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PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' STATUS POSITIONS IN ISRAEL

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Abstract

The article deals with socio-political, psychological-pedagogical factors, pedagogical strategies and technologies that have a positive impact on the status and role positions of students in Israeli schools. The modern society of Israel is characterized by the processes of social stratification based on ethno-cultural and religious grounds. Primary school children in Israel are particularly sensitive to these processes. The authors analyze the results of an empirical study conducted in schools of the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israel. The research was aimed at identifying the most effective pedagogical strategies, technologies and methods that can be used in various socio-cultural settings to strengthen the status and role positions of younger schoolchildren. The article describes a set of pedagogical strategies and technologies that strengthen the status and role positions of younger schoolchildren in multicultural schools in Israel. The implementation of the strategy of social and pedagogical support of the child allows solving the problems related to various social and role positions in children and adult communities. The use of technologies of direct and indirect pedagogical influence contributes to the elimination of bullying at a multicultural school. Using a pedagogical strategy to overcome aggressive behavior can reduce various manifestations of violence in children's groups.

Keywords: Child-adult community, interpersonal interaction, multicultural society, pedagogical strategies, primary school children, status and role positions of children

1. Introduction

At the present stage of social development in Russia, Israel and other countries, the social structure of society is becoming more complicated, which undoubtedly affects the goals and values of education. Not only subject knowledge, but also meta-subject competencies, as well as the results of the child's personal and social development become significant (Bremer & Smith, 2004). At the primary school age, the child begins to master social ties and relationships, actively enters the adult world, gains experience in interpersonal relationships in various social groups of peers both at school and beyond. Already from preschool age, children learn new ways of establishing social connections, using the possibilities of Internet access, virtual communication and search for information resources (Donina et al., 2018). During social interaction in the group, younger schoolchildren gain the first experience in playing various roles. Unfortunately, some of the younger schoolchildren for various reasons become outcasts, rejected by a group of peers, which reduces the level of social development of children and causes tension in the team of younger schoolchildren (Gal-Or, 1999).

The relevance of this study for Israel is associated with the process of social stratification of Israeli society according to ethno-cultural and religious characteristics, which has a significant impact on the education system, especially educational institutions and the social status of children in these organizations (Mizrachi et al., 2010). Particularly sensitive to these processes in Israeli schools are primary school children, who, due to age-related characteristics, form a picture of the world and the basics of worldview, perception and partial understanding of their role in the surrounding social environment, in the system of relations with adults and peers (Lutan & Fridman, 1992).

Younger schoolchildren face such socio-pedagogical and psychological task as gaining a new social status, mastering a new social role, understanding their social "I" and ways of interacting with society (Khairullina & Nurullina, 2009).

2. Problem Statement

The multicultural environment of Israel leads to the institutional diversity of educational institutions intended for different ethnic and cultural layers of the population (primarily for Jews and Arabs). However, not only the separation of schools leads to the formation of social stereotypes. Stereotyping affects both adults and children from various groups of migrants who have different social status in Israel (Ogubu, 1990). The greatest concern of the pedagogical community is the stratification of primary school children from migrant families into the "Eastern" (migrants from North Africa and the Middle East) and "Western" (the so-called "Ashkenazi") (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). With such stratification, representatives of the "Western" social layer are considered more intellectually gifted, capable of research, having creative potential and high status in society, while the label "second grade" schoolchildren incapable of intellectual activity is hung on the "Eastern" children prone to delinquency and inappropriate behavior in society (Leonardo, 2004).

In this regard, the problem arises of the formation of a child-adult community that is able to withstand social stereotypes and fosters respect for each person, regardless of their origin and religious views (Pevzner et al., 2015). The authors of the article believe that the process of strengthening the status-

role positions of primary school children will be successful if the educational organization interacts with the family and the school, accompanied by the process of mastering social roles by the child, if a school agreement is signed that defines the rights and obligations of the subjects of the educational process, and if a set of pedagogical strategies and technologies has been put into practice that ensure the strengthening of the status-role positions of children.

3. Research Questions

The article seeks answers to the following research questions:

3.1. What socio-political and pedagogical factors influence the status-role positions of a primary school child in a children's group?

3.2. What are the consequences of the status-role position of the child for the child's socialization, personal development, and psychological state?

3.3. Is there a relationship between the status of the child in the classroom, academic achievements and motivation for learning activities?

3.4. What are the pedagogical strategies and technologies for strengthening the status-role positions of the child in the children's group?

4. Purpose of the Study

To develop and experimentally test pedagogical strategies and technologies for strengthening the status-role positions of a primary school child in a multicultural society in Israel.

5. Research Methods

Theoretical methods (interdisciplinary analysis of pedagogical, psychological, sociological research literature on the research problem, historical and pedagogical analysis of community and collective education in different countries of the world, generalization, systematization and conceptualization of pedagogical experience of schools in the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israel, conceptual and terminological analysis of the basic definitions of the study); empirical methods (questioning, interviewing schoolchildren, parents and teachers, monitoring the behavior of children in school, the method of expert assessments). An important research method was the socio-metric diagnosis of the status-role positions of elementary schoolchildren in a children's group. To conduct this methodology, three questionnaires were developed for schoolchildren, their teachers and parents. The survey covered 62 students, 10 teachers and 40 parents - a total of 122 respondents. The questionnaire for children contained 50 statements; each required a rating of respondents on a scale from 1 to 5. The scale reflected the degree of consent of the respondents to the validity of the statement and covered a range of opinions from consent to complete disagreement.

Questions from 1 to 15 revealed a positive and negative attitude of classmates to the child. The positive attitude, according to the questionnaire, is manifested in liking, in popularity among classmates, in high appreciation from classmates, in recognition of leadership qualities from classmates, in submission to one's will. The negative attitude of the children's group towards the child, according to the questionnaire,

has the following manifestations: bullying, harassment, hatred, neglect, intimidation, violence, mockery, ignoring, labeling.

It should be noted that the questionnaire was aimed not only at revealing attitudes toward the child, but also at identifying those socio-pedagogical factors that determine this attitude. These include intellectual abilities, high academic performance, ancestry, financial status, religious affiliation, appearance, social status of parents, ethnic origin, strength of character, physical strength. Questions 16-24 reflect the child's attitude towards the school class community, which is expressed in a sense of equality with other children, popularity in the class, friendly feelings from classmates, leadership skills, and a sense of belonging to the class and school community. Questions 25-29 reflect the attitude of teachers towards strengthening the status-role position of the child in assessing children. This attitude is manifested in the protection of the child in case of discrimination, in helping children to increase self-esteem and self-confidence, in tolerating children, not interfering in conflict situations, in a biased attitude of the school administration towards children, depending on the social status of their parents. Some of the questions (34-50) concern the relationship between children and parents. These questions reveal the attitude of parents to the academic performance of children, to their status and role positions in the class, as well as the degree of influence of parents on children and on the attitude of children to parents.

6. Findings

An empirical study was conducted in schools in the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israel. It was important to understand how pedagogical strategies, technologies and methods for strengthening the status-role positions of primary school children are universal and can be used in various sociocultural conditions. For this, two schools were selected as the experiment grounds; they were different in cultural-historical, social and ethno-religious characteristics.

The research focus in the Arab sector was on a school located in the Bedouin village of Qasr al-Sir. The school in Qasr al-Sir is central to nearby villages. About 70% of primary school students belong to the dominant Alhavashle family, and about 30% of students belong to the minority families of Skiku, Hresi, Abu Khadobi, and Algol. A dominant family has great power in the village. Representatives of this family have the highest social status and, as a rule, high educational qualifications, as well as stand higher in material and financial well-being. Non-dominant families have the same traditions and way of life as Bedouins with high social status, including the patriarchal system of family relations. However, non-dominant families, unlike dominant ones, have a low social status and low material wealth.

Belonging to dominant and non-dominant families affects not only the social status of children and their parents, but also the position of teachers (Saba Sa'di, 2010). In order to understand the nature of this influence, 5 teachers and 10 students of the studied school were interviewed. According to the respondents, a teacher who belongs to the dominant family is more authoritative in the classroom; he is more able to use technologies of direct pedagogical influence in cases of conflict than a teacher who belongs to the Falah family. At Qasr al-Sir school, the school principal and all leading teachers belong to the indigenous Bedouin family, and 50% of the other teachers are from non-dominant families.

Having studied the micro- and meso-factors of the environment in which the Bedouin school is located, we consider the situation in the 5th grade in which the experiment was conducted. 32

schoolchildren study in the classroom, of which 22 are girls and 10 are boys aged 11-12. As an interview with teachers and students of this class showed, 22 children (about 70%) have financial difficulties to varying degrees; their parents mainly perform non-prestigious types of work. Most students are brought up in large, polygamous families. And only five families in the class are monogamous. The number of family members in this class is from 7 to 30 people.

During the interview, the religious affiliation of the students was revealed: 30 schoolchildren are brought up in Muslim families, so Islam is the dominant religion in the class. And only two schoolgirls belong to families professing the Christian religion. Belonging to a religious minority, as shown by an interview with these two children, causes them a lot of inconvenience. In many cases, they feel that they are being discriminated against, which they say they feel especially acutely during fasting in the month of Ramadan and during sports. Of particular concern to them is the fact that the vast majority of girls in the class wear Muslim clothes, and in this regard they feel like "white crows". To the question of the interview, who is the leader in your class, most of the boys (7 respondents) named the captain of the football team, and most of the girls (14 respondents) named the tallest and the most beautiful girl in the class. At the same time, some girls (8 respondents) believe that their female peers cannot be leaders, since leadership positions should always belong to boys.

The research base included not only an Arab school, but also the Mekeb Bet school in Beersheba, which is located in the Jewish sector of Israel. Beersheba is the administrative center of the Southern District of Israel. A number of educational institutions are located here, including Ben-Gurion University, the "Soroka" Hospital (the second largest in Israel), the district court, the municipal theater, and regional departments of various government services.

An empirical study of pedagogical strategies to strengthen the status-role positions of schoolchildren was carried out in the 5th grade of the Mekeb Bet school, in which 30 students, 16 girls and 14 boys are studying. 12 students (40%) belong to the Ashkenazi ethnic and cultural group, whose representatives come from Europe and North America. According to available observations, children belonging to this group are distinguished by attractive appearance, as well as high academic achievements. They represent the class in the self-governing bodies of elementary schools, take part in subject competitions, have a high level of language competence, highly developed intellectual abilities, are successful in various types of educational and cognitive activities, willingly participate in research projects and intellectual games. 6 students (20%) belong to the ethno-cultural group of Mizrahi, their parents are from Algeria and Morocco. As an interview with children belonging to the Mizrahi group showed, they have large families consisting of 5-12 people. Parents of these children, having a non-prestigious job, are experiencing financial difficulties. According to interviews with teachers and children (30 children and 5 teachers were interviewed), students from the Eastern group are distinguished by their courage, audacity, often cruelty and aggressive behavior, they are well physically developed, therefore they are willing to engage in physical culture and sports and participate in competitions. Children belonging to the Eastern group do not pay due attention to academic performance, because they are forced to earn extra money in the market. They often come into confrontation with Ashkinazi representatives in the struggle for leadership in the classroom. 9 schoolchildren (30%) belong to families that come from the countries of the former Soviet Union: Russia (3 schoolchildren), Ukraine (5 schoolchildren), the Republic of Belarus (1 schoolchild). Parents of 6 elementary school students are

content with modest work and low earnings, which affects their social status and causes disappointment with their position in Israeli society. Two parents work as doctors in the city hospital "Soroka", have a high income and high status positions. Children belonging to this group successfully study mathematics and technology, willingly share their knowledge with classmates, however, poor knowledge of the indigenous language - Hebrew (out of 9 children, only 3 students are fluent in Hebrew) do not allow them to fully disclose their individual potential. Therefore, they form a closed informal group of Russian-speaking students and distance themselves from other peers. Even more distant from classmates are children from Arab families who used to live in the north and center of the country, but were forced to move to the south of Israel in search of work. Arab students (3 students - 10%) are a national minority and, as it was recorded in an interview with them, are discriminated against and stigmatized. These children find themselves in a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, they come from good families (the parents of all three children are medical workers at the "Soroka" hospital) and are distinguished by high academic achievements, and on the other, they are discriminated against because of their ethnicity.

After interpersonal and academic problems were identified in the experimental 5th grades of the two schools, in order to strengthen the status-role positions of younger schoolchildren, a program of pedagogical activities was developed for younger schoolchildren, their parents and teachers. The implementation of the program lasted two months.

When developing and implementing the program of measures of pedagogical influence on primary school children, the results of diagnostics of status-role positions of children were taken into account. Based on these results, a strategy of socio-pedagogical support for the child was actively used, aimed at solving the child's problems associated with social-role positions in the children's group and in the adult-child community (Kuldanova et al., 2018). When using technologies of direct and indirect influence on children, bullying structures were eliminated using such methods as intervention, directive action in relation to children with aggressive behavior, protection, problematization, acceptance (in relation to victims of aggression) (Temina, 2017). During the formative experiment, the pedagogical strategy of overcoming aggressive behavior, violence and bullying in the children's group was actively used (Mazaeva & Isaeva, 2015). In addition to these forms of work, a series of interactive classes was conducted for children, the purpose of which was the social, moral, and emotional development of primary school children (Hertz-Lzrovicj & Fox, 1987). The participants in the games developed such qualities as self-awareness, self-management, self-control, empathy, acceptance of another, assertiveness, and the ability to solve a problem. At the last lesson, the children signed a school agreement, which secured their rights and obligations.

To determine the effectiveness of the strategies used, we will firstly examine the changes that occurred in the teams of the studied classes, and secondly, changes in the status and role positions of schoolchildren who were subjected to harassment, aggressive or violent actions by classmates, and also analyze how much the improvement of status-role positions affected the performance of primary school children. To obtain reliable results, a complex of diagnostic procedures was used: observation, independent expert evaluations, as well as interviews with children, teachers and parents. As a result of the diagnosis, it was found that the bullying structures that existed earlier in both experimental classes were eliminated. Sustainable oppression of children who had previously been subjects to physical or mental pressure from classmates was no longer observed, although some manifestations of aggressive behavior by some

schoolchildren were recorded. They were manifested mainly in the initiation of fights (by boys), in insulting remarks (by boys and girls), ousting individual students from the circle of communication (by boys and girls). However, these aggressive actions were fragmented, episodic in nature and had no signs of bullying or mobbing.

As a result of pedagogical influence measures, the level of trust among primary schoolchildren in relation to parents increased, as a result of which the number of children who hide the results of their academic performance and their personal experiences from parents was reduced (from 11 students to 6 in the Arab sector, from 9 to 5 in the Jewish sector). The interest of parents in interacting with the school also increased; the number of contacts between teachers and parents related to raising children has increased over the five-month period in the Arab sector by 20% compared to the previous half-year, in the Jewish sector - by 15%.

As the study showed, 4 out of 8 children in the Arab sector and 1 child in the Jewish sector increased their status-role positions significantly, while the rest - partially. Schoolchildren, who had the most significant changes in their status-role positions, also significantly increased the percentage of excellent and good grades received over the course of six months in 3 out of 4 subjects. For one child this indicator remained unchanged, while for another one, it even decreased. Schoolchildren in both the Arab and Jewish sectors, whose status and role positions have only partially increased, also have positive dynamics in academic performance in most subjects, but their academic success is less significant than that of other students surveyed. Thus, the pedagogical strategies for strengthening the status-role positions of primary schoolchildren in the children's group, implemented during the experiment, turned out to be effective. The hypothesis of the study was mainly confirmed.

7. Conclusion

The empirical study conducted in two schools in the Arab and Jewish sectors of Israel led to the following conclusions:

- In both Arab and Jewish schools, there is a problem of interpersonal relations in children's groups and child-adult communities, associated with low status-role positions of individual students. In some classes, bullying structures are spread, whose participants are, on the one hand, children who show physical or mental violence against other children in the form of oppression, discrimination, stigmatization, and on the other hand, there are victims of aggressive actions.

- Low status-role positions of primary school children, as a rule, are one of the reasons for their low academic performance, although in some exceptional cases, high academic achievement can cause rejection of children. Positive changes in the status-role positions of children in the children's group and in the child-adult community lead to a positive dynamics of their performance and contribute to improving interpersonal interaction with peers and adults.

- A comprehensive program of pedagogical influence, designed for primary school children, their parents and teachers, including the implementation of pedagogical strategies, technologies and methods for increasing the status-role positions of primary schoolchildren, is an important

tool for the prevention of conflict situations in the children's group, the elimination of bullying structures, establishing trust among children, parents and teachers.

▪ Pedagogical strategies to strengthen the status-role positions of primary school children are universal and can be used in various sociocultural conditions. This is evidenced by the results of an experiment conducted in two schools, differing in cultural-historical, social and ethno-religious characteristics.

The study proved that the implementation of pedagogical strategies, technologies and methods can be effective if social and pedagogical factors affecting the social status of children in the school community are taken into account, motivational readiness of teachers to overcome social stereotypes in students is formed, family and school interaction is ensured in accompanying the process of mastering social roles by a child.

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