

Social and Psychological Factors in the Development of Preschool Children

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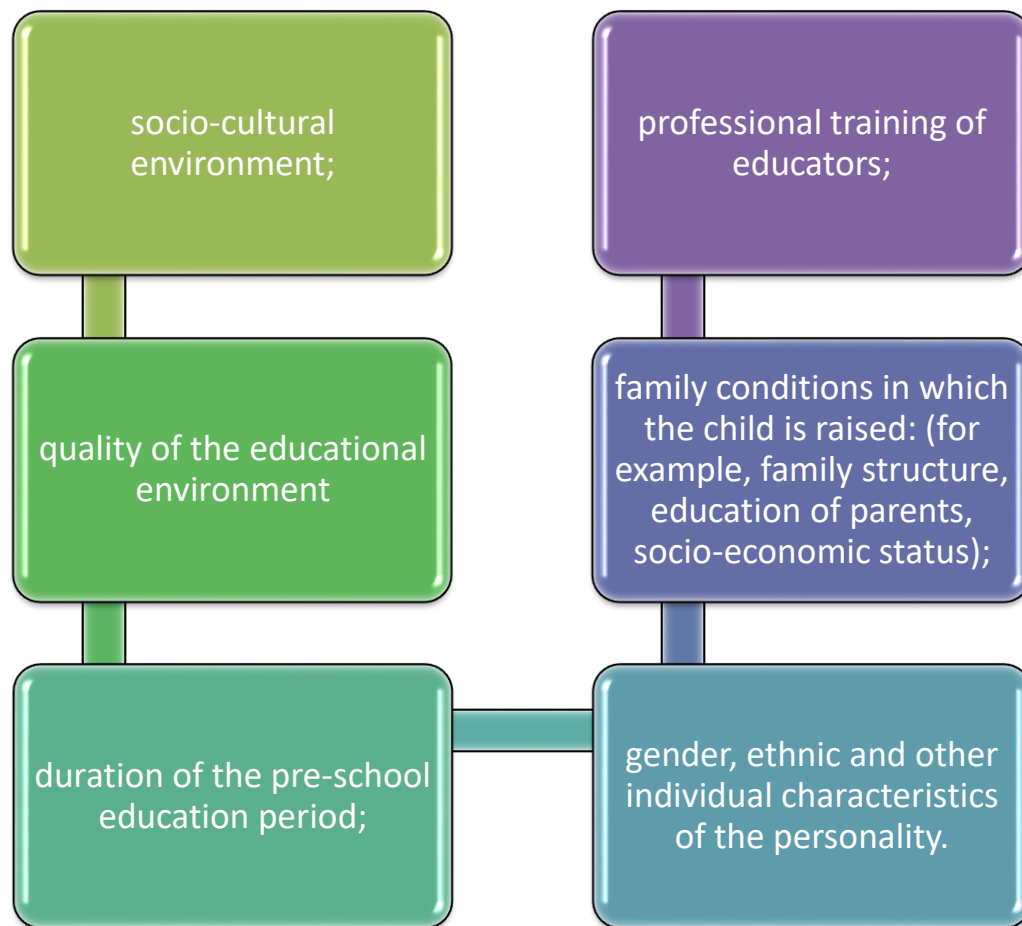
Abstract:

The article presents a generalized review of modern foreign studies aimed at studying the socio-psychological characteristics of preschoolers' development. The leading directions of modern science in the field of preschool education have been identified, and their cross-cultural aspects have been highlighted. Particular attention is paid to the main factors of preschool education, which have a positive impact on the subsequent stages of development and socialization of children. The role of preschoolers' relationships with others during preschool childhood is noted. The data on the cause-and-effect relationship between the quality of these relationships and the child's academic and social success in the future are summarized.

Keywords: preschool educational environment, communication skills, academic success, social competence, interaction with others

As in many domestic studies, currently abroad special attention is paid to the problem of interdependence of different types of abilities, as well as the influence of relationships with peers on academic performance and social acceptance. Often, putting the child's intellectual development in the foreground, insufficient attention is paid to his personal sphere and the sphere of social interaction. At different age stages, depending on personal priorities and reference groups, mental abilities become not the only significant ones. After all, in order to be successful and accepted in a group, you also need to have certain communication skills, be able to reasonably justify your position, constructively solve various problems and be ready to accept a different point of view. Some scientists call this area of abilities social intelligence, and in foreign sources the term sounds like social competence. In this context, such important aspects in the development of a child as the emotional sphere and the sphere of interaction with others are put forward: both with adults and with peers.

A review of foreign sources made it possible to identify several areas that receive special attention in modern science in the field of preschool education:



Many studies are currently focused on the role of preschool education in the long term, whether it is primary school or the performance indicators at the end of it. However, the results are quite contradictory. Most of the analyzed preschool programs show a positive impact on children's development. This data is supported by the results of many studies that have found that preschool programs tend to be effective in influencing children's cognitive development, both in the short and long term [2]. At the same time, the authors of some studies talk about the lack of such significance of preschool education. Thus, Magnuson notes that the benefits obtained through early education level out in the second or third grade of school compared to the indicators of children who did not study in any additional program before school [4]. In this regard, the authors come to the conclusion that the format of school education is rather decisive for the extent to which the positive results of preschool education are maintained.

However, both earlier studies and recent studies have reported a positive contribution of preschool education to future academic success. For example, a large-scale study of early development (Study of Early Child Care) conducted by the National Institute of Child Health (NICHD) in Switzerland showed that the duration of attendance at preschool institutions, regardless of its quality, may be associated with the problem of social development in the future. A positive impact of preschool education on mental abilities and academic success in general is also noted [3]. As noted above, much attention in modern developmental psychology is paid to the emotional sphere and the sphere of interaction with others. Foreign literature emphasizes the role of social relationships (with parents, teachers and peers) in the context of the formation of the necessary competencies of a primary school student. Social relationships are assumed to perform a regulatory function in

adaptability and in the ability to cope with difficulties when children move to school [5]. There is growing evidence that the quality of the relationship between the child and the caregiver makes an important contribution to the transition to school, especially in the social and behavioral spheres. Without denying the importance of Bowlby's attachment theory on the need for long-term relationships with one adult who constantly cares for the child (ideally the mother), many modern foreign studies note the importance of relationships with the caregiver. Researchers put forward the idea that children can form different types of attachments with people other than their parents who are involved in their upbringing (caregivers), including caregivers. From this point of view, caregivers, due to their role, can provide physical and emotional support, which is the basis for the formation of an attachment relationship [4]. Modern studies also note the existence of a relationship between the teacher-child relationship and the child's readiness for school. In the academic field of science, there is evidence that the teacher-child relationship contributes to linguistic development and the development of academic skills, and also has a positive effect on the child's academic success in elementary school.

The significant consequences of aspects of the caregiver-child relationship are reflected at the social and behavioral level during the school years. In particular, close and trusting relationships reduce aggression and antisocial behavior, promote prosocial skills, school competence, and a positive attitude toward school. In contrast, high-conflict relationships are associated with increased aggression and problem behavior, decreased cooperation, self-confidence, and a positive attitude toward the school environment. In general, all this contributes to isolating, antisocial behavior, aggression toward peers, and a general negative attitude toward school and active participation in its social life. Gender also determines the significance of the type of caregiver-child relationship. For example, a study conducted in China examines the difference in gender and its importance in social competence: girls find it easier to find a common language and are focused on cooperative communication at the behavioral and emotional levels, while boys are more focused on establishing relationships of power/leadership, dominance, and are focused on active relationships with other boys. In terms of relationships with teachers, boys are supported by more assertive and "masculine" qualities (building, repairing, etc.), while girls are supported by relationships, accuracy, etc. Existing studies trace a connection between teacher-girl relationships, presumably due to girls' focus on relationships; hence emotional attunement with the teacher is more important for them [1]. As a result, an opinion is being formed that conflictual relationships with teachers are not so significant for boys and that the discourse supported in society is typical that it is natural for boys to strive for dominance and aggression in communicative behavior. However, if you look at it from another perspective, it is precisely for boys that there is an opportunity to make a greater contribution to the development of their communication skills through relationships.

The same study noted that in the United States, the hypothesis was also tested about the relationship between the teacher-pupil relationship and subsequent academic success and behavior of the child, especially in African-American children, children with language problems and behavioral problems. In particular, in the United States, special attention is paid to the ethnicity of children in connection with subsequent problems in the social and academic spheres. Some studies note a tendency for teachers to have worse relationships with African-American children, compared with white or Hispanic children. The coincidence of ethnic identity contributes to closer and less conflictual relationships; this is especially evident in Hispanic children. At the same time, support from teachers of African-American children at risk and children of Hispanic origin to a greater extent predicts a decrease in aggressive behavior in them than in white children [2]. The results on the influence of ethnic identity on the subsequent successful development of children are contradictory.

Some studies talk about the existence of a relationship between ethnic identity in the teacher-child dyad and the development of social and intellectual abilities in the child, while others have not

confirmed this data. But in general, based on the results of modern studies based on kindergartens and primary schools, it can be concluded that children's readiness for school is definitely promoted by favorable relationships with the teacher as opposed to conflictual ones, especially with regard to the successful socialization of the child [5]. It is interesting that different countries highlight their own specific significant aspects in the sphere of social and psychological development of children. Thus, in the USA, much attention is paid to gender and ethnicity, as well as equal opportunities for obtaining the necessary education and development for families with different socio-economic levels. Particular attention is paid to preschool education of children from disadvantaged families and families of social minorities [2]. Also, in the USA, they are interested in the attitude of the parents themselves to preschool education. Yoko Yamamoto and her colleagues drew attention to the importance of parental expectations of the educational environment, noting that although many scientists have tried to identify the features that determine high quality preschool education, few know about the views of parents themselves on it. The authors note the particular importance of taking into account the views of immigrant parents with different socioeconomic status on high-quality preschool education. Having conducted a content analysis of open conversations with parents among immigrants of low and middle socioeconomic status from China and Europe, the authors noted that, regardless of socioeconomic status and culture, parents highlighted the professionalism of educators, the educational process, and the educational environment as significant conditions for high quality preschool education. However, there are also differences: according to the survey data, immigrants from China focused on the personality of the educator, while immigrants from Europe emphasized an individual approach and the ability to meet the needs/requests of children and parents. The study's findings also suggest that parents' choice of criteria for valuing high-quality preschool education is influenced by both ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

In China, the importance of relationships with early educators for the further development of a preschooler is noted, including for their academic performance, language communication skills (language literacy) and communication with peers. This phenomenon is referred to as "social success", which ultimately affects cognitive, social and emotional development. Here, Xiao Zhang notes that undeservedly little attention is paid to parent-child relationships, since it has been proven that the relationship between a child and mother, as well as a child and father, affects many aspects of a child's development, including mental, social, emotional and linguistic competencies. For example, there is data on the role of parent-child attachment on the readiness to establish relationships in the future. Thus, in China, over the past 30 years, interest in the problem of relationships between fathers and children and their influence on the child's development has been growing. Closeness and conflictual relationships are considered in the context of the child's future social competence, in connection with which the assumption is put forward and tested that favorable relationships with the father contribute to the formation of a trusting and supportive model of relationships, which leads to the formation of social responsibility and the ability to constructively resolve various types of conflicts. The peculiarity of Chinese research is that traditional Chinese culture values the role of the father in disciplining children, transmitting knowledge about correct social skills. The famous Chinese work "Three Symbols" says that: "It is the father's fault if the child does not receive a proper education." Thus, in China, studying the specifics of the development of abilities and the influence of various factors of the educational environment on them, scientists try not to neglect the aspect of the child's family structure and relationships in it.

To sum up, we can say that modern foreign psychology in the study of social and psychological factors of preschoolers' development, the importance of education for the social and personal development of the child, focuses on such aspects as:

1. the importance of preschool education in the long term (influence on the child's future social and academic success and readiness for school);
2. the influence of types of relationships with educators on the child's social and psychological development;
3. the quality of the educational program from the parents' perspective, the involvement of parents in the educational process;
4. the child's family structure (including socio-economic status);
5. Socio-cultural, ethnic and gender characteristics.

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