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Psychological indicators of personal achievement: results of a content analysis of students' work in various disciplines

SVITLANA BYKOVA. **Psychological indicators of personal achievement: results of a content analysis of students' work in various disciplines.** *This article presents the results of a study into the indicators of success identified by higher education students. The primary research method employed is content analysis, the application of which has enabled the identification of the main textual codes associated with human success. The results of the content analysis of essays by students from various specialisations, and their quantitative and qualitative comparison, showed that the most significant and predominantly selected markers are those of material wealth (financial security, high earnings), power and status (possession of power, influence, authority), result-orientation (purposefulness, effectiveness, decision-making ability and accountability for outcomes), and characteristics of the social spectrum (such as empathy and sensitivity) are not particularly significant, nor is conformity to encouraged social norms (for example, discipline); at the same time, the ability to interact and communicate remains important. Therefore, based*

on the research findings, it can be argued that during one's student years, success is achieved by demonstrating competence in professional activities; consequently, we believe that to enhance the success of today's students, they should be given a sense of professional identity whilst still in education (for example, through the introduction of dual education).

Keywords: achievement, success, creativity, specialisation, content analysis.

1. Statement of the problem

An important task for educational institutions is to foster the development of individuals who are intellectually capable, patriotic, capable of growth and self-development, creative, and able to achieve their goals and succeed. Consequently, it is pertinent to study human success, identify relevant criteria and indicators, and examine its manifestation in various spheres and types of activity, etc.

2. Analysis of recent research and publications

The examination, analysis and synthesis of information regarding personal success, the results of studies into its psychological profile, and the characteristics of how success manifests in various activities can be found in the works of many researchers. In particular, in the works of N.O. Lyashenko, T.O. Pavlyuk, A.V. Lizun, R.Yu. Mikhalchuk, V. Kirichenko, A. Sardak, N. Litovchenko and others. It is worth focusing on identifying specific personality characteristics that serve as relevant indicators of success as a stable personality trait and are important for an individual's effectiveness and achievement of success [1].

It should be noted that the objectivity of assessing an individual's success is ensured by society or a reference group analysing and evaluating their achievements, which are significant for the world at large or for a specific social environment in particular. Therefore, societal values and external indicators are important for enhancing the objectivity of success assessment. Such external indicators include a person's appearance, their material well-being, career progression, marital status, and so on [3].

Thus, following an analysis of a substantial body of literature, Y.M. Ilyina identified the competencies (characteristics) associated with success and those that do not contribute to it. Among the characteristics of success are authenticity; communication skills and the ability to establish

constructive relationships; personal boundaries (establishing one's own psychological space); perceiving obstacles and failures as experience and a stimulus for achievement; the ability to choose a motivating goal; the ability to utilise one's own resources; responsibility; prioritisation of motives; reflectiveness; naturalness and spontaneity, the ability to act in situations of uncertainty; boldness, risk-taking, constructive assertiveness; speed of response to challenges; valuing one's own time; independence; proactivity; constructive attitudes; a predominance of achievement motivation rather than avoidance; a will to power; global thinking; professional mastery; capacity for self-development; health; the ability to derive pleasure; emotional resilience. Among the psychological traits whose prominence indicates a lack of inclination towards success, the following are highlighted: minimal demands on one's own life; self-sacrifice; destructive habits, laziness; perfectionism; constant anxiety and fear; imitation of others' experiences [5].

T. Bilukha, L. Deynychenko and T. Kukhar investigated the personal factors underlying academic success (specifically in vocational education). To address the research objectives, they employed the following psychodiagnostic methods: 'Expert Assessment of Students' Academic Performance', which involved expert lecturers evaluating students' academic performance using scales for academic achievement, motivation (desire to learn); health status; social conformity; psychological resilience; communicative competence; and the overall (integral) expression of academic performance. The survey data on students was supplemented by the results of modular and end-of-term assessments. The results showed that successful students demonstrate restraint and behaviour in accordance with social norms. They are characterised more by diligence than by giftedness, as well as a high level of intellectual development, emotional stability, realism, composure and work capacity, and formalised communication with those around them [2].

Researchers who have identified markers of success in business and entrepreneurship have highlighted the following qualities that contribute to success not only in business but also in social relationships: a healthy sense of self-worth; having life goals and the ability to set them for oneself; constructive, positive thinking; willpower; self-confidence and belief in one's own abilities; consistency; an active approach to life; having a personal image and the ability to shape it; freedom and independence in decision-making; the desire to have money as a means of achieving one's own goals, rather than merely to secure one's livelihood; the

ability to choose something that no one has done before; the ability to establish and manage social interaction; decision-making and taking responsibility for it [5].

Thus, information regarding the personal characteristics of success is actively being studied, at the same time, immersion in a particular activity (which is also dynamic), for Ukrainians, a prolonged period of stress, tension and constant danger due to the war, a shift in value priorities, etc., undoubtedly influence the benchmarks of success and affect its personal markers, which requires detailed study.

The aim of this article is therefore to conduct a content analysis of self-assessment essays written by students from various specialisations and to identify the characteristics of a successful person that they highlight.

3. Presentation of the main material

Content analysis of students' self-assessment essays was chosen as the main research method in order to summarise and classify the characteristics of a successful person identified by them. Both quantitative and qualitative content analysis are to be applied.

Quantitative content analysis involves a counting process in which procedures are established for processing existing categories and applying classifications to identified groups, ranking them and measuring the relevant associations [6]. This method can be used as the primary research method. In international research, content analysis is widely used and is considered one of the leading research methods, particularly in psychology and pedagogy [4]. Content analysis makes it possible to 'embed' the text's content within a social context, to understand and analyse it simultaneously in the context of the manifestation of social life and its evaluation. Such 'embedding' of a specific text within the subject matter under investigation enables the researcher to establish:

- what exactly is reflected in the text, as well as to analyse what existed previously;
- the information present in the text;
- to draw conclusions and establish the nature of the perception of information, which, according to researchers, can be considered a 'textual code' valuable for obtaining quantitative information about the content of the document [6]. We therefore chose content analysis, as it enables us to identify these features recorded in specific documents (in our case, the works of the subjects under study). The results we obtained were supplemented using the interview method.

Overall, this study used content analysis of the participants' writings to identify psychological indicators of success. We did not limit ourselves to academic success alone; the study addressed a person's success in general. The study was conducted in several stages: identifying indicators of success for the student body as a whole, determining such indicators according to specialisation, summarising and interpreting the data obtained, and determining the results. Accordingly, the study sample consisted of 100 individuals, divided equally into two groups of 50. The first group comprised students of purely technical specialisations, whilst the second group comprised students of such specialisations as Design, Graphic Design and Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, Restoration. The aim of this comparison was to confirm or refute the hypothesis regarding differences in the understanding and identification of psychological indicators of success among individuals with a significant component of creative (artistic) abilities for application in professional practice, and those for whom the presence of such abilities is not a determining factor for achieving success. The study was conducted at the Odesa State Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture.

The summary results of the content analysis are presented in the table below (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Summary results of the content analysis (n=100)

№	Characteristics	Prevalence of the trait, %
1	intellect, being intelligent	63
2	originality, being unlike others	38
3	harmony	42
4	education, competence in various fields	46
5	self-sufficiency	53
6	financial security, high earnings	97
7	power	82
8	charisma	61
9	determination	43
10	responsibility	52
11	good health	77

12	talent, creative abilities, creativity	41
13	leadership, leadership qualities	58
14	communication skills, ability to communicate	76
15	determination	92
16	adaptability	45
17	effectiveness	91
18	self-fulfilment	76
19	influence, authority	94
20	ambition	81
21	resilience	36
22	initiative	49
23	discipline	21
24	optimism	47
25	empathy, sensitivity	28
26	perseverance	65
27	life satisfaction	63
28	free in one's actions, self-reliant, independent, acting at one's own discretion	78
29	ability to make decisions, 'has a mind of one's own', relies on oneself	71
30	well-developed intuition, having a 'sixth sense'	56

The analysis revealed that the most significant and frequently selected markers are those of material wealth (financial security, high earnings), power and status (possession of power, influence, authority), results-orientation (determination, effectiveness, ambition, decision-making ability and accountability for results), whilst indicators of the social spectrum (such as empathy and sensitivity) are not particularly significant, nor is conformity to encouraged social norms (for example, discipline); however, the ability to interact and communicate remains important. There is less consensus regarding other markers that are

indicators of:

- the volitional sphere (resoluteness, resilience, perseverance), although purposefulness is highly rated; this is likely linked to the fact that success is understood as understanding one's goal—what exactly a person wants, what they are striving for—and moving towards it;
- the emotional sphere (empathy, sensitivity, optimism, resilience) do not predominate in the selection, although they are widely represented. Life satisfaction is also perceived by respondents as a sign of success, yet it encompasses more than just emotional components. It should be noted that research data [7] indicate that success contributes to a person's attainment of life satisfaction;
- communicative (communication skills, the ability to interact), although these are frequently chosen, the percentage is still significantly lower than, for example, material well-being;
- behavioural – free in one's actions, 'one's own master', independent, acting at one's own discretion, able to make decisions. Success is realised through specific actions; what is important is that a successful person is free to choose their own ways and methods of activity and behaviour.

Once again, power, status and material well-being, as well as career progression, are among the top priorities alongside the ability to act freely. Regarding creative traits, a comparison of the two groups (creative and technical specialisations) showed that although material benefits and status characteristics, as well as freedom and the ability to freely realise one's ideas, are prioritised, creative abilities and creativity are also characteristic features of a successful individual. At the same time, we did not find any significant differences between these groups of individuals in this respect.

It should be noted that the identification of markers of success is an individual process and is based on factors of both a subjective and objective nature. At the same time, one's own hierarchy of values, which is naturally shaped by these factors, is always decisive and unique to the individual.

If empathy is a highly rated value in a person's own hierarchy, then its absence will be interpreted by them as a shortcoming that certainly does not correspond to success. The sphere of success or the assessment of success in general is also important. At present, students are at the stage of mastering their profession and assess success based on this primary

activity; such is their dominant subjective view of success during their student years. Although success reflects the subjective view of each participant in the study and is naturally based on values, achievements and the specific sphere in which the individual perceives the realisation and development of success, it is worth noting the unanimous focus on professional activity as the sphere in which success manifests itself and the corresponding description of a successful individual, which testifies to the importance of the educational stage in building a professional trajectory and shaping an individual's success and their self-perception as a successful person. It should be noted that international experience in the field of education shows that fostering a sense of achievement is the most effective method of preparing young people [8].

4. Conclusions

Thus, based on the research findings, it can be noted that success is an integrated characteristic of the personality which, during one's student years, despite the importance of social interaction and personal relationships (love, friendship, family), is primarily accumulated in the professional sphere; therefore, to foster success, it is important to encourage immersion in professional activities from the student years onwards, which will provide students with opportunities for self-realisation, self-expression, and harmonious socialisation. In this context, the introduction of dual education is a key factor in enhancing personal success and the sense of it during one's student years.

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Abstracts

СВІТЛАНА БИКОВА. Психологічні показники особистісних досягнень: результати контент-аналізу робіт студентів з різних дисциплін. У статті наведено результати дослідження ознак успішності, що виділяються здобувачами вищої освіти. Основним методом дослідження є контент-аналіз, застосування якого дозволило виділити основні текстові коди успішності людини. Результати контент-аналізу творів студентів різних спеціалізацій, кількісно-якісне їх порівняння, показало, що найбільш значущими та переважно обраними є маркери матеріального статку (забезпеченість, високі заробітки), владно-статусні (наявність влади, впливовість, авторитетність), результат-зорієнтованість (цілеспрямованість, результативність, вміння приймати рішення і відповідальність за результат), ознаки соціального спектру (як-то емпатія, чуйність) є не надто значущими, як і відповідність заохочуваним соціальним нормам

(наприклад, дисциплінованість), водночас важливим все ж є вміння спілкуватися та комунікувати. Отже, за результатами дослідження, можна стверджувати важливість у студентському віці становлення успішності шляхом підтвердження компетентності здобувача у професійній діяльності, тому вважаємо, що для посилення успішності сучасного студента варто надати йому таке самовідчуття у професії ще на етапі навчання (наприклад, через запровадження дуальної освіти).

Ключові слова: успішність, успіх, творчість, спеціалізація, контент-аналіз.

SWIĘŁANA BYKOWA. **Psychologiczne wskaźniki osiągnięć osobistych: wyniki analizy treści prac studentów z różnych dyscyplin.** W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badań dotyczących wskaźników sukcesu wskazywanych przez studentów. Główną metodą badawczą jest analiza treści, której zastosowanie umożliwiło wyodrębnienie kluczowych kodów tekstowych odnoszących się do sukcesu jednostki. Wyniki analizy treści prac studentów różnych kierunków oraz ich ilościowo-jakościowe porównanie wykazały, że za najbardziej znaczące i najczęściej wybierane są wskaźniki materialne (bezpieczeństwo finansowe, wysokie zarobki), władzy i statusu (posiadanie władzy, wpływowość, autorytet), a także orientacja na wyniki (determinacja, skuteczność, umiejętność podejmowania decyzji oraz odpowiedzialność za skutki), cechy należące do sfery społecznej (takie jak empatia, wrażliwość) uznawane są za mniej istotne, podobnie jak zgodność z aprobowanymi normami społecznymi (np. dyscyplina), jednocześnie nadal istotną rolę odgrywają umiejętności komunikacyjne. Na podstawie uzyskanych wyników badania, można stwierdzić, że w wieku studenckim kluczowe znaczenie ma budowanie sukcesu poprzez potwierdzanie kompetencji jednostki w działalności zawodowej, w związku z tym w celu zwiększenia sukcesu współczesnego studenta za zasadne uważa się wspieranie kształtowania poczucia własnej wartości w zawodzie już na etapie nauki (na przykład poprzez wprowadzenie kształcenia dualnego).

Słowa kluczowe: osiągnięcia, sukces, kreatywność, kierunek, analiza treści.