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## The Trust Factor for Children in a Risk Situation

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### Abstract

The trust factor in children's socialization results from relatedness of trust as a systemic quality of social communication and the functional basis for building interpersonal relations. In a risk situation trust can provide a background for reducing uncertainty, overcoming alienation and for security/shelteredness attitude, however, it shows the narrowing trend and turns into «particularized trust». The study revealed that the risk situation analysis (based on test drawings) and the children's descriptions of risk-generating situations indicated the significant fall in level of children's trust towards unfamiliar adults.

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### 1. Introduction

A child acquires a basic feeling of trust and a basic feeling of distrust in an attempt to externalize risks and internalize his confidence in opportunities and a strong potential of personal trust through the process of internal and external environmental factors' interaction at early stages of personal development. Basic trust is formed in ontogenesis and serves as «emotional inoculation against existential anxieties» [1. P. 39] starting from the first months when a bond between a child and outside world appears. In this period, close mother–child relations are the most important factors that shape trust. The nature of trust «protective cocoon» (E. Erikson) reflects these relations, the characteristics of the first subjects hosting emotional, cognitive and activity-based dimensions of trust in the course of interaction. «Trust established between an infant and its caretakers provides an 'inoculation' which screens off potential threats and dangers that even the most mundane activities of day-to-day life contain» [1. P. 3].

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It should be mentioned that a number of researchers, L. Huff and L. Kelley among them, underline the importance of a particular individual's inclination to trust [2]. Different countries pay more or less attention to the issues of children's development in risk environments; however, the problem's pertinence is undisputable. A number of countries consider it one of their strategic goals. Thus, Romanian researchers note, «The issue of children at risk is one of the strategic objectives set by the National Reform Plan within Europe 2020 Strategy» [3. P. 2362].

For children themselves a risk situation largely depends on perceiving it as risky, on the situation's image arising and its interpreting by a child. More or less adequate situational images appear depending on the situation uncertainties; these images determine the orientation system and the line of behavior. «A pre-school child does not really know how to operate a car, but tries to understand it by enacting driving using available substitutes, that is, essentially, by using emotionally colored make-believe reality in order to understand models and structural relations of the real world» [4].

The significant factor of this process is basic trust, which develops and transforms, takes on social parameters in the course of the individual's interactions with the environment. Integration of trust into the individual's socialization process relates to immanent trust relevance as a systemic quality of social communication and trust potential as a context of social development.

Inextricable links between risk situations and possibilities are essential as well. [5]. The possibilities of change, transformation, risk prevention and social trust development are presented in the context of risk interpretation on the basis of systemic interrelations of communication, trust and uncertainty. «A constant need to act in a condition of uncertainty, including those in which there is a lack of time for decision making and a lack of information, results in risk becoming an essential signifying element in every person's life.» [6].

The changeability of risk situations, the need for orientation in the uncertainty system require considering trust in the course of ontogenesis. Human personality in terms of ontogenesis was studied in foreign and domestic literature (J. Bruner, K. Levin, A.N. Leont'ev, C.R. Rogers, S.L. Rubinshtein, B.F. Skinner, G.S. Hall, E. Ericson, C.G. Jung). Moreover, there is the scanty number of publications concerning the development of trust, its social conditionality, and trust ontogenesis as a socio-psychological phenomenon (I.V. Antonenko, E. Ericson, C.R. Rogers, A.G. Maslow, and T.P. Scripkina). Even less attention was paid to the trust factor in the situations of risk (K.J. Rotenberg, B. Misztal).

The nature of communication is essential for creating a high level of confidence in interpersonal relations between children and the adult world. The bonds of trust can both have an impact on developing interpersonal relations, emotional support, and maintain the prevention of frustration, incommunicability, reluctance of other people, anxiety. Trust may become a specific way to adapt to risk situations and to minimize risk (J. Neumann, A. Seligman).

Developing trust in risk situations is a selective process that depends on a wide range of factors, parameters and conditions pertaining to the environment. Nevertheless, cognitive conditions of children's socialization in risk situations can provide insufficient information for children to act, and the result is children's intuitive world picture, which immanently includes generalized trust relations to other people and the environment. This can explain the fact that children often trust in threatening environmental factors, such as fires, transports, pedophiles, etc. The development of generalized trust grounds in cognizing the level and degree of other people's benevolence and safety of objective world that leads to subconscious anxiety minimization in social interactions. While rationalizing the social world picture, the children's confidence in their abilities to overcome risk situation and to extend trust potential is rising. «In contrast to the widespread assumption that young children are prone to uncritical credulity, recent evidence shows that they extend trust with appropriate selectivity»[7].

Positive setting to trust in other people, to feel psychologically safe and secure at risk conditions, to build up trust relationships inside children groups is established. Trust as a socio-psychological phenomenon comprises three basic components: cognitive (i.e. perception of the person who is trusted based on knowledge and social perceptions), behavioral (i.e. manifestations of trust relationships taking into account selectivity, the situation of

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