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Development of time perspective in nenets, Sami and Russian adolescents: A comparative analysis

Desarrollo de la perspectiva del tiempo en adolescentes nenets, Sami y Rusos: Un análisis comparativo

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the issue of studying specific features of the development of time perspective in adolescents representing different ethnic groups living in the North of Russia. The study includes a comparative analysis of the development of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian male and female adolescents.

The current article presents the results of an empirical study conducted using the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory. The respondents in the empirical study were 99 Nenets adolescents aged 12-15 years (54 boys and 45 girls); 79 Sami adolescents aged 12-15 years (41 boys and 38 girls); 121 ethnic Russian adolescents aged 12-15 years (63 boys and 58 girls).

The comparative analysis of the development of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents has shown the presence of similar trends characteristic of the age group in general, and specific features at the same time.

Resumen

Este artículo se ocupa del tema del estudio de las características específicas del desarrollo de la perspectiva del tiempo en adolescentes que representan diferentes grupos étnicos que viven en el norte de Rusia. El estudio incluye un análisis comparativo del desarrollo de la perspectiva temporal en adolescentes varones y mujeres nenets, sami y de etnia rusa.

El presente artículo presenta los resultados de un estudio empírico realizado utilizando el Inventario de Perspectiva Temporal de Zimbardo. Los encuestados en el estudio empírico fueron 99 adolescentes Nenets de 12 a 15 años (54 niños y 45 niñas); 79 sami adolescentes de 12 a 15 años (41 niños y 38 niñas); 121 adolescentes de etnia rusa de 12 a 15 años (63 niños y 58 niñas).

El análisis comparativo del desarrollo de la perspectiva temporal en adolescentes nenets, sami y de etnia rusa ha mostrado la presencia de tendencias similares características del grupo de edad en general y características específicas al

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The results of the study enrich the scientific understanding of the phenomenon of time perspective, supplement and expand the understanding of the process of personality formation in representatives of different ethnic groups living in the North of Russia. The identified features of time perspective in adolescents will help to supplement the programs of psychological assistance and support for adolescents in the aspect of building life strategies, implementing capabilities of forecasting life prospects and managing time resources.

Keywords: Time perspective, adolescence, Nenets adolescents, Sami adolescents, ethnic Russian adolescents.

Introduction

The ability to construct one's own life prospects, to perceive the boundaries of time, to understand historical time and social time is an extremely important component of psychological health of a person. In the process of personality development an individual must acquire an ability not only to be sensible of time, but to regulate it as well. Acquiring only social code is not enough to live in the world, it is also important to learn to apprehend the standards of time. Personality formation cannot be complete without acquiring the ability to set adequate goals based on the analysis of real-life situations, and to forecast possible changes in time. The starting point which helps an individual to perceive his/her life path, to divide life into periods, to set expectations and goals, to develop one's own life strategy, in general can be seen as time perspective.

Russia is a multiethnic and multicultural country. Indigenous peoples, who live mainly in the North, occupy a special place in the ethnic composition of the country. The mode of life and cultures of these peoples possess specific features, and are very contingent on natural conditions. All these aspects affect the processes of identity and personality formation (Flotskaya et al., 2021). In our opinion, development of time perspective in indigenous adolescents has its own specifics. At the same time, currently there are practically no studies on the development of time perspective in adolescents representing the indigenous peoples of Russia, which makes our study relevant. Our study includes a comparative analysis of the development of time perspective in adolescents representing different ethnic groups living in the North of Russia. We assumed

the same time. Los resultados del estudio enriquecen la comprensión científica del fenómeno de la perspectiva temporal, complementa y amplía la comprensión del proceso de formación de la personalidad en representantes de diferentes grupos étnicos que viven en el norte de Rusia. Las características identificadas de la perspectiva del tiempo en adolescentes ayudarán a complementar los programas de asistencia y apoyo psicológico para adolescentes en el aspecto de construcción de estrategias de vida, implementación de capacidades de previsión de perspectivas de vida y gestión de recursos de tiempo.

Palabras clave: Perspectiva temporal, adolescencia, adolescentes nenets, adolescentes sami, adolescentes de etnia rusa.

that the development of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescent boys and girls would have distinctive features. In order to test this hypothesis, we have conducted an empirical study.

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In this article, the authors attempted to present a brief review of the literature on an open problem, the methods of the study and its results.

Materials and methods

The notion of time perspective was introduced in psychology by K. Lewin as "the totality of an

individual's view of his psychological past and psychological future existing at a given time in the reality-irreality dimension of the life space" (Lewin, 1980, p. 139). L.K. Frank characterized time perspective as the life space of an individual, comprising the past, the present and the future (Frank, 1939). P.G. Zimbardo considered different aspects of the subject's attitude towards various periods of their existence, enclosed in the time frame of the past, the present and the future. According to Zimbardo, under the influence of certain operant motives time perspective turns into a socially, biologically, and sensory driven process (Zimbardo, 2012).

The process of intensive development of time perspective takes place in adolescence. In this period, an individual begins to determine one's own life strategy, to create an image of the future for oneself, thereby laying the foundation for future life choices (Flotskiy, 2021). Development of time perspective is related to the fact that by the age of fifteen, adolescents develop a new sense of time and continuity of life, which provides them with the opportunity to compare the past, the present and the future, to balance their life goals against the amount of time needed to achieve them. During this period emerges an ability to assess one's time and distribute it optimally. According to E. H. Erikson, personal identity of an adolescent is based on the awareness of the past and the future, and accumulates all the ideas about oneself into a single whole (Erikson, 1996). O. A. Kozhurova in her studies describes the assessment of the present in adolescents as tense, but having positive sentiment at the same time. For them, the past is significant, the present seems long, bright, optimistic, and they are less oriented towards the future (Kozhurova, 2011). V. N. Petrova (Petrova, 2011) and P. I. Yanichev (Yanichev, 2001), on the contrary, emphasize in their works that adolescents are characterized by focusing on the future. Studies conducted under the leadership of L. A. Regush have proved that future poses a significant problem for high school seniors – it is a source of anxiety and discomfort (Regush, 2010). Future imagined by adolescents is often filled with fears, hopes and expectations which form the horizon of possibilities and prospective life trajectories (Carabelli, 2016). V. G. Petrovskaya points out that hedonistic motives, pursuance of pleasures, a certain degree of disconnect from the past and the future are inherent to adolescents due to their desire to demonstrate maturity (Petrovskaya, 2020).

According to A. Syrtsova, there is one more side to personality formation which affects the time perspective of an individual – social adjustment, which is closely related to family patterns, predominant religious denominations, specific features of the established educational system, socio-economic characteristics (Syrtsova, 2008a). Specific circumstances of social adjustment influence the time perspective of an individual, determining the choice of life strategy and self-fulfillment (Prokonich, 2012). Affiliation of people with different social groups determines particular characteristics of time perspective developing in them (Nestik, 2014). The study by M. Mead shows that orientation of an individual towards the past, the present or the future depends on the culture type prevalent in a particular society (Mead, 1988). Significant distinctions have been identified in the time perspective of adults and students from Brazil, India, Australia, and the USA (Syrtsova, 2007). The study by P.G. Zimbardo shows differences in time perspective in representatives of different ethnic groups in terms of negative and positive past, as well as fatalistic present (Zimbardo, 1999).

To identify specific features of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian male and female adolescents, we have conducted an empirical study in several regions of the Russian North: the Arkhangelsk region, the Murmansk region, and the Nenets Autonomous District. The respondents in the study were 99 Nenets adolescents aged 12-15 years (54 boys and 45 girls); 79 Sami adolescents aged 12-15 years (41 boys and 38 girls); 121 ethnic Russian adolescents aged 12-15 years (63 boys and 58 girls). The sample consisted of 299 respondents in total.

The Nenets are the descendants of the indigenous population of the White Sea coast, they live in the Nenets Autonomous District. Their traditional occupation is reindeer breeding. Throughout the year the Nenets move across tundra with their herds of reindeer. Activities such as hunting and fishing play an important role in summer. This lifestyle has allowed the Nenets to preserve their ethnic identity, traditions and culture.

The Sami are the smallest in number indigenous people in the North of Russia. They are localized in the village of Lovozero in the Murmansk region, and live there together with ethnic Russian population. In the past, the Sami used to lead a semi-nomadic lifestyle. The social structure of the contemporary Russian Sami is characterized by inclusiveness in the present-day

society and preservation of interest in their ancestry, culture, language and traditions.

In our study we used the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory psychodiagnostic technique adapted in Russian by A. Syrtsova (Syrtsova, 2008b, pp. 101-109). This inventory allows identification of the respondent's attitude towards different components of time continuum. The inventory asks the respondents to rate their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the 56 statements on a 5-point scale. The Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventory was designed to assess such indicators as a negative attitude towards the past, a positive attitude towards the past, an orientation towards the future, a fatalistic attitude towards the present, and a hedonistic attitude towards the present. The indicator of a negative attitude towards the past (*Past negative*) reflects the degree of resentment of one's past, the negative emotions at the memory of it. The indicator of a positive attitude towards the past (*Past positive*) reflects the degree of embracement of one's past, the positive character of memories, the assessment of the benefits provided by any life experience. The indicator of orientation towards the future (*Future*) reflects the degree of orientation towards the next stage of life, the presence of goals and plans for the future in a person. The indicator of a fatalistic attitude towards the present (*Present fatalistic*) reflects the perception of one's fate as predetermined and beyond one's

control. The indicator of a hedonistic attitude towards the present (*Present hedonistic*) reflects the pursuance of pleasures, the search for new experience, the disconnect from one's past and future.

To organize the collection of empirical data, we received written consent from parents or other legal representatives of our adolescent study participants. The collection of empirical data was carried out in groups of 10-12 respondents. Before testing, boys and girls indicated their age and ethnicity in writing.

The obtained data were processed using SPSS Statistics 22. To test our hypothesis, we used the Student's t-test for independent samples. This method enabled us to identify significant differences in the degree of manifestation of time perspective components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian male and female adolescents.

Results

In the course of studying the distinctive features of time perspective development in indigenous adolescents living in the North of Russia, we have analyzed the specifics of time perspective components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian boys and girls aged 12-15 years. The manifestation of time perspective components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian male adolescents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Perspective components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian male adolescents (according to the results of studies by Flotskaya, Aryabkina, Bulanova, Ponomareva, Flotskiy)

Time perspective components	Nenets males	Sami males	Ethnic Russian males
Past negative	3.45±0,09	3.29±0.09	3.27±0.10
Present hedonistic	3.64±0,06	3.67±0.06	3.63±0.06
Future	3.04±0,07	3.17±0.07	3.12±0.09
Past positive	3.54±0,09	3.51±0.07	3.36±0.12
Present fatalistic	3.31±0.09***	3.00±0.09**	2.84±0.12***

Note: * - $p \leq 0.05$; ** - $p \leq 0.01$; *** - $p \leq 0.001$.

The analysis of the obtained study results regarding specific features of the development of time perspective in adolescents has shown the absence of significant differences in most components of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian boys. The predominant component of time perspective in boys of all three studied ethnic groups is *Present hedonistic* – a hedonistic attitude towards the present, which determines their orientation towards the present and their satisfaction with the current moment. This component is manifested in Nenets boys

($M=3.64\pm 0.06$), Sami boys ($M=3.67\pm 0.06$), and ethnic Russian boys ($M=3.63\pm 0.06$) almost identically. The next most pronounced component is *Past positive* – a positive attitude towards the past, reflecting the degree of embracement of one's past, a nostalgic attitude towards one's memories. This component is almost equally manifested in Nenets boys ($M=3.54\pm 0.09$) and Sami boys ($M=3.51\pm 0.07$), while in ethnic Russian boys it is somewhat less pronounced ($M=3.36\pm 0.12$), which, in our opinion, indicates that ethnic Russian male

adolescents are less oriented towards reflecting on the past. The *Past negative* component is somewhat more pronounced in Nenets boys ($M=3.45\pm 0.09$) than in Sami boys ($M=3.29\pm 0.09$), and ethnic Russian boys ($M=3.27\pm 0.10$) of the same age. This indicator reflects the rejection of one's past, and orientation towards either real or projected negative memories. At the same time, the indicator of orientation towards the future in the structure of attitude towards the future is manifested less than most other indicators in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents. This shows that orientation towards the future is less present among adolescents of the studied ethnic groups, they do not have clearly defined goals and plans for next stages of life. This indicator is pronounced in Nenets boys less than in Sami and ethnic Russian boys ($M=3.04\pm 0.07$). The *Present fatalistic* indicator, which reflects

the predetermined character of the present and the future, the view of the results of one's actions as predestined, is manifested differently in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents. It is significantly more pronounced in Nenets boys ($M=3.31\pm 0.09$) than in ethnic Russian boys ($M=2.84\pm 0.12$) ($p<0.001$) and Sami boys ($M=3.00\pm 0.09$) ($p<0.01$) of the same age. This indicates the presence of a greater fatalism in the attitude towards the present and the future among Nenets boys.

The analysis of specific features of time perspective development in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescent girls has shown that the representatives of the studied ethnic groups are characterized by presence of both similar and contrasting trends in the development of time perspective components (Table 2).

Table 2.

Perspective components in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian girls aged 12-15 years (according to the results of studies by Flotskaya, Aryabkina, Bulanova, Ponomareva, Flotskiy)

Time perspective components	Nenets girls	Sami girls	Ethnic Russian girls
Past negative	3.57±0.09	3.62±0.10*	3.34±0.10*
Present hedonistic	3.76±0.07	3.86±0.05	3.88±0.08
Future	3.11±0.08*	3.33±0.09	3.41±0.11*
Past positive	3.63±0.09	3.63±0.09	3.63±0.12
Present fatalistic	3.37±0.08***	3.00±0.11**	2.96±0.09***

Note: * - $p \leq 0.05$; ** - $p \leq 0.01$; *** - $p \leq 0.001$.

The predominant component of time perspective in Nenets girls ($M=3.76\pm 0.07$), Sami girls ($M=3.86\pm 0.05$), and ethnic Russian girls ($M=3.88\pm 0.08$) is *Present hedonistic*, which indicates the predominance of orientation towards the present and satisfaction with the current moment. In Nenets girls, this component is slightly less pronounced than in their Sami and ethnic Russian age-mates. The *Past positive* indicator is manifested identically in the representatives of all three studied ethnic groups, which indicates the absence of any specifics in the degree of acceptance of one's own past and nostalgic attitude towards one's own memories.

While analyzing the specific features of the *Past negative* component, we have identified a tendency for this indicator to increase in Sami girls ($M=3.62\pm 0.10$) in comparison with their ethnic Russian age-mates ($M=3.34\pm 0.10$) ($p<0.05$). These results indicate that Sami girls are more oriented towards rejection of their past, fixation either on real or on projected negative memories. In terms of attitude towards the future, there is a tendency towards an increase in the

manifestation of orientation towards the future in ethnic Russian girls ($M=3.41\pm 0.11$) in comparison with their Nenets age-mates ($M=3.11\pm 0.08$) ($p<0.05$). These results indicate a lesser degree of orientation towards the future among Nenets girls, lack of clearly defined goals and plans for next stages of life. The *Present fatalistic* indicator is significantly more pronounced in Nenets girls ($M=3.37\pm 0.08$) than in their ethnic Russian ($M=2.96\pm 0.09$) ($p<0.001$) and Sami ($M=3.00\pm 0.11$) ($p<0.01$) age-mates. These results demonstrate a greater fatalism in the attitude towards the present and the future among Nenets girls, who focus more on fate, and not on their own will.

Discussion

The comparative analysis of the development of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents helped us to identify both similar and contrasting trends in the process. Similar trends include the predominance of a hedonistic attitude towards the present, a limited orientation towards the future, and the

predominance of a positive attitude towards the past. It should be noted that O. A. Kozhurova in her study highlights the limited orientation towards the future among adolescents as well (Kozhurova, 2011), while V. G. Petrovskaya (Petrovskaya, 2020) notes the hedonistic nature of their attitude towards the present. Thus, these particular features of the development of time perspective in adolescents can be considered general trends of the age group.

We can also highlight certain trends characteristic of the representatives of different ethnic groups. Thus, Nenets adolescents are characterized by a more pronounced fatalistic attitude towards the present, i.e. for them the events in life are predestined and depend on fate rather than on their own will. This trend is statistically significant and is observed in both boys and girls. S. V. Semyonova (Semyonova, 2006) and A. E. Menyashev (Menyashev, 2005) in their studies noted a pronounced manifestation of the mythological, irrational world perception among representatives of indigenous peoples.

Additionally, Nenets adolescents are somewhat less focused on their own future. In our opinion, this is due to the centuries-long traditional way of life and activities of the Nenets, which reduces the ambition of Nenets adolescents to search for their own life trajectory.

The Sami adolescents reveal more similarity with their ethnic Russian age-mates in the development of time perspective, and that, from our point of view, is due to the greater degree of assimilation of the Sami. Among the specific features, one can distinguish a tendency towards a more negative attitude of Sami girls towards their past, which is manifested in a greater degree of rejection of their past, fixation either on real or on projected negative memories.

The development of time perspective in ethnic Russian adolescents demonstrates no pronounced distinctive features in comparison with the representatives of other studied ethnic groups. In our opinion, this can be explained by the prevalence of ethnic Russians in the North of Russia, in contrast to representatives of indigenous small-numbered peoples.

Practical conclusions

The comparative analysis of the development of time perspective in Nenets, Sami, and ethnic Russian adolescents has shown the presence of both similar trends, characteristic of the age group in general, and specific features. The

results of the study enrich the scientific understanding of the time perspective phenomenon, supplement and expand the understanding of the process of personality formation in representatives of different ethnic groups living in the North of Russia. The identified features of time perspective in adolescents will help to supplement the programs of psychological assistance and support for adolescents in the aspect of building life strategies, implementing capabilities of forecasting life prospects and managing time resources.

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