

FAMILY RELATIONS: INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION

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Abstract: *The article studies the variability of the identification processes in the marital dyad correlated with the character of inner relations in the wedded pair, psychological distance between the partners, emotional involvement into relations and other parameters. It describes the in-marriage individuality identity types: pseudo-social identity, pseudo-personal identity, “we”-identity. It also represents the outcomes of empirical research confirming the theoretical assumptions on the interrelation between the identity type and subjective marriage prosperity model. The article proves that the types of marriage identification processes impact the marriage partners’ subjective conceptions of marriage prosperity makings.*

Keywords: *subjective marriage prosperity, identifications, in-marriage individuality, identity types, identity in wedded pairs, “we”-identity, pseudo-personal identity*

Recently increased interest to the investigation of identification and identity problems has caused significant enlargement and conceptual sophistication of knowledge in the given sphere. The investigation of identity has acquired special relevancy under conditions of modern society that is characterized by the high-level dynamism of arising change. The family as a social institute, presenting a model of social relationships appears to be the reflection of the individual’s current historical state (A. I. Antonova, L. F. Burlachuk, A. D. Gradovskiy, L. V. Kartseva, L. A. Korostyleva, T. D. Martsinkovskaya, V. M. Rozin, E. V. Titova, I. G. Yakovenko; J.-P. Vernan, H. Delacroix, P. Jane, K. Manngem, I. Meyerson, N. Elias). Thus, treating the questions of identity in reference to the family seems to be justified.

The analysis of research works on the problem of matrimonial relations showed that in this context identification as a process and as a result is not often paid attention to. It is frequently presented as the concretization of social identification on the basis of the fact that the family is traditionally viewed as a small group (W. James, F. Znanetskiy, Ch. Kuli, J. Piaget, W. Thomas, Z. Freud.; Y. E. Aleshina, A. N. Volkova, L. Y. Gozman, A. N. Elizarov, A. I. Zakharov, M. Zemaska, E. V. Kirichenko, O. B. Panenko, A. I. Tatscheva, V. A. Terekhin, N. F. Fedotova and others). It is possible to come across only single references concerning identification with the family as a community (N. Akkerman, L. A. Korostyleva, E. A. Kronik, N. F. Fedotova, E. G.

Eidemiller and others), thereby the question about possible variability of identification processes is not touched upon.

Nowadays married couples defined as “happy” (“trouble-free”) appear in the focus of researchers’ attention rather seldom. Emphasizing the search for causes of the disruptiveness of matrimonial relations many authors give a sketchy definition of the “happiness” concept, they do not pinpoint the possible variants and levels of the latter. We suggest that the unification of matrimonial success causes rather formal division of marriages into “happy” and “unhappy”, leads to superficial and simplified investigating successful and constructive interaction of partners in marriage, brings to conservatism and stereotype in searching the ways of overcoming matrimonial ill-being.

Investigating the specificity of identification mechanisms in a married couple will allow, in our opinion, to reveal factors that give an opportunity to differentiate subjective successful relationships of the partners in a family, to show their variability.

As a result of a theoretical analysis of psychological investigation on the problem of identification (N. N. Avdeeva, V. S. Ageev, G. M. Andreeva, E. Z. Basina, E. P. Belinskaya, E. M. Dubovskaya, R. L. Krichevskiy, V. N. Pavlenko, A. V. Petrovskiy, V. A. Yadov, G. Brakewell, A. Vaterman, W. James, J. Marsia, J. Meed, J. Turner, H. Tejfel, S. Freud, E. Erikson and others) we have drawn up the typology of identification processes in the married couple. The generalized characteristics of main types are presented below.

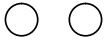


The first variant appears to be the identification of the subject of the conjugal interaction with the family role. The given type was named as “pseudo-social identification” (PS hereafter) on the basis of a combination of formal similarity and content difference with social (group) role. PS-type identification suggests that a personality sort of hides behind the family role identifying with it for getting an opportunity to achieve subjectively significant goals. Pseudo-social identification is characteristic of the relationships, built on the basis of mutual agreement, even associate relationships based on mutual advantage of the family members. An individual is oriented to the optimal role interaction, defines himself or herself as a member of the married couple, implements in the family different needs, is able to explain the causes and consequences of his or her group solidarity. As a result of such identification the spouses act as a community in certain circumstances, make “We” actual as necessary, but in fact they exist as independent subjects.

The next variant of identity in a married couple is the identification with the personality of the partner. Such identification transforming into dependence is accompanied by the feeling of beneficence on the part of one member of the conjugal dyad, his or her voluntary “dissolution” in the personality of the partner, denying their own “I” in favour of the “I” of the partner, undifferentiated inner borders of the personality. In this case the purposefulness and meaningfulness of an individual’s life as well as his or her time prospect are fully determined by the identification of his or her own personality and the personality of the spouse (“Other-centering”). The given type has acquired the name of “pseudo-personal identification” (PP hereafter) on the basis of self-identification with the personality of the partner.

Finally, the third among the revealed variants of identification in marriage appears to be conscious partial identification of one’s personality with the conjugal com-

munity, accompanied with creating the new formation “We” in the semantic space of each member of the conjugal dyad. The given type of identity is formed against the background of interlocutory communication and characterized by an optimal psychological distance of the partners, which, on the one hand, facilitates the formation of the community and, on the other hand, does not infringe the autonomy of the personality, its individuality [1,2,4,5]. This variant was named “we-identification”. The generalized characteristics of all types are presented in table 1.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of personality identification types in marriage

Identifi-cation types	The type of relationships in the couple, directionality of the relationships	Psycho-logical distance	Identity specificity	Scheme of identi-fication
Pseudo-social	Mutual agreement. Attitude to communication with which the interactional aspect of it is ignored, the orientation to business matters prevails, avoiding communication. “I-centering”	Distant	Identifica-tion with fam-ily (conjugal) role rather than with community	I the other 
Pseudo-personal	Alterocentric directionality in communication (according to S.L.Bratchenko). Emotional hiperdependence. “The other-centering”.	Minimal (“nega-tive”)	Conjugal commu-nity = partner. Identification with the “dominating” partner	The other I 
We-identifi-cation	Interlocutory directionality in communication (according to S.L.Bratchenko). Parity relationships. Normal emotional dependence. Authenticity of each partner’s personal-ity. Tendency to mutual self-expression, development and cooperative creative work; developed reflection. “I-the other centering”	Close, but not breaking the authenticity of the persona-lity.	Identification with the family commu-nity “We”, fully developed “feeling of We”. The partners’ possessing common semantic space.	I the other 

In segmental descriptions of successful relationships in marriage it seems possible to pinpoint several components: 1) objective (from the viewpoint of social norms) success providing the satisfaction of the basic needs of individuals; 2) subjective sensation of relationship success, which does not depend on their objective characteristics; 3) subjective sensation that one has an opportunity of self-actualization in marriage. It is obvious that in this plane success (as well as identity) is viewed not as a group parameter, but as an individual one: it does not cover the marriage in the whole, but characterizes the subjective assessment of the situation by the definite participant of the interaction.

We suppose that models of subjective well-being will be characterized by the prevalence of different components of conjugal success for spouses with different types of identity in marriage.

Pseudo-social identity implies that an individual finds opportunities to satisfy certain psychological needs in the family: demand for security, belonging to a group,

self-affirmation etc. Marriages in which the spouses are characterized by pseudo-social identification, are remarkable for a high degree of cooperation (through role mutual complementation) and cognitive agreement. In our opinion, among the revealed components of well-being it is objective indicators of success that correspond to pseudo-social type of identification processes most of all. At the same time, cooperation and cognitive agreement indispensably suggest mutual subjective satisfaction with the relationships. Thus, the first among the identification types concerned is accompanied by the combination of subjective and objective criteria of success in the subjective model of conjugal well-being, the objective criteria being emphasized.

Pseudo-personal identification determines somewhat different combination of success components. K.A.Abulkhanova-Slavskaya notes that self-expression by means of self-sacrifice often leads to a failure, because the significant Other is often far from reciprocating [quot. 3, p.45]. Indeed, the wish to be voluntarily dependent, concentration of one's all life expectations on the other, full absence of the need for autonomy and other components of pseudo-personal identification may appear a collateral of subjective satisfaction with marriage only in case its stability is guaranteed, i.e. if the second partner also finds an opportunity of satisfying his or her needs in marriage. Thus, in case of pseudo-personal identification the subjective model of well-being indispensably and sufficiently combines in itself subjective (as dominating) and objective (as attendant) signs of relationship success.

Spouses with we-identification are characterized by the emergence of the "I-feeling" and identification of their own "I" with this new formation. Speaking about the formation of common psychological space, "We-space", which presents the result of the interaction of spouses as authentic personalities – equal partners, the researchers traditionally distinguish among other necessary conditions of such formation the urge to mutual self-expression, development and cooperative creative work (S.L.Bratchenko, E.L.Dotsenko, A.A.Kronik and others). It affords ground for suggesting that the subjective model of spouses' well-being with we-identification indispensably contains objective-subjective sign of relationship success – the possibility of self-implementation in marriage.

It is important to underline that two afore-mentioned identification types by definition do not suggest such a possibility. L.A.Korostyleva notes that rigidity of matrimonial relations, their excessive normalization and rigid fixing of family roles (which are largely characteristic of pseudo-social identity), causing resistance to change, impede a person's self-implementation. Moreover, a family with rigid unchangeable structure is considered pathogenic by family psychotherapists; the process of self-implementation in such family is considerably complicated.

Emotional blending, a person's dissolution in the family, inability to get conscious of oneself, to get aware of one's interests and needs, to see them in correlation with other family members' interests and needs also impede the process of self-implementation, as well as rigidity [6]. Researchers share the opinion that self-implementation is impossible if there is some violation of a certain degree of autonomy, authenticity of each partner.

If self-implementation of the partners in marriage is possible only in the case of "we-identification", separate subjective and objective indicators appear to be the criteria of well-being and in this case alongside with the two afore-mentioned.

Summing up the above-said, we should emphasize it once more that well-being in marriage seems to be an integrative characteristic, which presents on the whole the combination of three components: objective, subjective, objective-subjective indicators of relationship success, meanwhile the dominating signs of well-being are different for every time (cf. Table 2).

TABLE 2. The interrelation of identity type and subjective model of a person’s well-being in marriage.

Identity type	Signs of well-being	
	Dominating	Attendant
Pseudo-social identity	objective	subjective
Pseudo-personal identity	subjective	objective
We-identity	Objective- subjective	Objective, subjective

To check the construed theoretical model we made empiric research aimed at revealing the character of interaction between the type of a person’s identity in marriage and his or her subjective model of family well-being. Sample collection consisted of 200 testees aging from 30 to 50, being officially married (100 married couples). The investigation included several stages: 1) specifying the presence of identity in the couple; 2) qualifying the type of identity, 3) revealing the peculiarities of subjective models of conjugal well-being with different types of identity.

On the basis criteria distinguished for each type of identity three experimental groups: spouses with pseudo-social and we-identity. As a result of summing up the experimental data within the groups at the first stage of the investigation basic psychological peculiarities of respondents with different types of identity.

For pseudo-social type the classification features are indicators showing the social basis of relationships – orientation to optimal role interaction and also the absence of emotional unity “We”. The lists produced by the respondents in the process of self-description of their conjugal community most often contained role characteristics (“spouses”, “couple”, “parents”, “sexual partners”, “citizens”, “electors” and others), and also included the evidence of partners’ isolation in marriage (“strangers”, “separated leisure-time”, “different views”...) and emotional segregation (“rivals”, “constant fight”, “not a very happy couple”).

For the type of “We-identity” the classification features were the presence of the semantic unity “We” and optimal psychological distance with the partner, which facilitates the formation of the unity but does not break the autonomy of a person, his or her individuality. Descriptions of the family union by the spouses of such kind contained utterances pointing out at “co-being” (“compatibility”, “empathy”, “agreement of opinions”, “common breathing”...), the presence of the community and realization of its advantages (“one unit”, “team”, “power”, “what is stronger than each of us”...), significance of emotional connection between the partners (“feel each other”, “we’ll overcome everything”...), maintenance of one’s own individuality and the importance of one’s own “I” (“individualities”, “equal partners”, “do not restrict the other’s freedom” and others).

Respondents with pseudo-personal identity are characterized by the medium degree of identity with the conjugal union in view of the fact that for them the identity directly with the leading partner is more usual. Among the definitions given by the testees when describing the unity “We” there were rather typical assertions that either directly or indirectly pointed at one’s dependence on the partner (“we depend on each other”, “head and neck”, “bound with one tie”, “thread following the needle” and so on). Thereby the spouses admit positive emotional background of relationships, confidence, understanding, support.

The next step of the investigation was finding the specificity of family well-being apprehensions among spouses with different types of identity. The results of Marriage Satisfaction Questionnaire (V.V.Stolin, T.L.Romanova, G.P.Butenko) allowed us to assert that the spouses of all the three groups admit full or partial satisfaction with marriage relationships (group PS – 84%, group PP – 90%, group WI – 98%). Thus, the subjective component of well-being in marriage turned out to be not depending on the type of identity. The analysis of the investigation results on the basis of objective indexes of success (conjugal term, having children in marriage, income level, living conditions, harmony in sexual relationships and others) also didn’t show any differences in the groups. It gives us an opportunity to state the presence of subjective success in marriage for the representatives of all types of identity.

For distinguishing the subjective-objective component of well-being we formed a complex methodology that can be used for finding the ideas of self-implementation in the family at the level of values, abilities, role aspects. Together with the subjective assessments of marriage success the observed results give evidence that, as concerns the respondents with We-identification and pseudo-personal identity, their satisfaction with the relationships almost always correlates with self-implementation in the family at the level of values. As concerns spouses with pseudo-social identity, here, alternatively, this or that variant of satisfaction with the relationships is often accompanied by non-implementation of individually significant values in the family. Besides, in the picture of subjective ideas of the respondents concerning the implementation of values in the family space the following regularities are observed: 1) spouses with pseudo-social identity see the level of implementation of the most family values being lower than the level of the demand for them; 2) spouses with we-identity highly estimate the implementation of most values in the family; 3) spouses with pseudo-personal identity tend to admit partial implementation of family values in one’s family, thereby the demand for such values, as “love (Platonic)”, “sense of security”, “common sense”, is estimated much higher than their non-implementation (the authenticity of all differences was confirmed by the formula φ - Fisher’s criterion of angular transformation, $p \leq 0.01$).

Also it was revealed that spouses with we-identification in marriage admit a larger demand for their skills and abilities in the family space than respondent with pseudo-social and pseudo-personal identity (the latter assess the demand for the abilities very low indeed).

According to the opinion of all groups’ representatives, the family facilitates rather than impedes the implementation of most roles preferred by the spouses. However, the number of roles the family helps or can help to implement as well as the number of roles implemented in the family space by the current moment was larger in the group

of testees with we-identity. Probably, they feel the support of the family in the plane of implementing desirable and priority roles to a larger degree than the others. At the same time the spouses with pseudo-social identity's average number of roles the implementation of which is impeded by the family has exceeded the similar index of WI respondents. Role implementation of the spouses with pseudo- personal identity appears to be the intermediate variant (in regard to the other two): its degree is higher than in PS group and lower than in WI group.

Comparing the data on the presence of well-being signs in each group we are coming up to the following conclusions. Probably, for the subjective feeling of well-being in the relationships the spouses with pseudo-social type of identity are comfortable with the awareness of the fact that the family as a social institution performs its basic functions successfully providing the members of the conjugal dyad with an opportunity to implement parents' beliefs, economical well-being, social status, stability, protection, confidence in the future and so on. For the spouses with pseudo-personal identity the following concepts are of great importance: stability of the family, acceptance of the family unity by the partner and an opportunity to implement their personal values in the family space. As for the spouses constructing their relationships in the couple by means of we-identification, the feeling of their own well-being in marriage is likely to be formed against the background of implementing various combinations of possible components of self-implementation in the family space (these components are value component and operational). Thereby the family's performing social functions is also a necessary condition.

Conclusions

Personal identity in a conjugal dyad has its own specificity and suggests differentiating into pseudo-social identity, pseudo-personal identity, we-identity.

The types of identification processes in marriage influence the subjective ideas of spouses concerning the necessary components of the family well-being. Objective, subjective and objective-subjective components of family success in the well-being subjective model of respondents with different types of conjugal identity are presented in different proportion.

Revealed as a result of an empirical investigation peculiarities of assessing family well-being by respondents with different types of identity accord with the subjective models of conjugal well-being of each identification type which we have described on the theoretical level.

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RODINNÉ VZTAHY: INDIVIDUÁLNÍ IDENTIFIKACE

Abstrakt: Tento příspěvek zkoumá variabilitu procesů identifikace v manželské dvojici v korelaci s charakterem vnitřních vztahů v manželském páru, duševní odstup mezi partnery, emoční angažovanost ve vztazích a další parametry. Popisuje typy identit osobnosti v manželství: pseudo-sociální identitu, pseudo-osobní identitu, „my“-identitu. Rovněž uvádí výsledky empirického výzkumu, který potvrzuje teoretické předpoklady, které se týkají souvislosti mezi typem identity a modelem subjektivní prosperity manželství. Příspěvek dokládá, že typy procesů identifikace v manželství ovlivňují subjektivní pojetí utváření manželské prosperity manželských partnerů. Popisuje proměnlivou kombinaci objektivního, subjektivního a objektivního-subjektivního utváření úspěšného manželství v subjektivním modelu prosperity mezi respondenty s různými typy manželské identity rozlišenými v rámci této studie, které odpovídají teoretickým předpokladům modelů subjektivního úspěchu manželství pro každý typ identifikace v manželství.

Klíčová slova: subjektivní prosperita/pohoda v manželství, identifikace, osobnost v manželství, typy identity, identita v manželských párech, „My“-identita, pseudo-osobní identita