

Study of the Self-Image of Mothers Raising Disabled Children with Mental Retardation

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Received date: January 9, 2023, **Accepted date:** January 14, 2023, **Published date:** January 17, 2023

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Summary

The article is devoted to the study of the Self-image of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation. The sample consisted of two groups of mothers in the total number of 60 people. In the main group, 30 mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation aged 10–14 years were studied. The second group consisted of mothers raising healthy children. The projective technique “Who am I?” of M. Kuhn and T. McPartland was applied. The analysis made it possible to determine the Self-image of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation. This work is the initial stage of the study of the Self Image of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation, which reflected a comparison of descriptive characteristics and revealed general trends. Further work on the Self-Image of the mother was carried out by constructing subjective semantic fields using the semantic differential technique.

Keywords: Image of I, Mothers of Children with Disabilities, Test "Who Am I"

Short Communication

In the science and practice of psychology, the problems and needs of a family raising a child with developmental delay are mostly evaluated through the life activities, psychological support and patronage of children with disabilities [6]. A humane attitude towards people with developmental disabilities is developing in society, and new effective ways are constantly sought for their social adaptation [3, 5].

However, one of the important aspects that requires special attention is often excluded from the field of view, namely: the parents themselves of a child with developmental disabilities. The mother of a disabled child, who most often bears problems related to ensuring the life of the family, raising, educating

children, including sick ones, is under the influence of a long-term pathogenic factor - stress [4]. The mother's personality undergoes significant changes under the influence of psychotraumatic factors, the outlook on the world, the attitude towards herself, towards other people and towards the child is changing [3, 4, 5].

The image of the Self, which developed in the mind of a woman, before the birth of a disabled child with mental retardation, has been changing for many years due to the reorientation of life attitudes. Despite all the stability of the Self-Image, it is not a static, but a dynamic formation. When changing to oneself and the outside world, the multi-level system of all interconnected components of the Self-concept changes and shifts. With the growth of contradictions in the structure of the Image of the Self, the stability and internal consistency of the elements of the model of the Self of the concept are violated, mental tension arises, which in turn transforms the entire structure [1].

The self-image of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation has not been sufficiently studied and requires further research. Our

In the course of a meaningful analysis of the implementation of the methodology "Who am I?" First of all, the following components of the Self-Image are studied: features of self-assessment of identity; level of reflection; features of temporal identity.

The interpretation of the results includes the study of the following points: determining the level of identity differentiation; the use in the process of evaluating the identification characteristics of such signs as "plus minus at the same time" and the question mark ("?"); correlation in the answers designating social roles and individual characteristics; psycholinguistic aspect of answers [2].

Mothers raising disabled children and mothers raising healthy children took part in our study. The main

study is devoted to the examination of the self-image of mothers raising children with mental retardation and disabilities. The aim of this study is to determine the Self-Images of mothers raising mentally handicapped children by "Who Am I?" The methodology developed by M. Kuhn and T. McPartland in 1954 will be based on. [2].

This technique is used to study the content characteristics of a person's identity. The question "Who am I?" is directly related to one's own perception of oneself, that is, the Image of I. According to the conditions of the test, within 12 minutes it is necessary to give as many answers as possible to one question: "Who am I?". Further, the respondent evaluates each of his characteristics according to a four-digit system: the plus sign is put when, in general, you personally like this characteristic; the minus sign is put when, in general, you personally do not like this characteristic; "±" - is set when you both like this characteristic and do not like it at the same time; "?" - the "question" sign is put when you don't know at the moment how you feel about it exactly, you don't yet have a definite assessment of the answer in question.

group consisted of 30 mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation at the age of 10–14 years. The control group of 30 people included mothers raising children without pathology in the development of the mental sphere at the age of 10–14 years. The number of examined mothers was 60 people.

In the course of the study, we have identified the following results. When interpreting the emotional-evaluative component of the Self-Image - self-esteem - it was found that 63% of mothers raising children with disabilities had indicators of overestimated self-esteem. Mothers of disabled children rated their qualities, listed in the test with a plus sign, and the minus sign was absent in the assessments. According to the conditions, the "minus" sign was put when, in general, this characteristic was personally not liked. Perhaps the

respondents wanted to show their best side, socially approved by society and look “correct”. In the group of mothers raising children without developmental disabilities, the indicator of overestimated self-esteem amounted to 50% of the total.

It is also important to note that in the group of mothers raising healthy children, the indicator of low self-esteem was 11% of the total. In the group of mothers raising children with mental retardation, such an indicator was not revealed.

According to the responses, mothers of both groups equally possess adequate self-esteem (37% each).

The following important information for studying the image of the I of mothers is provided by the analysis of the material concerning the use of plus-minus signs in assessing the characteristics at the same time. The use of a plus-minus sign by a person indicates the ability to consider a phenomenon from different sides, sometimes opposite. It also speaks of the degree of balance, the balance of the reaction to significant phenomena in terms of emotions.

In the group of mothers raising healthy children, the indicator of a balanced type of people was 63% of the total number of questionnaires in the group. In the group of mothers of children with disabilities, this figure was 33%. In this evaluation criterion, a significant difference was revealed between the groups of mothers. In connection with the results obtained, it can be said that mothers of healthy children have a greater degree of stress resistance, resolve conflicts faster, are more tolerant of the shortcomings of other people, and maintain constructive relationships with different people.

In the group of mothers raising children with mental retardation, the largest percentage (45%) prevailed - the emotionally polar type. People belonging to the emotionally polar type use categorical,

maximalist assessments of people and phenomena, they are not inclined to consider phenomena from different angles. Perhaps this is due to changes in the emotional state of mothers raising children with mental retardation, a sense of anxiety and insecurity.

The use of the "?" when evaluating characteristics, it is a hallmark of a person who is able to endure a situation of internal uncertainty. This indirectly indicates that a person is capable of change, ready for change. The use of the "?" in responses in the group of mothers of healthy children reached 47% (14 mothers). In the group of mothers raising children with disabilities, the use of the sign "?" in seven questionnaires (21%). This suggests that it is possible that the mothers of this group, for the most part, experience difficulty in the ability to endure internal uncertainty, experience fear of change.

Further, when analyzing the obtained results, the level of reflection was investigated. It is believed that a person with a high level of reflection in response to the question "Who am I?" gives more answers, he does not have difficulties in self-determination. In the group of mothers raising children without developmental features, the indicator of a high level of reflection reached 80% (20 people) of the total number of respondents in this group. In the group of mothers of children with disabilities, 33% (8 people) did not hesitate to answer the question “Who am I?” They gave more than 15 different answers. 67% of mothers of children with disabilities found it difficult or difficult to write answers to the question, limiting themselves to nouns (“mother”, “worker”, “wife”, “woman”). It is likely that the low level of reflection in the responses of mothers raising children with disabilities is associated with the lack of self-reflection of the respondents, the possible avoidance of exploring the inner world.

Next, the temporal aspect of the identity of both groups of mothers was analyzed. It consisted in identifying an indicator of perspective identity

(perspective self) in the answers. Based on the analysis of verb forms, the presence of aspiration to the future, temporal integration of the personality was considered.

When answering the question "Who am I?" in the descriptive characteristics of mothers raising children with mental retardation, no future tense verbs were found. Characteristics associated with prospects, intentions, wishes, dreams related to different spheres of life were little expressed and were practically absent. It can be assumed that the future of mothers of children with disabilities is less certain, they more often imagine their life as "one day".

In the group of mothers of healthy children, 30% of the respondents answered, "a future grandmother", "a person who will go to live by the sea", "a future scientist", "a future psychologist". All this is interpreted as an indicator of the presence of plans, goals for the future, life prospects.

The next significant indicator is the analysis of the correlation of social roles and individual characteristics in identity. 67% of mothers of disabled children with mental retardation in response to the question "Who am I?" indicated many different social roles ("mother", "daughter", "colleague", "worker", "sister"). At the same time, there was a lack of individual characteristics ("smart", "good", "funny", "sociable"). The predominance of only nouns in the answers, indicating social roles, speaks of fear in connection with self-disclosure, a pronounced tendency to self-defense, and insufficient confidence. In the group of mothers raising healthy children, this indicator reached only 21% of the total number of respondents.

An analysis of the spheres of life represented in the identity gives an idea of what is most actualized in his mind. This characteristic is the most significant for the subject and the person writes at the very beginning of the list of answers to the question "Who am I?". In both groups, the answer "mother" prevailed

in the answers.

The analysis of physical identity in both groups showed that the identification characteristics associated with the description of one's physical data, painful manifestations, habits, addictions sounded to the least extent. It can be assumed that the reflection of bodily sensations is weakly expressed in mothers of both groups.

"Active Self" as a component of identity includes the designation of occupations, hobbies, self-assessment of abilities for activity, self-assessment of skills, abilities, knowledge, achievements. The indicator in the group of mothers of healthy children was 80%, in the group of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation it was 50%.

Analysis of the psycholinguistic aspect includes determining which parts of speech and which meaningful aspect of self-identification are dominant in a person's self-description. 70% of respondents from the group of mothers raising children with disabilities used only nouns in the description, which indicates the need for certainty and constancy. The indicator in the group of mothers of healthy children is lower - 58%. The lack of adjectives (85%) in the responses was observed in both groups of subjects. It is possible to assume that it is about a weak differentiation of personality.

Conclusion

Thus, it was revealed that the image of the self of mothers raising disabled children with mental retardation is dominated by the following characteristics: a lower degree of stress resistance, conflict. Mothers of children with disabilities are often not inclined to consider phenomena from different angles, often give in to emotions, are categorical and maximal in their assessments. They experience difficulties in experiencing the conditions of internal uncertainty, difficulty in self-disclosure, self-reflection, fear of

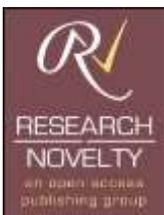
change. It can be said that their image of the Self is “closed”. They are more likely than mothers of healthy children to feel the need for constancy and certainty.

Perspective Self-analysis revealed that it is difficult for mothers of children with disabilities to imagine their future, it is not defined, and more often they live according to the principle of “one day”. An analysis of the active self-showed that mothers of disabled children identify themselves as a “good worker”, “valuable personnel”, “handyman of all trades”, “experienced housewife”. In the descriptive characteristics of mothers of disabled children, there are mainly social roles (“wife”, “mother”, “daughter”, “colleague”, “student”) with a minimum number of individual characteristics.

Further research into the self-image of mothers of disabled children contributes to its more accurate definition. As part of our study, the next step will be the application of the semantic differential method, which will allow us to obtain new in-depth data. This, in turn, will provide grounds for the development of more effective tools in the work of a psychologist-consultant with this category of mothers.

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