

**THE INFLUENCE  
OF DOMINATING ASPIRATIONS ON WELL-BEING WITHIN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY**

Self-determination theory has evolved over the past 30 years from psychological research done by Edward L. Deci, Richard M. Ryan, and their collaborators from around the world. Names Deci and Ryan are practically unknown in our country though their research has become classic in the Western scientific literature. No research is translated into Russian so far.

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human motivation concerned with the development and functioning of personality within social contexts. The theory focuses on the degree to which human behaviors are volitional or self-determined - that is, the degree to which people endorse their actions at the highest level of reflection and engage in the actions with a full sense of choice

Within SDT, the nutrients for healthy development and functioning are specified using the concept of basic psychological needs, which are innate, universal, and essential for health and well-being. That is, basic psychological needs are a natural aspect of human beings that apply to all people, regardless of gender, group, or culture. To the extent that the needs are ongoingly satisfied people will function effectively and develop in a healthy way, but to the extent that they are thwarted, people will show evidence of ill-being and non-optimal functioning. The darker sides of human behavior and experience are understood in terms of basic needs having been thwarted.

Further, for an example, I shall speak about one of the studies which has been lead by Tim Kasser and Richard M. Ryan within SDT. The study is described in the article "A dark side of the American dream: correlates of financial success as a central life aspiration".

Financial success has long been a core component of the American dream, and many of the values modeled and encouraged by modern society suggest that success and happiness depend on procuring monetary wealth (Derber, 1979). Aspiring for financial success is an important aspect of capitalist cultures. Yet folklore and table side discussion often suggest that a darker side lurks behind the American dream. Pursuing material wealth is sometimes viewed as empty or shallow and as precluding investment in one's family and friends, self-actualization, and contributions to the community.

The current study specifically focuses on the relative centrality of financial success in comparison with other life domains. It predicted that having the goal of financial success per se would not be associated with psychological outcomes. Rather, it expected that individuals who aspire toward financial success more than other life domains will evidence negative outcomes. Specifically, people who value or expect to attain financial success more than affiliation, community feeling, or self-acceptance are predicted to have negative profiles on variables associated with psychological adjustment. Additionally, such individuals will be more likely to evidence a control orientation than will those who espouse less centrality for financial success within their system of goals. Financial success was investigated as an aspiration or life goal that may be negatively associated with psychological adjustment when it predominates over other life goals. Theorists such as Rogers, Maslow, Fromm, and Deci and Ryan implied that when goals regarding extrinsic rewards or the contingent approval of others are more central to an individual than are goals concerning intrinsic actualizing tendencies, lower well-being and greater distress may occur.

Three studies examine the hypothesis that values and expectancies for wealth and money are negatively associated with adjustment and well-being when they are more central to an individual than other self-relevant values and expectancies. Studies 1 and 2 use 2 methods to show that the relative centrality of money-related values and expectancies is negatively related to college students' well-being and mental health. Study 3, using a heterogeneous noncollege sample, extends these findings by showing

that a high centrality of aspirations for financial success is associated with interview ratings of lower global adjustment and social productivity and more behavioral disorders.

The relative strength of aspirations for self-acceptance and community feeling were generally associated with greater self-actualization and vitality, whereas an emphasis on financial success aspirations was related to lower psychological adjustment. Similarly, expectancies of attaining financial success predicted more negative outcomes on self-actualization and vitality when overall expectancy levels were controlled. Furthermore, people who held financial success as a more central aspiration than other domains showed a greater tendency to be control oriented. Thus, less adjustment was consistently evidenced for individuals who held financial success as a more central aspiration than self-acceptance, affiliation, or community feeling. Finally, a rank-order methodology used in two studies further demonstrated the deleterious consequences of having money as an important guiding principle in life. One process that could account for the insalubrious effects of financial-success goals is that individuals aspiring for wealth may be more likely to focus on contingent, external goals and fleeting, superficial satisfactions unrelated to inherent needs. Propensities toward relations with others, self-examination, or investment in social concerns may thus be supplanted by materialistic occupations, to the detriment of the self and its development. A related explanation may also be applied: Individuals dispositional high on broad factors such as neuroticism, or those with low security and sense of well-being, may be more prone to view money as a means of self-enhancement.

The idea and methods of this research seemed interesting to me. My scientific research is connected with the studying of teacher's professional alienation. We suppose that domination of some aspirations can be a factor leading to trouble and alienation, producing the negative effect on teachers' professional identity and activity. We can above use the described approach in the scientific work.