Dynamics of Self-assessment of Human Appearance at Different Stages of Life *

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INTRODUCTION

The role and functions of appearance, its self-esteem and appraisal by other people during formation and development of personality at various points of its life journey were proved in many modern researches. Generally scientists consider various external and internal factors as factors of appearance self-esteem. Among external factors, culture-bound gender-related and age-related stereotypes and appearance standards (that are broadcasted via mass media) and social environment of a person (inner circle – parents, friends, relatives and outer circle – peers, colleagues, members of different groups), are classified first. Also among external factors, specifically developed programs can be classified, aimed to boost self-esteem of appearance, decrease relevance of other people’s appraisals, etc. Among internal factors, various personal characteristics (masculinity/femininity, self-actualization and self-expression need and others), can be classified. In addition, most of researches emphasize that influence of these factors is intermediated by stage of personal life journey. Along with this we didn’t find special researches, focused on dynamics of appearance self-esteem at different stages of life journey, and that is what became the goal of present research. The goal of research was to study age-related pattern of person’s appraisals of his/her appearance’s components and its integral characteristics.

HYPOTHESES

- 1) person’s appearance appraisals may change at different stages of life journey;
- 2) person’s appearance appraisals are determined by his/her social and psychological needs degree.

METHODOLOGIC BACKGROUNDS

- 1) Concept of dynamic nature of self-other system (relation to oneself, to others, to the world) of V.N. Myasishchev (Myasishchev, 2014);
- 2) Social and psychological approach to appearance, its appraisal and self-esteem by V.A. Labunskaya (Labunskaya, 2012; Labunskaya, Drozdova, 2017).

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

The following methods were used to prove hypotheses:
1) V. Schutz Interpersonal Relations Questionnaire (Schutz, 1958; Rukavishnikov, 2006);
2) Method called “Assessment and content interpreting of own appearance and its conformity to gender and age related constructs” by V.A. Labunskaya (Labunskaya, 2012);
3) Social and demographic inventory. The empirical subject of research was 103 persons aged 14 to 60 (57 women and 46 men).
The participants of research were divided in 3 sub-groups according to their stage of life journey. The first subgroup included 30 individuals aged 13-18 (adolescent persons); the second subgroup included 43 individuals aged 19-34 (young persons), the third subgroup included 30 individuals aged 35-60 (adult persons).

RESULTS

The research that has been made allowed to notice age-related pattern of person’s self-esteem of his/her appearance (expressive behavior) and its integral characteristics (extent to which appearance conforms to gender / gender roles, age-related attractiveness, appearance’s sexuality, appearance’s attraction for partners of opposite sex). The obtained data show that the lowest self-esteems of appearance (affected by age factor) are typical for a person between “juvenile” and “youth” period, comparing to period of “adulthood”. The revealed trend is firstly peculiar to women. As for men, there are similar trends, but the pattern of indices is not significant in terms of mathematical statistics.

Also, we revealed that appearance self-esteem is stipulated by his/her socio-psychological needs degree. The obtained results allowed us to make a conclusion, that attractiveness for others, self-esteem of appearance sexuality, satisfaction with appearance, high level of need for social contacts and establishing close emotional relationships with others, are exceedingly significant for person’s positive self-sentiment, related with high self-esteem of his/her appearance and its components. While having similar results in male and female subsamples, an impact of need for control on self-esteem of appearance’s components and its integral characteristics was revealed among men.

Table 1. Comparison study of person’s appraisals of his/her appearance at different stages of his/her life journey (adolescent persons, young persons, adult persons) according to Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks.

STUDIED VARIABLES	PSYCHOLOGICAL	MEAN RANK 1	MEAN RANK 2	MEAN RANK 3	CHI-SQUARE	P
Self-esteem of expressive behavior		39,22	53,23	63,02	9,661	0,008
Self-esteem of the extent to which appearance conforms with gender		42,13	49,03	66,12	10,427	0,005
Self-esteem of the extent to which appearance conforms with gender roles		35,35	53,78	66,10	16,227	0,000
Self-esteem of age-related attractiveness		67,27	47,72	42,87	11,633	0,003
Self-esteem of appearance regarding its attraction for partners of opposite sex		37,15	55,57	61,73	11,262	0,004
Self-esteem of appearance sexuality		37,57	51,28	67,47	15,135	0,001