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BODY IMAGE AS THE BASIS FOR POSITIVE SOCIALIZATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

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Abstract

The authors raise an understudied problem of the development of body image as a “sign” of personality development and one of the mechanisms of successful socialization of an individual in early childhood. Based on the terminological analysis, the concept of “positive socialization of young children” is specified and the concept of “body image” is unfolded in a sociocultural context. The materials and results of an experimental study of the dependence of “body image” interpretations on parenting styles are provided. The potential of various forms of art for improving teachers’ and parents’ awareness of the significance of “body image” for positive socialization of young children is identified.

Keywords

Body image – Socialization mechanisms – Initial socialization – Positive socialization

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Introduction

Positive socialization plays a key role in the self-definition of every person at every stage of their life and in any circumstances. The essence of socialization is found in the integration of an individual into a certain social system (family, kindergarten, school, college, university, professional community, etc.) with the goal of mastering and translating social experience in different types of activity. The primary mechanism of positive socialization is a person's conscious acceptance and motivated embodiment of socially accepted values, norms, rules, knowledge, and skills required for successful self-realization in the social environment and full life in society.

An American sociologist Franklin H. Giddings who introduced the term "socialization" in 1887 described it as a process of personality formation occurring as a result of combined spontaneous and educational impact. The concept of "socialization" was introduced into social psychology by A. Bandura and J. Coleman in the middle of the 20th century and quickly expanded beyond its semiosphere and acquired a meta-subject nature. At present, various aspects of socialization present the object of studies in philosophy, economics, political science, anthropology, social medical sciences, sociology, cultural studies, ethnography, art history, developmental psychology, pedagogics, etc. By the present day, the history of the development of socialization as an area of interdisciplinary research has been studied well and the leading conceptions of socialization have been analyzed and described (A.V. Mudrik¹). Globalization processes are reflected in the ideas of planetary and cosmic sociology including those stated long before the formation of sociology as a science (V. M. Bekhterev, V.I. Vernadskii, K.N. Venttsel, P.P. Lazarev, E. Morin, V.S. Solovev, A.L. Chizhevskii, etc.).

The subject-object approach (introduced by E. Durkheim, T. Parson, J.H. Ballantine, A. McNeill, J. U. Ogbu, J. and Z. Perry, R. J. Havighurst, etc.) that views socialization as a process of mastering behavior roles and models within an individual's relations with family and society, the process of development of satisfactory bonds with other people (G. Terry Page, G.B. Thomas, Alan R. Marshall) has spread widely in the field of social sciences. In the field of humanitarian knowledge, the subject-subject approach to the socialization phenomenon (founded by W. E. Thomas, F. Znanetskii, C.H. Cooley, G.H. Mead, A. Haller, W.M. Wentworth) suggesting that the person themselves plays an important role in the process of positive socialization at different stages of their life (L. Dowdney, D. Skuse, K. Morris & A. Pickles²) appears more promising.

There are several conceptions of the younger generations' socialization. I.S. Cohn examines childhood in two aspects: first, as a specific subculture of society and second, as an element of human culture in general³. Based on this, Cohn interprets the initial socialization as "a way of the existence and transmission of culture". According to V.S. Mukhina's theory, child socialization involves the development of personality and the manifestation of its qualities in the form of socially acceptable acts, actions, states, and relations with the surrounding world⁴.

¹ A. V. Mudrik, *Socialization of a person: Textbook for students* (Moscow: Academy, 2004).

² L. Dowdney; D. Skuse; K. Morris y A. Pickles, "Short Normal Children and Environmental Disadvantage: A Longitudinal Study of Growth and Cognitive Development from 4 to 11 Years", *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* Vol: 39 num 7 (1998): 1017-1029.

³ I. V. Cohn, *Child and society* (Moscow: Academy, 2003).

⁴ B. C. Mukhina, *Age psychology. The phenomenology of development: textbook for students* (Moscow: Academy, 2006).

It is important to review the scientifically substantiated *mechanisms of socialization of a growing person*: “imitation” (I. Gard); “progressive mutual accommodation” (adaptability) between an active growing human being and the changing conditions of their existence (U. Bronfenbrenner); “dialogue” (M. Bakhtin⁵, V.P. Zinchenko⁶); the interrelation of “imitation”, “identification”, “shame”, and “guilt” (N. Smelser); the dual mechanism comprising “identification” and “isolation” (V.S. Mukhina⁷); the successive change between the phases of adaptation, individuation, and integration (A.V. Petrovskii), and “creativity” (N. Ahmadi, L. Peter, T. Lubart, M. Besançon⁸).

Despite the multifaceted in-depth research of many issues related to positive socialization, the period of initial socialization of a person, more specifically the first three years of life, remains understudied. A child at the age of infancy and early childhood successfully socializes in the process of emotionally significant communication and different types of interaction with other people (most importantly, close adults). This problem was addressed in the studies by N.M. Aksarina, J. Bowlby, L.S. Vygotsky⁹, D. Winnicott¹⁰, M. Donaldson, A.V. Zaporozhets, M.I. Lisina, E.E. Maccoby¹¹, V.S. Manova-Tomova, V.I. Slobodchikov, E.O. Smirnova, and many others. One of the little-explored questions is the mechanism of transformation of a “biological being” into the “social being” in the process of a child mastering their physicality (J.R. Staffieri¹², V.T. Kudriavtsev), the development of body image as a “sign” of personality and a basis for positive socialization (M. Featherstone¹³) occurring, among other things, along the process of mastering the sociocultural function of hands (L.V. Shkoliar, I.A. Lykova¹⁴).

The problem of the study is found in the search for ways to broaden the views of modern parents and pedagogues teaching young children regarding the “image of a child’s body” as a sign of developing personality.

Study objectives:

1) To specify the term “positive socialization of young children” on the basis of terminological analysis;

⁵ M. M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981).

⁶ N. A. Bernstein, *Biomechanics and Physiology of Movement: Selected Psychological Works* (Moscow: Institute of Practical Psychology, 1997).

⁷ B. C. Mukhina, *Age psychology. The phenomenology of development: textbook for students* (Moscow: Academy, 2006).

⁸ N. Ahmadi; L. Peter; T. Lubart y M. Besançon, *School Environments: Friend or Foe for Creativity Education and Research?* In: Mullen C. (eds) *Creativity Under Duress in Education? Creativity Theory and Action in Education*, vol 3. Springer, Cham. 2019.

⁹ L. S. Vygotsky, *History of higher mental functions development. Collected works: In 6 t. T. 3: Problems of development of the psyche* (Moscow: Pedagogy, 1983).

¹⁰ D. W. Winnicott, *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

¹¹ E. E. Maccoby, *The role of parents in the socialization of children: An historical overview.* In R. D. Parke, P. A. Ornstein, J. J. Rieser, & C. Zahn-Waxler (Eds.), *A century of developmental psychology* (p. 589–615). American Psychological Association, 1994.

¹² J. R. Staffieri, “A study of social stereotype of body image in children”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol: 7 num 1 (1967): 101–104.

¹³ M. Featherstone, “Body, Image and Affect in Consumer Culture”, *Body & Society* num 16 (2010): 193-221.

¹⁴ L. V. Snkolyar y I. A. Lykova, “Development of hand functions in the human being ontogeny”, *Biosciences Biotechnology Research Asia* Vol: 8 num 2 (2015): 529-534.

2) To disclose the concepts of “physicality”, “body image”, and “body culture” in the sociocultural context. To scientifically substantiate the interpretation of “body image” as a basis for positive socialization of a young child;

3) To study the ideas of modern parents about “the physicality of a child” and identify the types of “body image” interpretation;

4) To establish the relations between parenting styles and the varying interpretations of “body image”;

5) To identify the potential of art for the development of the sociocultural “image of a child’s body” in adults raising young children.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical portion of the study is constructed based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical, sociological, culturological, and art history literature on the issue of positive socialization of young children in the process of mastering their body as a sociocultural “instrument” through the means of various types of art. The present research also uses the results of our previous studies¹⁵.

The empirical portion of the study was conducted in five subjects of the Russian Federation (Vologda Oblast, Kamchatka Krai, Moscow Oblast, Perm Krai, and Rostov Oblast). Three preschool education organizations having two educational groups for young children were randomly selected in each region. Parents raising young children (or their legal representatives) were invited to participate in a voluntary anonymous questionnaire “What I think and know about my child’s body” (the questionnaire was developed by us and is presented below). Overall, 232 questionnaire forms were processed, 204 of which were included in the study results (28 forms were completed partially or damaged). The respondents’ age and gender were not accounted for in the result analysis since it was anticipated that the majority of the surveyed parents participate in parenting to the maximum extent and, therefore, determine the priorities and style of family upbringing initiatively.

Questionnaire “What I think and know about my child’s body”

1) Do you often watch the activity of your child simply because it brings you pleasure (the way they move, play, draw, model, dance, etc.)?

2) Does touching your child bring you pleasure? What feelings does their body evoke?

3) What baby care activities bring you the most joy (bathing, going to bed, dressing, hair combing, games, rhymes, massage, etc.)?

¹⁵ I. Lykova; V. Kozhevnikova y I. Merzlikina, Readiness of Teachers To Dialogue In The Educational Environment: Problem Statement, European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences (2018); I. A. Lykova, “Cognitive, artistic and physical development’s integration: «From the ball to the human body’s image and the Olympic symbolism»”, NETWORK Electronic scientific journal “Pedagogy of Art” num 3 (2013) y I. A. Lykova y V. V. Kozhevnikova, “Formation of communication in the educational environment (education and development of young children)”, “Kazan pedagogical journal num 3 (2017): 92-99.

4) What worries you, what do you fear when you think and care about the body, health, physical condition of your child?

5) What words do you usually use when referring to your child (including affectionate names, nicknames, names of facial features, body parts, etc.)?

6) Which one of the statements provided below corresponds to your idea about the human body, including the body of a young child (choose one of four options).

Statement one (*Type 1 in Table 1*). The body is the basis of human life and health (especially for a young child), thus, parents need basic knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and hygiene for comprehensive care and supervision of a child in accordance with specialist recommendations.

Statement two (*Type 2 in Table 1*). The body is unique and loved, it is “a wonderful gift from nature”; therefore, it should be accepted as it is without intervening in its natural processes of growth, maturation, functioning, and development.

Statement three (*Type 3 in Table 1*). The body is a crucial part of a child’s self-awareness and a basis for their successful socialization, a constantly developing “instrument” of active learning of the surrounding world and one’s self; therefore, it is important to create appropriate conditions for its comprehensive development accounting for age-related abilities and individual characteristics.

Statement four (*Type 4 in Table 1*). The body is only the appearance and there is no need to pay a lot of attention to it or somehow influence its structure, functions, processes, and individual characteristics; once a child grows up, they will take care of their appearance, including the body, themselves.

7) Choose a proverb/saying that best corresponds to your ideas about the body and its role in human life (underline one phrase).

“A healthy body is better than wealth”.

“A man can be recognized by their gait”.

“Healthy spirit is in a healthy body”.

“The apple doesn't fall far from the tree”.

8) How are you helping your child explore their body and its abilities?

Choose any number of answers out of the provided list and add your own interesting “solutions”: 1) we look into the mirror often; 2) we look at photos; 3) we do physical exercises together; 4) we carry out hygiene procedures; 5) we perform various tasks together, including house chores; 6) we play outdoor and role-playing games; 7) we dance; 8) we name body parts during various procedures;

9) We perform nursery rhymes, songs, home theater scenes with dolls;

10) We look at the images of children (illustrations, sculptures, toys) and talk.

The study also deployed the “Parenting styles questionnaire” method for studying parenting styles developed by D. Baumrind and modified by S. Stepanov.

The modeling experiment method was applied to study the potential of various forms of art for the development of body image as the basis of young children’s socialization in the sociocultural educational environment. The “Kaliaki-maliaki” (“Scribbles”), “Lepeshka” (“Flatbread”), “Petrushka”, “Nashi pelenashki” (“Our swaddling clothes”), and “Pestushki-poteshki” (“Little nursery rhymes”) art methods were approbated on 57 teachers and 232 parents.

The study results interpretation methods included qualitative analysis and descriptive statistics. Based on the results of the sixth and seventh questionnaire items, we identified the relationship between the parents’ choice of the “body image” type and the style of family upbringing using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient — $r_s=0.325$ ($p\leq 0.001$). The results of the analysis are presented in two forms — verbal and graphic (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Results

Answers to Item 1. Based on the terminological analysis, the concept of “positive socialization” was specified with consideration of the specific characteristics of young children. *Positive socialization in early childhood* is viewed as a dynamic process of a child mastering the initial sociocultural experience for successful communication and interaction in the close social circle (in the family, a kindergarten group, etc.). Herewith the initial sociocultural experience is viewed as a constantly expanding system that includes basic life skills, cultural skills, ways of communication depending on the age-related abilities, individual characteristics of a child, and the educational demands of their family.

Answers to Item 2. As a result of the analysis of interpretations of the concepts of “physicality”, “body image”, and “body culture”, we formulated the content for parents and teachers raising young children. In the sociocultural context, “physicality” is considered an integrated quality of personality, the cumulative result of a person’s physical, social, and cultural development. Body culture is viewed as a crucial part of the overall culture of personality. The content of physicality determines the person’s attitude towards their body, physical development, and health in all spheres of life and activity. Several aspects disclosing the sociocultural nature of a developing person’s physicality can be identified. H.J. Stam perceives the attempt to position physicality in union with “self-image”, culture, ethnos, etc., as one of such aspects. The concept of “physicality” is also disclosed in the context of issues related to somaesthetics, human physical attractiveness (B. Turner, D.R. Shaffer, N. Crepaz, Ch. Sun), self-identity (S. Penna, S. Kirby, M. Adelman, L. Ruggi, L. Langman, etc.), social expectations (C.M. Sabiston, W.A. Sedgwick, P.R.E. Crocker, K.C. Kowalski, etc.), following fashion (K.P. Johnson, J. Yoo, M. Kim, Sh.J. Lennon, M.S. Sontag, J. Lee, etc.), and the effect of the media (D. Henderson-King, E. Henderson-King, L. Hoffmann, J.E. Ferris, etc.).

The concept of “body image” was first introduced into the scientific discourse by P. Schilder who defines it as “a person’s subjective experience of their body”, i.e. as a mental spatial image, which, as he argues, forms within interpersonal interaction¹⁶. “Body image”

¹⁶ P. Schilder, *The image and appearance of the human body: Studies in the constructive energies of the psyche* (New York: Intern. univ. press, 1970).

presents a specific system of a person's ideas about the physical aspect of their own "Self", about their body — a bodily and psychological "map"¹⁷.

Answers to Item 3. Further on, we studied the modern parents' ideas about "the child's physicality" and identified the types of "body image" interpretations. The resulting typology is presented in the "*Materials and Methods*" section: the sixth item of the "**What I think and know about my child's body**" questionnaire contains *four statements* corresponding to the four types of the "body image" interpretations from the perspective of parents raising young children. The parents are aware of the fact that "body image" is not passive, "frozen", or initially given. On the contrary, it is dynamic and subjective since in early childhood it is formed with the participation of adults and at an older age, the person themselves shapes it in the process of activity. "Body image" is constructed in different life situations from various manifestations of the bodily and the ideas of physicality (both real and ideal). It is necessary to help the parents realize that "body image" starts to form in a child's consciousness from a very young age and performs a crucial function at all life stages. It includes the feeling of one's body, the experience of owning it, and its subjective assessment. "Body image" gradually forms in an infant following parents' touches, positive attitude, affectionate words, and orientation on the present development.

Answers to Item 4. Based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature and experimental study materials, we identified four parenting styles described as variative parental strategy models regarding, among other things, the child's physicality and "body image". Two criteria were identified for the analysis of parenting styles:

1) *warmth — coldness* (determined by the degree of parents' responsiveness to the natural needs of children, characterizes the emotional bond between children and parents);

2) *presence or lack of control* (determined by the level and consistency of requirements appropriate for the characteristics of children).

We will proceed to describe the four parenting styles — authoritarian, indulgent, authoritative, and neglectful — through the combination of "warmth" and "control" criteria.

The authoritarian style is characterized by a high level of control over the child's behavior and an insufficiently warm attitude towards them.

The indulgent style involves low control over a child's behavior (activity) and warm relationships in the family.

The authoritative style combines systemic and motivated control over the behavior of a child, the presence of "family rules" and warm relationships between children and parents.

The neglectful parenting style (E. Maccoby, J. Martin) is characterized by low and unsystematic control of a child's behavior (activity) accompanied by insufficient warmth and emotional connection between children and adults.

¹⁷ P. Schilder, The image and appearance of the human body...

We share D. Baumrind’s¹⁸ viewpoint suggesting that the authoritative parenting style is optimal in the conditions of uncertainty as a systemic characteristic of both the present and the future.

In the course of the present study, we established correlations between the parenting styles and the variative interpretations of “body image”.

The relationship between parents’ choice of “body image” type and parenting styles was identified using Spearman’s r — $r_s=0.325$ ($p \leq 0.001$).

The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Parenting styles	“Body image” types from the parents’ perspective			
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
Authoritarian style	0.106 ($p \leq 0.001$)	0.801 ($p \geq 0.05$)	0.516 ($p \leq 0.001$)	0.791 ($p \geq 0.05$)
Authoritative style	0.524 ($p \leq 0.01$)	0.509 ($p \leq 0.01$)	0.126 ($p \leq 0.001$)	0.903 ($p \geq 0.05$)
Indulgent style	0.891 ($p \geq 0.05$)	0.136 ($p \leq 0.001$)	0.703 ($p \geq 0.05$)	0.529 ($p \leq 0.01$)
Neglectful style	0.368 ($p \leq 0.01$)	0.323 ($p \leq 0.01$)	0.396 ($p \leq 0.01$)	0.142 ($p \leq 0.001$)

Note: the types of “body image” are presented in the form of statements 1, 2, 3, and 4 provided in the “Materials and Methods” section

Table 1

The results of testing the relationships between parenting styles and the types of “body image” from the perspective of young children’s parents

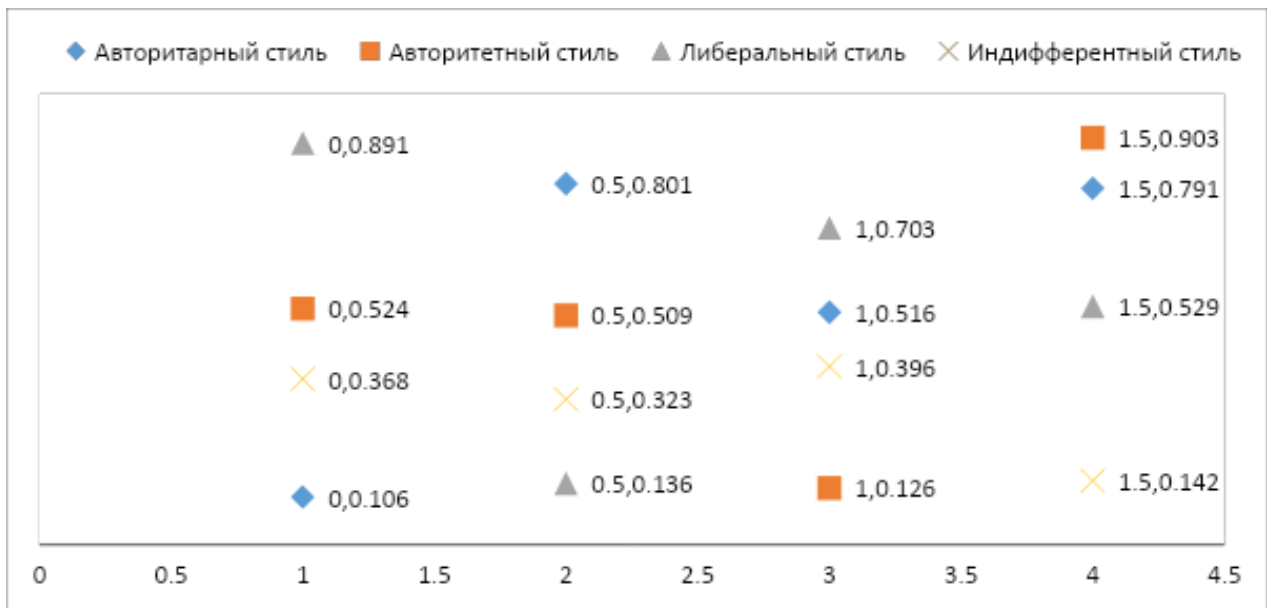


Figure 1

Correlation between parenting styles and the types of “image of a child’s body” from the perspective of parents raising young children

¹⁸ D. Baumrind, “Parenting: The Discipline Controversy Revisited”, Family Relations Vol: 45 num 4 (1996): 405–414.

Авторитарный стиль	Authoritarian style
Авторитетный стиль	Authoritative style
Либеральный стиль	Indulgent style
Индиферентный стиль	Neglectful style

Answers to Item 5. The potential of various forms of art for the development of a sociocultural “image of a child’s body” as a “sign” of developing personality in parents and teachers was identified. The main resource was constructed by the works of different types of art that allowed creating an image of a person and expressing a certain attitude towards the human body:

— oral and musical folklore (nursery rhymes, chants, fun games, finger games, lullabies);

— folk toys embodying an image of a person (Abashev, Bogorodsk, Dymkovo, Kargopol, Romanov toys, etc.);

— folk textile dolls (“Bereginya”, “Bessonitsa” (“Sleeplessness”), “Krupenichka”, “Kuvadka”, “Nerazluchniki” (“Lovebirds”), “Otdarok za podarok” (“A gift for a gift”), “Parochka” (“Couple”), “Pelenashka”, “Pokosnitsa (a girl and a boy)”, “Stolbushka”);

— dolls for different types of children’s theater (finger, puppet, shadow theater, etc.);

— colored illustrations in children’s books (by artists like Iu. Vasnetsov, V. Konashevich, V. Lebedev, A. Pakhomov, V. Chizhikov, M. Fedotova, I. Chekmareva, and others.);

— small sculptures or figurines (images of children and young animals);

— artistic photographs capturing the images of early childhood and an individual child.

Discussion

The search for the ways of harmonization of positive socialization and flexible individuation of the educational process presents one of the most prominent questions of modern psychological and pedagogical science (A.G. Asmolov, I.S. Kon, V.T. Kudriavtsev, V.S. Mukhina, L.V. Obukhova, etc.). Positive socialization comprises self-identification, self-actualization, and self-realization of a child in the process of their integration into the social environment.

The body presents an “instrument” for a child’s exploration of the inner and outer world and physicality acts like a mechanism for establishing the relationships between a developing person and the social environment.

Modern psychology recognizes the definition of physicality as a special phenomenological reality presenting a combination of biopsychosocial aspects of the physical existence of a subject in the physical world (A.Sh. Tkhostov, D.A. Beskova). I. B.

Bykhovskaia defines physicality as a characteristic emerging at the intersection of the natural and the sociocultural that unites both the materialized, objectified consequences of this “intersection” and the qualities, “signs” of the body, or “the integral hypersensitive qualities” (the term introduced by V.P. Kuzmin) of physicality not possessed by the object itself but attributed to it by society. The body as a whole, as well as its individual parts, can be examined as the initial basis of the conceptualization of the world, both inner and outer¹⁹.

Body image is a person’s subjective perception of their own body, the synthesis of how a person perceives and understands it, and how do they feel about it.

In most studies, body image is viewed as one of the fundamental components of self-awareness (R. Burns, V.S. Mukhina, J. Piaget, S.L. Rubinshtein, I.M. Sechenov, R.I. Meerovich, M.O. Mdivani, E.T. Sokolova, etc.). A. Radley notes the importance of the common ground of a range of theories examining the specific characteristics of physicality (Goffman, Geertz, Zimmel, Goodwin), namely the process of symbolization in the development of physicality. Empirical studies provide solid evidence for the relation between human motor and cognitive experience, social or perceptual development in infancy.

Body image is a holistic system of a person’s ideas about the physical aspect of their “Self”, their body, a sort of bodily and psychological “map” or “portrait” of a person. This portrait comprises both a person’s feeling of their body and its subjective evaluation. Body image resembles a unique constructor assembled by a person from individual elements (Ostwald, Michael²⁰). Body image is subjective and dynamic since it is constructed by each person in the process of their life and activity as a projection of their external “Self”. A person’s perception of their body is linked to personal experience, as well as sociocultural norms.

According to S. Jourard²¹, body image is necessary for the development of a physically, mentally, and socially healthy personality. If a child feels attractive and finds support in the close social circle, they will form a positive image of their body bringing them joy and thus determining the harmonious nature of relationships with the outside world. On the contrary, if a child feels unattractive, ugly, invisible, and even physically handicapped, they will form low self-esteem based on the distorted body image, which will negatively affect their overall development and cause serious difficulties in socialization. This outcome may lead to a person becoming alienated from their body, losing the ability to recognize the health-related signals and other messages the body sends to itself and other people. A child that was not caressed, stroked, or touched experiences major difficulties in the formation of body image, expressing and making sense of their emotions; they do not feel or understand other people. In most severe cases, serious distortion of body image may result in the corruption of the sense of “Self”.

It is no accident that modern psychology considers “body image” a fundamental component of integral “Self-image”. In the process of growth and development, body image is included in all the fragments of the structure of self-awareness: self-identification, gender

¹⁹ Materials of the international correspondence scientific and practical conference. "Psychology of corporeality: theoretical and practical research" (Penza, March 25, 2008) (Penza: V. G. Belinsky state pedagogical University, 2008).

²⁰ M. Ostwald, “Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret), The Modulor and Modulor 2 – 2 volumes”, Nexus Network Journal num 3 (2001): 145-148.

²¹ S. Jourard, The transparent self (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971).

status, claims for recognition, psychological time and social space of personality, social roles, etc. Every person must learn to perceive their unique body objectively, love it, and strive to improve it from early childhood.

Visual arts (sculpture, pictorial art, graphics, theatre, circus, etc.) have great significance for the formation of body image in a person's consciousness since such artworks provide references of beauty expressed in vivid and visible images. A person presents the main theme and the most precise measure in art. The types of art the pieces of which are most attractive to young children and available for the formation of their body image include oral and musical folklore (rhymes, fun games, lullabies), folk toys (including rag dolls), theatrical dolls, book illustrations, sculptures, photography, animation, etc.

Conclusions

In the sociocultural context, physicality is viewed as a fundamental condition for positive socialization through which a person acquires the ability to attribute meanings and symbols to the surrounding world. A child's mastery of their body results in the construction of "body image" as a basic system of values, meanings, signs, as well as norms and rules of socially acceptable behavior, value relation to one's own body. "Body image" presents a sign of forming personality. The mastery of body culture is an important mechanism of a person's self-identification and positive socialization at all life stages. The content of a person's body culture is viewed as a sphere of value-oriented resolution of contradictions between biological (natural) needs and inclinations on the one hand and social guidelines, values, norms, and rules on the other hand.

Every person perceives the reality of the world and explores it exclusively through their own body (sense organs, perception). In early childhood, this process takes a more intensive and dynamic turn. The perception of the world is anthropocentric. Thus, the human body sets the parameters of perception and allows the very opportunity of mastering the surrounding space, time, and other parameters of existence and provides an empirical basis for what later becomes the image of the world integrating the concepts like big/small, far/near, high/low, fast/slow, warm/cold, light/dark, moving/static, health/illness, creation/destruction, harmony/chaos, and many others in the consciousness of a child. Thus, the "body image" becomes a basis for "the image of the world" — both inner and outer.

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