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Gender patterns in young people's perceptions

Gender schemes recorded in the cultural texts are legitimized by various institutions of socialization, through which they direct the process of constructing the human gender experience. There are gender schemes that help a young man in self-determination, providing his adaptation to the social medium. On the other hand, there are those schemes that hamper the young people's self-fulfillment. Therefore, the study of young people's gender perceptions, clarifying the extent of their fixedness and dynamism is an important issue.

Gender schemes and stereotypes schematize generalized patterns that include a system of ideas of masculinity / femininity traits, gender roles, behavior, recorded in background expectations of society. Such schemes may be stereotypical and serve as so-called cognitive structures, based on which a person perceives the information about men's, women's roles, treats them and behaves accordingly.

The associative experiment has been used to determine the stereotypes of young people's gender experience. The choice of this method was based on the theory of semantic organization of memory - associative links are established during the acquisition of subjective experience. It follows that the similarity of individuals' experience is reflected to some extent in the similarity of their verbal responses in the associative experiment. In view of the above, as a result of application of the associative experiment the author finds out the meanings used by the members of the experimental group for defining certain stereotypes. The most common stereotypes were found out on the previous stage of studying young people by means of the gender stereotypes inquirer developed by G. Heimans (modified by T. Bendas).

Young people have different perception of woman and man images. The key stereotypes of young people's gender experience are "stereotypes of masculinity, femininity", "stereotypes associated with the performance of gender roles," "stereotyped assessment of appearance". The male youth's perceptions about both women and men are more stereotypical that is very similar to the female youth's perceptions about men that are very stereotypical as well. As a rule, the male youth endow women with feminine features, and the female youth endow men with masculine ones. The young people's perceptions about the performance of gender roles are stereotypical as well. The obtained results put it under the question that there is a significant influence of gender patterns created in a society on forming the young people's gender perceptions. Therefore, we consider that reviewing especially patriarchal gender patterns that complicate the process of young people's gender self-determination and self-fulfillment is an actual issue.

Key words: *gender scheme, gender experience, background expectations, gender roles, masculinity, femininity, androgyny.*