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## Influence of gender stereotypes on the socialization of the children of older preschool age

### Вплив гендерних стереотипів на соціалізацію дітей старшого дошкільного віку

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
#### Abstract


Within the framework of the theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical sources, the content and essence of the concepts “gender”, “gender socialization”, “gender sociability”, “gender stereotypes” were clarified and pedagogical conditions, namely: organization of an effective subject-playing area of the group for meaningful enriching the experience of gender communication in the children’s team; stimulation of the interaction of different gender subjects in a single social-and-developmental educational environment of a preschool educational institution; presence of positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group as a factor in the formation of a child’s gender competence were determined. It was proven that their implementation was ensured


#### Анотація


У межах теоретичного аналізу психолого-педагогічних джерел уточнено зміст і сутність понять «гендер», «гендерна соціалізація», «гендерна комунікативність», «гендерні стереотипи» та визначено педагогічні умови, а саме організація ефективного предметно-ігрового простору групи для змістовного збагачення досвіду гендерного спілкування в дитячому колективі; стимулювання взаємодії суб’єктів різної статі в єдиному соціально-розвивальному освітньому середовищі закладу дошкільної освіти; наявність позитивних стимулів до взаємодії в різностатевій групі як чинника формування гендерної компетентності дитини. Доведено, що їх реалізація забезпечувалася шляхом оптимального поєднання ефективних форм і методів роботи з

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through an optimal combination of effective forms and methods of working with children of older preschool age, aimed at the formation of gender socialization, culture of relationships with peers of the same and opposite gender, a tolerant attitude towards them, and ability to establish friendly partner relationships. Specified pedagogical conditions were implemented at three successive stages: cognitive-oriented, organizational-targeted, activity-directive, using the following forms and methods of work as: a series of games, exercises, conversations, communication, work in nature, method of problem situations aimed at raising children's awareness of gender roles.

**Keywords:** gender, gender stereotypes, gender socialization, gender sociability, socialization, children of senior preschool age.

## Introduction

At the current stage of the development of Ukrainian society, there are changes in the content of theoretical and methodological, and practical approaches in the field of education, in particular, process of children socialization is carried out taking into account the gender characteristics of the personality. Currently, gender issues are constantly in the center of attention of the European Community. This aspect becomes especially relevant in connection with Ukraine gaining the official status of a member of the "Biarritz Partnership" – an international initiative of equal rights and opportunities for all. Within the framework of this project, Ukraine has identified priority areas of activity aimed at ensuring comprehensive integration of the principles of gender equality in education.

In Ukraine, the problem of gender formation of a child's personality is reflected in the following regulatory and legal documents: the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine No. 254к/96-ВР, 1996), regulatory and legal acts of Ukraine: "On Education" (Law of Ukraine No. 2145-VIII, 2017), "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Men and Women" (Law of Ukraine No. 2866-IV, 2005), "On Preschool Education" (Law of Ukraine No. 2628-III 2001), "National Doctrine of Education Development" (Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 347/2002, 2002), "Basic Component of Preschool Education (State Standard of Preschool Education), New Edition" (Order No. 33, 2021). Unfortunately, the state gender policy is characterized by contradictions,

дітьми старшого дошкільного віку, спрямованих на формування гендерної соціалізації, культури взаємин з однолітками своєї та протилежної статі, толерантного ставлення до них, уміння встановлювати доброзичливі партнерські стосунки. Визначені педагогічні умови реалізовувалися на трьох послідовних етапах: когнітивно-орієнтовному, організаційно-цільовому, діяльнісно-директивному, з використанням таких форм і методів роботи, як: серія ігор, вправ, бесід, спілкування, праця в природі, метод проблемних ситуацій, спрямованих на підвищення рівня усвідомлення дітьми гендерних ролей.

**Ключові слова:** гендер, гендерні стереотипи, гендерна соціалізація, гендерна комунікабельність, соціалізація, діти старшого дошкільного віку.

diversity, dynamism and often stereotypes, which leads to negative consequences for the formation of gender culture in the future generation. Currently, there are virtually no scientifically based mechanisms for overcoming gender stereotypes and effective measures aimed at the effective socialization of older preschool children.

Formation of gender stereotypes of a personality is connected with two interrelated processes: children's awareness of gender identity (the ability to associate themselves with a certain gender based on primary self-awareness and the development of cognitive processes) and mastering the basics of gender identity (children's understanding of male and female roles). It is gender stereotypes that are the basis of socialization, as they help to keep existing gender roles, norms of behavior accepted in society. The presence of signs of gender stereotyping during older preschool childhood indicates the sensitivity of this age stage in their formation.

Overall, the formation of gender identity in preschool children is a complex process influenced by a combination of social, cultural, biological, and personal factors. It's important to create an environment where children can freely express their identity and interests, regardless of gender stereotypes. Encouraging gender equality and allowing children to explore a wide range of activities and interests can support healthy gender development.

However, in the modern conditions of the society development, preschool educational institutions usually continue to reproduce the standards of traditional culture in matters of gender formation, which contributes to the formation of stereotypes of the self-perception of a preschooler's personality by gender characteristics. By their essence, gender stereotypes are a type of stable, emotionally saturated social stereotypes, which the generally accepted idea of "male" and "female" roles in public life is fixed. At the same time, gender stereotypes have a negative effect on self-realization of the personality, acting as a kind of barrier in the realization of the person's individuality.

This study clarifies and characterizes the essence of the concepts of "gender socialization" and "gender stereotypes" and identifies pedagogical conditions, forms and methods of forming gender roles in preschool children based on the application of the gender approach.

### Literature review

The main purpose of the modern education system in Ukraine and abroad is to create conditions for the development and self-realization of each personality (Vasylenko et al., 2022).

The studies of scientists note that the assimilation of civilized traditions of life in Ukraine, as well as its integration into the European community are impossible without harmonization of social relations based on gender socialization. Education as one of the most important social institutions capable of integrating the gender approach into the educational process of educational institutions and laying bases for the formation of a social gender culture plays a significant role in the transformation of the system of gender relations (Rogošic et al., 2020).

In modern scientific studies (Cerbara, et al., 2022), it is proposed to implement a gender approach that will ensure overcoming gender stereotypes, provide an expansion of living space for the development of individual abilities, promote in the implementation of gender equality of children, stimulate gender tolerance and orientation to partnership, interchangeability in the performance of future family and social roles. It is one of the methodological bases that requires changing a traditional vector of educational technologies under the motto "We are different – we are equal".

The gender approach is aimed at creating comfortable conditions for gender identification and effective socialization of the personality (Skočajić et al., 2020).

The problem of gender stereotypes, in particular, its philosophical, social-and-psychological and pedagogical aspects are very popular among modern researchers, in general, they agree that gender stereotypes reflect a system of ideas and values concerning the understanding of the relationship between a man and a woman, as well as the change and historical path of their formation (Govorun et al., 2013).

At the beginning of the 20th century, one of the first researchers who turned to the study of the process of assimilation of gender stereotypes by children was M. Mead (1928), the American anthropologist. Scientist came to the conclusion that ideas about masculinity and femininity were not innate, they were formed by society in the process of a personality socialization. Gender stereotypes were connected with existing social stereotypes: girls were expected to develop traditionally female self-identities, boys – male ones. From the very beginning of the society development, the process of children socialization has been stereotyped according to gender characteristics. Gender stereotypes determined by culture are simplified, stable, emotionally colored images of behavior, character traits of men and women (Erikson, 1993).

To fully understand the essence of the raised problem, we will reveal the content of the concepts: "gender", "gender socialization", "gender sociability", "gender stereotypes".

It should be stopped at the analysis of the concept of "gender". Therefore, gender (from English *Gender* – genus, sex) is defined as a social-and-psychological characteristic that distinguishes a person's gender – "man" or "woman" (Secheiko, 1999, p. 25). The concept of "gender" means sex as a social phenomenon, like all that social that is formed over the biological sex.

Another concept of our research is "gender socialization", which we consider as the process and result of the general and psychosexual development of a girl/boy in accordance with the age-related features of growing up, determined by specific social conditions; as a process of personality development, individuality of a girl/boy in real life activities, which is carried out

in the system of relationships with adults, peers of the same and opposite sex, and oneself.

According to V. Tkalych (2011), gender socialization of a child is a process of reproduction of the social-and-cultural component of masculinity and femininity, which is carried out with the help of imitation and transformation of values, norms, attitudes, gender models of individuals behavior, social groups and a specific society and provides the essence and factors of the personality socialization.

Therefore, gender socialization of a personality is the process of assimilation of social norms, rules, behavior characteristics, attitudes in accordance with ideas about the gender role, its formation and purpose.

The following functions can be identified in the personality gender socialization: social adaptation, which means standardization of speech, gestures characteristic of the representatives of a certain gender, perception of gender stereotypes, values, meanings, symbols and inculturation – assimilation of the traditions of the gender culture of society with the aim of passing them on to the next generation; internalization of a personality, which includes the development of a specific hierarchy of motives, values, interests, formation of gender identity, correspondence between mental gender and gender role (Moskalenko, 2008, p. 325).

Therefore, the essence of gender socialization consists in mastering gender behavior by a child, forming a positive attitude towards oneself as a representative of a certain gender and ideas about gender norms of relationships between people of different genders.

The result of the gender socialization process is gender sociability of older preschool children, the level of which was determined in our research. It is characterized by children's assimilation of ideas about the norms of relations between different genders in society, formation of a positive gender Self-image, ability to keep the norms of gender behavior among peers and adults.

It is gender stereotypes that are the basis of socialization, as they help to keep the existence of gender roles, norms, models of personality behavior and thinking accepted in society (Burns, 1982).

Therefore, gender stereotypes have high durability, are rooted in a personality consciousness for a long time, and are reproduced by new generations in the process of socialization. To a large extent, they act as a magnifying glass, emphasizing more strongly the differences between genders, which inhibit the development of personality traits that do not correspond to stereotypes.

Sociological, psychological and philosophical studies of gender are not accurately reflected in the new educational paradigm, teachers are not sufficiently informed about current studies in this field. Therefore, there is a need to use experience, scientific-and-methodical, psychological-and-pedagogical works of the countries that have achievements in implementing a gender component in the life of educational institutions.

Let's take a closer look at the preconditions for applying a gender approach to the educational process. Researcher Petrenko (2010) singled in the educational process, most methods and technologies are oriented towards the education of an impersonal average personality; a unified approach causes disharmony in intergender relations, which leads to stereotyping and limitation of interpersonal relationships between boys and girls.

Gender approach as a new methodological tool of analysis is substantiated by a modern researcher O. Petrenko as "a new methodological tool for the inclusion of a personality in the existing gender distribution in the country and society through the construction of education and upbringing" (Govorun et al., 2013, p. 73). An important means of applying a gender approach is the organization of joint activities of representatives of different genders to enrich the experience of interpersonal communication (common classes, organization of leisure time, experimental research activities, organization of mutual assistance, common game activities) (Govorun et al., 2013, p. 15).

Gender approach in education as a mechanism for achieving gender equality and establishing equal opportunities for the self-realization of each personality involves: orientation towards the neutralization and mitigation of the difference between genders, gender stereotypes; consideration of social-and-gender differences; lack of orientation to the "special purpose" of a man or a woman; encouraging types of activities that correspond to the interests of a personality, education in the spirit of free choice of gender identity, encouraging types of activities that

correspond to the interests of a personality, the possibility of withdrawal from traditional patriarchal models of society building.

Within the framework of a gender approach, the change in values, orientation towards the egalitarian nature of gender roles, which ensures their universalization and interchangeability, acquires special importance (Govorun et al., 2013, p. 8).

### **The aim of the research**

The purpose of the article is to highlight and experimentally verify, based on a theoretical analysis, the problem of researching the efficiency of forms and methods of forming gender sociability of older preschool children in the educational process of a preschool educational institution.

### **Methodology**

In accordance with the purpose, the following research methods were used: 1. Analysis and synthesis of scientific sources on the problem of the studied topic, used to clarify the purpose of the research, to define the essence of the key concepts of the process of forming gender sociability of older preschool children in the educational process of a preschool educational institution. 2. Study of the coordination of pedagogical experience in order to identify the state of formation of gender sociability of older preschool children in the educational process of a preschool educational institution and the efficiency of the application of selected forms and methods of work at a formative stage of the experiment. 3. Observation of children's activities in the conditions of gender interaction and communication. 4. Pedagogical experiment to determine the efficiency of implementation of selected pedagogical conditions.

For the process of research and experimental work, children of older preschool age with normal development who attend preschool education institutions were selected, namely: a preschool educational No. 12 nursery-kindergarten of a combined type of Uman City Council, a preschool educational institution No. 25 nursery-kindergarten of a combined type of Uman City Council, Uman Primary School No. 1 of Uman City Council, preschool educational institution No. 34 nursery-kindergarten of a combined type of Uman City Council. 180 children of older preschool age from the preschool educational institutions took part in the

experimental work, and they were united into experimental groups (90 respondents each).

The instruments of data collection in our study were a psychological and pedagogical experiment (stating, formative, control stages), which used the following methods: observation, survey, recording of information, statistical processing of the results.

In accordance with the analysis of the theoretical foundations of socialization, generalized data on the specifics of the influence of gender stereotypes on this process, in the ascertainment phase of the experiment, criteria (cognitive, emotional-and-value, activity-based), indicators were developed and levels (sufficient, medium, low) of gender sociability of a personality in older preschool childhood were characterized.

In the ascertainment phase of the experiment, the following methods were used: conversations, didactic games, analysis of activity products, verbal associative experiment, work with a fairy tale, observations with preschoolers and questionnaire of parents and preschool teachers. Obtained results showed that the majority of older preschoolers were at medium and low levels of gender sociability. The low level of awareness of preschool teachers and parents on the issues of the formation of gender socialization of older preschoolers and the significant influence of gender stereotypes formed in them was among the reasons that slowed down the process of personality socialization in the conditions of the educational process of a preschool educational institution. Therefore, there is a need for the development of various forms, methods and pedagogical conditions for the application of a gender approach in working with the children of older preschool age and purposeful introduction of preschool teachers and parents to the principles of gender socialization.

The formative phase of the experimental research was conducted in three stages: cognitive-oriented, organizational-targeted, activity-directive. During the experimental work, the following factors were taken into account: age characteristics of older preschool children, their social experience, specifics of the educational process of preschool educational institutions.

Student's t-test (t-statistic) and appropriate calculations to check the reliability and statistical validity of significant changes in the levels of

gender socialization formation of older preschool children were used.

Experimental work with the children in the formative phase of the experiment was based on the assumption that socialization was carried out by the personality's assimilation of ideas about the norms of gender relations, formed positive emotional and value attitudes towards themselves and representatives of different gender, accumulation of practical experience of partner gender relations based on the application of a gender approach.

We focused attention on the importance of pedagogical conditions that were implemented in all phases of experimental work and ensured an optimal combination of the following methods and forms of organization of the educational process: group and individual activity on moral education, games-competitions, game exercises, talks, conversations, practice in situations of success, situations causing different emotions and feelings, exercises for the development of the ability to listen to others, modeling the ways to express feelings, didactic games, collective stories, demonstration of verbal means of expressing signs of sympathy for the children of the group, introduction of motives for social encouragement of common activities, method of comparison, modeling and forecasting life-significant situations, walks, use of children's artistic and literary creativity in organized and free activities, game design, methods of problem situations and playing them in role-playing games, etc.

The authors of the article followed certain ethical rules. First of all, before conducting the experiment, all ethical requirements were taken into account and consent from the participants of the experiment (preschool teachers, parents of preschool children) who were informed about the purpose and objectives of the experiment was obtained.

## Results and discussion

Appropriate pedagogical conditions of the research based on the justification of the theoretical base were determined. They were aimed at increasing the efficiency of step-by-step methodology for the formation of gender competence of older preschoolers in the context of the application of person-oriented and gender-based approaches. They included such components as: organization of an effective subject-playing area of the group for meaningful enriching the experience of gender

communication in the children's team; stimulation of the interaction of different gender subjects in a single social-and-developmental educational environment of a preschool educational institution; presence of positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group as a factor in the formation of a child's gender competence. It was proved that only the comprehensive provision of these pedagogical conditions could contribute to solving the problem of the formation of gender sociability with the use of selected and experimentally verified research methods.

*The first pedagogical condition – organization of an effective subject-playing area of the group for meaningful enriching the experience of gender communication in the children's team* required the presence of a large playing space: equipment and materials for playing, thematic toys, various attributes and multimedia tools. All toys, materials, attributes, and substitute items were combined according to the functional characteristics in accordance with various types of children's subject-playing activities (thematically-reflective, building, motor, etc.). Most didactic materials, toys and pictures were multifunctional, that is, they were used in different ways, depending on the purpose of the activity.

Properly organized subject-playing area contributed to the child's gender socialization, affected all aspects of his/her development and was a source of enrichment of children's activities. Within the organized area, preschool teachers stimulated children's self-regulation (for example, they encouraged girls to play sports, and boys to self-care); organized tasks for boys and girls in common activities; removed traditional cultural prohibitions on boys' emotional self-expression, encouraged them to express their feelings; created conditions for training intergender sensitivity (for example, through theatrical activities, trainings).

*The next pedagogical condition – stimulation of the interaction of different gender subjects in a single social-and-developmental educational environment of a preschool educational institution* involved interpersonal interaction in common activities, which contained significant reserves, namely: mutual influence of the children of different gender, mutual assistance, training of a different gender group. Cross-gender interaction of children was especially valuable because it allowed a preschool teacher to use it as a factor of mutual learning. In common activities, in games, purposeful

formation of speech took place, new forms of communication were formed, and such an important quality of behavior as ease of communication developed, a mechanism of self-evaluation and self-control was formed. It should be noted that the formation of gender competence in older preschool children was effective under the condition of organizing common types of activity in homogeneous and heterogeneous groups. Organization of a comfortable effective educational space made it possible to form children's ability to find a common language, achieve harmonious understanding, tolerant attitude towards each other, formed creative individuality and creative abilities of children, and also had a positive effect on their psycho-emotional state.

*The third pedagogical condition included the presence of positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group as a factor in the formation of child's gender sociability.*

This condition provided the formation in children the ability to coordinate their actions with other children, to carry out self-regulation, self-control of behavior, acts and actions and their consequences for others, to distinguish socially acceptable behavior from antisocial one, to overcome feelings of alienation and aggression, to remove protective barriers, to form an emotional feedback leading to overcoming lack of self-confidence, mastering the skills of supporting each other, the desire to see peers as friends and game partners.

In various types of activities, the children realized their knowledge about cultural standards of behavior, acquired the skills of establishing partner, friendly relationships with peers (ability to agree, understand other's point of view, come to help, rejoice at other's success (male-friend, female-friend), take good care of the results of someone else's work).

A preschool teacher's task was to use positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group, to build a bridge that would help unite children, their desires, and aspirations for mixed-gender interaction.

Within the defined pedagogical interaction, the children acquired the ability to empathize, sympathize, help others, choose appropriate ways of communication in various life situations, interact effectively with each other, take an active part in mastering certain gender roles, norms and functions.

As a result of performing the tasks, the children came to the conclusion that each child had his/her own interests, thoughts, desires, and abilities, which were manifested regardless of gender. In the process of implementing the specified pedagogical conditions, the children developed the ability to coordinate their actions with other children, to form the skills of self-regulation, self-control of behavior, acts and actions and their consequences for others. The children learned to feel unity with others, to notice the positive qualities of others, to rejoice in the successes of others and to express this joy in words.

The purpose of the first – cognitive-oriented – stage was to form children's interest in mixed-gender interaction, to make children aware of gender roles and gender identification. The tasks of the stage were: enrichment of the emotional and sensory sphere of children; formation of a sense of belonging to a gender, showing emotional and sensory unity with children regardless of gender; fostering interest in children and social-and-emotional need for communication with peers. At this stage, the first pedagogical condition was implemented: *organization of an effective subject-playing area of the group for meaningful enriching the experience of gender communication in the children's team.* The content line of the implementation of the tasks of the first stage, aimed at making the child aware of his/her own emotions and feelings, stimulating interest in the children of the group and the need to communicate with them, included: games-exercises, conversations, games-competitions, practice in situations of success, situations causing different emotions and feelings, exercises for the development of the ability to listen to others, modeling the ways to express feelings, didactic games, collective stories.

In particular, the following didactic games were used: to demonstrate verbal means of expressing signs of sympathy for the children of the group ("We are all so different, but equal", "Find a pair", "Captain of the ship", "Pass the movement", "Hello", "Who lives in a fairy-tale house?", "Mirror", "Picture for a birthday child"); for the purpose of forming in children the idea of themselves as a representative of a certain gender, a positive attitude towards themselves: "Who am I?", "What do I want to be", "Who are we talking about", "Dress correctly", "What - for what?", "What do girls like, and what do boys like"; discourses on the topics: "What errands are performed by girls and what - by boys", "What is

good and what is bad?"; excursions to production facilities; "Who can become who", "Boys and girls – masters of all trades", "Girls are future mothers, boys are future fathers".

The following common classes were held with children: "What professions are there for the brave", "Protection and compassion – the qualities of a man and a woman", "Boy and girl behavior", "Good – bad", didactic games: "He and she are like naughty", "Describe a portrait of a girl or a boy", "A boy and a girl are so different and so similar", "How to act properly", "A boy and a girl are a future family", "Listen and find", "Boys and girls are similar to themselves".

Game-competitions stimulating cognitive activity were used: "Name a brave profession", "Describe a portrait of a girl (boy) in words", "Who will convey the character of the hero (heroine) of a famous work?", "Who composes a short story about a boy (girl, mother, father, grandmother, grandfather) with the following words (cheerful, mischievous, funny, hero, brave, winner, gentleman, etc.)".

During conducting classes and games, we paid attention to the fact that often character traits and behavioral characteristics did not depend on the child's gender, but only on what actions parents, educators, friends expected from him/her, what they praise and what they berate for. These methods and forms of work made it possible to implement the tasks of the first stage. In particular, the use of multimedia and interactive methods allowed children to form an idea of modern gender roles. After all, the conditions of gender socialization require girls to show not only traditionally feminine qualities (softness, femininity), but also determination, initiative, the ability to defend their own interests and achieve results, and boys – tolerance, sensitivity, and the ability to come to help. In the process of interaction, the preschool teachers encouraged the children to evaluate the features of the gender behavior of the fairy tales and cartoons heroes from the point of view of the use of gender stereotypes.

The purpose of the second – organizational-targeted – stage was the formation of children's abilities to build constructive gender relations and harmonious relationships (to initiate help, sympathy, emotional support, to do good useless deeds). The tasks of this stage included: formation of socially-oriented motives for the common activities of children of different gender; directing children to achieve positive results in common activities; ability to establish

positive relationships between children of a different gender group. During the second stage, the second pedagogical condition was implemented: *stimulation of the interaction of different gender subjects in a single social-and-developmental educational environment of a preschool educational institution*. A number of various methods and forms of work was the substantial aspect of the implementation of the tasks at this stage: game exercises, developmental games, problem situations, common collective creativity, errands, entertainment, organization of children's practical experience, introduction of motives for social encouragement of common activity, self-service, work in nature, visual activities, sports games, "rukhanky" (exercises) which contributed to assimilation of gender behavior and culture of relations with peers of the same and opposite gender, tolerant attitude towards them, ability to establish friendly partner relations.

The following game situations: "Scene with toys – a ready-made solution", "Native, familiar, stranger", "Why did people come up with rules?", "We teach our friends that things we can do well ourselves", "Builder", "Mosaic", "Broken phone" and others were among them. Indirect methods of guidance (leading questions, prompts, preliminary positive evaluations), methods of setting up for success in achieving positive results, elements of psychological training, methods of organizing activities, analysis of various types of situations that arose spontaneously or were created by a preschool teacher were also used.

In the course of role-playing games, game situations like "My family", "Airport", "Moving to a new flat", "We are waiting for the guests", "Toy store", "Children are sick", "Birthday celebration" and real life activities, children implemented their knowledge about cultural standards of behavior, acquired the skills of establishing partner, friendly relationships with peers (ability to agree, understand other's point of view, come to help, rejoice at other's success (male-friend, female-friend), take good care of the results of someone else's work).

The example of equality of requirements for girls and boys was sports games and exercises. For example, a preschool teacher could offer to play "kozaky-rozbiinyky" (Cossacks-bandits), which both boys and girls want to play, learning about the world. Children were convinced that there were no types of occupations or professions that would be suitable only for the representatives of



a certain gender. It is worth studying everything that interests you regardless of gender. For example, both boys and girls learned to make “varenyky” or made bicycles. Children assimilated gender behavior through learning about moral norms of behavior among people. Boys learned to help their parents, to acquire self-care skills, to be sensitive; girls were taught to be brave, independent, be good at technology. Preschool teachers encouraged children to develop universal human traits, such as creativity, independence, confidence, courage, sensitivity, which were valuable traits for individuals of both genders during activities on the development of speech and visual arts.

The third – activity-directive – stage was aimed at the effective introduction of various forms of interaction between preschoolers of different genders in the process of common activities. The tasks of this stage were: education of social behavior in gender relations; mastering constructive actions regulating common activities; training in the ability to find effective forms of cooperation between children in a multi-gender team, development of skills to use moral norms of behavior in accordance with their individual interests, taking into account gender. At this stage, the third pedagogical condition was implemented: *presence of positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group as a factor in the formation of a child's gender position*. The substantive aspect of the work at this stage involved solving problem situations using the following methods: preschool teacher's instruction, encouragement or approval, which stimulated correct behavior of participants in the acting-out situation, and methods: group and individual classes, ethical discussions, exercises, role-playing games, communication with children on various topics, walks, the use of fiction, children's literary creativity, game projecting of problem situations: “Bridge”, “Stairs”, “Cloud”, game exercises “Candle”, “Opposition branch”, “Compliments”, games “Finish the picture”, “Guess”, “Our panel”, “Glove”.

Organizing common games, in particular, with family-related content: “We are waiting for the guests”, “Family vacation outside the city”, “Family holiday”, etc. and dramatization games based on the plots of fairy tales, we created situations in which preschoolers were able to empathize with the experiences of the characters and compare standards of moral behavior in the fairy tale with his/her own behavior. In such games, it was important to overcome the disunity

between boys' and girls' play groups, which usually arose due to differences in their play interests.

In our opinion, in organization of work on gender socialization of preschool children, preschool teachers and parents successfully supplemented the area of self-regulation of the children (for example, they encouraged girls to play sports, and boys – to self-care); organized tasks for boys and girls in common activities; removed traditional cultural prohibitions on boys' emotional self-expression, encouraged them to express their feelings; created conditions for training inter-gender sensitivity (for example, through theatrical activities, trainings).

A special role for the development of gender competence of older preschoolers was given to common events for the pedagogical team of the preschool educational institution, namely the following events were held: lecture “Gender stereotypes in society”; master class “Ways of developing gender identity of senior preschoolers”, “Introducing a gender approach into the educational process of educational institutions”, consultations on the formation of the “Self-concept” of older preschoolers; for parents: individual conversations, consultations, parent meetings, during which educators informed them about the results of identifying children's gender competence, informed about the content, forms and methods that stimulated the development of a child's gender competence.

After the formative experiment, the final cuts were evaluated and analyzed according to the defined criteria and indicators of the control and experimental groups. Quantitative indicators of the experimental groups of older preschoolers proved the positive dynamics of the levels of their gender sociability. The difference in the obtained results in the control and experimental groups was significant and became a consequence of the introduction of a gender approach into the educational process of a preschool educational institution, implemented by preschool teachers and parents and the developed methods and forms of socialization of older preschool children, but not the influence of random factors.

Experimental and control groups with the same number of  $N_e = N_c = 90$  took part in the pedagogical experiment to check gender sociability of older preschool children. According to the results of the conducted research, it was found that 31.1% of older preschoolers achieved a sufficient level of gender sociability (Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*Indicators of the comparative experiment in the experimental group.*

Levels	Start of the experiment	Final of the experiment	Dynamics of changes (+/-)
Sufficient level	10 persons (11.1%)	28 persons (31.1%)	+18 persons (+20.0%)
Medium level	44 persons (48.9%)	44 persons (48.9%)	–
Low level	36 persons (40.0%)	18 persons (20.0%)	–18 persons (–20.0%)

Source: Obtained by the authors.

The number of children with a medium level of gender sociability increased to 48.9%. The number of children with a low level of gender sociability changed significantly (up to 20%). A different situation was observed in the control group (Table 2), in which only 14.5% reached a sufficient level of gender sociability, a medium level was in 52.2% of children. A low level of gender sociability of 33.3% was recorded in a significant number of children. In general, the results of the experimental research confirmed that the implementation of the proposed

pedagogical conditions, selected forms and methods of working with the children of older preschool age contributed to the formation of gender sociability of children of older preschool age. The justification for this conclusion was obtained from the statistical analysis of the sample given in Tables 1 and 2 using the t-statistic, since the volumes of independent samples  $N_e = N_c = 90$  were more than 30 and, therefore, the sample means were normally distributed.

**Table 2.**

*Indicators of the comparative experiment in the control group.*

Levels	Start of the experiment	Final of the experiment	Dynamics of changes (+/-)
Sufficient level	9 persons (10.0%)	13 persons (14.5%)	+4 persons (+4.5%)
Medium level	45 persons (50.0%)	47 persons (52.2%)	+2 persons (+2.2%)
Low level	36 persons (40%)	30 persons (33.3%)	–6 persons (–6.7%)

Source: Obtained by the authors.

For the quantitative analysis of the state of gender sociability levels in the children, each level was referred to a certain (conditional) rating: low – “1”, medium – “2”, high – “3”. For each studied group, the average value of the sociability level in this group was calculated according to the specified three-point rating system and the variance, serving as a measure of the grouping of the experimental data around the average value. Calculation was carried out according to the formulas:

– average value of samples:

$$x_c = \frac{1 \cdot n_1 + 2 \cdot n_2 + 3 \cdot n_3}{n_1 + n_2 + n_3},$$

where  $n_1, n_2, n_3$  are the numbers of children of the studied group referred to low, medium and high levels of success;

– variance:

$$D = \frac{(1 - x_c)^2 \cdot n_1 + (2 - x_c)^2 \cdot n_2 + (3 - x_c)^2 \cdot n_3}{n_1 + n_2 + n_3}.$$

To find out whether the differences in the average values of the levels in the experimental and control groups before and after the formative research and experimental work are significant or random, the values of the t-statistic were calculated:

$$t = \frac{|x_{c,e} - x_{c,c}|}{\sqrt{\frac{D_e}{N_e} + \frac{D_c}{N_c}}},$$

where  $x_{c,e}, x_{c,c}$  are the average values of the levels in the experimental and control groups;  $D_e, D_c$  – their corresponding variances.

Results of the calculations were given in Table 3.

**Table 3.**  
 Indicators of the comparative experiment in the control and experimental groups.

		Control group ( $N_c = 90$ )				Experimental group ( $N_e = 90$ )			
		Beginning cut		Final cut		Beginning cut		Final cut	
Levels	indicators	$n_i$	%	$n_i$	%	$n_i$	%	$n_i$	%
Low	1	36	40.0%	30	33.33%	36	40.0%	18	20.0%
Medium	2	45	50.0%	47	52.22%	44	48.89%	44	48.9%
Sufficient	3	9	10.0%	13	14.44%	10	11.11%	28	31.11%
<b>average value of the level</b>		1.70		1.81		1.71		2.11	
variance		0.410		0.442		0.428		0.499	
t-statistic		$t_{CG-EG,before} = 0.115$		$t_{CG,before-after} = 1.142$		$t_{EG,before-after} = 3.943$		$t_{CG-EG,after} = 4.091$	

Source: Obtained by the authors.

For a 99-percent probability of the significance of the conclusions about the nature of the differences in the average values of the studied levels in the control and experimental groups (or in each of the groups before and after the experiment), the critical value of the t-statistic  $t_{cr}=2,5576$ . Accordingly, the differences of the compared levels were considered random if  $t < t_{cr}$ , or significant if  $t > t_{cr}$ . Analysis of Table 3 showed that the differences in the average values of the levels of the control and experimental groups before the beginning of the experiment (1.70 and 1.71, respectively) were insignificant ( $t_{CG-EG,before} = 0.115 < t_{cr}$ ), which indicated the equivalence of the compared groups. The final cut (after conducting the experiment) showed that the average value of the level in the control group increased insignificantly ( $1.81 > 1.70$ ;  $t_{CG,before-after} = 1.142 < t_{cr}$ ), while in the experimental group  $x_{c,e}$  increased by 23.4% ( $2.11 > 1.71$ ), and this increase was not random ( $t_{EG,before-after} = 3,943 > t_{cr}$ ). This allowed us to affirm the reliability of the conclusion regarding the efficiency of the method of forming gender sociability of older preschool children described in the paper.

### Conclusions

Analysis of the results of theoretical and experimental research showed the prospects for the implementation of the purpose and goals of the research, the dynamics of the results of the efficiency of the used forms and methods of forming gender sociability of the children of older preschool age in the educational process of a preschool educational institution.

In the conditions of the research, appropriate pedagogical conditions (organization of an effective subject-playing area of the group for meaningful enriching the experience of gender communication in the children's team;

stimulation of the interaction of different gender subjects in a single social-and-developmental educational environment of a preschool educational institution; presence of positive incentives for interaction in a mixed-gender group as a factor in the formation of a child's gender competence) were determined. It was proven that only the comprehensive provision of these pedagogical conditions could contribute to solving the problem of the formation of gender sociability of older preschoolers.

Based on the results of the ascertainment experiment, it was found that the majority of respondents were at the medium (48.9% – EG, 50% – CG) and low (40% – EG, 40% – CG) levels of gender sociability, only 9.1% and 10% (EG and CG, respectively) reached a sufficient level, which testified about the low level of knowledge of the preschool teachers and parents on the issues of the formation of gender sociability of older preschoolers.

According to the results of the comparative analysis, it was found that after the formative experiment in the experimental group, 31.1% of older preschoolers achieved a sufficient level of gender sociability. The number of children with a medium level of gender sociability increased to 48.9%. The number of children with a low level of gender sociability changed significantly (up to 20%), which showed positive dynamics in the achieved level in formation of gender sociability.

A different situation was observed in the control group, in which only 14.5% of children reached a sufficient level of gender sociability, a medium level was in 52.2% of respondents. A low level of gender sociability of 33.3% was recorded in a significant number of children.

Results of the conducted research confirmed the originality, efficiency and possibility of

implementing proposed forms and methods in working with the children of older preschool age on the basis of a gender approach and purposeful information of preschool teachers and parents with the principles of gender socialization.

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