



*Original Contribution*

**SELF-EVALUATION AMONG 7-11 YEAR OLD CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Self-evaluation is defined as the way in which one feels with regard to oneself, including the degree of one's self-esteem and self-acceptance. It is expressed through the feeling of personal value and competence which people relate to their I-concept (ego-concept). It is related to the personal identity.

The period of primary school age is sensitive to formation of real self-evaluation. The intensive formation of the self-evaluation is defined by the new social role of the child – being a student and 'a social subject' who fulfils a socially significant and socially appreciated activity.

The children deprived of parental care are put in a specific and problematic social situation of development. Measurement of the self-evaluation regarding the school achievement appears as a fundamental moment in the building of effective pedagogical model.

The study is conducted with children aged 7-11 from children's home 'Maria Theresia' and 'Bulgarka' in Stara Zagora.

**Key words:** Self-evaluation, social role, I-concept, personal identity

Self-evaluation is defined as the way in which one feels with regard to oneself, including the degree of one's self-esteem and self-acceptance (Psychology Encyclopedia 1998, p. 1086). It is expressed through the feeling of personal value and competence which people relate to their ego-concept. It is related to the personal identity. Love and acceptance are directly related to 'identity of success', the lack of love and acceptance is related to 'identity of failure'.

Though the present research we have as aims to explore:

- self-evaluation of children deprived of parental care vis-à-vis school;
- factors that influence the positive formation of child's self-perception.

For the purposes of the research 'Self-evaluative questionnaire at primary-school age' is used. It is published in 'Manual for child's research', (B. Minchev, 2000). There is a subscale that is used to measure the self-perception vis-à-vis school.

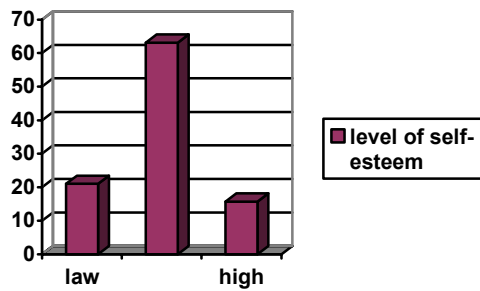
The following results were obtained:

- 21% of the children are with low self-esteem;
- 63,1% of the children are with average self-esteem;
- 15,7% of the children are with high self-esteem (See the graph 1).

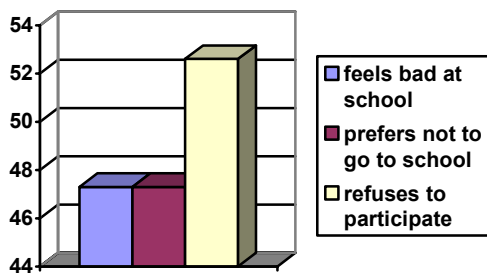
We analyzed in details the answers to every particular question from the examined scale:

- 47,3 % from the children declare that frequently feel bad at school.
- 47,3% prefer to stay at home instead of going to school.
- 52,6 % from the children confess that they frequently refuse to participate in the class work.
- 78,9 % from the children think that they do well at school.
- 31% from the children declare that they don't like the teacher asking them questions in front of the class.
- 36% from the children declare that they experience difficulties to talk in front of the class. (See the graph 2)

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Graph 1: self-esteem



Graph 2: feel at school

Some discrepancies in the obtained results draw the attention. The following are the more considerable ones:

1. Discrepancy is seen in the data that shows 60 % of the children with average self-esteem and 15 % high but at the same time approximately 50 % of the children declare, that they feel bad at school frequently and prefer to stay at home.
2. More than 50 % of the children confess that they frequently refuse to participate in the class work and at the same time only some 30% admit that they don't like the teacher asking questions to them and only 36% from the children declare that they experience difficulties to talk in front of the class.
3. Around 50% of the children openly declare that they feel bad at school and frequently refuse to participate in the class work. Meanwhile to the direct question 'Are you doing well at school?' only 20% answer 'no'.
4. Factors that determine the negative experiences at school were defined through co-relational analysis. In 81% of the cases the negative experiences are related to feeling of loneliness; in 64 % to isolation from the peers. The negative experiences lead in 100% of the cases to a complete refusal to go to school, and in 81% to refusal to take part in the class work.

We analyzed the coefficient of determination of the negative correlations.

Only one reliable, significant, negative correlation is obtained. In 65 % of the cases a factor for decrease in negative experiences at school is the assertiveness, the ability to tell something interesting in front of the whole class.

Factors that determine the passivity in the educational process are defined through the analysis of the positive correlation to the question 'Do you frequently refuse to take part in the class work?'. The coefficient of determination shows that the passivity is conditioned by feeling of loneliness (100 %); negative experiences at school (81%); lack of popularity among children (64%); difficulty to talk in front of the class (52%). The coefficient of determination shows that the passivity would be influenced in 80 % of the cases by the ability to tell something interesting in front of the class and in 80% of the cases by the active participation in class work when the child likes to be asked questions in front of the class. The refusal to go to school in 100 % of the cases is determined by negative experiences and in 64 % by isolation from the children.

The unwillingness to go to school could be overcome in 80 % of the cases through strengthening of the influence over the peers, and in 65% through the ability to tell something interesting or through increasing the attractiveness of the teaching process. The positive self-evaluation of children regarding their success at school is related to the feeling that one is accepted and has enough friends – in 64 % of the cases with the feeling that one is easily liked as well. The positive self-esteem to a great extent is influenced by the classmates.

The positive assessment from the classmates is related in some 50 % of the cases to the influence over friends; in 63% of the cases to the ability to tell something interesting in front of the class; with the feeling that one is easily liked and to the manifested activity in the teaching process.

In more than 50% of the cases the positive assessment from the peers is a factor for overcoming the feeling of loneliness.

Primary school age is accepted as an important period for the formation of the ego-concept and the self-evaluation. (N. Mincheva, 2000). This is the period of formation of a real self-evaluation.

From the obtained results a conclusion could be drawn that the children that have been studied don't have a real self-evaluation vis-à-vis their achievements at school.

The inflated self-evaluation is a result

of students' desire to present them-selves in a better light. The change of social position at primary-school age is experienced as a deeper crisis from the children, raised in social institutions for children deprived of parental care. The child becomes a 'social subject' through his/her entrance into school thus fulfilling a socially significant and socially appreciated activity. (A.Goneev, N.Lifintseva, 2002, p. 56)

Children deprived of parental care to a bigger extent need wide social confirmation and approval for the positive evaluation of their personality. Their models of comparison and evaluation related to family are negative and cannot serve as basis for building a real positive self-evaluation. The communication between peers and supervisors in the boarding schools is limited and bears specific problems and characteristics. There is a lack of mechanisms and situations through which children could prove and confirm a positive self-evaluation.

With their entrance in school the children, raised in homes for children deprived of parental care, for the first time have the opportunity to compare their models of behavior, interests, and intellectual abilities with those of children that have lived in a social situation different from theirs.

Filling in the questionnaire appears to be a good opportunity for the children to receive social approval.

The fact that a bigger part of the children confess that they feel bad at school is indicator, that they don't look only for presenting themselves in a better way but, as well, for an opportunity to share their problems. It is an expression of their need for a demonstration of attention.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

1. The children deprived of parental care have average self-evaluation of their school achievement.
2. In most of the cases this evaluation is unreal and inflated.

3. The inflated self-evaluation is a result of the aspiration for receiving wide social approval.
4. The negative experiences at school originate from the isolation from the group of peers. They influence negatively the attitude towards and activity during the learning process. The way of overcoming this is to create conditions for increasing the assertiveness of the children.
5. Peers with their negative and positive self-evaluation appear to be a determining factor for creation of children's self-perception regarding their experiences at school.
6. The feeling of loneliness and isolation are the basis for the refusal to go to school.
7. Reinforcement of the positive experiences at school could be achieved through increase of children's activity, through creation of conditions for mutual aid, respect and collaboration in the process of work.

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