



FEATURES OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS AND THE FEELINGS OF EMPATHY IN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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A B S T R A C T

This article presents theoretical information about the most important social feelings of empathy, the important role of empathy in the formation of a child's personality and in his life in general, and at the same time, with the help of empathy, the child learns to understand other people, their inner experiences, learns to understand and help the dignity of another person.

KEY WORDS

Capacity for empathy, altruism, humanistic empathy, egocentric empathy, deceneration.

INTRODUCTION

A person with a well-developed sense of empathy is someone who can offer support with compassion, sympathy, and selflessness, and who cares about the well-being of others. Empathy is one of the most important social emotions. It plays a significant role in shaping a child's personality and in their overall life.

The moral values and emotions instilled in a child gradually turn into personality traits and later manifest themselves in relationships with the people around them.

Through empathy, a child learns to understand other people and their inner experiences, begins to appreciate the value of others, and shows a desire to help and care for the well-being of others. Over time, empathy manifests itself in forms of altruism typical of adolescence (starting from the 4th grade).

L. Merfi's research shows that the manifestation of empathy in children depends on the level of closeness to the object (whether familiar or unfamiliar), the frequency of contact with the object (known or unknown person), the intensity of the stimulus that triggers empathy (such as crying, tears, or pain), and previous experience.

The development of empathy in a child is associated with age-related changes influenced by temperament, emotional sensitivity, and the impact of social groups.

Research Methadology

The feeling of sadness plays an important role in the formation and development of empathetic emotions. A child's crying evokes a sense of compassion in the mother, prompting her to pay attention, comfort, and help the child.

Similarly, memories of a sad event involving a loved one can awaken feelings of pity, compassion, and sympathy, as well as a desire to provide help.

Egocentrism of the individual and psychological discomfort experienced by the person (such as depression, anxiety, aggression, etc.) can interfere with the development and expression of empathy. In addition, attitudes that are "instilled" from childhood can also hinder the formation and manifestation of empathy.

Such attitudes may include avoiding personal connections, lack of interest in others, and an indifferent response to other people's problems.

At the elementary school age, two types of empathy are observed: humanistic empathy and egocentric empathy.

Humanistic empathy is related to experiences that respond to the well-being of others, while egocentric empathy involves experiences that are centered not on others, but on oneself.

Examples of humanistic empathy include: compassion, sympathy, pity, and concern for others.

Examples of egocentric empathy include: sadness, fear, suffering, feeling sad in response to someone else's grief, or feeling upset in response to another's joy (which can be a manifestation of envy).

From birth, a child does not possess innate abilities such as empathy, altruism, humanism, and similar traits. It is the role of the immediate environment—parents, teachers, and educators—to shape and develop these abilities in the child.

In schools, empathy is developed through school-time activities and after-school programs with children.

Currently, in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard, many schools have introduced the subject "Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics." This subject has been included in the curriculum for fourth-grade students and is aimed at fostering moral feelings and values.

In addition, extracurricular activities have also been integrated into the educational process. For example, the program "Ethics: The ABCs of Kindness" (for grades 1 to 4) focuses on the development of moral emotions and communication skills in primary school students.

Empathy can also be nurtured during recess by helping children analyze uncomfortable or, on the contrary, pleasant social situations they encounter with their peers.

In general, during the learning process, the content of a child's emotions changes, and their development progresses in terms of increased awareness, stability, and self-regulation.

Literature Review

Empathy is generally defined as a person's ability to understand the inner world of another person's experiences or to participate in another individual's emotional life. Typically, the object of empathy is considered to be another person. However, in several studies, empathy has also been directed toward neutral objects, nature, or works of art that are anthropomorphically perceived by the observer. The concept of empathy is included in both reflexive (conscious understanding) processes and emotional perception processes. In some cases, features of both can be observed within empathy. The scientific understanding of empathy entered the field of psychology at the beginning of the current century, although the exploration of this phenomenon began much earlier.

The development of this concept can be traced back primarily to the idea of **sympathy**. This term was introduced by the ancient Greeks to describe the emotional connection people feel toward one another.

Later, the concept was further developed by **Adam Smith**, who saw in sympathy the foundation of justice and altruism, and by **Herbert Spencer**, who regarded sympathy as the ability to feel for others and as a phenomenon that evolves alongside human psychological development.

Supporters of the theory of sympathy considered empathy to be an innate trait. For example, **W. McDougall** proposed the theory of the instinctive origin of sympathy, while **Théodule Ribot** suggested that it is a psychophysiological characteristic common to both humans and animals.

Sympathy is considered a primary emotion, upon which social and moral feelings are formed. In this context, it is viewed as the ability to align one's emotions with the emotional state of others, as well as a reflection of the spiritual unity between people and their true relationships. Over time, the primary meaning of the term **sympathy** has faded, and it was replaced by the concept of **empathy**.

The second development of knowledge about empathy can be seen in **T. Lipps'** theory of feeling. According to Lipps, feeling is the process of understanding a work of art, and later it becomes the process of understanding oneself. For Lipps, feeling is a specific form of understanding the essence of an object or subject. The individual understands their own emotions through the content of the subject or object, projecting it onto their own self. This process of "feeling" involves integrating the accepted object: through projection, the individual reaches a deep connection between themselves and the object, causing the object to "emerge by itself" or "be self-induced" through such a process. In this regard, Lipps viewed sympathy as an involuntary-imitation quality.

Later, based on this theory, **S. Markus** explored it in the psychology of art. He understood empathy as the process of understanding the aesthetic pleasure object, feeling it, and entering the figurative image. Combining these theories, in 1909, **E. Titchener** introduced the concept of empathy into scientific psychology.

However, there are also viewpoints that suggest this concept was introduced to scientific psychology by **T. Lipps**.

Modern researchers consider empathy to be an emotional phenomenon, a process of understanding, and the ability to feel the thoughts and emotions of others. According to **L. B. Merfi**, empathy is defined as not ignoring others' distress, alleviating their condition, and providing assistance. Empathy is most commonly observed in children who are well-adjusted to social life and have maximum trust, love, and care in their families.

H. L. Rosch and **A. G. Kovalev** consider empathy to be one of the key factors in the development of a child's personality. They believe that empathy is a combination of warmth, attention, and influence. Maintaining a balance of needs makes upbringing more effective.

If empathy is to determine the psychological climate in teaching a child, it could also have some drawbacks. Psychologists **Daymond** and **Bronfenbrenner**, who studied empathy as a concept, demonstrated the interconnection between this process and an individual's emotional aspects. According to their interpretation, empathy is a combination of sensitivity and social insight, meaning the ability of an individual to accept and understand the feelings and thoughts of another person.

These researchers base their experiences on the **perspective type** of empathy. They are interested in the ability of strangers, placed in specially arranged situations, to predict each other's responses. According to **Daymond**, empathy in such situations is an "intellectual reproduction of the inner world of a person."

In the views of **Daymond** and **Bronfenbrenner**, while empathy is considered a cognitive ability to understand others, the key features that ease the process of understanding are those that help simplify the process of comprehension.

Analysis and Reults

Many psychologists are not only interested in the general phenomenon of empathy but also in its manifestation, development, and especially its formation in children. However, unfortunately, the phenomenon of empathy remains insufficiently studied, particularly its expression during the early school years. Furthermore, there is currently insufficient attention given to the development and formation of empathy in schools.

The development of any social emotion in children occurs directly through interactions with adults. The formation and development of empathy in children is greatly influenced by the family, the relationships between family members, and particularly the parent-child relationship. It is within the family environment that the upbringing defines the child's value orientations and the scope of their interests, as the family is the decisive first step in shaping and developing a child's future personal qualities.

The relationship between parents and their attitude toward the child serves as the foundation for the child's future interactions with others. Simply put, if a child observes empathetic behaviors between their parents and toward themselves from an early age, the sense of empathy will develop. Thus, empathy, as well as moral feelings, should not be "imposed" through violence or punishment, but rather should be "instilled" in the child through personal example and explanation of moral norms.

The emotional understanding and acceptance from parents, as well as the disruption or lack of emotional connection between the child and the parents, negatively impact the child's development and can harm their psyche. Family conflicts, insulting behavior from parents, the absence of parental love, and pedagogical neglect all contribute to the emergence of "difficult" children in society.

Furthermore, according to the research findings and **Ye. Stotland's** views, the development of empathy is influenced by the number of children in the family and the order of birth. Firstborn children or only children, especially when an object (person) is different from them, holds a higher or lower status, or is unrelated to them and not competing with them, tend to show more empathy. The level of empathy in such children is linked to their motivation for personal success: the more the motivation is expressed, the less empathy is shown.

On the other hand, children born later, such as those with siblings, will show empathy if the object of empathy is similar to them, holds an equal status, or has a reciprocal relationship with them. In competitive situations, later-born children tend to show empathy specifically toward firstborns or only children in the family.

Therefore, the formation of moral emotions and empathy in children primarily occurs within the family. With the foundational teachings provided by their parents, children enter kindergarten and later school, where the teachers' role is to foster or develop empathy and moral feelings through professional skills.

In addition to the education from parents and teachers, communication with peers significantly influences the development of empathy. Upon entering the first grade, the child's social environment changes. The child learns to communicate with classmates and teachers and increasingly applies the communication skills acquired at home. They begin to learn to understand others and develop

empathy. In their research, **A. A. Bodalev** and **T. R. Kashtanova** showed that extensive communication between a child and their peers positively influences the development of compassion and empathy.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Thus, empathy is a complex and multifaceted concept that signifies deep emotional involvement. Empathy is considered a leading social emotion, representing an individual's ability to emotionally respond to the experiences of others. It involves subjectively perceiving others, understanding their experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

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