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**PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR
IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

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Abstract

Objective: to study the features of reproductive attitudes of men and women in relation to reproductive behavior. Methods: questionnaires of systematic and multivariate studies of personality; diagnostics of interpersonal relationships; semantic differential; reproductive attitudes; interviews; semantic psycho-geometric test "Colored shapes". Results and conclusions. The main motives of reproductive behavior: desire to have a child, love for children, a sense of motherhood, willingness to become a mother. Fathers – procreation. Career and professional activities are compatible with the birth and upbringing of a child. A man has the purpose of material family support.

Keywords

Reproductive system – Reproductive behavior – Psychological support – Parenthood

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Introduction

The problem of reproductive attitude is one of the most important and significant problems of our time. Modern living conditions force the person to evaluate his position in relation to the birth of a child in a new way. Sometimes the birth of a child is not due to the desire and willingness to become parents but it results from economic benefits; as well as the pressure of society in which it is a custom to have children. All this forces the person to be in a contradictory state, in the uncertainty of his position in relation to the birth of a child, which contributes to the manifestation of such a phenomenon as infertility. Infertility is one of the urgent problems of modern families. Every year there is an increase in the number of couples faced with infertility, while the age of a couple decreases. It is necessary to realize that infertility is not just a physical state; there are also a number of emotional and social aspects. Some people may suffer from intense feelings of irritation, despair, loss of self-control, envy of people who do not know such a problem. The psychological reaction of men and women to the diagnosis of infertility is often different, and it can also affect the relationship.

Infertility, as a medical diagnosis, is known and studied, modern methods of assisted reproductive technologies have been invented. In psychology, unfortunately, this problem is not sufficiently considered. However, as observations and practical work show, knowledge and understanding of the mental component of infertility can improve the treatment process. In this case, reproductive attitudes, being complex socio-mental formations of individuals, contributes to the disclosure of individual position to the birth of the child, to the awareness of internal contradictions.

The authors consider the features of reproductive attitudes in relation to infertility and parenthood. Within the framework of this study, infertility is understood as one of variants of reproductive behavior formed by a corresponding attitude of personality. Accordingly, parenthood (motherhood/fatherhood) is also one of options of reproductive behavior of individuals, due to their reproductive attitude.

This problem is considered within the framework of such scientific directions as social psychology, personality psychology and gender psychology.

The purpose of the study: to identify differences in the features of reproductive attitudes of men and women in relation to reproductive behavior.

Subject of research: reproductive attitudes; infertility of men and women.

Object of research: The study involved 256 people between the ages of 21 and 40 years, 128 of them are infertile (69 women and 59 men) and 128 respondents with children (62 women and 66 men).

Women of both samples are of fertile age. Men and women of both samples are married but are not married to each other.

Main hypothesis. Reproductive attitude can be certain (harmonious) and uncertain (contradictory), and it results in objective (infertility and gender) and subjective (personal characteristics, attitude to the spouse) factors.

The main hypothesis of the study is presented by the following assumptions:

1. The reproductive attitude of infertile individuals is uncertain (contradictory); there is a mismatch and ambivalence in the content of affective, cognitive and conative components.
2. Reproductive attitude of subjects with children is certain (harmonious); there is consistency in the content of affective, cognitive and conative components.
3. Both infertile individuals and parents with children have sexual differences in the components of reproductive attitudes.
4. There is a connection between the type of reproductive attitudes and personal characteristics, attitude to the spouse, motives for the birth of a child.

The objectives of the study:

1. To identify the main components of reproductive attitudes, especially their content among infertile individuals and respondents with children;
2. To investigate the features of reproductive attitudes among men and women;
3. To reveal the features of the attitude to the fact of the birth of a child and assessment of the child in connection with reproductive attitudes;
4. To investigate the personal characteristics of the subjects, the motives for the birth of a child in relation to reproductive attitudes and implemented behavior;
5. To study the features of personality in connection with infertility in the system of relationship “I – child – others”;
6. To determine the influence of sex factors and infertility on characteristics of reproductive attitudes.

The scientific novelty of the research is as follows:

1. The idea of reproductive attitude as a kind of social attitude is specified (reproductive attitude is a complex socio-psychological mechanism consisting of a set of behavioral acts, judgments, assessments and positions of individuals; it is expressed in the behavior, emotions, motives of a person for the birth of a child and affects the adoption of appropriate decisions);
2. The features of reproductive attitudes, which are caused by factors: objective (gender and infertility) and subjective (personal characteristics, relationships with a partner, the idea of a child and the attitude to the fact of his birth, the motives for the birth of a child);
3. The ways of implementation of reproductive attitudes through parenting or abandonment of it, infertility;
4. The mental component of infertility both female and male is revealed.

Ideas about A.N. Leontiev’s personal meaning are connected with the concept of social attitude in Russian psychology. The issues of the phenomena of attitudes are also touched upon in L.I. Bozhovich’s theory of personality, it relates to the “internal position” or orientation. In close connection with the attitude is V.N Myasishchev’s theory of relations. The theory of A.G. Asmolov, considering the attitude in the overall structure of activity and V.A. Yadov’s dispositional theory of attitudes occupy a special place in the definition of social attitudes. In foreign psychology following names are connected with the problem of social attitudes: L. Thurstone, C. Osgood, L. Festinger, W. McGuire, D. Katz, M. Rokeach, M. Fishbein, I. Ajzen, E. Bogardus, C. Hovland etc.

The analysis of domestic and foreign theories allows to define the attitude as a complex socio-mental mechanism consisting of cognitions, affective reactions, providing predisposition of the subject to the perception of future events and actions in a certain

direction; provides a stable purposeful nature of the relevant activities, serves as a reasonable selective activity of the person.

Reproductive attitude is a complex socio-psychological mechanism consisting of a set of behavioral acts, judgments, assessments and positions of individuals; it is expressed in the behavior, emotions, and motives of a person for the birth of children and affects decision-making. Conditions of formation provides for the presence of needs and opportunities, or situations, to meet this need (in accordance with the theory of D.N. Uznadze). According to V.V. Boyko, norms, traditions, society, and mainly private needs and abilities of individuals affect the formation of reproductive attitudes. According to his theory, the basis of reproductive behavior is the need for children. Researchers in the reproductive sphere (in particular, V. Boyko) determine the attitude of individuals to their offspring, to children in general through the concept of “philoprogenitiveness”. Thus, the need for children as a socio-psychological phenomenon includes elements of social and individual plan. On the one hand, these are the attitudes of parents that correspond to the current socio-historical types of families (large, small or childless). Such attitudes determine the relation to the value and number of children in the family, as well as to their upbringing, which is characteristic of the objective motive to have a child. On the other hand, it is a manifestation of philoprogenitiveness, characteristics of the subject as the carrier of internalized social norms, attitudes towards children in general – a subjective motive.

Parenthood includes motherhood and fatherhood, but it is not limited to their combination.

Motherhood is a complex phenomenon that can be viewed from different perspectives and defined through different concepts: 1. Motherhood is a process that takes place in several stages, a certain point in a woman’s life; 2. Motherhood is one of social roles that a woman “tries on” on her life path; 3. Motherhood is an activity, real behavior, conditioned by the need for children, reproductive attitude of a woman.

Existing research on the problem of paternity allows us to distinguish two approaches to its understanding. According to the first approach, paternity is a “favorable environment” for the development of the child. From the point of view of the second approach, parenthood is viewed through the prism of the personality of parents. The authors who follow this direction in the study of parenthood, in particular paternity, believe that the birth of a child and the relationship with him gives a man the opportunity to socialize himself.

As an independent component of parenthood, paternity is subject to all its laws. Thus, paternity, like motherhood, contains several components: 1. Cognitive, including awareness of his paternal role, knowledge and understanding of parents’ functions; 2. Affective – feelings and emotions expressed in his attitude to children, to himself as a father; 3. The behavioral component is expressed in the performance of his paternal role, self-assertion, self-development.

There is a point of view that infertility is the cause of psycho-emotional disorders in human life. On the other hand, infertility is one of those pathological conditions that can significantly affect the psycho-emotional status, causing a state of chronic stress. Thus, we observe the so-called mechanism of the “vicious circle”. On the one hand, infertility has a negative psycho-emotional state; on the other hand, strong emotional experiences provoke psychosomatic infertility.

Materials and methods

In total, 256 people, 128 infertile men and women, 128 parents took part in the study.

Men and women of both samples are married; the marriage is registered and it is primary. The sample of infertile individuals is only subjects with primary infertility, with a preserved reproductive system, capable of bearing a child and the birth of a child (as a result of medical support), who are treated for more than 1 year. 53% of infertile women and 42% of infertile men over the past five years have changes in the professional sphere: career growth, change of occupation.

62 women and 66 men comprised the group with children. The subjects are biological parents of children being raised. Changes in the professional sphere (career growth) are observed in 35% (women – mothers) and in 37% (men – fathers). The average age of the tested men is from 27 to 40 years, women – from 21 to 35 years.

Research methods

A set of methods has been used to achieve the objective: 1. the questionnaire of systematic and multivariate study of personality (SMSP); 2. the questionnaire of diagnostics of interpersonal relationships (DIR); 3. semantic differential; 4. modified method “Facts associated with the birth of a child”; 5. questionnaire for the study of reproductive attitudes (authors’ development); 6. interviews (developed by the authors); 7. associative experiment; 8. the questionnaire used to collect sociological data; 9. a semantic psycho-geometric test “Colored shapes” (developed in collaboration with I.S. Yakimanskaya).

Mathematical and statistical processing of raw data, the analysis of average values, the percentage method, the Mann-Whitney criterion, the Kruskal-Wallis criterion, Spearman’s rank correlation, factor analysis (Principal Components), two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used.

Results

Features of the content of reproductive attitudes and their components were carried out in several stages. At the first stage, a hierarchy of facts and judgments associated with the situation of birth is revealed. Further, the interview, revealing the peculiarities of experiences, thoughts and behavior of women and men was conducted, then differences in the content of attitudes were revealed; the image of the “child” and the motives for the birth of a child. Finally – the degree of influence of infertility and gender factors on the components of attitudes was revealed. In parallel, the socio-psychological characteristics of the personality of women and men, the attitude to the spouse were considered.

The analysis of the interview showed that infertile women experience uncertain, ambivalent worries in connection with the birth of a child. The object of experiences is the image of a child, a woman herself. Special attention is paid to the treatment process, which is recognized as significant and it is associated with the image of a child. The fact of the birth of a child is associated with anxiety, first of all about you, then about a child. A child is more often perceived as a hindrance in achieving certain, often career, goals. Knowledge about children is superficial, they are generalized, but knowledge about the treatment process is specific and detailed.

Infertile women consider the adoption of children as something negative; they express concerns that are associated with public opinion, the heredity of the unborn child.

Women-mothers perceive the image of the child as the closest, native person, for whom you can tolerate marital problems. The fact of the birth of your child is considered as an event that carries joy, excitement and meaning. The child is assessed as an incentive to achieve professional and personal growth. Mothers are more likely than infertile women to agree to the idea of adoption.

The analysis of the results of the questionnaire “The study of reproductive attitudes” confirms the above data. We have identified significant differences in the content of all three components of reproductive attitudes by groups of women.

Thus, infertile women experience ambivalent feelings in connection with the birth of a child. There is concern about adoption, which is associated with the recognition of their inferiority, inability. It is noted that infertile women, more often than women-mothers give the child a certain function, his birth is associated with a certain purpose, for example, strengthening the family or the emergence of the meaning of life. At the same time, experiencing a painful process of treatment, they tend to avoid communication with other children, which makes it difficult for them to give a specific and emotional assessment of the child’s image.

Significant differences ($p \leq 0.01$) in the evaluation of the concept of “child” by the method of semantic differential were revealed: women-mothers more often give the following characteristics to the concept of “child”: alive ($U=109$), bright ($U=86$), specific ($U=133$), fragile ($U= 43$), chaotic ($U=351$), moving ($U= 231$), long ($U=518$), fast ($U= 268$), kind ($U= 385$).

Infertile women believe that the child is characterized as pleasant ($U= 559$), but lifeless, dull, abstract, durable, orderly, short-term, slow, cruel.

The results of the study show that women-mothers, evaluating the concept of "child", give it the qualities which are unique to their children. Therefore, such characteristics as long, fast or changing, etc. are revealed in the personality of children. In turn, infertile women may characterize a collective image, which consists of their knowledge of someone’s children. In addition, these characteristics describe the treatment process: well-ordered, slow, and short-term.

Factor analysis of the semantic differential data allowed identifying two factors for each group of women. All features are uniquely correlated by high load factors with only one of indicators. The first factor can be called “negative evaluation”, as it consists of a set of adjectives carrying negative characteristics. It should be noted that in the group of women-mothers, the factor is formed by a large number of adjectives than in the group of infertile women. At the same time, in the group of women-mothers, this factor describes the state of a child in certain situations. And infertile women describe the first factor as essential characteristics of a child. This factor evaluates the treatment process as a heavy, rough, cold. The second factor, consisting of positive characteristics, the authors called “positive assessment”. This factor contains adjectives evaluating surface qualities, as well as the usefulness (uselessness) of the child. Such results of factor analysis indicate the priority of instrumental (practical) motives for the birth of a child.

The following features were revealed in identifying the motives for the birth of a child. In the group of infertile women, the main indicators are age (45%), as well as family strengthening with the birth of a child (45%). Such indicators as “desire on the part of the spouse” and the motive of “procreation” scored 35%. The birth of a child on the own, inner desire is the next motive, by which only 33% of women is guided. The same number of women believes that the birth of a child can be favored by the material security of the family. And 15% of the sample identified the search for the meaning of life as the basis of the birth of a child.

Women who gave birth indicate their own desire to have children as the main reason for the birth of a child (90%). Such motives as love for children and a full family (with the birth of a child) scored 55%. Another motive for the birth of a child is healthy marital relationships, love and confidence in the spouse (52%). And the last group of motives, typical for this sample, is the birth of a child because of the “awakened” feeling of motherhood, readiness to become a mother (20%).

After a detailed analysis of all the motives, the authors conditionally divided them into true motives (internal motivation to have a child) and instrumental motives (external motivation), in which the child is endowed with a function, he is a means to achieve a certain goal. Thus, external, instrumental motives are dominated in the group of infertile women, while in the group of women-mothers – their own desire to have a child – internal motivation, determined by the social and biological nature of women.

Analysis of the results of SMSP showed that emotional stability ($U=255$, $p\leq 0.001$) and social adaptation are more typical for women-mothers. Compliance and feminine personality traits are manifested in socially significant situations ($U=492.5$, $p\leq 0.001$). In this case, they are characteristics of introverted type of communication ($U=465.5$; $p\leq 0.001$).

Infertile women in general are emotionally unstable, and there may be a conflict between aspirations in different directions: selfishness and altruism, aggressiveness and desire to please, isolation and belonging to the group. It is revealed that the profile of this group shows a tendency to the so-called “conversion five” (relatively high rates on the 1st and 3rd scales, and relatively low rates on the 2nd scale); it indicates the possible presence of psychosomatic disorders. Infertile women have relatively high results on the femininity scale, which indicates masculinity, independence, aspirations for emancipation, self-sufficiency.

The differences revealed by the DIR method show that infertile women are characterized by such indicators as “powerful – leading” ($U=583$, $p\leq 0.05$), “independent – dominant” ($U=123$, $p\leq 0.001$), “straightforward – aggressive” ($U=537$, $p\leq 0.001$), ‘suspicious – skeptical” ($U=596$, $p\leq 0.05$), and “dependent – obedient” ($U=419$, $p\leq 0.001$) styles of relationships. That is, women who are registered for infertility, for the most part, are imperious, intolerant of criticism, independent, isolated in the group, somewhat complacent, stubborn, and suspicious. At the same time they listen to the opinions of others and sometimes depend on their opinions.

The group of women-mothers is characterized by confidence, sincerity, spontaneity, the ability to be a good mentor and organizer, realism in relations with others, modesty, humility, tendency to take on other people’s responsibilities, the need for help and trust, compromise behavior, the developed sense of responsibility, expressed willingness to help other people.

As part of the study, using the method of DIR, representative data on the subjects' perception of their partners (spouses) were obtained. The following octants are significant (infertile women): "incredulous – skeptical" ($U=532.5$, $p \leq 0.001$), "submissive-shy" ($U=433$, $p \leq 0.001$), and "dependent – obedient" ($U=582.5$, $p \leq 0.05$). In the group of women-mothers – "powerful – leading" ($U=595$, $p \leq 0.05$). The results and the analysis of average values showed that infertile women often describe the portrait of their partner as a capable coordinator, but at the same time conformal, dependent on the opinions of others, submissive, touchy, distrustful, suspicious, they are characterized by a sense of guilt.

In turn, most women-mothers evaluate the image of a real partner as a trusting person, helping; he is able to perform other people's duties, having his own point of view, with stable moral values at the same time intolerant to criticism.

The obtained data are confirmed by the results of associative experiment data and a semantic psycho-geometric test.

Content analysis of interviews with men revealed features of the content of the components of attitudes, which are confirmed by other methods, such as "Facts associated with the birth of a child".

Infertile men tend to experience mixed feelings in relation to the birth of a child and in interaction with children. The birth of a child is estimated as the end result of a certain process, associated with the victory over infertility. The attitude to adopted children is negative, alarming, there are concerns about the genetic potential. Adopted children are assessed as recognition of their own social and biological failure. At the same time, they believe that a child strengthens the family; every family needs, and gives the child the function of procreation. One of the important areas of infertile men is career, a job that can replace the absence of a child.

Men-fathers feel joy, pride, positive feelings in connection with the birth of a child. Interaction with the child causes a variety of positive feelings and emotions. The child gives the opportunity to be necessary, to become a father, an incentive to achieve life goals. Men-fathers note that in the absence of their own children, they may decide to adopt someone else's child. This is evidenced by significant differences in the evaluation of judgments in the questionnaire "Study of reproductive attitudes".

A greater number of differences were revealed in the judgments related to the conative component. At the same time, there is a contradiction in the behavioral intentions of infertile men: they are ready to risk their health for the sake of giving birth to a child, but they will not refuse to work.

Factor analysis of semantic differential allowed distinguishing two factors for each group of men: the factor of "negative evaluation" and the factor of "positive evaluation". Factors in the group of men-fathers describe not only the characteristics of a particular, real child, but also the attitude to him: conscious, long-term, etc. A positive factor in the group of infertile men contains such a variable as "useful", which emphasizes the instrumental importance of the child for this group of subjects. The results are confirmed by the analysis of the method "Facts associated with the birth of a child".

Analysis of motives of the birth of a child allowed identifying the following features. In the group of infertile men, the cause of age was indicated in 69.2% of cases.

This may be due to the absence of a child in the sample, while the average age is only 31 years, so this reason is socially significant. However, more often (74.3% of the sample of infertile men) indicated a personal desire as the reason for the birth of a child. In authors' opinion, this is due to the lack of a child and the difficulty of his birth, as well as the implementation of the goal – the birth of a child. The socially significant motive of "procreation" in the group of infertile men is indicated in 61.5% of cases, followed by the motive of "strengthening the family" (30.7%), the desire to have a full family (20.5%). Less than 10% of the sample indicated such reasons as "parents' desire" and "love for children".

Men-fathers recognize procreation as the primary motivation for the birth of the child (51.2%), it followed by a sincere desire to have a child (41.4%), love for children (26.8 %). 20% of the sample indicated such motives as the desire to have a full family and strengthening the family.

Analysis of the results of SMSP showed that infertile men are more characterized by emotional stability ($U=479$), by the presence of feminine personality traits ($U=540$), optimism ($U=591.5$). Men-fathers are characterized by manifestations of emotionality, masculinity ($U=540$), social introversion ($U=570$), individualism ($U=554$). Analysis of data on the method of DIR showed that infertile men are characterized by such characteristics as "suspicious – skeptical" ($U=309$), "submissive – shy" ($U=232$), "dependent – obedient" ($U=483$). Men-fathers demonstrate a "powerful and leading" ($U=494.5$) style of behavior. The differences at $p \leq 0.001$ are revealed.

Thus, the majority of men-fathers are characterized by manifestation of emotionality, activity in interpersonal relations, manifestation of aggression, while the analytical mindset is evident. Fathers have more masculine personality traits.

Infertile men are more passive in interpersonal relationships, less aggressive, they tend to smooth out conflicts (this is evidenced by the high average values on the scales of impulsiveness, masculinity, rigidity, optimism).

The following octants are significant in the image of their wife (for infertile men): "responsible – generous (She)" ($U=317$, $p \leq 0.001$), "cooperating – conventional (She)" ($U=574.5$, $p \leq 0.001$). Infertile men are more likely to represent the image of a wife as friendly, conformal, shy, independent, and confident.

In the group of men-fathers, the image of the wife is endowed with friendliness, humility, modesty, sympathy and empathy for others, the desire for cooperation.

Thus, bipolar characteristics are revealed in infertile men: a) optimism – willingness to be obedient; b) a high level of emotional lability is negatively associated with independence, with the dominant position of the personality of men. Anxiety of men-fathers is associated with assertive behavior on the part of women. Submission and conformism on the part of men determine the lack of optimism in the relationship with a woman. It is submitted that manifestation of masculine qualities of a woman contributes to the emergence of anxiety in men. The manifestation of man and feminine qualities (submissiveness, shyness) leads to a pessimistic attitude. Thus, for the majority of male fathers, it is important to match gender identity to sex in their relationship.

The results are confirmed in the associative experiment and in the semantic psycho-geometric test.

A comparative analysis of the interview, the questionnaire of reproductive attitudes showed that both men and women experience positive feelings, talking about a child. At the same time, the results show the specificity of reproductive attitudes of men and women. The anxiety and excitement of a mother are associated with diseases, problems of a child. Negative feelings of a father are caused by the behavior of a child, which emphasizes the “conditionality” of the father’s love for children. Women more often than men understand the causes of children’s actions, they are able to take care of a child, and this is a feature of the cognitive component of their reproductive attitude.

Men note that a child is a high level of responsibility, an increase in material costs that fall on them as they are the head of the family, the earner. In this case, the child is an incentive to achieve professional results for men. Women believe that it is impossible to sacrifice themselves for the sake of a child, but one of the main reasons for the preservation of the family is a child who needs a father.

Significant differences in the reproductive setting according to the results of the questionnaire were found only in the judgments related to the cognitive and conative components.

These conclusions are indirectly confirmed by the choice of facts associated with the birth of a child. The analysis of results allows us to conclude that both groups of the sample empower the birth of a child with a deep personal positive meaning. Fathers think more than mothers about the objective difficulties associated with the appearance of a child in the family: the problem of housing, it is difficult to educate a child.

The content of factors after the calculation of semantic differentials by the method of factor analysis is almost the same, especially the one that is called as a “negative” factor, in which, in our opinion, the state of a child in a difficult situation is estimated. The content of the factor of “positive evaluation” in the group of women included such characteristics as bright, lively, active (personal behavioral properties). While men pay attention to their attitude to the child: conscious, durable, long-term, they predict the distant future.

Analysis of motives for the childbirth in the family showed that the main reason for men is continuation of the genus (51.2%), in second place – the desire to have a child (41.4%), love for children (26.8%). 20% of the sample indicated such reasons as the desire to have a full family and the birth of a child contributes to the strengthening the family.

Women, in turn, suppose that the main motive for having a child is their own desire (90%). 55% gained such motives as love for children and a full family after the childbirth. The fourth category of motives for the birth of a child is strong marital relations, love and confidence in the spouse (52%). Another important motive for the female sample is “awakened” feelings of motherhood, readiness to become a mother (20%).

The analysis of group profiles of SMSP, compiled by average values, showed that the majority of women-mothers are emotionally stable, socially adapted, their compliance is manifested in socially significant situations. This group is characterized by feminine personality traits. At the same time they demonstrate introverted type of communication. Women are characterized by rigidity ($U=554$, $p \leq 0.001$) and overcontrol ($U=587$, $p \leq 0.05$). In turn, men-fathers are characterized by the manifestation of emotions, activity in interpersonal relations, the manifestation of aggressiveness, while they demonstrate an analytical mindset, typical masculine personality traits.

The results of statistical processing of materials by the method of DIR show obvious differences at $p \leq 0.001$ significance in the individual and personal properties. The following octants are significant for men: “powerful – leading (I)” ($U=498$); “independent – dominant (I)” ($U=496$). Women are characterized by such octants as “submissive – shy (I)” ($U=434.5$); “cooperating – conventional (I)” ($U=555.5$). This distribution of results highlights the gender identity of groups. In addition, it is possible to observe the adequacy of relationships: powerful – leading “He” and submissive – shy “She”; it contributes to a harmonious partnership.

A comparative analysis of the interview showed that infertile men and women experience ambivalent feelings in relation to the birth of a child: joy, pain, anger, delight, etc. In this case, the object of experience is themselves and a child. The child is associated with the treatment process, the positive result of which will be a personal victory, the negative result – defeat. Perhaps that is why infertile men and women are ambiguous; they often react negatively to the question of foster children (to adopt a child – to admit insolvency).

Career plays an important role in the life of infertile men and women: as a way to get away, “forget” about the problem of infertility. Their work is more important than the birth of a child.

Analysis of evaluation of statements in the questionnaire showed significant differences in the cognitive and conative components. At the same time, there are a number of contradictions, for example, men are willing to risk their health for the sake of the birth of a child, but in interviews they note (women confirm), irregular intake of drugs, sometimes they demonstrate irresponsible attitude to visiting a doctor, etc.

The child is perceived as the meaning of life, endowed with a huge, significant function for infertile individuals. For women, the more important point is that with the birth of a child, the family becomes stronger; the child retains the family, which is confirmed by the analysis of the facts associated with the birth of a child.

Infertile men tend to worry about the future of the child; it is possible that this excitement is due to the function of a man as a father. At the same time, men more often than women note the presence of the father as a necessity for the social development of a child. Infertile women, in turn, mention the birth of a child as a fact of joy of motherhood.

The analysis of results of the semantic differential demonstrates ambiguous representations of the image of the child by men and women registered for infertility. The authors found significant differences ($p=0.01$) in 25 scales, due to the different content of the experience of subjects in communication with children. It should be noted that, according to the results of the interview, it causes mixed feelings and behavior (from complete absorption of communication to avoidance), understanding of their own incompetence (men) in interaction with girls and boys.

The factors obtained after statistical processing of the semantic differential also have different contents. It should be noted that the factor of “negative evaluation” evaluates not only the image of a child, but, above all, the perception of the process of treatment of infertile individuals.

The factor of “positive evaluation” of both men and women contains the variable “useful”, which allows us to talk about the priority of practicality in connection with the birth

of a child. These conclusions are confirmed by the analysis of motives of the birth of a child among infertile men and women, which showed that instrumental, practical motives are more often indicated.

One of the leading motives for the birth of a child in both groups is the age of the subjects. In the group of infertile men, the cause of age was indicated in 69.2% of cases, in the group of women – in 45%. The motive of “procreation” in the group of infertile men is indicated in 61.5% of cases, then the motives of “strengthening the family” (30.7%), the desire to have a full family (20.5%). Less than 10% of the sample indicated parents’ desire and love for children. In the group of women, 35.7% gained such motives as the desire of the spouse and procreation. 45.2% is given to the desire to strengthen the family. It should be noted that infertile men in 74.3% of cases have pointed to their own desire as the impetus for the birth of a child. In turn, infertile women only in 33.4% of cases distinguish the motive – the birth of a child by choice. At the same time, women indicate such an incentive as the desire of the spouse (35.7%). Perhaps, the awareness of their inner desires is difficult, traumatic.

Analysis of personality profiles, compiled by the average of each group by the method of SMSPP, allows the authors to draw the following conclusions. Profiles of both groups on six scales have almost equal value. It is possible to talk about the similarity of manifestations of some personal characteristics of men and women: impulsiveness, anxiety, stability of views. A significant difference was found on the scale of “neurotic overcontrol” ($U_{emp}=581.5$ $p\leq 0.001$), which is more significant for women; it reflects the women’s insistence, both to themselves and to others, the importance of social norms and foundations. They are more likely to have psychosomatic disorders. On the masculinity/femininity scale, the authors found no significant differences; it allows them to speak about similarities in gender identity.

Significant differences were found at $p\leq 0.001$ of the significance level of DIR octants in two groups. Men are characterized by “dutifully-shy” ($U_{emp}=453$), “incredulous-skeptical” ($U_{emp}=164$) octants. Women are characterized by “powerful-leading” ($U_{emp}=563$), “independent-dominant” ($U_{emp}=207$), “collaborating-conventional” ($U_{emp}=574$), “responsibly-generous” ($U_{emp}=328$). Infertile men and women have ambivalent relations with society: the importance of social norms and at the same time distrust, suspicion.

The authors distinguish two main factors of infertility and gender, which can determine features of reproductive attitudes, their components, and personal characteristics. There are significant differences in the level of each component in the samples, which may indicate that each sample is characterized by a special manifestation of the component. In addition, there is a difference in the content of components in the groups, due to the influence of factors of sex and infertility.

The analysis of the influence of sex and infertility factors showed that the affective component (AC) is influenced by both sex and the infertility factors, but the influence of the combination of the two factors was not revealed. The cognitive component (CC) is also influenced by both factors separately, and a combination of these factors is added. This suggests that a cognitive component of reproductive attitudes in each sample has its own, specific, due to sex, the presence/absence of the child, as well as a combination of these two factors.

The behavioral component (BC) is determined only by sex, while the analysis of average values suggests that this component is more expressed among women.

The analysis of multivariate dispersion ANOVA showed that when assessing the image, the influence of sex is found on the following variables of DIR “independent – dominant”, “distrustful-skeptical”, which are more significant for men. The variables “dependent – obedient”, “cooperating-conventional”, “responsible-generous” are more expressed among women. The influence of the infertility factor was found in the following variables: “independent – dominant”, “straightforward-aggressive”, “distrustful-skeptical”, “submissive-shy” and “dependent – obedient”, which are more significant for the infertile sample. The influence of a combination of two factors was found on the variable “powerful-leading”, which is expressed among man-fathers; “independent – dominant” – among infertile women, and “incredulous-skeptical”, “submissive-shy” are represented among infertile men.

It should be noted that the indicator “independent – dominant” is influenced by each factor individually and in combination. Presumably, this characteristic is specific for infertile women. While the significance of the variable “powerful-leading” is found only in the combination of factors, and acts as a distinctive feature of men-fathers. The peculiarity of the personality of infertile men will “obediently-shy”, and most likely infertility “develops” this feature.

The analysis of influence of gender on personal characteristics according to SMSP revealed only two variables with a tendency to significance ($p < 0.05$) “neurotic overcontrol” and “rigidity”, which are expressed among women. These characteristics are more common among women-mothers, most likely due to their maternal function and social role.

The factor of infertility affects the following scales: “pessimism”, “emotional lability”, expressed among respondents with children; “femininity-masculinity”, “individualism”, “optimism and activity”, “social introversion”, which are more typical for infertile respondents.

Conclusion

As a result of the study, the authors draw the following conclusions:

1. Components of the reproductive attitudes among infertile men and women and among respondents with children have different manifestation and content, due to gender and the fact of absence/presence of a child.
2. Reproductive attitudes of infertile individuals are uncertain, as there are contradictions, ambivalence, and ambiguity in the content of components. In this case, the cognitive component dominates, the elements of which are traced in the affective component.

In general, the following specific features of reproductive attitudes of infertile men and women were found:

- (a) Infertile men and women experience ambivalent feelings about the birth of a child. In this case, the object of the experience is both a child and a specific person. The fact of the birth of a child is practical, which deprives the fact of birth of emotionality. However, the process of treatment (luck and failure) is quite emotional. The image of the child is associated, firstly, with the treatment process, and secondly, with the collective image of

someone else's child. The very fact of the birth of a child is associated, first of all, with anxiety, the risk to health, an obstacle to implementation of further professional activities.

(b) A combination of specific knowledge about the treatment process and general knowledge about the child is the content of cognitive components. At the same time, the cognitive component is more expressed among women who are more aware of the treatment process. They empower a child with an important quality – “usefulness”, which indicates the instrumental motives of the birth of a child.

(c) Infertile men and women are active in the treatment process but they avoid other children, which affects the level and depth of knowledge about the child. Adoption of a child is considered by men as the most extreme option. Women talk about the fears associated with adoption – for the majority it is unacceptable. The public opinion confuses them in adoption issues.

Connotative component of infertile women is expressed stronger: there is control over the treatment process of a woman and her husband.

3. Reproductive attitudes of respondents with children are defined; the main is the affective component. The following features of reproductive attitudes of men-fathers and women-mothers are revealed:

(a) Men and women with children have feelings and emotions related to their children. The fact of the birth of a child is emotional, associated with a miracle that carries the joy of motherhood/fatherhood, parental pride and, of course, the excitement for their child. The image of the child is diverse and emotional for women-mother and men-fathers in comparison with the image of a child of infertile individuals (it is associated with their own children).

(b) The cognitive component is manifested in the knowledge of their own child, his needs, and personal characteristics. The cognitive component is more expressed among women than among men. Women-mothers know the children's personality better than men-fathers. Their knowledge is more specific about certain problems (understanding the causes of moods, lies, etc.).

(c) Mothers interact directly with children more often than men and their communication is more emotional. Men manifest themselves in solving the life difficulties of the child associated with the outside world. In the absence of their own child, men and women with children note that they would decide to adopt a child.

4. Specific features of the reproductive attitude are associated with personal characteristics, relationship with the spouse, with society.

5. Infertile women have androgynous and masculine gender identity; men have androgynous and feminine identity. Women demonstrate themselves as strong, decisive, leading, strong-willed, and independent; however, along with these qualities men see the possibility of cooperation, softness, and obedience in the images of their spouses. Men tend to show humility, shyness, distrust. In general, infertile men and women are characterized by optimism, activity, individualism, social introversion.

a) The relationships are characterized by powerful and leading style on the part of the infertile woman and obediently-shy on the part of infertile men. The manifestation of power-leading style in men is associated with an increase in anxiety, uncertainty.

Women are more often concerned about the treatment process and they are responsible for all prescriptions, not only their own, but also the spouse. In general, relationships with spouses are ambivalent.

b) Infertile women and men are characterized by ambivalent relations with society: conformity and the desire to defend their position, which contributes to maladaptation in society and determines the specifics of the formation of reproductive attitudes.

c) Most of infertile women's motives for giving birth to a child are related to the influence of the social environment. Also, instrumental motives prevail, in which the child serves as a means to achieve personal goals: strengthening the family, preserving the family. However, infertile men want to have a child of their own (more often than women). At the same time, this desire is associated with overcoming obstacles, with solving a socially significant problem.

d) One of the most important areas for infertile men and women is career, work that can, from their point of view, replace the absence of a child. In this case, the child is perceived as a real obstacle to the implementation of professional activities.

e) For women who are registered for infertility, characterized by psychosomatic manifestations caused by the intrapersonal conflict, which is expressed in uncertain reproductive attitudes.

Men-fathers have androgynous and masculine gender identity. Women-mothers have androgynous and feminine identity. A man is characterized by the manifestation of leadership qualities. A woman is characterized by softness, as well as responsibility, rigidity, overcontrol. Relationships with spouses of men-fathers and women-mothers are characterized by respect for boundaries, the presence of contact; a spouse is assessed as a partner, equal to himself, an adult. However, the majority of women-mothers believe that for the sake of the child it is necessary to preserve a family, endure insults; the presence of the father ensures the full social and personal development of the child. The main motives: a desire to have a child, love for children, sense of motherhood, the willingness to become a mother. The main motives for fathers are procreation (due to gender). Career and professional activities are compatible with the birth and upbringing of a child. For a man – this is the purpose of material security of the family. The results of the study made it possible to make recommendations for working with infertile couples.

Recommendations:

1. After identifying personal characteristics that contribute to reproductive attitudes, the consultative work on the realization of their reproductive position (willingness or unwillingness to have a child) is performed (as well as the motives of the registration on infertility, individual and psychological characteristics that contribute to the implementation of a specific reproductive behavior).

2. It is necessary to carry out preventive work with persons who have not yet realized their reproductive behavior: young girls and boys. Its purpose is to study young people of their reproductive aims, in particular the factors contributing to it (the motives for the birth of children, personal characteristics, relationship to the child, and possible relationships with a future spouse). Such a study will determine their reproductive position, and, if necessary, it will adjust it. For example, studies of foreign scientists (Manal Farih, Della Freeth, Khalid

Khan, Catherine Meads) found that in the Middle East and North Africa there are shortcomings in knowledge and behavior in the field of sexual and reproductive health¹.

To achieve this goal, information materials (mini-lectures on family and marriage, the birth of a child), diagnostic methods (for example, used in this thesis), and training exercises aimed at understanding the characteristics of their reproductive position, as well as the factors contributing to it are used.

The importance of preventive work with adolescents is confirmed by the studies of foreign authors (Hanna Savioja, Mika Helminen, Sari Fröjd, Mauri Marttunen, Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino).

They conducted a sample survey of almost 187,000 adolescents (50.4 per cent of girls) on the basis of a survey.

So the most important of the family variables was life in a family with two parents, which showed a feedback with early/risky sexual behavior in adolescence².

The results of the study can be useful in the consultative work of a psychologist with couples who are registered for infertility. In addition, the data obtained can be used in the prevention and educational work of psychologists, teachers on the topic of parenthood with adolescents and parents.

The importance of partnership between various organizations concerned for reproductive health of young people should also be emphasized. This is evidenced by the experience of the International *Planned Parenthood Federation*.

Doortje Braeken points out that effective partnership between civil society, government and the corporate world are an element of successful access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people.

According to the author, trust, openness, respect and interdependence are the key conditions determining the successful partnership of any organization³.

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¹ Manal Farih; Della Freeth; Khalid Khan & Catherine Meads, Sexual and reproductive health knowledge and information-seeking behavior among middle eastern female university students. A systematic review, num 27 (4) (February, 2015): 383-395.

² Hanna Savioja, Mika Helminen, Sari Fröjd, Mauri Marttunen & Riittakerttu Kaltiala-Heino Adolescent sexual behavior – family characteristics, parental involvement, and associated mental disorders, num 30 (3) (October, 2018): 295-308.

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