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Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

REPRESENTATIONS OF IDEAL MOTHERHOOD AMONG SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS: AGE AND GENDER ASPECTS

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Abstract

One of the pressing issues in the modern world is the issue of fulfilling the role of mother by girls. Motherhood as a stereotype of behavior is present in various models: adequate motherhood and deviant motherhood. It is noted that the representations of senior school students about motherhood develops under the influence of objective and subjective factors. An analysis of the structure of representations about ideal motherhood among senior school students showed that 22% of the subjects had a cognitive indicator, 29% had an emotional indicator, and a behavioral indicator was mostly expressed (49%). The results of the study showed that significant differences in the representations of girls and boys were revealed in the severity of the behavioral indicator of representations. At the same time, significant differences in the perceptions of girls and boys of senior school age exist in the severity of a behavioral indicator, personality differences were observed among senior school students of different sexes with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood. It is concluded that the purposeful development of representations about ideal motherhood will be effective in the early stages of ontogenesis, and a high level of cognitive indicator of these representations will contribute to the formation of positive attitude towards girls, high self-esteem and satisfaction in the assessment of their personality by senior school-girls.

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Keywords: Behavioral component of representations, cognitive component of representations, emotional component of representations, motherhood, personality, representations about motherhood.



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1. Introduction

1.1. The determinative influence of a woman-mother on the formation of representations about motherhood among senior pupils

One of the pressing issues in the modern world is the issue of fulfilling the role of a mother by girls, their readiness for motherhood, identification of themselves as women-mothers, the attitude of girls to motherhood as a value. The personality of the expectant mother is affected, first of all, by family values that are instilled in her in the family; stereotypes of the role of the mother in marital and child-parent relations; experience gained in relationships with a mother or her replacement person.

Motherhood as a system and a stereotype of behavior is present in modern society in various models. From the point of view of Rudova (2009), the models of motherhood can be divided into two types: adequate (positive) motherhood and deviant (abnormal, negative) motherhood. Adequate motherhood is a characteristic of the form of motherhood in which a feeling of love and responsibility for the child is realized, the ability to reflect on his spiritual, physical and psychological state, the ability to actually accompany the child through life. Deviant motherhood is a characteristic of the form of motherhood in which mothers abandon their children and show open neglect and violence towards them, in which there are problems of disruption of maternal-child relations, leading to a decrease in the emotional well-being of the child and deviations in its optimal mental development.

The importance of motherhood is due to the uniqueness and social significance of this phenomenon, because it manifests itself through the implementation of the basic need for motherhood in contact with the child. With deviant motherhood this destiny of the mother is destroyed. Huston (1983) noted that the mother's representations about the purpose of a person influence stereotypes of male and female behavior in the family. The modern woman is prone to emancipation, the number of young women is growing, among the life priorities of which are professional activities, material well-being, social realization, self-actualization, but not motherhood. Young people, especially girls, have more blurry stereotypes if mothers work. However, the daughters of working mothers usually respect them more and tend to be more like them (Huston, 1983). Thus, behavior and attitude, the implementation of maternal functions depend not only on a specific personality, but also on the corresponding modern reality of the institution of motherhood.

In high school age, social space expands, which contributes to the formation of the image of the world as a whole. The family has a powerful influence in many areas of human life. At senior school age, representations are formed related to the desire to repeat the parental example, or, on the contrary, the desire to do the opposite (Zakharova, 2017). Children relate the position of parents and their actions to their own leading motives. Parental positions acquire a personal meaning for them and begin to determine not only their attitude to them, but also to their own future family roles. Already in adolescents, under the influence of parental behavior, positive, negative, neutral or contradictory semantic formations are distinguished in relation to the future family life. In this regard, it can be noted that individualized representations of a person may be incorrect or distorted, including representations about motherhood. This may be due to a number of factors: the presence of negative experience, unfavorable relationships with one's own mother, negative attitude of the father to the mother, etc. There is a need to rebuild, remodel them.

Therefore, today the issue of forming a positive attitude towards motherhood in the younger generation is relevant.

1.2. Representations of a man as a regulator of personality

Developing the problem of social representations, the French psychologist Moscovichi (1998) noted that a person's representations about various aspects of the world around him, about his own life are of the leading importance, they are fulfilling the basic regulatory function of the life of an individual and the functioning of society.

Moscovichi (1998) emphasized that a person is able to objectify, introduce into real life the images and concepts that are born in the course of fluent meetings, conversations, disputes, transmission of rumors and are produced in the inner world. The most important conceptual translator, in his opinion, is a social group, its experience, the system of representations and images of certain aspects of social reality that have developed in it. Thus, representations are not so much products of the mind that can produce some social consequences, but rather social products created by the mind that take on reality (Moscovichi, 1998).

Senior school students' perceptions of motherhood develop under the influence of objective factors (the presence of a mother, grandmother; emotionally warm relations with them) and subjective factors (confidence in the quality of attitude to oneself on the part of the mother; level of self-esteem; value orientations). At the same time, the cognitive components of senior school students' perceptions of motherhood are most sensitive to the action of objective ones, and emotional and behavioral components to the action of subjective factors.

Representations of motherhood can contain various subjective images that reflect this social sphere. Such images, first of all, include the image of the ideal mother, the images of maternal roles and functions.

In connection with the foregoing, we conducted a study aimed at studying the structure of representations about ideal motherhood in senior school students and its impact on personality.

2. Problem Statement

In 2018-2019 we conducted a study of the characteristics of students' perceptions of the value of motherhood; determinants affecting these perceptions (Tkachenko et al., 2019). In 2019-2020 we continued our study, but the object of attention now was the peculiarities of representations about ideal motherhood among senior students.

86 young men and women (15-16 years old) of educational institutions of the Krasnodar Territory of the Russian Federation took part in our study. To evaluate representations about ideal motherhood, we used the method of Ovcharova (2003) "The Representations of an Ideal Parent". The questionnaire consists of 54 pairs of polar qualities. All qualities are differentiated into three types: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. According to the results of our survey, the portrait of an "ideal mother" consists of the following qualities: "prudent, practical, cooperating with children, forgiving, responsible, respecting children, happy, joyful, kind, approving a child, loving, educating, rested, teaching a child" In the portrait of the "ideal mother," those qualities were selected that scored more than 50% of the subjects' high scores.

Analyzing the structure of representations about ideal motherhood among senior students, we found that 22% of the subjects had a cognitive indicator, 29% had an emotional indicator, and a behavioral indicator was expressed by most senior students (49%) (Fig.1).

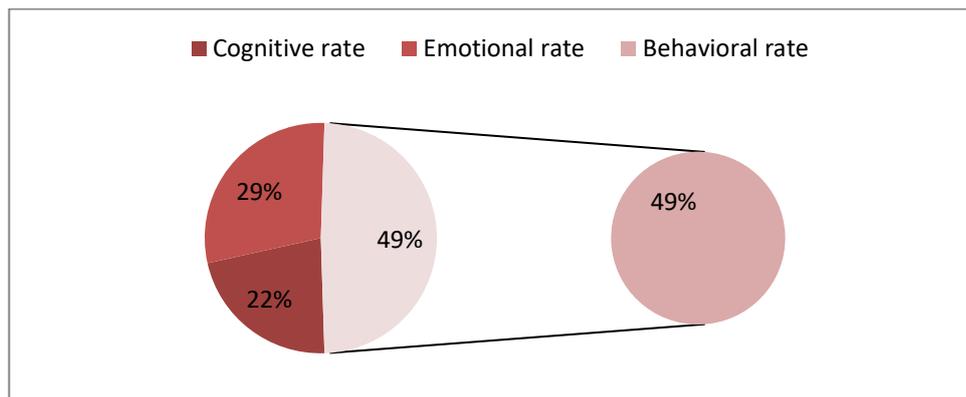


Figure 01. Percentage of senior school students depending on the expressed indicator in their structure of representations about ideal motherhood

The result obtained from the study served as the basis for our further study of the structure of representations about ideal motherhood among senior school students, taking into account age and gender characteristics of the individual.

3. Research Questions

A study of the structure of the representations of young men and women among senior students about ideal motherhood raises the question: does the age and gender characteristics of the senior pupil's personality affect this structure, and does the specificity of the expressed indicator of perceptions (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) affect the personality of senior students of different sexes.

4. Purpose of the Study

1. To study the influence of age and gender aspects on the structure of representations about ideal motherhood.

2. To study the features of the influence of the specificity of the expressed indicator of representations (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) on the personality of senior students of different sexes.

In the course of the study a hypothesis was put forward that the age and gender characteristics of an individual affect the severity of the structural components of representations about ideal motherhood among senior students at school.

Participants

The study involved 172 respondents: 86 young men and women of senior classes (15-16 years) and 86 adolescents (13-14 years). The study was conducted in 2019-2020. All participants agreed to participate in the study.

5. Research Methods

Method "The Representations of an Ideal Parent" (Ovcharova, 2003);
Self-Relationship Test Questionnaire (Stolin & Pantileev, 1988)

6. Findings

To study the influence of age-related personality traits on the severity of individual components of representations about ideal motherhood, a control group of 86 adolescents (13-14 years old) was formed, the method "The Representations of an Ideal Parent" was also conducted (Ovcharova, 2003).

Statistical processing of data using the Student's t-criterion parametric indicator showed that on the "Cognitive Index" scale, the average value in the "Senior School Students" group ($X = 17.151$) is higher than the average value of the "Teenagers" group ($X = 12.872$), on the scale "Emotional indicator" the average value in the group "Senior School Students" ($X = 20.163$) is greater than the average value of the group "Teenagers" ($X = 13.221$), on the scale "Behavioral Indicator" in the group "Senior School Students" the average value is 21.477, this is more than the average value of the group "Teenagers" equal to 14.849. The most significant differences between the group "Senior Students" and the group "Teens" were identified on the scale "Cognitive indicator" ($T = 2.299$, $p < 0.05$), while on the scale "Emotional indicator" ($T = 3.908$, $p < 0.001$), on the scale "Behavioral indicator" ($T = 3.294$, $p < 0.001$).

We concluded that there is a significant difference between the structures of representations about the ideal motherhood of senior students and adolescents. In this regard, the formation of representations about the value of motherhood will be more effective in the early stages of ontogenesis.

To identify the influence of the gender aspect on the severity of the components of representations about ideal motherhood, we evaluated the significant differences in the representations of girls and boys. To compare the "Girls" group and the "Boys" group between themselves, the T-student criterion was used for independent samples. The data are presented in Table 01.

Table 01. Empirical values of the T-student criterion for independent samples

Scale Names	Average in the group "Girls"	Average in the group "Boys"	The empirical value of the criterion	Significance level
Cognitive indicator	17.719±9.109	16.607±8.76	0.481	0.632
Emotional indicator	19.344±8.856	21.429±6.149	-1.069	0.29
Behavioral indicator	19.312±8.514	24±6.2	-2.458	0.017*

The results allowed us to state that significant differences in the perceptions of girls and boys of senior school age exist in the severity of the behavioral indicator ($T = -2.458$, $p < 0.05$). In the group «Girls» for this indicator, the average value is 19.312, this is less than the average value of the group «Boys» equal to 24. There are no statistical differences between the structure of representations about ideal motherhood in girls and boys on emotional and cognitive indicators. But the average value of the emotional indicator in the «Girls» group, the average value is 19.344, this is less than the average value of the «Boys» group equal to 21.429. And the average value of the cognitive indicator in the group in the «Girls» group, the average value is 19.344, this is less than the average value of the group «Boys» equal to 21.429. At the next stage of the study, we selected three groups of respondents of 20 people, depending on the severity of one or another component (cognitive, emotional, behavioral) representations about ideal motherhood. Only 60 people. Each group included both boys and girls. Self-relationship Test Questionnaire (Stolin & Pantileev 1988) was conducted with this group of subjects. After receiving the test results, we determined statistical

differences in the indicators senior school students of different sexes on the scales: "Self-esteem"; "Autosympathy"; "Expected attitude from others"; "Self-interest."

To identify differences in the personality characteristics of girls and boys with different expressed indicators in representations about ideal motherhood, the T-student test was used for independent samples (Table 02).

Table 02. Empirical values of the T-student criterion for independent samples

Scale Names	Differences between "Girls" and "Boys" groups with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood		Differences between "Girls" and "Boys" groups with a pronounced emotional index in representations about ideal motherhood		The differences between groups "Girls" and "Boys" with expressed behavioral indicator in representations about ideal motherhood	
	The empirical value of the criterion	Significance level	The empirical value of the criterion	Significance level	The empirical value of the criterion	Significance level
Self-esteem	0.470	0.645	0.407	0.689	-0.575	0.577
Autosympathy	4.165	0.001***	1.276	0.218	-0.854	0.408
Expected Attitude from Others	2.354	0.03*	1.464	0.160	-1.682	0.110
Self-interest	1.833	0.083	1.443	0.170	-0.370	0.716

Significant differences, according to the results of the study, were revealed only between groups of girls and boys with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood on the scales of "Autosympathy" ($T = 4.165, p < 0.001$) and "Expected attitude from others" ($T = 2.354, p < 0.05$). In the group "Girls with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood" the average value is 44.833, this is more than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood" equal to 22.125 on a scale on the scale "Expected Relationship from Others". It can be noted that the girls in this group are more sensitive than boys to a positive attitude towards others. The average value on the "Autosympathy" scale in the group "Girls with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood" is greater than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood" ($X_1 = 80.5, X_2 = 47.25$). Girls more than boys need self-approval, self-confidence and positive self-esteem.

However, it should be noted that the differences between boys and girls with different dominant components of representations about ideal motherhood are manifested in a qualitative assessment of experience. For example, on the scale of "Self-esteem" in the group "Girls with a pronounced cognitive index", the average value is 63.417, this is more than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced cognitive index" of 57.75; in the group "Girls with a pronounced emotional index" the average value is 53, this is more than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced emotional index" equal to 48.222; in the group "Girls with a pronounced behavioral indicator" the average value is 47, this is less than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced behavioral indicator" equal to 54.25.

According to the "Self-Interest" scale, in the group "Girls with a pronounced cognitive indicator" the average value is 72.667, this is more than the average value of the group "Boys with a pronounced cognitive indicator" of 50.75; the average value in the group "Girls with a pronounced emotional index" is

greater than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced emotional index” ($X_1 = 66.455$, $X_2 = 48.111$); the average value in the group “Girls with a pronounced behavioral” is less than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced behavioral indicator” ($X_1 = 49.625$, $X_2 = 55.417$).

And also on the scale “Autosympathy” in the group “Girls with a pronounced emotional index” the average value is 62.636, this is more than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced emotional index” equal to 47; in the group “Girls with a pronounced behavioral indicator” the average value is 54, this is less than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced behavioral indicator” equal to 63.917. On the scale “Expected attitude from others” in the group “Girls with a pronounced emotional indicator” the average value is 35.909, this is more than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced emotional indicator” of 22.444; in the group “Girls with a pronounced behavioral indicator” the average value is 19.75, this is less than the average value of the group “Boys with a pronounced behavioral indicator in” equal to 37.083.

Thus, the structure of representations about ideal motherhood in senior school age is significantly affected by age-related features, significant differences in the representations of girls and boys are revealed in the severity of the behavioral indicator of representations. At the same time, significant differences in the perceptions of girls and boys of senior school age exist in the severity of a behavioral indicator, personality differences were observed among senior school students of different sexes with a pronounced cognitive indicator in representations about ideal motherhood. It can be noted that the deliberate development of representations about ideal motherhood will be effective in the early stages of ontogenesis, and a high level of cognitive indicator of these representations will contribute to the formation of positive attitude towards girls, high self-esteem and satisfaction in the assessment of their personality by senior school-girls.

7. Conclusion

Currently, there are few studies devoted to the study of maternity, most often they relate to representations about maternity and the readiness for it of young girls of student age (20-25 years) (Alifirenko, 2009; Evdokimova et al., 2015; Filippova, 2000; Tkachenko & Komarova, 2018; Tkachenko et al., 2019). In our study, the structure of representations about motherhood among senior school students was examined.

The formation of representations does not occur by itself, but is always woven into the processes of communication and interaction. Thanks to these processes, representations change and develop. Representations can act both as a kind of exchange fund (in the form of knowledge), and as ways of influencing one person on another, with which people strive to achieve some changes in their relationships (Andreeva, 1998; Gozman, 1983). Representations of ideal motherhood begin to form from early childhood. Jacobson P. M pointed to the fact that the child already has a very large area of representations of valuable or non-valuable qualities of a person in certain life circumstances, about the qualities of a friend, which is formed as a result of exposure to adults. These representations and assessment enter the consciousness of the student and lead to the formation of peculiar “stereotypes” of the perception of another person (Jacobson, 1998). In our study, we are talking about the perception of the image of the mother, on

the representations of which senior school students are affected by both age and gender characteristics of the person.

In connection with the foregoing, it should be noted that knowledge of the structure of the representations of senior school students about motherhood allows us to competently develop a program for the formation of a positive attitude towards motherhood. And the sooner it is introduced into the educational process, the more effective will be the formation of a relationship to motherhood as a value.

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