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Relationship between aggression and creativity in senior preschool children

Mergalyas M. Kashapov^{a*}, Tatiana V. Ogorodova^a, Svetlana A. Pavlova^b

^a Demidov Yaroslavl State University, 14 Sovetskaya Str., Yaroslavl, 150003, Russia

^b Municipal general education institution 'Grigorievskaya secondary school', Yaroslavl municipal district, 6 Klubnaya Str., village of Grigorievskoye, Yaroslavl region, 150515, Russia

Abstract

Modern psychology has accumulated large amounts of data from theoretical and empirical studies on aggression and creativity as phenomena that are independent of each other. The article presents a synthesis of empirical data on the relationship between aggression and creativity in children of the senior preschool age. The findings reveal gender differences in the manifestation of aggression and creativity in preschool children. We believe that correctional and developmental work with senior preschool children can contribute to redesigning aggression and developing creativity.

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1. Introduction

Issues related to human aggression are discussed in many psychological studies. Very high levels of aggression in society and mass media, absence of clear and adequate scientific definition of aggression, confusion of the concept of aggression with other related concepts (for example, conflict), and the unclear origin of this complex phenomenon make the study of aggression one of the most pressing challenges in today's world, and one of the most important theoretical and practical tasks to resolve.

Aggression is a peculiar characteristic of people and understood as a propensity to aggressive behaviour. People acquire this feature in the process of human development; this specific feature is based on the principle of social learning that consists of frequent highly intensive stimuli-inconsistent aggressive reactions directed

* Kashapov M.M Tel.: +7 910 665 42 06
E-mail address: smk007@bk.ru

towards a wide range of social objects. Furthermore, aggression is often characterized by an inability to control reactions, as well as by manifestation of a hostile attitude toward the environment.

Ilyin [1] defines aggression as a personality trait, which reflects one's propensity to aggressive reactions when a frustrating or conflict situation occurs.

Aggression is formed at an early age; therefore, we conceive it to be expedient to start aggression correctional and preventional work with preschool children.

Human aggression has both qualitative and quantitative characteristics and different degrees of manifestation varying from total absence to extreme forms. Kashapov describes more than 20 types of aggression manifested in interpersonal interactions. Particular attention is paid to creative counteraction to aggression [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Determination of aggression and its driving forces occupies one of the most important places in the research of this phenomenon.

Along with this, some psychological theories (including the psychoanalytic one) state in general that human aggression mechanisms are involved in the formation of creative mechanisms in a personality. The founder of psychoanalysis and supporter of the human energy theory Freud [7] believed that a creative product was the result of indirect expression of sexual and aggressive energy that was not allowed to manifest itself in a more expressed way. Guilford [8] understood creativity as an ability to abandon stereotypical thinking and considered divergent thinking as the basis of creativity. Ilyin [9] describes creativity as an ability to find solutions in unusual situations, to become exposed to new things and to reflect deeply.

Thus, we assume that there exists a relationship between such psychological characteristics of the personality as aggression and creativity. This assumption has given an impetus to our research.

The aim of the study is to research the relationship between aggression and creativity at the senior preschool age.

2. Method

The study involved children of the senior preschool age (from five to seven years old) in the Yaroslavl municipal district. The total sample consisted of 97 people; there were 61 boys and 36 girls.

The diagnostic tools of the study included *The Kinetic Family Drawing* by Burns and Kaufman, *The Nonexistent Animal* proposed by Dukarevich, the children's version of *The Rosenzweig Picture-Frustration Study* modified by Dobrov, the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Figural Form B, and Guilford's Alternative Uses Task.

Reliability of the data analysis was achieved by using the non-parametric U-criterion of Mann-Whitney to compare two independent samples by the level of the feature selected, and Spearman's correlation coefficient to reveal the relationship between the indicators under study (aggression and creativity).

We assumed that relationships between the indicators of aggression and creativity in senior preschool age children were negative.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Relationships between aggression and creativity in senior preschool age children

The findings revealed that verbal creativity had negative relationships with such indicators of aggression as anxiety ($r=-0.26$; $p<0.05$), conflict ($r=-0.28$; $p<0.01$) and feelings of inferiority ($r=-0.20$; $p<0.05$).

Hence, we have the portrait of a senior preschool child: children who have adequate self-esteem (i.e. sense of usefulness), who can adequately respond to frustrating situations (who have low anxiety), who are ready to find non-aggressive ways to resolve conflict situations will have some potential for verbal creativity. Preschool teachers believed such a child to be a secure, open, pre-schooler ready to interact with peers and adults. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the development of communicative and emotional side of the child's personality in the family and preschool institution. This contributes to the expansion of the repertoire of

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