

Success as It is Viewed by Teenagers of a Different Birth Order

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Abstract

The relevance of the problem studied is that the formation of a successful personality type depends on its internal position regarding the semantic characteristics of success. The study reveals the peculiarities of success semantics that teenagers with different birth order. By means of such methods as testing, associative experiment, method of multiple identifications, and focus group method there has been revealed a set of factors in teenagers' self-consciousness that determines the image of a successful self in accordance with the birth order in a family. There has been correlated the connotation of self success view and the denotation of a successful person view in the semantics of a "successful self". The relatedness of "successful self" image positions and "successful person" positions in the spheres of professional life, education, family life, public activity, hobbies has been found out. Materials of this article can be of a great practical value in psychological counseling for the prediction and correction of individual personality development of a teenager.

Keywords: birth order in a family, self-image, success

1. Introduction

Success, having its all social significance in a personality self-realization, is formed at specified stages of ontogenesis and is connected with self-consciousness development conditions. According to the prevailing majority of native psychologists the adolescence is considered crucial in self-consciousness formation (Bozhovich, 1976; Dubrovina, 1998; Feldshtein, 1996; Kon, 2009; Prikhozhan, 1984; Sobkin, 1986; Vygotsky, 1960). Erikson analyzes the identity problem at adolescence in details focusing on the peculiarities of teenagers' self-image. He writes: "... the integration in the form of ego identity is a sum of internal experience gained at all previous stages when successful identification led to a successful balancing of individuals' basic needs with their possibilities and giftedness" (Erikson, 1959). Teenager's self-consciousness development is connected with the social situation of development, teenagers' self-determination, processes of role identification, self-realization. These factors specify the formation of images and views characteristic for teenager's self-consciousness. Considering a general statement according to which the external is refracted through internal, external forms of personality behavior are determined by features of its internal position. In this regard, the significance of personality successful type development specifies the necessity to research the personality internal positions, mental representations concerning connotative characteristics of success in self-consciousness as emotional-evaluative addition to its major (denotative) meaning within the frame of personality psychology. It is important to pay attention to many aspects of methodological plan here. This is the personality value-sense sphere formation (Salikhova, 2009, 2014, 2015), and dialectics of a person and world interaction (Bayanova, 2009, 2013), and a cultural context of personality with which an individual has difficult relations of mutual transformation (Bayanova, 2011, 2013; Khusainova, 2015). The necessity to research connotations of success views transfers this problem into the sphere of psycho-semantics and study of an individual value system. The study of success views as any other verbal meanings makes it important to regard the statement that semantic components are considered in connection with psychological and social causality. The content of success concept, settings and attitude to success and successful people determines teenagers' choice of their life activity goals; it forms the motivation of achievement, and subjective semantics of success contains both general and individual semantic meanings. The obvious absence of established theoretical views about the connotation of success, causality of self-consciousness semantics of a social situation of development in general and the factor of birth order in a family, in particular, testifies to the contradiction between scientific status of an issue and the level of its elaboration in general psychology, psycho-semantics and psychology of consciousness.

The necessity to solve the specified contradiction defines the problem of the research: to identify the peculiarities which characterize connotations of success concept at a different birth order. The study of features characteristic for the connotation of success in self-consciousness of teenagers having the positions of the “single”, “senior” and “younger” child in a family, is actual both for psychological science and for social practice due to its obvious theoretical and practical relevance.

On the one hand, the social request for a successful personality formation is obvious, on the other hand, the issues of success semantics, social stereotypes of a successful person have been insufficiently developed in psychology; there are no data concerning conditions that determine success concepts by family education peculiarities, including the birth order in a family. Due to a general demographic tendency to the reduction of children in a family, i.e. with the growth of families having few siblings, the research of success connotation by single children, and also by children with different birth order is becoming especially interesting and important.

2. Materials and Methods

The complex of investigative techniques, including associative experiment, content analysis, testing, focus group method; methods of mathematical processing of empirical data have been used to solve the research objectives. To find out the success semantics of teenagers with different birth order there have been determined their general (denotative) views of success by means of the associative experiment and subjective projected (connotative) representations by means of the semantic method.

Pupils studying at comprehensive schools of Kazan aged between 13-15 years made the experimental base of the research. 407 people, organized in groups of a different gender and sibling position (single children, younger and senior brothers and sisters in a family) took part in the research. The credibility and validity of the research results are supported by the application of methods approved in numerous experimental researches within the frames of general psychology, psychology of personality, mutual testing of obtained results. The reliability of results is confirmed by a sufficient volume and representativeness of testees' sample, by the application of mathematical methods aimed to process empirical data.

In teenagers' views the meaning of success includes a specific semantic range consisting of such positions as: “a financially successful person”, “a person who is respected”, “a person who can form a good family”, “a good son/good daughter”, “a person who has achieved a high social status”, “a creative person”, “a good specialist”, “a person seeking for self-development”. The specified semantic range that reflects cognitive structures of consciousness, standing behind linguistic meaning, has been revealed as typical for teenagers of a different birth order (Russ, 2011). Thus, features of success semantics of teenagers with different birth order and a sibling position have been stated on the basis of carried-out analysis.

3. Results

The social situation concerning the development of two children even if both of them have the same parents and live in the same family differs as in the process of family development there arise new needs, and their realization is distributed between children according to their birth order (Adler, 1928, 1933; Klas, 2002). It leads to the emergence of special atmosphere around each child in the family that, in its turn, is reflected in vital success concept formation (Isaacson, 2002; Leman, 2004; Richardson, 2004). Thus, correlation of success as knowledge (denotation), as typical view of success by teenagers revealed through the construct “A SUCCESSFUL PERSON”, and success as subjective projected representation (connotation) revealed through the construct “I AM SUCCESSFUL” define the problem of the research which is formulated as follows: what is the semantics of success concept that teenagers of a different birth order have.

A psycho-semantic analysis of teenagers' ideas about success allowed to correlate the connotation of successful self concept and the denotation of a successful person concept that was revealed in the semantics of “successful self”. There has been figured out the correlation of “successful self” image positions and positions of a “successful person” in spheres of a person's life activity defined as “sphere of professional life”, “sphere of education”, “sphere of family life”, “sphere of public activity”, “sphere of hobbies”.

The factorization of positions of success allowed to find out the originality of the connotation of success in views of teenagers of a different birth order in a family. Image “successful self” in teenagers' self-consciousness has features of categorization in the semantic space of success in connection with the ordinal position in a family. So, psycho-semantic distinctions in the connotation of success concepts that single, senior and younger children have in a family have been revealed in the research; they are manifested in the following features:

- Semantics of success that single children have in a family reflects the proximity of a “successful person” position with all typical, except creativity, positions-representatives of success, characteristic for this age

category. Bipolar “Material status-manifestation of identity”, “Orientation to social authorities-manifestation of identity” and one-polar “Self-actualization” are figured out as factors integrating connotations of success.

- Semantics of success of senior children in a family reflects the identification of a “successful person” image with typical positions-representatives of success characteristic for teenagers. Senior children’s ideas of success are cognitively multiple and the connotation of success is displayed in accurate differentiation of these ideas according to spheres of life activity. Subjective meanings that senior children have about success were distributed according to bipolar factors “Communication-manifestation of identity”, “Education-perfectionism”, “Work-perfectionism”, “Creativity-manifestation of identity”, “Communication-manifestation of identity”.

- Semantics of success that younger children have in a family is characterized by proximity to a “successful person” image of all typical positions-representatives of teenagers’ success, except the position a “financially successful person”. For younger children the ideas about success are connected with bipolar factors “Perfectionism-material status”, “A family-social-approved hobbies”, “Manifestations of identity-hobbies”.

Distinctions that have been found out by comparison of success connotations and that depend on the birth order, are manifested in the following: though all children single out the subjective significance of success and identify it with representatives of success, the children that are single in a family exclude the interrelation of material wealth and creation of a good family from its semantics. Younger children connect material wealth only with positions of status achievement and creativity in the semantics of success. The semantics of success characteristic for elder children in a family is revealed in the excluding of a material wealth position of such representatives of success as a “person who makes a good family”, a “good son/good daughter”, a “good specialist”.

Gender peculiarities of success and “successful self” image of senior, younger and single male teenagers and female teenagers have been found out in case of general objective distinction indicators in the connotation of success characteristic for senior, younger and single children (Russ, 2013).

4. Discussion

Having compared various psychological assessments of success image development in teenagers’ self-consciousness reflected in the works of native psychologists representing phenomenological, humanistic, interactionist, cognitive directions, psychoanalysis, psycho-synthesis, it is expedient to note that the measure of self-acceptance, positive or negative self-attitude, providing the focus towards future, the solution of professional personal and moral self-determination issues are the measurement of self-consciousness. The internal position which a teenager should create includes the realization of oneself as a necessary and approved member of society. At the same time, in the system of views that each individual has there are specific components intrinsic only to this individual.

Thus, the identification of differentiation characteristic for teenager’s views of success and successful person is connected with specifics of their semantics. Semantics, reflecting the character of these views, in its turn, allows to reveal features of connotation peculiar to a successful person and teenagers’ own success.

It is obvious that views of success are specified by conditions of a child’s socialization where factors of the family are the most important. The family peculiarities-living conditions in which social-psychological processes are developing, interfamilial relations, communication content, features of emotional contacts, psychological microclimate-determine the specifics of child’s psychological status own perception. The attention to the features of individual’s identity formation have made scientists and experts understand the necessity to study significant factors influencing the development of children with different birth order in a family.

In the structure of a family the child’s position connected with a birth order, characterizes the full context of that family atmosphere in which a child has grown. In the course of family development as a group there arise new needs that are different from previous ones, and the satisfaction of these needs is distributed between children depending on their birth order. The way two different children cope with a problem arising in case if the situation in a family changes, never coincides. Needs or demands influencing lifestyle correspond to the perceptible birth order of a specific child. The empirical data obtained in a number of researches testify to the significance of a child’s birth order as his/her psychological status in a family, allowing to put forward the following theoretical assumption. Typical denotative views a “successful person” correspond and are identified with the representatives of a “successful self”, finding and reflecting, thus, general and specific in the semantics of success and connotation of a “successful self” by teenagers in accordance with their birth order in a family as a person’s subjective perception of his/her psychological status.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the conducted empirical research allowed to reveal a number of facts in teenagers' self-consciousness defining the image of a successful Self depending on a birth order in a family. Success in self-consciousness is revealed both at denotation and connotation levels. If the first of specified levels is formed under the influence of a socio-cultural context, the second is the result of subjective experience which conditions of birth order in a family are referred to.

The obtained results allow to state the availability of interrelation between the semantics of success and successful self of teenagers with different ordinal position. Besides, the comparison of success content as it is viewed by teenagers of a different birth order and gender allowed to define success connotation features of teenagers taking "senior", "single", "younger" positions.

Despite the fact that the research undertaken does not suggest a full explanation of the influence of birth order on personality traits, it extends the idea of the features of self-consciousness in terms of semantics of success depending on the position of a person's birth order in the family. The given line of research has the potential success of the relevance and prospects of empirical studies in connection with the socialization of personality and identity formation.

6. Recommendations

Materials of this article can be of a great practical value in psychological counseling for the prediction and correction of individual personality development of a teenager.

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