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DIFFERENCES IN EDUCATIONAL GROUP: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS IN CADET CORPS AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Tatyana V. Drobysheva (a)*, Semyon V. Tarasov (b)
*Corresponding author

- (a) Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences, 13-1, Yaroslavskaya str., Moscow, Russia, tdrobysheva@mail.ru
- (b) Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences, 13-1, Yaroslavskaya str., Moscow, Russia, sementarasovvas@gmail.com

Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of the problem of determination of adolescents' interpersonal relations in specific conditions of socialisation in cadet corps. The work aims to identify differences in the attitudes of adolescents depending on different conditions - in a cadet corps or a comprehensive school. The hypothesis was the assumption that the interpersonal relationships of adolescents in a semi-closed study group differ from those in an open study group in terms of introversion/extraversion and anxiety/aggressiveness intensity. The study involved real-life groups of 8th-grade students aged 13-14 years: two groups of the cadet corps and a group of schoolchildren from a general education institution, the total sample size 77 people. It has been shown that the specificity of adolescents' relations in such groups was characterised by focus on active self-realisation and such qualities as stubbornness, self-will in defending their interests. School students differed from cadets in that they gave more pronounced assessments on the scales of spontaneity and rigidity, as demonstrated by them and concerning others. Differences in cadets' interpersonal relationships - those measured with the sensitivity scale - in contrast to other groups - have been found. Cadets' attitudes in both groups had common characteristics: the indicators intensity on Anxiety and Spontaneity scales, the idea of friendship as "comradely relations", as well as absence of the isolated adolescents category in the structure of the group.

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1. Introduction

The present conditions of the development of society are characterized by: uncertainty of the situation, difficulty of planning the near and remote future, transition to the digital community, limitation of direct interpersonal contacts, etc. (Durodié, 2020; Van Dijk, 2021, etc.). In the case of self-isolation, the relevance of the study of small semi-closed and closed groups has increased significantly (Marmarosh et al., 2020, etc.). In our opinion, the problem of determining the group dynamics of small semi-closed groups can be studied with the example of study groups. They are characterized by stability of composition, priority of group goals, and specificity of interpersonal relations.

Growing number of semi-closed educational institutions, i.e. cadet corps, cadet schools, requires comprehensive research of the conditions for socialisation of adolescents and young men in these institutions, as this would allow understanding not only life and mental processes in this type of school but also in other boarding schools that exist abroad and are increasingly gaining popularity.

Thus, the research problem formulation is determined by identification of the social environment specifics that condition the process of formation and development of personality and its bonds with the wider society. We did not find studies on cadet's boarding schools in psychology literature, since the word 'cadet' is more applicable to students in military academies, and their research is specific to personal development (Franke, 2000; Firing et al., 2009; Kelly et al., 2014; Maddi et al., 2012; Mayseless & Hai, 1998; Terziev, 2017, etc.). Therefore, we only have turned to psychological literature on socialisation issues.

In this study of the differences in socialisation conditions, we adhere to two fundamental foreign approaches. The first is the approach that considers socialisation as a mechanism of adaptation to environmental conditions (Dewey, 1930; Durkheim, 1950, etc.). After attending kindergarten, school for children is not something stressful, as family and society prepare them for this. We also consider socialisation phenomenon within the framework of symbolic interactionism approach. In it, socialisation is the process of transformation of a person from a physiological organism into a reflexive social Self (Cooley, 1902; McPhail & Rexroat, 1979; Mead, 1934; Meltzer et al., 2020, etc.). The choice of such research object as interpersonal relations isn't random, as a number of authors claim that interpersonal relations serve as key mechanisms in personality - society interaction. Our examination of adolescents' interpersonal relations is carried out within the perspective of active mediation of interpersonal relations (Kelley, 1979; Zhuravlev, 2009, etc.). This approach to the problem of interpersonal relations, in our opinion, most fully describes all the specificity and diversity of this phenomenon belonging to personality and group psychology. Also, research from this theory standpoint allows us to depart from the orientation that had long prevailed in foreign psychology - that is studying groups within the framework of the "conformism - nonconformism" dichotomy.

In the context of solving this research problem, life of an individual in cadet corps, psychologists have conducted several pedagogical and psychological-pedagogical studies focused on the following aspects: factors of social and pedagogical adaptation of adolescents and young men to life in cadet corps and cadet schools; conditions for preparing young people for military service in semi-closed educational institutions (cadet corps and schools); the specifics of cadets' personal characteristics formation, etc.

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(Gosnell et al., 2020; Mayer & Skimmyhorn, 2017; Patterson, 2020; Smith et al., 2020). In the above areas of research, the emphasis is on the role of the educational process components (pedagogical technologies, styles of upbringing, principles of organising educational process, etc.) that determine the effects of specific socialisation of students. Thus, this line of research is focused not so much on identifying the content of the educational process in the cadet corps as an "external" factor in the formation of personality, but rather on analysing effects of organisational and educational environment of cadet corps in their connection with the personal qualities of cadets, which allow them not only to adapt but to cope successfully with the requirements of this environment as well. Analysis of the literature showed that among the number psychological studies, works of a socio-psychological orientation were the least represented. The studies we found were focused on relationships between cadets and junior commanders, as well as on sociopsychological adaptation to the conditions of the cadet corps/school (Banabakova & Georgiev, 2017; Perevozkin & Tishkova, 2020; Popovych et al., 2020 etc.). These few works are of interest to us in connection with the formulation of our research hypothesis. For example, colleagues found that not all students manage to quickly and successfully adapt to new conditions of education and free time in a semiclosed institution. Cadets often have difficulties with self-organisation, compliance with rules and regulations of the educational institution. Emotional experiences caused by distance from family, as well as problems of interpersonal interaction between leaders and students, have been noted. Thus, these studies indirectly trace the connection between the form of the educational environment organisation (semi-closed type) and the characteristics of socialisation in it.

2. Problem Statement

Summarising all these facts, we can conclude that most of the works, regardless of discipline, are focused on finding the specifics of the conditions for individuals' socialisation in cadet corps. Educational institutions such as cadet corps or cadet school are classified as semi-closed institutions. The educational process in these institutions has specific features both in the content of the educational component and in the organisation of the relations system in educational groups and institution as a whole. Most of the cadet corps and schools are organised as boarding schools with staying on the territory of the educational institution. Children can see their parents, at best, on weekends. Another feature characterising life of such study groups is the increased requirements for discipline and statutory relations. Cadet corps training groups are typically free to enter and exit because of their semi-closed nature.

3. Research Questions

Main research question is to study, analyze and interpret main differences of socialization in cadet corps and comprehensive schools. Differences in educational and social environments may help to distinguish specific characteristics of interpersonal relationships that are correlated with student's adaptation and, vice versa, such analysis can help to understand the characteristics that can help to adapt to new conditions. Using of theoretical approaches mentioned above will help to perform comprehensive analysis, results of which could be used both in theoretical and practical directions.

4. Purpose of the Study

All this served as the basis for formulating the purpose of the study focused on identifying differences in interpersonal relationships of adolescents depending on conditions of socialisation (in the cadet corps or a general education school). Research hypothesis is as follows: it can be assumed that the interpersonal relationships of adolescents in a semi-closed study group differ from those of adolescents in an open study group in terms of the intensity of introversion/extraversion and anxiety/aggressiveness. Refining the hypothesis, it should be noted that, in our opinion, in a semi-closed group, adolescents should be more oriented toward expanding the circle of contacts and active self-realisation. The former is associated with limited freedom of social contacts choice in the cadet corps (compensation for this limitation is the intensity of indicators on the extraversion scale), the latter - with the motivation for learning. Three study groups were the object of the research - two groups of students from the cadet corps and one school student group, for comparison.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Sample

The study has involved three real groups of adolescents aged 13-14 years, 8th-grade students, two groups of cadets (25 and 24 students) and one group of school students (N = 28) studying in a comprehensive education institution. The inclusion in the research of two, rather than one, groups of cadets pursued the goal of identifying general and partial characteristics of the adolescents' interpersonal relationships. The total sample size was 77 individuals. The choice of the age group was determined by the fact that they enter the cadet corps starting from 7th grade. During a year of joint training in a study group, group structures (sociometric, communicative, authorities) should be formed, group norms of behaviour should be developed, etc. A group of students from the 8th grade of a general education school played the role of a "control" group. They had more interaction experience because these teenagers have been studying together for several years. In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the groups were relatively equal - in each of the three groups, two-thirds of the respondents were brought up in conjugal (nuclear) families, roughly an equal number of students had a brother or sister and lived in a large or small family. The only exception was one indicator - the gender composition. Both cadet groups consisted entirely of boys, while the general education class consisted of an equal number of boys and girls. In this regard, when comparing the indicators of interpersonal relations, the data was juxtaposed twice. The first time - only boys from a comprehensive school, the second time - the whole group. Comparative analysis included only data on the intensity which coincided with the two measurements. When analysing the differences in the motivation for entering cadet corps, it was found that the first cadet group was primarily focused on the choice of a military profession, then on the choice of parents, and only after that came their interests. Whereas in the second group of cadets, education was in the first place, then came the choice of parents and their interests.

5.2. Measurements

- 1) Test by Sobchik (2005) "Individually typological features" included eight main scales: extraversion, spontaneity, aggressiveness, rigidity, introversion, sensitivity, anxiety, lability; and two additional scales lies and aggravation focused on checking reliability of the data obtained (Sobchik, 2005), and Russian adaptation of Interpersonal Checklist, (Leary et al., 1957).
 - 2) Method of value orientations by Fantalova (2001) contains twelve 10-point scales.
- 3) The sociometry method (Moreno, 1951) is a parametric procedure that evaluates your classmates according to their intimacy and dislike. The evaluation takes place in two spheres of personal interaction interpersonal and business, number of elections is five. Five categories had been defined: stars, accepted, isolated, neglected, rejected.
- 4) A mini-essay on the topic "What is friendship?" The texts of the essays were processed using content analysis (for more details about the method, see: Downe-Wamboldt, 1992).

To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, an author's questionnaire was developed, which included some open questions aimed at identifying the motivation for entering cadet corps, professional orientation (ideas about the future profession), subjective assessment of the significance of indicators for success in life, indicators of subjective economic status. The following statistical methods were used in the work: frequency analysis, correlation analysis (r-Spearman), comparison of indicators of intensity as demonstrated by scales, and Mann-Whitney test to identify differences.

6. Findings

Before introducing results of empirical research, a detailed description of its tasks should be given.

The first one consisted of a pairwise comparison of the interpersonal relations variables for each of the two groups - cadets and school students. It was hypothesised that the indicators coinciding in the three groups on eight scales of the method would indicate the role of the "age" factor in formation of interpersonal relations of adolescents in the study group, regardless of socialisation conditions. Being different in the two cadet groups and schoolchildren group, indicators of the interpersonal relations scales can be interpreted as a result of influence of the socialisation characteristics in the organisational and educational environment in the cadet corps.

The second task was focused on identifying the features of interpersonal relations in different educational groups of adolescents studying in the cadet corps, i.e. we are talking about general and specific features of adolescents' interpersonal relations in a semi-closed study group. The detected differences in the levels of variables exist possibly due to both the socio-psychological climate in the group, and the style of leadership, as well as the way the groups were formed.

In group 1, the class teacher was a man, in group 2, a woman, who, according to experts, had paid more attention to an individual approach when working with students, and was more emotional and less authoritarian than her male colleague. An important condition was the fact that the female leader of the boys group could stimulate more emotional and open relationships in her class.

6.1. Differences in interpersonal relations between cadet corps and school

Comparative analysis by the Mann-Whitney criterion of levels of interpersonal relations variables in the study groups of adolescents in the cadet corps (generalised scale) and schools showed the following. Cadets' interpersonal relations differed from similar relations between school students in intensity: spontaneity (U = 0.428; $p \le 0.006$), aggressiveness (U = 0.394; $p \le 0.002$), rigidity (U = 0.459; $p \le 0.014$), sensitivity (U = 0.425; $p \le 0.006$).

As shown in Figure 1, the indicators of spontaneity, rigidity, and sensitivity were more pronounced in the group of school students than for cadets. In the generalised group of cadets, spontaneity and rigidity demonstrated normal values, which indicated their balance.

On the other hand, in the cadet corps, values on the aggressiveness scale were more pronounced, while in school they did not exceed the norm. Interpreting the data obtained, we noted that the education system in the cadet corps, in contrast to school, implied strict policies aimed at forming strong-willed nature and emotional self-control in students' behaviour, ability to comply rules and norms appropriate for the cadet corps organisational culture.

As a result, a tendency typical for adolescence, manifested in spontaneous (ill-considered) statements and actions, heightened subjectivity, desire to defend their views and principles, increased criticism of other opinions and views, became less pronounced.

At the same time, the system of education and upbringing in the cadet corps enhances the adolescents' need for active self-realisation and further stimulates the manifestation of stubbornness and self-will in defending their interests (aggressiveness scale).

This situation may be typical of a team of boys who have chosen a military career. Formation of leadership qualities among students is one of the tasks of socialisation in cadet corps. Interestingly, no statistical differences were found in the scale of anxiety, in the group of cadets and schoolchildren, while differences in its severity (test scores) in the two groups were obvious.

Moreover, it was the school group that demonstrated greater emotionality, sensitivity, and insecurity with others (the scale of sensitivity). The absence of statistically significant differences in the generalised group of cadets and the school group - according to the scales: introversion, extraversion, and lability could be considered as a manifestation of the age characteristics for interpersonal relations of adolescents.

What this means is the balance of introversion and increased intensity of extraversion and lability; that is desire to expand social contacts, increased mood variability, and aspiration for emotional involvement are typical for interpersonal relations of 13-14-year-old adolescents who took part in the study. Of course, it cannot be argued that this is typical for all adolescents of this age. However, it can be assumed that a similar trend can be found in other groups of this age.

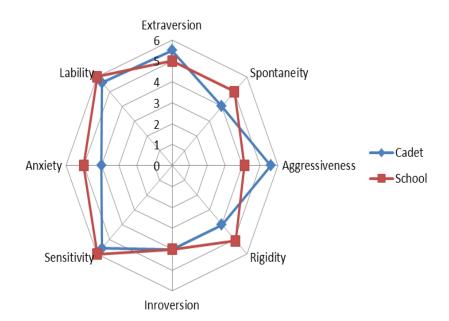


Figure 1. The intensity of the scales of interpersonal relations in the study groups of cadets and the

6.2. Differences between cadets and school students in understanding "what is friendship?"

A comparative analysis of friendship concept in the joint group of cadets and the school group has shown that there were statistically significant differences in the understanding of this phenomenon by adolescents. The differences were related to how adolescents interpreted friendship: as "companionship" $(U=0.378;\,p\le0.000)$ or understood as "a friend is a specific person" $(U=0.57;\,p\le0.04)$, or trust $(U=0.500;\,p\le0.017)$. For the cadets, friendship was primarily companionship, trust in each other, communication, and help. In a group of school students, help, and communication were also the most important signs of friendship, but their definition system also included the concept of "happiness". This fact gave a different meaning to the concept of friendship as existing in the minds of school students. It has become more emotional, deeper, and took on a personal character. For the cadets, however, understanding of friendship was characterized by somewhat more distanced relationships - of a partnership nature, oriented toward mutual assistance, but less emotional.

6.3. Sociometric structure of groups

Comparing the data of sociometric research in the three groups of adolescents, the following was found. Unlike school, both groups of cadets did not have such categories of students as the isolated ones. Moreover, these indicators characterised relations between cadets in both business and personal interaction. In general, the results obtained indirectly indicated the specifics of socialisation conditions in cadet corps - adolescents lived in a boarding school, so being solitude was extremely problematic for any of them. The training system in the cadet corps implies formation of a team-like study group with high level of cohesion, a clear distribution of roles and statuses, and an organised communication system. Due to a number of objective conditions associated with the course of this study, it must be admitted that the results of a sociometric study cannot represent a complete picture of the differences for the relations in question, since

the cadet corps groups exclusively consisted of young men, while the school group was mixed in gender. However, it should be noted that it is possible to accept the fact that the non-present category of isolated students is the specifics of the socialisation conditions in cadet corps. This result will be verified at the next stage of the study when the sample includes semi-closed groups of mixed types.

6.4. Differences between the two groups of cadets

A comparative analysis of the differences in the levels of variables for interpersonal relations of cadets from other groups and the factors that determine them showed statistically significant differences in the two groups of cadets only in terms of the sensitivity scale (U = 0.198, p ≤ 0.039). However, differences on the level of tendencies in the intensity of interpersonal relations on four out of eight scales were still present (Figure 2). The absence of statistically significant differences in three of the four scales could be explained by the fact that only small real-life study groups participated in the research, and by a general trend in both groups associated with exceeding the test norms on these scales. A qualitative analysis of the data obtained by comparing test indicators revealed the following. In group 2, in general, the signs of sensitivity (impressionability, a tendency for reflection, etc.), aggressiveness (active self-realisation, stubbornness, self-will in defending their interests), lability (changeable mood, etc.), extraversion (desire to expand social contacts) were more pronounced than in group 1. However, taking into account that the indicators of lability and extraversion scales did not reveal statistically significant differences in the joint group of cadets and the group of schoolchildren, it can be assumed that it was the impressionability that distinguished the second group of cadets from the first one. An attempt to explain the differences in interpersonal relations in groups of cadets determined the direction of the search for differences in their concepts of friendship. The analysis showed that in the first group of cadets, associations were related to companionship, trust, and communication. And in the second group of cadets, friendship was primarily help, and only then companionship, trust, and communication. It should be noted that the differences in sociometric structure of the two groups were grounded in the fact that the first one included "stars" (highstatus, emotionally most preferred) in both business and interpersonal relations, while the second group only in interpersonal area. Taking into account the respondents' differing motivations for studying in cadet corps (the dominant motive in the first group was the desire to become a military professional, whereas in the second - to get an education), it can be assumed that the specificity of motivation determines the strength of cohesion indicators in the groups. Correlation analysis of the cadets' perceptions of friendship and the indicators of their interpersonal relations, distinguishing the two groups, showed that in the first one the indicators of extraversion (lower in this group than in the second one) were associated with perception of friendship as companionship (r = 0, 51; $p \le 0.018$) and with an image of a specific person - a friend (r = -0.45; p ≤ 0.042). The intensity of sensitivity was also associated with companionship (r = 0.58; p ≤ 0.006). At the same time, lability indicators in this group were determined by the notions of friendship as help (r =0.61; p ≤ 0.003) and were associated with an image of a specific person - a friend (r = -0.60; p ≤ 0.004). In the second group, the scale of aggressiveness (it was higher in this group in terms of test values) was associated with the idea of friendship as a state of happiness (r = 0.44; $p \le 0.04$). These connections showed the semantic load of interpersonal relations of adolescents studying in different groups of the cadet corps. Let us keep in mind that in the first group (motivation to become a military man) the indicators of extraversion, sensitivity, lability were lower in test values than in the second one. Interpreting the connections, we can say that the more the cadets from this group were inclined to expand social contacts, the stronger was their belief that friendship is companionship, but not a specific person (friend), and vice versa. The more impressionable adolescents were, the higher was their pessimism in assessing prospects, as was stronger their belief about friendship as being companionship and vice versa. Finally, the more changeable was their mood, the higher their sentimentality, the more they tended to perceive friendship as help, but not a specific person (friend). Taking into account that these scales were lower in this group than in the second one, it can be concluded that understanding friendship as an image of a specific person rather than as partnership, serves as semantic definition for the interpersonal relations in this group. In the second group of cadets, higher indicators of active self-realisation, manifestations of stubbornness, and self-will were due to understanding friendship as a state of happiness.

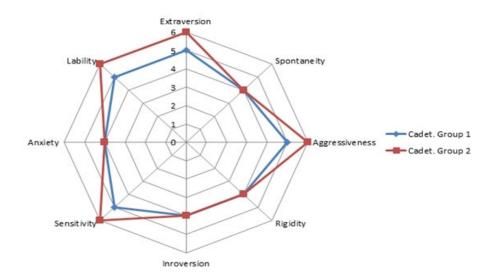


Figure 2. The intensity of the scales of interpersonal relations in two study groups of cadets

6.5. Discussion

Based on the results obtained and their interpretation, it can be said that even though analysing cadet corps groups separately, (some) common features still could be found. Some of these traits can be seen as the influence of socialisation conditions - through studying in a semi-closed study group.

According to the research results, the two semi-closed groups commonly demonstrated coincidence in the subjective assessment of material well-being and their economic status, the set of core values for these groups was identical, the future profession belonging to military sphere of activity made important achieving success in this area. As a strategy for achieving success in life for these groups, education was the most important, but work was also represented (the coincidence of the socio-psychological portrait of the groups). A common characteristic for the groups was complete coincidence in the group structure, i.e. the absence of such a subgroup as isolated individuals, in contrast to the open groups (Cillessen & Bukowski, 2018; Ferguson et al., 2019). The intensity degrees as expressed by Individually Typological Questionnaire scales, which were taken as orientation of personality in the interpersonal relation, coincided; though with slight differences in accentuation. As for the friendship concept, the cognitive element for

building interpersonal relationships, cadets relied on concepts of help, trust, communication, and camaraderie. The sociometric status of adolescent in the group was also a generalising characteristic; it performed a function of a regulator for behaviour and relationships in the corps (Galián et al., 2018; Rytioja et al., 2019, etc.).

Comparing the general characteristics of two adolescent cadet and school groups, we can identify characteristics of age and of the specific conditions of socialisation within the framework of education in a semi-closed adolescent group of a cadet boarding school. The age characteristics include heightened selfesteem, loading one's self with (exaggerated) significance (Naganandini, 2017; Singh et al., 2017, etc.). The value orientations of all three groups shared a common structure, which suggests that this was not an environmental characteristic, but a family one, since family endows us with values. High significance of successfulness in future should also be considered as family-age characteristic. The age characteristic is the cognitive perception of friendship as help and communication. Also, intensity of extraversion, lability, and sensitivity of interpersonal relations as measured by the scales, can be attributed to the adolescent period of personality formation (Kononenko et al., 2020). But the main difference will be the severity of aggressiveness on the scale within the framework of socialisation conditions in a semi-closed group. That could be an indication of family or school problems. (Estévez Lópe et al., 2018). Based on this, it can be said that several factors influence formation of interpersonal relations and determine the specificity of socialisation conditions in a semi-closed study group. These factors can be divided into "external" and "internal". The influence of family characteristics on aspects of interpersonal relations should be referred to as the "family" ones. Their influence is explained by the fact that in situation of isolation from the family, an adolescent turns on hyperalimentation to the family, as well as the fact that passing new stage of socialisation he rebuilds the early acquired experience (schooling) where the family and relations with it become the foundation once again. (Pössel et al., 2018) The "environmental" ones include influence of sociometric status (controlled by internal values and norms of the cadet corps) on interpersonal relations, the formation of a military-professional orientation that also influences relations, as well as presence of some distinctive ideas about friendship as partnership and trust.

These results and their generalisations show that the differences in interpersonal relations in socialisation conditions of a cadet boarding school and a secondary school are different. They differ both in the intensity of the scales and in the factors that determine formation of these relations.

One of the main limitations of the study was the fact that the gender criterion was not representative. This was due to the specifics of such educational institutions as cadet corps. Being the first step in individual's military career, these institutions are more focused on recruiting and training boys. While at school the gender factor is mixed. In this study, we have sought to conduct statistical analysis in such a manner that this aspect would be utterly minimised. Analysing comparison of cadets with a school group initially only by male sex, and then with a mixed school group, no statistically significant differences were obtained between these analyses. Another consideration we can come up with is the use of the sociometric method, with its objectivity questioned recently (Košir & Pečjak, 2005). But it is worth saying that our study does not focus on sociometric status; we use this method to represent the structure of the group and form an understanding of cohesion and interconnectedness.

7. Conclusion

The research results have partially confirmed the research hypothesis. It was found that the conditions of adolescents' socialisation in the cadet corps, on the one hand, increased intensity of active self-realisation, manifestations of stubbornness, and self-will of adolescents, demonstrated in interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, the spontaneity of statements and actions characterising this age, adolescents' increased criticism of other people's opinions, their subjectivity and desire to defend their views and principles, were levelled by the educational system, as well as by the elements of organisational culture formed in the educational institution (norms of behaviour, values, traditions, etc.). The revealed specificity of cadets' interpersonal relations in comparison with school students was also manifested in the notions of friendship as comradely relations built on mutual assistance. Another result of this study, which illustrates the peculiarity of interpersonal relations formation in conditions of cadet corps, is that there are no isolated adolescents in the educational groups of cadets. The specificity of interpersonal relations in different semi-closed groups of cadets was defined by intensity of sensitivity and aggressiveness indicators. Cadets from the study group motivated to become military men were less prone to reflection and pessimism in assessing their prospects than cadets from the group motivated to get a good education. It was shown that the first group's lower sensitivity scores were associated with understanding friendship as presence of a specific friend. At the same time, higher indicators of aggressiveness (i.e., active self-realisation, defending one's interests, etc.) in the second group of cadets (with the motivation for getting an education) were due to the idea of friendship as a state of happiness. In the perspective of studying patterns of formation and development of semi-closed study groups, attention should be paid to analysing the socio-psychological climate, the role of a significant Other (group leader), their characteristics, and leadership style as factors of interpersonal relations of adolescents in semi-closed study groups. An important research direction, in our opinion, is the one focussing on semi-closed educational groups and aiming at identifying signs of a collective subject in them (Gaydar, 2013; Zhuravlev, 2009 etc.).

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