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THE DYNAMICS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN IDEAL AND REAL SELF OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR PERSONAL EFFICIENCY

A b s t r a c t. The article analyzes the research of the real and ideal self-images of pupils having different levels of personal effectiveness at the time of their transition from primary school age to adolescence. There are five category groups with which pupils describe the "successful pupil" image: generalized characteristics; acting and behavioural characteristics; personality traits (this category can be divided into two subgroups: 1) a person as a learning agent, the treats important for learning activity implementation; 2) a person's traits characterizing him/her as a human being); relationships with other people, other characteristics. The ideal self-image peculiarities are determined and compared, in dynamics, with real self-images of 3rd-6th grade pupils depending on their personal effectiveness. The research results give grounds to assert that the self-knowledge of primary schoolchildren has the form of self-perception and self-observation that are basis for creation of ideas about themselves; such ideas consist mostly of single images in specific situations. In contrast, at the beginning of adolescence, self-study and self-reflection become very important, which is a prerequisite for holistic, generalized self-image formation.

Key words: personality; personal efficiency; reflexity; primary school age; adolescence.

1. RELEVANCE OF STUDIES

Adequate self-knowledge and comprehension of own self contribute to development of a person as a successful effective personality, his/her powers for constructive self-creation from the early stages of ontogenesis, and espe-

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cially in transitional developmental periods. The dynamism of reality and relationships with other people support adequate adaptation in changing social conditions, constant approaching to own self as an internal regulatory source, for more differentiated regulation of personal behaviour. Therefore, it is important to study the psychological mechanisms of personal effectiveness formation at the period of transition from primary to secondary school, from childhood to adolescence.

According to the cognitive-phenomenological approach, the inner world, the personal "inner reality" is dominant in the personal "theory of the world". The researchers note that life experience is fixed in mini-theories in the form of systems of meanings, significances, beliefs, values that govern personal perception and imagination, determine interpretations of the surrounding world and an agent's activities. Personal concepts on a happy world correspond to the concept on oneself as a successful person, able to cope with life's challenges.² Experience in ontogenesis is associated with a person's awareness of his/her own psychological peculiarities, are formed as a result of constant comparing of own values? and attitudes with the norms and requirements of the social environment, they are mediated by the real context of life through the personality-motivational plan of consciousness. This experience, as well as self-attitude expressed in it, is in continuous development. Such dynamism is manifested primarily in expansion and deepening of the contextual and functional spheres during lifespan development on the base of emotional experience accumulation. According to I.I. Chesnokova, some relatively stable ideas on "self", images of self and own behaviour, "tied" to a particular situation or to a certain communication are formed on the first level of self-knowledge, which is the main on the early ontogeny stages. The second level of self-knowledge is characterised by the fact that knowledge about oneself are acquires not from the "I – other people" system but from the "I - I" system. Based on the analysis of these processes, the researcher arrives to the following conclusion: "A generalized self-image, arising from separate, unitary, situational images, contains general, characteristic features and ideas on a person's own essence, social importance. This generalized image is expressed in the corresponding concept on self [...] It (the self-concept) affects

¹ M.Y. Borishevs'kiy, "Samosvidomist' yak faktor psykhichnogo rozvytku osobystosti," *Psykhologiya i suspil'sto* (2009), 4: 119-126.

² R. JANOFF-BULMAN, CH. TIMKO, "Coping with traumatic events: the role of denial in light of people's assumptive worlds," in: *Coping with negative life events: clinical and social psychological perspectives*, ed. C.R. Snyder, C.E. Ford (N.Y., L.: Plenum Press, 1987), 22.

greatly the whole structure of the person's psyche, world perception in general, causes the main line of behaviour, even in difficult living conditions."³

As the researchers point out (A.M. Winogorodskiy, N.Y. Zavats'ka, O.A. Kraieva, G.M. Svidens'ka⁴) the adequacy, realism of a person's self-image is directly related to the development of reflection. The reflection "implies mirroring of one's own inner world, which support appearance of a system of ideas and concepts about oneself, about own qualities, feelings, experiences, motives of behaviour, achievements and failures, etc." G.M. Svidens'ka states that not only separation of self, formation of personal integrity, a certain attitude to self, filling with new content elements take place, but also the personal sense of life (needs, motives, values) and also prospects for the future are formed and developed namely because of reflexive analysis.⁶

An ideal is required for reflection, such an ideal "must be both: abstract and practical, relevant to a direct activity. A person, through reflection realizing changes in his/her own self, forms a conceptual image of him/herself, characterized by internal harmony, integrity. In this process, "fullness of awareness and acceptance of changes occurring in him/herself, a degree of proximity of real and ideal self-images, expressed egocentric attitudes emphasizing the significance of self and self-trust" can be considered as criteria. So, referring to the above theoretical principles, we have set the task to study the dynamics of real and ideal self-images of pupils having different levels of personal effectiveness at their transition from childhood to adolescence.

The purpose of research is analysing of the peculiarities of relations between ideal and real self-images at pupils having different effectiveness.

The research was attended by third – sixth grade pupils of general school (129 people). According to their teachers' expert assessment, the pupils were divided into three groups according to their personal effectiveness (PE): group I – pupils with high personal efficiency (with high PE), group

³ I.I. CHESNOKOVA, *Problema samosoznaniya v psikhologii* (Moskva: Nauka, 1977), 99.

⁴ A.M. VINOGORODS'KIY, Rozvytok osobistisnoyi refleksiyi pidlitkiv (na materiali spryinyattya muzyky) (Kyiv, 1999); N.Y. ZAVATS'KA, Psykhologiya sotsial'noiyi readaptatsiyi osib zrilogo viku (Lugans'k:vid-vo SNU im. V. Dalya, 2009); O.A. KRAYEVA, "Stanovlennya refleksyvnoyi svidomosti na etapi podolannya pidlitkom kryzy identichnosti", Problemy suchasnoyi psikhologiyi? (2011), 11: 382-392; G.M. SVIDENS'KA, Psykhologichni osoblyvosti rozvytku samosvidomosti osobystosti v period pidlitkovoyi kryzy (Kyiv, 2008), 23-25.

⁵ N.Y. ZAVATS'KA, *Psykhologiya sotsial'noiyi readaptatsiyi osib zrilogo viku* (Lugans'k: vid-vo SNU im. V. Dalya, 2009), 79.

⁶ G.M. SVIDENS'KA, Psykhologichni osoblyvosti rozvytku samosvidomosti osobystosti, 25.

⁷ V.V. Turban, Stanovlennya etychnoyi svidomosti v ontogenezi (Kyiv, 2013), 11.

⁸ N.Y. ZAVATS'KA, Psykhologiya sotsial'noiyi readaptatsiyi osib zrilogo viku, 77.

II – pupils with average personal efficiency (with average PE), group III – pupils with low personal efficiency (with low PE).

Research method: Pupils were asked to give as a free description (conversation) a definition, a description of a successful pupil (an ideal self-image), as well as to compare it with their real self-images. The content analysis of the descriptions made it possible to distribute all the received statements to five groups of characteristics (categories).

Table 1. Categories of third-sixth grade pupils' statements about the a successful pupil's traits

Categories		Illustrating statements
I. Generalized characteristics. This group covers the most commonly used characteristics, as well as the less well-differentiated expressions		Such a pupil "is studying well" and "gets good marks"; "always doing everything right", "has success in everything", "seeks for better"
II. Characteristics of activities and behaviour. This group presents statements describing specific school abilities, as well as activity characteristics of a learning agent		"is reading, drawing, etc. well", "has calligraphic handwriting", "memorizes well the lesson material"; " is preparing always for classes", "answers the teacher's questions", "does all homework", "is willing to answer", "works well at a lesson"
III. Personality traits. This group of statements was divided into two subgroups:	1) the features of a pupil as an agent of study, traits im- portant for the learning acti- vity implementation	"reasonable", "conscientious", "attentive", "diligent", "interested in various sciences", "thinking"
	2) personality traits describing a human being	"kind", "polite", "honest", "caring", "active in social life"
IV. Relationships with other people. This group includes statements about relationships with other people – peers and adults		"maintains friendly relationships with classmates", "respects others", "understands the teacher"
V. Other characteristics. This group contains statements about the pupil's appearance, a list of names of excellent pupils, interest in modern gadgets, as well as some specific characteristics		"beautiful"; "a fan of PCs and iPads"; "teacher's favourite", "has a good reputation", "gets pleasure from learning"

2. RESULTS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

The empirical data analysis made for the 3-6th grades pupils regarding the definition of a successful pupil has led us to the next conclusions. Pupils with low PE (figure 1) show mainly the following tendencies: firstly, the

number of the statements about specific classmates as successful pupils decreases from the third to the fourth grade and they disappear at all in the fifth and sixth grades; secondly, the percentage of generalized characteristics grows from the third to the sixth grade. Within this aspect, the peculiarity of these pupils is that the image of a successful pupil made by the third-graders includes in a slight amount (by 7.7%) personal traits but the fourth-graders did not mention such statements.

At the same time, there are traits important for a learning agent (16.7%) in the descriptions of the fifth-grade pupils; the percentage of these traits increases significantly in answers of the sixth-grade pupils (27.3%), and the characteristics of the "I-person sphere" appears again (9.1%). As it was mentioned above, the statements of the sixth-grade pupils about personality traits are changed also

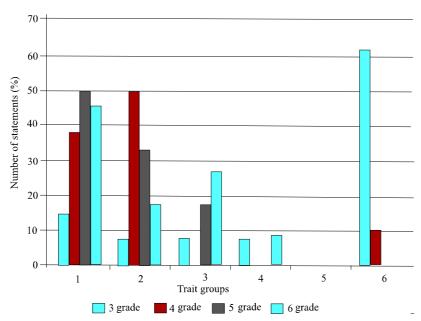


Fig. 1. Distribution of a successful pupil's traits in the descriptions of 3-6th grade pupils with low PE

Note: 1 – generalized characteristics; 2 – characteristics of activities and behaviour; 3 – a person's traits as a learning agent; 4 – a person's traits as a human being; 5 – relationships with other people; 6 – other characteristics.

qualitatively. Thirdly, at the transition to the secondary school, the percentage of statements about behaviour and activities of a successful pupils decreases: they equal to 50.0% in the fourth grade, 33.3% in the 5th grade, and 18.2%

in the 6th grade. The sphere of relationships with other people is not reflected in the image of a successful pupil by low-performing pupils.

How does this image correlate with the real self-image of pupils with low efficiency? First of all, we should note that the pupils of all grades mentioned not only positive but also negative self-characteristics. In addition, the five- and sixth-grade pupils had categorical statements about their failure ("I have bad marks"), but the third- and fourth-grade pupils gave milder descriptions ("I am sometimes a little lazy", "I talk sometimes at lessons") or acknowledge existence both positive and negative manifestations ("I can be named successful, because I take pains and can be named unsuccessful, because I am sometimes lazy"). There are also certain age-specific features of correlation of the real self-image with the image of a successful student. Thus, the low-performing third-grade pupils were not able to substantiate the assertions about their successfulness (25.0%) or they tried to prove their success in other fields of activities (25.0%): "I play guitar and dance well", "I help my mother", or accused others in their failure (12.5%): "bad friends." The fourth- and fifth-grade pupils of this group showed the most number of "double" (ambivalent) self-characteristic (42.9% of the 4th-grade pupils, 33.3% of the 5th-grade pupils) and the "apologetic" statements: "I listen to the teacher, but sometimes I speak" etc. The sixth-grade pupils had mainly more categorical judgments (both positive and negative) and attempted to explain their mismatch with the image of a successful pupil: "I'm not selfassured."

These data is the basis for concluding that students with low PE, being aware of their mismatch with the image of a successful pupil, experience discomfort and protect themselves against it with the self-description "duality" or with demonstration of their success in other areas of life.

The experimental data analysis as for the image of a successful pupil (ideal self) of pupils with the average level of personal effectiveness (figure 2) shows that the percentage of generalized characteristics and characteristics of activities and behaviour in all classes is relatively stable and varies from 22% to 36%. For the 3-5th grades, the number of statements of the two categories is almost the same (the 3th grade: 28.6% and 28.6%; the 4th grade: 36.7% and 33.3% and the 5th grade: 21.9% and 25.0%, respectively). The percentage of activity characteristics (34.6%) exceeds the percentage of generalized characteristics (23.1%) only at the sixth-graders. The most dynamic changes occur for the pupils with average PE with the category of "personality traits."

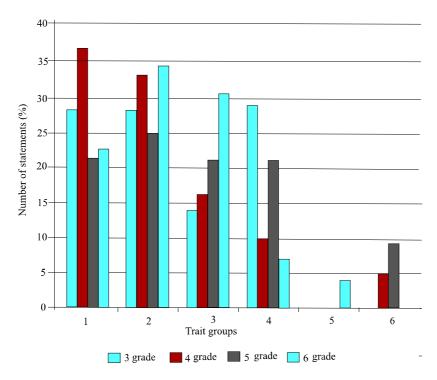


Fig. 2. Distribution of a successful pupil's traits in the descriptions of 3-6th grade pupils with average PE

Note: 1 – generalized characteristics; 2 - characteristics of activities and behaviour; 3 – a person's traits as a learning agent; 4 – a person's traits as a human being; 5 – relationships with other people; 6 – other characteristics.

First of all, there is a clear tendency of increasing of the number of the statement about a pupil's traits as a learning agent from the third to the sixth grade: 14.3% of the 3rd grade pupils mentioned such treats, 16.7% of the 4th graders did it, 21.9% of the 5th grades, 30.8% of the 6th grade. For the average effective third-graders, important in educational activities personality traits are not yet a priority, but for sixth-graders, such traits are ranked the second in significance as a successful pupil. At the same time, statements about the traits of a successful pupil as a human being mentioned by this pupil group are very unstable: 28.6% for the 3rd graders, 10.0% for the 4th graders, 21.9% for the 5th graders, 7.7% for the 6th graders. We can see a certain tendency of reduction (except for the 5th grade) in the ideal self-image of the pupil with average PE of such traits as "kind", "polite", "caring" and so on and replacement of them with behavioural characteristics, as

well as traits important for the learning agent. Let us add that the sixth graders with the average PE level mentioned statements about relationships with other people.

Thus, it can be argued that the acting and behavioural traits are significant for the image of a successful pupil of the average PE pupils, as well as, the importance of the pupil's traits as a learning agent increase dynamically from the third to the sixth grade.

As for correlation of the ideal and real self-images of the people with the average level of personal effectiveness, the following conclusions can be made. The third- and fourth-graders of this group do not have practically at all negative (6.3% for the 4th grades) or ambivalent self-characteristic (14.3% for the 3rd graders, 6.3% for the 4th graders). Let us note that the fifth part of the average effective third-graders asserted, but could not argue their success. It should be noted that the self characteristics of the fourth-graders with average PE are almost 70% identical to a successful pupil's treats. The situation is changed for the fifth and sixth grades. Thus, the number of negative (45.5% for the 5th graders, 33.3% for the 6th graders) and ambivalent, "double" (27.3% and 25.0% respectively), as well as explanatory statements increases. Examples of such explanatory statements are: "If I want, then I can do everything, and if I am forced, then I do noting," "I am lost and I cannot answer at the board." These data are the basis for determining of the dynamics of the real self-image with respect to the ideal self-image for the group of pupils with average efficiency. Primary school pupils have a positive perception of themselves as learning agents, so their ideal and real self-images are quite identical, but at the early adolescence, self-characteristics, reflexivity of statements, adequacy of self-perception as a pupil become more important.

The experimental data analysis as for the 3-6th grade pupils with the high PE level (figure 3) shows that the number of generalized characteristics decreases from the third to the fifth grade, compared with other groups (28.6% for the 3rd grade, 16.7% for the 5th grade). The number of such statements of the sixth-graders increases, but they are also changed qualitatively, as noted above. At the same time, from the third to the fifth grade there is a stable significant number of behavioural and activity characteristics (35.7%, 27.6% and 37.5% respectively), their percentage significantly decreases for the sixth-graders (16.7%). Regarding the personality trait statements, the following tendency was observed for the pupils with high PE (except for the 5th grade): decreasing, in comparison with other groups, of a pupil's traits as a learning agent and growing of the percentage of statements about the personality traits of a pupil as a human being. This tendency is especially

pronounced for the sixth graders (for comparison: 9.1% belong to the personal traits in the low PE group and 19.4% belongs to the high PE group). Analyzing the data of the five-grades with high PE, we can see the opposite tendencies: for these pupils, the image of a successful pupil includes more characteristics of behaviour and activities, as well as the pupil's traits as a learning subject. In our opinion, it is a reaction on transitivity of their educational status, on adaptation to the new conditions that they experience at this period of life. In addition, the peculiarity of this group is existence at all ages of the characteristics of relationships with other people, both classmates and teachers.

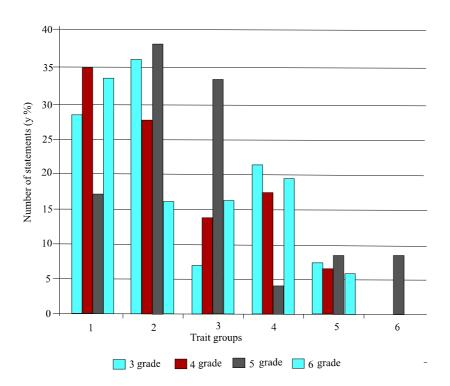


Fig. 3. Distribution of a successful pupil's traits in the descriptions of 3-6th-grade pupils with high PE

Note: 1 – generalized characteristics; 2 – characteristics of activities and behaviour; 3 – a person's traits as a learning agent; 4 – a person's traits as a human being; 5 – relationships with other people; 6 – other characteristics.

As a result, it can be argued that the most noticeable changes for the high PE pupils in the image of a successful pupil (ideal self) occur in the ontogenetic plane. So, the behavioural-activity and generalized characteristics remain important for the third- and fourth-graders, but behavioural manifestations become less important for the sixth-graders and generalized characteristics acquire a qualitatively new content. In addition, personal traits characterizing an agent of vital activity become relevant for highly effective sixth graders in the image of a successful pupil (statistically significant growing at the level of $\rho \le 0.01$, 2.5 times as much as the results of the II group). Other expressions of the high PE sixth-graders concerning the reputation and the emotional-value sphere testify expansion of the spectrum of characteristics inherent to the ideal self. The high PE five-graders demonstrated most clearly some destruction of the ideal self-image (in comparison with the other groups) due to adaptation processes, their age and social situation. This is evidenced by the emphasis on their behavioural characteristics and pupil's traits as a learning agent. They are also characterized by increase of the number, in comparison with other grades, of statements about the relationship with other people, which undoubtedly gives grounds for acknowledging of the growing importance of interpersonal interactions for them.

The relation between the ideal and real self-images of high PE pupils shows that these pupils mostly have positive self-images that encompass not only the field of learning, but also personal and behavioural features. Thus, more than 50% of the high PE third-graders, arguing for their positive selfperception, named such characteristics as "good", "wanting evil no one", and also "faithfully fulfilling the tasks." The similar results can be seen for the fourth- and fifth-graders with this efficiency level: almost all pupils are categorical in perceiving themselves as successful pupils. Few of them (8.3% in the fourth and 10.0% in the fifth grades) spoke not only on their positive manifestations, but also - very sketchy - about their "failures" (for example, they cannot be called a successful pupil, because "I have 10 mark in my academic transcript (12 marks is the best)"), and also argued their success with some caution ("I am trying to study well and behave myself adequately"). The real self-images of these pupils are dominated by generalized and activity characteristics, the percentage of personal traits decrease, compared with the third-graders, there are external confirmation of success ("I have received three letters of praise"), as well as there are many characteristics of interpersonal relationships ("I support friendly relations", "I forgive the blame of my friend").

As for the general positive self-perception, the high PE sixth-graders gave mainly non-categorical, cautious, "procedural" statements: "I am trying to be conscientious, persistent, focused," "trying to succeed," "to change myself for the better", "not much, but there are some achievements," "I am trying to learn a lot". So, both ideal and real self-images of this pupil group do not include nearly at all the argumentation of success only due to adherence of school requirements and rules; the reflective value of learning and personal traits contributing to success become much more important.

3. CONCLUSION

In general, it can be argued that self-knowledge of primary schoolchildren is based on self-perception and self-observation; the ideas on self are formed on it. Such ideas are mostly separate images of self in specific situations. In contrast, at the beginning of adolescence, introspection and self-reflection become very important, which is a prerequisite for the formation of a holistic, generalized self image.

The peculiarities and trends of self-image formation and dynamics of the pupils with different efficiency levels, determined by this research, demand the special attention of teachers and school psychologists to create a system of developmental and correctional influences aimed at formation of reflexivity as a mechanism for the development of personal effectiveness of pupils at different school stages.

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DYNAMIKA RELACJI POMIĘDZY IDEALNYM I REALNYM OBRAZEM SIEBIE WŚRÓD DZIECI W WIEKU SZKOŁY PODSTAWOWEJ I ADOLESCENTAMI W ZAKRESIE ICH POCZUCIA WŁASNEJ EFEKTYWNOŚCI

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł analizuje wyniki badań nad "ja-realnym" i "ja-idealnym" wśród uczniów o różnym poziomie własnej skuteczności w grupie w okresie przejścia z poziomu szkoły podstawowej do gimnazjum. Stwierdzono istnienie pięciu kategorii, poprzez które uczniowie postrzegają obraz "idealnego ucznia": 1) ogólne cechy; 2) charakterystyka aktywności i zachowania; 3) cechy osobowości (kategoria ta została podzielona na dwie podgrupy: a) cechy indywidualne ucznia ważne dla realizacji aktywności uczniowskiej; b) cechy osobowości charakteryzujące podmiot jako osobę; 4) relacje z innymi ludźmi oraz 5) inne cechy. Ustalono specyfikę obrazu "ja-idealnego" oraz jego korelację z obrazem "ja-realnym" wśród uczniów klas od 3 do 6, w zależności od poziomu ich poczucia własnej skuteczności. Wyniki badania dają podstawy, by twierdzić, iż samopoznanie wśród uczniów szkoły podstawowej występuje głównie w postaci samoobserwacji i w mniejszym stopniu introspekcji, opierając się na pojedynczych obrazach siebie w określonych sytuacjach. Natomiast uczniowie starsi, będący w okresie dorastania, swój ogólny obraz siebie oraz własną samoocenę kształtują głównie na podstawie procesów introspekcji i autorefleksji, które stanowią główne mechanizmy pozwalające na stworzenie całościowego, uogólnionego obrazu siebie.

Słowa kluczowe: osobowość; poczucie skuteczności; obraz siebie; "ja-idealne", "ja-realne"; autorefleksja; wiek szkolny; wiek młodzieńczy.