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**TÍTULO:** Formando las actitudes de género de los niños en edad preescolar en familias monoparentales.

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**RESUMEN:** El objetivo de la investigación es determinar los factores socio-psicológicos de la formación de actitudes de género en niños preescolares de familias monoparentales. El principal método empírico de investigación es estudiar el estilo de educación y las características personales de 78 madres y las actitudes de género de sus hijos de familias monoparentales. Las preferencias de rol de género se forman de manera insuficiente en los niños en edad preescolar de padres autoritarios e indiferentes en comparación con los niños de padres liberales. En los hijos de padres autoritarios se observa la tendencia a cambiar la identificación de género y la manifestación de la pasionera.

**PALABRAS CLAVES:** Actitudes de género, estilo de crianza, preescolares, familia.

**TITLE:** Forming the gender attitudes of pre-school children in one-parent families.

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**ABSTRACT:** The research objective is to determine the social-psychological factors of forming the gender attitudes in pre-school children from one-parent families. The leading empirical method of research is studying the style of upbringing and personal characteristics of 78 mothers and the gender attitudes of their children from one-parent families. The role-gender preferences are formed insufficiently in pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents compared to the children of liberal parents. In children of authoritarian parents, the tendency to changing the gender identification and manifestation of passionarity is observed.

**KEY WORDS:** gender attitudes, style of upbringing, pre-school children, family.

**INTRODUCTION.**

The research of the influence of upbringing style on forming the gender attitudes of pre-school children is topical due to the fact that interrelations with the kin grownups play a major role in developing the gender identity of children.

The upbringing styles are the environment which determines the mental development of children and formation of their personality. The parents' influence on children largely depends on their educational

impact, while the parents' ideas about their children are the internal orientation basis of upbringing and communication between the children and parents [Kolominsky and Strelkova, 2013; Malova and Maksimova, 2015; Minullina and Akramova, 2014; Galvão & Henriques, 2018].

Today, all social institutions pay much attention to one-parent families. This can be explained by the fact that a family is a complex system, in which the bases of development are laid down and formed, which influence the whole life of a child.

In the modern society, special attention should be paid to single-mother families, as they amount to 30% of all families in the Russian Federation, or about 5.6 mln families. The causes of their appearance and prevalence can be found in the current changes in social sphere, such as the decreased value of marriage and family, appearance of new, illusionary forms of family (same-sex marriage, trial marriage, "civil marriage", misalliance, etc.), prevalence of extra-marital relations, increased number of divorces [Malova and Maksimova, 2015; Chernopyatov, 2018; Volyn, 2004].

The current changes significantly alter the social status of women, loosen the traditional functions of mothers and parents, make women more independent and responsible. In certain situations, the unconscious execution of the traditionally masculine functions at the expense of the maternal ones induces internal resistance and aversion in children; in other cases, a single mother tries to consciously elaborate her own style of behavior to make beneficial influence on the upbringing of children.

The psychological deformation of a family is associated with the distortion of the concept of interpersonal relations in it, and with adoption and implementation of undesirable values, asocial intentions, etc., in a family [Hashim et al, 2018; Ingavale, 2013; Eisevandi et al, 2015; Adedeji, 2018].

The methodological basis of research are the works: on social-psychological and age categories (B. G. Ananyev); on the family influence on development and upbringing of a child personality (L. S. Vygotskiy, V. S. Mukhina, G. G. Khomentauskas) [Zharkov, 2005]; on the psychology of a one-parent family (A. I. Zakharov, V. M. Tseluyko, I. F. Dementyeva, T. A. Gurko, O. M. Arutyunyan)

[Ivanova, 2006; Evtushenko, 2007]; on the styles of upbringing (A. S. Makarenko, E. G. Eydemiller, S. S. Stepanov, L. V. Kartseva) [Zdravomyslova and Temkina, 2007]; on the gender role at pre-school age (G. V. Verzhiboka, T. V. Bendas, A. Stoller, I. S. Kletsina, etc.) [Bendas, 2006].

The object of research is gender attitudes of the children of senior pre-school age.

The scope of research is the conditions of forming the gender attitudes of pre-school children.

The research objective is to study the social-psychological factors of forming the gender attitudes of pre-school children from one-parent families.

The research hypothesis: the upbringing style influences the formation of gender attitude at pre-school age under the following social-psychological conditions:

- Broadening the cognitive forms of communication and interaction in the family and in the pre-school educational establishment;
- Creating a favorable educational environment determining the formation of gender identity of pre-school children;
- Psychological-pedagogical organization of educational activity with pre-school children is performed within the frameworks of individualized complex technique aimed at developing the adequate gender attitude.

## **DEVELOPMENT.**

### **Methodology.**

The empirical research of the influence of upbringing style on forming the gender role of pre-school children was carried out on the basis of pre-school educational establishments of Naberezhnye Chelny city in the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation. For the research, we selected single-mother families with pre-school children. The total number of participants was 156 people, of them 78 children and their mothers.

Empirical methods of research: 1) Test “Family upbringing styles” (S. Stepanov), 2) Projective drawing test “Who am I?”, 3) Interview “Gender attitudes of children”, 4) Test “Gender-age identification”, modification by M. L. Belopolskaya, and 5) Observation chart of tendency to manifest personal features of passionarity.

### **Stages of empirical research.**

1. At the preliminary stage, we formed three samples of children depending on their mothers’ upbringing style, with the test “Family upbringing styles” by S. Stepanov:

Group 1 – 27 children of authoritarian mothers (12 boys and 15 girls),

Group 2 – 33 children of liberal mothers (14 boys and 19 girls),

Group 3 – 18 children of indifferent mothers (8 boys and 10 girls).

2. Then, to study the levels of self-conscience aspects associated with the gender identification, we offered the children to do the projective drawing test “Who am I?”.

3. The interview “Gender attitudes of children” was performed separately with each child; four questions were asked:

a). Who will you become when you grow up (a man / a woman, a wife / a husband, a mother / a father)?

b). Is it possible that you go to bed as a girl (boy) and wake up as a boy (girl)?

c). Would you like to wake up as a boy (for girls)? Would you like to wake up as a girl (for boys)?

d). How do girls and boys differ?

4. The test “Gender-age identification”, modified by M. L. Belopolskaya, was performed in two stages. At the first stage, the participants are offered twelve cards with pictures of various age periods. The girls and boys must show which card corresponds to their idea of themselves at the present moment. The children are asked: “In your opinion, what are you like at the present moment?”. At the second stage, the children answer the question: “In your opinion, what will you be like in future?”.

5. Observation of the tendency to manifest the personal features of passionarity is performed during game activity of the children. The observation chart is filled in, which implies the analysis of game activity and the analysis of speech. Thus, the level of passionarity is revealed, i.e., the children are classified as demonstrating passionarity, persistence and sub-passionarity features.

### Results and discussion.

Senior pre-school children were offered a projective drawing test “Who am I?”. Table 1 shows the frequency of different criteria of the self-image of pre-school children of authoritarian, liberal and indifferent mothers.

Table 1: The results of diagnosing the self-image of pre-school children.

No.	Criteria	Group 1 authoritarian mothers (%)	Group 2 liberal mothers (%)	Group 3 indifferent mothers (%)
1	Confusion of gender roles	19	3	5.6
2	Detailed genitals	3.7	0	5.6
3	Separate parts of body	3.7	0	5.6
4	No people, no picture of oneself	11.1	0	5.6
5	Excessive hatching	11.1	0	16.7
6	Robot-like figures	11.1	9.1	16.7
7	Small legs or absence of legs	30	9.1	33
8	Own gender	81.5	97	94.4

In the projective drawing test “Who am I?” of pre-school children of authoritarian mothers, there are such features as: small legs or absence of legs (30%), confusion of gender roles (19%), own gender (81.5%), robot-like figures (11.1%), dark clouds and hatched sun (5%).

97% children of liberal mothers drew their own gender. Only one child from this group manifested confusion of gender roles (3%). Also, the children drew robot-like figures and small legs of their own figure (9.1% each).

94.4% children of indifferent mothers drew their own gender. In their drawings, more frequently there was excessive hatching, robot-like figures and small unsteady legs (16.7% each).

The differences in the frequency of different criteria of the self-image of pre-school children of mothers with different upbringing styles were studied by Fischer's angular transformation. The majority of children of authoritarian mothers manifested confusion of gender roles ( $\varphi^*=2.451$ ;  $p\leq 0.01$ ) and small unsteady legs ( $\varphi^*=2.136$ ;  $p\leq 0.05$ ) in their drawings. In the drawings of indifferent mothers' children, small unsteady legs prevail.

Thus, the gender-role identification of the pre-school children of authoritarian mothers is characterized by the children are partially conscious of themselves and partially symbolically and unconsciously manifest the lack of a solid foundation, the instability of the personality. The same is true for the children of indifferent mothers. They manifest the deficiency of the fundamental sense of protection, which leads to anxiety, distortion of personality development, hinders the emotional maturity and mental health.

The children of authoritarian mothers more frequently manifest the confusion of gender roles. The first reason for depicting oneself as a person of the opposite gender is the lack of opportunity to "study" a man or a woman. For example, boys remain under the influence of their authoritarian mother in the family. The second reason is the child identifying oneself with the more imposing parent, which leads to the confusion of gender role, difficulty in adopting the gender role in compliance with the biological sex.

The children of liberal mothers show little value of the social position of a personality. They demonstrate subordinate position in the society, not associated with hard labor (for example, the children draw themselves in black and white, at the feet of busy grownups, or depict themselves as a static, idle figure). Through color and dynamic characteristics associated with age (drawing a human figure, etc.), pre-school children demonstrate their axiological attitude to various stages of human life. They tend to devalue early childhood, including their own age, and the reason for it is the socially indifferent status of their main actual occupations.

The majority of children depicted their own gender irrespective of their mothers' upbringing styles, but the confusion of gender roles was more frequent in the children of authoritarian parents. Thus, the children of authoritarian mothers demonstrate the confusion of identity, which may lead to the sense of inferiority.

### **Obtained results.**

As is known, the formation of gender-role identity in pre-school children takes place under the influence of the environment (family) and the child's development. The building of the self-image is influenced by the attitude of a parent (mother) to the child. The children of authoritarian mothers more frequently demonstrate:

1. The lack of the sense of protection, constant sense of anxiety.
2. The confusion of gender role, difficulty in adopting the gender role in compliance with the biological sex.
3. The lack of satisfaction with the results of their activity.
4. The experience of early awareness of high emotional pressure.
5. The experience of tense atmosphere at home.

According to the authors of the test, at the age of 6–7, the conceptual characteristics start manifesting the social position of the person. The children's drawings reflect their attitude to the gender role as that of little value from the viewpoint of social significance, subordinate, not associated with any serious activity (for example, children draw themselves sitting at the feet of busy grownups, depict themselves in black and white, or as a static, idle figure). Both through color and dynamic features of the age, and through depicting the self-image in social environment, a senior pre-school child expresses their subjective attitude to various age periods of human life. The typical attitude is devaluation of the whole period of childhood, including their own age, and the reason for it is the

socially indifferent status of their main occupations in life. This conclusion is supported by the analysis of comments, made by children when they draw themselves at different periods of life.

The drawings of authoritarian mothers' children differ little from those of liberal or indifferent mothers' children. However, they more poorly express attitude to age groups (the drawings are either one-color or black and white), and the content of age is not specified by any figurative means. Self-image is deprived of all attributes. Rather typical for this group is depicting of a single self-image instead of several ones if the self-image is depicted in dynamics.

The interview "Gender attitudes of children" was performed with children. The children were asked about what they would be in future, whether people could change their sex and whether they would like to change their sex.

The analysis of the answers of children of authoritarian, liberal and indifferent mothers to the question "Who will you become when you grow up?" showed that all children adequately estimated their future gender (100% each).

To the question "Is it possible that you go to bed as a girl (boy) and wake up as a boy (girl)?" 91% of the pre-school children of authoritarian parents answered in the negative; they consider gender to be irreversible. At the same time, 9% answered that it was possible. In the groups of the children of liberal and indifferent mothers, 100% of children do not believe that boys may turn into girls, or viceversa.

To the third question referring to changing one's sex, all respondent answered that they would not like to change their sex, i.e. to wake up as a boy or girl (opposite sex).

Statistical analysis showed that the children of authoritarian parents more often agree that it is possible to change one's sex ( $\varphi^*=1.627$ ;  $p\leq 0.05$ ).

In the opinion of pre-school children, there is difference between girls and boys. The children mainly mentioned differences in clothes and the length of hair. Sometimes, the children said that girls and boys differ in strength and height. We have not revealed the differences in the frequency of distinguishing features of girls and boys in the answers of pre-school children from families with different upbringing styles. The representation of girls and boys is the same in all pre-school children, irrespective of their parents' upbringing styles.

The children were offered a test "Gender-age identification" by M. L. Belopolskaya. At the first stage, the children showed which image their representation of themselves corresponds to at the given moment. The results of diagnosing are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The results of diagnosing of the children's representation of themselves by M. L. Belopolskaya's test.

	Criteria	Group 1 authoritarian mothers (%)	Group 2 liberal mothers (%)	Group 3 indifferent mothers (%)
Idea of oneself at present	Correct gender	100	100	100
	Correct image at present	81	100	83
Idea of oneself in future	Schoolboy (schoolgirl)	56	48	50
	Man (woman)	44	52	50

In the groups of children of authoritarian and indifferent mothers, there were children who could not correctly estimate their image. They represented themselves either as grownup woman (grownup man), or as a baby. Only 81% of pre-school children of authoritarian parents and 83% of pre-school children of indifferent parents correctly estimated their current image and showed themselves as pre-school children ( $\varphi^*=1.457$ ;  $p\leq 0.05$ ).

The second stage consisted of the children's estimation of themselves in future. In the group of authoritarian mothers' children, 56% see themselves as schoolchildren and 44% see themselves as grownups (a man or a woman).

In the group of liberal mothers, 48% of pre-school children see themselves as schoolchildren and 52% see themselves as a man or a woman.

50% of pre-school children of indifferent parents see themselves in future as schoolchildren, and the same number of them see themselves as men or women. We have not revealed the differences in the frequency of representation of themselves in the future in the answers of pre-school children from families with different upbringing styles. The representation of themselves in the future is the same in all pre-school children, irrespective of their parents' upbringing styles.

The observation chart for revealing the tendency to manifest the personal features of passionarity allowed performing observations of the children's behavior and speech during game activity. The units of observation were the parts of speech: verbs, nouns, and adjectives (Table 3).

Table 3: Manifestation of passionarity in children's speech.

Categories	Parts of speech			
	Verbs	Nouns	Adjectives	Pronouns
passionarity features (masculine)	win, gather, invent, call, urge, convince, find, suffer	hero, victory, business, strike, luck, love, word, battle	red, fighting, businesslike, willful, active, interesting, exciting, passionate	I
persistence features (mixed)	ask, walk, try, learn, protect, play, unite	assistance, labor, family, health, patience, house, children, parents	green, brown, caring, industrious, calm, reliable	we
sub-passionarity features (feminine)	rest, wait, lie, sleep, fear, hide, leave, turn	laziness, food, rest, break, sleep, vacation, fatigue, fear	boring, grey, uninteresting, black, gloomy, sick, dirty, disturbing	they

As a result of observation, the pre-school children were classified into those demonstrating passionarity, persistence and sub-passionarity features.

In the group of pre-school children of authoritarian mothers, the majority of children belonged to passionarity type (48%), in the group of pre-school children of liberal mothers, the majority of children belonged to persistence type (48%), and in the group of pre-school children of indifferent mothers, the majority of children belonged to sub-passionarity type (50%). At the same time, among the children of authoritarian and liberal parents, those with sub-passionarity features were a minority

(22% and 24%), and among the children of indifferent parents, those with passionarity features were a minority (17%).

The statistical analysis revealed that the majority of pre-school children of authoritarian mothers were inclined for passionarity ( $\varphi^*=2.578$ ;  $p\leq 0.01$ ), the majority of pre-school children of liberal mothers were inclined for persistence ( $\varphi^*=1.845$ ;  $p\leq 0.05$ ), and the majority of pre-school children of indifferent mothers were inclined for sub-passionarity ( $\varphi^*=2.394$ ;  $p\leq 0.01$ ). Therefore, the style of upbringing in a one-parent family influences the inclination for passionarity.

According to the results of comparative analysis of the features of the gender role manifestation of the pre-school children of authoritarian, liberal and indifferent mothers, we may conclude that the children of authoritarian parents tend to change their gender identification and to manifest passionarity. Taking into account that in this group there were 12 boys and 15 girls, these girls were developing a masculine type.

The majority of pre-school children of indifferent parents were inclined for sub-passionarity. Taking into account that in this group there were 8 boys and 10 girls, these boys were developing a feminine type.

The pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents have not completely formed the gender-role identity. In other words, they do not have comprehensive representations of the typical gender features of their own behavior, as well as the functions expressed as the generalized statements of masculinity or femininity (gender identification). Their representations of the behavior of boys and girls are opposite, i.e., feminine in boys and masculine in girls.

Our research has stated the differences in gender identification of children from the families with different upbringing styles; these differences are expressed as uncertain representations in children of authoritarian parents. This may be due to the fact that the pre-school children of authoritarian parents, at the emotional-will level of their internal activity sphere, remain dependent on the opinion

of their peers and grownups, and are unable to make independent decisions due to their age. The tendency for distorting the gender roles in pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents remains within the age norm, but if their mothers continue controlling their children, telling them what to do, etc., then the children may form a distorted conception of gender roles.

The role-gender preferences, i.e. values referring to the stereotyped behavior of the genders, are formed insufficiently in pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents compared to the children of liberal parents. The image of oneself as a representative of a certain gender was not formed in boys and girls. This is probably due to the identity crisis.

The children of authoritarian mothers manifest the tendency for the change of gender identification and inclination for passionarity. The majority of pre-school children of indifferent parents manifest sub-passionarity features.

## **CONCLUSIONS.**

The inclination for passionarity is manifested in the increased activity of pre-school children. Such children are very active and energetic. Authoritarian parents constantly control their children, regulate and direct their actions and deeds. As a consequence, the constant control and constrain of the child's activity just increases it, and the child becomes impulsive.

Under liberal style of upbringing, the children become as they naturally are. Thus, there is no distinct connection between the inclination for passionarity and the liberal style of upbringing.

Passivity, laziness is more often formed in children of parents with indifferent style of upbringing, as the children are often left to oneself; they are not educated and supported by their parents. Most of the time, such children watch TV or play computer games; the parents do not pay attention to the child and allow such occupations.

The obtained results testify to the lack of attention on the part of the parents, in particular, those with authoritative style of upbringing, to one of the most important spheres of a personality: gender identification of a pre-school child, which determines gender self-consciousness and harmonious formation and directs the gender socialization of a child.

In a family environment, measures should be taken to form the gender identity of a child. These measures should include the development of gender competency of a child, provide the gender-comfortable family lifestyle, support the child's individuality, and facilitate the gender development of a child. For that, it is essential to broaden the social territory of a family, so that the child's personality develops in a free, flexible and multi-faceted way, the personal potential of a child is disclosed, and the child is able to self-implement and self-actualize, emphasize their individuality and harmonize the gender interaction.

The activities aimed at developing the gender-role attitudes in children promoted the children's individual initiative, as the children acquired the opportunity to express themselves naturally in this gender role. Violations of gender passionarity can be most rapidly corrected at pre-school age. At the primary school age, cognitive passionarity starts to dominate, while the formations of the pre-school become less significant. A psychologist of a pre-school educational establishment can take measures to consolidate the gender passionarity.

The styles of family upbringing are one of the key factors which form the character and behavior of children. The incorrect upbringing is a factor aggravating the potential character deviations in children.

Gender identity serves as the basis for implementing the gender culture in all social spheres. After acquainting with the social gender roles, children strive for comprehending these roles. As early as at the age of 3, children become aware of their self, the pronoun "I" appear in speech. The gender identity as awareness of the constancy of one's gender is formed before the senior pre-school age.

The children may manifest the adequate, inadequate and negative attitude towards their gender. Depending on what gender-role conceptions the child acquires during the pre-school period, they will further play the corresponding role during the adolescence, when sexual attractions become predominant, and later, during the adulthood.

The empirical research of the influence of upbringing styles in one-parent families on forming the gender roles at pre-school age gave the following results. The role-gender preferences, i.e. values referring to the stereotyped behavior of the genders, are formed insufficiently in pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents compared to the children of liberal parents.

The image of oneself as a representative of a certain gender was not formed in boys and girls. This is probably due to the identity crisis. In pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent mothers, the role-gender identity is not completely formed. That is, they do not have comprehensive representations of the typical gender features of their own behavior, as well as the functions expressed as the generalized statements of masculinity or femininity (gender identification). The tendency for distorting the gender roles in pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents remains within the age norm, but if the parents excessively control the child, always telling them what to do, etc., then the child may form a distorted conception of gender roles.

The research hypothesis has been confirmed: the upbringing style influences the formation of gender role at pre-school age. The children of authoritarian parents tend to change their gender identification and manifest passionarity. The majority of pre-school children of indifferent parents manifest sub-passionarity features.

This statement is confirmed by the significant differences obtained when comparing the indices of the gender identification of pre-school children of authoritarian, liberal and indifferent parents:

- In the majority of drawings of the children of authoritarian parents, confusion of gender roles and small unsteady legs are observed. In the drawings of the children of indifferent parents, small unsteady legs prevail.

- The children of authoritarian parents more often agree that it is possible to change one's sex.

- Among the pre-school children of authoritarian and indifferent parents, there were children who could not correctly estimate their current image and represented themselves either as babies or as grownups.

- The majority of pre-school children of authoritarian parents were inclined for passionarity, the majority of pre-school children of liberal parents were inclined for persistence, and the majority of pre-school children of indifferent parents were inclined for sub-passionarity.

There is a correlation between the parents' style of upbringing and the inclination for passionarity in pre-school children. The authoritarian style of upbringing leads to forming the inclination for passionarity in children, while the indifferent style of upbringing leads to forming the sub-passionarity features in children.

Within this research, we considered only one-parent families, making no comparative analysis with full families. Further, we are planning to do research in this sphere, which, in our opinion, will yield a vast material for practical implementation with the families, with a view of adequate formation of gender-role identification of children from families of different types.

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