

The Illusion of Happiness: A Critical Analysis of Hedonistic Attitudes in the Modern Educational Environment

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ABSTRACT:

The writers examine how the educational experience has become an arena for emotional satisfaction, as opposed to being intellectually demanding; thereby providing an emotionally comfortable atmosphere that is conducive to hedonic attitudes (i.e. prioritizing "pleasure" over learning) within this illusion of happiness. For the first time within this issue, the gender dimension and the aspect of traumatic experience are integrated. It has been proven that in conditions of global instability, hedonistic strategies in education perform the function of a specific psychological defence and coping mechanism. Trauma, whether social, psychological or due to crisis events, promotes the need to locate an "educational safe-space" as a result of which people seek to create an 'illusion of happiness' in order to avoid further re-traumatization. The gender specificities have been analyzed within the context of how each sex maintains the illusion of being at peace: Women primarily utilize emotional labor; and aesthetically enhance their educational experiences. Men on the other hand are more likely to demonstrate their hedonism via either instrumental detachment or escapist behaviors. The authors justify the need to move from a model of 'pedagogical comfort' to a trauma-informed eudaimonic pedagogy that would take into account gender differences in overcoming difficulties and contribute to the formation of true personal resilience.

Keywords: hedonism, educational environment, illusion of happiness, gender aspect, traumatic experience, emotional labour, eudaimonia, psychological defence, academic resilience, consumerism in education.

1. Introduction

The new, evolving educational setting has undergone many positive changes because of the effects of global social and cultural changes and/or negative effects (crisis) on the mental health of all those involved in the educational process. One of the most obvious trends in this area are the changing values and emphasis within the educational system; moving away from an emphasis upon the academic discipline/effort toward providing students with emotional comfort, satisfaction and overall subjective well-being. This particular trend creates a relevant need for studying the hedonistic attitudes in the student population, since it forms a unique approach to understanding how students perceive their educational experiences; as a pleasurable experience versus as an intellectually demanding activity. These changes have created another phenomenon that we will define as "the illusion of happiness" in this research; a situation where students feel psychologically comfortable and satisfied instead of developing themselves cognitively or emotionally through forming stable and long lasting cognitive and value systems.

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it makes it possible to critically assess the outcomes of the hedonic trend in education. On the one hand, this trend has the potential to serve as a compensatory mechanism during unstable periods of time. However, on the other hand, it results in decreased academic persistence, autonomy, and responsibility. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable with regard to social and psychological trauma caused by war, economic crisis, and global crisis. It is in these situations that educational spaces are beginning to take on the role of "safety" that reduces the risk of re-traumatizing students. Rudenko and Tasenko (2024; 2025) have demonstrated that traumatic experience changes how people see their reality and encourages them to seek ways to lower their levels of existential stress. Hedonistic strategies may therefore be viewed as a form of psychological protection against negative and painful experiences.

At the same time, current research indicates that hedonistic practices are not gender neutral. Socio-cultural roles and expectations determine the specifics of their manifestation: women are more often involved in maintaining emotional harmony through the practices of "emotional labor" and aestheticization of the educational process, while men are more likely to use strategies of distancing and escapism. The connections that Tormakhova and Grechkosii (2025), and Scussel et al. (2023) described regarding traumatic experience, consumer attitude, and the changes in culture, allow for consideration of hedonism within "traumatic consumerism." Group identity studies on trauma have shown that collective experiences are a factor in developing adaptive strategies such as education (Levcheniuk et al., 2021; Storozhuk et al., 2023; Nur, 2024). The current research frameworks however separate each one of these issues -- trauma, gender, and consumerism -- leaving an opportunity for integrating them into a unified analytical approach.

The scientific novelty of this study lies in the combination of three analytical dimensions: hedonism, gender, and traumatic experience, for a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of "illusion of happiness" in the educational environment. In the proposed conceptual model, trauma is seen as the cause of the illusion (through psychological defense mechanisms), gender as a factor that determines the form of its manifestation, and critical analysis of hedonism as a tool for identifying its consequences for the educational process.

The purpose of the article is to critically analyze hedonistic attitudes in the modern educational environment through the prism of the "illusion of happiness" and to justify the need to move from the model of pedagogical comfort to trauma-oriented eudemonistic pedagogy. In accordance with this goal, the following basic research assumptions are made:

1. Hedonistic attitudes in education perform the function of psychological protection in the conditions of traumatic experience.

2. Gender differences determine the specifics of the implementation of these attitudes.

3. The dominance of the hedonistic paradigm negatively affects the formation of academic resilience and deep learning.

The research approach is based on an interdisciplinary combination of socio-philosophical analysis, gender studies, and trauma psychology, which allows for a holistic vision of the problem and outlines prospects for its further theoretical and practical understanding.

2. Literature review

Current discussions about the transition of education environments show that researchers are increasingly interested in hedonism, psychological trauma and gender differences related to social behavior. However, at this point, the way in which all of these have been studied is piecemeal; many researchers only study one or two of the factors mentioned above. Therefore, they lack a holistic approach.

One of the main fields for study is criticism of hedonistic approaches to contemporary culture and education. In this approach, hedonisms are seen as a product of general tendencies of consumerism which transform the process of education into a sphere providing services that meet the needs of students. It is also worth mentioning that Predko et al. (2023), and Jong (2020) stressed on connection between traumatic experiences with formation "traumatic consumerism", when pursuit of comfort and avoidance of stress become dominant strategies of behavior. This approach allow us to interpret hedonistic attitudes not just as a cultural phenomenon but also as a response to emergency situations

Another key area of research has been in the psychological trauma process, with an emphasis on how psychological trauma effects cognitive and behavioral processes. A number of researchers have found that traumatic experiences alter the way we perceive our reality, which leads individuals to engage in various types of activities intended to alleviate their current levels of existential stress. Additionally, through the lens of a

phenomenological approach, it has become evident that not only do traumatic events affect the subjective experience of each individual, they transform all of the social practices, inclusive of educational practices, that are experienced by each member of society. Consequently, the hedonic strategies utilized by some students may be viewed as a form of coping behavior that prevents them from becoming re-traumatized.

Studies of collective trauma also emphasize its importance for the formation of group identity and social strategies. Kelly et al. (2020), Holman et al. (2020), and Duane et al. (2020) show that traumatic events affect collective perceptions, values, and behaviors, which in turn affects the functioning of social institutions, including education. As such, we may think of the learning environment as a site where not only do students learn from their teachers, but also where they reproduce those adaptive mechanisms which arise in response to trauma.

While much recent research has focused on the anthropological and cultural aspects of societal transformations, some researchers such as Koval-Mazyuta et al. (2023); Belousova et al. (2021); and Ortiz (2023) focus on what can be called "Smart Culture", which represents the shift towards new ways of interacting; i.e., toward using technology and changing values in order to create a new type of culture. From this perspective, education can be viewed as a dynamic environment where technological innovations, cultural practices and psychological needs intersect.

Additionally, gendered aspects of education have long been studied by scholars in the social sciences and humanities. However, the application of these analyses to the study of hedonic tendencies, and/or past traumatic experiences is uncommon. The role of gender in determining how people respond to and cope with stressors has been extensively researched. Furthermore, many studies have also investigated how gender influences interpersonal interactions. While most of this research has demonstrated that women tend to use emotional support and conciliatory behavioral patterns to deal with others, while men tend to employ distancing coping styles. However, almost all of these

differences have been examined outside of the educational environment, and without regard to whether or not they are related to hedonic orientations.

Therefore, based on our review of relevant literature we may draw at least two general conclusions about the nature of hedonistic behavior within contemporary education. First, hedonism within education is part of larger cultural and consumerist trends.

Secondly, traumatic experience is an important factor that determines the formation of adaptation strategies, including a focus on comfort and avoidance of stress. Third, gender differences determine the specifics of the implementation of these strategies, but their integration into the analysis of educational processes remains insufficient.

Thus, there is a scientific need for an integrated approach that combines the analysis of hedonism, traumatic experience, and gender characteristics within a single theoretical model. It is this combination that allows us to better understand the phenomenon of the “illusion of happiness” in education and outline its implications for the development of the modern educational environment.

3. Methods

The research methodology corresponds to its theoretical and analytical nature and is aimed at a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of hedonistic attitudes in the modern educational environment through the prism of the “illusion of happiness”. Given the goal, a qualitative-interpretive research approach with elements of interdisciplinary analysis was applied, combining socio-philosophical reflection, concepts of trauma psychology and gender studies.

The key concepts of the study were conceptualized as follows: “hedonistic attitudes” are seen as an orientation of the educational process to maximize emotional comfort and minimize intellectual stress; “illusion of happiness” is a construct that reflects the replacement of deep personal development with a superficial experience of well-being; “traumatic

experience” as a set of social, psychological, and crisis influences that form the need for defense mechanisms; “gender dimension” as a system of socio-culturally determined differences in the ways of experiencing and overcoming difficulties.

The research design for this project included an interdisciplinary approach to research methodology. Three interconnected approaches were utilized. First, the research was based on a theoretically/conceptually-based approach. This involved conducting a critical examination of hedonism as it has become the leading philosophy for many aspects of education. Second, the research was based on an interpretative/qualitative approach. Interpretation was used in order to understand how trauma influences individuals' development and use of hedonic strategies. Third, the research was based on a comparative/quantitative approach. A comparison of the quantitative data related to gender differences in hedonic strategy implementation was conducted.

This approach ensures the logical consistency of the study, where trauma explains the causes of the illusion of happiness (as a defense mechanism), gender explains the forms of its manifestation, and critical analysis of hedonism explains its consequences for the educational process.

The study is based on the analysis of contemporary educational discourse, which includes scientific publications, analytical reports, and empirically documented practices of organizing the educational process in conditions of social instability. The analysis includes works that cover the issues of trauma, the transformation of consumer culture, and anthropological changes in modern society.

The criteria for selecting the sources were: relevance to the research topic; modernity (mainly publications of recent years); scientific validity and interdisciplinary nature. Particular attention was paid to studies that reveal the impact of traumatic experience on individual and collective behavioral strategies, as well as works on gender aspects of social practices.

The main research method used is critical discourse analysis, which allows us to identify hidden

meanings, value orientations, and ideological assumptions underlying modern educational practices. The analysis was carried out in several stages:

- identification of key narratives related to the concepts of comfort, well-being and success in education;
- interpretation of these narratives in the context of psychological protection and coping strategies;
- identifying gender differences in the presentation and realization of hedonistic attitudes;
- synthesizing the results within a holistic theoretical model.

To provide for greater analytical reliability, the methodology employed the approach known as methodological triangulation. The approach of methodological triangulation is the combination of the application of multiple theoretical paradigms with the use of more than one type of data source.

This research has an analytical/theoretical/qualitative design and therefore it did not include experimental intervention nor manipulation of variables. This research has an interpretative nature and aims to describe the socio-cultural and psychological mechanisms behind hedonic attitudes in education.

The logic of the study is based on a deductive-inductive approach: from general theoretical positions on hedonism, trauma, and gender to their concretization in the educational context, as well as further generalization of the findings.

The study identifies the following key analytical categories:

- “pedagogical comfort” as an indicator of hedonistic orientation of education;
- “psychological protection” as a functional aspect of hedonism;
- “retraumatization” as a factor determining the need to create a “safe educational space”;

- “emotional labor” and “aestheticization of learning” as forms of implementation of hedonistic strategies in women;

- “distancing” and “escapism” as characteristic strategies of men's behavior.

These categories are used as interpretation tools to systematize and summarize the research material.

The research method used also has some disadvantages such as no quantification of the results found in this study. It is dependent upon the researchers' point of view. However, the multi-disciplinary way that we have analyzed our data will allow us to overcome the disadvantages described above through the amount of theoretical material covered and the level of conceptual understanding achieved with respect to the subject under investigation.

Therefore, the methodology selected provided a means by which we could conduct an in-depth analysis of the “Illusion of Happiness” in Education. In addition, it allowed for integration of trauma-based, gender based, and critical hedonic dimensions into a single analytical structure.

4. Results

An in-depth theoretical and analytical consideration allows us to substantiate that in the context of prolonged social instability (war, economic crises, global uncertainty), the educational environment is undergoing a qualitative transformation, within which its functional purpose is changing. Education is perceived less and less as a space of intellectual challenge and development and more and more as an environment of psychological compensation. In this context, hedonistic attitudes are not just a cultural trend, but an adaptive mechanism that is formed under the influence of traumatic experience.

Trauma, both individual and collective, disrupts the integrity of subjective experience, increases anxiety and reduces tolerance to uncertainty and stress. In response to this, the subjects of the educational process (both students and teachers) tend to look for forms of learning organization that minimize the risk of re-experiencing negative states. It is in this context that the demand for a “safe educational

environment” is formed, where priority is given to emotional comfort, support, and predictability.

It has been established that the “illusion of happiness” in this case serves as a psychological buffer: it allows maintaining a relative stability of the internal state by displacing or smoothing out difficult aspects of the educational process. However, this mechanism is dual in nature. On the one hand, it ensures short-term adaptation and

reduces psycho-emotional stress. On the other hand, it contributes to the formation of unique behavior, a decrease in the ability to overcome difficulties and a gradual reduction in the cognitive depth of education.

Generalization of the results allowed us to identify the key relationships between traumatic experience, hedonistic attitudes, and transformation of the educational environment (Table 1).

Table 1. Interrelationship between traumatic experiences and hedonistic attitudes in education

Component	Characteristic	Functional effect	Educational
Traumatic experiences	Increased anxiety, instability, loss of a sense of security	Development of a need for psychological protection	Changing expectations regarding the educational process
Psychological protection	Avoiding stress, striving for stability	Activation of coping strategies	Reorientation toward comfortable forms of learning
Hedonistic attitudes	Focus on pleasure and minimizing effort	Reducing cognitive load	Simplification of learning content
“The illusion of happiness”	A subjective sense of well-being without deep development	Temporary stabilization of the state	Formation of superficial learning experiences
Educational environment	A “safe learning” space	Support for emotional comfort	Lowering academic expectations

Description: The table shows how traumatic experiences are transformed into hedonic attitudes and how these attitudes affect learning.

While the role of the educator as an intervening factor that creates positive hedonic attitudes during education should be considered independently; the educator will find themselves in a difficult situation when traumatic experiences are on the rise, because they want to create an atmosphere of safety for their students psychologically, but at the same time maintain the traditional academic standards.

Studies have shown that teachers continue to have no choice but to modify their teaching methods based upon the demand for comfort from students. This can manifest itself in reduced evaluation criteria; less rigorous intellectual requirements; increased emotional support; etc. Hedonistic

attitudes, therefore, may be formed both by student expectations “from the bottom” and by pedagogical decision-making “from the top”.

At the same time, this transformation is ambivalent. On the one hand, it helps to maintain students' involvement in the educational process in the face of psychological instability. On the other hand, it creates the risk of creating “low expectations” that limit the development of academic endurance and the ability to overcome difficulties.

To clarify the identified relationships, it is advisable to present a generalized conceptual scheme (Figure 1), which illustrates the mechanism of forming the “illusion of happiness” in education.

The proposed scheme demonstrates the cause-and-effect nature of the phenomenon under study, where trauma is the starting point and the

transformation of the educational process is the end result.

Another important result is the discovery that hedonistic attitudes are not a purely individual reaction, but tend to be institutionalized. Educational practices are gradually adapting to the demand for comfort, which is manifested in the simplification of curricula, lowering of assessment requirements, and an increased role of emotional support and service orientation of education. Thus, individual coping strategies are transforming into systemic characteristics of the educational environment.

At the same time, we would like to stress that this mechanism has not been universally negative. On

one hand, in a short-term perspective, it can have a positive effect as an additional support to stabilize student engagement with learning processes. Nevertheless, on another hand, in a long-term perspective, the predominance of hedonic logic may also lead to an increasing risk of developing academic resilience, critical thinking and overcoming complex intellectual tasks. Thus, the extended analysis confirms that traumatic experience is a key determinant of the formation of the “illusion of happiness” in education, determining both its functional necessity and potential limitations for the development of the modern educational environment.

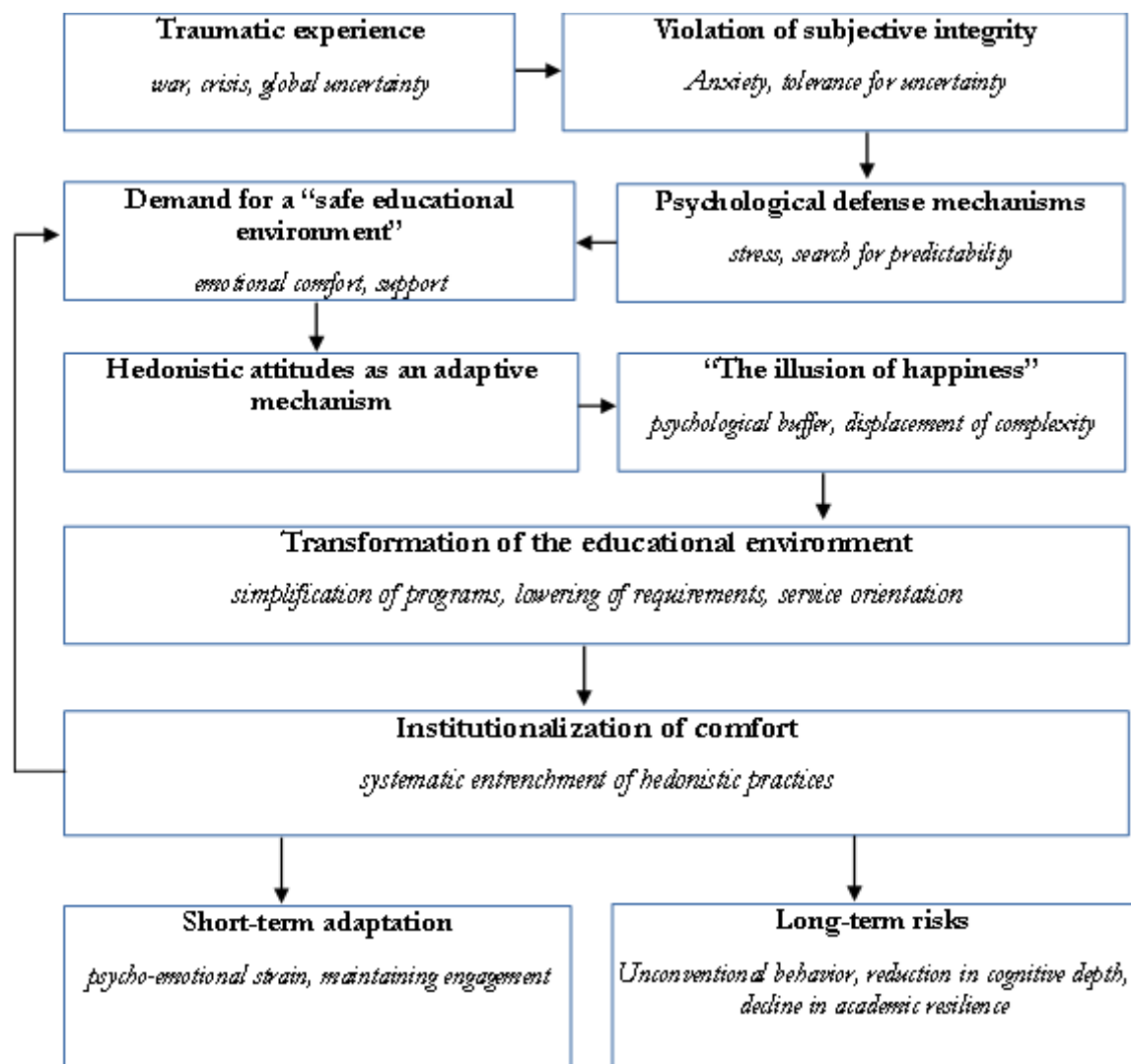


Figure 1. Conceptual scheme of the formation of hedonistic attitudes under the influence of trauma

An in-depth analysis of the gender dimension of hedonistic attitudes reveals not only differences in the forms of their manifestation, but also the underlying socio-cultural mechanisms that determine these differences. In this study, gender is considered not as a biological characteristic, but as a socially constructed system of roles, expectations and practices that determine the ways of experiencing, interpreting and overcoming difficult life situations, in particular in the educational environment.

The results obtained indicate that hedonistic attitudes are a universal phenomenon, but their implementation has a clear gender differentiation. This differentiation is manifested at the level of psychological protection strategies, ways of interacting with the educational environment and the nature of responding to intellectual and emotional challenges. First of all, it has been found that women are more likely to use the strategy of maintaining the "illusion of harmony", which is realized through the mechanisms of emotional labor.

In terms of the educational system, this implies that women will be involved as "the person" who creates and maintains an atmosphere (emotional) of harmony for all students; and as such they will mediate and prevent conflict; and finally create and maintain a mutually supporting relationship with their students. As a result, they tend to want to see how well the various components of the learning process match up with each student's need to feel psychologically comfortable in the classroom. And because they want to make sure every child feels happy in class, they try to make school a pleasant place to go ("aestheticization of learning").

There are two sides to this coin. The good side of the equation is that when women take on these roles in the classroom, they help to create an atmosphere that supports all students -- particularly those students who have experienced trauma. However, if women spend too much time trying to smooth things over, then there is less room to discuss difficult issues or to allow students to experience frustration (which is necessary to learn).

Instead, men's strategies of hedonism are of a different nature and are associated mainly with distancing and escapism. In this case, the "illusion of happiness" is achieved not through the active construction of a comfortable environment, but through a decrease in involvement in it. This can be manifested in a decrease in interest in challenging tasks, avoidance of responsibility, shifting attention to alternative areas of activity, or formal fulfillment of academic requirements.

Such strategies also have a double effect. On the one hand, they help to reduce the level of psychological stress and avoid overloading under stressful conditions. On the other hand, they contribute to the fragmentation of learning experience, a decrease in the level of involvement in the educational process, and the formation of a superficial attitude to knowledge.

The comparative analysis allows us to summarize gender differences in the form of a systemic model (Table 2).

Table 2. Gender peculiarities of hedonistic strategies in education

Parameter	Female strategy	Male strategy
Main mechanism	Emotional labor	Distancing
Way of achieving	Harmonizing the environment	Reduced engagement
Behavioral model	Active support for interaction	Partial or complete avoidance
Cognitive effect	Decreased criticality due to excessive	Fragmentation of thought
Risks	Masking of problems, reduced	Loss of motivation, superficial learning

Description: The table illustrates key differences in the ways hedonistic attitudes are expressed depending on gender.

An important result is that both types of strategies have a common functional basis - they are aimed at reducing psychological stress and maintaining subjective well-being. However, it is the way in which this well-being is achieved that determines

the specifics of their impact on the educational environment.

A further-reaching implication of this study is how sex-specific hedonic orientations are used in developing educational practices at an organizational level. Educational institutions as organizations may develop their own practices to meet the perceived needs of students. As such, they may be creating opportunities to continue and expand upon the same behavioral strategies previously established through gender. Examples include promoting emotional comfort (thereby reinforcing social harmony) and reducing expectations (therefore supporting distance).

The connection between gender-based strategies and experiencing trauma is an important area for research. Instability promotes both the need to seek out or receive emotional support, as well as to avoid

the situation or people involved. Therefore, the presence of trauma will have a greater effect on educational behaviors when there are gender-based differences.

To deepen the analysis, it is advisable to shift the focus from gender differentiation to the pedagogical level and consider the teacher as a key mediator of the formation of hedonistic attitudes. In this context, it is pedagogical strategies that determine whether the “illusion of happiness” will be reproduced or transformed into sustainable educational development.

In order to summarize the results and visualize the mechanisms of formation of hedonistic attitudes, it is advisable to present a conceptual scheme that reflects the role of the teacher as a key mediator between traumatic experience and educational outcomes (Figure 2).

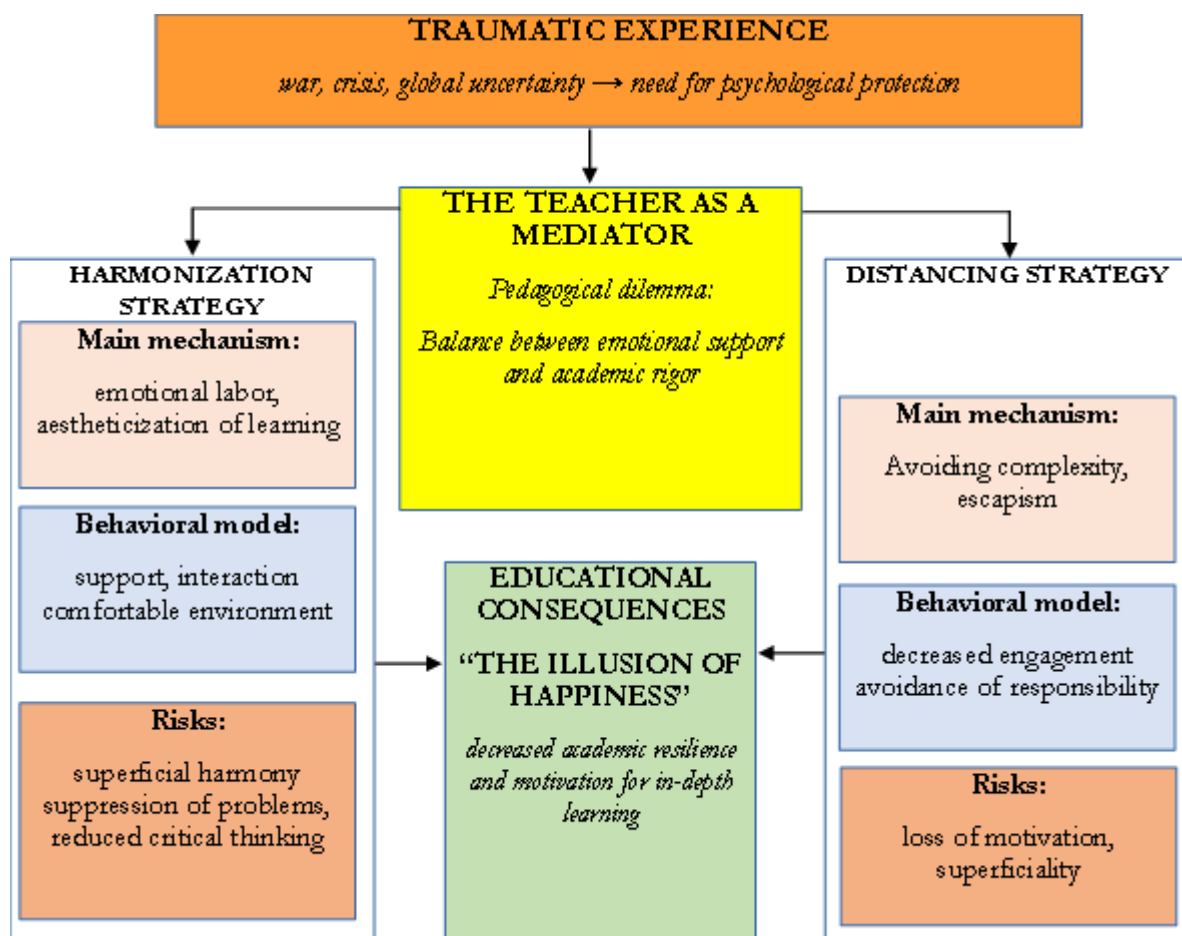


Figure 2. Pedagogical mediation of gendered hedonistic strategies in a traumatized educational environment

The authors have proposed to integrate all three (analytical) dimensions of the research (the traumatic environment; gender-specific behavior models; educational technologies) into one common systemic cause-and-effect relationships. A special emphasis was placed on the pedagogical dilemma arising from the increasing demand for psychological comfort -- simultaneously ensuring student's emotional security, while maintaining high academic standards.

The provided diagram shows how traumatic experience serves as the initial condition forming the desire for psychological protection and creates hedonistic tendencies as an adaptive response to such stress. The teacher has played a central role in creating conditions under which these responses are developed/translated/transformed, as they make choices regarding what pedagogical approaches will be used to develop these attitudes. There are two general gender-specific models for developing psychological comfort -- gender-orientation through emotional work and distance through reducing personal involvement -- and both are able to create shallow knowledge acquisition. This leads to the formation of "illusory happiness" -- providing temporary stability -- and leading to loss of academic resilience and motivation for deep learning. The diagram indicates that there is a need for educators to redirect their pedagogical practice toward finding a balance between promoting psychological well-being and supporting intellectual growth.

In conclusion, we want to emphasize that the consideration of gender is critical in order to understand hedonistic trends in contemporary education. The results clearly indicate the need for transition to trauma-oriented eudaimonic pedagogy, balancing support for psychological well-being with development of coping skills and based on gender specifics of these processes.

5. Discussion

The results obtained allow us to significantly deepen the understanding of the phenomenon of hedonistic attitudes in the modern educational environment and clarify their place in the broader socio-cultural context. First of all, they confirm the

initial assumption that the hedonistic shift in education is not an accidental or purely cultural phenomenon, but has deep psychological prerequisites related to the spread of traumatic experience. Thus, the results of the study are consistent with modern approaches in the psychology of trauma, which consider behavioral and cognitive strategies as adaptive responses to prolonged stress and uncertainty.

A significant theory component was to demonstrate how hedonic attitudes toward education can be viewed as an adaptive or defensive mechanism to manage stress/psycho-emotional overload. Unlike the classic views on hedonism, which describe hedonism as a pursuit of pleasure, we view hedonism as a way to avoid excessive psycho-emotional burden. This provides another perspective on the common criticism of "comfort education" (i.e., it is not simply a form of consumerism, but rather a reaction to the traumatic realities of contemporary society).

At the same time, it was shown that this adaptive function also has clear limits. The "illusion of happiness" created in an educational setting leads to temporary stabilization, but not to the long-term development of the cognitive and personal resources. Thus, these findings confirm the third research hypothesis concerning the negative influence of the dominant position of the hedonic paradigm for academic persistence. The results are consistent with critical perspectives on the concept "consumer education", which see the danger of transforming the pedagogical process into a consumerist orientation focused on pleasure instead of development.

The integration of the gender dimension into the analysis of the phenomenon under study is particularly significant. The findings confirm the second hypothesis and demonstrate that hedonistic strategies are implemented differently depending on gender roles and socio-cultural expectations. Women's strategies related to emotional labor and harmonization of the educational environment can help maintain psychological stability, but at the same time pose a risk of a hidden reduction in critical thinking. The male strategy of distancing, on the contrary, reduces the level of emotional stress

by reducing involvement, which, however, leads to fragmentation of the educational experience.

Thus, gender is not just a variable, but an important moderator of the interaction between traumatic experience and hedonistic attitudes. This allows us to expand on existing theoretical approaches that usually consider these aspects separately and propose an integrative model in which trauma determines the cause, gender determines the form, and hedonism is the functional result of the transformation of the educational environment.

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In this context, the phenomenon of a "pedagogical dilemma" is emerging: the need to simultaneously support students' emotional well-being and ensure their intellectual development. Excessive emphasis on the former leads to a reduction of the content of education, while ignoring the traumatic context can lead to retraumatization.

Thus, the teacher is not only a participant, but also an active constructor of the "illusion of happiness", since it is through his or her pedagogical decisions that the hedonistic paradigm is transmitted or overcome.

From a practical point of view, the results substantiate the need to reorient the educational paradigm. Instead of the "pedagogical comfort" model, it is advisable to implement approaches that combine sensitivity to traumatic experience with a focus on personal development. In this context, the concept of eudemonic pedagogy is promising, focusing not on instant gratification but on achieving deep, meaningful well-being through overcoming difficulties and self-development.

At the same time, there are also some limits to this study's findings. Since the work is theoretically and analytically focused, the proposed hypotheses can be quantitatively tested. Therefore, future research will be conducted that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods (mixed-methods) to measure the extent of hedonic thinking; its connection to traumatic events; and how these are related to student academic success. Additionally, other studies may include an international perspective to determine if these results are universal or if they apply to all countries. Finally, additional research would involve developing actual strategies that schools and educators use to implement Trauma-Informed Eudemonic Pedagogy.

The effectiveness of transitioning to eudemonic pedagogy will largely depend upon the willingness of educators to re-evaluate their roles. The educator must develop skills to provide emotional support while also upholding high standards of scholarship. In addition, the educator must develop teaching strategies which allow students to overcome obstacles as opposed to avoid them.

In conclusion, this research validates the complex and paradoxical state of hedonistic thinking in today's educational system. Hedonism serves as a way to respond to trauma; however, it also represents an obstacle to reaching a full potential of the person. Due to the duality of hedonism (both a reaction to trauma and an impediment to personal development), there is a need for its reflective critique and for the pursuit of pedagogies that represent a balance between the need for emotional support and the necessity for intellectual growth

6. Conclusion

The article provides a comprehensive critical analysis of the phenomenon of hedonistic attitudes in the modern educational environment through the prism of the "illusion of happiness", which allowed to reveal their multidimensional nature and contradictory impact on the educational process. The results confirm that the hedonistic shift in education is not only a consequence of cultural transformations, but also an adaptive response to traumatic experiences that form a demand for a

safe, emotionally comfortable learning environment.

It has been proven that trauma is a key factor in the emergence of the “illusion of happiness” as it activates psychological defense mechanisms aimed at avoiding the re-experiencing of negative experiences. In this context, hedonistic attitudes serve as a coping strategy that ensures the short-term stabilization of the psycho-emotional state of participants in the educational process. At the same time, it has been found that the dominance of such attitudes in the long term leads to a decrease in the level of academic endurance, critical thinking and the ability to deeply absorb knowledge.

Particular attention is paid to the gender dimension of the phenomenon under study. It is found that gender determines the specifics of the implementation of hedonistic strategies: women are more likely to focus on the emotional harmonization of the educational environment through the practices of “emotional labor” and aestheticization of learning, while men are more likely to resort to strategies of distancing and escapism. Thus, gender is an important moderator of the impact of traumatic experience on educational behavior, which emphasizes the need to take it into account in the development of modern pedagogical approaches.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the combination of three analytical dimensions - hedonism, gender and traumatic experience - into a single conceptual model, where trauma explains the reason for the formation of the “illusion of

happiness”, gender determines the forms of its manifestation, and a critical analysis of hedonism allows us to identify its consequences for the educational environment. This integrative approach expands the existing scientific understanding of the transformation of education in the context of global instability.

The practical significance of the results obtained is to justify the need to move from the model of “pedagogical comfort” to trauma-oriented eudemonic pedagogy. This approach involves combining psychological support with the formation of the ability to overcome difficulties, the development of academic resilience and critical thinking, as well as taking into account the gender characteristics of educational interaction.

At the same time, the study has limitations related to its theoretical and analytical nature, which necessitates further empirical verification of the proposed provisions. Prospects for further research are to conduct quantitative and mixed-methods studies, analyze intercultural differences, and develop applied models for the implementation of trauma-informed pedagogical practices in modern education.

To summarize, it should be emphasized that the “illusion of happiness” in education is a complex socio-psychological phenomenon that simultaneously performs an adaptive function and creates risks for the deep development of the individual. That is why its critical reflection is a prerequisite for the formation of an effective, sustainable and humanistic educational system.

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