Psychological and Pedagogical Support to Primary School Children in Conflict Relations

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ABSTRACT

The paper studies the manifestations of conflict in primary school age as an inevitable aspect of the complex of social and psychological factors of a modern society. We reveal the psychological features of the conflict behavior and the psychological and pedagogical conditions of support to these conflict manifestations. Moreover, we claim psychological and pedagogical support to be an integral part of the educational process of primary school children in conflict situations. Our results show that psychological conflicts between the children are caused by both (i) emotional and volitional disorders, and by (ii) the insufficient formation of communication skills.

Introduction

The need to study conflicts between children is caused by the essential problems in our everyday life. The growth of conflict at school reflects one of the most acute social problems of our society, where in recent years the use of physical and emotional negative effects have increased dramatically. In particular, the increase of aggression against a person leads to serious consequences for all parties involved in the conflict.

There is enough experience in the field of conflictology in Russian pedagogics. The process of junior schoolchildren conflict investigation is complex and based on the grounds of the investigations dedicated to conflict theory (Ancupov & Shipilov, 2013; Ancupov & Shipilov, 2004; Grishina, 2000; Anan’ev, 2001; Dmitriev, 2002; Tastan et al., 2018); the theory of children’s personal enhancement (Bodalev, 2015; Bojovich, 2001; Vorob’eva & Shakhmatova, 2006); the investigations of junior school children’s emotional-volitional sphere
Conflict relations in the educational process are studied by A.S. Belkin (1995), N.I. Leonov (2006), A.I. Sorokina (2001) and etc. The advances studies of pedagogical conflicts (Ershov, 1992; Kurochkina & Shakhmatova, 2013; Rybakova, 1991) determine the features of conflicts in education and its significance for pedagogical process. It the scientific works of L.S. Vygotsky (2007), A.G. Zdravomyslov (2005), J.L. Kolominsky & B.P. Zhiznevsky (2001) and etc. the authors indentify the reason for appearance of a conflict as well as determine the strategies to overcome it, discover content of the activities, dedicated to prevention and removal of the consequences which are connected with conflict relations.

Conflict as a psychological and pedagogical phenomenon and as an integral part of personality and society has been studied by many psychologists and educators (Tastan & Davoudi, 2013; Kurbanov et al., 2017; Ahmadi et al., 2014). Recent work (Mosina, 2018; Pavlenko, 2000) emphasizes the need to create conditions for the personality-oriented interactions between children of primary school age, since it is the interactions that are often accompanied by conflicts that arise. Such conflicts negatively affect both the children involved in the conflict and the class, reducing the productivity of children’s interactions with each other and the level of children’s activity in the learning process.

To summarize, the relevance of the study lies, on the one hand, in the importance of studying conflict manifestations in the early school years and in the psychological and pedagogical support of children's conflicts, and on the other hand, in the small number of experimental developments in the field of research on these issues.

Research Methodology

The purpose of the investigation: to propose, justify and approve productive forms of work on the prevention and correction of conflicts between primary school children.

Research objectives:

1. To formulate the theoretical foundations of conflicts between primary school children in the context of pedagogical science.
2. To consider the causes and characteristics of conflicts in primary school age in the context of the psychological and pedagogical characteristics of primary school children.
3. To devise the organizational and pedagogical conditions of psychological support for conflicts between primary school children.
4. To propose, justify and test experimentally the effectiveness of work on the prevention and correction of conflicts between primary school children based on the diagnosis of their conflict manifestations.
5. To suggest methodological recommendations for prevention of psychological conflicts between primary school children.

Conflicts in primary school age play not only a negative role but also serve as a basis for building relations with other people in the future.

The main reasons for these conflicts are (i) the children’s inability to communicate effectively, and (ii) the personal characteristics of the children themselves.

In the early school years, interactions between children move from chaotic interactions to managed interactions built on joint activities. These activities help to establish certain norms and rules that primary school children use to get out of conflict situations. Such rules are presented in a form developed by the children themselves in the process of interaction. Therefore, the success of prevention and correction of the conflict depends
on teaching children to control their actions, to find optimal ways out of conflict situations, to forecast the consequences of their actions and so forth, which, in turn, requires psychological and pedagogical support.

In order to successfully prevent and correct, if necessary, conflicts between primary school children, it is necessary to determine the psychological and pedagogical conditions accompanying such conflicts. These conditions include:

- maintaining a positive socio-psychological climate in the study group;
- consideration of the personal characteristics of each child; building cooperative relationship between the teacher and each child; using methods that help children to become more active in the learning process;
- the readiness of a child to resolve a conflict; the responsibility of a child for his/her behavior;
- «Regarding the primary school age, we understand responsibility as an integrative characteristic that determines the behavior in educational and other activities based on the social norms of learning motives and a positive emotional attitude to it» (Sorokoumova, Molostova & Ferapontova, 2017).
- using active forms of work, such as conversations, discussions, games, contests, thematic class hours, intellectual, aesthetic and cultural activities;
- teaching communication skills, methods of self-regulation, etc.;
- using by the teacher the principle of “the relationship of pedagogical management and children’s self-management, which involves creation of situations that require collective decision making, forming a sense of responsibility for their action, protecting each member of the team from negative reactions and manifestations” (Kurnosova, 2018).

In general, the content and methods of work to prevent and correct the negative effects of psychological conflicts are determined by the main goal – the psychological well-being of a child, children self-realization, the formation of social and communication skills and the overall successful socialization of a child.

In order to achieve this aim we have designed and conducted the empirical study the purpose of which is to diagnose the features of appearance of junior schoolchildren’s conflicts and to determine the content of the work dedicated to prevention and correction of such psychological conflicts

**Results**

The experimental work was carried out provided by State-funded educational institution of Nizhny Novgorod «Secondary comprehensive school № 110». The sample group consisted of first-grade pupils (40 people). The middle age of the children – 7-8 years old. The investigation is both general and individual.

The experiment included three stages:

1. The initial stage, the purpose of which is to diagnose the features of appearance of junior schoolchildren’s conflicts.
2. The forming stage, the purpose of which is to organize work dedicated to prevention and correction of psychological conflicts of junior schoolchildren.
3. The control stage, including repeated diagnosis with the methods of the initial stage. The aim is to determine the productivity of the offered remedial and developing program connected with prevention and correction of psychological junior schoolchildren’s conflicts.

The empirical study was conducted in order to identify appearances of junior schoolchildren conflicts by applying the interrogation methods, methods of talk therapy as well as by using a complex of diagnostic techniques.
1. The questionnaire of G.P. Lavrentieva and T.M. Titarenko (1992) «Criteria of child’s aggression». The purpose is to learn appearance of children’s aggressive behavior as the concomitant factor of psychological conflicts.

2. The graphical technique «Kaktus» of M.A. Panfilova (Veliyeva, 2007). The purpose is to determine the features of behavioral reactions of junior schoolchildren.

3. Chromatic test of M. Lusher (Burlachuk, 2007). The aim to determine the features of emotional development and identify child’s aggression and anxiety.

4. The diagnosis of self-appraisal by applying the technique «Lesenka» (V.G. Shchur) (Marcenkovskaya, 2008). The aim is to identify the features of child’s self-appraisal as well as his/her ideas regarding relation of other people to him/her, the level of awareness of this relation.

5. The techniques of learning about mental conditions «Paravozik» (Veliyeva, 2007). The aim: to determine the level of junior schoolchildren’s positive and negative conditions.

6. Observation of the features of children’s communication (the techniques of Smirnova & Holmogorova, 2005). The purpose: to determine the features of cooperation in a group of children.

7. The diagnosis of interindividual relationships in a group by applying sociometric technique «Capitan korablya» (Smirnova & Holmogorova, 2005).


9. Parents’ questionnaire «Prevention of child’s psychological conflicts in a family».

Following the empirical studies in relation to first-grade pupils the results regarding the whole sample group were obtained.

The comparative results of learning about appearances of children’s aggressive behavior achieved by applying the questionnaire of G.P. Lavrentieva and T.M. Titarenko (1992) «Criteria of child’s aggression» have shown that, in general, the level of appearance of the selected children’s aggression is considered as high by both the teacher and the parents. According to the teachers’ survey, 45% children have the high level of aggressive behavior, 35% children have the average level, 20% children have the low level. The parents observed that 30% schoolchildren were prone to the high level of aggressive behavior, 50% children were prone to the average level and 30% children were prone to the low level. This statistics requires child correction guidance directed to lower the aggression of specific group of junior schoolchildren.

The diagnosis of the features of appearance of behavioral reactions by applying graphical technique «Kaktus» of M.A. Panfilova (Veliyeva, 2007) discovered that junior schoolchildren experienced unstable state of emotional sphere, and suffered more often than others from such negative emotional appearances as aggression, impulsiveness.

The results of the diagnosis of the features of emotional development obtained with chromatic test of M. Lusher have shown that 50% girls and 25% boys have the high level of aggression and anxiety; 30% girls and 50% boys have the average level; the low level is identified only regarding 15% girls and 25% boys. The analysis of the levels of junior schoolchildren aggression and anxiety based on the chromatic test of Lusher during the initial stage indicates that girls less comply with the pressures and are prone to anxiety more than boys are.

The results of the diagnosis of junior school children self-appraisal based on the technique «Lesenka» have proved the fact that 1/5 children are prone to self-acceptance. It shows the necessity of treatment in the cases of exaggerated self-assessment or low self-esteem. It was discrowed that 40% children had self-depreciation as the
factor of psychological conflicts. This is a high indicator and, as a result, may become the reason for heightened aggression serving as the way of self-protection and self-realization.

The purpose of the technique «Paravozik» was to determine the levels of junior school children positive and negative mental conditions.

By analyzing the levels of junior school children’ positive and negative conditions (pic. 2) it can be concluded that negative mental condition is prevailing (80%); 4 children are prone to positive mental condition (20%). Thus, the information also proves the reasons for the children heightened tendency to conflicts.

The observation of the features of children communication was also conducted by applying the techniques of E.O. Smirnova and V.M. Holmogorova (2005).

According to the results of the diagnosis, the high level of communication development is determined in relation to 25%, the average level - 45%, the low level – y 30%. The obtained results indicate that there is interconnection between the children conflict behavior and the level of communication development.

To investigate interindividual relations in a junior schoolchildren group the diagnosis based on sociometric technique «Capitan korablya» (Smirnova & Holmogorova, 2005) was made. The results showed that the level of formation of collective relations in the class was not enough, because there was the high percentage of ignored and rejected children (40%).

The determination of group cohesion by applying the indicator of Sishor (under Rogov’s E.I. technique) also showed the low level of junior schoolchildren cohesion.

The analysis of the features of appearance of junior schoolchildren conflicts based in consideration with the observations of their different types of activities, diagnosis of the level of their anxiety and determination of the level of their self-esteem gave the opportunity to identify three level of mental features of appearance of junior schoolchildren behavior, including: high, average and low.

The low level of conflict appearances is characterized by the intention to adequately assess oneself and one’s peers, the presence of emotional stability during the communication process, empathy, the ability to perceive a peer as a communication partner the way he is. The low level of anxiety and self-acceptance (or exaggerated self-assess) are characteristic of this level.

The average level of appearance of conflicts is specified by adaptive communication, in the process of which a child from time to time experiences negative moral qualities, the breach of communication rules and conflict situations with peers take place. Moreover, a child is not able to decide on his own whether he should ask for adults’ help or keep to himself/herself. There are emotional intelligence, goodwill, empathy and mutual understanding, but in spite of this, overwhelming emotions cannot be always under control. This level is characterized by the levels of both exaggerated and low self-esteem, self-acceptance is rare. The average level of anxiety is found out.

The high level conflict appearances is specified by destructive communication, in the process of which fear of communication or intrusive communication are prevailing, a child is also not able to cope with other fears of different nature. During the communication process, such children don’t control their words and actions. If they answer at a lesson, such children either keep silent, or speak much, loudly, but illogical, inconsistent. The characteristics of this level are the high level of anxiety and low self-esteem.

During the empirical study the parents also filled out the questionnaire which according to the results of which the level of family assistance dedicated to prevention of child psychological conflicts and the readiness to cooperate with teachers on this matter were concluded. (таблица 1).
Table 1. The results of parents’ questionnaire «Prevention of child psychological conflicts in a family»

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Answers</th>
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| What do you think prevention of child psychological conflicts is necessary or not? | yes – 80 %  
|                                                                          | no – 0 %                                    |
|                                                                          | depending on a situation – 20 %              |
| Do you assist your children regarding correction of his/her behavior as the basis of psychological conflict prevention? | yes – 55 %  
|                                                                          | no – 15 %                                   |
|                                                                          | depending on situation – 30 %                |
| Do you want to learn the techniques of assistance dedicated to correction and prevention of child psychological children? | yes – 90 %  
|                                                                          | no – 10 %                                   |
| Can you always determine the mental condition of your child (anxiety, aggression, impulsiveness and etc.)? | yes – 45 %  
|                                                                          | no – 10 %                                   |
|                                                                          | sometimes – 45 %                            |
| Do you come into conflict with somebody in the presence of your child?    | yes – 15 %  
|                                                                          | no – 20 %                                   |
|                                                                          | sometimes – 65 %                            |
| Do you always know about psychological conflicts of your child?           | yes – 30 %  
|                                                                          | no – 25 %                                   |
|                                                                          | partially – 45 %                            |
| Do you agree that a psychological conflict may be resolved by itself?     | yes – 35 %  
|                                                                          | no – 35 %                                   |
|                                                                          | it is difficult to answer – 30 %             |
| Do you want to get the information (in different forms) which connects with organization of children assistance dedicated to correction and prevention psychological conflicts? | yes – 75 %  
|                                                                          | no – 10 %                                   |
|                                                                          | sometimes – 15 %                            |
| How do you relate to your child’s success?                               | praise him in front of others – 45 %       |
|                                                                          | praise him face to face – 35 %              |
|                                                                          | differently – 20 %                          |

The obtained results of the questionnaire have shown the necessity to carry out an awareness-raising work with parents which concerns prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren conflicts, taking into consideration their proneness to psychological conflicts and their individual features.

Thus, according to the results of empirical study we have determined that junior schoolchildren conflicts are characterized by a set of violations of emotional-volitional sphere (anxiety, aggression, negative mental condition, inadequate self-esteem), as well as the low level of communication development.

In order to reach the purpose at the initial stage – organization of work dedicated to prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren conflicts, decreasing level of conflict appearances in children behavior, we have highlighted the following tasks:

2. Development of self-confidence, increasing self-acceptance, decreasing level of anxiety.
3. To enrich and diversify the emotional world of a child, teach him correct emotional reactions, junior schoolchildren physical and emotional stress relieving.
4. Improving the ability to successfully realize one’s potential through his/her behavior and connections, skill training of self-control in different situations, which emotionally hurt a child.
5. Expansion of cognitive, creative abilities of junior schoolchildren, stimulation of their self-determination, self-development and self-education, a willingness to expand their horizon.
6. Formation of communication competence, communicational culture, relation to moral ideals, ethical standard of behavior, increasing level of good breeding.

7. To correct behavior field.

The listed tasks served as a basis of design for the correction and development program, directed to decreasing level of aggression and anxiety, increasing level of social competence, development of self-confidence, increasing self-acceptance; physical and emotional stress relieving; development of the abilities to do one’s best in realizing his/her potential though behavior and relations, communication skill training of junior schoolchildren.

The program included 10 lesson (2 times per week). The lessons were taken after working hours. The duration of one lesson varied from 20 to 40 minutes (depending on the form of the lesson). Preparation and realization of this program were implemented in close cooperation with a social teacher, a form master and the parents of pupils.

The correction and development group lessons in the frameworks of assistance dedicated to correction and prevention of junior schoolchildren conflicts mainly contained games, ability test exercises, purposed for integral psychological development of a child and resolving of the specified psychological problems. Psychotherapeutic techniques increased correction impact.

The designed program also consisted of game trainings aimed at development of junior schoolchildren communication skills directly through the communication process in order to prevent and correct psychological conflicts.

During organizing the assistance the necessity to motivate children, including in order to increase self-acceptance and the opportunities of self-realization was taken into account.

When we corrected the proneness to appearances of conflicts, the autogenic techniques-exercises purposed for regulation of mental condition were implied. It is worth mentioning that the role of theater-playing activities during the forming stage is important. The elements of thearticalization were combines with such social-cultural rehabilitation techniques as game-therapy, doll-therapy, fairytale-therapy, musicotherapy, art-therapy, dramatization, animation, psychodramatic elevation, self-actualization and etc.

In the frameworks of organization of the assistance process we taught junior schoolchildren to control their mental condition, form their appropriate behavior. To achieve the literature and didactic games were selected with the purpose of improving the process of emotional-volitional sphere formation.

The particularly important elements are game and project techniques, forming the individual features of junior schoolchildren that can develop only through activities and not can be formed verbally (in group projects, in which a not big group «works» and a final product is created on a basis of joint activity, the following qualities are developing: the abilities to cooperate in a group, to take responsibility for one’s choices and decisions, to divide mutual responsibility, to analyze the results of one’s activity, to feel oneself a member of a group – to control temperament, character, time for the sake of joint interests). The characteristic of assistance dedicated to development of junior schoolchildren teamwork is activation of relations with parents regarding this field.

Formation of group skills and abilities was also stimulated by both design and realization of education projects that have different purposes including optimization of group relationships. This form, inter alia, was offered for the purpose of jointly carrying out any project by parents and their children according to interests and children education demand and, as a result, gave the opportunity to obtain a certain result.

During the control stage the control diagnosis of features of junior schoolchildren appearances was made in order to determine productivity of the offered correction and development program dedicated to prevention and
correction of junior schoolchildren psychological conflicts, the qualitative-quantitative analysis of the results of experimental study was carried out, effectiveness of the offered forms and methods of assistance dedicated to prevention and correction of the children psychological conflicts was determined.

The comparative results of learning appearances of children aggressive behavior by applying the questionnaire of G.P. Lavrentieva and T.M. Titarenko (1992) «Criteria of child aggression» at the initial and control stages have shown that, in general, both the teachers and the parents point out decreasing the level of appearances of children behavioral reactions: according to the teachers’ observations, 9 children experience positive dynamics (45%), the parents find out that it characterizes 10 children (50%). During the control stage the teachers have observed that 3 children are characterized by the high level of aggression behavior (15%), 10 children – by the average level (50%), 7 children – by the low level (35%). According to the parents’ observations, 2 children are prone to the high level of aggression behavior (10%), 5 children – to the average level (25%), 13 children – to the low level (65%). This statistics proves the positive results of the conducted correction work dedicated to decreasing aggression of the specific group of junior schoolchildren.

At the initial and control stages the comparative analysis of the results of diagnosis of appearances of junior schoolchildren anxiety and aggression by using a chromatic test of M. Lusher identified that the level of aggregator and anxiety decreased at the control stage (the high level decreased by 15%). In relation to 45% at the control stage the average level of aggression and anxiety was determined, the low level – in relation to 30% (increasing by 10%).

According to the results of the diagnosis of junior schoolchildren self-acceptance, it may be concluded that following the forming stage of experiment 25% improved their self-acceptance. This fact proves that there is normalization of exaggerated self-esteem and self-depreciation. The appearances of exaggerated and low self-esteem as the factor of conflict have the tendency to decrease. This information indicates that the specific group of children are prone to normalization of the level.

The analysis of the level of junior schoolchildren positive and negative conditions have also shown a positive dynamic. In spite of the fact that there is appearance of different levels of the children negative mental condition, the positive mental condition has increased (by 15%), the high and average levels of mental condition have decreased

Learning the features of appearances of junior schoolchildren conflicts, taking into account the results of the observations of their different activities, diagnosis of the level of their anxiety and determination of the level of their self-acceptance, gave the opportunity to conduct comparative analysis of the levels of junior schoolchildren conflict appearances determined at the initial stage.

The comparative analysis of junior schoolchildren conflict appearances carried out at initial and control stages proves a positive dynamics based on the assistance provided and dedicated to prevention and correction junior school children conflicts: the level of children conflict appearances is determined to decrease by 25%, the low level of conflict appearances has increased by 30% – more than twice.

**Conclusion**

In general, the results of the conducted analysis indicate optimality and productivity of the offered program purposed for prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren conflicts which was tasted during the experimental study. Therewith, it is worth mentioning that the further work in this field requires prolongation.
Based on the obtained information, the practice recommendations for teachers and parents dedicated to prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren psychological conflicts have been made.

Taking into account that the process of prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren conflicts is quite complex, organization of work in this field requires conscious and widespread using by a teacher the different methods and techniques, selection of which is characterized by the results of the conducted diagnosis.

The results of the theoretical investigation of junior schoolchildren psychological conflicts and their conditions, as well as conduction of experimental study in this field, in the process of which the relevant psychopedagogical program purposed for prevention and correction of conflict appearances of junior school children has been designed, prove the following conclusions.

1. The assistance to junior schoolchildren dedicated to prevention of conflicts should be provided in the framework of the next main fields: creating the objective conditions, preventing from the appearance and destructive development of conflict situations; optimization of organizational-administrative operation of educational institution; removal of social-psychological reasons for conflicts; blocking of individual reasons for conflict appearances.

2. The main purpose of psychological-pedagogical assistance involves the selection of the specific way of behavior by a teacher, thanks to which the negative consequences may be minimized and the positive potential in interindividual relations may be maintained.

3. The main types of the activities dedicated to prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren psychological conflicts include: game and training techniques, individual consulting; involving schoolchildren in project activity in order to form communicative connections, development of the ability to cooperate in a group, teaching the rules of resolving problem (conflict) situations; individual work with the system of child’s values; teaching social skills, the ways of effective communication, constructive behavior in conflict situations.

4. The principal methods of prevention of conflict situations in a group of children are to prevent and correct conflicts. The main forms of conflict prevention are the following: learning children self-learning, the ability to control oneself, teaching junior schoolchildren the acceptable ways of anger expression, practice of communication skills in conflict situations, as well as forming such qualities as empathy and trust.

5. Prevention and correction of psychological junior schoolchildren conflicts are characterized by deep involvement of a teacher in the process of communication between children, taking into consideration individual features of each child, as well as the teacher ability to select optimal approaches, including both traditionally pedagogical and connected with psycho-correctional field. The main purpose of psychopedagogical correction is considered as removal of communication barriers, development of better understanding of oneself and other people, stress relieving, creation of success opportunities for everyone.

6. In correction work the principle role belongs to the next actions: to provide a child a necessary set of the means and ways of actions in situations which are important for him, to develop the individual effective model of behavior, as well as to create for everyone the opportunities to succeed.

7. The offered program of psychological-pedagogical prevention and correction of junior schoolchildren psychological conflicts is based on a set of games designed for specific goals, training exercises, dedicated to overcome conflict appearances of children behavior, improving their socialability, forming the communication skills, self-confidence increasing and acquisition of self-control skills.
References


