

UNDERSTANDING

THE MAN

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THE WORLD

Editors

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LUBLIN 2012

## **Sosio-psychological climate in a family as an indicator of parent-adolescent relationships character.**

### **Problem definition and timeliness of the topic:**

Issues concerning the nature and factors of socio-psychological climate in a family make us study them in relation with the general problem of socio-psychological and spiritual atmosphere of society. It should be emphasized that socio-psychological climate in the family is determined by and is the product of social atmosphere that is typical for condition of society in general. Instability of modern life leads to instability in family relations, anxiety, and inner stress of a human being. Socio-psychological climate is an indicator of a family life, of its mental state that can be seen in the way members of the family communicate to each other, and of the degree of consistency of their relations.

Thus timeliness of studying of the main indicators of socio-psychological climate in a family and their connection with the features of parent-adolescent relationships is determined first of all by modern tendency of family crisis, transformation of family roles, values, functions and hence increased demands of real life, that reflect social, psychological, and individual problems in family relations.

The problem of parent-adolescent relationships studying deals with different aspects of family life connected with performing its functions by a family and satisfying the need of its members in communication, personal and spiritual growth. Socio-psychological climate of a family is a condition of parent-child relationships development and an indicator of their variability and peculiarities (E. Eidemiller, V. Yustitskis, V. Satir, A. Spivakovs'ka, M. Buyanov, V. Tytarenko, V. Druzhinin, T. Yablons'ka and others).

Among the existing approaches regarding socio-psychological climate, when analyzing this phenomenon in the family context, we look to the relations criterion. As B. Paryhin (2003) says, interpersonal relations make the basis of psychological climate, determine social and psychological well-being of people involved in them. Interrelations between family members, relations to activities, and self-centered relations that become the basis for self-estimation and well-being [2] are the main components of displaying socio-psychological climate. Thus degree of contentment with interpersonal relations and one's own position in a group, family are reflected via well-being of a human. V. Torokhtiy (2003) says that for a small group with family relations, similarity of interpersonal feelings, and value-

orientational unity it is more appropriate to use the term “psychological health of a family” than “socio-psychological climate”. The author interprets the above mentioned definition as an indicator of family essential functions dynamics, emotional comfort of family relations, and also as a capability of a family to withstand social stressors [1, pp. 36-37].

B. Paryhin (2003) does not identify the terms “socio-psychological climate” and “psychological atmosphere”. “The atmosphere itself can be rather changeable and can be characterized as the one with a high degree of mobility. Atmosphere is a variable, constantly changing, and sometimes subtle side of collective consciousness.” [2, p.508] Socio-psychological climate in a family includes a *stable* system of interpersonal relations and can be regarded as their qualitative characteristics. Sound psychological climate is based on relations of mutual trust, respect, support, responsibility and cohesion.

### **Recent researches analysis:**

Recent researches on the problems of socio-psychological climate deal with studying of this phenomenon in the context of a group microclimate. Factors and features of sensitive climate, peculiarities and characteristics of relations in a group, their combinations, and also individual features of the group members are considered in this aspect. The Researches on socio-psychological climate, first of all, concerned the affairs of compatibility, cohesion, conformism, dominance, and also the peculiarities and components of conflicts ( K. Levin, T. Newcom, A. Petrovskiy, H. Andreyeva, H. Hrishyna, and others).

Researches of O. Dobrynina (1992), H. Navaytis (1999), T. Hurko (1987), T. Andreyeva, A. Tolstova (2001), N. Obozov, A. Obozova (1983, 2000), and others are dedicated to the study of socio-psychological climate features in the family in the context of matrimonial interaction. Dobrynina (1992) says that socio-psychological climate in the family is an integral feature that reflects the degree of contentment of a family members with the main aspects of their activities: psychological atmosphere, communication, support in relations [4].

E. Eidemiller, V. Yustitskis, A. Spivakovs'ka, M. Buyanov and others pointed at the mutual relation between socio-psychological climate in a family and mental development of the child. Socio-psychological climate in the family and the features of parent- adolescent relationships in particular are of a great importance not only in the period of achievement and development of a personhood by the child, but continue playing an important role for the adolescents as well. Taking into account a dynamic character of parent- adolescent relations, a restructuring of relations with parents at the new level of quality takes place at the adolescence age (Craig, G., 2000, P. Crittenden, 2002; Ericson E., 1996, Kon I.). The

adolescents, boys and girls, have an increased need in communication, advice, trust, equal terms with their parents based on mutual understanding and respect [6].

That is why, from the point of view of adolescence development sensitive conditions it is important to build relations between parents and their children on parity basis with the subject-subject form of communication as the factor of development. This form of communication takes into account the emotions, feelings of each other; value of a personality and interests of each participant of the interaction are recognized. Parent-adolescent relations based on the principle of subject-subject communication create atmosphere of safety, sociability, and trust in the family that is the basis for personal growth for each member of the family. Significance of dialogical communication as an important component for creating psychological conditions of development of harmonious parent-adolescent relations in a family was emphasized in the works of V. Satir, G. Kraig, I. Kon, A. Mudryk, A. Yevseyenkova, H. Remschmidt, D. Feldstein.

Harmonious socio-psychological climate in a family provides stability of family relations, it is determined not only by subject-subject interaction, but also by value-orientational cohesion of the family with the degree of consistency of the value systems of parents and children as its basis. Works of I. Kon, E. Ericson, D. Leontiev, M.S. Yanyts'kyi, V.S. Torokhtiy, Yu.V. Trophimova consider the role of value systems as a core factor of relations in the family and parent-adolescent relations in particular.

When studying the literature on the problems of family relations, we can come to conclusion that studying psychological climate in the family touched some of its constituent components: compatibility, the degree of contentment with the relations, system of values of the family, unity, psychological closeness, etc (N. Obozov, A. Obozova, I. Kon, O. Dobrynina, T. Andreyeva, H. Navaytis, and others). System-based viewing of the problems regarding relations in the family makes it possible to study not only separate phenomena of psychological climate in a family or parent-adolescent relations, but also consider their interrelations.

Thus when studying socio-psychological climate in a family, it is important to take into account not only positions, opinions of each family member and the context of family relations, but also the degree of their cohesion. Complementarity and not inconsistency in the points of view of parents and the adolescents as for the peculiarities of their interrelations and psychological climate in the family should be a bright indicator of cohesion of their expectations and the basis of family relations development.

**The objective** of our research is to study the peculiarities of socio-psychological climate in a family and the indicators of the features of parent-adolescent relationships.

To reach the objective we are to complete the following tasks:

1. To determine the degree of consistency between the opinions of parents and children regarding the basic features of socio-psychological climate in the family.
2. To determine the significance of difference in estimation of basic components of socio-psychological climate in the family and their gender peculiarities given by parents and their children.
3. To determine the interrelation between the indicators of socio-psychological climate in the family and the features of parent-adolescent relations.

126 Ukrainian families with adolescent children took part in the research. 50 families out of them bring up adolescent boys, and 76 families bring up girls. The boys and the girls are 18 years old, the mothers – 42, and the fathers – 44 years old in average.

**Methods of research:**

Technically the consistency is characterized by us as a correlation coefficient between individual data of family members regarding psychological climate components. For this purpose we used parametric methods of mathematical statistics and Pirson's correlation coefficient. Significance of difference in estimations given by parents and their adolescent children was determined with the help of Student's T-criterion.

Taking into account the set of the constituent elements of socio-psychological climate of a family, we studied the main characteristics of the phenomenon: indicators of relations between the members of a family, indicators of personal growth of the parents and the children, and also indicators of family system management.

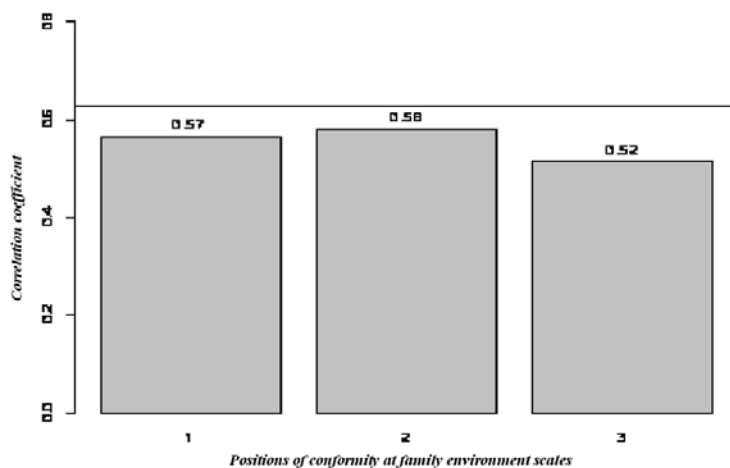
Taking into consideration this fact, we used the technique called "Family Environment Scale" (FES) adapted by S.Yu. Kupriyanov (1985). This technique is aimed at studying and evaluating social climates in families of all types. FES includes ten scales, and each one is represented by nine characteristics. The scales are grouped together in the following units.

1. The first unit gives characteristics to the "Relations between the family members" and includes the following scales: cohesion, expressivity, proneness to conflict.
2. The second unit gives characteristics to indicators of "Personal growth" of the family members and includes the scales: freedom, commitment to progress, intellectual and cultural orientation, need for having an active rest, and moral aspects of the family.
3. The third unit includes indicators of "Family system management" and scales of management and control.

Degree of consistency of views of parents and their children on socio-psychological climate in the family is shown in the fig.1. As we can see it in the figure, the degree of consistency of views of parents and their children regarding the qualitative aspect of their relations in their family is characterized by the indicators of correlative relationship that are insignificantly lower than the critical value ( $r = 0.60$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Fathers and their children have the least consistent positions ( $r = 0.52$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ), and mothers and their children have better indicators of the degree of consistency although they are also different from the significant ones ( $r = 0.58$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$  ). It is possible to draw a conclusion that there exists an avid tendency to consistency of views of parents and their children regarding the indicators of socio-psychological climate in the family.

Fig. 1

**Consistency of views of parents and their children as for the features of socio-psychological climate in the family.**



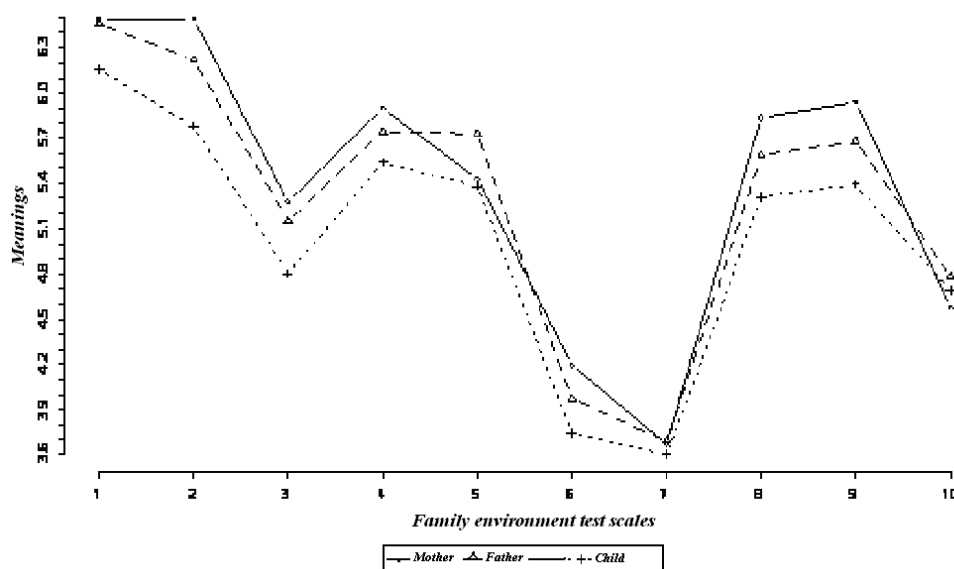
1. Cohesion of Parents by FES; 2. Cohesion of a mother and a child by FES; 3. Cohesion of a father and a child by FES.

Comprehensive analysis of the features of family socio-psychological climate indicators was conducted taking into account the determination of significance of differences in the estimation given by the parents and their children. Student's T-criterion, mathematical statistics method, was used for that purpose.

Let's consider graphic data at the scales that characterize socio-psychological climate in the family given in the fig. 2. As we see in the represented diagrams, estimation given by the children has some differences with the one given by the parents on almost all indicators of family socio-psychological climate parameters.

Figure 2

**Correlation of indicators of moral and psychological climate in the family as seen by parents and children**



**Unit of Relations:** Scales – 1. Cohesion; 2. Expressivity; 3. Non proneness to conflict.

**Unit of Personal Growth:** Scales – 4. Freedom; 5. Commitment to progress; 6. Intellectual and cultural orientation; 7. Need for having an active rest; 8. Moral aspects of the family

**Unit of Management:** Scales – 9. Management; 10. Control.

Indicators from the 1<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> scales characterize peculiarities of the Unit of Relations: degree of cohesion, proneness to conflict, and expressivity. Indicators of the Unit of Personal Growth of parents and children are represented from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> scales. Characteristics of the data from the scales depict the level of freedom, commitment to progress, active rest, intellectual and cultural orientation, and moral relations. Indicators from the Unit of Family System Management are represented by the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> scales, characteristics of which show the degree of family organization, of determination of family rules and duties, of control of each other performed by the family members.

Let's consider the correlation of views of family members upon the estimation of indicators of the *Unit of Personal Growth* and mark reliability of differences at the scales mentioned.

The indicators witness that both parents and their children give a low estimation to the degree of intellectual and cultural orientation of their family and the one of active rest. Activities in social, cultural, intellectual spheres of life are insignificant for the family. Parents and children say that discussing political and social issues, attending the theatre and concerts, taking part in family intellectual discussions are not reckoned important in the activities of the

family. Truthful degree of difference can be seen in estimation given by mothers and children to activities of family members in intellectual and cultural orientation ( $t = 2.56$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ), that means that there are differences between them in the views concerning the matter. Mothers estimate focusing of the family members on intellectual-cultural orientation in their personal growth higher than their children.

Family members give an ambiguous estimation to display of freedom and self-consistency in problem solving (scale 4). Faithfulness of the differences as for these data can be seen in estimations given by the mothers in relation with estimations given by the children. Thus mothers ( $t = 2.81$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) give higher estimation than their children to the fact that self-consistency is welcome in the family, that each one can make decisions by themselves and rely on themselves, that freedom and self-assertion of own rights are welcome. Statistical significance in estimations given by the fathers and the children is not observed that means that there exists more consistent position. Commitment of family members to progress in the estimations given by the fathers has faithful degree of differences in relation with the estimations given by the mothers ( $t = -1.98$ ;  $p = 0.05$ ) and children ( $t = 2.26$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ). The fathers think that promotion into life, belief in one's own strength and reaching new achievements is the priority in any activities for the family members.

Moral aspects of the family are appreciated much higher by the mothers and have statistically faithful meanings in relation with the estimations given by the children ( $t = 3.31$ ;  $p = 0$ ). The mothers think that their families respect moral and ethical values and follow them. Difference in views of the mothers and the children can indicate that there are contradictory positions as for declaring and display of the moral aspect in personal growth of the family members or points that the mothers idealize relations in their families.

Thus, there exists a difference in the positions of the parents and the children as for socio-psychological climate in the family as it can be judged by the scales of *personal development*. When estimating the indicators of personal growth, the fathers give higher marks to commitment of the family to progress, and the mothers give higher marks to display of freedom by the family members, degree of moral aspects of the family system, and intellectual and cultural orientation of the family members than their children. In our opinion the mothers tend to idealize relations in their families and overmark almost all the indicators of the Unit of Personal Growth.

The next stage in our investigation is aimed at comparing the indicators of the Unit or Relations in the estimations given by the parents and their children represented by the scales called proneness to conflict, cohesion, and expressivity.



Faithfulness of difference in indications of cohesion, expressivity, and proneness to conflict is observed in estimations of the mothers and the children. It should be mentioned that it has a reverse interpretation of the data obtained due to peculiarities of calculations by the scale “non proneness to conflict”. Because of this and not to change the indicators of data and to rest on more faithful results we determined the dichotomous name of the scale as “non proneness to conflict”. Thus the children believe that relations between the members of the families are more conflict than their mothers do. Faithfulness of difference according to this indicator is rather significant ( $t = 2.81$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ).

Difference in views of the mothers and the children with their statistical significance is observed in estimations of cohesion and expressivity.

The mothers appreciate more the level of concern and help to each other in the family, intensity of belongingness to the family ( $t = 2.18$ ;  $p = 0.03$ ). The degree of display and expression of their feelings and emotions by the members of the family, as seen by the mothers and the fathers, differs from the opinions of the children. Both the mothers ( $t = 4.57$ ;  $p = 0$ ) and the fathers ( $t = 2.56$ ;  $p = 0.01$ ) tend to mark the degree of open expression of their own emotions by the members of the families higher than it is characterized by the children.

Thus we can state that opinions of the parents and their children have some differences according to the scales of cohesion, expressivity, and proneness to conflict. These data prove the fact that parents and children have different views upon the character of family relations. The adolescents, boys and girls, think that there exists proneness to conflicts in relations, members of the families do not always tell each other about their own feelings, and yet there exists a sufficient degree of cohesion and support.

The Unit of *Family System Management* has truthful differences between the mothers and the children in their estimation of the degree of importance of order, organization, planning and support of family rules ( $t = 3.02$ ;  $p = 0$ ) for the family. In our opinion it can be explained by the fact that the mothers have experience and values of a family life, and for the children these aspects are not significant due to absence of their own family life experience.

Correlative analysis of indicators of socio-psychological climate in the family that was conducted makes it possible to reveal the correlation between the degree of cohesion of the points of view of the parents and the children and individual estimation of the parameters of psychological climate by the parents and the children. Conformity of views of the mothers and the children, of the fathers and the children upon social climate in the family has a reverse correlation with the estimations given by the mothers ( $r = - 0.31$ ; with  $p \leq 0.001$ ); ( $r = - 0.27$ ; with  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and the fathers ( $r = - 0.27$ ; при  $p \leq 0.01$ ); ( $r = - 0,31$ ; with  $p \leq 0.001$ ) to the

intellectual and cultural orientation of the family; the estimations given by the mothers ( $r = -0.3$ ; with  $p \leq 0.001$ ) ; ( $r = -0.28$ ; with  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and the fathers ( $r = -0.25$ ; with  $p \leq 0.01$ ); ( $r = -0.39$ ; with  $p \leq 0.001$ ) to the orientation of the family to the active rest, and to the degree of control of each other performed by the family members.

Thus in case of a conformed position in estimation of socio-psychological climate in the family by the parents and the children, the difference in views in intellectual and cultural sphere, display of control and rest can be observed. Adolescent boys and girls, and their parents have different interests; this reflects age peculiarities of their relations.

Conformity of views of the mothers and the children regarding socio-psychological climate has also direct correlations with the estimations given by the children to cohesion ( $r = 0.22$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ), expressivity ( $r = 0.22$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ), freedom ( $r = 0.23$ ; with  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and moral aspect of the family ( $r = 0.19$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Significant correlations are observed in the mothers' replies according to the indicator "cohesion" ( $r = 0,22$ ; with  $p \leq 0,05$ ).

We can state that the more consistent the mothers and the children are in their estimation of socio-psychological climate in the family, the more often they estimate relations in their families as cohesive; the children can state that feelings and emotions are expressed openly in their families; freedom and self-consistency are welcome. As we see, consistency of views of the mothers and the children regards the emotional aspect of relations.

Consistency of views of the fathers and the children upon socio-psychological climate in the family has direct correlations with the estimation given by the children to commitment to progress ( $r = 0.22$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and moral aspect of the family ( $r = 0.21$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ), and also with the estimations given by the fathers to expressivity in the family ( $r = 0.2$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ). The more conformed are the data given by the fathers and the children regarding socio-psychological climate in the family, the more openly and expressively can the father act to express his feelings. Inverse correlations are connected with the estimation given by the children to the degree of control in the family ( $r = -0.27$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and orientation of the family on the active rest ( $r = -0.24$ ; with  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

So, we can make the following conclusion: the degree of consistency in views of mothers and children, fathers and children upon socio-psychological climate in the family is based on indicators of different units and scales. Consistency in views of the mothers and the children regards the estimation of indicators of the Unit of Relations (cohesion, expressivity); of indicators of Unit of Personal Growth (freedom and moral aspect); of indicators of Unit of Family System Management (control). Consistency in views of the fathers and the children regards the estimation of indicators of Unit of Personal growth (commitment to progress and

moral aspects); of indicators of Unit of family system management (control). The degree of consistency in views of the mothers and the children depends on the estimation of the Unit of quality of Relations in the family by the children and the same can not be said when characterizing the consistency in views of the fathers and the children. It means that there are gender-based differences in estimations of socio-psychological climate by the family members.

The higher are the marks given by the children to the following features of relations in the family such as coherence, expressivity, freedom aimed at moral values, the more conformed and united are the views of the mothers and the children upon socio-psychological climate in the family. Due to this it is possible to emphasize emotional and expressive role of a mother in the family. The more the children are directed to commitment to progress and moral values when estimating a family, the more consistent are the views of the fathers and the children regarding socio-psychological climate in the family. The data obtained show the gender features of the father's role in the family and deal with its object-instrumental character.

#### **Conclusion:**

The views of parents and their adolescent children regarding socio-psychological climate in a family have a sufficient degree of consistency. The fathers estimate much higher the commitment of the family members to progress; the mothers distinguish personal freedom, intellectual and cultural orientation of the family members, and also moral aspect of relations. It should be mentioned that the mothers tend to idealize not only personal qualities of members of their families, but also the peculiarities of their relations with the children.

Parent-adolescent relations have different views upon the intellectual and cultural sphere and having an active rest. It points at the peculiarities of their relations based on the age features of the adolescent. The degree of control in the family makes a significant impact on the personal growth of the family members and on the qualitative characteristics of their relations. Conformity in views of the parents and their children promotes an open expression of feelings in relations, cohesion, freedom, and commitment to progress.

The perspectives of further researches of problems of family relations and of parent-adolescent relations in particular can deal with the study of factors that promote the development of gender equality and equal share in parent-adolescent relations.

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#### **Annotation:**

W artykule przedstawiono cechy rodziców i młodzieży relacji i ich stosunek do zgodności poglądów rodziców i dzieci w zakresie społeczno-psychologiczny klimat w rodzinie. Analizuje różnice między poglądami rodziców i dzieci w kontekście ich relacji, ich cechy płci są badane.

**Słowa kluczowe:** społeczno-psychologiczny klimat w rodzinie, spójność przedstawienia, relacje rodzic-nastolatek.

*В статье рассматриваются особенности родительско-юношеских взаимоотношений и их взаимосвязь с показателями согласованности представлений родителей и детей относительно социально-психологического климата семьи. Анализируются различие взглядов родителей и детей на контекст их взаимоотношений, исследуются их гендерные особенности.*

**Ключевые слова:** *социально-психологический климат в семье, согласованность представлений, родительско-юношеские взаимоотношения.*

*The article depicts the features of the parent- adolescent relationships and their relationship to the consistency of views of parents and children regarding socio-psychological climate of the family. The difference between the views of parents and children in the context of their relationships is analyzed, their gender characteristics are investigated.*

**Keywords:** *socio-psychological climate in the family, the consistency of representations, parent-adolescent relationship*

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*/ N. Vlasova // Understanding the man - understanding the world//  
Interdisciplinary Conference. – Lublin, 2012. – C.73–83*

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