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Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary
Tendencies of Development

SUBCULTURE ELEMENTS OF MODERN PRESCHOOLERS

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Abstract

Subculture is used by children in organisation of leisure activities, in showing initiative, conflict resolution, etc.; it is a very effective mean of socialization of a child in a complicated world of people. As the topic is highly relevant and important, a study of the content of the subculture of modern preschoolers, of the possibility of preserving its developmental functions by adults in the process of supporting of subculture usage by children was organised. Nonparticipant observation of preschoolers, a talk with them, and also a survey (questionnaire survey) of preschoolers' parents and kindergarten teachers were conducted. In total, 127 children from 3 to 7 years old, as well as 50 parents and 19 kindergarten teachers participated in the survey. The results directly indicate the role of the subculture in the socialization of children, even in the framework of the relatively uncommon usage of the subculture elements among the children. However, it gives the opportunity to put the question of dependency of the subculture elements usage from the social development of children and from age characteristics of children's interactions. Adults are able to communicate the elements of preschool subculture as a mean of self-organization and regulation of children's interaction. However, they have almost forgotten about their educational potential and do not use them for solving developmental problems.

Keywords: Children's subculture, preschool age, inner world of the child, socialization, regulation of behaviour, independent activity.

1. Introduction

Since the late 80-ies of the twentieth century a special attention was paid to the study of the subculture of preschoolers. It was caused, on the one hand, by the desire to learn more about the world of childhood, which is especially important now in the changed adult society. On the other hand, it may be explained by the importance of the search for new forms and methods of teaching and nurturing of modern preschoolers. According to a number of researchers (V.V. Abramenkova, I.S. Kon, V.T. Kudryavtsev, N.Ya.Mikhaylenko, M.V.Osorina and others), the features of the child's inner world are revealed most fully in the children's subculture and this fact cannot be ignored in the educational work with children (Abramenkova, 2000; Voropaeva, 2017; Kapitsa & Kolyadich, 2016; Osorina, 2018; Popkova, 2012; Feldstein, 1998).

Nowadays in Russian and foreign science that studies the children's subculture is primarily aimed at collecting data on its content and at specification of its types. Although these studies are mainly descriptive, they allow to make a conclusion that   current social reality has the significant influence on children's subculture (Abramenkova V. V., Alieva T. I., Kudryavtsev V. T., Ivanova N. V. Osorina M. V., etc.).

The changes in public life led to changes in the content of elements of children's subculture. Certain topics have disappeared (for example, agriculture) and new ones have appeared (characters of modern cartoons, for example, Luntik, Spiderman, etc.). At the same time, researchers note some tendencies that distort the existence of a subculture.

In the mentioned studies two main problems can be traced: the lack of time and space for the use of many elements of the subculture and impoverishment of its content (Burlakova, Klopotova, & Kopteva, 2011; Klopotova, 2017; Klopotova & Romanova, 2014) In addition, the researchers note that the modern children's subculture is oversaturated with elements of adult culture (Smirnova, 2015) This leads to the loss, displacement of its own content. And this "adultness" of the children's subculture is associated with the loss of some of its functions (Shmarion & Zemlyanskaya, 2018).

Thus, existing data show that the children's subculture needs adult assistance to get the ability to address its own educational and developmental problems.

2. Problem Statement

Since the children's subculture is communicated to preschool children in two ways- by older children and by adults, the two most relevant research problems are identified. Their relevance is determined by the fact that in modern life there are practically no yard communities where children of different ages can unite. In kindergartens children are grouped according to their age, and communities of children of different age are extremely rare (Voropaeva, 2017; Ivanova & Vinogradova, 2012; Korepanova-Kotlyar & Sokolova, 2017; Menshikova, 2016; Osorina, 2018; Pavlenko, 2016).

The first problem is related to the need to identify elements of the subculture that are communicated or have ceased to be communicated to preschool children by other children. The importance of this problem is determined by the fact that it acts as a mean or way of the independent children activity in the process of communication of the elements of a subculture to younger children.

Whether the subculture is used for organization of leisure activities, showing initiative, or solving conflict situations, etc., in any case, its elements and their content are chosen by the child himself. Moreover, the correctness of their usage is also evaluated by the children. Thus, it is possible to say that in the process of subculture communication from children to children its ability to regulate behaviour is as clear as possible for children and is accepted by almost everyone.

The second problem is determined by the fact that there are no data on whether adults can partly compensate the lack of information about the elements of the subculture and their functions, which arose due to a violation of its communication from older children. It is important to understand that the formulation of this problem is not related to the ability of adults to acquaint children with different aspects of reality including their subculture. The focus is on the ability of adults to transmit elements of subculture and support their use by children as means and ways of independent activity. Unfortunately, nowadays adults use elements of the subculture (mainly nursery rhymes, riddles, etc.) to form certain skills and abilities of children (from memory to altruism).

In the literature nowadays there are no data on whether such use of the subculture is sufficient for its internalization as means and method of regulation of children's behaviour. Perhaps within such communication the regulatory functions of the subculture are hidden from children by other educational tasks.

3. Research Questions

In the conducted research an attempt to answer the following questions was made:

1. What types of preschool subcultures prevail in modern children: ones that allow to organize leisure time (yard games, collections) or ones that are aimed at behaviour regulation in the framework of interaction with peers (peace-making rhymes, counting-out rhymes, teasers, "poddevki" – kind of knock-knock jokes used by Russian children).

2. To what extent adults are able to communicate the elements of the preschool subculture as a mean of self-organization and regulation of children's interaction.

4. Purpose of the Study

One of the purposes of the research was to identify the current state of preschool subculture. The obtained empirical data allow to actualize the problem of purposeful leadership of an adult in mastering the subculture in the current situation of the preschooler's development.

5. Research Methods

The results under discussion were obtained in unincorporated observation of preschool children, in the talk with them about the elements of children's subculture, as well as in a survey (questionnaire survey) of parents of preschool children and kindergarten teachers (in total 127 children from 3 to 7 years; 50 parents and 19 kindergarten teachers).

6.   Findings

Studies have shown that nowadays there is a significant depletion of the content of the subculture in preschoolers (which is also noted in other studies) (Burlakova, Klopotova, & Kopteva, 2011; Polyakova, 2014; Popkova, 2012; Smirnova, 2015) At the same time some of its elements are used by a small number of children.

The obtained results allow to say that modern children on average know and use such elements of the subculture as peace-making rhymes (30% children), and teasers (25%), to a lesser extent – count-out rhymes (17%), poddevki (10%) and original (not stereotypical touch and run game) yard games (8%).

It is important to note that children of different ages use elements of subculture, first of all, in situations that correspond to the main objectives of a particular age period. Thus, at a younger age child most frequently use elements of the subculture that regulate situations of communication — peace-making rhymes and teasers. In the middle age counting-out rhymes are used the most frequently as a solution to a major conflict of this period: distribution of roles. In older age the use of yard games as a way of self-organization of free time starts to dominate. It seems that these results directly indicate the role of the subculture in the socialization of children even despite such a low percentage of the children who use these elements.

It is also remarkable that among participants there were none of older preschoolers who used teasers in situations of communication. But at the same time children begin to use poddevki. Unfortunately, the data obtained are not sufficient for final conclusions. However, it gives the opportunity to put the question of dependency of the subculture elements usage from the social development of children and from age characteristics of children's interactions.

An analysis of the results of talks with children revealed another problem that needs to be carefully researched. In modern conditions in the process of growing up children cease to perceive children's subculture as a sphere of their original being, more and more – as requirements of an adult.

In this regard, the need to study the second stated research question becomes even more urgent.

Questioning (survey) of parents and kindergarten teachers allowed to state that the interviewed adults knew the elements of the children's subculture that were the subject of study. The results of this survey are presented in Table 01.

Table 01. Amount of adults who know various elements of children's subculture (in %)

Adults interviewed	Knowledge of the elements of children's subculture				
	Peace-making rhymes	Counting-out rhymes	Teasers	Games	Poddevki
Parents	100	100	100	100	10
Kindergarten teachers	100	100	100	100	11

However, the repertoire of subculture elements is very poor. The overwhelming majority of parents could remember only one peace-making rhyme: "Make friends, make friends, never never break friends..." Repertoire of teasers, counting-out rhymes included from 1 to 3 points in adults: "Silly goose",

"scaredy cat" etc. And few have heard of poddevki. Moreover, they are often confused with teasers. Most of all adults (mothers) remember the yard games: touch and run, Chinese jump rope, dodge ball, hopscotch, "The sea is rough — one..." etc.

The survey data show that adults almost do not use the potential of elements of children's subculture, rarely offer children to use them in interaction with peers. The results of this survey are presented in Table 02.

Table 02. Amount of adults who communicate a variety of elements of children's subculture to children (in%)

Adults interviewed	Communicated elements of children's subculture				
	Peace-making rhymes	**Counting-out rhymes**	**Teasers**	**Games**	**Poddevki**
Parents	12	25	1	46	0
Kindergarten teachers	11	46	1	53	0

So, it is obvious that teasers are practically not communicated by adults. As a rule, parents and teachers consider the use of this element of children's subculture as "wrong" behaviour of a child: "It's not good to call names." Preschoolers usually are blamed for the usage of teasers.

Adults also rarely use peace-making rhymes. Mainly this element is communicated to children of early preschool age. Adults encourage older preschoolers to "ask for forgiveness". Following this demand, children consider it sufficient to say "sorry" to settle down the conflict, while in reality the conflict usually remains to be unsettled.

The elements most frequently communicated from adults to children are counting-out rhymes and games. These elements of the children's subculture are used by parents and kindergarten teachers to regulate conflict interaction of preschool children in groups on walks, in the classroom of additional education, on vacation.

All of these elements of children's subculture come from adults' childhood. For example, a team game with the ball "dodge ball"

Thus, adults are able to communicate the elements of the preschool subculture as a mean of self-organization and regulation of children's interaction. However, teachers and parents have almost forgotten about its educational potential and do not use them (peace-making rhymes). Moreover, they often isolate themselves from elements of children's subculture that they consider to be unknown, incomprehensible, and unacceptable from their point of view (teasing, poddevki).

7. Conclusion

Due to a number of objective reasons, there is a lack of data on the content and functions of the subculture of modern preschoolers. The most common reasons for that can be identified as "inaccessibility" of the subject of study. Nevertheless, preschoolers use and communicate various elements of the children's subculture to their peers, mainly as a mean of interaction regulation. This confirms the importance of subculture for the socialization of preschoolers.

It is necessary to use the capabilities of adults - parents and teachers- to support the children's subculture. This raises new problems and research questions related to the ability of adults to use the resources of children's subculture without imposing their own rules and norms of interaction between the children.

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