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## STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF AN IDEAL FATHER

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*Relations of fathers with daughters and sons, the role of fathers in the cognitive, emotional and social development of children are described. The participation of fathers in the socialization of children is considered. The study of differences between perception of an ideal father of female and male students is analyzed.*

**Introduction.** Studying the role of fathers in raising children did not always have the proper recognition and attention of researchers. Before the eighties of the twentieth century, fathers were not visible in the sphere of child upbringing. Now it becomes obvious that fathers play a significant role, because relations with a father have a comprehensive and important influence on the formation of a child's personality at all stages of his/her life. This conclusion is based on the results of the research conducted in different countries of the world.

The daily participation of men in taking care of children plays a role in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. Fathers who adhere to the principle of gender equality are more likely to pass on the value of gender equality to their children.

Y.V. Borisenko defines fatherhood through the manifestation of the personal-semantic sphere of a man, complementing the functions specific to the man in the family [1; 2].

Fatherhood is more often viewed from the point of view of a socio-psychological approach as a sociocultural phenomenon. Many researchers have confirmed the conclusion that the role of fathers' functions varies depending on the characteristics of the family structure adopted in the society (V.I. Druzhinin, I.S. Kon, and others).

**Task formation and methods of research.** The subject of our research is to study students' perception of an ideal father. We suggested that there were gender differences in students' perception of an ideal father.

We used the questionnaire "Perception of an ideal parent" by Ovcharova and the questionnaire "Diagnostics of parent-child relationships", which had 20 questions.

60 students of Polotsk State University, 40 females and 20 males took part in our research.

**Results, their discussion and perspectives.** After having analyzed students' perception of an ideal father, it is possible to identify the most important qualities of an ideal parent. We grouped responses into three main blocks of components: cognitive, emotional and behavioral.

1) Cognitive component: "strong", "must be fair", "forgiving", "always patient", "let children decide for themselves".

2) Emotional component: "indulgent", "interested in children", "proud of children", "feeling sorry for children", "never screaming at a child".

3) Behavioral component: "not afraid to apologize to a child", "must be an experienced parent", "praising", "listening to a child", "not limiting freedom of the child".

Then we compared images of an ideal father of male and female students, we could distinguish some differences in students' perception (see fig. 1, 2).

Analyzing the data from the figures 1, 2, it should be noted that the images of an ideal father are a little bit different with females and males: female students mark out the behavioral component ("not afraid to apologize to the child", "listening to a child", "praising", "not restricting freedom of a child") and partly emotional ("never screaming at a child").

For male students the most significant components are cognitive ("strong", "forgiving") and emotional components ("not afraid to apologize to a child", "listening to a child", "praising", "not limiting freedom of a child").

Peculiarities of the paternal role in the family and the upbringing of children are determined by such factors as accessibility for a child, involvement in joint activities with a child, responsibility for financial support and organization of educational sphere of a child. Comparison of "included fathers" and "included mothers", i.e. those who are actively involved in upbringing of a child, led to the conclusion that "included fathers" have better influence on the development of a child than mothers [3].

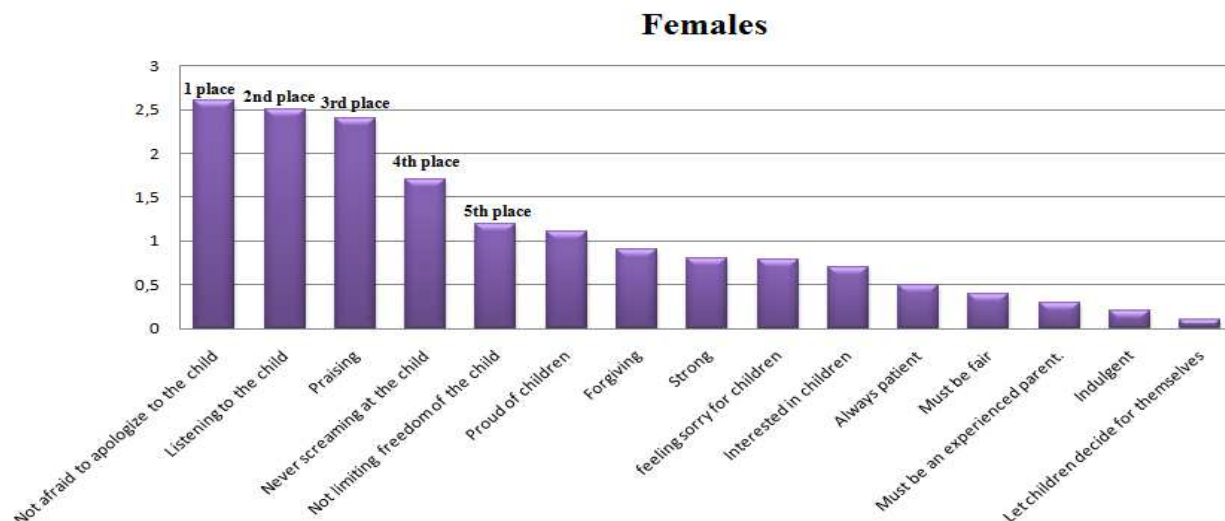


Figure 1. – Female perception of an ideal father

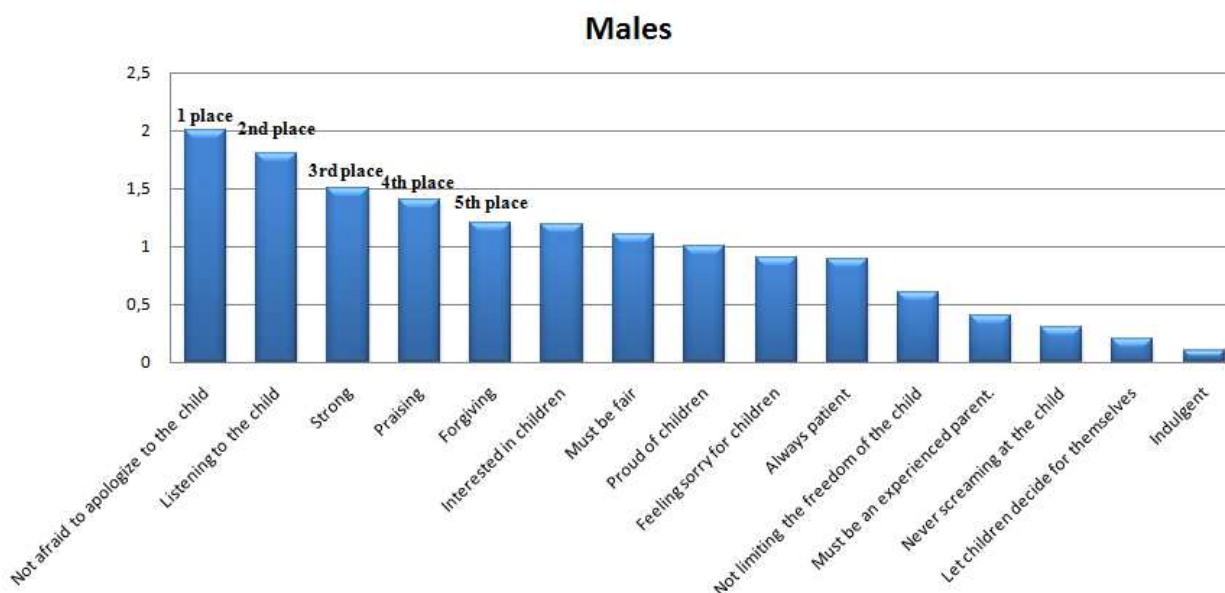


Figure 2. – Male perception of an ideal father

The relationship of a daughter with her father influences her further heterosexual contacts, being the prototype of this relationship. Warm and satisfying relationships with a father help a daughter be proud of her femininity, promote acceptance of herself as a woman and easier heterosexual adaptation, in addition, a father can influence daughter's life priorities - a family life or a career orientation [4]. This has a positive effect on the physical and intellectual development of daughters, their ability to defend their point of view, to look more positively at the world and their role in it.

The image of the father is significant for emotional well-being and gender-role identity of adolescents [6], influences the process of self-actualization [7], socialization, the formation of the Self- image, self-esteem and behavior [9].

It was assumed earlier that warm attitude of a father should influence more self-concept of a son, not a daughter. However, V.E. Kagan confirmed the opposite: overbearing, dominant control of a father led to a negative Self-image of boys, without affecting Self-image of girls. R. Burns, in this regard, formulates a question that has not yet received an answer: maybe it is not that father's dominance negatively affects boys Self-concept, but fathers' dominance blocks the way to mother's domination, which might have a positive impact?

He strongly emphasizes the importance of parental warmth and insists on the presumption of parental love, arguing that neither whims of a child nor anger of parents undermines parents' inner devotion and love for a child [5].

According to R. Campbell's observations, kind fathers have courageous sons, while hard-core, super-masculine ones have a feminine type of their sons [7].

A number of studies and theoretical assumptions allow us to conclude that not only real interactions between a father and a child are important for the normal mental development of a child, but also on his mental image, i.e. "an inner father", represented in the psyche, formed under the influence of various conditions (Kalina O.G., 2007, Davids M., 2002; Marks M., 2002; Britton R., 2000; Grossmann K. et al., 2002; Bios, R., 1970; Tyson, F., Tyson, R., 1998). If a father is physically inaccessible to a teenager, then psychologically he is always present in the family, continues to exist as an "internal object", in the form of an "image", a certain symbol or a myth.

Thus, a friendly, emotionally stable father is the key to a normal relationship between a father and children in the future [8].

**Conclusion.** Thus, we can conclude that there are minor gender differences in perception of an ideal father. Female respondents think that an ideal father should not be afraid to apologize to a child, to listen to his child, to praise his child, not to restrict freedom of a child and should never scream at children.

Male students believe that an ideal father should be strong, forgiving, should not be afraid to apologize to a child, listen and praise his child.

Despite the identified small gender differences, students have positive, fairly complete and multidimensional image of an ideal father. This perception is close to an image of a real father.

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