Image of Film Hero as Identification Model of Development of Self-identity in Adolescence

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Abstract

Peculiarities of identification model with film heroes in adolescence are considered. The factor analysis of semantic differential allows defining specific strategies of identification with heroes and value transformation of ideal and anti-ideal. 3 identification models were revealed – first model with no identification with heroes, second model with identification with main hero, third model with complicated I-ideal and I-anti-ideal changes.

1. Introduction

The process of self-identity development is the central psychological process in adolescence. Adolescent’s self-determination in different spheres is based on various identification models that teenagers meet and interact with [1]. That process happens everyday and involves diverse situations where adolescents get the chance to estimate and fit on different behavioral, emotional, value and cognitive models [2]. One of the sources for self-identity processing is film. Movies are popular among adolescents and represent many identification models. Film can combine different real-life and imaginary elements and show the real life in...
Films can provide vivid identification models for teenagers and adolescents can choose those models that seem interesting, and attractive to them.

Self-identity is the system of all self-representations including the self-esteem. Different psychologists define various structural components of self-identity. One of the measurements of self-identity are the diode – I-real and I-ideal. I-real consists of actual representations of myself. I-ideal includes representation of my ideal and focuses on traits, moral norms, images and identification model that I want to incorporate. I-real and I-ideal often are regarded in a couple. Also I-ideal can be considered in dichotomy with I-anti-ideal. K.Horney claimed that I-anti-ideal is important structure and it consists of representations about my despicable image/ I anyi-ideal includes characteristics that I want to avoid.

2. The present study

The aim of the study was to explore how the image of film hero as identification model for adolescents influences on identity. The hypothesis was that there are dynamic changes in I-real and I-ideal representations due to film review. We also proposed that changes both in I-ideal and I-anti-ideal representations will be detected. These changes allow to define several identification models with film hero.

3. Method

4.1 Participants

The data consists of 71 adolescents (25 boys and 46 girls) aged from 15 to 17 that took part in the investigation. All subjects attend schools and live in Moscow.

4.2 Measures

The procedure consisted of 3 phases and was based on method semantic differential by C. E. Osgood [5]. Firstly, subjects were to estimate themselves (I-real, I-ideal and I-anti-ideal) by 28 bipolar scale with different personal characteristics. Secondly, adolescent watched the movie with actual life content. Thirdly, subjects estimated themselves (I–real, I-ideal and I-anti-ideal) and 10 main heroes of the film by the same 28 bipolar scales. That procedure allows to compare changes in personal identity characteristics before and after the movie review and to compare identity characteristics with heroes. Due to the aim of the research the content of the movie is very important. It must be interesting and close for adolescents. The theme of school bullying seems to be close to teenagers. That phenomenon is familiar to many adolescents who can be the participants in different positions: victim, aggressor, supporters and observers. The problem of bullying in Russian school is actual. For most adolescents that theme is not attractive but close and important. That explains the fame of film “Scarecrow” directed by R. Bykov. That movie was done made in soviet times but remains important nowadays. The main hero of the film overcame the bullying in her class and refused to recognize herself as a victim. The class divided into two groups: one of them continued bullying behavior and the other one were passive observers. That film can be used to estimate different psychological peculiarities of adolescents. It helps to define life values, determine moral principles and moral atmosphere [6], [7], [8].

5. Results

The factor analysis of semantic differential allows to define 3 factors that explains 94.0% and 95.8% of summary dispersion for boys and girls respectively [9]. The content of defined most important factors F1 and F2 for boys and girls are common in general. Most of the personal characteristics for factor F1 for boys and factor
F2 for girls were the same. Also most of the personal characteristics for factor F2 for boys and factor F1 for girls were the same. Factor F1 was named as resoluteness-indecision, factor F2 was named as responsiveness-indifferent. The significant difference was in the weight load of factors. For boys the main factor was factor F1 (80.7% of weight load), for girls the main factor was F2 (81.8% of weight load). The factor F3 for boys was named as immediacy-prudence. The factor F3 for girls was named funny-sad. The result analysis showed some interesting picture of value transformations due to film review in self-identity. We describe three main identification models that were defined.

When there are no identification between adolescent and heroes of the film, the value space didn’t interact. There are three main facts. First, expectations of value transformation due to the film review were not proved. I-real and I-ideal didn’t transform after the film review. The same tendency is regarded for I-anti-ideal. Second, the legible differentiation was found between I-real and I-ideal on one hand and I-anti-ideal on the other. I-real and I-ideal are estimated in value space of resoluteness and responsiveness and I-anti-ideal is regarded in value space indifferent and indecision. Third, the opposition between two groups of film heroes is shown – Lena, Dima and Vasiliev (quadrant II) in one cluster and Mironova, Shmakova, Petka, Valka in the other (quadrant IV). Two clusters differ by values – responsiveness and indecision for one group and indifference and resoluteness for the other.

The analysis shows the identification model when the identification between adolescent and main positive hero of the film takes place. Lena – the main positive hero of the film was the victim of group bullying in school and resisted to aggression. We define the following important facts. First, there is a vivid opposition of I-ideal and I-anti-ideal that are situated in quadrant I and III respectively. That opposition is similar to space determination of I-ideal and I-anti-ideal for boys. The opposition of I-ideal (resoluteness and responsiveness) and I-anti-ideal (indifferent and indecision) can be regarded as cultural invariant that describe values position of modern adolescents. Second, the esteem of hero Dima correlates with both I-anti-ideal before and after the film review. Dima is one of the most important film heroes – he embodied the hope to stop the bullying but didn’t pulled it up and signed up for the majority. As the result he becomes the most disappointing hero. Third, the I-real esteem changes due to the influence of film review. The I-real moves towards the esteem of Lena (main positive hero). The role of responsiveness from factor F1 increases. The factor F1 is the most important in semantic space for girls. That let us conclude that girls begin to identify themselves with the hero.

When complicated process of value transformation takes place, important transformations in structure of self-identity happen. Firstly, the anti-ideal moves to quadrant III where are significant negative value on factor F1 (Indecision) and factor F3 (Prudence). It is worth to be mentioned that the characteristics of Dima (main negative hero) are based in values of quadrant III. In reviews to the film he was regarded as beautiful boy with coward heart, traditional boy with good traits but not stable and firm, accurate and attractive but weak and unreliable. We can make the conclusion that negative film hero defines specific vector of anti-ideal value transformations. Secondly, I-real moves from quadrant II (resoluteness-prudence) to quadrant I (resoluteness-immediacy). That transformation happens due to changes in axis factor III that correlates with value of Lena (main positive hero of the film, victim of the bullying). We conclude that transformation of adolescent’s I-real aroused by tendency to identification with main positive hero. Thirdly, the transformation of I-real after film review to quadrant I is connected with value conflict between I-real and I-ideal. I-ideal remains in the same value zone before and after the film review (quadrant II (resoluteness-prudence) where the most heroes of the film are situated. But value zone of main positive hero Lena is contrasted to that group. She is situated in quadrant IV (immediacy-indifference). In review to the film she was regarded as girl with naïve open eyes, simple and guileless, knight with open heart [сынка]. As the result the value conflict for adolescents happens - changes in I-real are not supported by changes in I-ideal. Identification model arouses conflict between immediacy and prudence. Fourthly, I-real after the film review moves to such values as immediacy, emotionality and naivety.

6. Discussion
Three identification models of spectator and film heroes can be defined. The first one shows the aloof position to conflicts and content of the movie when heroes relations are regarded as stranger life. Second identification model is characterized by overlap of self-identity values with content of the main film conflict. The movie is regarded as my life, positive and negative heroes correlates with adolescent’s ideal and anti-ideal. The third identification model shows the values transformation of self-identity when relations between I-ideal and I-anti-ideal changes.

References