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EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PROGRAM "WE" ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The article aims to explore the influence of psychological-pedagogical program "WE" developed by the authors on interpersonal relationships among primary school children. The authors applied theoretical methods (analysis, synthesis, generalization), as well as empirical methods (analysis of psychological, pedagogical, scientific and methodological literature, generalization and systematization of methods and techniques for developing interpersonal relationships of primary school children, the "Captain of the Ship" technique, the method of monitoring interpersonal relationships, the method of problem-based situations). Auxiliary methods included the method of mathematical and statistical data processing (Pearson's chi-squared test). In this research, the authors developed and tested the psychological and pedagogical program "WE", as well as methods and techniques aimed at developing communicative skills, initiative in communication and emotional

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involvement of the child in peer activities. According to the findings of the experimental work, it can be concluded that such forms and methods of developing the culture of interpersonal interaction as extracurricular activities, talk with students, the methods of games, phototherapy, tasks, dramatization, collaborative work of boys and girls, problem-based situations have an impact on the development of communication skills, initiative in communication and emotional involvement of the child in peers activities.

Keywords

Experimental research – Psychological-pedagogical program – Interpersonal relationships

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Introduction

School education has always faced a problem of interpersonal conflicts and arguments. It is obvious that ways of eliminating this negative phenomenon can be found in preschool and primary education. Efficient management of children's relationships in the group can become a powerful resource for personal and social development of the child¹.

Personality of a younger schoolchild develops in communication with peers and adults (L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin, M.I. Lisina, etc.). This first experience which children gain at this age determines their further social development.

Currently, according to the Federal State Education Standard, one should realize that "... the school principle of teaching children is substituted with two basic models for the organization of schoolchildren's learning:

- 1) collaboration of an adult and children;
- 2) children's independent work.

These models can be implemented only if the child has developed communication skills, including the skill of building interpersonal relationships².

Interpersonal relationships and their specifics were considered in the works of O.A. Bogdanova, M.I. Lisina, T.A. Repina, R.A. Smirnov, and others. In the 1960s and 1970s, the issue of children's interpersonal relationships was studied by L. Kolominsky, T.A. Repina, V.R. Kislovskaya and others as part of socio-psychological research. Those studies focused on the structure and age changes in the group of children.

I.N. Anastasi believes that "interpersonal relationships occur, manifest themselves and are developed in communication. Communication plays an exceptionally great role in the formation of the child's personality. During school age, children develop complex and diverse types of relationships with others which largely determine the formation of their personality. It is important to study these relationships to systematically form them, for the purpose of creating a favorable emotional climate for each child in the group"³.

The relevance of the research topic stems from the fact that psychological analysis of the relationships between children can point to new approaches to instilling such important personal qualities as tolerance, morality, being considerate, cooperation with people having different views, etc. Therefore, the importance of the problem is determined by its social significance, while at the same time it has not been studied properly. There have been practically no Russian studies devoted specifically to the psychological and pedagogical analysis of the children relationships in groups.

Thus, this work aims to study the influence of the psychological-pedagogical program "WE" on interpersonal relationships among children of primary school age. Regarding the

¹ L. M. Shipitsyna, ABC of communication: Development of the child's personality, communication skills with adults and peers (for children from 3 to 6 years old.). In: O.V. Zashchirinskaya, A.P. Voronova, T.A. Nilova. 2nd ed., updated and revised (St. Petersburg: Detstvo-Press, 2008).

² A. M. Ruzskaya, Development of child's communication with adults and peers (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 1988).

³ L. M. Shipitsyna, ABC of communication: Development of the child's...

relevance of the problem and the stated goal, we put forward the following hypothesis: the developed program "WE" will have positive influence on the development dynamics of interpersonal relationships of primary school children, if educational psychologist in their work take into consideration:

- individual and psychological specifics in the development of interpersonal relationships of primary school children;
- systematic application of the program in one's work, observing the positive development dynamics of children's interpersonal relationships.

Materials and methods

Research tools include diagnostic, graphic and analytical methods of comparison: the method of mathematical and statistical data processing (the Pearson's chi-squared test) conducted before and after the experiment. The experiment was carried out in Secondary School No. 14 in the city of Yakutsk, Republic of Sakha (RS, Y). Twenty primary school children aged 8-10 took part in the study.

While exploring psychological and pedagogical experience, we identified the forms and methods of work aimed to develop the culture of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls of primary grades:

1) a lesson (M.A.Fedorova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), Iengra village; A.Yu. Zhukova, a primary school teacher, Yamal boarding school for secondary (complete) general education, Yar-Sale village, Tyumen region; L.K.Yushkova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), Yakutsk);

2) extracurricular activities (T.A.Skorlupkina, an educational psychologist, O.E. Lukina, a primary school teacher, Obozersky Secondary School No. 2, Arkhangelsk region; R.O. Sazonova, a primary school teacher, School No. 5 in Poikovskiy village, Tyumen region; L.P. Porshneva, an educational psychologist, Rovdino municipal secondary school, Rovdinovillage, Shenkursky district, Arkhangelsk region; N.I. Genze, an educational psychologist, Secondary School No. 16, Stary Oskol; T.S. Sannikova, an educational psychologist, Adyshevo secondary school, Adyshevo village, Kirov region);

3) parents' meetings on a particular topic (S.N. Kuznetsova, a primary school teacher, English Gymnasium, Magadan).

In their psychological and pedagogical work, teachers and psychologists of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Sakha used such methods as:

1) talks with primary school students on a particular topic (M.A.Fedorova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), Iengra village; S.N. Kuznetsova, a primary school teacher, English Gymnasium, Magadan; A. Zhukova, a primary school teacher, Yamal boarding school of secondary (complete) general education, Yar-Sale village, Tyumen region);

2) methods of games (L.M.Porshneva, an educational psychologist, Rovdino municipal secondary school, Rovdinovillage, Shenkursky district, Arkhangelsk region; N.I. Genze, an educational psychologist, Secondary School No. 16, Stary Oskol; R.O.Sazonova, a primary school teacher, School No. 5 in Poikovskiy village, Tyumen region);

3) dramatization (M.A.Fedorova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), Iengra village; R.O.Sazonova, a primary school teacher, School No. 5 in Poikovskiy village);

village, Tyumen region; A.Y. Zhukova, a primary school teacher, Yamal boarding school of secondary (complete) general education, Yar-Sale village, Tyumen region; T.S.Sannikova, an educational psychologist, Adyshevo secondary school, Adyshevo village, Kirov region);

4) engaging boys and girls in collaborative activities at lessons in tasks implying group, team and pair work (M.A.Fedorova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), lengra village; A.Yu. Zhukova, a primary school teacher, Yamal boarding school for secondary (complete) general education, Yar-Sale village, Tyumen region; L.K.Yushkova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, RS (Y), Yakutsk; T.A.Skorlupkina, an educational psychologist, O.E. Lukina, a primary school teacher, Obozersky secondary school No. 2, Arkhangelsk region; L.P.Porshneva, an educational psychologist, Rovdino municipal secondary school, Rovdino village, Shenskursky district, Arkhangelsk region; N.I.Genze, an educational psychologist, Secondary School No. 16, StaryOskol; T.S. Sannikova, an educational psychologist, Adyshevo secondary school, Adyshevo village, Kirov region);

5) formulating a problem-based situation (T.S.Sannikova, an educational psychologist, Adyshevo secondary school, Adyshevo village, Kirov region).

Let us examine in more detail the psychological and pedagogical experience of the above-mentioned teachers and psychologists of the Russian Federation and the RS (Y).

At literature lessons, M.A. Fedorova, a primary school teacher at School No. 1, RS (Y), lengra village, focuses on the formation and development of interpersonal interaction, as well as resolution of interpersonal conflicts between boys and girls in primary school. In her opinion, "it helps not only students to form comprehensive portraits of the characters of Russian folk tales and stories in their subconscious, but also to analyze relationships between the characters of fairy tales, stories, etc."⁴.

Marina Antonovna uses the following methods of topic-based talks with her primary school students. This method is widely applied at the lessons of literature reading in the second grade. For example, during the talk on the topic "I want to be like ...", primary school children determine the personality traits of the protagonist, his attitude towards the representatives of the opposite sex (he helps, saves, respects, or makes friends with them), on the basis of which students come to a conclusion that it is necessary to respect and be friends with each other.

M.A. Fedorova's many years of experience showed that children take an active part in discussion, they participate in a conversation on chosen topics with great interest and excitement.

For example, when analyzing the main character of Russian folk tale "Ivan Tsarevich and the Gray Wolf", M.A.Fedorova asked students questions to reveal the qualities that define the character. To the teacher's question: "What features does the main character have?", the students answered: "Ivan Tsarevich is very kind, because he did not kill a small wolf cub" (Inna Ch.); "He is very brave since he was not afraid to make friends with a wolf" (Katya P.); "Ivan Tsarevich is very strong, and he is probably very tall as he could easily saddle the wolf" (Danil R.), etc.⁵.

⁴ M. A. Fedorova, Interpersonal interaction. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson" 2008 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

⁵ M.A. Fedorova, Interpersonal interaction...

M.A. Fedorova notes that "most girls of the second A grade focused more on personality traits of the main character, while the boys paid attention to the physical condition of the protagonist" ⁶.

During the talk, the students were also asked to answer the question: "Why didn't Ivan Tsarevich give the Princess to Koshchei the Deathless?"; they were also asked to express their attitude to the main character of the Russian folk tale. The pupils of the second A grade gave the following answers: "He felt sorry for her, because she was frightened" (Dasha B.), "Maybe because Ivan Tsarevich loved her?" (Maria O.), "Because Ivan Tsarevich is a knight, and he could not but helped the Princess" (Dima N.) ⁷.

Also, most of the boys expressed a positive attitude towards the main character of the fairy tale, as well as the wish to be like him.

M.A. Fedorova actively applies the method of dramatization of fairy tales about friendship and fellowship at the lessons of literature reading. The teacher notes that while putting on a fairy tale with the topic "My friend", boys and girls are more relaxed, not embarrassed by each other. "If I ask the students to make pairs of a boy and a girl, as a rule, all students find a partner easily. These methods and techniques, in my opinion, are the most effective way to eliminate interpersonal conflicts between boys and girls in primary school, and also the main way to form and develop the culture of interpersonal relationships between them" ⁸.

A.Yu. Zhukova, a primary school teacher in Yamal boarding school of secondary (full) general education, Yar-Sale village, Tyumen region, conducts talks on a particular topic with elementary school students during lessons of literature reading.

A.Yu. Zhukova notes that "literature acts as a source of knowledge, moral and aesthetic norms, and transmits culture and traditions of a society. It has always been considered one of the basic components in the upbringing and formation of a well-developed personality. Reading lessons provide an opportunity to evaluate the model of the characters' behavior and compare it with one's own, which in the future will allow students to correct their attitude towards others" ⁹.

Using the method of dramatization, Anna Yuryevna asks her students to act out this or that episode from a fairy tale. According to the teacher, her lessons are very interesting and children really love them. "The lesson is so unusual; thanks to dramatization when students are wearing costumes children never get bored". Such lessons aim to analyze the relationship of the protagonists of the book, after which Anna Yuryevna divides the students into pairs (a boy and a girl) and invites the children to imagine through dramatization how they could resolve the conflict between the characters. The boy should take the role of the girl, and the girl plays the boy's part. As A. Yu. Zhukova points out, "it is done so that children can better understand each other's actions and the model of behavior" ¹⁰.

⁶ M. A. Fedorova, Interpersonal interaction...

⁷ M. A. Fedorova, Interpersonal interaction...

⁸ M. A. Fedorova, Interpersonal interaction...

⁹ A.Yu. Zhukova, Development of relationships between boys and girls. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson" 2007 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

¹⁰ A. Yu. Zhukova, Development of relationships between...

At PE lessons L.K.Yushkova, a primary school teacher, School No. 1, Yakutsk, uses a series of tasks that contribute to the development of the culture of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls in primary school. She says that "knowing personal characteristics of students, one can adjust the load placed on students and achieve necessary results; it also facilitates the rapid improvement of relationships between boys and girls in primary school"¹¹.

In addition to this, the teacher engages boys and girls in collaborative work during sports games. According to Lilia Konstantinova, "mixed teams of boys and girls, where boys help girls to complete, for example, "obstacle course", pull-ups, push-ups, climbing the rope, etc., that is, more complex types of exercise which girls cannot do. It was recorded that after performing these actions, boys begin to feel stronger and more confident. Girls, in turn, are more respectful of boys. Thus, interpersonal relationships between boys and girls improve significantly"¹².

T.A. Skorpupkina, educational psychologist, O.E. Lukina, primary school teacher, Obozersky Secondary school No. 2, Arkhangelsk region, use group and pair forms of work in their extracurricular activities. These tasks take into account the specifics of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls in primary school.

T.A. Skorpupkina and O.E. Lukina claim that "the specifics of the Boys and Girls extracurricular classes is connected with the formation and development of boys and girls' cooperative skills that contribute to better and more motivated learning of new material and the revision of the material covered". For example, during such classes, boys and girls work together and carry out projects on given topics. For example, at one of extracurricular Boys and Girls lessons that was dedicated to the Victory Day, the students were asked to split into teams of four (two boys and two girls) and draw a large greeting card to the veterans of the Great Patriotic War or to write a congratulation poem. T.A. Skorpupkina and O.E. Lukina note that "all tasks are performed in a warm and friendly atmosphere between the students. The pupils feel the helpful and supportive attitude of others and are not afraid to do the work assigned to them"¹³.

At the lesson which was devoted to the traffic code, students were asked to split into pairs (a boy and a girl) and think up their own road signs. "Doing this, the girls paid more attention to the design of the sign, and the boys – to its meaning. Thus, performing a collaborative task, the children distributed roles quickly and conflict-free"¹⁴.

R.O.Sazonova, a primary school teacher, School No. 5 in Poikovsky, Tyumen region, teaches a number of extracurricular classes that include group and pair work.

"The lesson cycle "Boys and girls are traveling through different countries" helps to reveal specific feminine and masculine features of my students"¹⁵.

¹¹ L. K. Yushkova, Development of cooperation skills between...

¹² L. K. Yushkova, Development of cooperation skills between...

¹³ T. A. Skorpupkina & O. E. Lukina, Development of cooperation skills between primary school students. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson" 2009 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festeval.1september.ru>

¹⁴ T. A. Skorpupkina & O. E. Lukina, Development of cooperation...

¹⁵ R. O. Sazonova, Development of the interaction culture between boys and girls through extracurricular activities. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson", 2007 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

At her lessons, R.O. Sazonova creates problem-based situations that are connected with life experience of children. This enables boys and girls to experience and try the role of the opposite sex, in this or that situation. As Raisa Olegovna notes, students of her class "try on the personal traits of their female and male classmates with great interest and curiosity". For example, the teacher gives the following task: "Dima, show me, please, the favorite movement of the girl you sit with"; "Masha, could you show how, in your opinion, Kirill is doing his favorite hobby?"¹⁶.

L.M. Porshneva, an educational psychologist, Rovdino municipal secondary school, Rovdino village, Shenkursky district, Arkhangelsk region, explores the development of the culture of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls in primary school and develops it in the cycle of lessons "Our friendly team"¹⁷.

To achieve these goals, L.M. Porshneva uses the method of engaging boys and girls in collaborative games during extracurricular activities. For example, the games "What I like about you is...", "Do you know that ...", "Do it", etc. These games imply pair and team forms of work, the main goals of which are: to form positive attitude towards the opposite sex; to learn how to work in pairs and groups; to develop skills of cooperation with the opposite sex.

For example, in the game "What I like about you is..." the students are asked to split into pairs (a boy and a girl).

In this game, students should say as many compliments to each other as possible without repeating themselves. The pair that makes up the most original compliments to each other wins¹⁸.

N.I. Genze, an educational psychologist, Secondary School No. 16, Stary Oskol, believes that "conflict-free coexistence of boys and girls in primary school is impossible. Due to different interests, preferences, and academic achievements, they unwillingly participate in the "big conflict" which must be timely resolved"¹⁹. The series of lessons "Be calm" was developed right to deal with this, and it aims to improve intra-group relationships and teamwork skills, to reduce aggression, and to develop positive attitude towards the opposite sex.

To achieve these goals, N.I. Genze uses games ("Conjoined Twins", "Invitation", "We Are Walking in Circles", etc.) which engage boys and girls in collaborative work during extracurricular activities and include pair, team and group forms of work. The purpose of these tasks is to foster positive attitude towards the members of the opposite sex and to develop the ability to cooperate with them.

Below is an example of the game "Conjoined Twins" used in lessons series "Be calm".

¹⁶ R. O. Sazonova, Development of the interaction culture between...

¹⁷ L. M. Porshneva, Development of the culture of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls of primary school through the lesson series "Our Friendly Team". All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson". 2007 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

¹⁸ L. M. Porshneva, Development of the culture of interpersonal...

¹⁹ N. I. Genze, Potential of conflict-free coexistence of boys and girls in primary school. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson" 2008 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

The game aims to develop the ability of younger students to interact with the members of the opposite sex, to collaborate with them, and develops their ability to stay focused. The teacher asks the students to split into pairs (a boy and a girl) and to press a shoulder to their partner's shoulder, thus representing the conjoined twins. Then various tasks are given, for example, without separating from each other, to carry water in a large wooden spoon to a glass. The pair that does it most quickly wins²⁰.

T.S.Sannikova, an educational psychologist, Adyshevo secondary school, Adyshevo village, Kirov region, says that "only dramatization of fairy tales can help students to try on the role of the opposite sex. My main task is to expand the range of behavior patterns and suggest alternatives to solving complex situations arising in the conflict between boys and girls" ²¹.

In her work, T.S.Sannikova uses such methods as engaging boys and girls in collaborative activities during lessons using group and pair forms of work, problem-based situations, and dramatization. T.S. Sannikova believes that combining these methods allows a teacher to form a positive relationship between boys and girls in the class.

Using the method of dramatization, Tatyana Sergeyevna asks the boys and girls of her class to act out conflict situations that arise between children most often. According to the teacher, her lessons are very exciting, children feel free and relaxed at them. The purpose of such lessons is to analyze children's behavior and develop empathy. For this, the teacher divides the students into pairs (a boy and a girl) and through dramatization, asks the children to imagine how they could resolve the conflict. A boy should take the role of a girl, and a girl plays a boy's role. "Maxim, now please imagine that you are a girl, for example, you are Katya V. You were really hurt by your classmate, for example, Fedya A. How would you behave? How would you feel?". Similar tasks are given to girls. T.S. Sannikova notes that "it is necessary for children to be able to look at their behavior, the manner of communication, so that they can imagine themselves in another person's shoes to understand their feelings and emotions. In the future, this will help children to change their behavior" ²².

S.N. Kuznetsova, a primary school teacher, English Gymnasium, Magadan, sees the meaning of pedagogical interaction between the family and the school in creating conditions for the fulfilling life of children, development of their personality by school and family.

She claims that "knowledge of personality traits of the boys and girls in the class is important for resolving conflict situations between parents and children, when preparing for an interview, solving problem situations that students may experience with each other, as well as between parents and children" ²³. S.N. Kuznetsova conducts talks with primary school students and their parents on such topics as "Generation gap", "Conflicts and their solutions", "Friendship, what is it?" etc., which, in her opinion, should help students understand the need for friendship between boys and girls.

²⁰ N. I. Genze, Potential of conflict-free coexistence...

²¹ T. S. Sannikova, Dramatization as a way to develop cooperation skills of boys and girls in primary school. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson", 2007 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

²² T. S. Sannikova, Dramatization as a way to develop...

²³ S. N. Kuznetsova, Interaction of family and school. All-Russian Festival of Pedagogical Ideas "Open Lesson" 2009 academic year. Retrieved from: <http://festival.1september.ru>

At such lessons Svetlana Nikolaevna first asks parents to share how they behaved, with whom they made friends when they were children. Then she gives the floor to the children, that is, the students express their opinion about what they heard, compare their behavior with the behavior of their parents.

Having studied and reviewed the experience of the schools in Neryungri, we noted that many of them use creative team activities as a means of developing the culture of interpersonal interaction between boys and girls in primary school.

For example, in School No. 18 in Neryungri, to develop the culture of communication between boys and girls of primary school, the teachers carried out team activities such as "Autumn Ball", "Miss Princess", "Knight's Tournament", etc., during which participants had to present their portfolio. For example, in "Knight's Tournament" they were asked to devote a poem to the lady of the heart, etc²⁴.

In School No. 13 in Neryungri, the creative team of primary school teachers holds annual celebrations for primary grades dedicated to the holidays on March 8 and February 23, in which boys and girls of primary grades take an active part: they prepare creative congratulating performances and plays²⁵.

Thus, having examined and studied vast psychological and pedagogical experience, we can conclude that it is necessary to investigate the interpersonal relationships of primary school children. For this purpose, it was necessary to develop the psychological-pedagogical program "WE" and to experimentally test its impact on the formation of interpersonal relationships of primary school children.

Results

Experimental research was carried out in three stages:

Stage 1 – ascertaining. The authors conducted a study to identify the initial level of interpersonal relationships among primary school children.

Stage 2 – educational. Here the authors developed and tested the "WE" program which is aimed at developing interpersonal relationships among children of primary school age.

Stage 3 – control. At this stage, the authors conducted the final re-assessment of the level of interpersonal relationships development. This procedure aimed to determine the impact of the program on the dynamics of interpersonal relationships of primary school children.

Next we would like to present a step-by-step description of the findings of all stages of the experiment.

Stage 1. When carrying out the experiment, we used the following methods:

²⁴ The official site of School №18 of the town of Neryungri. Retrieved from: <http://www.sch18.ru/mart4.l.htm>

²⁵ The official site of School №13 of the town of Neryungri. Retrieved from: <http://www.sch13.ru/mart4.l.htm>

- 1) the "Captain of the Ship" technique by O.E. Smirnova and V.M. Kholmogorova²⁶;
- 2) "the method of observation of interpersonal relationships" ²⁷;
- 3) the method of problem-based situations²⁸.

Let us present the results of the ascertaining experiment.

Using the technique "Captain of the Ship" by O.E. Smirnova and V.M. Kholmogorova, we could identify the following statuses of children in the class: outcasts – 9 children (45%), leaders – 3 children (15%), stars – 3 children (15%), and ignored – 5 children (25%). The detailed picture of the interactions of children in the group was devised using the "Observing interpersonal relationships" technique of O.E. Smirnova and V.M. Kholmogorova. Using this technique, we obtained the following results for the following criteria:

- initiative: a low level of initiative was found in 9 children (45%); an average level of initiative was observed in 7 children (35%); high initiative – 4 children (20%);
- sensitivity to peer influence: a low level was detected in 7 children (35%), an average level was observed in 8 children (40%), a high level of sensitivity to the influence of other children in the group – 5 children (25%);
- prevailing emotions: negative – 9 children (45%), neutral-focused – 6 children (30%), positive – 5 children (25%).

Research of scientists from the Pennsylvania State University, USA, Marcela M. Torres, Celene E. Domitrovich, and Karen L. Bierman shows that studies aimed at finding out the emotions of children should be conducted more widely. In their opinion, an early study of children's awareness of the emotions of their peers, as well as adults, has a positive impact on their relationships with peers and adults. We agree with the opinion of these authors that children's ability to communicate with their peers "... in turn influences the child's relationship with teachers, which directly affects their academic performance in school"²⁹. Therefore, we also think that the child's emotions should be seen as the crucial aspect in interpersonal relationships. The indicator "the degree of emotional involvement of the child in the actions of their peers" using the method of problem-based situations gave the following data:

- total lack of interest in the actions of their peers – 6 children (30%);
- 6 children (30%) cast short and interested glances at their peers;
- 5 children (25%) often observe closely the actions of their peers;
- 3 children (15%) closely watch and actively join in the actions of their peers.

Thus, at the ascertaining stage of our research, we could see that the development of interpersonal relationships in children is impossible without applying special methods that will facilitate better understanding of each other in the process of communication, and it also confirms the existence of a psychological and pedagogical problem.

²⁶ E. O. Smirnova & V. M. Kholmogorova, *Interpersonal relationships of preschool children: diagnostics, problems, correction* (Moscow: Vlados, 2003).

²⁷ E. O. Smirnova & V. M. Kholmogorova, *Interpersonal...*

²⁸ E.O. Smirnova & V.M. Kholmogorova, *Interpersonal relationships...*

²⁹ M. M. Torrec; E. Domitrovich Celene & K. L. Bierman, "Preschool Interpersonal Relationships Predict Kindergarten Achievement: Mediated by Gains in Emotion Knowledge", *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Vol: 39 (July–August 2015): 44-52.

Stage 2. We proved the need to develop the psychological and pedagogical program "WE" which will be directed at the development of interpersonal relationships of primary schoolchildren. To achieve this, we used the following programs: "Childhood" (I.V. Loginova); "ABC of Communication" (L.M. Shipitsina); "Origins" (A.G. Arushanova).

The goal of this psychological and pedagogical program is to develop interpersonal relationships of primary schoolchildren. The program includes such methods as: game method, conversation, phototherapy, tasks aimed at developing interpersonal relationships among schoolchildren.

This program is based on the principles identified by A.N. Leontev, D.B. Elkonin and others: the principle of the leading activity; the principle of partnership; the principle of an active doer; the principle of subjectivity; the principle of humanization; the principle of dialogic communication; the principle of teamwork.

Methods used during lessons include games, talks, tasks, and phototherapy. The tasks involve group work, and the lessons are 30-45 minutes long.

Let us discuss in more detail the methods that are used in class.

The game method means the impact on children through the game. This method allows kids to develop dialogue skills, helps to improve coordination of movements, as well as communication skills. It is also good for team-building.

For example, "Gratitude" game. At this lesson, in a game children learn the words of gratitude and share their emotions. At the end of the lesson, kids do a collaborative task.

Talks allow the teacher to give new information, it facilitates communication within the group, and gives an opportunity to share one's thoughts with the class.

Here is an example of using the method of talks:

A talk on the topic "An Important Word". In this talk, children learn new words. At the end of the lesson, during summing up, children express their opinion on what they liked most of all, what emotions they experienced.

Talk "Show and Tell". Children are divided into pairs and receive a task – a situation that needs to be discussed and acted out. Working on the task, children actively interact with each other, which contributes to the development of speech, thinking, and behavior flexibility.

Conversation "Make a Wish". During the lesson, children share their dearest dream with the group. This exercise facilitates the establishment of a trusting relationship within the children's group, helps them to become more open and teaches them to share their thoughts.

Phototherapy is used to help children become aware of their inner world. It teaches one to look at oneself from the side. Children also learn facial expressions for different situations, finding out the prevailing feelings.

Here are some examples of using this method in class:

Lesson "Learning to Say Hello". Children look at photos of children and adults and discuss how to say hello in the right way.

The method of exercise was used at lessons to perform practical actions aimed at bonding and team-building.

Here are some examples of using this method in class:

Lesson "Try to Find Out". Without using words, children should show an object, an animal or a fairy-tale character, and the group should guess what the child is showing.

Lesson "We Speak Nicely". Various exercises teach children to talk politely.

Thus, we assume that after the implementation of the program, primary school children will learn how to cooperate with peers, solve conflict situations, establish and maintain good contact with their peers, and help in a difficult situation.

Stage 3. The control stage of the experimental work involved identifying the level of interpersonal relationships among children and their peers. To achieve this, we used the same methods that were applied at the ascertaining stage.

Next, we tested the validity of the obtained results. For this, we applied the Pearson's chi-squared test for mathematical processing of the psychological data.

For the first method "Captain of the Ship" the following results were obtained:

The results of the diagnostics are shown in Figure 1.

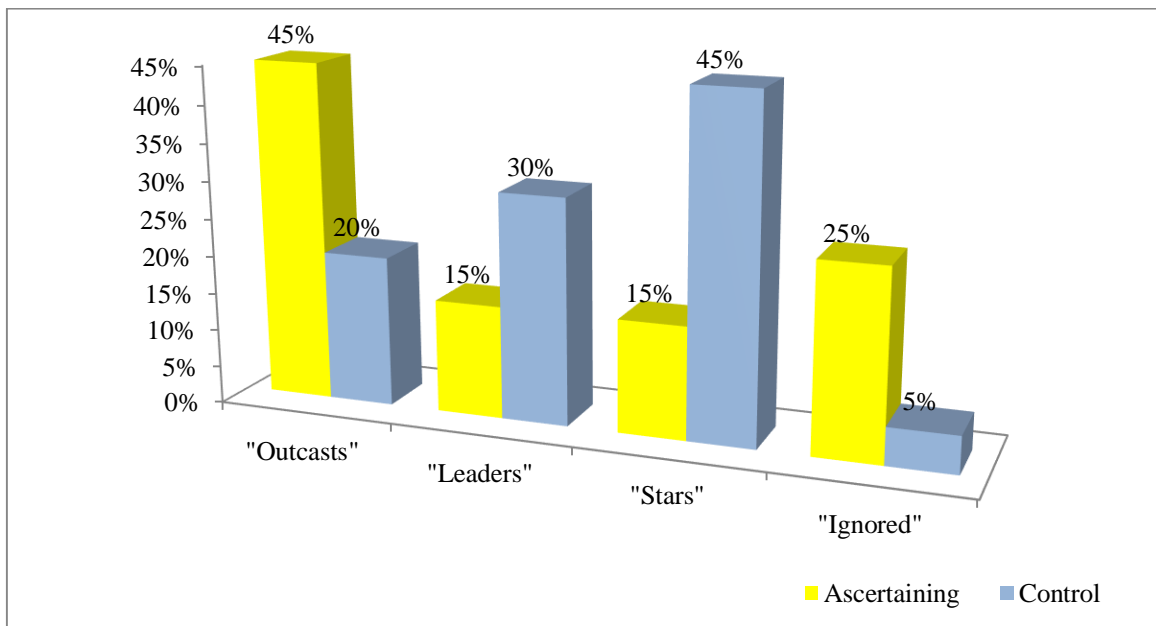


Fig. 1

Results of the technique "Captain of the Ship" by O.E. Smirnova and V. M. Kholmogorova

While at the ascertaining stage 9 children belonged to the "Outcasts", which is 45% of the total number of children studied, at the control stage only 4 children (2%) were included in this group. Five children moved from this group to "Leaders" and "Stars".

In the "Leaders" group, the number of children has doubled. At the initial stage only 3 (15%) children belonged to this group, whereas after the educational stage of the study, there were 6 of them (30%).

This number also increased for the group "Stars", when compared with the ascertaining stage, for 6 children (30%). Before the educational stage this group estimated 3 children, while after this there were 9 of them.

The group of "Ignored" children decreased from 5 children (25%) to 1 child (5%).

The validity of the data obtained was checked with the Pearson's chi-squared test: $\chi^2_{Emp} = 42.95$.

Differences between the two distributions can be considered reliable if χ^2_{Emp} equals or exceeds $\chi^2_{0.05}$. It is even more reliable when χ^2_{Emp} equals or exceeds $\chi^2_{0.01}$.

During the control evaluation of the method "Observation of interpersonal relationships of primary schoolchildren" we received the following results:

The criterion of "Initiative". At the initial stage of the study a low level of initiative was shown by 9 children (45%), whereas at the control stage their number dropped to 3 children (15%).

During the control stage 8 children (40%) had an average level. Compared with the initial testing, this indicator decreased by 5%. The children in this group became more initiative.

A high level of initiative was demonstrated by 9 children (45%). This indicator increased in comparison with the initial testing. First, a high level of initiative was observed in only 4 children (20%). This indicator increased due to children's moving from an average level of initiative into this group.

The results of the testing are shown in Figure 2.

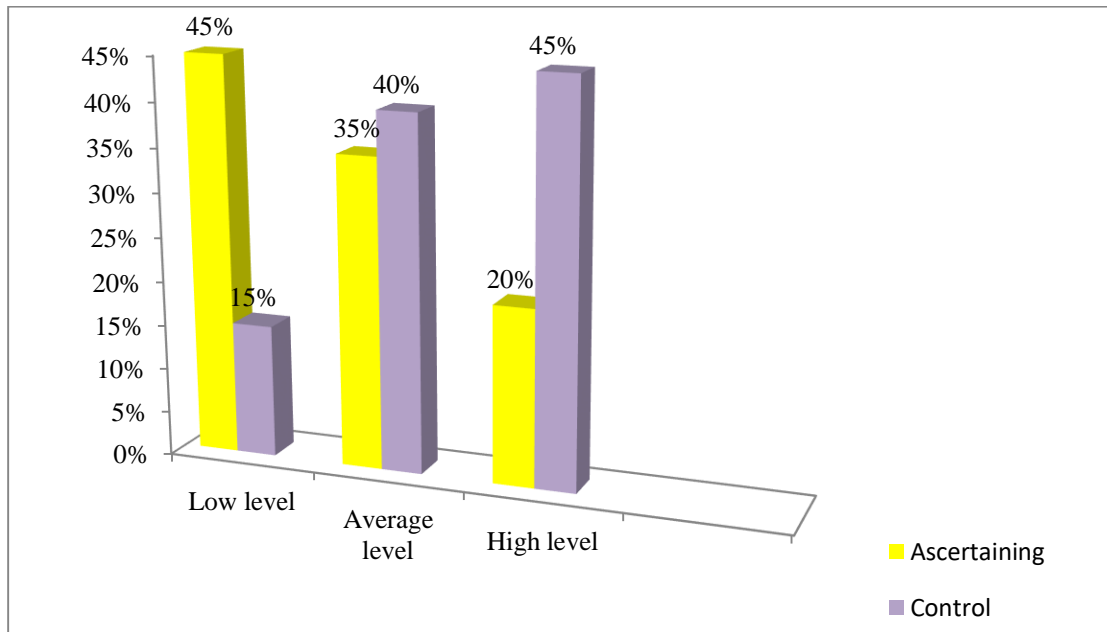


Fig. 2
Indicators distribution for the levels of interpersonal relationships of children for the "Initiative" criterion

According to the Pearson's chi-squared test, the validity of the research results is: $\chi^2 = 21.5$.

The results of evaluating sensitivity to peers influence are shown in Figure 3:

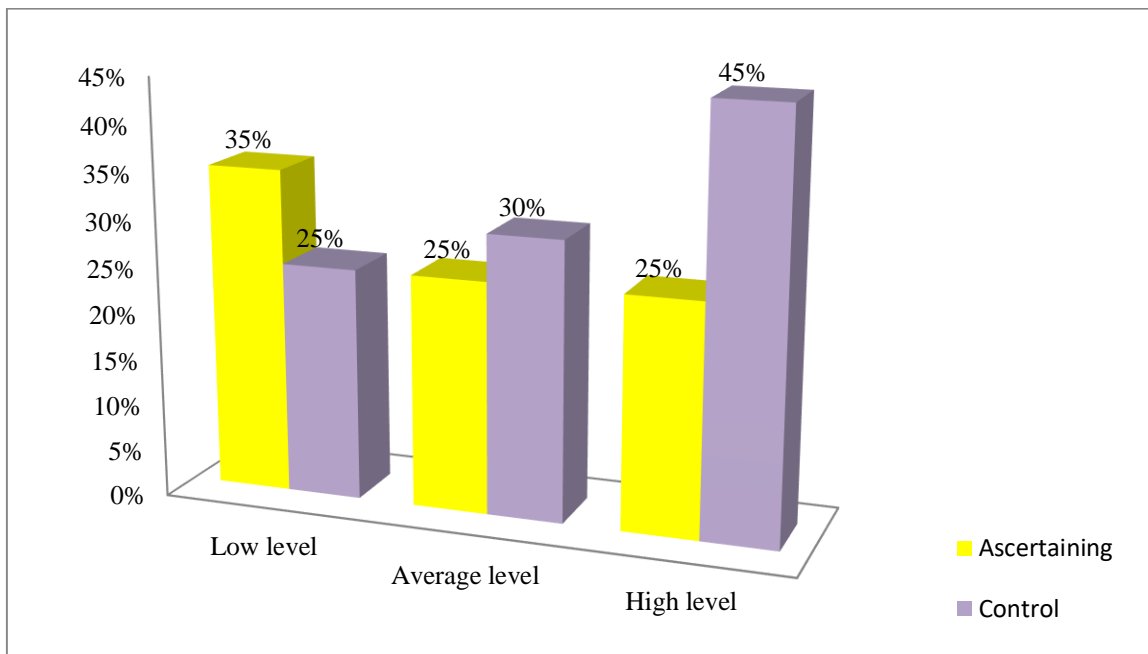


Fig. 3
Indicators distribution for the levels of interpersonal relationships of children for the "Sensitivity to peers influence" criterion

Having conducted the educational stage of the study, we found out that 5 children (25%) have lower results for this criterion: this indicator decreased by 10%. In comparison with the initial diagnostics following the results of the control stage, two children moved to the group of the average level. The average level was estimated for 7 children (35%). The number of children with the low level decreased by 5%. A high level with observed in 8 children (40%) and this group increased by 15%. There is a significant increase in the number of children with a high level due to the transition of children from the group with an average level.

The validity of the research results is $X^2 = 15.4$.

Dominating emotions: the results of the evaluation are shown in Figure 4.

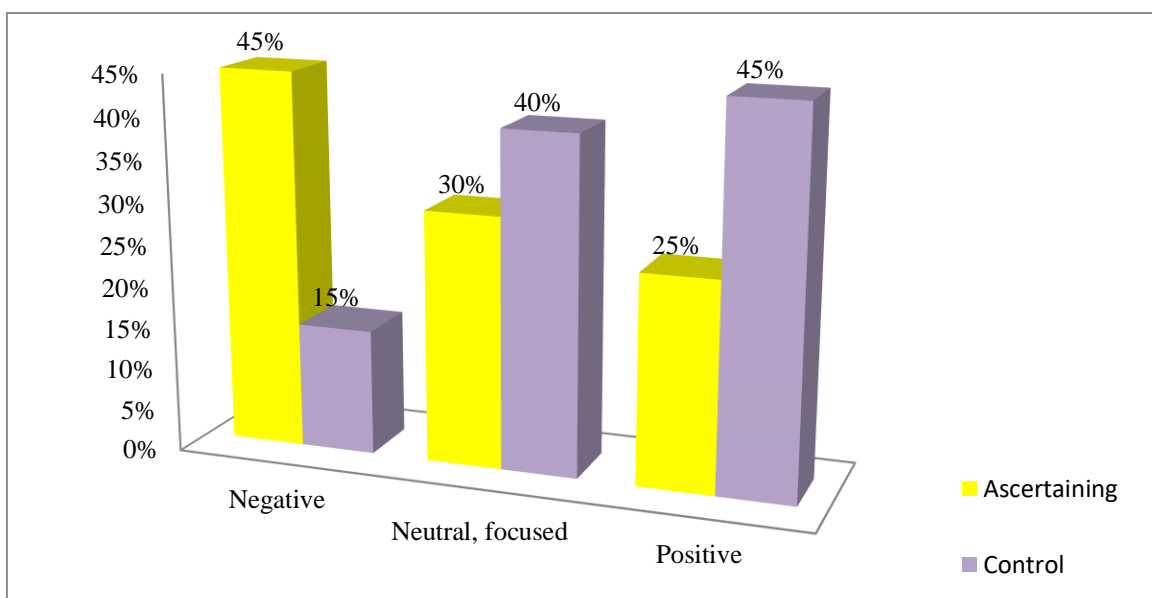


Fig. 4

Indicators distribution for the levels of interpersonal relationships of children for the "Dominating emotions" criterion

There have also been positive changes for this indicator. Negative emotions were registered in 3 children (15%). Compared with the initial testing, this indicator decreased by 30%, with two children moving into the next category. Neutral and focused mood was shown by 8 children (40%). In comparison with the initial study, this indicator decreased by 10%. The increase in the number of children with a positive mood was from 5 children (25%) to 9 children (45%). In this case, the increase was due to children's moving from the group with neutral-focused mood.

The validity of the research results is $X^2 = 36.5$.

For the method of problem-based situations by O.E. Smirnova and V.M. Kholmogorova, we obtained the following results at the control stage of our study. Let us consider them according to indicators.

Indicator "The degree of emotional involvement of the child in peer activities", the results of the evaluation are shown in Figure 5.

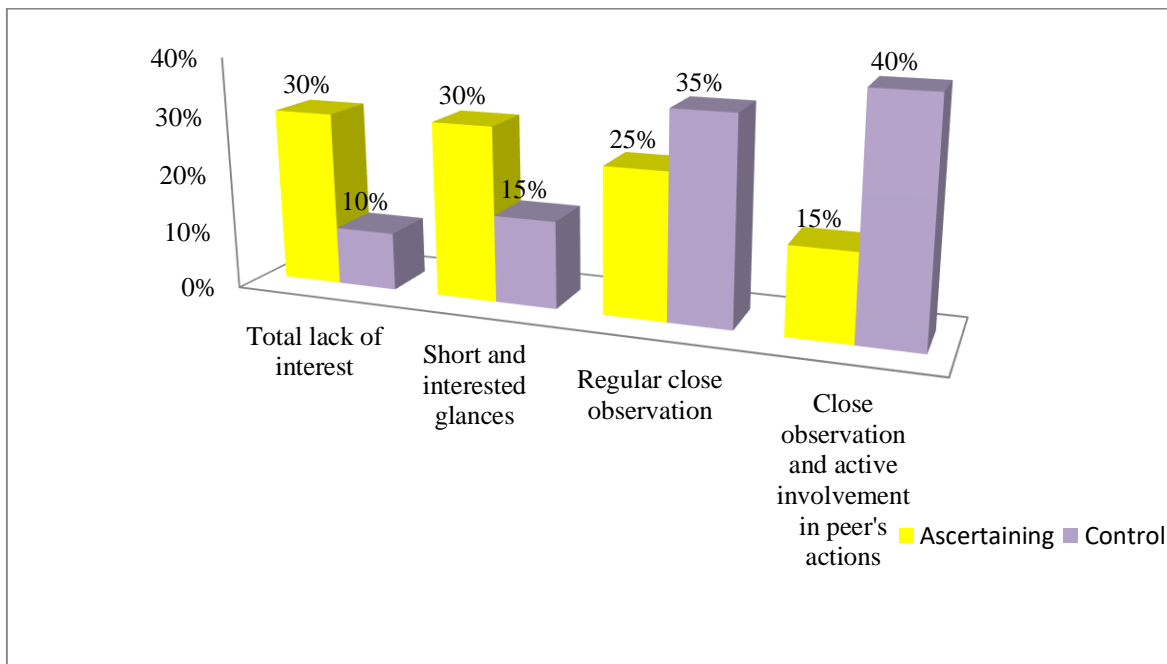


Fig. 5

Results of the method of problem-based situations, indicator "The degree of emotional involvement of the child in peers actions"

According to the results of the control test, we can see that only 2 children (10%) belong to the first group with the total lack of interest in peer's actions. In this group, the reduction estimated 20%. Three children (15%) belonged to the group "Short interested glances at their peers". This group has also decreased (by 15%). Seven children (35%) occasionally watched closely the actions of their peers, whereas there had been only 5 of them (25%) in this group. After the educational stage, it was revealed that 8 children (40%) started to observe and actively engage in the actions of peers. In comparison with the ascertaining stage of the study, this indicator increased by 25%.

Discussion

Thus, the comparative analysis of the ascertaining and control stages of our research assessing the level of interpersonal relationships of primary school children allowed us to register the positive dynamics in the group of schoolchildren, which supports the hypothesis of the research. The developed program was used to achieve the purpose and was applied consistently, at certain periods, taking into account the individual and psychological characteristics of the development of interpersonal relationships in younger children. Interpersonal interaction aims to increase boys and girls' awareness the concept of friendship and to improve friendly relationships in the children's group, to form tolerant attitude toward hobbies and understanding that boys and girls have equal rights, which in turn will have a positive impact and is an important aspect in the overall development of the personality of every student. The successful development of the culture of interpersonal interaction among primary schoolchildren depends on many factors and criteria. These include: mutual liking, antipathy, attractiveness and preferences in choosing a partner, common interests, willingness to collaborate performing any type of activity. All these factors and criteria listed above, in our opinion, also influence the development of interaction between children in primary grades.

After the experiment, the children demonstrated developed communication and teamwork skills. This proves the positive impact on the development of interpersonal relationships in the children's group, which confirmed the hypothesis of the study.

Conclusion

Our study was carried out among primary schoolchildren aged 8-10 years – the future of our country and the world. The research took into account the gender and age characteristics of children, as well as regional specifics which stem from the diversity of natural, climatic, and socio-economic conditions throughout Yakutia.

At the ascertaining stage of the study, we could see a low level of interpersonal relationships in the peer group regarding the following criteria: communicative skills, relationships with peers, establishment and maintenance of friendly emotional relationships, resolution of conflicts, and helping each other. All these indicators point to the existing problem related to the children's lack of communicative skills and insufficiently developed interpersonal relationships. According to our observations and the responses of teachers, educators and children's parents, we assume that the reason for this lies in the low culture of society, the poor development of the socio-cultural infrastructure. We are going to investigate this problem further in our next work.

The analysis of the obtained research results proved the effectiveness of the "WE" program that was developed and tested by us. The aim of this program was the development of interpersonal relationships among primary schoolchildren. The program included forms and methods of developing the culture of interpersonal interaction, such as extracurricular activities, talks on a chosen topic with primary school students, the method of game, phototherapy, tasks, dramatization, engaging boys and girls in collaborative activities, and setting a problem-based situation.

Thus, taking all the above into consideration, we can conclude that systematic, targeted and consistent work on the development of the culture of interpersonal interaction of primary school children implemented on the basis of the devised psychological and educational program "WE" has a great positive impact on the development of communicative skills, initiative in communication and emotional involvement of the child in the actions of their peers, which ultimately influences the interpersonal relationships among children of primary school age.

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