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**COGNITIVE ASPECTS OF FAMILY SELF-DETERMINATION OF
YOUNG MALES AND FEMALES**

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Abstract

In respect of the transformation of the institution of family and marriage that occur in modern society, the problem of studying the content and structural characteristics and socio-psychological determinants of family self-determination of young people is of a particular relevance. The purpose of the study is to diagnose the connection of cognitive abilities (intelligence, pragmatism - active imagination, conservatism - radicalism) and the content and structural characteristics of family self-determination in adolescence. A set of the following complementary research methods was used: theoretical and methodological analysis of literature sources, questionnaires, psychodiagnostic techniques (the Cattell's 16 PF test, the semantic differential technique developed by Charles Osgood, the "Level of Value-Availability Ratio in Different Life Spheres" questionnaire of E.B. Fantalova, the "Uncompleted Sentences" projective technique and "Test of Life-Purpose Orientations" of D.A. Leontiev), as well as methods of applied statistics (the Mann — Whitney U-test, the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient). Cognitive abilities are seen as an essential factor that plays an important role in the development of family self-determination in adolescence. The results of the study presented in the article show that cognitive abilities determine the development of the following components of self-determination in adolescence: cognitive, value and emotional, regulatory and behavioral, motivation, reflection. When assessing the connections between cognitive abilities and components of family self-determination, both general and specific peculiarities are observed among young males and females. The obtained results will be useful for purposeful formation of family self-determination in youth under the conditions of educational environment of a higher educational institution.

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Keywords: Family self-determination, cognitive abilities, adolescence.



1. Introduction

Over the past decade there has been a number of worrying trends conforming the crisis in family life which affects both marital and parent-child relationships. Modern socio-economic conditions explain the general deterioration of psychological environment, the growth of dysfunctionality and conflict in a large part of Russian families. As a result of the transformation of the institute of family, the loss of clear ideological orientation, lack of disciplines aimed at the formation of a family member's individuality in educational process of schools, colleges, universities, young males and females are put in a situation of an independent family self-determination and of a choice of family values and understanding. Against this background, the problem of the development of family self-determination of modern youth is of a particular interest especially in the period of identity formation of an individual. Self-determination of a growing person is carried out in various fields: personal self-determination (Ginzburg, 1994; Orestova & Karabanova, 2005; Vorobieva & Akbarova, 2015), professional self-determination (Klimov, 2005; Prjazhnikov, 2017; Karabanova, 2016), family self-determination (Dubrovina, 2015; Merzlyakova, 2015; Bibarsova, 2014; Mukhtarova, 2016), economic self-determination (Zhuravlev & Kupreychenko A.B., 2013), civil and cultural identity (Batarchuk, 2014), multi-cultural identity (Batarchuk, 2017), gender identity (Zinchenko, 2017), virtual identity (Asmolov & Asmolov, 2009), etc.

2. Problem Statement

The need to study family self-determination as a psychological phenomenon is determined by the realization of the idea of purposeful formation of family self-determination of modern youth, the creation of a conceptual scheme for designing and implementing a strategy for preparing young people for marriage and family life. The implementation of a psychological and pedagogical model of accompanying family self-determination in adolescence under the conditions of educational environment presupposes the addition and systematization of scientific knowledge about the content, structure, mechanisms, socio-psychological determinants of the formation of family self-determination of an individual. In earlier studies, it was established that the structural and content characteristics of family self-determination are determined by social status and religion (Merzlyakova, 2016), ethnocultural identity (Merzlyakova & Bibarsova, 2017), child-parent relations (Merzlyakova, 2014a), temperament (Merzlyakova, 2017), emotional and volitional characteristics (Merzlyakova, 2014b), competence in communication (Merzlyakova, 2013), emotional intelligence (Bibarsova, 2014), self-actualization (Mukhtarova, 2016). However, the empirical studies aimed at studying cognitive abilities as a factor in the development of family self-determination in adolescence are not enough. Resolving contradiction between the need for modern society to strengthen family authority in the youth environment and the need to identify the socio-psychological determinants of the formation of family self-determination in adolescence determines the scientific problem of the research.

3. Research Questions

3.1. Are there any differences in cognitive abilities between young males and females?

3.2. Are cognitive abilities a factor in the development of family self-determination in adolescence?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the presented study is to reveal the connection of cognitive abilities (intelligence, pragmatism- active imagination, conservatism - radicalism), as well as the content and structural characteristics of family self-determination in adolescence. In this connection, a hypothesis has been made that the young people's family self-determination is determined by a system of various psychological factors, one of which is cognitive abilities of young males and females.

In order to succeed, a set of the following tasks to solve was applied.

1. Conducting a comparative analysis of the reliability of differences in cognitive abilities indicators (intelligence, pragmatism - active imagination, conservatism - radicalism) among young males and females.

2. Assessing the connection nature between cognitive abilities of an individual and family self-determination among young males and females.

5. Research Methods

In order to address the tasks and check the hypothesis, a set of complementary study methods was applied, including theoretical and methodological analysis of literature sources, questionnaire surveys, psychodiagnostic methods and methods of applied statistics.

5.1. To study the influence of cognitive abilities on the development of family self-determination, the Cattell's 16 PF test was used: factor B (intelligence), factor M (pragmatism - active imagination), factor Q1 (conservatism - radicalism).

5.2. To diagnose the content and structural characteristics of family self-determination, we used the semantic differential technique developed by Charles Osgood, the "Level of Value-Availability Ratio in Different Life Spheres" questionnaire of Fantalova, the "Uncompleted Sentences" projective technique and "Test of Life-Purpose Orientations" of Leontiev.

At the analytical stage, we applied mathematical and statistical methods that allowed us to validate the study results. All the calculations were made with the use of IBM SPSS Statistics 21 program. The analysis included descriptive statistics, the non-parametric Mann — Whitney U-test, the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. The study was carried out on the basis of Astrakhan State University, Astrakhan Branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Astrakhan Branch of the Russian State University for the Humanities, Astrakhan State Polytechnic College and Astrakhan College of Computer Technologies. The study involved 1109 respondents, including 420 males and 689 females aged 15-22.

6. Findings

6.1. To study gender differences in cognitive abilities of student youth, we applied the nonparametric Mann-Whitney test, since the Cattell's test characteristics are measured in ordinal scales. Significant differences were revealed for the following factors: intelligence (the criterion value (**U**) is equal to 2144, the significance level (**p**) is equal to 0.008), pragmatism - active imagination (U = 1939.5

at $p = 0.008$), conservatism - radicalism ($U = 2315$ at $p = 0.047$). Analysis of median values (Fig. 1) indicates that specificity, rigidity of thinking, pragmatism, orientation to external reality and adherence to generally accepted norms and standards are more common for young males than for young females. A developed orientation to the inner world, high creative potential, intellectual interests, the desire to be well informed are more common for young females.

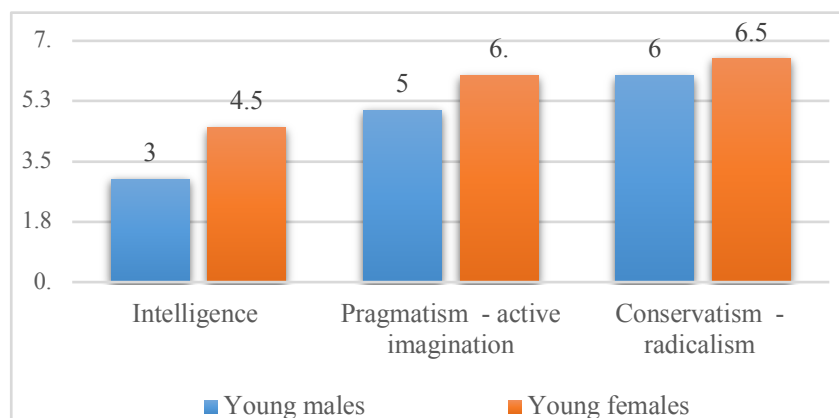


Figure 01. Differences in cognitive abilities between young males and females

6.2. Since we revealed the significant differences in cognitive abilities of young males and females, we further considered the male and female parts of the sample separately. Using the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, we studied the connection between cognitive characteristics of an individual and parameters of family self-determination in the group of young males (see Table 1). There is a positive correlation of factor B (intelligence) with cognitive, value and emotional, motivation and reflection components of family self-determination. An image-making element "I am the family member" includes the following components which are typical for young males: I am the future father, I am the son, I am the head of the family, I am the future husband. The higher are the assessments of abstract thinking, quick understanding and learning of young males, the higher is the value of marriage, family life, love, life meaningful orientations. At the same time, the marriage motives are the achievement of happiness, social recognition, parenting, love, harmonious sexual relations, self-actualization, security, success. A high level of intelligence positively correlates with a positive attitude towards oneself (I am an image), an internal locus of control (locus of control "Me", locus of control "Life"). The higher young males' intelligence is, the more intrapersonal conflict in family life and disintegration in the motivational and personal spheres are expressed.

There is a tendency to a positive correlation of factor M (pragmatism - active imagination) and the value of marriage. Active imagination, high creative potential, marital relations have a significant value for young males.

The negative correlation coefficient of the "conservatism - radicalism" variable and the accessibility of the "happy family life" value indicates that happiness in family life is achievable for young males characterized by conservatism, a tendency to moralization and moral teaching. There is a tendency for a positive connection between factor Q_1 and the accessibility of the "active life" sphere. Thus, young males who are critical and who are characterized by intellectual interests, analytical thinking

prefer an active way of life. Positive correlation at the trend level of the factor Q₁ and the marriage motives of parenting, happiness means that these motives are important for young males characterized by the presence of intellectual interests and analytical thinking. At high rates of radicalism, young males tend to overestimate their abilities, overestimate themselves and express the intrapersonal conflict in the sphere of a "happy family life".

Table 01. Study of connection between cognitive abilities and family self-determination among young males and females

Structural and content characteristics of family self-determination	Young Males			Young Females		
	Factor B	Factor M	Factor Q ₁	Factor B	Factor M	Factor Q ₁
<i>Cognitive component (an image-making element "I am the family member")</i>						
I am the future husband / wife	0.229*	-0.009	0.014	0.010	-0.126	0.011
I am the future father / mother	0.296**	0.104	0.113	0.005	-0.089	-0.078
I am the head of my family	0.250*	-0.045	0.161	0.052	-0.342***	-0.104
I am the son/ daughter	0.261*	-0.035	-0.076	0.010	-0.060	-0.183*
<i>Value and emotional component (values of matrimonial relations, life-purpose orientations)</i>						
Family of origin	0.092	0.048	-0.036	0.054	0.006	-0.138
Marriage	0.449***	0.226*	0.072	0.099	-0.053	0.064
My mother	0.001	-0.117	-0.042	-0.126	-0.061	-0.223**
My father	0.007	0.073	-0.101	-0.203**	-0.093	-0.188*
My future family	0.416***	0.083	0.200	0.107	0.015	-0.065
The values of happy family life	0.375***	-0.007	0.096	0.078	0.189*	-0.082
The value of love	0.425***	0.179	0.097	0.204**	0.172*	-0.031
The value of freedom as independence	-0.037	-0.220	0.018	0.077	-0.007	0.143
Attitude to family	0.059	-0.118	0.009	-0.026	0.026	-0.162
We are family (attitude to your own family)	0.023	-0.212	-0.049	0.072	0.064	0.075
Role of an individual in the family structure	0.065	-0.076	-0.075	-0.036	-0.106	0.027
Attitude to the future marriage partner	-0.032	0.001	0.134	-0.071	-0.112	-0.106
Self-attitude	-0.079	-0.159	0.04	-0.027	-0.125	-0.05
Attitude to future children	0.040	-0.254	0.223	0.143	-0.071	0.062
Attitude to romantic love	0.069	-0.013	0.165	0.06	-0.161	-0.118
Attitude to sex	-0.065	-0.156	0.094	0.086	-0.148	-0.004
Attitude to family rest and leisure	0.010	-0.055	-0.055	0.075	0.147	0.073
Attitude to family of origin	0.044	0.169	0.077	0.026	-0.079	-0.01
Attitude to mother	0.144	-0.07	0.021	0.043	0.043	-0.095
Attitude to father	0.178	-0.108	0.104	-0.05	-0.006	-0.012
Life goals	0.203	-0.090	0.038	0.002	-0.008	0.204**
Life process	0.227*	-0.178	0.006	-0.066	-0.112	0.047
Life achievements	0.243*	-0.177	0.000	-0.003	-0.143	0.056
General indicator of life meaningfulness	0.293**	-0.128	0.013	-0.020	-0.110	0.130

Regulatory and behavioral component (ideas on time perspective, ways of achieving activity goals, family roles orientation)						
My past	0.016	-0.189	-0.092	-0.176*	-0.161	-0.123
My present	0.109	-0.157	0.035	-0.174*	-0.124	0.074
My future	0.103	0.052	0.014	-0.057	-0.174*	0.013
Accessibility of a "happy family life" sphere	-0.195	-0.134	-0.318**	-0.026	-0.106	-0.158
Accessibility of active life	0.214	-0.090	0.251*	-0.073	-0.035	-0.048
Accessibility of knowledge (the possibility of expanding the education, outlook, common culture, as well as intellectual development)	0.163	-0.004	0.032	0.108	0.286***	0.082
Accessibility of creativity (the possibility of creative activity)	0.064	0.205	0.054	0.181*	0.195	0.199**
Headship and responsibility in the family	-0.035	0.065	-0.164	0.158	0.111	-0.077
Spouses' rights and duties	-0.022	-0.163	-0.034	0.081	-0.031	0.06
Attitude to divorce	-0.086	-0.15	-0.191	-0.063	-0.163	-0.131
Attitude to family conflicts	0.048	-0.022	0.102	-0.15	0.014	0.005
Motivation component (marriage motives)						
Security	0.238*	-0.205	-0.072	-0.053	-0.157	-0.058
Harmonic sexual relations	0.274**	0.010	0.044	-0.082	-0.045	0.083
Duty	0.059	0.023	0.065	0.081	0.108	0.043
Achievement of success	0.234*	0.062	0.021	0.054	-0.052	0.045
Compensation for feeling lonely	0.122	-0.068	-0.004	-0.145	-0.180	0.072
Personal independence ("running away from parents")	0.170	-0.113	0.023	-0.072	-0.067	0.256**
Love	0.281**	0.022	-0.056	0.039	0.112	-0.029
Material wealth	0.216	0.125	-0.028	0.049	0.066	0.088
Revenge	0.166	-0.032	0.078	-0.011	-0.058	-0.055
Communication with people	0.078	-0.004	-0.068	-0.011	-0.145	-0.104
Social recognition	0.306**	-0.007	0.037	-0.108	-0.055	0.072
Parenting	0.303**	0.187	0.232*	0.046	-0.040	0.020
Self-actualization	0.260*	0.067	0.071	-0.058	-0.180*	0.026
Happiness	0.482***	0.018	0.246*	0.166*	0.059	-0.071
Reflection component (objective self-evaluation, developed self-awareness and self-comprehension, internal locus of control)						
I am an image	0.287**	-0.143	-0.022	-0.143	-0.191*	-0.096
Self-confidence (freedom from internal contradictions, doubts) (accessibility)	0.115	0.026	-0.070	-0.061	0.024	-0.008
Locus of control "Me"	0.288**	-0.076	0.003	-0.104	-0.060	0.290***
Locus of control "Life"	0.292**	-0.006	-0.013	-0.060	-0.172*	0.155
Self-esteem (MD factor)	0.190	0.120	0.258*	-0.014	-0.018	0.005
Expressiveness of intrapersonal conflict in "happy family life" sphere	0.356***	0.143	0.361***	0.086	0.189	0.063
The index of mismatch, disintegration in motivational and personal sphere	0.419***	0.129	0.196	0.177*	0.136	-0.089

Notes: B - intelligence, M-pragmatism-imagination, Q₁ – conservatism – radicalism; * - correlation is significant at 0,1 level; ** - correlation is significant at 0,05 level; ***- correlation is significant at 0,01 level.

Similarly, we studied the connection between cognitive characteristics of an individual and components of family self-determination of young females (see Table 1). Intelligence is associated with such components of family self-determination as value and emotional component (attitude to the father, the value of love), regulatory and behavioral component (assessment of past and present, accessibility of creative activities), motivation component (happiness), reflection component (disintegration index in motivational and personal sphere). Young females with high indicators of intelligence have a negative assessment of their relationship with their fathers, the importance of the value of love, a low assessment of their past and present, the possibility of creative activity, and the marriage motive for achieving happiness, the severity of disintegration in the motivational and personal sphere are actualized.

The "pragmatism - imagination" variable (factor M) largely determines the variability of the components of family self-determination among young females rather than among young males. The significance of a family role "I am the head of the family", a positive attitude to oneself is more common for practical, conscientious girls. Self-actualization, internal locus of control "Life" is an important marriage motive. Young females with a developed imagination focused on their inner world highly appreciate a happy family life, love, possibility of cognition, expansion of their education, intellectual development but there is an evidence of intrapersonal conflict in the sphere of family relations.

In the case of young females, factor Q₁ (conservatism - radicalism) is associated with all components of family self-determination. Young females whom conservatism is inherent for highly value the family role "I am the daughter", as well as their relationship with the mother and father. At high rates of radicalism, young females have a sense of purpose, possibility of creative activity, actualization of the marriage motive "personal independence" ("running away from parents") and internal locus of control.

7. Conclusion

At the level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), the "intelligence" variable (factor B) causes variability of the following components of family of self-determination: cognitive (I am the future father), value and emotional (marriage, my father, my future family, the value of a happy family life, the value of love, life meaningfulness), motivation (sex, love, social recognition, parenting, happiness), reflection (I am an image, locus of control "Me", locus of control "Life", the expressiveness of intrapersonal conflict in family relations, disintegration in motivational and personal sphere).

The "pragmatism - active imagination" variable (factor M) at the level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) is associated with the following components of family self-determination among young females: cognitive (I am the head of the family) and regulatory and behavioral (cognition as a mean of goal achievement).

The "conservatism - radicalism" variable (Q₁ factor) correlates with the elements of the following components of family self-determination of young males and females: value and emotional (my mother, life goals), regulatory and behavioral (accessibility of a "happy family life" sphere, possibility of creative activity), motivation (personal independence, "running away from parents") and reflection (locus of control "Me", intensity of intrapersonal conflict in family relations).

So, based on the results of the empirical study, we can conclude that cognitive abilities (intelligence, pragmatism - active imagination, conservatism - radicalism) cause the development of structural and content characteristics of family self-determination of young males and females.

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