

## Розділ Гендерна психологія та психотерапія

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF GENDER IDENTITY IN EARLY ADULTHOOD

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У статті розкриті психологічні механізми особистісного самовизначення української молоді в сучасній суперечливій системі традиційних/патріархальних та егалітарних/демократичних координат з позиції гендерної методології. Створено психологічну модель статеворольової ідентифікації; узагальнено соціально-педагогічні чинники та особистісні детермінанти персоналізації гендерного Я.

Соціальне конструювання гендеру в молодіжному середовищі детерміновано гендерним простором сучасного суспільства, що характеризується подвійним протиріччям: з одного боку, частковим вирішенням шляхів утвердження формальної рівності статей та апеляцією до природного призначення жінки, з іншого — новим, альтернативним устроєм гендерних відносин, що ґрунтуються на принципі «рівності у відмінності», тенденції рівних прав і можливостей для самореалізації молодих чоловіків та жінок як унікальних суб'єктів соціально-історичного дійства. На фоні «загальної соціальної трансформації» студентки частіше виявляють ліберальні установки, більше підтримують рівний розподіл ролей у сім'ї, прагнуть рівних можливостей для самореалізації. Ці тенденції дозволяють констатувати збільшення суб'єктного потенціалу, визначити психологічні перспективи майбутньої життєтворчості молодих жінок як виходу за межі звичного та виклику стереотипам, що свідчить про необхідність розроблення та впровадження особливої ідеологічної системи гендерних знань та практик, релевантних психологічним принципам паритетності та саморозвитку статей.

Окреслені перспективи майбутнього дослідження проблеми соціального конструювання гендеру у студентському середовищі, шляхи формування егалітарної особистості.

**Ключові слова:** егалітарні цінності, амбівалентність свідомості, гендерні ролі, гендерні стереотипи, патріархат, самореалізація, гендерні упередження, статеворольова ідентичність, цінності.

The article deals with the psychological mechanisms of personal self-determination of the Ukrainian students (youth) in modern controversial system of traditional / patriarchal and egalitarian / democratic coordinates from the position of gender methodology. The psychological model of sex-role identification is suggested. Social and educational factors and personal determinants of personalization of gender "I" are summarized.

The social construction of gender in youth environment is determined by gender space of contemporary society, it is characterized by double contradiction: on the one hand, a partial solution of the ways of establishment of formal equality and appellation to the natural function of women,

on the other hand - new, alternative system of gender relations based on the principle “equality in difference”, tendency of equal rights and opportunities for self-realization of young men and women as unique subjects of socio-historical event. On the background of “total social transformation” girl-students often express liberal installations, support more equitable deviation of family roles, look for equal opportunities for self-realization. These tendencies allow to increase subjective potential, identify psychological prospects for future life creativity of young women as a way to overcome usual stereotypes, that demonstrates the need of the development and implementation of gender specific ideological system of knowledge and practices, relevant to psychological principles of parity and self realization of sexes.

Prospects of further study on gender social construction among students, ways of egalitarian formation of personality are outlined.

**Keywords:** egalitarian values, ambivalence of consciousness, gender role, gender stereotypes, patriarchy, self-realization, gender bias, sex roles identity, values.

В статье раскрыты психологические детерминанты гендерного самоопределения личности в современной противоречивой системе традиционных / патриархатных и эгалитарных / демократических координат с позиции гендерной методологии. Создана психологическая модель полоролевой идентификации; обобщены социально-педагогические факторы и личностные детерминанты персонализации гендерного Я.

Социальное конструирование гендера в молодежной среде детерминировано гендерным пространством современного общества, характеризуется двойным противоречием: с одной стороны, частичным решением путей утверждения формального равенства полов и апелляцией к естественному предназначению женщины, с другой – новым, альтернативным устройством гендерных отношений, основанным на принципе «равенства в различии», тенденции равных прав и возможностей для самореализации молодых мужчин и женщин как уникальных субъектов социально-исторического действия. На фоне «общей социальной трансформации» студентки чаще обнаруживают либеральные установки, больше поддерживают равное распределение ролей в семье, желают равных возможностей для самореализации. Эти тенденции позволяют констатировать увеличение субъектного потенциала, определить психологические перспективы будущего жизнетворчества молодых женщин как выхода за пределы привычного и вызова стереотипам, что свидетельствует о необходимости разработки и внедрения особой идеологической системы гендерных знаний и практик, релевантных психологическим принципам паритетности и саморазвития полов.

Начертаны перспективы будущего исследования проблемы социального конструирования гендера в студенческой среде, пути формирования эгалитарной личности.

**Ключевые слова:** эгалитарные ценности, амбивалентность сознания, гендерные роли, гендерные стереотипы, патриархат, самореализация, гендерные предубеждения, полоролевая идентичность, ценности.

**Introduction.** Gender (parity) democracy is important, not only because of the international recognition, but also for the internal dynamic of our country, the implementation of basic social programs which improve the quality of life for two socio-demographic groups-men and

women, the deprivation of inequality between this sexes and the development of partnership between them as an expression of social justice, the effective mechanisms of protection from the discrimination and so on.

However the historical experience proves that it is inefficient to solve the problems of human existence, human or national security using only power, scientific or technological methods without the changes in the social consciousness and culture. Such changes are possible only through implementation into the consciousness of people and culture a particular system of values and value orientations as a humanitarian component of social life security. Hence the study of person's gender identity formation in the ontogenesis is promoted by a social need to reveal the social and psychological factors of youths' gender culture formation, the necessity to study the inner mechanisms of person's identification with certain patterns of gender role behavior as well as social life democratization and egalitarian values formation. The cultivation of gender parity as a strategic way of socialization promotes the necessity of the gender formation study from the point of view of various psychological approaches, particularly genetic and cognitive.

In the context of "personality realization genesis" (S. Maksymenko, 2006) contemporary psychology focuses on the development of a person in the complex of processes of self development and self fulfillment, the harmonization of their inner world with the outer one in terms of social and cultural diversity, caused by the tendencies of globalization (S. Bem, 1975; T. Hovorun, O. Kikinezhdi, 2004; V. Kravets, 2013; I. Kon, 1978; A. Kocharian, 1996; A. Kocharian, M. E. Zhydko, N. N. Tereshchenko, E. V. Frolova, 2015; A. Maslou, 1999; M. Mid, 1988; K. Rodzher, 1994 S. Rubinshteyn, 1957; etc.).

In our opinion such phenomenon is vividly represented within the humanitarian and phenomenological approaches, and it enables to answer the question about the development of subjectivity, self expression and acquiring of "self" in the contradictions of life. Although the practical aspect of the gender identity question is quite "open", however it has a profound inner layer, as it encompasses a lot of unrevealed psychological mechanisms of personal and spiritual development of a human (A. Eagly, 1991; E. Erikson, 1956; G. Hofstede, 1998; J.-Sh. Hyde, 1991; A. Kocharian, 1996; 2015; M. Kimmel, 2003; V. Kravets, 2013; E. Maccoby, C. Jacklin, 1974; W. Mischel, 1970; T. Parsons, R. Bales, 1956; etc.).

Ukrainian youth decides on its future in the world where family and public spheres are no longer ruled by the ideals of Soviet patriarchal system, masked by the slogan of equality of men and women. Gender is a basic characteristic of a person that determines his or her psychological and social functioning. Gender relations characterize the degree of democracy in a society, as they determine the division of roles in the political, socio-economic and professional lives (T. Hovorun, O. Kikinezhdi, 2004; Kikinezhdi, 2011).

Gender identification plays an important role in the formation of gender self-consciousness of a person, in formation of her or his self-image, and acquiring the requirements for gender-role behaviour (I. Kon, 1978; A. Kocharian, 1996; O. Kikinezhdi, 2011). Gender identity characterized as being marked by awareness of gender-role cultural standards as well as social and psychological instructions, accepting the traditional or egalitarian modes of behavior, formation of ego-structures in the continuum of masculinity and femininity, by representation of the individual experience of self-knowledge and attitudes to evaluating oneself and others, by agreement and balancing between the real and ideal gender Self.

This research shows the necessity of creating and implementing the gender policies based on the psychological principles of parity and androgyny of sexes, and on self-development and full vital realization of an individual. Development of gender competencies among young Ukrainians will enable to create the possibility for maximum self-realization in mastering some sphere of life activities.

**Methods and results.** The goal of this research is to determine gender perceptions of student youth, specifically gender ideals in the self-concept, beliefs about traditional and egalitarian gender roles, and construction of the real and ideal self.

The young age is connected with gender self-determination, establishing of the behaviour fitting the gender role, and stable image of the “I” of men/women. As Erik Erikson emphasized, “the young age is the most important period of the development, when the main crisis of the identity occurs” (E. N. Erikson, 1956, 98). Uncertainty and indecision in gender identity is dangerous because it can hamper identity development.

*The task of the research:*

1. To establish peculiarities of gender identification and its influence on life choices in young adulthood;
2. To illuminate the determining factors and conditions of the self-determination of young men and women.

The methods for determining gender orientations in the self-concept included the following surveys: ego-identification (J. Marcia, 1970), masculine-feminine behavior (S. Bem, 1975), goal determination and goal pursuit (M. Rokeach, 1968), interpersonal attraction (T. Leary, 1974), and narratives “Me in 20 years”, “Who Am I” (M. Kun, McPartland, 1984 ).

Participants were 400 students of pedagogical universities in Kyiv, Ternopil and Chernihiv; men comprised 38% of the sample.

Our hypothesis was that student youth is heavily influenced by both the traditional and egalitarian gender orientations in deciding on their private and public roles. Hypothesis was tested with Fisher coefficient, Mann-Whitney U-criterion, correlation coefficient and factor analysis.

The most influential in the value system and perceptions of the future for both men and women are family roles; such roles are also dominant in the self-concept descriptions. Men view the ideal image of a woman in more traditional terms than do women themselves – women portray an ideal female as more intellectual and socially advanced. The findings show that while there are many similarities in self-views of young men and women, men is more oriented on traditional male values, whereas women maintain values of both traditional and egalitarian nature.

The results of content-analysis of the narrative “Who Am I” show the dominating gender roles in private family and public professional spheres of young men and women. As the cluster analysis shows, gender belonging is realized through personal qualities. We initially selected two large clusters. The first one determines the characteristics of the individuality of a person, such as: appearance, interests and hobbies. The second cluster refers to social descriptions, such as: public-political, professional and domestic roles.

We found no meaningful gender differences in such spheres as professional and domestic roles, interpersonal and gender qualities, hobbies and interests, which suggest the prevalence of personal, individual self-determination of the I in the samples of both sexes. At the same time the statistically meaningful (Student's t-criterion) differences were found in such subjective

descriptions as the physical I ( $t=-3,74$  at  $p=0,0004$ ), emotional sensitivity ( $t=2,17$  at  $p=0,03$ ), confidence in oneself ( $t=-2,56$  at  $p=0,01$ ) and ability for self-expression ( $t=3,59$  at  $p=0,00$ ).

The role of physical attractiveness in descriptions of the physical I is considerably higher (almost 4 times) for young women. Another sex difference in the image of the I is emotional sensitivity (4,86 for young women : 3,26 for young men) which demonstrates higher meaningfulness of emotional sphere for personal self-determination of young women. We explain such sex differences with different level of adaptation of young men and women to the new social roles of a student and future professional. Young women acquire more confidence in themselves, which, in our opinion, is influenced by a) young women's higher social activity; b) fewer gender expectations in relation to young women's social roles and considerably more expectations in relation to the realization of masculine roles by young men. In this age male students begin to feel the pressure of gender stereotypes of a bread-winner, protector etc. while having few possibilities for financial self-realization. The sex difference in the meaningfulness of self-openness (as for young women, its level reaches the mark of 8,48, while for young men it is 4,39) is possible to explain by the influence of gender socialization, as the society expects more empathy from young women. The statistical analysis of descriptions in the images of the real and future I shows similarities of the personal self-determination in different spheres of vital activities of young men and women (table 1).

Table 1

**The meaningfulness of the spheres of self-determination  
in female and male samples**

<i>Characteristics of self-description</i>	<i>Arithm. mean I am today</i>	<i>Arithm. mean I am tomorrow</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>
Appearance(physical I)	0,27	0,60	-0,84	25	0,41
I am in the society	0,64	0,80	-0,29	25	0,77
Feminine-masculine qualities	0,95	0,40	1,25	25	0,22
Interpersonal roles	0,68	0,60	0,22	25	0,83
I am in the professional sphere	0,05	0,40	-2,44	25	0,02
Hobbies and interests	1,36	0,80	0,84	25	0,41
Valuable context(meaningful) sphere	0,86	1,00	-0,24	25	0,81
Emotional characteristics "positive"	3,27	3,20	0,07	25	0,95
Emotional characteristics "negative"	0,55	0,00	1,19	25	0,25
Emotional support of others (ability for the emotional sharing)	0,55	0,80	-0,52	25	0,61
Confidence in oneself	0,23	0,20	0,11	25	0,92
Successes in realization family roles	0,64	1,20	-1,22	25	0,24
Ability for self-opening	8,05	10,40	-1,12	25	0,27
Individuality	0,82	0,70	0,28	25	0,78
Belonging to the group (identified "We")	0,50	0,75	-0,91	25	0,37

In the ratings of meaningfulness of different spheres of self-determination, the sphere of professional self-realization takes the leading place. In the image "I am today" the meaningfulness of professional sphere for young men is lower in comparison with the image "I am in future". At the same time in the image of the future I for young women the leading place is taken by the emotionally expressive sphere. These findings are confirmed through the analysis of descriptive self-characteristics presented by young men and women in narratives "I in 20 years". The qualities which are marked by young men as necessary for a woman have truly feminine character, for example, "faithful", "beautiful", "tidy", "thoughtful", "tolerant", "tactful", "complaisant". The responses for young women include unique feminine qualities, for example: tenderness, meekness, love, and children. The anti-ideal qualities are completely opposite to afore-named ones, as, for example, "negative", "fickle", "bad hostess", "has bad habits related to alcohol and smoking". It is not surprising that 94 per cent of young people think that the image of an ideal woman has to have traditional nature, and 95 per cent consider that the image of a real man must be of traditional nature, too.

We should note that nothing is mentioned about the wife as a professional, statesman, about her possibilities to take up sports or hobbies. Only 40 percent of young men consider that professional employment of a wife is possible, but not obligatory, and only on the condition of "a good job", "that she is able to devote more time to her family and children".

Similar options are traded in the narratives by young women where they describe their future: "I am cheerful and tidy when I meet my husband when he comes from work. I gave lessons of English to my children, took them to the pool, and while they were there, I visited the fitness center", "I still have a slender body and look young. I have time to take care of myself, visit a beauty salon"; "My wife brings me coffee in bed. She has time for sports and for the care of all family members".

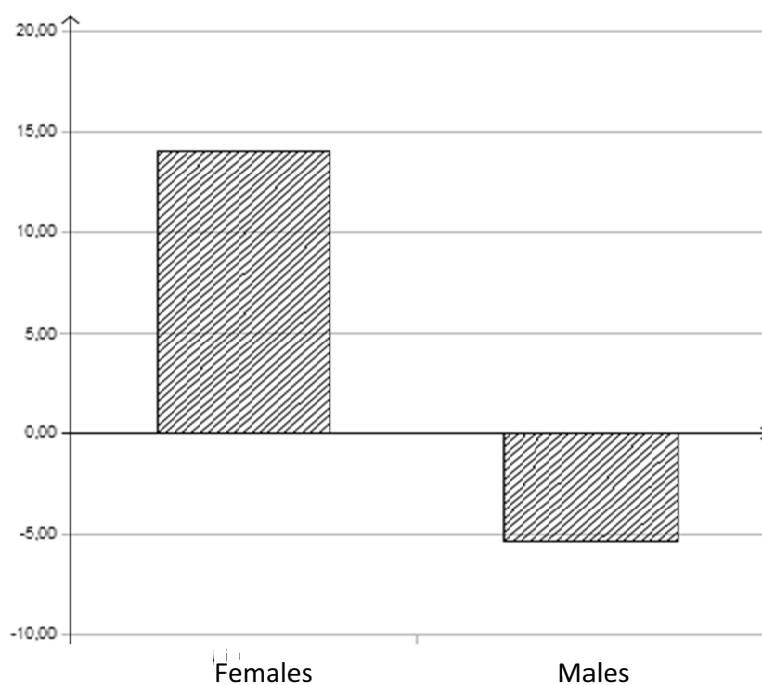
In the research we were interested in the dynamics between professional and private spheres for young men and women in the image of future. It was discovered that young men are oriented on building their career in identification of the future I to a greater degree, while young women show greater dependence on the domestic sphere. Both in the I-present and in the I-future the dominant tendency is professional activity for young men and domestic activity for young women.

The general sample was 170 respondents – 86 young women and 84 young men between the ages of 18-21 enrolled in a pedagogical university. The test showed high reliability due to internal consistency: the coefficient of correlation between the scales of egalitarian and traditional values is folds  $r=-0,95$  ( $p=0,0001$ ).

Majority of males in the sample showed agreement with the following statements: "there are a lot of words and phrases which cannot be pronounced by women but they are allowed to be spoken by men" and "women must not visit the same places which are visited by men, and women must not have the same degree of freedom as men". The students are aware of the myth that the "weaker sex" is subject to psychical disorders, depression and anxiety more frequently. These beliefs found the confirmation in the agreement with the statement "Women are too sensitive to become good surgeons". The apotheosis of traditional opinions of young men was their denying the professional suitability of women for various types of activities "Woman must recognize their intellectual narrow-mindedness in comparison with men". Young women showed more egalitarian views than did men in relation to physical attractiveness of both sexes to taking care of the figure,

keeping a healthy way of life etc. For example, women showed greater agreement with statements “A modern woman is obliged to care about her figure no more than her husband cares about his” and “Youth and beauty of a woman are the main guaranty of her happiness”.

The analysis of results of the questionnaire based on M. Jenkins’ method showed that most young men and women share traditional (patriarchal) values to some degree (Hyde J.-Sh., 1991). However, there were sex differences in gender orientations of young men and women. Young women are more oriented on the egalitarian relations in the domestic sphere, in sex behavior, marriage and pre-marital behavior. Traditional views of young men refer to the social and politic legislative sphere. Bipolarity of judgments of young men and young women about traditional and egalitarian value are presented in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Bipolarity of the division of gender orientations of student youth in sex selections*

Traditional values are directed against the expansion of space of a woman in relation to the professional activities. Women students admit egalitarian with men in the domestic sphere, but they share patriarchal opinions in relation to financial and legal responsibility of a husband.

**Conclusion.** The present research shows that young women are more oriented on the egalitarian relations whereas young men tend to endorse traditional gender orientations. Gender identity in both samples has perceptibly stereotypical nature, although less so among females.

The development of gender identity at the age of a young adult occurs on the basis of both conscious self-determination in continuum of masculine-feminine behavior and choice of individual meanings of gender roles (a considerable percent of young men and young women reached the highest degree of individual identity in j. Marcia’s test and the androgenic models of gender role behavior in accordance to S. Bem’s questionnaire as well). Number of students that “lag behind” at the level of diffusive identity (most of them are males), which demonstrate the sex-determined behavior, or show complete confusion in relation to the gender role.

Although the majority of respondents of both sexes showed traditional orientations, the comparative analysis of their structure (from the point of view of the cognitive emotional and behaviour constituents of gender self-determination in S. Bem's questionnaires) show the signs of destruction of bipolar gender orientations of student youth. The proof of it appears in the similarity of repertoire of social roles in the self-determination of "I am a man/woman" and also in the context of narratives "Who Am I" (today). The gender roles selected by young men and women do not fit the "Procrustean bed" of their patriarchal division, as they contain quite a lot of egalitarian constructions of self-determination in professional occupations, identification, and communications. The future of students in their gender scenarios of life can also be described from the point of view of the ambivalent.

Inheriting old stereotypes and accepting new, own values, modern students remain on the cross-roads of gender self-determination. Girls are more oriented to the egalitarian relations, than boys, in whom traditional gender orientations prevail. Reference gender гендерна identity in both selections has perceptibly stereotyped nature. Thus, life self-determination of youths is more conservative, stereotyping: "masculine" one is the activity in social, politic economic spheres, and everything "feminine" continues to be associated with a family, home duties, education of children. Girl-students show liberal options more often, they support the equal division of roles in a family; they want equal rights and possibilities for personal self-realization. These tendencies allow to state the growth of subject feminine potential, outline the psychological prospects of future life creativity of girls-students as the challenge for the traditional stereotypes.

Exactly through them an individual equates himself with proper psychological sex, creating his own personal life strategy under the influence of socio-cultural surroundings (including meaningful others, mass media, youth subculture, educational professional establishments). Differences in the structure of gender identification in the context of the subject development are predefined by the influencing of socially psychological factors at the micro-, mezzo-, macro- and exo-levels of the socialization.

The traditional gender identification| of young women is displayed mostly in the spheres of their life activities connected with reproductive and educational functions, and as for young men, it is displayed in the execution the functions of a bread-winner, defender. Both sexes come under the influence of sexual stereotypes in the field of the development of individual contacts.

This research shows the necessity of creating and implementing the gender policies based on the psychological principles of parity and androgyny of sexes, and on self-development and full vital realization of an individual. Development of gender competencies among young Ukrainians will enable to form a fair attitude towards the capabilities and status of a person regardless of his/her sex and create the possibility for maximum self-realization in mastering some sphere of life activities.

Call of time requires the development and implementation of gender-education technologies as psychological and pedagogical support of gender socialization of children and youth, aimed at personal development and gender equality.

The egalitarian socialization is congruent with personal-centred (non-violent) approach in education, as the most progressive and productive community of equal individuals of different sexes. In this sense the initial assumptions of personal egalitarian approach as a basic strategy of socialization and education cover the implementation of the idea of equality of sexes and their

interchangeability; indetermination of biological belonging of gender roles; approval of egalitarian ideology: gender competence as awareness of sex-role norms of conduct, gender sensitivity as means of creation conditions for the general development of the representatives of different sexes despite of gender stereotypes and prejudices, the ability to solve educational problems from the point of egalitarian gender ideology and gender tolerance as respect of fundamental rights and freedoms.

The activities of the School of Gender Equality (SGE), established at the Center for Gender Studies TNPU, named after Volodymyr Hnatiuk, became the basis for development of comprehensive educational program for youth “Gender culture of youth”, namely:

- to develop fundamental and applied gender studies;
- to apply gender and education-oriented technologies based on the concordance of the principles of progressive ethno-cultural traditions of the person-centred and egalitarian approaches;
- to develop and improve gender standards in education;
- to study the methodological bases of youth gender competencies formation as a peculiar system of gender knowledge and practices adequate to sex parity principles in the context of modern European integration processes;
- to expand the network of gender-oriented educational establishments and public organizations on the regional, national and international scales;
- a systematic module of gender enlightening of teaching staff, different forms of developing and correctional work with students, parents, teachers have been developed and implemented in educational establishments of different levels.
- to promote the activities of legislative and executive authorities in the state gender policy;
- to prepare young Ukrainians for family life and responsible parenthood.

The implementation of gender-educational technologies enables youth to acquire gender knowledge, to build and test their “Ego” in different situations, to practice and implement the principles of partnership, gender equality. Gender competence ensures the success in both spheres – autonomous activity and the ability to build harmonious relationships with others, using gender technology for orientation in modern life.

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