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PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF FEMALE STUDENTS' GENDER IDENTITY

The paper presents the results of an empirical study of psychological features of female students' gender identity. The majority of the students have difficulties in attributing themselves to a particular psychological gender, as neutral characteristics prevail in them. The higher level of uncertainty of gender identity in the students, the lower their awareness of social roles. If the students lack knowledge about social roles, they are indecisive, cannot choose something specific, which in turn makes them insecure, which affects their social life and educational activity.
Keywords: psychological features, gender identity, students, psychological gender, uncertainty of personality.

Introduction

Ambitiousness, independence, activity, aspiration for achievements were unacceptable for a woman in the patriarchal environment, which nowadays are considered to be quite common.

The concept of identity is one of central in modern psychological science, which we interpret as a complex phenomenon, psychic reality, which includes different levels of consciousness – individual and collective ones. Identity is a sense of one's own veritas, value, engagement in the world and connection with other people. We consider it in the context of personality development in adolescence, professional self-determination, ethnic and ideological self-awareness (Erikson, 2006).

Identity occurs in a person in the process of social interaction as an inevitable and always unique product of one's psychical development, as relatively stable and subjected to internal fluctuations and changes in the psychological heritage at the same time. It imposes a significant imprint for the whole life manifestation of a person - from the very childhood to the very old age.

Gender identity is defined by a number of researchers as the basic structure of social identity that characterizes a person from the point of view of belonging to a male or female group. It is important how a person determines oneself. The concept of gender identity includes interconnected components: gender, sexual orientation, "sexual scenarios", gender stereotypes and gender preference.

Female identity is belonging oneself to the category of female social group and the reproduction of the corresponding gender-driven roles and self-representations. The construction of female identity is directly associated with the specific "female experience" received by a girl in the process of socializing in the childhood. While forming of a gender-normalized method, institutions of socialization are very important (such as family, mass-medias that follow gender stereotypes). Identity, including professional, is an important regulator of self-awareness and social behavior of a person.

Therefore, we evaluate ourselves and others based on our ideas of what men and women should be. Comparing own representations with the generally accepted ones plays an important role in the psychological well-being of the individual. Each person has a lot of psychological features, and some of them are "without any gender", universal, and some traits are traditionally associated with typically male or female psychology. Some typical male or female features have their evolutionary-genetic and physiological grounds, preconditions. For example, the level of aggressiveness and dominance (that are considered as typical male features) correlates with the level of concentration of male gender hormones – androgens. Other features are formed in the process of socialization, education and development of a personality. It is known that there are social stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Although the acquisition of one or another typical male or typically female psychological feature occurs as a result of the combined effect of both groups of factors – the biological and social order. In this context, the psychological gender is radically different from the assigned sex. The following three basic concepts related to the phenomenon of psychological gender are worth considering: masculinity (typically male features), femininity (typical female features), androgyny (it is assumed that these features are presented harmoniously and complementary to androgynous).

Masculine women are focused on work and career issues. Self-determination in the professional sphere is a priority, it is crucial for them in terms of self-fulfillment.

Typically masculine traits – independence, assertiveness, dominance, risk appetite, autonomy, self-confidence, etc. – are a necessary attribute of competitiveness in the modern labor market. In addition, according to the results of modern studies, masculine women are characterized by greater self-esteem as a whole, as well as higher self-esteem in the field of academic achievements and their own appearance – physical "Self" (Zdravomyslova, 1999).

Femininity is directly related to family identity, gender identity and the general status of identity of the individual. Femininity is a property of the individual, which corresponds to her own psychological gender, adhering to the female gender-role norms, typical of a woman's behavior, values, and attitudes. Femininity is traditionally associated with emotionality, softness, responsiveness, normativity, communicative skills, sensitivity, and ability to empathy. The feminine woman is considered more realistic, practical, vulnerable, direct and passive, as compared to a woman with less definitely dominating femininity. Expressed femininity implies the predominance of the unconscious level of self-regulation, the tendency for intuitive comprehension of reality, a clear parenting orientation (Zdravomyslova, 1999).

Modern society puts less tough requirements for the girls' behavior of that for the boys' one. However, the lower value of "the feminine" in the society complicates the development of girls' positive self-concept, causing problems in creating a woman's identity, especially if the girl has high social leadership qualities. Today, we can observe such changes in the characters of women as the desire to be a leader, they have become more tough, strong-willed, striving for power. The system of values itself is changing – now career is often considered to be more important than a family. Many professions that were previously not available to women are not unaccepted now. We can see women in world-class sports (bodybuilding, boxing), troops, politics, law enforcement agencies. Modern girls prefer oversized clothes, wear pants instead of skirts and dresses. Also the unisex style is popular nowadays characterized by the complete absence of signs indicating the person's sex.

These changes have not only broken the stereotypical image of women but also resulted in a fact that women do not identify themselves with female gender.

Aim and Tasks

The paper aims to examine psychological features of female students' identity with different gender characteristics.

We solved the following tasks to achieve the research aim:

1) determining basic approaches to the study of gender identity of students based on identity and gender peculiarities issues review;

2) developing a program and conducting an empirical study on the identification of gender identity of female students.

Research Methods

The following research methods were used in the study: test-questionnaire "Who am I?" by M. Kuhn and T. McPartland, "Masculinity – Femininity Test" by S. Bem); statistical methods of data processing: correlation analysis of the obtained results using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient; Mann-Whitney U test; and Fisher transformation.

Test-questionnaire "Masculinity – Femininity" by S. Bem is used to examine a psychological gender and determines the degree of androgyny, masculinity and femininity of the individual, to determine the type of personality: masculine, feminine, androgyne (Bem, 1981).

Test-questionnaire "Who am I?" (Twenty Statements Test) by M. Kuhn and T. McParland is used to reveal the role of gender characteristics in the self-concept structure, as well as to study the content characteristics of the individual's identity. The question "Who am I?" is logically related to the characteristics of one's own perception of oneself, that is, "self-image". Answering this question, one indicates roles and characteristics associating with oneself, that is, a social status and the features (Bespanskaya-Pavlenko, 2013).

100 female students of the third-fourth years of study aged from 19 to 22 took part in the research.

Research Results

Having analyzed the results of "Masculinity – Femininity" Test we have found that 12% of students have expressed femininity, and 8% have expressed masculinity. Other 80% of female students have pronounced androgyny. It means that they have approximately equal significance of the results of femininity and masculinity. Of these 80% of the students, 53% are androgynous, but feminine characteristics are dominated by masculine, and in 19% masculine characteristics outweighed feminine. 8% have pronounced androgyny, that is, they do not have the advantage of feminine or masculine characteristics.

According to M. Kuhn's test it was found that only 7% of the students had no difficulty in determining their psychological gender. It means that they clearly understand it and their behavior and self-awareness coincides with this gender. But 93% of the girls, which are significantly more than those 7% who have been identified ($\varphi * = 5.28$ at $p<0.01$), have difficulty referring to a specific psychological gender. Of these 93% of the students, 31% have a predominance of feminine characteristics and family roles, and 36% have a predominance masculine characteristics and professional roles. 26% of the students could not provide answers that would indicate the specific gender characteristics and roles.

After that, the correlation analysis of the obtained results using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was performed. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Statistically Significant Interrelationships Between the Indicators of Gender Characteristics

Index	P1	P2	P3	P7	P8
P1			-0.716**	-0.251*	0.194*
P2			0.533**		
P3	-0.716**	0.533**		0.203*	-0.216*

Notes: 1. Symbols: P1 – masculinity; P2 – femininity; P3 – IS index; P7 –feminine characteristics; P8 – masculine characteristics.
2. There are statistically significant correlations (levels of statistical reliability: * – p <0,05; ** – p <0,01).

Here we can see the inverse correlation between the index P1 (masculinity) with the index P7 – the feminine characteristics (r = -0.256; p = 0.012) and the direct correlation with the index P8 – masculine characteristics (r = 0.194; p = 0.053).

So, the index P3 – the index of gender identity of the IS has direct correlations with the index P2 – femininity (r = 0.533; p = 0.000) and P7 – feminine characteristics in the content of the Self-concept (r = 0.203; p = 0.043), as well as inverse correlations with index P1 – masculinity (r = -0.716; p = 0.000) and P8 – masculine characteristics in the content of the Self-concept (r = -0,216; p = 0,031). Despite the fact most of all examinees are androgynous (80% vs. 20% and respectively φ * = 5.15 at p <0.01), the tendency of students to feminine identity is revealed both at the level of stereotypes, and at the level of perceptions of oneself as a subject of social relations in a world divided into men and women. But P2 index (femininity) does not have a statistically significant correlation with P7 (feminine characteristics), which indicates the uncertainty of the students in this issue, they try to educate their feminine characteristics by denying masculine characteristics.

A special place in the personal structure is occupied by its social status and role. Having grown up, a person actively enters social life, trying to take his/her place in it, to satisfy personal needs and interests. The relations between a personality and the society can be described by the formula: the society offers, the person searches, chooses, trying to realize the interests. At the same time an individual shows and proves to the community his/her own place and perform a certain role assigned to him/her (Myers, 1997).

The results of finding correlation relationships between the indicators of social attitudes and gender characteristics are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

Statistically Significant Interrelationships Between Social Indicators and Gender Characteristics

Index	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9
P4	0.498**				-0.269**
P5		-0.429**	0.251*	0.194*	
P6			-0.494**	-0.301**	-0.800**
P7					0.221*

Notes: 1. Symbols: P4 – family roles; P5 – professional roles; P6 – other social roles; P7 – feminine characteristics; P8 – masculine characteristics; P9 – neutral characteristics.
2. There are statistically significant correlations (levels of statistical reliability: * – p <0.05; ** – p <0.01).

As to the indicators that characterize the social identity of the subjects, attention is drawn to the fact that two of them (P4 – family roles and P5 – professional roles) are directly correlated (r = 0.498; p = 0.000), and inversely correlated with the indicator P6 – other social roles (r = -0.429; p = 0.000) and P9 – neutral characteristics (r = -0.269; p = 0.007). That is, in the content of the Self-concept, social identity in the sphere of leisure is distinguished from family, interpersonal and professional identity.

There is also direct correlation between index P5 – professional roles and P7 – feminine characteristics (r = 0.251; p = 0.012) and with index P8 – masculine characteristics (r = 0.194; p = 0.053). It means that gender characteristics have an influence on occupational choice.

There is also inverse correlation of the indicator P6 with other social roles with two gender indices: P7 – feminine characteristics (r = -0.494; p = 0.000) and P8 – masculine characteristics (r = -0.301; p = 0.002), as well as P9 – neutral characteristics (r = -0.800; p = 0.000). There is strong inverse correlation between indices P6 and P9 which means that the more informed the students are about the various social roles, the lower their uncertainty about gender identity is in relation to themselves to a particular psychological gender.

It confirms that today there is no clear division according to gender characteristics in the society. According to the interpretation of the test, "other social roles" mainly refer to the sphere of leisure of the individual, which means that gender characteristics have not a significant influence on the professional, interpersonal and family life of the individual.

The neutral characteristics of identity (P9) are also related to the indicator P7 – feminine characteristics (r =

0,221; p = 0,027). This corresponds to the sex of the students and confirms the preliminary results – although most of the students have neutral traits, feminine characteristics still outweigh the masculine ones.

It shows that the respondents just do not know enough about themselves as well as about the diversity of social roles. The social roles are the model of human behavior which objectively set the position of the individual in the system of social and personal relations. Obviously, if the students do not have enough knowledge of their possibilities and social roles, they are indecisive, cannot choose something specific, which is the reason of uncertainty that will have an impact on their social life and educational activities. This uncertainty does not allow students to focus on their main occupation – studying, because they are busy solving the problem of who they are and how to understand their social roles. This is also may be the reason of the predominance of neutral personality characteristics in most of the students.

To confirm the results for the correlation analysis, we used the Mann-Whitney U test. According to this method, the smaller criterion value is, the more possible that the differences between the parameter values in the samples are reliable. After analyzing Table 3 we can see that the criteria of other social roles and neutral characteristics are the least important. So, the data on these criteria is reliable.

Table 3.

Comparison of Gender and Social Identity Indices by Mann-Whitney U Test

	Masculinity	Femininity	IS index	Family roles	Professional roles	Other social roles	Feminine characteristics	Masculine characteristics	Neutral characteristics
Mann-Whitney U test	1123.00	1024.50	1128.00	1170.50	1051.00	881.00	1158.00	1139.00	752.00
P	0.637	0.240	0.663	0.880	0.305	0.029	0.816	0.671	0.002

Conclusion

Identity is a complex phenomenon, a multiplicative psychic reality, it is a result of the person's allocation from the environment, which makes it possible to consider oneself a subject of their physical and psychical states, actions and processes, to experience their integrity and identity with themselves – in relation to the past, the present and the future. Gender identity is an aspect of self-consciousness, describing the experience of a person as a representative of a certain sex in a certain sustainable social formation and manifests itself as a subjective experience of psychological internalization of male or female features. Modern conditions and changes have not only broken the stereotypical image of women, but also resulted in the fact that females do not identify themselves with "women" which is indicative of an indefinite gender identity.

With the help of the conducted empirical research we have found that the overwhelming majority of the respondents have difficulty referring to a specific psychological gender in which neutral characteristics predominate. But along with this there is a predominance of feminine characteristics, which refers to the account of the unconditional influence of the biological sex. According to the results of the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient "femininity" has no statistically significant correlation relationships with feminine characteristics and family roles, which indicates the uncertainty of students in this issue, they try to improve their feminine characteristics by denying masculine ones. The reasons for this complexity for students may also be the uncertainty of the individual in one's own possibilities and requirements of the society, limited experience of independent life.

The higher the uncertainty of gender identity of students is, the lower their certainty about social roles is, which is a pattern of behavior that is expected from a person who holds a certain status in the society. The more social roles a person is able to reproduce, the better he or she is adapted to life, the more successful he/she is. If the students lack knowledge about social roles, they become indecisive, which in turn entails an uncertainty that will affect their social life and educational activity.

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ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ГЕНДЕРНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ У СТУДЕНТОК

У статті представлено результати емпіричного дослідження психологічних особливостей гендерної ідентичності у студенток. Було використано тест-опитувальник «Хто я?» М. Куна і Т. Макпартленда та тест-опитувальник «Маскулінність – Фемінінність» С. Бем. Досліджуваними виступали 100 студенток третіх та четвертих курсів університетів віком від 19 до 22 років. Було виявлено, що ролі жінки значно змінилися, і ці зміни сильно сказалися на їхній поведінці, характері та цінностях. Вони прагнуть до незалежності, самостійності, рівності з чоловіками. За допомогою теоретичного аналізу було з'ясовано, що, виникаючи в результаті процесу взаємодії «Я» і інших, гендерна ідентичність проявляється як суб'єктивний досвід психологічної інтеріоризації чоловічих або жіночих рис. Усвідомлення власної гендерної приналежності і становлення гендерної ідентичності людини – одне з напрямів соціалізації. Таким чином, ми оцінюємо себе і інших на основі уявлень про те, якими мають бути чоловіки і жінки. Співставлення власних уявлень із загальноприйнятими відіграє важливу роль у психологічному самопочутті особистості. Але через зміни, про які ми вже говорили, процес гендерної ідентифікації є доволі складним. У результаті проведеного дослідження було виявлено, що більшість опитаних дівчат не відносять себе до конкретної психологічної статі – жіночої або чоловічої. У них переважає андрогінність – майже на одному рівні присутні як фемінні, так і маскулінні характеристики. Це означає, що їх самови-

значення і поведінка не співпадають з тими, які вважається в соціумі гендерно-відповідними, але все ж таки в них переважають фемінні характеристики. Зроблено висновок про те, що чим більше рівень невизначеності гендерної ідентифікації у студенток, тим у них нижче визначеність стосовно соціальних ролей, які є шаблоном поведінки, що очікується від людини, яка займає певний статус у суспільстві. Чим більше соціальних ролей людина здатна відтворити, тим краще вона пристосована до життя, тим більше вона успішна. Якщо у студенток не вистачає знань про соціальні ролі, то вони є нерішучими, не можуть обрати щось конкретне, це в свою чергу тягне за собою невпевненість, що буде мати вплив на їхнє соціальне життя та навчальну діяльність.

Ключові слова: психологічні особливості, гендерна ідентичність, студентки, психологічна стать, невизначеність особистості.

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