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THE PHENOMENON OF VITALITY. RESEARCH OF METHODS OF INCREASING VITAL ENERGY

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Abstract. *A theoretical analysis of subjective vitality as a psychological phenomenon has been presented, its features were highlighted in terms of different interpretations. The psychological and physiological factors of increasing vital energy have been analyzed and the reasons for its exhaustion were considered. An analysis of the empirical research of the psychological features of subjective well-being among representatives of the practice of yoga and parachuting has been presented. The mechanism of influence of the researched types of activity on the level of human vital energy has been substantiated.*

Keywords: *vitality, vital energy, personal potential, subjective well-being, yoga, meditation, parachuting, extreme.*

Introduction. The development of modern society has reached an extremely high level of development in the field of information technologies and material production. The modern pace of life and constant stress contribute to the exhaustion of a person's internal energy reserve. More and more people are looking for ways to obtain resources and increase the level of vitality. For this purpose, people are engaged in various types of activities that provide internal resources, relieve stress, and contribute to the maintenance of adequate "energy supply" necessary for the realization of manifestations of their vital activities.

Vitality is defined as the subjective experience of having physical and mental energy. With a

high level of vitality, a person feels that he/she is full of enthusiasm and vitality. Thus, vitality is associated with a feeling of power, strong positive experiences and calm energy.

The concept of subjective vitality was introduced into psychology by R. Ryan and C. Frederick. They define vitality as a person's conscious experience of being full of energy and life and consider it as a reflection of a person's physical and psychological well-being. This is a phenomenologically based criterion, the content of which differs from external indicators of well-being, such as success, health, social support and personal achievements (Ryan, 2015).

In foreign and domestic psychology, subjective vitality was denoted by such concepts as will, "Ego" strength, internal support, locus of control, action orientation, will to meaning, etc.

S. Freud invented and described the economic model of vitality, according to which mental energy was defined as a limited resource. The author claimed that spending energy on psychological defenses significantly exhausts a person, which negatively affects the level of subjective well-being.

Representatives of the Eastern tradition understood vitality as an active internal force that supports mental and physical health and requires a person's careful and effective attitude towards it in order to reach the optimal limit of its existence (Belik, 2017). Most models indicate that increased subjective well-being should be accompanied by a high level of independence and integrity or self-actualization (Ryan, 2011).

Research, which is presented by the results of a series of empirical studies, significantly expands the concept of subjective vitality and proves that it has an important role in the process of overcoming difficult life circumstances, in the development of a person, being not only a measure of psychological well-being, but also a full-fledged personal resource that reflects various aspects of personal potential (Kuzikova, 2022; Tunçkol, 2015; Yazıcı, 2021).

The level of subjective vitality can be influenced by other factors, such as love and closeness between people, with which the need for belonging is closely related. People of all ages are more resilient to stress and live more fulfilled lives with less psychological distress when they have significant others with whom a close connection is established in the form of love and affection (Uysal, 2016; Sivaramakrishnan, 2019).

Subjective vitality is recognized as an indicator of the psychological well-being of a person. This energy correlates not only and not so much with a person's physical condition, but with his/her psychological well-being. Self-determination (autonomy), competence (mastery) are defined as conditions that contribute to healthy development and strengthening of subjective vitality, because due to the ability to choose and have a choice (self-determination), a person acts not on the basis of obligations or compulsions, but on the basis of awareness his/her needs.

Methodology and methods. 270 respondents aged 22 to 50 took part in the research, among

them 90 representatives of yoga practice, 90 representatives of parachute sports and 90 respondents of the control group. Empirical research was carried out on the basis of: Yoga Studio “Symmetry” and Yoga and Music Festival “Avatar”; AC “Avia-Soyuz”, “Mayske”.

To achieve the purpose of the research, a set of methods was applied: methods of system analysis, methods of causal analysis, methods of comparative analysis, methods of direct structural analysis. From the group of empirical methods: psychodiagnostic method (tests); from the group of methods of data analysis (processing): qualitative and quantitative analysis of the obtained results, methods of computer processing of experimental data. The following methodological toolkit was selected: The Subjective Vitality Scale (SVS: Ryan & Frederick).

The results. The results of an empirical research of the level of subjective vitality as a condition show that among parachutists the most pronounced levels of this indicator are high (42%) and average (38%), while 20% of the respondents of the mentioned sample demonstrate a low level of vitality. As for representatives of yoga, most of the participants have a high level of vital energy (51%), 40% of the subjects have average indicators, and only 2% of representatives of yoga demonstrate a low level of vitality as a condition.

During our research, we compared the results of the two samples described above with the results of a control group that does not engage in similar activities and obtained the following result: the largest percentage of respondents (39%) had an average level of the studied indicator, 31% had a high level, and 30% of the subjects were diagnosed with low level of vitality as a condition.

So, the most favorable results are shown by the representatives of yoga, among whom there are almost no respondents who, at the time of the research, feel a very limited volume of vital energy, loss of strength and expressed reluctance to act. At that time, among parachutists there are slightly more respondents with such results, but in this sample, indicators that show fullness of energy, enthusiasm and readiness for action also prevail.

Instead, the results of the control group turned out to be the least positive, showing the lowest percentage of high vitality scores and the highest percentage of low vitality among the three samples. This definitely indicates that activities such as parachuting and yoga have a direct effect on the level of vital energy and its components. But, we assume, the sources of energy production in the researched types of sports activities are oppositely different.

Investigating dispositional subjective vitality, which is the level of vital energy which is characteristic of a person throughout life and is more a character trait than a condition, we obtained a somewhat similar result (see Fig. 1).

However, comparing the results of the research of subjective vitality as a state and dispositional vitality as a character trait, it can be seen that the results of all three samples in the second part are more positive, but the yoga representatives still show the most favorable indicators,

and the control group shows the lowest results.

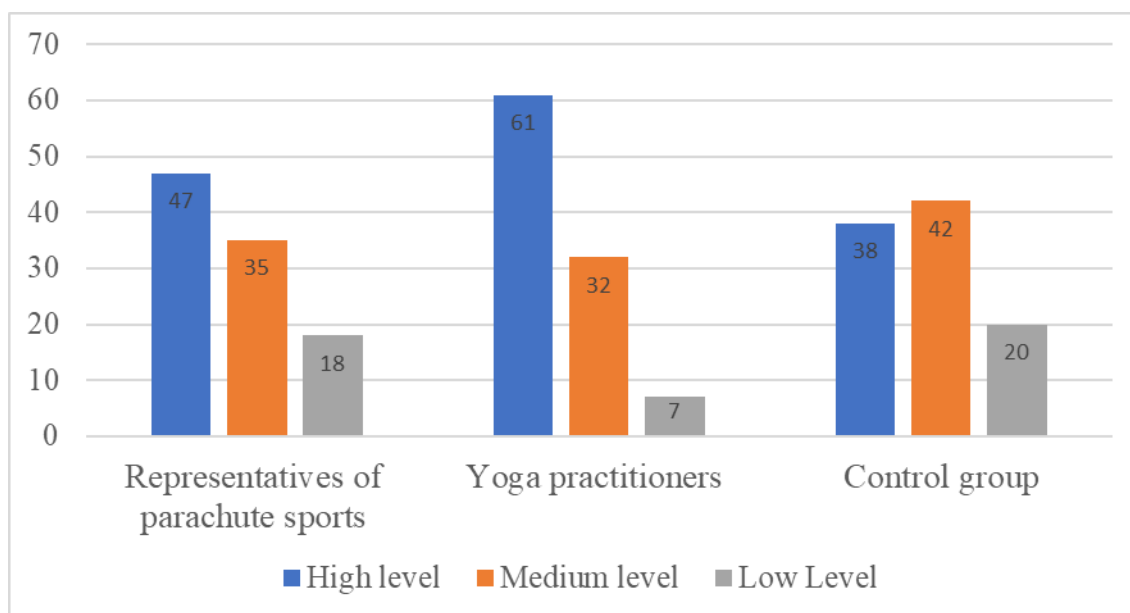


Fig. 1. Indicators of dispositional subjective vitality in representatives of various sports activities

The high results obtained by yoga representatives are explained by several factors. Respondents of the research were people who practice yoga 3 times a week for one and a half hours. Yoga is a universal system of self-discovery and spiritual development, the practice of which includes regular physical exercises with the performance of special exercises that normalize all body processes and lead to physical and psychological health (Boyko, 2008).

Pranayama is the fourth degree of yoga. Pranayama refers to the performance of various cleaning breathing exercises and the practice of holding the breath. Prana is a dynamic energy that provides the forces necessary for the human body to work (Iyengar, 2014).

It should be noted that psychology and physiology also indicate the therapeutic effect of various breathing techniques. That is, if we focus on inhaling while breathing, we get excited, and if we exhale, we calm down and relax (Lowen, 2015).

So, by associating breathing with energy, yoga teaches how to control it, how to raise it, calm it down and regulate it. Regular breathing in tandem with exercise and a healthy diet leads to an increase in vitality. Pranayama techniques provide an amazing relaxing or toning effect, which is achieved by activating the work of the parasympathetic or sympathetic nervous system. In our opinion, such a psychotherapeutic effect of yoga contributes to the increase of human energy in connection with the fact that it provides an opportunity to live and work through repressed emotions, which in turn are associated with the exhaustion of vitality (Bleicher, 1996).

As a result of the research of the vitality of representatives of parachuting sports, quite positive indicators were also obtained, which are significantly different from the results of the control group. We noted that the sources of energy of yogis and representatives of parachuting

sports are different, because yogis draw it from the inside, and representatives of parachuting sports find it outside. We consider it necessary to explain the mechanism of increasing vitality in representatives of parachuting sports.

In our opinion, the level of internal energy among the respondents of this sample increases due to increasing the adrenaline hormone in the blood. Adrenaline is a molecule that our body releases in situations of anxiety or stress. The actions of adrenaline are aimed at realizing a specific purpose: to promote energy production, to help us act and react quickly, to prepare our body for maximum productivity. In addition to adrenaline, dopamine is also released during extreme parachuting activities. The release of dopamine by neurons activates it and gives a person a sense of pleasure, lifts the mood (Lowen, 2015).

In our opinion, the obtained research results are due to the fact that parachuting changes a person's self-attitude and self-esteem. This sport involves competitions that are necessarily held in teams. The taste of victory and the feeling of being important, being part of a team, affects the sense of self-worth and success. In addition, a person who engages in such activities is constantly in a significant group of people and feels a sense of belonging to it, which also applies to representatives of yoga. Doing what you love, communicating with like-minded people and the taste of victory increase the level of vital energy.

Comparing the obtained result with the indicators of yoga representatives, we consider that increased vitality is also related to the experience of emotions by parachutists. After all, parachuting does not provide an opportunity for the human psyche to displace emotions, the individual meets the emotion directly, experiencing it, as a result of which it releases the energy that was previously used to suppress unpleasant emotions. At the same time, yoga stimulates the feeling of those emotions that have been displaced by the psyche, but with the help of physical exercises and breathing.

To maintain a high level of life energy of parachutists, there must be regularity of sports parachuting activities. But, as we know, in our climate this is not possible due to cold weather. Therefore, we have an assumption that the level of vital energy at the beginning and at the end of the season will differ among parachutists. The parachute season starts in April-May and ends in October-November. The first stage of the research was the period when parachutists make many jumps every weekend, and the second stage was the period when the frequency of jumps is rapidly declining. The results of the level of subjective vitality as a condition of parachutists at the beginning and at the end of the season are presented below (see Fig. 2).

As a result of the conducted research, we confirmed our assumption that the level of vital energy of parachutists changes from the beginning to the end of the season. At the beginning of the season a high level of vital energy is demonstrated by 55% of respondents, but at the end of the

season already 39%, while a low level of vitality, which is characterized by a decline in strength, increased from 11% to 25%.

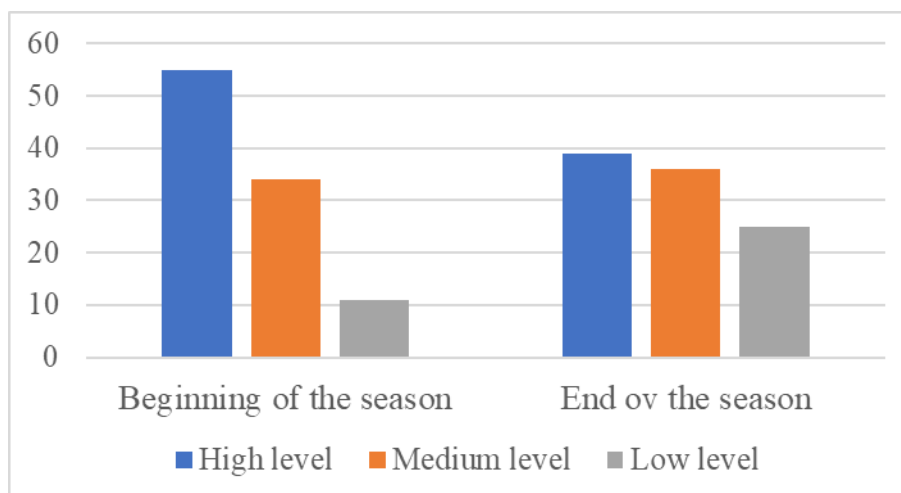


Fig. 2. The level of subjective vitality as a condition of representatives of parachute sports at the beginning and at the end of the jumping season

So, receiving a lot of emotions, provoking the release of adrenaline and dopamine hormones, the parachutist significantly increases the level of subjective vitality, but after the jumps, the level of vital energy gradually decreases. It should be noted that most people who practice this sport, after the end of the parachute season, engage in winter activities such as skiing and snowboarding, which allows them to maintain vital energy levels at an optimal level.

Having researched the psychological features of the vitality phenomenon, we have developed recommendations for increasing person's internal energy and achieving psychological vitality.

The basis of maintaining the proper level of internal resources is primarily work with the body and its health. A person should regularly do sports, eat healthy food, get a good night's sleep and drink clean water. The duration and quality of our life is related precisely to training and endurance of our body. Regular exercise is the easiest way to increase vital energy. Hobbies, learning new types of activity, communicating with a significant group and receiving new experiences are also effective ways to increase the level of vital energy. We recommend breathing exercises to increase the level of internal energy, which are borrowed from the practice of yoga or body-oriented psychotherapy.

Conclusions. A comparative analysis of the obtained results with the indicators of the control group indicates a direct positive effect of the practice of yoga and parachuting on the general level of vital energy of the person. It was determined that the level of subjective vitality of parachutists at the end of the jump season significantly decreases.

After analyzing the obtained data, we came to the conclusion that the basis of maintaining the proper level of internal resources is primarily work with the body and healthy feeling of emotions.

Low level of activity, suppression of emotional reactions and stress deplete a person's energy reserves. In addition, hobbies, mastering new types of activity, communication with a significant group and receiving new experiences are also effective ways to increase the level of subjective vitality.

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