PECULIARITY OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AND ANXIETY OF ADOLESCENCE

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The aim of the article was to establish peculiarity of the psychosocial adjustment and anxiety of adolescence depend from gender. Adolescence (14-15 years old) was randomly selected from Kaunas secondary schools, and then all the participants from the eighth and the ninth grades were investigated. Thus, the participants of the study were 521 students of middle school age (285 females and 236 males). The measure of psychosocial adjustment included K. Rogers and R. Diamond modified method. The measure of anxiety included C. R. Raynolds and B. O. Richmond method. Results. After the analysis we established that psychosocial adjustment level among students of middle school age was higher for females (56.13 ± 12.82 points) than males (51.33 ± 11.38 points) (p = 0.001). Females of adolescence showed higher (65.93 ± 11.34 points) levels of integrity criterion than males (59.30 ± 8.71 points) (p < 0.05) and emotional comfort is experienced stronger by females of adolescence (58.44 ± 11.33 points), they felt better than their peer males (49.70 ± 10.82 points) (p < 0.05). Somatic anxiety was high for the girls of middle school age (p = 0.004). Conclusions. Female adolescence show better psychosocial adaptation than males; their integrity and emotional comfort results are higher than that of their peer males. Somatic anxiety was higher for females compared to males.

Keywords: psychosocial adjustment, anxiety, adolescence.

Introduction

The psychosocial adjustment of a personality while being a special phenomenon of an individual in social interrelations covers multiple aspects in itself, some of which are related with the standards of the society while others are connected with the behavioral norms of the personality. All of them are equally important for the peculiarities of the personality values and its needs (Malinauskas, 2006). During the whole life of an individual, value orientation and development of needs acquire particular traits which at some moments of human life contribute to efficient adaptation while during others they complicate the situation by involving specific peculiarities. The group of the age of adolescence is unique since it shows the “flash” of the development of the social, psychological and physiological activeness of the personality (Barkauskaitė, 2004). Adolescence is one of the critical stages of the development of a personality. Due to rapid physiological alterations in the body and because of still underdeveloped psychological and social maturity, students age are less resistant to the impact of the stressors of the environment, and their psychosocial adjustment is disturbed more rapidly concerning the adolescents ability to adapt to the requirements which are set at school, to the norms regulated by the society and to relate adequately with the environment under the conditions which are present in the current social system (Williamson et al., 1995; Markevičiūtė ir kt., 2007; Way et al., 2007). When exploring the factors imposing on the psycho-social health of children and adolescents, more and more frequently, aggression, somatic disorders, depression, anxiety and insufficient self-esteem are emphasized (Markevičiūtė ir kt., 2007; Way et al., 2007), i.e., the psycho-social de-aptitude is highlighted.

Hanson (1997) notes what the most frequently identified students difficulties of psychosocial adjustment are; they may be generally attributed to the anxiety expressing the emotional state related with the entirety of life at school; it concerns the experience of social stress which is caused by the relationship with peers, fear of self-expression when negative emotions obstruct the revelation of one’s identity and the demonstration of one’s abilities; it also concerns the fear of one’s results and behavioral acts not fulfilling the expectations of others; here stems the anxiety about negative evaluations received from others (Hanson, 1997; Martišauskienė, 2004). There have been multiple researches exploring the data of schooling anxiety (Martišauskienė, 2004), student stress and fear at school (Burba et al., 2007), psycho-social adaptation, student well-being and health issues at school (Li, Prevatt, 2007).

The aim of the article was to establish peculiarity of the psychosocial adjustment and anxiety of adolescence depend from gender.

Research method. In September 2008, when performing the declarative exploration, an independent batch was construed. The research employs a two-stage random selection, i.e. schools of all the regions of Lithuania are to possess equal probability of getting into the sample. The explored batch consisted of 521 students of general education schools of Kaunas City (8th and 9th forms, aged 14 to 15, 285 females and 236 males). The students were selected for the research by employing the method of probability representation:
schools were selected and the exploration was performed in entire classes containing students of adolescence age. The age average of the explored batch is 14.7 ± 0.51 years.

The questionnaire employed modified methodology by Rogers and Dymond for exploration of *psychosocial adjustment* (Райгородский, 2000). The modified questionnaire by Rogers and Dymond consists of 101 questions. The subjects when replying questions had to select one of the seven variants of answers: “This is definitely not about me” = 0; “This does not look like me” = 1; “I doubt that this could be applied to me” = 2; “I do not dare to apply it to me” = 3; “This is similar to me, but I am not sure” = 4; “This is similar to me” = 5; “This is definitely about me” = 6. The subjects were informed that they had to assess statements concerning the methodology of lessons of physical education. The fundamental subscale which optimally reveals the psychosocial adjustment of personality is “adjustment” (the compatibility of the subscale is calculated in terms of Cronbach alphas criterion (0.76)). It involves most statements of this methodology. The authors of the methodology (Rogers and Dymond) in their model of psychosocial adjustment in addition to the generalized fundamental adaptation-defining value presents subscales of emotional comfort and integrity assisting to reveal the psychosocial adjustment of a personality. This subscales is assessed as one of the components supplementing the psychosocial adjustment of a personality, and its integrity is calculated according to Cronbach alpha criterion (0.69).

In order to discover the level of anxiety of adolescence, the *scale of students’ anxiety* was employed (Reynolds, Richmond, 1994). The questionnaire consists of 37 questions, 28 questions specify the level students anxiety. The subjects when replying questions had to select one of the two variants answers: “Yes” = 1; “No” = 0. The scale of anxiety consist form three factors: somatic, personality and social. The fundamental subscale is calculated in terms of Cronbach alphas criterion (0.73).

Statistical analysis of the data was performed by using SPSS version 13.0 program package. Hypotheses on the average of two quantitative features and on the equality of two percentual values were checked by t and z criteria accordingly. Hypotheses on the interrelation of markers were checked on the basis of chi square ($\chi^2$) criterion. Data differentiation is statistically significant in case of $p < 0.05$.

**Research results**

When exploring the levels of the psychosocial adjustment of adolescence age by applying the modified methodology by Rogers and Dymond, a statistically reliable difference between the psychosocial adjustment of females and males was established: among females, it is higher ($p = 0.001$) than among their peer males (Fig. 1). The psychosocial adjustment of the females is better (56.13 ±12.82 points) than that of males (51.33±11.38 points). The difference of the indicators of psychosocial adjustment of the female and male students of adolescence age is statistically significant ($p = 0.001$); the level of the psychosocial adjustment of females is higher.

A reliable difference ($p < 0.05$) was established between males and their peer females of adolescence age in terms of integrity (integrity stands for seeing of the causes of behavior in oneself, reliance on the objectives that have been set and resistance to obstacles) during the lessons of physical education; females of adolescence showed higher (65.93 ± 11.34 points) levels of this criterion than males (59.30 ± 8.71 points) (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1. Psychosocial adjustment, integrity and emotional comfort scales of adolescence](image_url)

* $p = 0.001$ to compare males and females psychosocial adjustment results.
** $p = 0.05$ to compare males and females integrity and emotional comfort results.
When assessing the data of the students on the manifestation of the factor of emotional comfort, it has been established that emotional comfort in the lessons of physical education is experienced stronger by females of adolescence (58.44 ± 11.33 points); their experiences during lessons of physical education were stronger, they felt better than their peer males (49.70 ± 10.82 points). The difference between the genders in terms of this criterion was statistically reliable (p < 0.05) (Fig. 1).

On the basis of the assumption that anxiety covers multiple aspects, a factorial analysis of research data was performed. Three factors of anxiety were singled out: somatic, social and personality anxiety. When dealing with the manifestation of the factors of anxiety in terms of the gender of the researched individuals, we may notice that the factor of somatic anxiety is higher among females (p = 0.004). However, the claim that females possess a negative self-concept (anxiety of the personality) than males or that they express social anxiety more frequently is impossible as these factors are not significantly different in terms of gender (p > 0.05). Our claim that females statistically reliably possess somatic complaints more frequently than their peer males is substantiated (p = 0.004) (Fig. 2).

![Fig. 2. The level of anxiety of adolescence](image)

[p = 0.004 to compare males and females somatic anxiety results.]

**Discussion**

By the performed research, we sought to establish the features of psychosocial adjustment (integrity, emotional comfort), anxiety (including somatic, personality and social anxiety) for adolescence. We suggest that psychosocial adjustment levels among adolescence were superior for females than males. The results of the performed research confirmed the data of other researchers that those students who are physically active show higher levels of psychosocial adjustment, are more communicative and maintain higher levels of self-esteem in comparison with physically passive students (Smith, 2004). It was established that intense physical activity has major significance for the psychosocial adjustment and satisfaction with one’s life in adolescence (Armonienė, 2007). Experiences of loneliness as well as other negative events / situations in life are related with the increased psychological discomfort further complicating the harmonious psychosocial adjustment to the surrounding environment. When analyzing the factors impacting the psychosocial adjustment, aggression, somatic disturbances, depression, anxiety and insufficient self-esteem are emphasized more and more frequently (Markevičiūtė et al., 2007; Way et al., 2007), all of these demonstrating psychosocial de-aptitude. When exploring the peculiarities of the psychosocial adjustment of adolescence, it was established that regular psychosocial adjustment requires the support of not only the family, but also that of friends (Morano, Cisler, 1993). Those students, who due to some reasons find it hard to communicate with their peers, feel isolated and separated from the environment, further lose the confidence in their own powers, lose self-respect and worsen their self-esteem due to regular failures (Ellickson, McGuigan, 2000). The data of the research by Malinauskas et al. (2008) established that male and female students are statistically reliably different (p < 0.05) in terms of self-confidence: males are more self-confident than females. We believe that these causes impose on the fact that males see a relationship between the peculiarities of their personalities (issues in studies and communication, excessive agility,
harmful habits, non-participation in extra-curricular activities, inability to concentrate attention) and their failures in schooling studies (Barkauskaite et al., 2004).

Even though there is no universally accepted classification of psychological difficulties of students, however, all of the variants reflect school problems. Hanson (1997) notes what the most frequently identified students difficulties of psychosocial adjustment are; they may be generally attributed to the anxiety expressing the emotional state related with the entirety of life at school; it concerns the experience of social stress which is caused by the relationship with peers, fear of self-expression when negative emotions obstruct the revelation of one’s identity and the demonstration of one’s abilities; it also concerns the fear of one’s results and behavioral acts not fulfilling the expectations of others; here stems the anxiety about negative evaluations received from others (Hanson, 1997). It is emphasized that any kind of a student’s well-being at school is influenced not only by the studying materials or curriculum, but is far more impacted by the management of studies, the interrelation of students and the functioning of the school as a particular microsystem possessing influence on the development of the personality (Li, Prevatt, 2007). Ollendick et al. (2003) in order to establish the level of anxiety among students applied a scale of anxiety for the evaluation of adolescence group (Reynolds, Richmond, 1994). The data of the questionnaire established that there is a high-level correlative relationship between depression and anxiety. The scholars established a statistically reliable relationship between depression and somatic anxiety (p < 0.01) (Ollendick et al., 2003). Thus we believe that the psychological well-being of adolescence because of the stress and anxiety that they experience at school is worsening while anxiety in turn negatively affects self-esteem, and social as well as somatic anxiety levels are increasing.

**Conclusions**

1. Female adolescence show better psychosocial adaptation than males; their integrity and emotional comfort results are higher than that of their peer males.

2. Somatic anxiety was higher for females compared to males.

**References**


