DIFFERENCES IN THE PROFILES OF MOTIVATION BETWEEN HIGH-ABILITY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR AVERAGE-ABILITY AGE PEERS

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Introduction

The most important characteristic of adolescents is the essential change of their intellectual sphere. The main feature of this period is considerable increase of ability to abstract thinking. Cognitive processes form as conscious and self-determined ones. The complexity of this period is connected with the variations in character and terms of the cardinal changes in the personality of children. The objective laws of age development show themselves through the individual variations depending on the environment and on the personality features. At adolescent age there are serious reorganizations in the motivational sphere. Two groups of learning motives are distinguished in the structure of motivation: the social motives, connected with ideas about the future profession and life as a whole, the motives of self-improvement, prestige and "avoiding of troubles"; the educational and cognitive motives, connected with research activity and education. The requirement to conform not only to expectations of other people, but also to self-expectations and self-concept starts forming in this moment. The main personality orientation becomes the aspiration to the future and the problem of professional choice.

The study aimed to reveal the peculiarities of motivational content and future time perspective in high ability students compared to their peers with age average intelligence.

Methods: We used: the Tests of Cognitive Abilities, the Questionnaires on Motivation, and school achievements.

Nuttin J. Future time perspective and motivation. Leuven, 1985.
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The studies of motivation usually use the questionnaires with the determined items, according to the theory underlying of each questionnaire, but not belonging to the concrete individual. The Motivational Induction Method (MIM) by J. Nuttin differs from other methods because it provides the conditions for spontaneous producing a large number of personal motives (Nuttin, 1985). This method is used for investigation of the motivational content and temporal prospect through the purposes formulated by examinees themselves. We used Russian version of the MIM (Tolstih, 2009). The results were statistically processed using an independent sample t-test and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs).

Participants: 240 students of V, VII, and X grades (from 11 to 16 years) of secondary schools put together two groups. The first group included 120 gifted students (equally of each grade and gender) with the IQ higher 125. The second group included 120 ordinary students (equally of each grade and gender) with the IQ from 85 till 115.

Results: The comparison of the MIM variables of the gifted students in various age (by means of t-test) showed that the motives connected with social contacts were significantly lower in grades 5, than in grades 7 and 10, as well as in a whole sample. The gifted 5th graders considerably less than the 7th and 10th graders connected the motivation with the educational period, the open present, the whole life, the maturity period. Thus, the difference of the 5th graders from older students both on the content of motives, and on the time codes, quite corresponded to their age characteristics specified in literature.

In two groups of the 5th graders the motives connected with aspiration to possess something, to get something, with the rest and entertainment, educational activities, and self-realization were most expressed. However, in the gifted 5th graders the motives connected with social contacts and religious, existential or transcendental nature were expressed significantly more strongly, than in their age peers. On the contrary, the motives connected with entertainments, missing responses or non-classified responses were not so often. The gifted 5th graders did not differ from the ordinary group on the time perspective scale, except of all life and education.

In the gifted 7th graders the motives of study and social contacts were prevailed. Also they specified lifetime in a whole and the educational period significantly more often than the ordinary peers. In the gifted 10th graders the motives connected with social contacts and transcendental nature prevailed, comparing to entertainment motives. In the temporal periods of the gifted dominated the educational and maturity period.

Discussion: The research revealed the age features of the motivation of adolescents both on the content of motives, and on the time localizations of motivational objects. The differences between the gifted and ordinary students were also found. It was showed that the motives of social contacts were expressed much more strongly in the gifted children in all grades. The gifted 5th graders distinguished by more mature motivational sphere, comparing with their peers, both on the content of motivation, and on time perspective. In grades 7 and 10, in addition to already specified dominance of social motives, in the gifted students the localization of motivational objects in the educational period dominated. In grades 7 the gifted students specified such time codes, as the life in a whole and the historical future, and in grades 10 also the maturity period. It is necessary to note especially that in the gifted 10th graders considerably more often than in the ordinary ones the motives connected with continuation of education after school, with future profession, and with transcendental motives.