

PSYCHOLOGICAL AGE OF ADOLESCENTS: NORMAL OR DEVIATION

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Problem's urgency is based on the necessity to study students' psychological features during the stage of transition from Elementary to Secondary school. On this stage of development the changes in attitude towards teacher and school education are natural. They depend on the change of eras, transition from childhood to adolescence, start of teen-age crisis and can be perceived as an indicator of changes in child's development. This paper's goal is to show the psychological features of students, who are entering Secondary school. The primary methods of our research were questionnaire survey, stating experiment and projective method. Research data shows significant difference between students' psychological and chronological (passport) age. Psychological age of most students, who enter Secondary school, is primary school age and it impedes the process of education and interaction with teachers. Research data, presented in the paper may help teachers, parents and students understand the reasons of school problems and help children to adapt to the new system of social relations.

Keywords: *attitude psychology, psychological age, self-consciousness*

Introduction: It is well-known fact in developmental psychology that when a child moves from Elementary to Secondary school, his attitude to school education changes from diligent and conscientious to negligent and irresponsible. His attitude to teacher also changes from role-based to personal. These changes are natural and related to the change in child's priorities, the origination of new interests, his need to communicate with peers and the process of his separation from parents and family. According to D.B. Elkonin's periodization of development, the transition from Elementary school to Secondary coincides with the transition from childhood to adolescence and first stages of teen age crisis. Change of age periods is based on the changes in the development of child's self-consciousness, the origination of new relation to himself and his social environment. In the opposite case child's behavior demonstrates various features, common to the previous stage of development. Nowadays, many researchers discuss the problem of changing the age period boundaries. For example, the question of the beginning of crisis of 7 years was stated by psychologists at the end of the last century

and today many scientists vote to prolong the teen age to 22 years. In our research we made an attempt to study the psychological features of students, entering Secondary school.

The purpose of the study: to analyze students' psychological features during the transition between Elementary and Secondary school.

Research methods: The following methods were used in our study: theoretical analysis of the given problem, diagnostic methods (questionnaire survey, projective method), experimental method (stating experiment).

Experimental base of the study: The experimental base of study consisted of 176 students of 5 grades of general education school in Moscow.

Research stages: The experiment was held in two stages. On the first stage we studied children' attitude to teacher and school education during their transition from Elementary to Secondary school. Children were asked to fill the questionnaire. On the second stage we studied the psychological features of self-consciousness' development and the developmental level of the previous age period's (primary school age) new-formation. For this part we used the Dembo-Rubinstein's method of self-consciousness' study, modified by A.M. Prihozhan [4: 300] and projective method "Little Red Riding Hood" (developed by E.E. Kravtsova) [3].

Results: Data of questionnaire survey showed that 73% of 5-th grade students perceive their school education as the vital requirement of their future development; 51% think that in school you can learn useful information; 47% believe they may learn something new at school. 44% of students think that school is a fun place and 34% told that they go to school to communicate with peers.

5-th grade students like teachers, who are good at explaining (64% of students), who can be approached with question if something is not understood (46% of students), who pay attention to everyone in class (39% of students). Teacher, who forget to check the homework, allows students to do their own business, don't pay attention to discipline is liked only by 14% of students. Children don't like teachers, who are boring (31%) and those who demand to work a lot (20%). Good teacher, according to the students of 5-th grade should be kind, strict, clever, attentive, just, funny, handsome, hard-working, reasonable, good organizer and he should like students. The nature of these answers allows us to assume that students try to provide socially preferable answers as "good students" (i.e. students, who study well and get good marks). Their attitude towards teacher is role based, just like the attitude of primary school age children.

The research data shows the dominance of emotional and behavioral components in children' attitude towards teacher and school education, which is typical for primary school age children. It is confirmed by the results of self-consciousness study. According to cultural-historical psychology "...development of a child, perceived from the point of stages in the development of personality, from the point of child's relations with environment, from the point of primary activity on every stage is deeply related to the

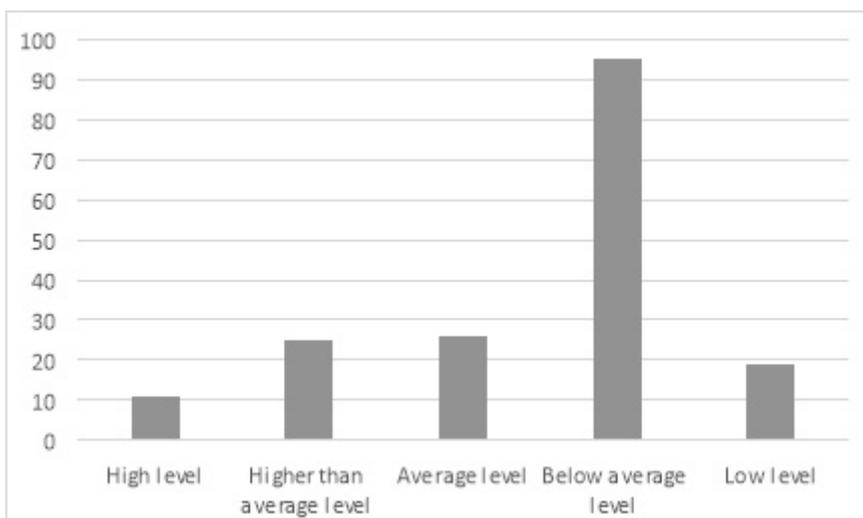
history of the development of child's consciousness" [1: 131]. In transition from one age stage to another, new psychological formations are born. They provide the restructuring and change of the process of development. The origination of central age psychological new-formation indicates that the current age period has ended and the personality is on the verge of age crisis. In critical ages "...the change of child's basic ways of experiencing occurs. The crisis is the moment of fracture, when a child passes from one method of experiencing the environment to another" [1: 189].

The analysis of self-consciousness' research data showed that the self-consciousness' developmental level of 33% of students (58 people) complies with primary school age. 9% (16 people) showed early teen age level of self-consciousness development and 52% of students were in the state of transition between primary school and early teen age. There were also several students (6%), who showed preschool age level of self-consciousness development (picture 1).



Picture 1. Level of 5-th grade students' self-consciousness development

To confirm and validate these results we studied the developmental level of the psychological new-formation of primary school age, which precedes teen age. Central new-formation of primary school age, according to L.S. Vygotsky, is voluntary attention (voluntary change of figure and ground), which was later confirmed by E.L. Gorlova's studies. It means that primary school age children at the end of their age period are able to identify "figure" and "ground" and switch the two of them [2]. To study the development of voluntary attention we used the projective method "Little Red Riding Hood", which was used in the works of A.A. Katerinina [3], K.V. Arlazarova [2] to diagnose the level of adolescents' reflection. We asked test subjects to write the "Little Red Riding Hood" fairy tale on behalf of the wolf. The research data showed that only 6% (11 people) of our students have demonstrated high level of voluntary attention, 14% (25 people) showed higher than average level, 15% (26 people) – average level, 54% (95 people) – below average level and 11% (19 people) had low level of voluntary attention. This data is presented on picture 2. Secondary school



Picture 2. Level of voluntary attention's formation of students, who transfer from Elementary school to

The results show that most students, studying in 5-th grade, don't have fully formed central psychological new-formation of primary school age – voluntary attention. In other words – psychologically most of them are still primary school age children and they act accordingly towards their teachers and school education.

Discussion issues: Our study revealed the number of interconnected factors, which impede the successful transition of a student from Elementary school to Secondary one. The results showed that most students demonstrate various features, typical for primary school age, which was confirmed by the results of self-consciousness' study. Whether it is the new age norm and the new pace of children' development, determined by changed social-economic conditions, or the indicator of the delay in children' psychic development, determined by various factors, is the question, which requires additional serious experimental study. An indirect confirmation of our results we may find in the works of E.E. Kravtsova [3] and E.L. Gorlova [2].

Conclusion: The study of psychological features of students, graduating from Elementary school, allowed us to identify group of children, whose psychological age is either primary school age or in the transition between primary school and teen age. Features, typical for primary school age, may be found in students' behavior, their attitude towards teachers and school education. Surely, this study didn't provide an exhaustive analysis of the given problem and additional large-scale studies are required but even now we can discuss the discrepancy between passport and psychological ages of modern adolescents. Research data may help to form teacher-student relations in schools and provide timely help to those children, who have difficulties entering new age period.

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ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ ВОЗРАСТ ПОДРОСТКОВ: НОРМА ИЛИ ОТКЛОНЕНИЕ

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Актуальность проблемы обусловлена необходимостью изучения психологических особенностей учащихся на этапе перехода от начальной к средней школе. На этом этапе развития изменения в отношении к учительскому и школьному образованию закономерны. Они зависят от смены эпох, перехода от детства к подростковому возрасту, начала подросткового кризиса и могут восприниматься как индикатор изменений в развитии ребенка. Цель данной статьи - показать психологические особенности учащихся, поступающих в среднюю школу. Основными методами нашего исследования были анкетный опрос, постановка эксперимента и проективный метод. Данные исследований показывают значительную разницу между психологическим и хронологическим (паспортным) возрастом учащихся. Психологический возраст большинства учащихся, поступающих в среднюю школу, - это младший школьный возраст, что затрудняет процесс обучения и взаимодействия с учителями. Данные исследований, представленные в статье, могут помочь учителям, родителям и учащимся понять причины школьных проблем и помочь детям адаптироваться к новой системе социальных отношений.

Ключевые слова: *психология отношения, психологический возраст, самосознание*