

DYNAMICS OF STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract. *This scientific article reflects the results of research on the psychological well-being of students of Rēzekne Academy of Technologies in 2019 and 2023. The need for such studies is justified by recent studies in various countries, which show that the prevalence and severity of mental problems among young people is increasing. Taken together, these studies show that students are increasingly experiencing symptoms of increased anxiety and stress, as well as depression. Thus, the deterioration of students' psychological well-being is a major challenge in modern universities. The aim of the empirical study: to reflect the dynamics of the level and content of the psychological well-being of young students. The analysis of scientific literature and empirical results is used as a basic method in the development of the article.*

Keywords: *dynamics of students, psychological well-being, adaptation, demographic and social determinants of students' psychological well-being, gender, material security, health.*

Introduction

The problems of psychological well-being becomes especially relevant in the youth and early adulthood stages, when a person's identity is formed, as well as the next profession is chosen and its basics are learned. High psychological well-being is associated with a sense of purpose in young people's lives, optimism, the ability to establish positive relationships with others, which create prerequisites for positive personality development.

The need for studying the psychological well-being of young students is also justified by recent studies conducted in different countries (Cvetkovski, Reavley & Jorm 2012; Baik et al., 2015; Eisenberg et al., 2009; Larcombe et al., 2015; Slavin et al., 2014; et al.), what show that there is a decrease in psychological well-being in the student environment, which is related to students' professional self-determination, material security, household and social adaptation problems, as well as the spread of mental illnesses. The mentioned authors conclude that the symptoms of increased anxiety and stress, suicidal ideation, obsessive-compulsive disorder, as well as depression are increasingly detected in the environment of young students.

The purpose of this article: to reflect the changes in the psychological well-being of Rezekne Academy of Technologies (RTA) students, compared to the studies of this phenomenon conducted in 2019.

The analysis of scientific literature and empirical results were used as basic methods in the creation of the article.

Theoretical substantiation of the research

The conducted empirical studies of the psychological well-being of young students were based on researcher K. Ryff's Six Factors theory of psychological well-being (Ryff, 2017).

In the following, the mentioned factors are described in the context of the psychological well-being of young students (see Table 1).

Table 1 C. Ryff's Six-factor model in the context of psychological well-being of students

(created by the author according Anic, Tončić, 2013; Ryff, 2014; Viejo et al., 2018)

The content factor of psychological well-being	Characterization of the factor in the context of the student's personality and study process
<i>Self acceptance</i>	Related to the accurate and adequate perception of the student's motives, feelings and actions. Self-acceptance also means awareness and acceptance of one's own characteristics, which are particularly relevant in the process of youth identity formation and professional identification.
<i>Positive relationships with others</i>	A factor associated with emotional well-being from warm, trusting relationships with others, as well as the ability to care for them, as well as understanding the need for compromise in mutual relationships. Thus, the ability to form close relationships with others shows the emotional and social maturity of the student's personality.
<i>Personal growth</i>	The factor of psychological well-being, which is directly related to the study process and the student's growth as a future specialist, because it predicts the sense of personal development of young people and the ability to realize their potential, openness to new experiences, greater self-improvement and improvement of their behavior over time, as well as deeper and deeper self-awareness and higher efficiency.
<i>Purpose in life</i>	The factor predicts the student's ability to act in the direction of his personally significant goals. In the context of the study process, it implies purposefulness in learning the chosen profession, the ability to overcome objective and subjective difficulties of the study process, and it is also important that the young person is convinced of the importance of his goals.
<i>Environmental mastery</i>	It is characterized by the student's ability to choose or create such conditions that correspond to the personal essence and allow him to effectively direct his life.
<i>Autonomy</i>	This factor, in the context of the study process, presupposes the student's ability to organize various aspects of his life related to the fulfillment of study requirements, creating favorable living conditions, as well as the ability to create an environment that promotes psychological well-being in general.

The psychological well-being of young students is influenced by a diverse set of factors. Based on research on the diversity of determinants of the phenomenon of psychological well-being (Akhtar, 2015; Baik et al., 2015; Bexley et al., 2013; Boyce et al., 2010; Burns, Machin, 2010; Demir, 2010; Ibrahim et al., 2013; Larcombe et al., 2015; Lerkkanen et al., 2018; Nepomuceno et al., 2016; Özdemir & Tuncay, 2008; Roslaba et al., 2017; Ryff, 2017; Schofield et al., 2016; Shaw et al. ., 2002; Sarokhani et al., 2013; Tommis et al., 2007;), Table 2 summarizes several factors that significantly affect the psychological well-being of young students.

Table 2 Demographic and social determinants of students' psychological well-being (created by the author)

Demographic factors	Effects on the psychological well-being of young students	Social factors	Effects on the psychological well-being of young students
<i>Gender</i>	Women are characterized by a higher level of positive relationships with others than men. In general, significant differences between the level and content of psychological well-being of men and women are not found.	<i>Social activity</i>	The social activity of young students positively affects their psychological well-being, developing the social competence of young people and providing the necessary social support.
<i>Place of residence</i>	Place of residence affects psychological well-being, in relation to the socio-economic conditions of a given rural or urban environment.	<i>Material security</i>	Insufficient material security increases the stress level of students on a daily basis, promotes doubts about successful graduation from a higher educational institution, creates the need to work in parallel with the study process, which negatively affects the psychological well-being of students.
<i>Health condition</i>	Physical health condition and health behavior habits, as well as the subjective interpretation of one's own physical health contribute/deteriorate students' psychological well-being.	<i>Quality of living conditions</i>	The social and physical factors of students' living conditions (noise, environmental temperature, number of students) in or outside the dormitories significantly affect their psychological well-being on a daily basis.
<i>Leisure content</i>	The psychological well-being of students is positively influenced by belonging to certain interest groups and playing	<i>Study environment</i>	The need to adapt to the study environment, the hygienic conditions of the study process, leaving the previously usual environment significantly

	sports. Forced activities, common use of alcohol or other psychoactive substances, frequent night clubs, or inactivity worsens students' psychological well-being.		increases the psychological tension of students, which in case of weak adaptation abilities can lower their psychological well-being.
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It should be emphasized that this article reflects changes in the overall level and content of the psychological well-being of young students compared to the study of these factors in 2019.

Research organization and process

The research scheme and methodologies are illustrated in Figure 1.

The study included the study of students' psychological well-being using K. Ryff's "Psychological Well-Being Scales" (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The first stage of the study was carried out in 2019, and the second stage in 2023. The research sample consisted of 90 respondents in both stages of the study.

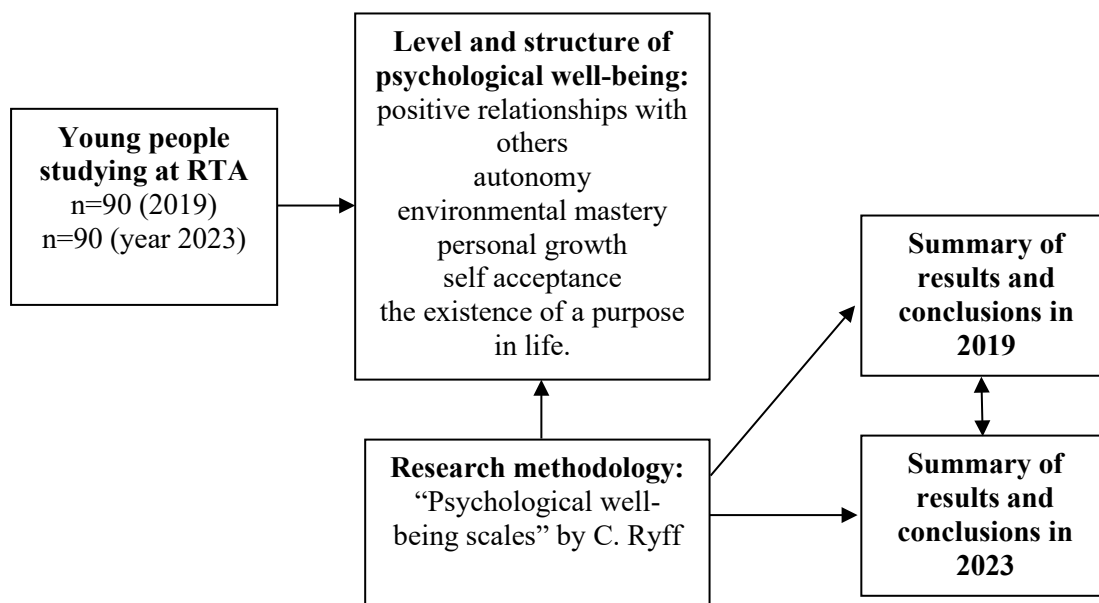


Figure 1 *Scheme of empirical research*

In the final stage, the collection, processing and analysis of the initial results took place. The average values of the respondents' results were used in the analysis of the content and level of psychological well-being.

Research results

In the first stage of the analysis of the obtained data, the overall level of psychological well-being of students in 2019 and 2023 was compared. As can be seen, the overall level of psychological well-being of young people studying in 2019 was higher (233 points according to the test results) than in 2023 (223 points according to the test results). Such results correlate with the general trends of decreasing psychological well-being and mental health of young people worldwide (Cvetkovski, Reavley & Jorm 2012; Baik et al., 2015; Eisenberg et al., 2009; Larcombe et al., 2015; Slavin et al., 2014; et al.).

However, despite the observed decrease in the level of psychological well-being, the psychological well-being of students in both 2019 and 2023 can be assessed as average (according to the C. Ryff's test instructions).

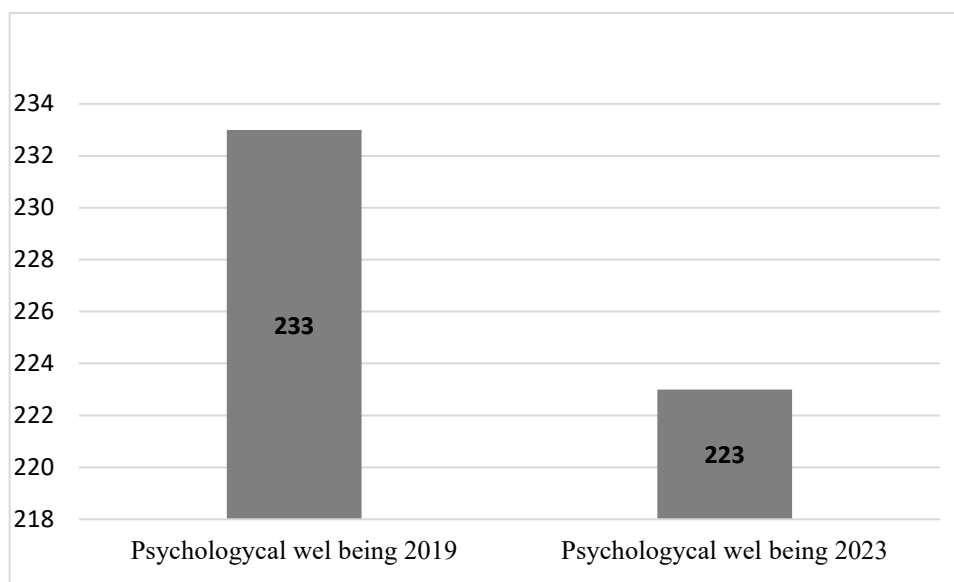


Figure 2 Comparison of the overall level of students' psychological well-being in 2019 and 2023

In the next stage of the study, the content of students' psychological well-being in 2019 and 2023 was compared.

Analyzing the content of the respondents' psychological well-being, it is possible to establish that the students of the studied sample are characterized by a high sense of personal growth and purpose in life. In 2023, a slight increase in this factor can be observed, however, students' sense of purpose in life is at a lower level than in 2019. At the middle level, there is autonomy and the ability to fulfill daily needs. The dynamics of autonomy indicators have not changed, but there is a slight decrease in the ability to implement daily needs compared to 2019. On the other hand, the problematic aspects of the psychological well-being of young students are related to relationships with others and self-acceptance. This problem

is characteristic of both the 2019 and 2023 research results. Figure 3 shows that in 2023, self-acceptance and positive relations with others are at a lower level than in 2019.

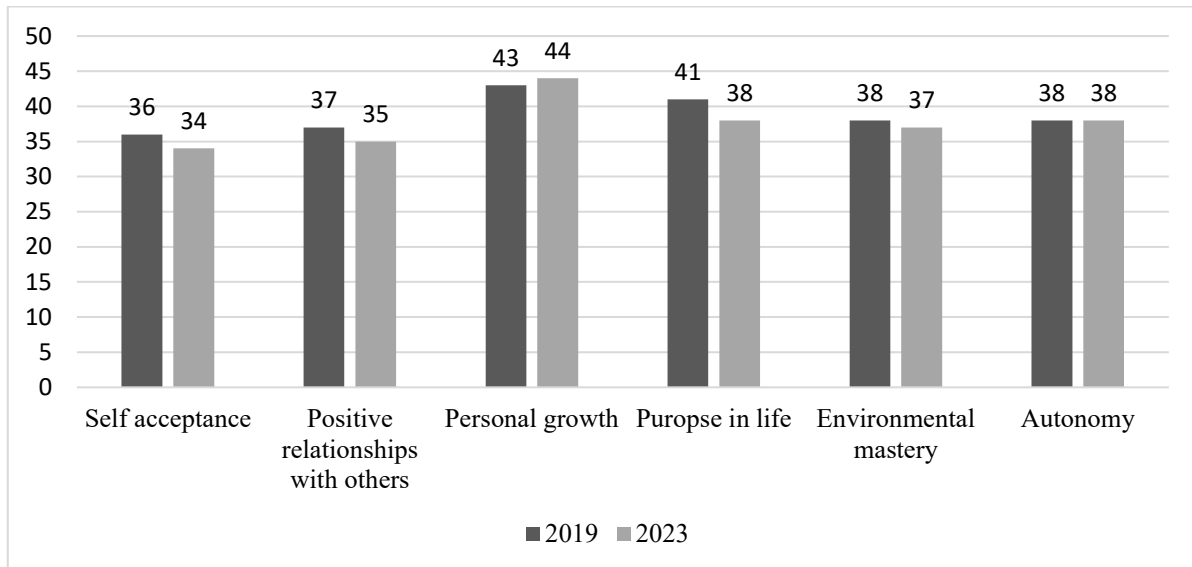


Figure 3 Content of psychological well-being of students in 2019 and 2023

In the next stage of the study, the indicators of content of psychological well-being in 2019 and 2023 were compared in the groups of women and men. (see Figure 4). The distribution of respondents in the study sample by gender was sufficiently proportional (51% women and 49% man in 2019 and 53% women and 47% man in 2023) to make it possible to compare the psychological well-being of young people in groups of different genders.

The obtained results show that the women of the studied sample have a higher level of psychological well-being than the men. In general, the level of psychological well-being of men can be assessed as average, and that of women as high (according to the research methodology instructions). By studying the dynamics of psychological well-being, it is possible to establish that in 2023 the overall level of psychological well-being of women and men has slightly decreased compared to 2019.

Analyzing the results of 2019, it was determined that women are characterized by a higher level of all factors of the structure of psychological well-being, except for the factor “Purpose in life”, the level of which is the same in both groups. For men, the most developed factor is “Purpose in life”, and for women – “Personal growth”.

The lowest level characterizes the factor “Self-acceptance” in both male and female groups.

The only factor in the structure of psychological well-being that is expressed at the same level for both men and women is “Purpose in life”.

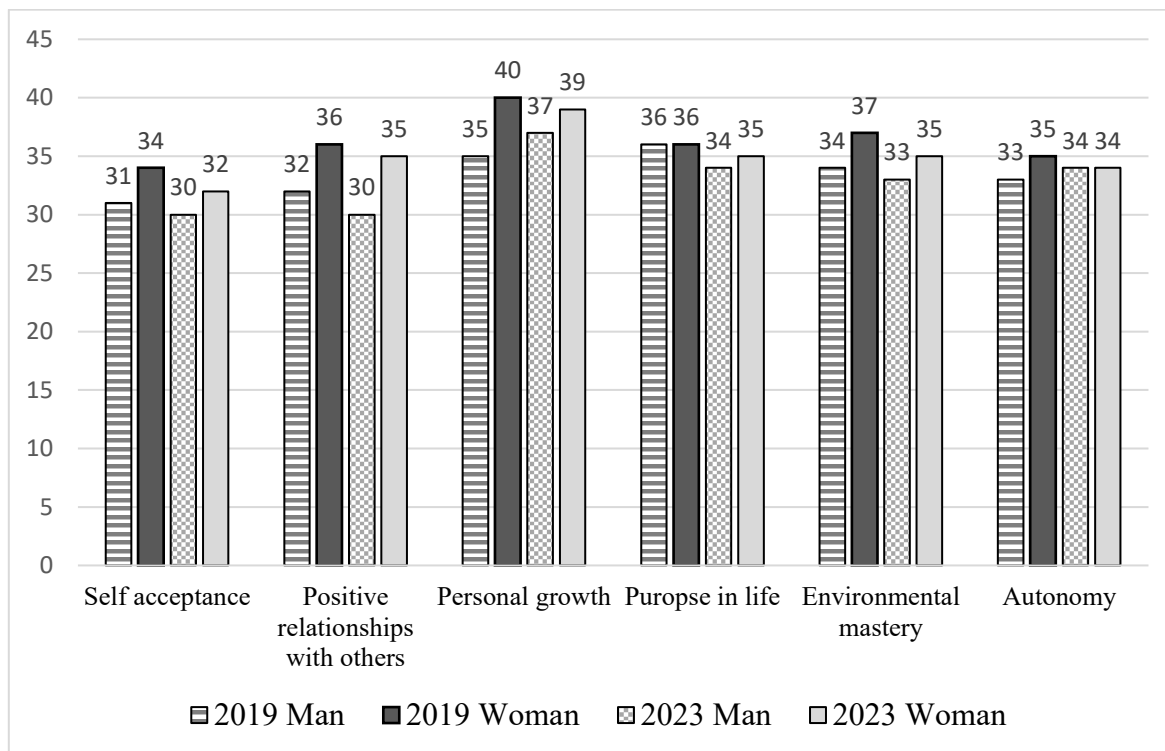


Figure 4 Content of students' psychological well-being in different gender groups in 2019 and 2023

The most significant differences between men and women can be observed at the level of the “Personal growth” factor.

The mentioned trends of 2019 can also be observed in 2023. However, in contrast to 2019, in 2023, a lower level of sense of purpose in life was found in the male group than in the female group.

The level of autonomy in both male and female groups in 2023 is the same, whereas in 2019, women were characterized by a higher level of autonomy than men.

It should be noted that the obtained results will be used for more detailed research on the influence of the study environment and place of living on the psychological well-being of young people studying at RTA.

Conclusions

As a result of the conducted scientific literature and empirical research, the author came to the following conclusions:

1. The overall level of psychological well-being of the young students in the study sample can be assessed as average;
2. A tendency towards a decrease in the level of overall psychological well-being was found, comparing the results of 2019 and 2023;

3. The students involved in the study are characterized by a high level of personal growth and a sense of purpose in life, which contributes to study achievements;
4. The problematic aspects of respondents' psychological well-being are related to the ability to build positive relationships with others and self-acceptance. This tendency can be observed both in 2019 and 2023. These results highlight the need to promote students' adaptation in the study environment through the activity of mentors and students' psychological support service.
5. Young female students are characterized by a higher level of psychological well-being in all aspects of its content, except for the sense of purpose in life, in which the results of both sexes are identical in 2019, but in 2023, a higher level of the mentioned factor was found for women.

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