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PSYCHO-PEDAGOGICAL DIAGNOSTICS OF SENIOR PRESCHOOLERS' GENDER SOCIALIZATION LEVEL

The paper deals with the issue of gender socialization of children, which is considered as a process and a result of general and psychosexual development of a personality, the girl's / boy's individuality according to the age peculiarities of maturation, carried out in the system of relations with adults and peers of both genders. The paper aims to substantiate and identify the levels of gender socialization of children of senior preschool age. The evaluation was carried out according to the following criteria: cognitive, emotional, and value-behavioral. Each criterion included a group of qualitative indicators that identified the content and level of gender socialization of children. A diagnostic technique was developed for identifying the levels of children's gender socialization, which made it possible to differentiate the levels of gender socialization of children quantitatively: sufficient, medium, and low. The experiment involved 80 children of both genders. According to the results of the implementation of a number of diagnostic methods and tasks by children, it has been established that most of the respondents have average and low levels of gender socialization. Thus, the results of the experiment on the examination of the levels of gender socialization of senior preschoolers have shown the need for the development and testing of an experimental program, which is going to be covered in the further studies.

Keywords: *children, gender socialization, diagnostic tasks, methodology, criteria, indicators, levels.*

Introduction

Gender socialization is a relevant pedagogical issue based on education aimed at personality development in general. In modern psychological and pedagogical studies, this issue is of particular relevance, since gender consciousness not only enables the formation of gender behavior and character, but also develops the concept of male and female psychology.

The scientific study of this issue has its own history and peculiarities. From the standpoint of humanistic psychology (Allport, 1998; Maslow, 1970), gender socialization is a process of self-actualizing of one's own potentials and creative abilities, overcoming negative influences of the environment that hinder self-development and self-affirmation according to gender. In this view, a person is a self-evolving system, a product of self-education.

We believe it is reasonable for our study to consider the ideas of the representatives of the subject-subjective approach (Erikson, 1982), T. Parsons (Parsons, 1956) and other scholars, which are based on the fact that a person is the subject of the process of gender socialization, and

he/she not only adapts to the society, but also actively interacts with it. Such an approach involves the passive role of the individual in the process of gender socialization, regards it as a process of adaptation to the environment and culture.

Taking into account the complexity and urgency of the process of gender socialization of preschool age children, the disclosure of the content of the process of gender socialization is of special significance.

Socialization embraces all processes of enculturation, involvement into communication and studying, with the help of which a person obtains social essence and the ability to act like a real member of the society. Primary socialization takes place in the pinafore stage of existence within a family or other close environment; it is related to the formation of general image of reality and mastering certain behavior patterns in different situations with people. Further in the process of primary socialization the correction of the obtained experience takes place (Baliuk, 2015).

Gender socialization is an important component of the overall socialization of the individual, a peculiar so-

cial differentiation between the sexes. Its specificity provides assimilating the cultural system of the society gender by an individual (Horodnova, 2008). Gender socialization depends on the norms, customs, and culture of the respective society, involving systems for differentiating gender roles (gender division of labor, specific gender-role rights, responsibilities of men and women) and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity (Mardakhaiev, 2002).

Gender socialization performs the following functions: social adaptation, which means standardization of language, gestures characteristic of the representatives of a certain gender, perception of gender stereotypes, values, meanings, symbols and inculturation – the assimilation of traditions of the gender culture of the society in order to transfer them to the next generation; the internalization of the individual, which includes the development of a specific hierarchy of motives, values, interests, the formation of a gender identity, the correspondence between the psychological gender and the gender role (Moskalenko, 2008).

Thus, gender socialization (the assimilation of gender norms, patterns and roles) is a result of complex interaction of biological, psychological, cultural and social factors. It involves a lot of intrapersonal and social mechanisms; the process of assimilating social norms, rules, peculiarities of behavior, attitudes in accordance with stereotypes of gender role, its formation and purpose (Kretchmar, 2017).

We consider it necessary to dwell on the analysis of the retrospective psychological and pedagogical aspect of the issue of gender socialization of preschool children.

Gender socialization of preschool children is a process of purposeful interaction and influence on children for the purpose of forming their gender psychology. It includes awareness of one's own gender identity and the related psychosexual and socio-sexual orientation, that is, mastering the psychosocial role corresponding to the moral and aesthetic norms of the human society. This means that gender socialization of preschool children cannot have a spontaneous nature, since it is a socially predetermined process.

The process of gender socialization starts in the early childhood and occurs spontaneously at the initial stages since in the preschool age the reflection of objects or phenomena of the world is carried out at the level of representations. A preschooler thinks clearly, by means of images (Ratsul, 2017). The development of imagination in a child is accompanied by accumulating experience in communicating with peers of both genders, the formation of gender-role behavior. It is possible to distinguish the following periods of gender socialization: primary (from birth to the end of the preschool age – the first period, the second period – from the beginning of schooling to social maturity); and a secondary gender socialization which begins with a period of social maturity and lasts for life.

Gender socialization is the process by which children acquire gender-related knowledge, skills and abilities. The following behavior manifestations are indicative of gender identity of children in the process of gender socialization: the choice of games and toys (playing with dolls vs. cars, transformers, etc.); role-playing preferences during games (wanting to be a mother, a teacher, a nurse or a commander, a spy, etc.); the choice of the environment (preferring peers of one's own or the opposite sex, tend to communicating with male or female adults); choice of activities (prefer to work about the house, "quiet" occupations, or showing interest in technology, dynamic sports that require strength, aggressiveness); the attitude to one's own appearance (the desire to wear women's clothes, to do makeup, or neglecting the appearance, preferring to dress like a boy, etc.); fantasies and dreams (the desire to be like a movie hero of a certain gender); level of satisfaction with a social role (admiring the male or female lifestyle, the desire to change the name or even gender); style of behavior (graceful carriage, timbre of voice, or sharpness, persistence and awkwardness) (Mardahayev, 2002).

Summing up all the above, gender socialization of children is a process and result of general and psychosexual development of a personality, the individuality of a girl / boy in accordance with age peculiarities of maturation, carried out in the system of relationships with adults, peers of both sexes and oneself.

The scientific literature review has shown that the issue is complicated and controversial accumulating scientific knowledge of different areas and requires an experimental study of the determination of the levels of gender socialization in senior preschool age children.

Aim and Tasks

The paper aims to substantiate and examine the levels of gender socialization of senior preschool age children.

Tasks of the research are as follows:

1) on the basis of the scientific sources review, clarify the essence of the "children's gender socialization" concept;

2) to define the structure of senior preschool children's gender socialization, as well as criteria and indicators of its formation;

3) to examine the levels of gender socialization of senior preschoolers.

Research Methods

In order to identify the specifics of gender socialization of senior preschool children, a research was conducted in pre-school institutions No. 12 and No. 25 in Uman, Cherkassy region, Ukraine.

The experiment involved 80 children of senior preschool age who were divided into experimental (EG - 40 children) and control groups (CG - 40 children). The groups were equal in their gender structure.

In accordance with theoretical principles of gender socialization, generalized data on the characteristics of the issue, we have selected the following criteria and indicators of gender socialization of senior preschool age children: cognitive (self-identification as a boy or a girl; so-

cial ideas of representatives of one's and the opposite sex; ideas about gender roles of men and women); emotional (maturity of empathy, emotional stability, interest in the emotional state of communication and ability to control emotions during communication); value-behavioral (to establish contacts with peers of both genders, tolerance, respect for both male and female peers, positive self-perception as a gender representative).

Based on the above criteria and indicators, the following gender socialization levels of senior preschool age children have been distinguished: sufficient, average and low. To each of the defined criteria and indicators of gender socialization corresponding diagnostic methods and special tasks were selected.

The correct selection of diagnostic tools opens up prospects for the development of appropriate effective measures to increase the level of the maturity of the studied characteristics (Sopivnyk, 2017).

In order to examine indicators of the cognitive criterion of gender socialization, the following methods were selected: Self-Image Inventory ("Who am I? Method") by N. Nizhegorodska, and "The Stairs" method.

The "Who am I? Method" was used in the following way: the children were suggested to answer a question who were they, as quickly and spontaneously as possible; as well as to provide an answer who they thought their parents considered them to be. When analyzing the replies, we took into account their subjectivity or objectivity, in other words, if the statement concerned their subjective or objective characteristics. Then the series of answers were compared, and a conclusion about self-concept of a child was made, where special attention was paid to their gender self-identification.

"The Stairs" Method suggested by S. Jacobson, is a variant of the Self-Estimation Technique by Dembo-Rubinstein modified for children. It is based in the drawing of stairs with five steps. The children are given five words – "man", "woman", "girl", "boy", "I", which are to be 'located' on the stairs. Every child is explained that there is the gender (gender role) he/she likes most on the upper step, and the one which is least appreciated – on the lower step.

Based on this method, we have obtained quantitative indicators. If a number of the step, starting from the top, is considered as a corresponding number of points, we can measure a step for every role/gender which was most frequently used by the respondents. This indicator is considered as an arithmetical mean of the number of stairs provided by every child to the suggested gender roles. The sum of these indicators for all roles is considered a convenient pattern of gender ideas of the children.

In order to examine the emotional criterion, we applied the following methods:

- task 1. Learning to understand emotional states of people in the picture.

The respondents are given pictures of children and adults with bright emotions on their faces (joy, happiness, sorrow, fear, etc.).

Every child is interviewed individually, being asked the following questions: "Who is there in the picture? What is he/she doing? How is he/she feeling? How do you know that? Describe the picture, please". Then the correctness of understanding other people's feelings and emotions, as well as perception of peers and adults by a child are evaluated and the number of correct answers is measured.

- task 2 "Studying ways of emotions manifestation" (by A. Kosheliova).

We made up some life stories (for example, children are playing in the yard and a dog suddenly approaches them; everyone had to learn a poem by heart, and a boy/girl has forgotten to do it). Variant 1: children dramatize a situation in front of the child audience and then the spectators are asked about the feelings of the actors; the researcher describes a situation and children are suggested to express its main heroes' emotions: strict teacher's face, laughing children, frightened boy, etc.

If a child cannot or incorrectly expresses an emotion a researcher describes the situation once again and explains hero's feelings to him/her.

In order to examine indicators of the value-behavior criterion, we used a task "Helping a Child of the Opposite Gender".

Every child was given two sheets or papers with uncompleted drawings, and pencils. It covers two stages.

Stage one. A child was proposed to finish a picture, making a choice between a) finish it by oneself, or b) help another child (of another gender) to finish it.

Stage two. A child was suggested to make a choice: to finish a task and to go for a walk/to play with toys, or to help another child (of the opposite gender).

After completing all tasks, we made a conclusion: whether a child helps another one on his/her own initiative or under the adult's pressure. Then we analyzed who was more often provided with help: boys or girls, and by whom.

Besides, we also observed children performing role-playing games, which provided an opportunity to assess the level of positive gender self-perception maturity, the ability to make contacts with peers of both genders, etc.

Research Results

According to the results of the carried out research, we have found out the levels of the respondents' gender socialization maturity according to each criterion. Most of the children of both groups (45% in CG, and 47.5% in EG) have it developed at an average level. The low level was found in 42.5% of the CG respondents and 42.5% of the EG ones. Only 12.5% of the CG and 15% EG respondents have the sufficient level of gender socialization maturity. As a result of interviewing, we have found out that almost half of the children have incomplete or incorrect knowledge about gender roles in a family, and family relations in general (son, father, husband, grandfather, etc.).

The results according to the emotional criterion show that 42.4% of the CG respondents and 40% of the EG

ones have the average level of gender socialization. The low level is observed in 47.5% of the children of the EG and 40% in the CG. The sufficient level was peculiar for 10% of the CG respondents and 15% of the EG ones.

The analysis of the results according to the value-behavior criterion shows that 50% of the children in the CG and 47.5% of the EG respondents have the low level of gender socialization. The sufficient level is peculiar for 12.5% of CG and 10% of EG respondents. The average

level is characteristic of 45% of the CG respondents and 37.5% of the EG ones.

Therefore, based on the research outcomes, it is clear that more than half of the children have the average level of gender socialization. The low level is peculiar for 47.5% CG and 45% EG preschoolers. The sufficient level was found in 12.5% of the respondents in the CG and 10% of the children in the EG (see table 1).

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents According to the Levels of Gender Socialization (%)

Levels of gender socialization of senior preschoolers	EG		CG	
	Number of children	%	Number of children	%
Sufficient level	4	10	5	12.5
Average level	18	45	16	40
Low level	18	45	19	47.5
Total	40	100	40	100

As we can see, the results almost do not differ in two groups of the respondents. Thus, the difference between the control and experimental groups concerning the low level is 2.5%, the average level – 5%, and the sufficient level – 2.5%.

Taking into account the obtained results, we have found that a sufficient level of gender socialization is characteristic of the senior preschool age children, who show interest in the emotional states of others, are capable of empathy towards other people of both genders, consider themselves as representatives of their gender, have an idea of the representatives of their and the opposite genders, are able to make contacts with peers of both genders, show tolerance, and respect to them (10% in the EG, 12.5% in the CG).

The average level is characteristic of children who do not always manifest interest to the representatives of the opposite gender, notice emotional states of others and react only according to adult's piece of advice, have unclear perceptions of the representatives of the opposite gender; they are sociable though not always can make contacts with other children; not always accept social norms and rules of conduct; are not always tolerant, and prefer communicating with peers of the same gender (40% in the EG, 45% in the CG).

The low level of gender socialization is peculiar for senior preschoolers having poor knowledge about the representatives of the opposite gender, who notice emotional states of others only with the help of an adult, who have incorrect understanding of gender roles in a family, are not sociable, etc. (45% in the EG, 47.5% in the CG).

Conclusions

Gender socialization of senior preschool age children is a result of assimilation of ideas about moral norms of interaction of different genders in the society, comprehension of female and male behavior patterns, their adoption and guidance in choosing behavior strategies.

The following criteria of gender socialization of children of senior preschool age have been distinguished: cognitive, emotional, value-behavioral with corresponding indicators. On the basis of the conducted research, the levels of gender socialization of the respondents have been selected: sufficient, average and low. It has been found that most of the respondents have average and low levels of gender socialization.

Further research studies are going to cover the designing and verification of the experimental technique of senior preschoolers' gender socialization, which would reflect the aim, pedagogical conditions and methodological support of the educational process in terms of the issue.

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ПСИХОЛОГО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНА ДІАГНОСТИКА РІВНЯ ГЕНДЕРНОЇ СОЦІАЛІЗОВАНОСТІ ДІТЕЙ

У статті досліджено та доведено актуальність питання гендерної соціалізації дітей. Гендерна соціалізація дітей – процес і результат загального й психосексуального розвитку особистості, індивідуальності дівчинки/хлопчика відповідно до вікових особливостей дорослішання, в реальній життєдіяльності, що здійснюється в системі взаємин із дорослими, однолітками своєї й протилежної статі та самим собою. Мета статті – на основі узагальнення теоретичних та практичних засад гендерної соціалізації обґрунтувати та виявити рівні гендерної соціалізованості дітей. Оцінка проводилася за такими критеріями: пізнавальний, емоційний, ціннісно-поведінковий. Кожен критерій включав групу якісних показників, які виявляли зміст та рівень гендерної соціалізованості дітей. Було розроблено діагностувальну методику виявлення рівнів гендерної соціалізованості дітей, що дало можливість кількісно диференціювати рівні гендерної соціалізованості дітей: достатній, середній, низький. Експериментом було охоплено 80 дітей різної статі. Експеримент проводився в три етапи. Відповідно до результатів виконання дітьми ряду діагностувальних методик та завдань було встановлено, що респонденти перебувають здебільшого на середньому та низькому рівнях гендерної соціалізованості. Таким чином, результати експерименту щодо виявлення рівнів гендерної соціалізованості дітей засвідчили необхідність розробки та апробації експериментальної методики гендерної соціалізації дітей, що і становить перспективу подальших наукових розвідок.

Ключові слова: діти, гендерна соціалізація, гендерна соціалізованість, діагностувальні завдання, методика, критерії, показники, рівні.

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