



COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20556708>

Abstract. This article provides a comparative analysis of the specific characteristics of the social adaptation process across different age groups of preschoolers. The study examined the ability of children in the junior, middle, and senior groups to communicate with peers, participate in collective activities, comply with social norms and rules, and manage their emotional state. Additionally, pedagogical and psychological factors influencing the level of social adaptation were identified, and effective pedagogical approaches in accordance with age characteristics were recommended. The research results play an important role in developing the social competence of children in preschool educational organizations and ensuring their successful integration into the social environment.

Keywords: preschool children, social adaptation, social competence, comparative analysis, communication with peers, emotional development, preschool education, socialization, pedagogical approach, age characteristics, communicative skills, child development.

Introduction

At the modern stage of societal development, the comprehensive development of the human personality, its successful integration into social life, and the formation of an active civic position are being recognized as priority tasks of the education system. The formation of social adaptation skills in children during preschool age, which serves as a foundation for subsequent stages of personal development, is of particular importance. Because it is during this period that a child acquires their first social experience, learns to establish relationships with those around them, begins to understand the norms and rules accepted in society, and masters the initial mechanisms for managing their behavior.

The preschool educational organization is an important social environment for children after the family. In this environment, the child communicates with peers and educators of different ages, participates in collective activities, and acquires important social skills such as cooperation, waiting in line, expressing one's opinion, and respecting the opinions of others. Therefore, studying the level of social adaptation of children in preschool educational institutions and developing effective mechanisms for its development is one of the urgent scientific problems of modern pedagogy and child psychology.





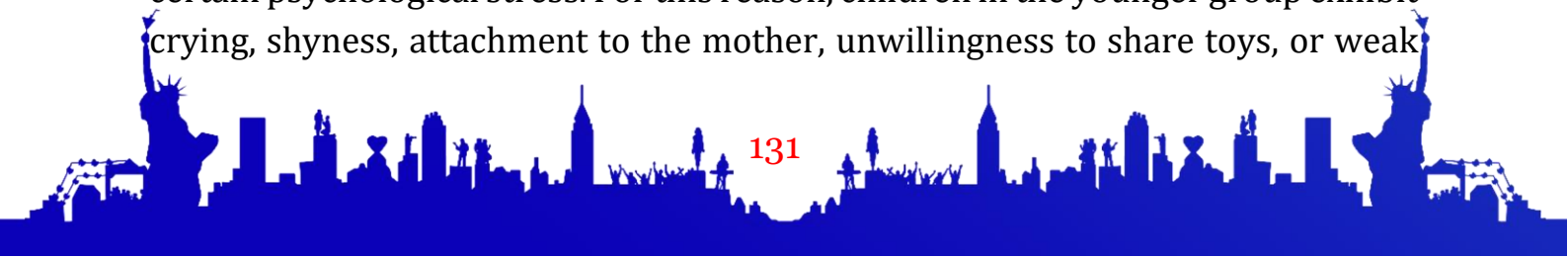
The process of social adaptation does not occur equally in all children. The child's age, individual psychological characteristics, family upbringing environment, communication experience, and pedagogical conditions in the educational institution directly influence the effectiveness of this process. While adaptation in younger group children is characterized by a greater sense of emotional attachment and security, in middle group children, cooperation with peers and the development of communicative activity are observed. In the older group, children begin to manifest qualities such as conscious adherence to social norms, independent decision-making, and finding their place in the community. In this regard, a comparative analysis of the level of social adaptation of children in different age groups allows for the determination of their developmental dynamics and the identification of age-appropriate means of pedagogical influence.

In today's conditions of globalization and informatization, the issue of developing children's social competence is becoming increasingly important. Modern society requires from a person not only knowledge and skills, but also qualities such as effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and a sense of social responsibility. The formation of these qualities begins from preschool age. Therefore, ensuring the social adaptation of children in the preschool education system, supporting their emotional and communicative development, and creating a healthy social environment is one of the important directions of pedagogical activity.

Discussion

The social adaptation of preschool children is a complex pedagogical and psychological process that plays a crucial role in their formation as individuals. This process is characterized by the child's integration into a new social environment, establishing relationships with peers and adults, adapting to the rules of group life, and learning to manage their behavior based on social norms. Therefore, it is advisable to interpret social adaptation not only as a child's adaptation to the kindergarten environment but also as the gradual development of their communicative, emotional, moral, and social competencies.

The manifestation of social adaptation in different age groups is not the same. In the younger group, the adaptation process is more closely linked to the emotional state. For children of this age, separation from the family, entering a new environment, and interacting with unfamiliar educators and peers can cause certain psychological stress. For this reason, children in the younger group exhibit crying, shyness, attachment to the mother, unwillingness to share toys, or weak





participation in group activities. In such situations, the caring nature of the educator, their individual approach to the child, and the creation of a safe and trusting environment are key factors in the successful course of social adaptation.

In children of the middle group, social adaptation takes on a more active character. At this stage, children strive to play with their peers, participate in group activities, express their opinions, and cooperate with others. As their speech development, communication experience, and level of independence increase, social relations also become more complex. At the same time, it is specifically in the middle group that situations such as conflicts between children, toy fights, the pursuit of leadership, and the preference of one's own desires over those of others are more pronounced. Consequently, in the development of social adaptation during this age period, it is important to teach children to cooperate, wait in line, agree, listen, and direct them toward the cultural expression of their feelings.

In older children, social adaptation becomes more conscious and purposeful. Children of this age are capable of understanding group rules, evaluating their own behavior, and modeling complex social situations through role-playing with peers. They begin to develop qualities such as responsibility, independence, self-control, helping others, and considering the interests of the community. Especially in the preparatory group, social adaptation manifests as one of the important criteria determining the child's psychological and social readiness for the next stage of education.

Comparative analysis shows that the primary criteria for social adaptation in younger group children are emotional stability and trust in the educator, while in the middle group, communicative activity and cooperation with peers are of primary importance. In the older group, the primary indicators are the awareness of social norms, the control of one's own behavior, and a sense of collective responsibility. This indicates the need to use methods and tools appropriate for each age stage in pedagogical activity.

The influence of the family environment is also of particular importance in the process of social adaptation. The kindness shown to a child in the family, the culture of communication, the opportunity for independence, the educational requirements of parents, and the attitude toward the child directly affect their adaptation to the kindergarten environment. In children who are overly pampered, not trained to act independently, or have limited communication experience, the adaptation process can be relatively difficult. Conversely, talking





with a child in the family, listening to their opinion, and teaching them to follow simple social rules facilitates social adaptation.

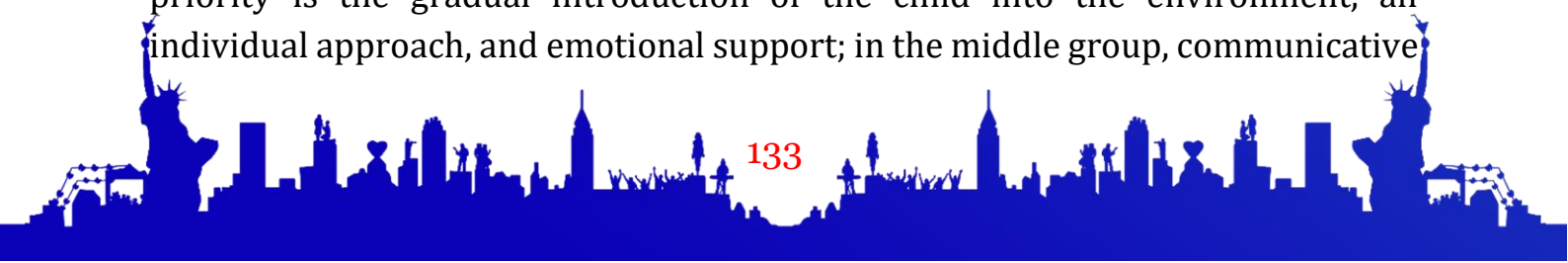
The professional skills of the educator are also one of the central factors in this process. The educator must organize a social environment taking into account the age and individual characteristics of the children and create an atmosphere of kindness, mutual respect, and cooperation within the group. Particularly effective are pedagogical approaches aimed at emotional support in the junior group, the development of communication and cooperation in the middle group, and the formation of responsibility and independence in the senior group.

In preschool educational organizations, play activity is considered one of the most effective tools for developing social adaptation. Through role-playing games, children reflect social relationships in adult life, play various roles, and learn to communicate, agree, help, and resolve conflicts. Didactic games, on the other hand, develop children's skills in following rules, concentrating, waiting in line, and completing tasks. Active games allow for teamwork, activity, and emotional relaxation. In this regard, game activity manifests as a natural, interesting, and effective pedagogical tool in the process of social adaptation.

Communicative activities, fairy tale therapy, dramatization, collective creative activity, conversations, and observations also play an important role in the development of children's social adaptation. For example, through fairy tales and stories, children develop socio-ethical concepts such as kindness, friendship, help, forgiveness, and responsibility. Dramatized games increase children's speech activity, teach them to express their thoughts, and provide emotional freedom. Collective creative work develops in children the skills of cooperation, striving for a common result, and appreciating each other's work.

Another important aspect during the discussion is that when assessing social adaptation, one should not limit oneself solely to external behavioral indicators. Although the child is actively participating in the group, they may experience internal emotional discomfort. Or, conversely, it is not always correct to conclude that a silent child is not adapted to the social environment. Therefore, when determining the level of adaptation, it is advisable to use comprehensive diagnostic methods such as observation, interviews, communication with parents, the educator's conclusion, and the analysis of the child's activity results.

Comparative analysis conducted across different age groups allows for the differentiated organization of the pedagogical process. In the junior group, the priority is the gradual introduction of the child into the environment, an individual approach, and emotional support; in the middle group, communicative





games, pair work, and work in small groups are considered effective. In an older group, it is possible to develop children's skills in responsibility, independence, and reflective thinking through discussion of problem situations, role-playing games, team tasks, and social projects.

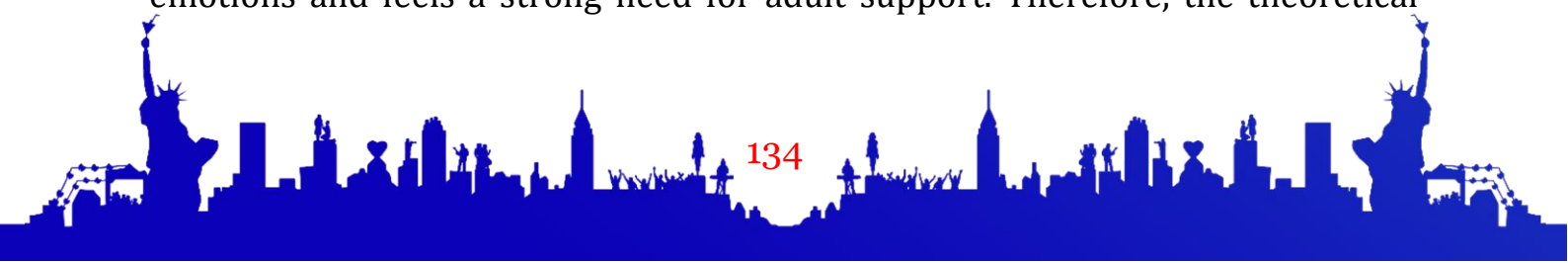
Theoretical basis

The social adaptation of preschool children is one of the important scientific problems studied at the intersection of pedagogy, psychology, and sociology. This is because the formation of a child's personality is closely linked not only to the process of biological maturation but also to their interaction with the social environment, communication with adults and peers, and the assimilation of norms and values accepted in society. Therefore, the concept of social adaptation includes processes such as a child's adaptation to a new environment, integration into group life, understanding social rules, and managing their behavior based on these rules.

Theoretically, social adaptation is inextricably linked to the socialization of the child's personality. Socialization is the process of a child's acquisition of societal experience, moral norms, communication culture, values, and forms of behavior; social adaptation manifests as a practical manifestation of this process. In preschool age, a child first gains social experience in the family, and later this experience expands in a preschool educational organization. The child learns from themselves to establish relationships with other people, to take the interests of the group into account, and to coordinate their desires with the needs of others.

The preschool age period is considered one of the most sensitive and critical stages of personal development. During this period, the child's emotional sphere, speech, thinking, memory, imagination, and volitional qualities develop actively. It is precisely this development that forms the psychological basis of social adaptation. For example, speech development allows a child to express their opinion, communicate with peers, reach an agreement, and express their needs. Emotional development, on the other hand, helps a child understand their own feelings, sense the mood of others, express empathy, and manage themselves in conflict situations.

The formation of social adaptation in preschool children varies depending on the age stages. The main content of adaptation in younger group children is associated with emotional security, trust in the educator, and gradual adaptation to the new environment. At this age, the child is still unable to fully control their emotions and feels a strong need for adult support. Therefore, the theoretical





foundation of social adaptation in a small group is determined by affection, protection, a stable daily routine, and an individual approach.

In middle-aged children, social adaptation is more manifested through communication and cooperation. During this period, the child strives to play with peers, express their opinions, and participate in common activities. However, egocentric situations, preference for one's own desires, and a tendency toward conflict may still be observed in their behavior. Therefore, the theoretical foundations for the development of social adaptation in the middle group are explained by communicative activity, the game process, the mastery of social roles, and adherence to group rules.

Social adaptation in the senior group and preparatory groups is relatively complex and conscious in nature. Children of this age develop qualities such as understanding social norms, evaluating their own behavior, valuing friendly relationships, and a sense of collective responsibility. They model various situations in social life through role-playing games, tasks, conversations, and team activities. Thus, the theoretical basis of social adaptation in older group children is determined by independence, responsibility, reflection, and the conscious assimilation of social experience.

One of the important theoretical sources of social adaptation is the activity approach. According to this approach, a child's personality is formed in the process of activity. In preschool age, play activity is the leading type of activity. Through play, the child reflects adult life, performs social roles, understands relationships, and learns to manage their own behavior. In role-playing games, a child understands relationships in society by performing roles such as "mother," "doctor," "teacher," "trader," and "friend." In this regard, play is considered a natural pedagogical mechanism of social adaptation.

A person-centered approach also plays an important role in the theoretical basis of social adaptation. Each child has a different character, temperament, family experience, level of sociability, and emotional state. Therefore, setting the same requirements for all children or using the same method may not yield the expected results in the process of social adaptation. A person-centered approach involves an individual approach to the child, understanding their internal needs, supporting their abilities, and the gradual development of their social activity.

From the perspective of the competency-based approach, social adaptation is linked to the formation of a child's social competence. Social competence is manifested through a child's ability to communicate with others, cooperate, resolve conflicts, adhere to social rules, and adapt their behavior to a specific





situation. The development of social competence in preschool education creates a vital foundation for a child's successful learning and social adaptation at subsequent stages of education.

The role of the family in the process of social adaptation is also of theoretical importance. The family is the child's first social environment. It is in the family that the child acquires the first experience of communication, love, trust, rules, and moral concepts. Excessive demandingness, indifference, or excessive pampering of a child within the family can negatively impact their adaptation to a preschool educational organization. Conversely, if there is a harmony of independence, communication, order, and love in the family, the child adapts more quickly and stably to the new social environment. The pedagogical environment is also one of the important theoretical factors of social adaptation. The psychological environment in the group, the attitude of the educator, the stability of the daily routine, the content of games and activities, and relationships between peers determine the child's social activity. If an atmosphere of kindness, trust, cooperation, and support is created in the group, the child will feel at ease, actively engage in communication, and positively perceive social experience. Conversely, strict supervision, intimidation, or indifference can cause a child to become shy, anxious, and socially withdrawn.

Theoretical analysis shows that a comparative study of the social adaptation of preschool children allows for the organization of the pedagogical process in accordance with age stages. While the primary focus in the junior group is on emotional security and environmental adaptation, in the middle group, the formation of communication and cooperation skills is a priority. In an older group, it is important to understand social norms, act independently, and develop collective responsibility. Therefore, the pedagogical methods used in each age group must correspond to the level and needs of the child's development.

Overall, the social adaptation of preschool children is a multi-factor, step-by-step, and continuous pedagogical process. Its theoretical foundations are closely linked to socialization, activity, personality orientation, the competency-based approach, family upbringing, and the pedagogical environment. These theoretical foundations serve to deeply analyze the characteristics of the social adaptation process in various age groups, identify effective pedagogical conditions, and develop social competence in children.

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