

AGE-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS OF PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY

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In modern psychology, gender is viewed as a key concept that integrates biological and sociocultural components of human identity. According to the American Psychological Association (2023), gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society considers appropriate for different sexes [5].

Gender equality is a state in which access to rights and opportunities does not depend on sex [4]. To understand age-specific characteristics of perceptions about gender equality, it is important to consider key gender categories. Gender roles can be defined as behavioral norms and expectations that society prescribes to men and women. Gender stereotypes are persistent ideas about traits and behaviors of men and women; perception of these stereotypes can change with age. V. Kreshchenko and O. Grinyova note that stereotypes influence youth behavior, forming expectations regarding their social roles and professional directions [2]. However, it is important to note that (according to L. Levchenko) traditional notions about male and female roles are gradually losing relevance among young people, giving way to more flexible and egalitarian behavioral models. Alongside generally accepted gender stereotypes, there are also gender attitudes — subjective beliefs about expected behavior of individuals of different sexes. Gender socialization is the process of assimilating gender norms and roles that occurs throughout life but becomes particularly intense during childhood and adolescence. M. Tkalich emphasizes that this process ensures the formation of psychological sex, the development of gender concepts, and the adoption of roles that change with age [3]; Gender identity is a person's psychological perception of themselves in relation to their sex.

Gender perceptions that emerge during social development determine individual experience, which is reflected in behavioral patterns, emotional reactions, self-esteem, and motivational attitudes of the personality [1]. Limitations of gender roles and the spread of negative stereotypes can negatively affect an individual's mental health, causing emotional disorders, depression, low self-esteem, and other psychological problems.

For a more detailed analysis of age differences in the perception of gender equality, an empirical study was conducted. For this purpose, we selected several psychodiagnostic methods, including: S. Bem Sex-Role Inventory; P. Glick and S. Fisk's Ambivalent Sexism Questionnaire towards women and men; "Gender Bias Quiz" (adapted by T. O. Kostina); Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. Information was collected online using the "Google Forms" platform. The study involved 60 respondents, divided into two samples according to age category: 30 people aged 20-25 years (main group) and 30 people aged 50-55 years (control group). For data processing, we conducted quantitative and qualitative data analysis, as well as correlation analysis using Spearman's criterion based on EXCEL, to confirm or refute the relationship between self-esteem and attitudes toward gender equality among representatives of different age groups.

In the course of interpreting the research data, the following results were obtained:

— In the main group, the androgynous type of gender-role behavior dominates among respondents – 86.67%. The masculine type was found in 13.33% of participants, while the feminine type was not recorded at all. Among women, androgyny prevails (93.75%), with masculinity characteristic of only 6.25%. In the male sample, the androgynous type is observed in 78.57% of respondents, while the masculine type in 21.43%. In the control group, 96.67% of all respondents demonstrate the androgynous type and 3.33% – the feminine type, none of the respondents showed

the masculine type of gender-role behavior. Among women, 95.24% have the androgynous type, 3.33% – the feminine type. All men in the sample have the androgynous type;

— The concurrent presence of both benevolent and hostile attitudes toward both sexes was found among the subjects of the main group. Higher levels of benevolent sexism compared to hostile sexism were recorded, as well as more pronounced hostility toward men. The highest indicators are observed on the scales of complementary gender differentiation and heterosexual hostility; in the control group, a complex and heterogeneous structure of gender attitudes was recorded. Lower levels of hostile sexism compared to benevolent sexism were found, while hostility toward men proved to be most pronounced.

— In the main group, in the general sample, a low level of gender bias prevails, accounting for 60%, while a medium level is demonstrated by 30% of respondents. A significantly smaller proportion of respondents have high (6.67%) and very high (3.33%) levels of prejudice. In the general sample, there is a slight predominance of the medium level of gender bias (53.57%) over the low level (46.43%). This tendency persists in both male and female parts of the sample, albeit with some differences.

— 96.7% of all respondents in the main group demonstrate a medium level of self-esteem and only 3.3% – a high level. Among women, all subjects (100%) demonstrate a medium level, and among men – 92.9% medium and 7.1% high. In the control group, 60.7% of all respondents demonstrate a medium level of self-esteem, 10.7% – high, and 3.6% – low. Among women, 61.1% have a medium level of self-esteem, 11.1% – high, and none of the participants has a low level. In the male group, 60% demonstrate a medium level, 10% – high, and 10% have a low level of self-esteem. The transitional level is found in 20% of men and 27.8% of women.

— In the main group, no statistically significant correlations were found between self-esteem and perceptions of gender equality. In contrast, in the control group, weak positive correlations are observed between self-esteem and benevolent sexism ($r_s=0.44$), complementary gender differentiation ($r_s=0.4$), and heterosexual intimacy ($r_s=0.53$).

Thus, the conducted research revealed certain age differences in the perception of gender equality. Although the androgynous type of gender-role behavior prevails in both age groups, younger respondents (20-25 years) demonstrate a greater diversity of types and a lower level of gender prejudice compared to the older group (50-55 years). Both groups are characterized by ambivalent attitudes toward sexism with a predominance of benevolent sexism over hostile sexism. It is important to note that in the younger group, no statistically significant correlations were found between self-esteem and perceptions of gender equality, while in the older group, weak positive correlations are observed between self-esteem and various forms of benevolent sexism. The results confirm the tendency toward transformation of traditional gender stereotypes in modern society, especially among young people.

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