

Empiric research of self-affirmation of a child preschool age, based on his creative activity

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Abstract. In this article we have studied the main strategies of self-affirmation of a child preschool age, we have analysed the manifest of a child's self-affirmative behaviour on a base of the method of observation and drawing test "Nonexistent animal", the empiric method (discussion) and analysis of product's activity of a child. We have found the connection between self-affirmation and self-appraisal of a child this age group.

Keywords: *self-affirmation, self-appraisal, constructive and destructive behaviour.*

A brief review of publications on the subject. The phenomenon of self-affirmation had been studied for a long time as a philosophical problem. Presuppositions of studying this phenomenon we can find in the works of I. Kant, A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche and other philosophers. But only in the XX century this concept was transferred from a philosophical field to psychology, where was formed as a scientific and theoretical problem. At that time the phenomenon of self-affirmation became one of the most studied anthropological problems. Such psychologists as: R. Albery, M. Emmons, E. Nikitin, N. Kharlamenkova and others have studied this problem and produced a lot of actual material according to this phenomenon. But even though there is a large baggage of theoretical material, which refers this problem, it is still lack of theoretical and empirical material about self-affirmation of a child preschool age.

The goal of this article is to analyse the main strategies of self-affirmation of a child preschool age, to determine particularities of child's self-affirmative behaviour, to study the connection between self-affirmation and self-appraisal of a child.

Materials and methods. During our empirical research we have applied the method of observation and psychodiagnosics (drawing test), analysis of the product's activity (children's pictures of nonexistent animal).

Results and discussions. Self-affirmation – is a process of confirming an inner "I" of a personality in society, who develops his own individuality and significance. A personality asserts himself first of all in his inner world and than – in external. This problem was studied by ancient philosophers and it is still relevant in our time. Nowadays it is still lack of theoretical and empirical material about influence of this phenomenon on the children preschool age. For this reason we decided to investigate self-affirmation problem and our aim is to prevent destructive forms of a child's behavior, to help a child in the process of development his inner "I", to help him to realize his own values and individuality, to increase his level of self-appraisal.

Foreign scientists A. Albert and M. Emmons [1] developed main strategies of self-affirmation for adults. On the basis of already offered material we have worked out strategies of self-affirmation for a child preschool age:

1) Assertive strategy of self-affirmation. The main aspect in this strategy is cognitive. A child who belongs to this category we named "a sun". He is a center, which all intercommunications in a group of kids exist around. He is like a magnet, everyone wants to be like him, to imitate

his behavior. Those kids are usually very sunny, smiling, open minded personalities, they think positively, gladly help everyone with pleasure, and are always ready to learn something new, holding themselves independent, well mannered. An educator often orients to "a sun", giving him more responsibility, commends him various tasks to complete. He easily gets acquaintance with others, adapts himself faster to the new conditions.

2) Uncertain strategy, when the main aspect is protective. Being "a shell", this child prefers to be closed from the actions of various stimuli of the external world, however it is very interesting for him what's going on outside. But the fear to be offended prevails and that is why he often shows a lack of initiative. We use the metaphor "shell" to explain that actually no one knows what pearl is hidden in its depth, so the same thing is with this child, who may hide treasures inside, having no possibility to express how beautiful his soul is. The fear of failure forces him to become detached from the group, that's why he often feels anxious, takes everything close to the heart, sensitive, defenceless, often physically looks weak, very prudent, bashful, imperceptible in a collective, he is afraid of taking responsibility, to be at the centre of attention. Other children don't notice him in a group or mock at him.

3) Aggressive strategy reveals a demonstrative aspect and is divided into two subcategories:

a) A kid with a high level of self-appraisal we named "a king". He thinks and talks a lot about himself, he gets used that everyone realizes his whims, admires him. Such child aims to appeal to himself other people, to be in the center of attention, to prevail above others, to manage and dominate on them, to subordinate everyone to his desires. This preschool age child considers that the whole world twirls round his person, he is not used to receive a denial on his address, behaves and dresses demonstratively, he advisedly breaks the rules in society.

b) Children with low self-appraisal we called "a clown". They can be compared with destructive tornado that blows off everything on its way. Having an unsatisfied need in parent's love, they search a method to "snatch" the piece of affection and attention among other people. They are too much active, noisy, self-centered. They intentionally initiate comical situations in a group to pay attention on themselves. Such kids tease another children, nickname and mock on them. It causes defensive reaction among the others so they usually don't like "clowns". Having inferiority complex, they can't realize their inner potential, they are unhappy and behave

themselves demonstratively. Children of the same age mostly treat negatively to such child, because often they are victims of his mockeries and offenses. They prefer to stay away from such a child.

Studying and examining behavior of preschool age boys during their playing activity, we came to the conclusion that demonstrative aspect is dominant in their games, which shows up in such strategies of self-affirmation as “king” and “clown”. Boys who belong to this category have strong desire to prevail above each other, to dominate, to attract attention, to conquer a lot of playing space and toys. They behave themselves noisily, imperiously, sometimes even rudely, push other participants of the game to measure their strength, they mock at weak children and may humiliate them.

The “sun” strategy is dominant in playing activity of girls. They are more sensitive, tactful and look after each other. Girls are interested in imitation of relationships of adults, they want to follow them. They treat with care to each other, try to arrange conflicts, envisage most conflict situations and even prevent them. They prefer quiet games, less movable, in a small group of people, taking care of toys, cleaning and decorating their playing space.

Another strategy of self-affirmation called “shell” includes such particularities of child’s behavior: anxiety, diffidence, trustfulness, vulnerability, desire to be imperceptible. This child accomplishes his tasks longer than other children, he is afraid to confess to an educator that he did not understand something during the lesson and to ask for help. He speaks quietly, is uncertain in his abilities and skills, refuses to participate in active games, adapts himself with difficulties to the new group and conditions of work.

Strategies of “a king” and “a clown” have such particularities of behavior: such children aim to be the best in every activity, badly endure criticism, speak loudly, they depend on other’s opinion, they resorts to various tricks to attract attention of people. They are usually quite spoiled, often use different manipulations and hysterics, try to prevail above others. They dress brightly, behave themselves demonstratively, provoke conflicts in the kindergarten’s group.

The strategy of a “sun” shows up such particularities of child’s behavior: he freely expresses his opinion, helps others with pleasure, wise, well-bred, benevolent, cheerful, confident, easily sets relationships with different people and adapts fast to the new collective. He helps an educator to organize an educational process, generates interesting ideas of games, fairy-tales and tasks, others like and appreciate him. “A sun” is able to settle up a conflict, respects everyone, aspires to knowledge, he is curious and attentive.

During realization of a drawing test called “Non-existent animal”, we have made an analysis of children’s works. In this article we illustrate the most interesting pictures which reveal main strategies of self-affirmation among preschool age children.

The picture 1.1 illustrates the “sun” strategy. Representation of a non-existent animal using the combination of a cat and a dog reveals a child’s rational way of thinking and some lack of creative attitude to the task. Two heads – a sign of availability of contradictory desires [5]. The animal feeds on meat and fish. Cat and dog are the best

friends, having one body for both they help each other and never feel themselves lonely. This nonexistent animal lives in the valley and has no enemies – indices an extrovert personality who has positive experience of building harmonious relationships with people. The “sun” child is open and receptive to the process of gaining new knowledge, building long term relationships with others, he wants to be valuable and acceptable by society, tries to be helpful and useful to people, has a high level of empathy, shares his toys and meal with pleasure, makes a compromise, likes to be a leader in the kindergarten’s group, sticks to the rules of discipline.



Pic. 1.1

The Picture 1.2 corresponds to the “shell” strategy. A non-existent animal combines in itself parts of the body of a cat, caterpillar and butterfly. A long and decorated tail signifies a high significance of sexual sphere and demonstrativity of a child. Many legs means necessity in support, feeling of own incompetence in building relationships with people. Animal’s wings manifest child’s reverie, romanticism, propensity to dreaming up, high expression of creative imagination. The non-existent animal lives in a cave, it testifies the lack of communication, feeling of loneliness. It feeds on berries and fruits – high level of socialization, adequate perception of the surrounding world. This animal builds relationships with friends who are similar to him and has no enemies [5]. On the whole this picture produces pleasant impression about a child who has no aggression towards other people and himself. He shows aspiration to meet new friends and become more sociable. However, he has a lot of difficulties in making acquaintance with others that’s why he is often in the shade, hiding in own cave like a shell, that closes itself at once when it feels first signs of danger. The same thing is with a child, most of the time he hides in an own shell without knowing how to express himself positively, become confident and free, successful, openminded and happy.

The “king” strategy is illustrated on the picture 1.3, where the main color is red, which in a negative form of meaning expresses aggression, violence and blood. A child has a low level of creative imagination because instead of creating a non-existent animal, he drew a bird. We should pay attention to the crown on the bird’s head – it is a symbol of demonstrativeness, desire to dominate over other people, to express own exceptness, willingness to become a leader. Large and decorated tail – high level of sexual sphere. Quarters are turned outside with a lot of claws – a kid is an extravert but has a high level of agres-

sion in himself. A bird doesn't fly upwards, but falls downwards, it means presence of internal conflict, the child suffers from it and demonstrates fast changeable behavior. Near the bird we can see a tree with a nest and baby birds who are the best friends of the king bird – child's desire to find love and support in own family.



Pic. 1.2

The bird has no enemies, however it tries to kill a little ant – the sign of accumulated aggression, feeling of hopelessness [5]. Such inner conflict can be provoked by contradictory styles of education in his family, what allows one adult – forbids another one. Thus, such upbringing produces confrontation when a preschool child can't adopt to the concept of morality. He begins to rebel, defending own rights for independence, integrity, own individuality and right to be happy and successful.



Pic. 1.3

The "clown's" strategy is characterized on the picture 1.4. The image of robot testifies the low level of creative imagination of a child. Absence of hands – a sign of his introvert behavior and problems in building relationships with people who surround him. Mechanical and similar to robot picturing of a nonexistent animal demonstrates the low level of sociability [5]. Absence of friends – a feeling of loneliness, robot's desire to become bigger in size – the fear of aggression, need in defence. Such child is uncertain, he doesn't believe in own forces, feels own incapacity in building relationships with others. For this reason he uses jokes and mockeries that are mechanisms of his protective reaction to the stimuli of the surrounding world. Putting a mask on himself, he feels protected, safe and prefers to attack first before the other people harm him. Such child has a low appraisal attitude from his parents, they don't believe in him, don't trust him, often compare own child to his brothers, sisters or friends. Parents have a high level of individual claims towards their kid and more often he is not able to correspond their expectations. It produces a conflict in family's relationships, alienates a

preschool age child from his relatives, produces a leveling of domestic values. The kid has a feeling of loneliness, lack of affection, love and support. Feeling negatively at home, he wreaks his anger on children in kindergarden's group, putting them in uncomfortable position by own jokes, mockeries and tricks.



Pic. 1.4

Conclusions. In summary we should notice that the results of the test "Nonexistent animal" are necessary to coordinate with the method of observation of a child and then to make a conclusion about child's correlation to the various strategies of self-affirmation. During our empirical research there were cases when according to the results of observation of a child one model of behavior was found out but the method of processing data (childrens pictures) shew up that a kid expressed himself on a picture by another manner. This fact confirms an assumption that there are all strategies of self-affirmation in use of every child preschool age and the most applied strategy becomes dominant and modifies, forms and influences on a growing up personality.

Aspiring a child to self-affirmation is natural. He prefers to confirm himself as a personality, to become independent, openminded, to express his inner potential and individuality. In preschool age a child has already separated his "I" from his mother and aspires to study his inner world, individuality, skills, capacity and destination. If parents understand this natural aspiration of a child and respect him – he develops harmoniously and uses the "sun" strategy of self-affirmation and as a result grows into a happy and assertive person.

If his will to achieve independence and self-development is suppressed by adults – in his further development he will choose such strategies as "shell" and "clown". In another case, when parents patronize their kid too much, making him the hub of the Universe, he grows egocentric and ungrateful with a crown on his head and uses the "king" strategy of self-affirmation. Thus, parents are responsible for their child's choice of this or that strategy of self-affirmation. For this reason they should care for creating a positive microclimate in their own family.

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Эмпирическое исследование самоутверждения ребенка дошкольного возраста на основе его творческой деятельности Годюк В. С.

Аннотация. В статье наведены основные стратегии самосутверждения ребенка дошкольного возраста, проведен анализ поведения самоутверждения ребенка на основе метода наблюдения, рисуночного теста «Несуществующее животное», метода беседы и анализа продуктов деятельности ребенка. Установлена связь между самоутверждением и самооценкой ребенка данной возрастной категории.

Ключевые слова: самоутверждение, самооценка, конструктивное и деструктивное поведение.