Images of the Elderly
in Preschoolers and Their Parents

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Образы старости
у дошкольников и их родителей

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Abstract

Introduction. The paper analyses the representations of old people by the preschoolers. The changing demographic situation of the society stimulates a study of contemporary relationship between generations. Some studies reveal stereotypes and discrimination of an old subject by small children. The nature of this phenomenon and factors influencing it are contradictory and not clear.

The objective of the study is to reveal and to analyze interrelations between the elderly images in preschoolers with those of their parents. We supposed that the image of the elderly in older preschoolers depends on stereotyped parents' representations of the elderly and on the quality and accessibility of child's relationship with grandparents.

Study design. 67 child-parents dyads including 67 preschoolers aged from five to six years (56.7 % of girls and 43.3 % of boys) and 67 parents aged from 23 till 59 years (85.1 % of mothers and 14.9 % of fathers) took part in the study. We used the method of projective drawing for children and a questionary together with association test for parents. The questionary was aimed to precise the social and demographic state of the parents and the ancestors, the type of the family from the point of view of participation of grandparents in the care and upbringing of children, relationship of children and grandparents and parents' opinions about the need for participation of grandparents in children upbringing.

Results. (1) The study of parents proved, that a positive or negative image of an old person is manifested via the dynamic system of health/disease, preservation or not preservation of functional abilities and life competence. A neutral image is represented through inclusion in the new state of a retired and an ancestor. (2) The study of children proved that the quality of communication with grandparents determines the emotional component in elderly and old subject image. A limited or absent communication results in emotionally neutral and personally not valuable image. (3) We did not reveal the influence of parents' stereotyped images on children.

Conclusions. (1) A positive aging images and an efficient communication of children with ancestors form a basis for positive image of elderly and of an old subject by small children. (2) Children experience of "sufficient" communication with grandparents actualizes predominantly the emotional aspect of communication in the image of an old subject. (3) Children with deficient communication with grandparents represent an image of an old subject as somebody else or nobody' person, and accentuate psychophysiological deficits. (4) Preschoolers can have own representations of elderly not identic to parents or surrounding people or social stereotypes.

Keywords: relationship between generations; image of elderly; parents and grandparents; preschoolers; sufficient and deficient communication with ancestors

Аннотация
Введение. В статье анализируются представления дошкольников о пожилых людях. Авторы исходили из фактов меняющейся демографической ситуации в обществе, которая актуализирует изучение межпоколенных отношений в ракурсе современных реалий. Результаты некоторых исследований фиксируют данные о проявлении у детей в раннем возрасте стереотипов и дискриминации в отношении стареющего человека. Однако сведения о природе формирования и факторах, влияющих на это явление, мало изучены и порой противоречивы.

Цель работы: выявить и проанализировать взаимосвязь образов стареющего человека у детей дошкольного возраста и их родителей. Мы предположили, что представление образа старого человека у старших дошкольников зависит от стереотипов родительских представлений о старшем поколении и качества, доступности взаимодействия ребенка со своими прародителями.

Ход исследования. Для проверки гипотезы нами было проведено исследование, в котором участвовали 67 детско-родительских диад: 67 дошкольников в возрасте от 5

до 6.8 лет (56.7 % девочек и 43.3 % мальчиков); 67 родителей (85.1 % матерей и 14.9 % отцов) в возрасте от 23 до 59. В качестве методов исследования в детской выборке применялся проективный метод рисуночного теста, в родительской выборке — метод направленного ассоциативного эксперимента и анкетирование. Анкета включала вопросы, касающиеся уточнения социально-демографических характеристик родителя и старшего поколения, определения типа семьи респондента по степени использования поддержки прародителей по уходу/воспитанию детей, а также взаимоотношений прародителей с ребенком и мнения родителей по поводу проблемы (не)участия бабушек/дедушек в воспитании внуков.

Результаты исследования. 1. В родительской выборке было показано, что отрицательный и положительный образ старого человека взрослыми чаще всего демонстрируется через призму динамической системы здоровье/болезнь, (не)сохранения функционального благополучия и жизненной компетенции. Нейтральный образ репрезентируется как вариант вхождения в новый статус пенсионера и прародителя. 2. В детской выборке показано, что качество общения ребенка с прародителями детерминирует эмоциональную окраску восприятия формирующегося образа стариков и старости в целом. Ограничение или отсутствие общения приводит к тому, что ребенок представляет образ стареющего человека как эмоционально нейтральный, не отражающий личной значимости. 3. Влияние на детские взгляды стереотипов родительских представлений обнаружено не было.

Выводы. 1. Реальные примеры успешного старения и конструктивного взаимоотношения прародителей и внуков могут послужить надежной основой для конструирования маленькими детьми позитивного образа старого человека и старости в целом. 2. Детский опыт «достаточного общения» репрезентирует образ стареющего человека, в большей степени актуализируя эмоциональные аспекты взаимоотношений. 3. Для детей с опытом дефицита общения с прародителями образ старого человека персонализирован с «чужими» или «ничьими стариками», чаще с акцентами на возрастные психофизиологические утраты. 4. Ребенок дошкольного возраста может демонстрировать свой собственный уникальный взгляд на старого человека, совсем не тождественный взглядам родителей, окружающих и социальным стереотипам.

Ключевые слова: межпоколенные отношения; образ старости; родители и прародители; дошкольники; достаточное и дефицитарное общение детей и старшего поколения

…A great art is to be old… Even greater art is to be young, to understand how a young and adult has to treat an old.

E. Grieg

…The best is a combination of the experience in elderly with the energy of the young age.
G. B. Shaw

Human life process includes different ages, but all human ages exist together.

K. Marx

Introduction

Demographic changes in the contemporary society are evident: increase in life expectancy, general aging of the population, changes in age groups ratios, marriage traditions, families configurations and transformation of relationship between generations.

The old generation is now different, no more perceived as passive, dependent economically and physically, suffering from loneliness, deficient in cognition and intelligence (Rowe & Kahn, 2015; Strizhitskaya & Petrash, 2019). So, we see now the evidence of a big difference between the life of an old subject now and the life of his old parents. With this the problem of trigger ability of negative stereotypes of the elderly is still actual in the society. They provoke the destructive behavioral models in the old person from one side and from the other — discrimination and neglect of the old generation by the youngers (Butler, 1969; Elutina & Chekanova, 2004).

Some researchers revealed, that the number of negative evaluations of the old generation increases with age, and already in 25 years old people one can see a negative attitude or different signs of discrimination for old subjects (Kolpina, 2017; Krasnova, 2003).

Some studies prove that negative attitude for old people and their discrimination can appear in small children (Goldman R. J. & Goldman J. D., 1981; Johnson, 1999; Lynott & Merola, 2007). The studies of children' attitudes to old people are rare and contradictory. In the study of R. J. Goldman, and J. D. Goldman (1981) the primary school children characterized all old people as ill or having weak health. A study of attitudes in 6–11 years old primary schoolchildren for elderly population revealed a tendency to their discrimination and preference for youngers (Babcock, MaloneBeach, Hannighofer, & Woodworth-Hou, 2016). Some other studies give different evidences of representing old people as kind, friendly, even more clever and independent as younger generation (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Vauclair et al., 2018). There are also research evidences about significant influence of parents' opinions on formation of stereotypes in early childhood (Degner & Dalege, 2013; Gilbert & Ricketts, 2008).

Studies of elderly representations by descendants proves that the image of elderly determines own modes of aging. This image is based on interaction with own ancestors as well as on communication with other old people (Cavallotti, Grau-Grau, Marimon, & Gas, 2017; Flamion, Missotten, Jennotte, Hody, & Adam, 2020).

M. V. Ermolayeva (2010) in her dissertation revealed, that a special psychological and pedagogical work with preschoolers favors formation of emotional features, such as empathy, ability to share feelings and it permits then to understand the wisdom and moral experience of old people.

This short review of literature proves the necessity and importance to study preschoolers' images of elderly and the factors influencing them.

It permitted us to fix *the objective of our study* — to reveal and to analyze age manifestations of elderly image in preschoolers.

We have supposed that *the image of elderly in older preschoolers depends on parents' representations of the elderly and on the quality and accessibility of child's relationship with own grandparents.*

Subjects and Methods of the Study

67 child-parent dyads living in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky city, took part in the study. The subjects included 67 preschoolers aged from five to six years, eight months (56.7 % of girls and 43.3 % of boys) and 67 parents aged from 23 till 59 years (85.1 % of mothers and 14.9 % of fathers) took part in the study. 55.2 % of respondents had higher education, 23.9 % — college education and 20.9 % — high school education. 88 % of respondents lived in a full family.

The study was performed in the "Center of Personality Development, Psychological, and Pedagogical Assistance" and in the Center of Child Development "Ryabinushka." The study was a part of celebrating "The International Day of Elderly." All adults signed an informed agreement form for them and their children. Parents, psychologists and teachers from the Center of Child Development confirmed that all children participating in the study had no problems in cognitive and social development.

We used the following *methods* in our study:

1. *A questionary* for adult participants, including three units: (1) Typical questions on social and demographic data of parents and grandparents as well some questions précising participation of grandparents in upbringing and education of children. (2) Questions on communication of children with their grandparents. (3) Questions on parents' opinions concerning the participation of grandparents in education of their grandchildren.

2. *Association test,* aimed to analyze parents' representations of elderly. The parents were proposed to write at least five associations for the words "an old person." 25 independent experts (students of the psychology and education department of Kamchatka State University named after V. Bering), aged from 18 till 47 years,

60 % of women evaluated the answers using Likert Scale from –3 till +3. A middle score was put for each group of associations. A middle score from –3 till –1 showed a negative image; from +1 до +3 a positive image; and from –0,99 till +0,99 meant neutral position. A supplementary qualitative analysis of answers determined semantic universal associations (the most frequent associations for each stimulus) (Serkin, 2009).

3. *Method of projective drawings* for preschoolers. They were asked to draw: "How do you represent(–ses) an old person?"

Children were proposed a sheet of paper A4, an eraser, black pencil, and a set of 18-color pencils (Venger, 2003). After finishing the drawing, the child was asked to name it and to talk about it. The time of drawing was not limited. The drawing took place in mini groups of three — four children.

Children drawings were analyzed though two criteria's:

1. Formal features of the drawing (color, size, position of objects on the sheet, accuracy and attention to details, hatch, and corrections) (Venger, 2003).
2. Experts' evaluation using Likert Scale from –3 (negative image) till +3 (positive image) of the titles of drawings and their descriptions by children. 15 independent experts were students of the psychology and education department of Kamchatka State University, named after V. Bering, aged from 18 until 47 years (66.7 % of women). The esthetic quality of drawings was not analyzed.

Results

The Image of Elderly in the P arents

The first part of the questionary dealt with social and demographic features of the ancestors (*Table 1*).

The *Table 1* shows the predominance of grandmothers with middle age 58 years with college or university education. Many authors indicate, that the majority of grandmothers before 65 years have more possibilities of interaction with grandchildren (Bulanova, 2017; Ermolayeva, 2012; Krasnova, 2000). Besides, being officially retired becomes often a trigger of "rapprochement" with grandchildren. In Kamchatka region women are officially retired after 50 years old. With this the respondents indicated that 64.5 % grandmothers continued to work. This evidence does not contradict with the data of other researchers on the dependence of the role of grandmothers in communication with grandchildren, their upbringing and education from the grandmother's social state, her level of health and the age of grandchildren. Thus, O. V. Krasnova (2000) revealed, that lower is the social state of a grandmother, more likely she is included in the grandchildren care.

Some authors prove that interaction between parents and grandparents in children care and support depend from the type of family. V. I. Sharin and I. A. Kul'kova (2019) determined three types of families: *traditional* — a large family including many generations living together, where the grandmothers and/or grandfathers take about all care

of children; *a mixt type* of family, where the grandparents live separately, but help their children if necessary, more often economically and *ordinary type*, when the old generation lives separately and mostly did not help to care and to educate their grandchildren. We used this classification of families in the questionary of our study (*Table 2*).

Table 1
Social and demographic features of the ancestors

Feature	% of ancestors (n = 191)		Fisher's Criterion (φ)
	grandmothers 72.3 %	grandfathers 27.7 %	9.05**
Age groups			
43–55 years	62.3	49.1	1.64
56–75 years	32.6	43.4	1.38
76 years and more	5.1	7.5	.61
Education			
Unfinished high school	1.4	1.8	.16
High school	13.0	30.2	2.64*
College	40.6	35.8	.61
University	44.9	32.1	1.63
Family situation			
Married	23.9	62.3	4.94**
Divorced	44.9	20.8	3.23**
Widow	31.2	16.9	2.09*
Social position			
Employed	64.5	75.5	1.49
Not employed	35.5	24.5	1.49

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

Table 2
Distribution of families types from the point of view of participation of grandparents in the care/education of grandchildren

Characteristics	Family type		
	traditional	mixt	ordinary
Distribution of families types	17.9 %	22.3 %	59.7 %
Help from the old generation	High	Middle	Low
Living together	Together	Separate	Separate
Professional activity of parents	High	High	Limited

The *Table 2* shows that the majority of parents ($p \leq .01$) declared a low support of grandparents. The young families consisted only from parents and children. This evidence coincides with contemporary demographic tendencies indicating weakening of interrelations between generations (Gorlin, Lyashok, & Maleeva, 2018).

We were especially interested in parents' opinion about the need and the actual level of child's communication with his grandparents (*Table 3*).

Table 3
Frequency of selected answers in the part two of the questionary

Age of the parents	23–35 years, % (n = 38)	36–54 years, % (n = 29)	Fisher's Criterion (φ)
Question: "Which utterance do you prefer?"			
Communication of my child with his grandparents is **sufficient**	40.5	34.5	.48
Communication of my child with his grandparents is **not sufficient**	50	41.4	.69
Communication of my child with his grandparents is **not mandatory**	0	0	0
Communication of my child with his grandparents is **absent**	10.5	21.1	1.18

As we can see from the *Table 3*, many parents consider not sufficient the communication of their children with the grandparents. The *Figure 1* explains the details of sufficient and not sufficient communication of children with their grandparents.
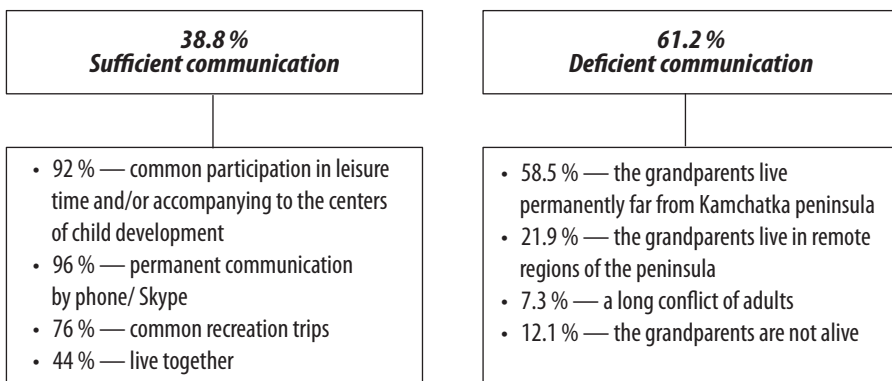

Figure 1. The structure of sufficient and not sufficient communication

Limited communication due to long distance or information processing problems for sure is a specific negative phenomenon of the region. But even the grandparents live

permanently far from Kamchatka region we don't consider it a "respectful" factor for deficient communication. We agree with Strizhitskaya and Petrash (2019) that actually the humans are mobile and different generations of the family not only live in remote regions of the same country, but also in different countries and continents. Nevertheless, the high information technologies don't limit significantly the communication of the child with his grandparents.

The *Table 4* presents parents' answers in the third part of the questionary.

Table 4

The frequency of answers in the third part of the questionary

Age of the parents	23–35 years, % (*n* = 38)	36–54 years, % (*n* = 29)	Fisher's Criterion (φ)
Question: "Which utterance do you prefer?"			
Is it better when the grandparents participate in the upbringing of their grandchildren **as much as possible**?	26.3	31	1.87*
Is it better when the grandparents **have limited participation** in the upbringing of their grand-children?	57.9	55.2	.22
Is it better when the grandparents **do not partici-pate** in the upbringing of their grandchildren?	15.8	13.8	.24

Note. *$p \le .05$.

It should be pointed out that a significant increase in parents' opinion on the need for greater participation of the grandparents in the upbringing of the young generation was revealed in the age group of 36–54 years old ($p \le .05$). The "ruffity" and the desire of independence in young parents give place to a more rational understanding of positive and negative aspects of interaction with the old generation. The parents realize more and more their approaching the state of grandparents.

Summarizing our evidences, we can state, that all respondents rejected "not manda-tory" communication of their child with the grandparents. Very few respondents were ready to exclude completely the participation of old generation in the upbringing of own children, but many would like to limit this participation. This situation can reveal intra-family conflicts and a not efficient dialogue between generations.

The *Table 5* shows the results of the *associations test.* All adult respondent gave 319 associations: 89.6 % of respondents gave five associations each, 5.9 % — four associations and 4.5 % — only two associations.

The analysis shows that neutral associations were the most frequent (43.2 %). Negative images (17.9 %) were significantly more rare than neutral ($\varphi = 3.43**$, $p \le .01$) or positive ones ($\varphi = 2.92**$, $p \le .01$).

Table 5
Categories of the image of an old subject and frequency of non-random associations

Categories of the image, %		Semantic universal associations	Examples of associations (in order of decreased frequency)
Positive	**38.8**	75 % Health Experience Respect Wealth	Good health, good memory, experience, rest, peace, wisdom, contemplation, respect, wealth, advises, resource, to live further, independence
Neutral	43.2	55.2 % Age Pension Grandchildren	Age, pension, grandmother/grandfather, grandchildren, pies, communication, work, country house, the time came, wrinkles, grouchiness, hobby, idleness, trip, grey hairs
Negative	**17.9**	84.6 % Illness Loneless Oblivion	Illness, loneness, poverty, weakness, fear, infirmity, unknown, death, bad health, forgetter, nursing home, disability

Semantic universal associations demonstrate the predominant relation of parents' positive and negative images of the elderly with the dynamic system of health/disease, preservation of functional wealth and life competence. The neutral image represents versions of the new state of retired and of an ancestor.

Preschoolers' Features of Elderly Image (Drawings Analysis)

All drawings by children were divided by the experts into neutral (53.7 %), positive (25.4 %) or negative (20.9 %).

Each category was analyzed using some formal criteria (*Table 6*).

The analysis of the *Table 6* data proves, that most children with neutral image of the elderly were not very motivated to draw, were distracted and used only black pencil. The children of this subgroup had more small drawings in the below part of the sheet. This can be explained as a lack of interest and low significance of elderly problem for this group of preschoolers.

Table 6
Distribution of formal criteria in preschoolers' drawings

Indicators	General frequency, %	Categories of images		
		positive	neutral	negative
Lack of motivation	41.8 — began immediately to draw	22.4	4.5	14.9
	58.2 — reluctance, distraction	2.9	**49.3**	5.9
Use of colors	62.7 — only black pencil	1.5	**46.3**	14.9
	10.5 — one color	4.5	4.5	1.5
	27.1 — different colors	19.4	3	4.5

End of Table 6

Indicators	General frequency, %	Categories of images		
		positive	neutral	negative
Drawings size	40.3 — small	1.5	**29.9**	8.9
	13.4 — big	1.5	4.5	7.5
Position on the sheet	25.4 — down	0	**20.9**	4.5
	17.9 — up	1.5	14.9	1.5
Eraser use	14.9 — yes	0	8.9	5.9

Note. Categories of images — significant evidence are done in bold.

Let us analyze now children drawings in relation to the level of communication with the grandparents (*Table 7*).

Table 7

Elderly images in preschoolers in relation to communication with grandparents

Category if image	Group as a whole, % (n = 67)	"Sufficient" communication, % (n = 25)	Limited communication, % (n = 42)	Fisher's Criterion (φ)
Negative	20.9	32	14.3 (n = 6)	1.69*
Neutral	53.7	8	80.9 (n = 34)	6.48**
Positive	25.4	60	4.8 (n = 2)	5.18**

Note. *$p \leq .05$; **$p \leq .01$.

These evidences prove, that in the subgroup of children with good options for communication with the ancestors both positive and negative images of elderly are greater than in the other subgroup, where the neutral image predominates.

We did a qualitative analysis of children drawings on the base of stories describing each drawing (*Table 8*).

One can see, that children from the subgroup of "sufficient" communication use own experience of relations with ancestors (predominantly grandmothers) in own drawings. It should be also noted, that children from this subgroup when describing the drawings, reveal often the emotional relations with the old generation (*kind, not wicked; good, does not blame me often, hug me, love me, kisses me and so on*). In the subgroup of limited the images of elderly are more rational and generalized (somebody said, we saw and so on). The children actualize often the stereotyped features of aging (*bad vision, uses a stick, rare hairs, no dents…*).

Sone authors describe the influence of parents on their children stereotypes. For instance, Lineweaver, Roy, and Horth (2017) describes such an influence of parents for formation of eidetism in 9 to 10 years old children and in teenagers. A study of correla-

Table 8
Examples of drawings descriptions

Description of drawings (steno grams)

Positive image

Yana, 6 years 2 months: "My lovely grandma has many hearts"

This is my most loved, superloved grandma Lubochka. She is super and very kind. She loves me, my very small brother — a baby Kirushka, my mom, dad and our Bimka (a dog -authors). She always knows everything, always has time, is always merry, kisses us and gives gifts. She says us, that she loves us all, but sometimes differently, but we all are in her heart. I think, that my grandma Lubochka has many hearts and we are all in each heart as in a home. We love her, therefore her hearts will never become ill

Neutral image

Sveta, 5 years 9 months: "Grandmother's husband"

I have drawn my second grandfather. My first grandfather passed away long ago. He was kind, he hugged and kissed me, he said, I am his chicken, but I will become soon a princess. The second husband of my grandmother does not say me nothing. In general, he is merry, весёлый, always laughing, but his look at me is severe. The grandmother likes him. He helps her to put the coat, and once he helped her to put boots

Negative image

Oksana, 5 years 2 months: "Grandmother — Robot"

My grandmother comes often to see us, she brings food, cleans the room, she is washing and ironing, cooking and making order in the cupboards. In summer she works in the garden… After the work, she watches TV and takes tee. Twice she gave me money for my birthday. My friend said that my grandmother is a robot

(left margin: Sufficient communication)

Positive image

Maria, 5 years 11 months: "Retired ladies"

These women are Katya and her friends. She is our neighbor in the house. She does not go to work, because she is retired. My father said it to me. She visits her friends, they have fun together, take tee, share their secrets and then go together for a walk

Neutral image

Veronika, 5 years 6 months: "A grandmother"

I have drawn a grandmother, an old lady. She is not kind nor wicked, she is simply old: she has glasses, a stick, her hairs are rare and are put into a bunch. She often has not a very nice necklace. She can be sad, because she has problems with vision and moves slowly. We meet often such grandmothers in the busses, in pharmacies, market, shops and at the post office. My mother says, that they take money at the post office, like a salary; nevertheless, they do not go for a work, that became difficult or bothering for them. Sometimes they quarrel at the post, not much, because the others look at them and can become angry

Negative image

Sasha, 5 years 4 months: "Rodents of Kolya"

My friend Kolya has a grandmother and a grandfather. He says me that they always nibble and bite him, for sure not really. Kolya is my the most sad friend. I try to amuse him. You can see at the top of the sheet, how I amuse Kolya

(left margin: Limited communication)

Note. The authors express their gratitude to the students of Kamchatka State University for registration of these steno grams.

tions of 6 to 7 years old preschoolers' images with these of their parents does not revealed the influence. We also analyzed this problem in our study (*Figure 2*).
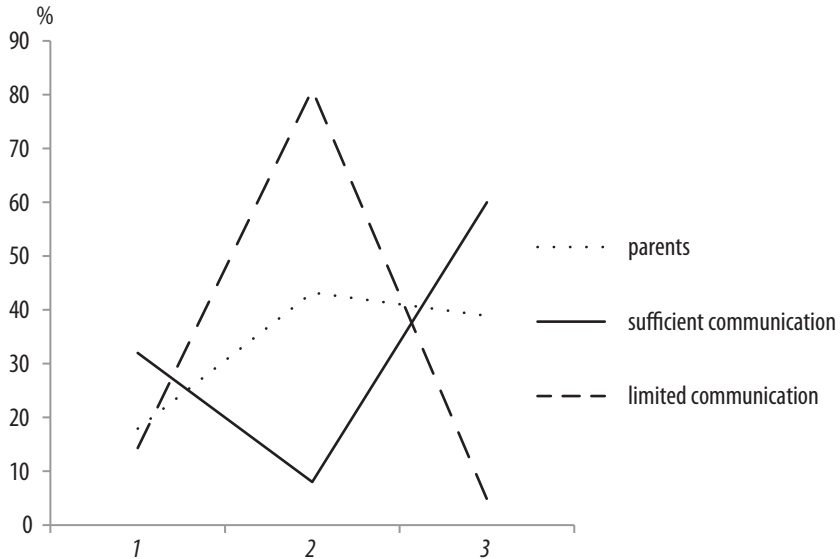

Figure 2. Frequency of different types of elderly images in parents and in the subgroups of preschoolers:
1 — negative images; *2* — neutral images; *3* — positive images

The *Figure 2* shows, that parents and children classified by experts in the subgroup of limited communication have similar graphic profiles of images positivity with predominance of neutral images. But we did not revealed any influence of parents' images on these of children ($r = .159$). Similar results were received in the study by A. Flamion et al. (2020), who proved that a 6–7 old child can have own unique image of elderly not identic to parents or surrounding people or social stereotypes.

To summarize the children have mostly a neutral image of elderly, but it depends from the level of communication with the grandparents.

Discussion and Conclusions

Modern publications discuss often the problem of contrasting the traditional Russian families where the grandparents played the main role in children upbringing to occidental "self-sufficient" families, including only parents and children (Ibragimova, 2007). The author accentuates, that contemporary Russian grandparents become more and more the "visiting governors," or perform a sporadic recreation activity, together with economical support of the grandchildren (Sharin & Kul'kova, 2019). It indicates some new tendencies and transformation of interactions between old grandparents and their children and grandchildren. Many Russian families conserve traditional poly generations

family relationships with a high importance, even priority of upbringing and socialization of the young generation.

The results of our study prove the importance and mutual advantage of constructing and preserving "bridges" between ancestors and the young generation. It makes necessary to study interrelations between old and young generations and specific features of each.

Many gerontological papers show the importance of studies of a search (transformation) of life meaning in an old subject after retirement (Antsypherova, 2001; Glukhanuk & Gershkovich, 2003; Glozman & Naumova, 2018). According to these authors, a transition of life experience to the grandchildren helps formation of the life meaning in the old generation (Ermolayeva, 2012). Some publications analyze the mechanisms of generations translating interaction as a dialogue of cultures (Vvedenskaya, 2017), ecology of communication (Mutilina, 2018), in relation to metaphoric language of tales (Ermolayeva, 2012), to adopting the old subject (Golubeva, Khabarova, & Soloviev, 2017), to the programs of generations interactions (Thompson & Weaver, 2016) and more.

It is clear, that efficient programs of children-grandparents dialogue must take into account age differences of participants. The preschool age is a sensitive period in the human social development. The nucleus of subjectivity is formed at this period and determines the further development of the subject (Kosheleva, Khoroshih, A. N., & Khoroshih, V. V., 2014; Persiyantseva & Gor'kovskaya, 2016).

D. I. Belostotskaya and V. P. Zinchenko (2012) proved the identity of emotional reactions and common understanding of stories meanings by preschoolers and old people. The authors underline the importance to respect child spontaneity, immediate emotional intuition, the predominance of child's experiences, generating the sense. With this, the immediate perception and experiences generated common sense in both children and the grandparents. These evidences permit an old subject to open a deep, sense forming dialogue with a child and to transmit him the own life experience.

Emotional openness and soulfulness of an old person, his readiness to accept and desire to reach a common decision helps the child to surmount his fear of inevitable changes with aging. It is important, that positive relations of the child with grandparents prepare the child for own aging and destroys the stereotype of elderly as uniquely a period of disability in human life (Yakovenko & Kovaleva, 2015).

So, we can summarize the following *conclusions* from our study:

1. Preschoolers can have own representations of elderly not identic to parents or surrounding people images or social stereotypes.
2. Children with deficient communication with grandparents form an image of an old subject as somebody else or nobody' person, and their relation to the represented image is not emotional, has no personal interest nor significance.
3. Children experience of "sufficient" communication with grandparents actualizes predominantly the emotional aspects of their communication in the image of an old subject.
4. Manifestations of responsiveness, emotional openness and soulfulness by an old person reduce significantly children' fear of age-related psychophysiological loss.

Besides, the real examples of successful aging and positive relations between grandparents and grandchildren form a basis for a positive image of an old person and elderly in a small child.

Limitations and Perspectives of the Study

There are two limitations of our study:

First, the lack of diagnostic technique adopted for assessment of preschoolers cognitive and psycho-emotional development limits and makes contradictory the evaluation of children' representations of elderly.

Second, only one parent, predominantly a mother, participated in our study. Some authors prove the identity of mother's and small children' ideas on inter group relations *(*Zadorova & Kuftyak, 2017; Degner & Dalege, 2013; Flamion et al., 2020*)*. With this, an analysis of just a part of parents cannot reflect all potential generalizations of results.

To conclude we would like to express our expectancy that our data help to understand better the stereotypes at the preschool age.

The perspectives of further studies are an analysis of the psychological culture of an old subject, conditions and factors of his readiness or difficulties for dialogue of generations as an efficient intergeneration program.

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