



# Psychology Features of Child-Parent Interaction of Foster Mothers with Foster Children

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## Abstract

The article is devoted to identifying the features of child-parent interaction between foster mothers and foster children. Self-perception of foster mothers becomes a kind of indicators in the regulation of child-parental relations. The article presents the results of a study, the purpose of which was to determine the relationship of social-perceptual images in the minds of foster mothers with their type of child-parent interaction. The study identified both specific and typical features of child-parent interaction in foster families. Maternal interaction with a foster child is built on the basis of her own ideas about herself.

**Keywords:** Child-Parent Interaction; Socio-Perceptual Images; Self-Perception; Perception Of Another; Foster Mothers; Foster Children

## Introduction

It is known that the parent-child relationship develops in an absolutely different way, unlike other kinds of interpersonal communication, since it is closer, emotionally rich and begins from the first days of life. The essence of the concept of "child-parent or parent-child relations" is not unequivocally defined in the psychological literature. Probably it is connected with that, firstly, such relations are a substructure of family relations which include interconnected, but unequal relations: parental attitude to the child, the child's attitude to parents [1]; secondly, such relations are considered as mutual influence, active interaction of the parent and the child in which social and psychological regularities of interpersonal relations are brightly shown [2].

There are also some methodological difficulties associated with the definiteness of these concepts. It should

be noted that many researchers, mostly foreign, without giving operational definitions, often use "interaction", "attitude", "communication" as synonymous [3-6]. However, in the history of Russian and Belarusian psychology, the correlation of these categories has often been the subject of scientific debate. For example, important questions were solved concerning the influence of this or that behavior, personal qualities, parental attitudes on the formation of the child as a personality or on the occurrence of deviations and disorders in development, the types of improper child rearing in the family were determined, the role of the adult in the formation of the child's personality was studied in the traditions of the cultural-historical approach of L.S. Vygotsky, as well as in the works of followers of his ideas [5].

At the same time, many aspects of interaction between parents and children remain unstudied, which was once pointed out by Markovskaya IM [5]. She believed that socio-psychological research devoted to the issues of interaction,

relations and communication can contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of this problem [5]. Sharing the scientist's position, we believe that at the present stage in the field of social psychology there is an insufficient amount of research aimed at studying the social-perceptual reflection of adoptive mothers and the connections of such reflection with child-parent interaction.

## Purpose

Determination of the relationship between the social-perceptual images of foster mothers and the type of their parent-child interaction. We hypothesize that foster mothers' self-perception become peculiar indicators in the regulation of parent-child relationships. Hence, the hypothesis was formulated that there is a statistical correlation between the structure of foster mothers' self-perception and their interaction with their foster children.

## Materials and Methods

The works of foreign, Russian and Belarusian scientists

concerning the problem of socio-perceptive images served as the material. Theoretical and empirical methods were used for realization of the objective. The research involved 36 people aged from 29 to 66 years ( $M=49.08$ ;  $SD=0.70$ ). To achieve the goal, we used the method "Structure of the image of a person (hierarchical)" developed by Sitnikov VL, et al. [7-9]. The questionnaire "Questionnaire of interaction between parents and children" by Markovskaya IM [5]. Methods of mathematical statistics: ranking method, descriptive statistics, Spearman correlation analysis. Statistical processing was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 for Windows. Correlational design was used in the study.

## Results

Based on the results of the primary analysis using the "Questionnaire of interaction between parents and children" method, ascending, descending, and uncertain values on the scales of the methodology used were determined. Absolute and relative frequency calculations are presented in Table 1.

Scales VRR	Increase values		Decrease values		Uncertainty values	
	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Demanding	17	47%	16	44%	3	8%
Strictness	16	44%	12	33%	8	22%
Control	24	67%	11	31%	1	3%
Closeness	28	78%	6	17%	2	6%
Acceptance	32	89%	4	11%	0	0%
Cooperation	27	75%	6	17%	3	8%
Consent	18	50%	9	25%	9	25%
Sequence	31	86%	4	11%	1	3%
Authority	23	64%	12	33%	1	3%
Satisfaction	27	75%	6	17%	3	8%
$\Sigma$	243	–	86	–	31	–

**Table 1:** Results of absolute and relative frequency measures on the questionnaire "Questionnaire of interaction between parents and children" scales (N=36).

In the sample under study, the frequency of increasing values is present in almost all scales. The predominant scales in the frequency of increased values are: "Acceptance", "Sequence", "Closeness", "Cooperation", "Satisfaction". At the opposite pole – the indicators of lower values in descending order on the following scales: "Strictness", "Demanding", "Authority", "Consent", "Control".

The next step in our work was to determine the relationships between the structural measures of adoptive

mothers' self-perception and the measures of their parenting interactions. Using Spearman's criterion, 9 correlations were identified; of which 1 correlation was positive and 8 correlations were negative. A positive correlation exists between Metaphorical and Cooperation ( $r=0,359$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ). Negative correlations are determined by Conventional and Closeness ( $r=-0,370$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Social intelligence and Consent ( $r=-0,401$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Social intelligence and Sequence ( $r=-0,409$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Conventional and Sequence ( $r=-0,435$ ,  $p\leq 0,01$ ), Ambivalent and Sequence ( $r=-0,356$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Social

intelligence and Authority ( $r=-0,386$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Positive and Authority ( $r=-0,409$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Intellectual and Satisfaction ( $r=-0,346$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ).

The results of the correlations between self-image variables and parental interaction were tested using Cramer's V criterion in order to determine the strength of the correlations between the traits under study. Thus, 9 correlations were confirmed, of which weak-3 correlations (1-positive, 2-negative), medium-1 negative correlation, relatively strong-1 negative correlation, strong-2 negative correlations, very strong-2 negative correlations.

The next step in our work was to establish relationships between the structure of the adoptive child's (perception of another) and the type of parental interaction. Using Spearman's criterion, 6 correlations were found, including 1 positive correlation and 5 negative correlations. A positive correlation exists between Volitional and Consent ( $r=0,339$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ). Negative correlations are determined by Social intelligence and Strictness ( $r=-0,336$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Corporal and Cooperation ( $r=-0,365$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Conventional and Consent ( $r=-0,362$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ), Conventional and Satisfaction ( $r=-0,506$ ,  $p\leq 0,01$ ), Negative and Satisfaction ( $r=-0,351$ ,  $p\leq 0,05$ ).

The results obtained on the presence of correlations between the perception of another (foster children) variables and parental interaction were tested using Cramer's V criterion to determine the strength of the correlations between the traits under study. Thus, 5 correlations were confirmed, of which weak-1 negative correlation, medium-2 negative correlations, relatively strong-1 positive correlation, and strong-1 negative correlation.

## Results

A negative correlation of medium strength is noted between the authority of the parent and social intelligence. We hypothesize that such a correlation is possible when the mother herself believes that with a decrease in her authority as a parent, a more attentive attitude toward her child, a desire to understand his actions and actions, the characteristics of his speech, and the characteristics of his nonverbal behavior may help her in communicating with her child. With emergence of confidence in the parental position, with emergence of the feeling of understanding of the child's problems, the force of parental influence on him or her decreases. This feature can be typical for parents whose children have entered a phase of adolescence. It is in communication with teenagers that parents often have a sense of loss of authority, which manifests itself in the reflection of parental I-esteem.

Authoritativeness also has a relatively strong negative

correlation with the positive characteristics of foster mothers' self-perception. In our opinion, such a relationship is possible because as the strength of influence on the child decreases, the mothers' self-esteem increases, and as such strength increases, the parents' self-esteem decreases. It is possible that these features are associated with traditional family roles, where the role of the father is perceived as a guarantor of authority, and the role of the mother is to care and love [10].

A strong negative relationship is determined between satisfaction and the intellectual characteristic of mothers' self-perception. Probably, this feature can be considered that with a decrease of satisfaction in the relationship with the child there can be an increase of concern about the developing relationship and on this basis a need to overcome a stressful situation. Often, the cognitive component of consciousness is activated in order to overcome the arisen tension. Accordingly, in a situation of dissatisfaction with the relationship with the child, the mother's intellectual abilities to overcome the situation increase. Conversely, in a situation of relationship satisfaction, the intellectual component is not activated due to the absence of a situation of frustration and tension.

A strong negative relationship between consistency and neutral characteristics of adoptive mothers' self-perception is also found. In the situation of consistency and consistency of their actions, the number of neutral characteristics in the self-perception of adoptive mothers decreases, and not only neutral, but the number of conventional, conventional ones also decreases. In our sample a very strong negative correlation was also determined with them. It is possible that the consistency of the mother, her consistency in her requirements will promote a decrease in the psychological protection of her personality. Indeed, according to Markovskaya IM [5], inconsistency of the parent can be a consequence of emotional unbalance, educational insecurity, rejectionist attitude to the child [5].

Another very strong negative relationship was revealed between intimacy and conventional characteristics of self-perception of adoptive mothers. It is possible that an increase in the parent's perceptions of the child's emotional closeness will contribute to a decrease in the conventional characteristics in the adoptive mothers' self-perception, and conversely, as emotional closeness decreases, the conventional, conventional characteristics in the adoptive mothers' self-perception will increase.

Regarding the obtained correlations we should note one: between satisfaction and conventional characteristic of perception of another, by the strength of the correlation it is a medium negative correlation. In our opinion, as

satisfaction with the relationship with the child increases, the use of conventional characteristics in relation to the child decreases. With increasing satisfaction in the relationship with the child, his or her image becomes more differentiated and concrete. Moreover, as satisfaction increases, the number of negative characteristics in the child's perception of another decreases.

One relatively strong positive correlation was established - between consent and the volitional characteristic of the child's perception of the other. It is likely that this peculiarity is related to the fact that foster mothers believe that with an increase in volitional effort it is possible to come to agreement in the relationship with the children. And such effort, in their opinion, should be made by the child. In our opinion, it is most likely a reflection of how the mother herself would act if she were in the place of the child in a situation of communication with a mother similar to herself.

Another strong negative correlation was established between control and social intelligence. Most likely, inadequate control (both in the variant of petty patronage and in the variant of permissiveness) would contribute to a decrease in the success of communication and social adaptation, which are at the heart of social intelligence.

## Conclusion

Based on the results it is possible to conclude. Parental interaction is determined more by foster mothers' self-perception than by their perceptions of their foster children. Both specific and typical features are identified in the links of parental interaction with the images under study. The specific features determined in self-perception will include metaphorical and intellectual structural characteristics, which we refer to the cognitive component of self-consciousness, to the specific features in perception of another-volitional characteristics, which we refer to the regulatory component of self-consciousness. Also important to note the specific modal characteristics that stood out in determining the strength of the relationship. In self-perception, these are positive and neutral characteristics, while in self-perception they are negative. Conventional characteristics and social intelligence are typical, recurring in the correlations. The most typical parental response in relation to the foster child will be interaction in such variants as cooperation, agreement and satisfaction.

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