

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MOTIVATION OF PARENTHOOD AND ATTITUDE TO PARENTHOOD

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This article represents a research on gender differences in motivation of parenthood and attitude to parenthood. Recently interest in the study of family relations has increased significantly. Researchers of various areas of scientific knowledge, both theorists, and practitioners are conducting various investigations. Until relatively recently most socialization research focused on the processes and parental child-rearing strategies. For the most part psychologists paid little attention to the parents themselves and the context in which they carried on their parenting.

Introduction. The family is the main institute of socialization. Most authorities agree that parenting is one of the most difficult tasks any adult faces. Parenting is influenced by the relatively enduring characteristics or personality of a man or a woman. It is understood that troubled parents are more likely to have troubled children. Parents do not undertake their parenting in a social vacuum. They are immersed in networks of relationships with friends and relatives. These arenas of social interaction may be sources of stress and support, or both.

Various functions and types of parenting were investigated. Many agreed that rearing children is one of the main essences of a family. Being a parent is often described as a key developmental milestone in the adult life course, and research suggests that the decision to become a parent is driven by a variety of motivational factors [7].

In numerous studies of parenting, social and psychological factors and conditions of formation of ideas of parenting were described. For more than fifty years psychologists dedicated themselves to the task of uncovering the part that different parenting practices have in shaping a child's personality and behaviour. Three dimensions emerged from the study: the warmth or hostility of the parent-child relationship, the control or autonomy of the disciplinary approach, the consistency or inconsistency that parents show in using discipline.

Parenthood is biological and social ties between spouses and children including the birth and upbringing of a child providing his familiarizing with cultural, spiritual, and moral values of society. Completion of formation of a parental role can be judged by motives of future mothers and fathers.

Main part. Causal and functional dependence of reproductive attitudes and reproductive behaviour of an individual are widely discussed in psychological and pedagogical studies (A.I. Antonov, 1973; V. Boyko, 1981; V.A. Borisov, 1976; A.I. Kuzmin, 1997; L.I. Savinov, 1996, etc.). In addition, researchers often point out that there is a factor depending on the parental family. They study the similarity of various dynamic parameters of the functioning of one's own and the parent family, "parental family has a powerful influence on the choice of career and spouse" (N. Peseshkian). E. Byrne notes that decisions involve unconscious attitudes inherited in childhood by parents. R. Skinner and D. Kliiz mention the similarities in the choice of a spouse, which operates similarly to one's own and has approximately the same set of problems [1].

In the research on heterosexual couples' motivations to parent, men and women often highlight perceived psychological or personal rewards of children, such as the emotional benefits of the parent-child bond, enjoyment of children, and personal fulfillment [6,8,9]. For instance, in their sample of 34 heterosexual couples, Langdridge (2000) found that the desire to give love and to receive love were described as the most salient motivators by both men and women [8].

The analysis of psychological literature has shown that the system of factors which determine the formation of parenthood, has not been specified yet. As a rule, theoretical and practical aspects of research in the field of family relations concern certain aspects that do not affect the formation of a person as a parent.

Main motives of child birth are a child from a loved one, compliance to social expectations, preservations of the relations with a loved one, a child as a protest to people around, rejection of a past life, withdrawal of the present, the child's birth for the sake of maintaining own health, self-affirmation [4, 5].

Russian psychologists consider parenthood from a gender perspective. K.N. Belogay studied gender differences in the structure of the parental relationship. She was able to identify differences in the needs and motives, behavioral and functional areas of maternity and paternity. For example, in her study it was found that

the main motives for fathers were the motives of self-change and motives of maternity were the motives associated with the development of relations with a partner. In addition, women were significantly more likely than men to see a child as the essence of their lives. There were also differences in parental behaviour of mothers and fathers. Mothers spent much more time with their child than fathers. Attitudes to interaction of mothers and fathers significantly differed: mothers increasingly encouraged verbal expression of the child, and fathers were more focused on the promotion of the activity of their children. The parents were different in the functional purpose of motherhood and fatherhood: mothers were attributed by the function of love and care, while fathers - protection and education [2].

The subject of our research is identification of motives of parenting that are common and whether motives of parenting are determined by gender. The issue is very important but there is not much data. It is also necessary to study whether there is any gender difference in motives of parenting.

In our research 72 males and females(36 – females and 36 – males) aged from 20 up to 25 and from 25 to 65 were engaged. According to Eric Eriksson they represent young adulthood and adulthood. All of them had children. The research was conducted with people of various occupations and of different social status, such as teachers, engineers, workers, and students. It helped us to collect different opinions and points of view.

The questionnaire used in the research was developed on the basis of the materials presented in "Fundamentals of Psychology of Family and Family consultation", the edition of N.N. Posysoyev and "Psychological Maintenance of parenthood" by R.V. Ovcharova [4, 5].

In addition to the questionnaire, we used a survey "Attitude to Motherhood and Paternity"[3]. The purpose of this technique was to study the attitude to parenthood determining the level of predisposition of respondents to a certain model (degree of traditionalism or an alternative). In this technique individuals were to estimate the offered statements using a scale from 1 to 7 points.

As a result, we got data of parenting motivation. Analyzing the data we could realize how the motives of parenting were estimated, what motives were at the top of the list, what motives were the last to choose.

The results of the analysis was as following: males first chose the motive "a child from a loved one", females – the motive "conscious desire". The second chosen male motive was "procreation", and for females – "a child from a loved one". The third motive of males was "conscious desire", and of females –"procreation". The fourth motive males and females chose was "maintaining relationships with partners". In the choice of the last motive, the fifth, males and females differed again. For males it was the motive of self-affirmation, and for females –"to change one's life making it different".

Using nonparametric U-criterion by Mann-Whitney in the STATISTICA program, we made a correlation analysis of our data. The level of significance was not significant ($p < 0,05$). This fact demonstrates lack of significant differences between men and women in attitude to paternity and motherhood. In addition, this questionnaire allows to reveal predisposition of the respondents to a certain model (degree of traditionalism or an alternative). The predisposition of the respondents, both males, and females to a traditional model of parenthood was found. This information can be seen in diagram 1.

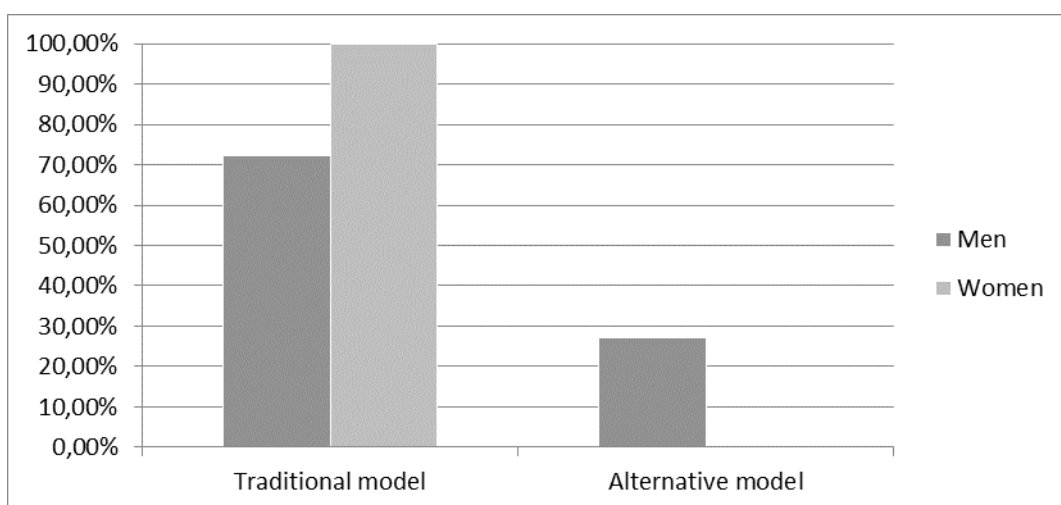


Fig. 1. The degree of traditionalism or alternatives of parenting model