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Dmitrii Dubrov

**FAMILY SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A
PREDICTOR OF PARENTAL AND
ADOLESCENT SUBJECTIVE
WELL-BEING IN RUSSIA**

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FAMILY SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A PREDICTOR OF PARENTAL AND ADOLESCENT SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN RUSSIA²

This research examines the role of family social capital (FSC) in parental and adolescent subjective well-being. As the construct FSC is relatively new, the article presents data of validated methods for measuring it. 397 Russians were interviewed to identify whether FSC is a significant predictor of subjective well-being. The results indicate that it is a predictor of adolescent subjective well-being. For parents, this construct can be a predictor of their subjective well-being depending on their level of income.

JEL Classification: Z

Key words: family social capital, subjective well-being, interpersonal relations, parents, adolescents.

¹ International Scientific-Educational Laboratory for Socio-Cultural Research of the Expert Institute of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia), ddubrov@hse.ru

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Introduction

In recent years subjective well-being has been a popular research area in modern psychology. In the 20th century positive psychology which studies this phenomenon and the factors that determine it was founded as a separate area within the psychology. Subjective well-being is understood as the subjective feeling of happiness and life satisfaction (Bradburn, 1969). Studies have shown that happy people tend to be more successful in their social lives, have better performance at work, cope better with problems, have better health, cooperate more with other people. They are more inclined to help others and participate in charity, and they live longer than people who are not happy (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to subjective well-being.

One of the generally accepted predictors of subjective well-being is the quality of social cohesion (Diener & Seligman, 2002). People satisfied with the relationships within their family and community often feel happier and more satisfied with life than those who are not satisfied with these relationships. However, it remains unclear why these relationships are so relevant for being happy. One possible explanation is that individuals who have positive relationships with others can count on support when they need it; while for people who have no such relationships, such support is not easy to get. Being able to rely on someone when you need them makes you happier (Siedlecki et al., 2014). The support of relatives and others is a key concept for understanding the relationship between quality of social cohesion and subjective well-being. This kind of support refers to the family social capital (FSC) (Coleman, 1988), which could help to draw a more complete picture of this relationship.

The two main objectives of this study are: (1) an examination of the relationship between subjective well-being and the components of FSC; (2) developing and validating a questionnaire for measuring FSC.

Subjective Well-Being

There is a difference between "subjective well-being" and "psychological well-being". Bradburn (1969), who first studied the phenomenon of wellbeing in psychology, defined it as a kind of balance between the positive and negative affects on the individual, a high level being determined by the predominance of positive affects (Bradburn, 1969). Later followed two approaches to study this phenomenon: hedonic (wellbeing is considered as a dichotomy: satisfaction – dissatisfaction) and eudemonistic, where well-being is associated with personal growth.

In the hedonic approach, this construct was operationalized as subjective well-being, which was understood as more positive and less negative experiences, and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). In the eudemonistic approach this construct was operationalized as psychological well-being, defined as self-acceptance, positive relations with others, self-realization, the presence of goals in life, the ability to satisfy everyday needs and autonomy (Ryff , 1989).

This study follows the hedonic approach and defines subjective well-being as a positive interaction with the environment, happiness and life satisfaction.

Family social capital

Currently, social capital theory is widely used to study different kinds of social relations, including those within the family (Burt, 1997; Coleman, 1990). Social capital can be defined as the set of resources (trust, mutual support, mutual aid, attention to the needs of each other) mediated by relationships between subjects within a particular social formation (e.g., a family) (Carr et al., 2011; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Pearson, Carr & Shaw, 2008). This study is based on the concept of internal (bonding) social capital. Internal social capital refers to the ties between the subjects of social interaction, such as parents and children. There are three dimensions of internal social capital: structural, cognitive and relational capital (Hoffman, Hoelscher & Sorenson, 2006; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Pearson, Carr & Shaw, 2008; Pearson & Carr, 2011). The structural aspect is the relationships

between family members. The quality of these relations depends on the degree of psychological closeness and the frequency of contacts between family members (Rostila, 2010). This aspect includes the resources that facilitate interaction and communication between family members (Carr et al., 2011). The cognitive aspect is the shared system of ideas, interpretations and values within the family. The structural and cognitive aspects of social capital form the relational aspect of social capital (Carr et al., 2011; Pearson, Carr & Shaw, 2008). This aspect includes resources created on the basis of interpersonal relationships, such as trust, norms, obligations and identity (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Trust is considered as the basis for cooperation, information exchange and knowledge sharing (Carr et al., 2011; Pearson, Carr & Shaw, 2008; Pearson & Carr, 2011). According to Coleman (1988), who introduced the concept of social capital, parents can build social capital within the family, but this is possible iff they devote sufficient time and attention to their children (Coleman, 1988).

In addition, Coleman first introduced the conceptual framework of social capital as an important factor in the academic development of children. It is suggested that social capital acts as the mechanism of family human capital transmission from parents to children. Children's education is an outcome of parents' human capital (knowledge, skills, health, education). But it develops iff the parents' human capital is strengthened by FSC (parental human capital being used in the family, not only at work or in other activities). Studies have been conducted confirming Coleman's assumption that social capital is a strong predictor of the academic success of the younger generation (Teachman, Kathleen & Karen, 1996; Post & Pong, 1996; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Crosnoe, 2004; Shahidul et al., 2015). Thus, FSC is the most important source of human capital and, subsequently, the financial capital of the younger generation as education is converted into wages.

Unlike such constructs as the psychological climate of the family and family cohesion, FSC is a broader and more complex concept. It includes affective (emotional closeness between parents and children, attachment), cognitive (values, attitudes shared by members of the family) and behavioural components (mutual

support, mutual assistance, the attention paid to children by parents). The psychological climate of the family refers to the affective side of family relationships (general emotional attitude), and can be either favourable or unfavourable (Winnicott, 2007). Whereas FSC is either present or absent.

Coleman (1988) introduced the following indicators to measure the level of social capital in families: 1) the level of trust in the family; 2) degree of psychological closeness between parents and children; 3) the quality and intensity of attention that adults or parents pay to children; 4) the level of mutual support. These indicators were used as scales for the development of the questionnaire to measure FSC.

Based on the above, we hypothesise (H1) that FSC is a predictor of the subjective well-being of adolescents and their parents, i.e. the higher the FSC, the higher the level of subjective well-being of family members.

Method

Participants

Participants of the study were parents and adolescents. Table 1 shows the gender and age characteristics of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Sample	N	% male	% female	M(SD) age
Adolescents	274	48.6%	51.4%	17.7 (3.15)
Parents	123	41.5%	58.5%	33.9 (7.51)
Total	397	45.05%	54.95%	

Materials and procedure

To measure FSC, a questionnaire was developed for parents and adolescents. The indicators proposed by Coleman were used to determine the level of FSC. Initially, the questionnaire for parents consisted of 37 items. The participants were asked to rate the degree of agreement with statements from 1 (Totally disagree) to 6 (Absolutely agree). After conducting confirmatory factor analysis ($\chi^2/df=3.24$; CFI=.94; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.06; PCLOSE=.31) Items with low factor loads in all scales were deleted. The final description of scales for FSC measurement (parents) are in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of scales for family social capital measurement (parents)

Scale	N items	Sample item	α
Trust in family	4	«I totally trust my child (ren)»	.74
Psychological closeness with children	7	«I always feel emotional closeness with the child (ren)»	.85
Parental attention	4	«I spend much time communicating with my child (ren)»	.88
Parental support	4	«I always strive to assist my child (ren) in everything».	.76
Children's support towards parents (in parent's perception)	5	«I always feel assistance (support) of my child(ren)».	.86

The questionnaire for adolescents consisted of 36 items. The participants were also asked to rate the degree of agreement with statements from 1 (Totally disagree) to 6 (Absolutely agree). After conducting confirmatory factor analysis ($\chi^2/df=3.21$; CFI=.96; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.04; PCLOSE=.26), items with low

factor loads in all scales were deleted. The final description of scales for FSC measurement (adolescents) are in Table 3.

Table 3. The description of scales for family social capital measurement (adolescents)

Scale	N items	Sample items	α
Trust in family	4	«I totally trust my parents' opinion»	.84
Psychological closeness with parents	5	«I usually feel warmth in relationships with parents»	.86
Parental attention to children (in children's perception)	5	«Parents devote a lot of time for communication with me»	.89
Parental support towards children (in children's perception)	4	«I always feel my parents' support».	.91
Children's support towards parents	5	«I always help parents in household chores».	.87

To test the convergent validity of the questionnaire, a modified method of studying psychological distance (similar to FSC) by Kupreychenko (14 items) in both variants of the questionnaire was used. Sample item: "We have the same perception of the world" (Kupreychenko, 2008).

To measure the level of subjective well-being I used the life satisfaction scale by Diener (adapted for Russia by Osin & Leontiev, 2008). The scale consists of 5 items. Participants are asked to rate the degree of agreement with statements from 1 (Totally disagree) to 6 (Absolutely agree). For example, "In general, my life is close to ideal".

In addition, for covariance control, the participants were asked to specify their level of education, income, nationality, gender and age.

Validation of the questionnaire and verification of the hypothesis was carried out using confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, path data analysis, implemented in the programs SPSS 21, Amos 21.

The survey of the participants was conducted via the internet on the basis of the electronic platform 1ka (www.1ka.si) by posting links to the questionnaire in social networks and internet forums.

Results

Correlation analysis identified a strong correlation between the measurement technique and the methods of psychological distance measurement by Kupreychenko. It indicates the convergent validity of our method in both samples. The Pearson correlation coefficient of the indicators of FSC and psychological distance are in Table 4.

Table 4. The Pearson correlation coefficient of the indicators of family social capital and psychological distance (PSD)

Sample	N	FSC-PSD
Adolescents	274	.89**
Parents	123	.80**

Note. ** $p < .01$.

To test our hypothesis that FSC is a predictor of subjective well-being of adolescents and their parents, we used path data analysis. The following components of FSC were used: trust, perceived psychological closeness between parents and children, the attention paid by parents to children, parental support towards children, children towards their parents; and subjective well-being (see Figure 1). Table 5 provides model fit of current path model.

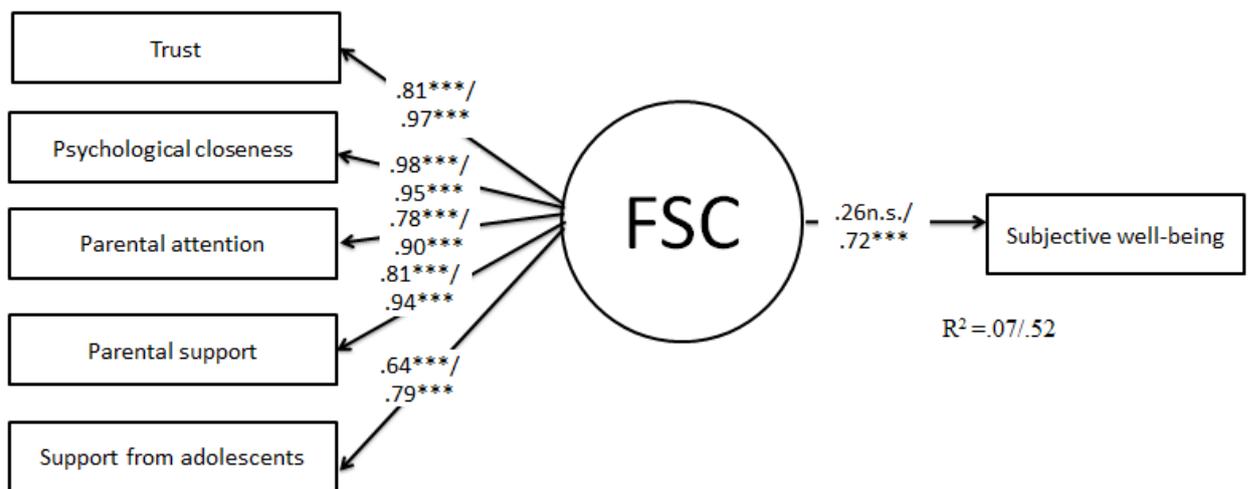


Figure 1. Standardized regression weights and significance levels of the path model (parents/adolescents). *** $p < .001$, n.s. — not significant. $\chi^2/df=4.34/6.34$; CFI=.91/.95; RMSEA=.06/.05; SRMR=.07/05; PCLOSE=.10/.08.

The results indicate that FSC is a predictor of subjective well-being for adolescents, i.e. those relationships that develop within the family, perceived attention and support provided by parents play a significant role in adolescent happiness. However, for the parents the correlation between FSC and subjective well-being is not significant. For parents this construct it is not as important for subject well-being as for their children. This relationship was assumed to be strengthened by adding "level of income" to the path model (see Figure 2.) Table 6 provides model fit of current path model (parents).

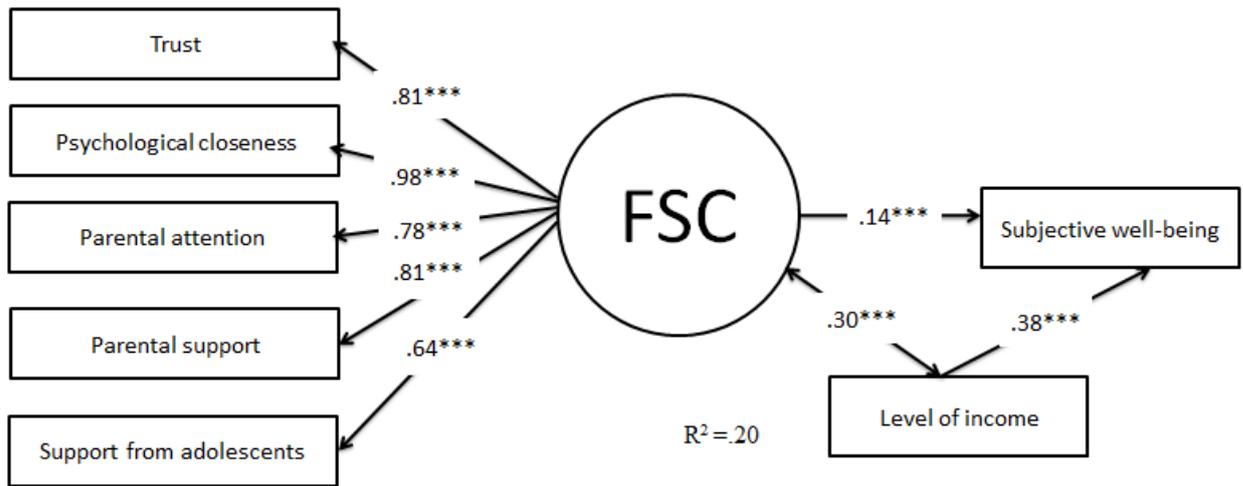


Figure 2. Standardized regression weights and significance levels of the path model (parents). *** $p < .001$. $\chi^2/df=5.37$; CFI=.91; RMSEA=.05; SRMR=.07; PCLOSE=.18.

The level of income together with FSC play more significant role for subjective well-being of parents than FSC without regard to income.

Discussion

As stated, one of the accepted factors of subjective well-being is the quality of social relationships, i.e. quality of relationships with other individuals, including family (Diener & Seligman, 2002). This study clarified the relationship between FSC and the subjective well-being of parents and adolescents.

We determined that a key concept for understanding the relationship between quality of social cohesion and subjective well-being is the support of relatives and friends. For a more complete understanding of this relation, we used FSC. This construct, in addition to mutual support, includes trust in the family, psychological closeness between parents and children, the attention paid by parents to children.

To answer the question of whether FSC is a predictor of subjective well-being, we developed and validated the questionnaire to measure the level of FSC.

According to the findings, FSC is a significant predictor of subjective well-being for adolescents. Taking into account the current economic status of

adolescents (they usually do not have to support themselves financially) and their main spheres of life – family, friends, school – the most important interpersonal relationships are in these spheres. Therefore, family relationships, the support and assistance of family (economic, psychological, help with studies, etc.) is important for adolescent subjective well-being. This corresponds the results of a study conducted in the US with a sample size of 1111 people aged 18 to 95. Moreover, the analysis of invariance revealed no age differences i.e. support of others is necessary for being happy at any age (Siedlecki et al., 2014).

For parents, FSC does not play such a significant role. How can this be explained? I hypothesized that income level plays a significant role for parents, as it is necessary for providing for the family, that is the well-being of the family is linked to parental subjective well-being. The correlation between subjective well-being and income has been established in the other studies (Bradburn, 1969; West, Reed & Gildengorin, 1998; Lachman & Weaver, 1998). In cross-cultural research, it was found that the highest correlation between income and subjective well-being is observed in countries with low income (Diener & Oishi, 2015). Parental income analysis indicates it to be below average in our sample, which could be an explanation for the correlation. Russian research has also confirmed the existence of a relationship between income and subjective well-being (Golubeva, 2010; Khashchenko, 2005; Shamionov, 2008). The study by Shamionov (2008) indicates a two-way correlation between these two constructs (Shamionov, 2008). Furthermore, income levels depend on levels of self-esteem and social frustration related to the ability to satisfy needs, including the needs of the family (Golubeva, 2010). That is why this construct was added to the path model. The latest model indicates that the level of income is associated with FSC (.30), so this construct has predictive power for subjective well-being of parents ($R^2=.20$).

Limitations

However, this study design does not imply the analysis of the relationship between FSC and subjective well-being within each family. Therefore, in the future I plan to conduct intergenerational research, to explore this relationship.

Conclusion

Subjective well-being is the positive experience of interaction with the outside world, happiness and life satisfaction. FSC is a broad concept that (in contrast to the psychological climate of the family, family cohesion, etc.) includes affective (psychological closeness between parents and children, attachment), cognitive (values, attitudes shared by members of the family) and activity (mutual support, assistance, the attention paid by parents to children).

FSC is a predictor of the subjective well-being of adolescents. For their happiness, it is important for adolescents to have trust in their families, psychological closeness with their parents, and attention and support from their parents. FSC and income are predictors of the subjective well-being of parents.

It is clear that the life of an adult, especially a parent, is much more difficult than that of a child, and therefore there are more factors that influence happiness to be fully explored in the future.

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Dmitrii Dubrov

National Research University Higher School of Economics. International
Laboratory of Socio-Cultural research. Junior Researcher ; E-mail:

ddubrov@hse.ru

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