

## Interrelation of Aggression with Reflexivity and World Image in Students of the Pedagogical Profile as an Opportunity to Improve Their Psychological Health

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### ABSTRACT

The development of unique techniques aimed to increase and stabilize levels of young men and girls' psychological health whose after- graduation profession will be connected with pedagogical activity characterized by an accelerating rate of various innovations in education process and requirements to training quality, need in life-long self-education to increase competitiveness and improved communicative skills to obtain and use information provides the relevance of the studied problem. The objective of the paper is to consider intensity and peculiarities of manifestation and interdependence of such characteristics as aggression, reflexivity and ideas of the world (first of all, its social aspects) in students of different genders going to get engaged in pedagogical activity in future. Research methods of testing and questioning were used in the course of empirical research. The study revealed that the intensity of certain characteristics manifestations concerning aggression, world image and reflexivity differs in students due to their gender. Gender distinctions are observed in the structure of interrelations between characteristics of aggression and indicators of world image and reflexivity. Materials from the paper can be useful for elaboration of psychology-pedagogical educational programs promoting psychological health strengthening, namely: formation of positive relation to the world, mastering skills of mental states self-control and reflexivity with gender and individual-psychological features of students trained according to a pedagogical profile in view.

### KEYWORDS

Students of a pedagogical profile, psychological health, aggression, reflexivity, world image

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## Introduction

### *Urgency of the problem*

The period of youth is one of the most responsible stages in the formation of adult personality. This stage includes understanding of meaning in life and its

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goals. Youth is the stage significant for the formation of own beliefs and abilities to build life independently. Psychologically healthy personality has to have convincing, constructive and harmonious world outlook to adequately perceive the surrounding world and its social manifestations, in particular.

At present, personal development of youth takes place in the context of complex difficulties of social reorganization in the society. In this regard, the study of modern youth's psychological features, specific ways of their perception of the world around and themselves as well as their life values is getting increasingly actual (Salikhova, 2014). Promptly changing modern society requires answering what psychological skills and characteristics the graduate of a pedagogical profile has to gain to fully perform further professional activity in pedagogical process.

There is no doubt that the person whose professional life is connected with teaching is obliged to look carefully after their own psychological health. Only a psychologically healthy teacher can help students determine correctly their life goals, propose such meanings in life that will reveal abilities and talents of younger generation.

Being equipped with updated methods and technologies of educational activity, the teacher should avoid a directing and controlling "function" in educational process. The modern teacher is bound to understand the necessity of life-long personal self-development, and to have clear motivation and desire to cultivate qualities significant for pedagogical activity. Awareness of the importance of personal self-improvement, need to master methods of mental states self-control, in particular, methods to control own aggressive motives, developments of reflexivity as a self-knowledge method have to become an integral part of future teacher' motivational sphere (Salikhova, 2015).

Person's psychological wellbeing depends, in many respects, on skills to recognize and overcome stress-producing situations, and skills of mental states self-control (Prokhorov & Chernov, 2014; Prokhorov & Chernov, 2015, Valiullina, 2015). The teacher should be flexible to meet any changes in the environment, and to keep the level of stress resistance appropriate for a healthy person. A high level of aggression is one of the signs that the person has experienced stress; its excessiveness can cause both social-psychological and somatic problems (Kuznetsova & Abramova, 2014; Bettencourt et al., 2006). Therefore one of professional goals that the teacher of the 21st century should master is skillful combination of information flow required by training programs and creation of such psychological atmosphere on the lesson which would facilitate students' assimilation of knowledge and at the same time would not provoke fits of various types of their aggression. The modern teacher should master skills of own mental states self-control to prevent ruinous influence of negative emotions and experiences both on them and students who can become involuntary witnesses and participants of an intense situation if the teacher is not able to cope with themselves and will create, thereby, a stressful conflict situation.

The concept "world image" is common when it comes to characterize the totality of phenomena of human's cognitive activity. A.N. Leontyev (1983) used this concept as a comprehensive form of knowledge structuring. The world, from the scientist's point of view, is revealed in human's perception through the system of values which are selected from a real objective world (Leontyev, 1983). Huge amount of knowledge that broadens horizons of world concept and its social-psychological aspects has accumulated due to cultural and scientific

progress in human civilization. Each human is unique, therefore, there are as many subjective world images as people (Smirnov, 1983). As the human is getting mature, world image acquires a certain structure and limitations that mostly depend on subject's individual perception (Prokhorov, Chernov & Yusupov, 2015). Considering some characteristics of a subjective world image that each individual creates, it is necessary to pay attention to the specifics of mental states experiences which Prokhorov (Prokhorov & Chernov, 2014) describes as multicomponent systems depending on an actual situation in which the individual finds themselves. World image is not just a structured information stock; it is an emotional attitude towards it, a peculiar estimating position based on personal life experience.

Reflection takes one of the first places in the list of mechanisms of mental states self-control. Reflection results in understanding, contrasting and assessment of the available state with the required one. If an actual state is recognized unsatisfactory, then the search of ways to correct it starts (Prokhorov & Chernov, 2014). Developed reflexivity as a personality quality, in general, allows the human to realize life experience and characteristics of developed individual world image, to understand true motives of actions, to realize life goals based on the developed personal system of values. Therefore, one of the ways to improve teacher's psychological wellbeing is to train them to use reflection consciously in stressful situations to reduce the level of own aggression.

Many techniques have been developed in practical psychology to conduct psychological correction to strengthen individual's psychological health. However, the problem of adequate psychological methods selection to impact the personality and at the same to consider their identity is still urgent (Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2010). The accelerating rate of various innovations and new requirements to the quality of teaching, need in life-long self-education to increase competitiveness, improvement of communicative skills in the context of modern conditions to obtain and use information require attention to personality psychological hygiene. Awareness of personal self-improvement, efforts for mastering techniques of mental states self-control, reflexivity development as a necessary way of self-knowledge have to become an integral part of the future teacher's motivational sphere. Improvement of own psychological health is one of significant professional tasks of future teachers.

### **Materials and Methods**

Testing and questionnaire methods, methods of mathematical statistics were applied in the research. Widely known techniques were used: 1) Buss-Durkey Inventory; 2) A.V. Karpov & I.M. Skityaeva (2005) technique to diagnose the general measure of reflection development; it includes diagnostics of retrospective, actual and perspective activity reflection, and communicative reflection as well; 3) Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ). The questionnaire "World image" was created according to the idea of the work.

The questionnaire contains 49 parameters with certain characteristics of the outside world, first of all, of society as an integral part of the world picture (Table 1). Instructions to complete the questionnaire "World image": Assume that the world surrounding you, first of all, society may be presented by one person. Specify the degree to which each of the signs offered in the questionnaire could be expressed in this "generalized" person. Assign a certain number of

points to each statement (from 1 to 10). Remember that 5 or 6 points express an opinion that the corresponding property is not specifically shown in the world (some certain average level) in any way. 4, 3, 2 or 1 points emphasize that this quality increasingly develops into its opposite (e.g., pleasure – into grief (item 1)). When it is closer to 1 point then grief is stronger as opposed to pleasure. 7, 8, 9 or 10 points show that this characteristic is expressed in its direct meaning (e.g. the closer it is to 10 points, the more expressed the pleasure is (item 1)).

**Table 1.** Characteristics included in the questionnaire "World image".

No	Characteristics of world image	No	Characteristics of world image	No	Characteristics of world image
1	Joy	2	Self-love-	3	Universal love
4	Self-love	5	Limitation(narrow-mindedness)	6	Enlightened consciousness
7	Self- confidence	8	Interest in what is happening in life	9	Feeling of protection from problems
10	Clarity of mind	11	Self-satisfaction	12	Strong will
13	Tension in goal achievement	14	Sincerity, openness	15	Total of energy, vital forces
16	Anxiety	17	Clearness of understanding of life situation	18	Responsibility for own actions
19	Laziness	20	Patience, tolerance to people	21	Self-absorption
22	Tendency to analyze own actions	23	Tendency to analyze own thoughts	24	Tendency to make decisions relying on previous experience
25	Apathy	26	Sleepiness	27	Dullness, feeling of impossibility to think over a situation
28	Ressentiment	29	Aggression	30	Fear for oneself
31	Feeling of guilt	32	Irritability	33	Disappointment
34	Melancholy	35	Experience of loneliness	36	Helplessness
37	Physical indisposition, discomfort	38	Instability of behavior, impulsiveness	39	Benevolence
40	Attractiveness	41	Beauty	42	Wealth of colours
43	Sorrow	44	Scale (small-huge)	45	Scale (flat - volume)
46	Cognoscibility (in cognizable - learned up to the end)	47	Availability (absolutely inaccessible for understanding - completely realized)	48	Changeability (absolutely unchangeable- can cardinaly change)
49	Imagery (not various - very diverse)				

The teachers' training college of the city of Kazan was used as an experimental research base. Young girls and boys aged between 15-17 years took part in the research (100 people).

## Results

Research results revealed a number of features presenting young men and girls' ideas about manifestation of intensity of certain characteristics in the world (Table 2.). Reliable differences were found out in the degree of aggression and reflexivity expressiveness in the studied groups (Table 3, 4).

**Table 2.** Comparative analysis data of quantitative values of the questionnaire "World image" indicators with Student's t-criterion taken into account in groups of young men and girls.

No. of indicators	Characteristics of world image	X - average value of an indicator (young man)	X - average value of an indicator (girls)	Student's t-criterion	p
16	Anxiety	4,90	6,14	-2,207	0,05
20	Patience, tolerance to people	6,73	7,87	-2,073	0,05
23	Tendency to analyze own thoughts	6,52	8,44	-2,278	0,05
24	Tendency to make decisions, relying on previous experience	6,92	9,08	-3,007	0,01
29	Aggression	3,90	5,30	-2,256	0,05
30	Fear for oneself	3,90	6,17	-3,453	0,01
31	feeling of guilt	3,93	5,77	-3,008	0,01
39	Benevolence	6,77	8,17	-2,317	0,05

Keeping in mind that the questionnaire instruction proposes to imagine the world in the image of a "generalized" person endowed with certain personal "generalized" characteristics, and proceeding from the assumption that ideas of the world, first of all, about its social component are in many respects testees' own projection which they estimate relying on their personal life experience, one may say that, in general, the world for girls participating in the research is represented as more disturbing, aggressive, frightening and, at the same time, causing sense of guilt. Along with it, girls imagine the world (society) more tolerant to certain people, more friendly and more capable to reflection of new ideas and past events (items No. 23 and 24 in Table 2). As for young men the world seems to them more pacified, it does not cause fear and frights, and it does not cause feeling of guilt.

**Table 3.** Comparative analysis data of indicators quantitative values of Buss-Durkey Inventory with Student's t-criterion taken into account in groups of young men and girls.

No. of indicators	Characteristics of aggression	X - average value of an indicator (young men)	X - average value of an indicator (girls)	Student's t-criterion	p
50	physical aggression	6,37	3,81	3,958	0,001
51	displaced aggression	3,90	5,82	-2,278	0,05

52	irritability	3,25	4,97	-2,354	0,05
53	negativism	3,10	3,37	-0,784	-
54	offence	3,62	4,08	-0,834	-
55	suspiciousness	4,29	6,34	-2,863	0,01
56	verbal aggression	6,67	8,28	-2,753	0,01
57	feeling of guilt	5,40	7,90	-2,750	0,01

Comparative analysis of aggression indicators shows reliable distinctions in the structure of aggression in young men and girls (Table 3.). So, the only type of aggression which prevails in intensity in young men is physical aggression. Such types of aggression as negativism and offense are presented approximately equally in both groups and do not have a high level. Displaced aggression, suspiciousness, verbal aggression and feeling of guilt (self-aggression) are expressed stronger in girls than in young men. Comparison of intensity of various ways of reflection in testees' groups showed that such types of reflection as retrospective (meaningful analysis of past experience), future reflection (creation of conscious plans for future), communicative reflection (analysis of relationship with other people) are stronger developed in girls. Young men revealed more expressed reflection of present activity (understanding of actions in the present) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Comparative analysis data of quantitative values of reflexivity indicators with Student's t-criterion taken into account in groups of young men and girls.

No. of indicators	Characteristics of aggression	X - average value of an indicator (young men)	X - average value of an indicator (girls)	Student's t-criterion	p
58	retrospective reflection of activity	30,43	33,47	-2,750	0,01
59	reflection of present activity	33,20	30,37	2,625	0,05
60	reflection of future activity	33,63	36,73	-2,710	0,01
61	communicative reflection	32,90	36,45	-3,259	0,01

Differences were revealed in EPQ indicators in the studied sample of students (Table 5). The group of young men showed more extraversion, while girls were less emotionally balanced (a high level of neuroticism).

**Table 5.** Comparative analysis data of quantitative values of extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism indicators with Student's t-criterion taken into account in groups of young men and girls.

No. of indicators	Characteristics of aggression	X - average value of an indicator (young men)	X - average value of an indicator (girls)	Student's t-criterion	p
62	Extraversion	16,03	14,06	2,076	0,05
63	Neuroticism	9,40	17,77	-7,817	0,001
64	Psychoticism	10,73	10,07	0,755	-

Analysis of correlation links is of certain interest (Table 6.). Correlation analysis (Pearson's method) was used in the research.

**Table 6.** Data of correlation analysis.

Young men			Girls		
Interrelation between indicators	Value of correlation coefficient (r)	p	Interrelation between indicators	Value of correlation coefficient (r)	p
2 - 50	0,45	0,01	1 - 54	- 0,38	0,01
8 - 53	- 0,41	0,01	2 - 51	0,37	0,01
8 - 64	- 0,41	0,01	4 - 58	- 0,51	0,01
9 - 52	0,43	0,01	6 - 50	0,37	0,01
9 - 55	0,40	0,01	7 - 51	0,42	0,01
10 - 52	- 0,51	0,01	8 - 56	0,40	0,01
19 - 53	- 0,51	0,01	10 - 54	- 0,37	0,01
19 - 58	- 0,37	0,01	10 - 55	- 0,38	0,01
20 - 50	- 0,56	0,01	13 - 50	0,38	0,01
29 - 50	0,45	0,01	13 - 51	0,38	0,01
29 - 56	0,52	0,01	13 - 53	0,43	0,01
30 - 50	- 0,42	0,01	20 - 56	- 0,37	0,01
31 - 53	0,43	0,01	29 - 54	0,48	0,01
33 - 57	- 0,39	0,01	30 - 53	0,37	0,01
39 - 50	- 0,38	0,01	34 - 54	0,45	0,01
50 - 60	0,47	0,01	34 - 55	0,41	0,01
52 - 61	0,45	0,01	38 - 52	0,39	0,01
52 - 55	0,46	0,01	40 - 51	0,39	0,01
53 - 58	0,46	0,01	41 - 51	0,38	0,01
53 - 64	0,37	0,01	43 - 54	0,49	0,01
			52 - 63	0,40	0,01
			54 - 63	0,53	0,01
			55 - 59	0,36	0,01
			57 - 61	- 0,45	0,01

Reliable interdependence of world image characteristics with an indicator of physical aggression is observed in the group of young men. So, the idea that the world (society) becomes more and more selfish (the world does not care about an individual), aggressive, deprived of fear, less tolerant and malevolent generates strengthening of physical aggression. Girls can experience strengthening of physical aggression in case when it seems to them that the world (society) is capable to generate more and more lofty ideas and purposes, but at the same time intensity to achieve these purposes arises.

Availability of reliable interrelations of world image characteristics with an indicator of displaced aggression is not observed in young men while in girls this type of aggression is stronger in case if the world seems more selfish, confident in its strength, more attractive and beautiful but at the same time causing much tension.

The higher the level of neuroticism and the more the world seems unstable and impulsive to girls, the higher irritability as the characteristic of aggression is in girls. At the same time irritability in young men is stronger when the world seems more stable to them (protected from problems) but at the same time deprived of "clarity if mind ", that is deprived of common sense. The feeling of the world stability strengthens such characteristic of aggression in men as suspiciousness. In girls, unlike young men, suspiciousness strengthens in case

when the world seems more and more deprived of common sense and increasingly sad.

Feeling of guilt (self-aggression) in young men is greater if the world seems to them "not disappointed in life", i.e. the more the world is represented as self-sufficient and seeking for fixing those foundations which have already developed in it. Feeling of guilt has no reliable interrelations with characteristics of world image in girls.

Reflection indicators also have reliable interrelations with different types of aggression. So, in group of young men the higher the level of communicative reflection is, the less irritability and suspiciousness are. Strengthening of communicative reflection reduces self-aggression (feeling of guilt) in girls.

Strengthening of physical aggression generates strengthening reflections of future activity, and strengthening of negativism leads to decrease in retrospective reflection of activity. Increase of suspiciousness level leads to strengthening of activity reflection in present.

### Discussions

In the course of empirical research a large number of reliable differences in degree of expressiveness and in interrelations between indicators of aggression and characteristics of world image and reflexivity in young men and girls going to be engaged in pedagogical activity were revealed. Data which convincingly proved the necessity to take into consideration genders of future teachers during their professional formation and increase of their adaptability to stressful situations inevitable in educational process were obtained. So, it is possible to assume that young men in their professional activity can be subject to risk of physical aggression and negativism strengthening, i.e. desires to do everything on the contrary, not as it is considered correct since they connect lots of world image characteristics with these indicators of aggression. Girls have a bigger risk to experience offense, depression and to show displaced aggression in case the world around seems to them less comfortable than usually.

As educational process makes a considerable part of teacher's world image, the need to master ways of states self-control, aggression in particular, becomes apparent; gender differences should be taken into account.

When reflection is considered as a self-control method, then reflection of future activity (drawing up accurate plans for future, e.g. concerning career professional development) can strengthen aggressive motives (physical aggression) in young man in relation to those who will give them the feeling of world image deterioration. At the same time, to reduce desire to make acts which contradict conventional ideas of correct pedagogical behavior male teachers need to develop ability to reflect previous experience. Feeling of irritation in the course of pedagogical activity can be reduced in men due to communicative reflection activation (understanding and analysis of relationships with people around).

It is more actual for girls to pay attention to activity reflection in the present as it was revealed that intensification of this type of reflection leads to strengthening of their suspiciousness to events that, in turn, activate the state of depression and melancholy (the world seems to be filled with melancholy and senselessness). At the same time, communicative reflection with surrounding people can decrease the tension of experience connected with remorse.



Despite the variety of researches, the influence of reflection on various individual-psychological characteristics of reflection and aggression interdependence has been studied insufficiently. Comparison of representations of the world, first of all, society with different types of aggression and various types of reflection, with testees' gender differences in view, makes the research unique.

### Conclusion

It was revealed that young men and girls, whose future profession will be connected with pedagogics, have considerable differences in their representations of the world. Some characteristics of world image are closely connected with experience of different types of aggression; the structure of interrelations significantly differs due to genders. It was found out that reflexive regulation of aggressive manifestations in young men and girls is not identical. In certain cases it is necessary to reduce certain types of reflection, not to strengthen them. Both psychological methods aimed to develop reflection and methods of self-control and self-regulation of reflexive processes should be elaborated. Sometimes excessive reflexivity does not provide benefit. Hence, the development of psychology-pedagogical methods to strengthen psychological health of future teachers should consider gender peculiarities of the world perception and the specificity of interrelations of various types of reflection with characteristics of aggression.

### Recommendations

Materials from the article can be useful to develop practice-focused psychology-pedagogical educational programs aimed at increase of psychological health and general level of future teachers' adaptability with gender differences and their individual and psychological features in view.

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