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International Scientific Conference**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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**Abstract**

The research relevance stems from the importance of investigating the emotional development specifics in intellectually disabled primary school pupils, which should be accounted for when planning the development process and psychological intervention. Research into the unique individual emotions of such children will mitigate the negative factors of their development. Focus here is on the individual psychological traits of emotions. This research used the following psychological diagnosis methods: O.E. Shapovalova's questionnaire based on B.I. Dodonov's value-based classification of emotions designed to analyze the unique emotional development and the emotional vectors of primary school pupils; series of assignments including the analysis of black and white photographs that show the subjects' ability to recognize the emotional states of other people and to understand why a person experiences their respective emotions; and O.E. Shapovalova's What Would You Do? questionnaire designed to show whether the children were able to regulate emotions when given a choice in a conflict. This research revealed the individual specifics of emotional development in intellectually disabled primary school pupils: weak emotion regulation, weak differentiation, polarity and inadequacy of emotions, inability to independently resolve problems without conflicts, propensity to frequent affective reactions, inability to understand the emotional states of other people. Depending on a personal emotional development, such students might need comprehensive, targeted, systematic, and individual psychological intervention and assistance. Basing on the available compensatory reserves and preserved emotional development, such intervention will enable the optimal emotional development to better prepare intellectually disabled primary school students for independent life in the society.

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1. Introduction

Today's society and its development, the evolving social and economic state of the art, the integration of psychological theory and practice call for better psychological analysis of children with special needs. Social adaptation and integration of intellectually disabled children is a major topic in psychological intervention research. In that context, due adjustment for the emotional traits of such children is critical.

Emotions constitute a psychological reflection that affects any human activity and is integral to everyday life. Therefore, emotions are a set of internal mental states that manifest themselves in the subjective attitudes and feelings as well as in expression and communication behavior (Kravchenko, 2018).

Primary school age is the best age for emotional development. This period is associated with the loss of childish spontaneity; it is a period when a person learns to understand their own feelings.

As a child develops, they undergo several age-bound stages, each of which adds new qualities to their emotions and alters the balance between intellectual and affective aspects of emotion (Levkova et al., 2019). The development of intellectually disabled primary school pupils has its own specifics; however, it should not be seen through the lens of their affections or intelligence alone; rather, it is the affection-intelligence balance that should be focused on.

Zabramnaya and Borovik (2016) studied the peculiarities of emotional development of intellectually disabled primary school pupils. She believes that the insufficient activation of the emotional factor is indeed one of the reasons why such children may fail to adapt socially.

Shapovalova (2019) and Shklyar (2015) have found that intellectually disabled students showcase specific emotional development due to having mental disorders and underdeveloped mental cognition. Their emotions are underdifferentiated, primitive, and inadequate. Intellectually disabled primary school pupils often show abnormal, unhealthy manifestations like dysphoria, apathy, or euphoria; their emotional reactions to a change in the situation are inadequate, ranging from passivity and indifference to aggression and hostility; they are more prone to affective response. Besides, it is difficult for them to understand the emotional states of other people.

These findings are consistent with the results of international research. Gottman and DeClaire (2015) note that a child's emotions are fundamental to their development and learning. This refers specifically to the emotional intelligence. Studies have proven that an adequately developed emotional intelligence contributes to the physical, mental, moral, and social wellbeing of a person, as it enables the person to effectively interact with other people, to solve problems, to build positive relationships, to make informed and reasonable decisions.

In case of intellectually disabled children requires, psychological intervention requires profound knowledge of, and adjustment for, the core patterns, individual and typological emotional traits in order to be effective; only then will it positively affect the child's personality development and enable them to adapt socially.

2. Problem Statement

Given the fact that this problem is both urgent and understudied, we defined the core problem hereof: investigation into the individual psychological emotional traits of intellectually disabled primary school pupils.

Primary school age is considered to be the most “emotionally intense” period of life. Once a child enters school, their life changes drastically, which cannot but affect the emotional content and the interaction with people around them. For this reason, the research team sampled children from Grades 1 to 4 of a Type VIII school for children with special needs.

An organic defect, a neural disorder, or a persistent cognitive disability jeopardize intellectually disabled children’s ability to adequately perceive the reality around them (elsewhere herein also referred to as ‘the real world’); this affects the child’s attitudes, experiences, and emotions. We believe that psychological intervention and assistance, which is intended to help with the emotional development of intellectually disabled primary school pupils, might be crucial to their personality development (Shapovalova et al., 2015).

With this in mind, we were able to investigate in depth the emotional development of intellectually disabled children, to approach the issues of diagnosis, and to make psychological intervention more effective (Karynbaeva et al., 2017; Karynbaeva et al., 2019).

3. Research Questions

Research into the emotional development of intellectually disabled primary school pupils remains important for the theory and practice of psychological intervention. Timely analysis, intervention with, and development of emotions in such children should be seen as an important prerequisite to their effective social adaptation.

It is the child’s experiences and attitude towards the environment that are seen as an important component of the social circumstances of the child’s development, the component that merges various effects of external and internal factors.

Shklyar (2015) in her studies summarizes the available data on the emotional aspect of intellectually disabled primary school pupils’ behavior. She notes that the emotional development of such children should be mainly guided by external factors including special education, psychological intervention, and properly organized lifestyle.

Researchers from other countries (Bjeron & Richardson, 2001; Kim et al., 2001) also note how important emotions are for intellectually disabled children, and argue that emotions should be borne in mind when arranging psychological assistance and intervention for such children (Bjeron & Richardson, 2001; Kim et al., 2001).

Latest papers by O.L. Goncharova, L.M. Kryzhanovskaya, K.S. Kruchinova, A.A. Makhova, I.S. Tikhonenkova et al. state that intellectually disabled primary school pupils have specific emotional traits that the development process and psychological intervention must be adjusted for. Intervention requires a comprehensive effort to steer the development of the child’s personality. Not only emotional delay, but also

the individual mental development metrics should be taken into account to that end (Kryzhanovskaya et al., 2018; Tikhonenkova, 2016).

This calls for a more rigorous experimental and empirical study of intellectually disabled primary school pupils' emotional development.

The idea behind this research is that the unique individual emotions of such children will help mitigate the negative factors of their development.

4. Purpose of the Study

This research was carried out at the Bira Boarding School, Jewish Autonomous Oblast. It sought to investigate the age-related and individual emotional traits of intellectually disabled primary school pupils. The novelty of this research lies in the fact that it presents substantial evidence that complements the available scientific data on the emotional development of intellectually disabled primary school children.

5. Research Methods

The sample consisted of 100 school pupils, Grades 1 to 4, of the Bira Boarding School, Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

This paper investigates the psychological peculiarities of emotional development of intellectually disabled primary school pupils: emotional attitude towards the real world, the understanding of other people' emotional states, and emotion regulation in the process of resolving problems.

For experiments, the research team used O.E. Shapovalova's questionnaire (2019) which is designed to analyze the unique emotional development and the emotional vectors of primary school pupils; a series of assignments including analysis of black and white photographs that would show the subjects' ability to recognize the emotional states of other people and to understand why this or that person experiences their respective emotions in the photographs; and O.E. Shapovalova's (2019) What Would You Do? questionnaire designed to show the extent, to which the children were able to regulate their emotions when given a choice in a conflict situation.

6. Findings

Once the sample was found to be representative, and the core psychological diagnosis methods were picked, the research team tested the intellectually disabled schoolchildren's emotional activity and attitude towards the real world, see Table 01.

Table 1. Intellectually disabled primary school pupils' attitude towards the real world

Subjects		Emotional activity					
Number	Grade	High		Medium		Low	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
50	1-2	1	2	21	42	28	56
50	3-4	3	6	27	54	18	36
100	1-4	4	4	48	48	46	46

These results show the tested schoolchildren had inadequately low emotional activity. They did not always have a positive attitude towards various objects and phenomena around them. Many of them were found to pay no attention or react inadequately to various situations, at least in some cases; the children were shown unable to consistently differentiate and control their emotional states and signs. Even in the most pleasant situations, these children sometimes failed to experience strong positive emotions that are fundamental to mental health (Shklyar, 2015).

To see how far the children would be able to understand the emotional states of other people, they were shown black-and-white pictures of people with different emotions: tension, concentration, embarrassment, shyness, happiness, joy, interest, thoughtfulness, aggression, rudeness, excitement, thrill, grief, and despair. Thus, we were able to see whether our subjects were capable of recognizing emotions in pictures and to guess what might have invoked such emotions.

Experiments showed that the tested pupils failed to recognize more subtle emotions and tended to simplify their interpretation; they had difficulties isolating mimic and especially pantomimic signs; they found it easier to recognize the emotional states they'd often experience themselves. Besides, in most cases they were being negative about situations where a person failed.

To test emotion regulation in these children, the research team utilized Shapovalova's What Would You Do? questionnaire designed to show the extent, to which the children were able to regulate their emotions when given a choice in a conflict situation (Shapovalova, 2019).

Table 2 presents the quantitative metrics of the method.

Table 2. Emotion regulation in intellectually disabled primary school pupils when facing a problem

Subjects		Assignment grade					
Number	Grade	High		Medium		Low	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
50	1-2	2	4	16	32	32	64
50	3-4	7	14	21	42	22	44
100	1-4	9	9	37	37	54	54

The results show that emotion regulation could be quite well-developed even in the youngest students of the boarding school. This applies to mildly disabled schoolchildren from well-off families. They were capable of resolving their problems adequately, interested in being on good terms with others, able to differentiate and control their emotions properly. These children tried to understand and overcome their difficulties in communication with adults or peers, were quite good at controlling their emotions, and did their best to express such emotions in a socially acceptable manner.

Therefore, they had no difficulties communicating with teachers or peers. These children did not need intervention; on the contrary, they could serve as role models for other schoolchildren and teach their peers to resolve problems in a conflict-free manner.

There were also intellectually disabled pupils who had medium scores; they were not fully independent or confident in their abilities, seeking assistance from adults instead. Such children would not universally show a positive disposition and adequate attitude to a communication situation. Sometimes, they would be unable to respond to the situation appropriately and control their emotions.

Low emotion regulation was found in children whose behavioral disorders were severe. These were unable to resolve any communication-related problem without a conflict. Any hindrance would trigger a temper tantrum; such children were prone to misbehavior and would act impulsively, showing no regard for others.

Thus, we concluded that most intellectually disabled primary school pupils would often refuse to resolve their problems and show potential aggressiveness in their responses. Intellectually disabled schoolchildren were thus found to be prone to conflict and to showing negative emotions when facing a problem. Only some were proven willing to resolve communication problems in a conflict-free manner, meaning that their flaws could be addressed, and positive emotional traits could be furthered. This is why it is imperative to provide timely and comprehensive psychological intervention and assistance designed not only to help children learn to regulate their emotions, but also to facilitate personality development in general.

7. Conclusion

Primary school is the time when children's emotional development is highly responsive.

Emotions are a major component of reflection; they have specific patterns in case of intellectually disabled primary school pupils, including correlation with the structure and degree of a defect; the availability of compensatory reserves; and the importance of timely psychological intervention and assistance.

Experiments presented herein show that such children need comprehensive, targeted, systematic, and individually tailored intervention and assistance to develop well; the required degree of such intervention depends on the emotional development of each particular child.

Being based on the available compensatory reserves and the preserved qualities of emotional development, such intervention will enable the most optimal emotional development, which in turn should help shape a positive personality and facilitate social adaptation.

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