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Gender socialization of students with disabilities: Ukrainian practices

Гендерная социализация студентов с инвалидностью: украинский опыт

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyze the process of gender socialization of students with disabilities. We used a comparative analysis method and method of generalization in the research process. The logic of our study involved organizing and conducting a survey of students with disabilities. The state of gender socialization of students with disabilities in six institutions of higher education of Ukraine is investigated. The social and pedagogical conditions for the formation of gender socialization of students with disabilities are substantiated. The importance of creating a gender sensitive university environment based on the idea of gender equality has been proved. The basic elements that determine the level of gender sensitivity of a higher education institution are considered. The expediency of creating self-help centers for students with disabilities is substantiated. The essence of teachers and students motivation to cooperate in an inclusive environment in the context of gender socialization is highlighted. Positive impact of students with disabilities involvement in active forms of student and out-of-class student activity has been established. It is proved that the experience of students with special educational needs is not gender-neutral, because boys and girls deal with different realities that shape the understanding of disability.

Аннотация

Целью статьи является анализ процесса гендерной социализации студентов с инвалидностью. В процессе исследования нами использовались метод компаративного анализа и метод обобщения. Логика нашего исследования предусматривала организацию и проведения анкетирования студентов с инвалидностью. Исследовано состояние гендерной социализации студентов с инвалидностью в шести высших учебных заведениях Украины. Обоснованы социально-педагогические условия формирования гендерной социализации студенческой молодежи с инвалидностью. Доказана важность создания гендерночувствительной среды университета, основанной на идее гендерного равенства. Рассмотрены основные элементы, которые определяют уровень гендерной чувствительности высшего учебного заведения. Обоснована целесообразность создания центров самопомощи для студентов с инвалидностью. Освещена сущность мотивации преподавателей и студентов к сотрудничеству в инклюзивной среде в контексте гендерной социализации. Выявлено положительное влияние привлечения студентов с инвалидностью к активным формам аудиторной и

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Key Words: gender, socialization, students, disability, higher education institution

Introduction

Harmonization of social relations is an important prerequisite for sustainable civilizational development. One of the components of the harmonization process is to ensure equal opportunities for members of the various sexes. The history of this issue goes back for many decades. Nowadays, the provision of equal opportunities for representatives of different sexes is enshrined in the legislation of the vast majority of countries in the world, including Ukraine. At the same time, it is appropriate to point out the declaratism existence in the process of gender transformation in Ukraine. In this context, the problem of gender socialization of persons with disabilities is of particular relevance. The priority is to ensure the rights of such persons, to create conditions for the realization of their educational and creative potential in educational institutions.

Educational institutions, while providing access to education, should also perform other functions, such as outreach and education, facilitating gender transformation. Forming new approaches and standards in this field will create preconditions for gender socialization of students with disabilities in higher education institutions. The aim of the article is to analyze the process of gender socialization of students with disabilities. The authors of the article formed the hypothesis that the gender socialization of student youth with disabilities will be effective in the higher education institution within such socially pedagogical conditions as the creation of a gender-sensitive university environment based on the idea of gender equality, motivation of teachers and students to cooperate in an inclusive environment in the context of gender socialization, engagement of students with disabilities into gender environment in classroom and extracurricular activity of higher education institutions.

внеаудиторной деятельности. Доказано, что опыт студентов с особыми образовательными потребностями не является гендерно-нейтральным, поскольку учащиеся имеют дело с различными проявлениями реальности, которые формируют понимание инвалидности.

Ключевые слова: гендер, социализация, студент, инвалидность, высшее учебное заведение

Literature review

Gender issues, including those with disabilities, have been the research focus of many scholars. For example, the practical aspects of gender socialization of persons with disabilities are discussed by T. Kazanceva (2010). The researcher identifies two positions on which gender socialization of persons with disabilities should be based: the formation of gender identity and the acquisition of social experience.

Theoretical provisions that reveal the social and pedagogical regularities of the formation of a disabled child and social and pedagogical approaches to work with him are presented in the works of A. Kapska (2003), N. Myroshnichenko (2005) and A. Kolupaieva (2009).

The fundamental work of Sax L. J. (2008) analyzes the development of students of different genders during their college education. The author formed a sample of 17 thousand students of different sexes from 200 educational institutions. During the research, various parameters were analyzed: academic achievement, self-esteem, life-orientations, physical and emotional health, interpersonal relationships and others. The results of the study showed that college education has different effects on students of different genders. Thus, more than half of the 584 college students had a clear gender orientation.

In turn, Stockard J. (2006) analyzed in detail the basic theories of gender socialization. The process of developing theories of gender socialization was considered in chronological order - from the early tradition of social learning theory to gender schema theory. The author points to the existence of complex relationships between biological, psychological, environmental and social factors in human life and development. The author describes the influence of the environment (peer groups), the role of parents in gender socialization.

Issues of formation of value orientations of youth in modern society were considered by a team of scientists (Donina, Salikhova, Aryabkina, Chernova & Kovardakova, 2019).

Organizational aspects of the functioning of higher education institutions in Ukraine are discussed in the article by the team of authors (Kurmaiev & Pyzhianova, 2017).

The problem of existence of gender stereotypes in educational institutions is highlighted in the scientific papers of J. Duffy, K. Warren & M. Walsh (2001) and E. S. L. Chen & N. Rao (2011).

Weckwerth A. C. & Flynn D. M. (2006) investigated gender peculiarities of social support and specificity of burnout syndrome in Northern Ontario University students. The authors used adapted MBI-HSS and SPS techniques to analyze the incidence of burnout and study the degree of influence of interpersonal relationships on the social support of individual students. The components of burnout syndrome were identified: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal achievement. The results of the study showed that the nature of the support was significantly dependent on the student's gender. Analysis of the components of burnout syndrome revealed that male students had a higher depersonalization rate than female students. Instead, female students had a lower personal achievement rate than male students.

The team of authors (West M. et al., 1993) examined the level of social needs satisfaction of students with disabilities. To this end, a survey of 761 Virginia higher education students was organized. Its results showed the presence of problematic moments in establishing communication with the administration of institutions, teachers and other students. Thus, one of the obstacles was that teachers did not fully understand the special nature of the needs and rights of students with disabilities. The authors propose recommendations that will better address the needs of students with disabilities.

Suzanne E. Eckes and Theresa A. Ochoa (2005) focus on the challenges of implementing effective adaptation programs for people with disabilities in higher education. The authors cover the rights of persons with disabilities, identify the main problems of educational and social adaptation in higher education institutions. The article justifies the proposals for the implementation of adaptation programs and increase their effectiveness.

Stromquist N. P. (2007) proposes to identify five elements of the process of gender socialization. For each of them, the results of the studies in countries with different levels of economic development are summarized. The results indicated that there were no significant differences in the process of gender socialization in the countries where the studies were conducted.

Methodology

The logic of our study involved organizing and conducting a survey of students with disabilities. The survey was attended by 530 students enrolled in 6 higher education institutions in Ukraine (Bogdan Khmelnytskyi Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University, Kharkov Humanitarian-Pedagogical Academy, Drohobych State Pedagogical University, National University of "Chernihiv Collegium", Open International University of Human Development "Ukraine"). 378 respondents identified themselves as female, 152 - as male.

We also used a comparative analysis method in the research process. It was used when comparing the answers of different gender respondents to the questionnaire. The method of generalization made it possible to determine the general characteristics of the main problems of gender socialization of students with disabilities in Ukraine.

Results and discussion

The questionnaire included questions on both the issues of gender socialization of students with disabilities and problems of their everyday life in order to determine the peculiarities of lifestyle and prospects for further research.

First of all, we were interested in a variety of problems today's student youth with disabilities are troubled by. We need to note that 45% of students are concerned on the economic problems.

The question about their attitude to other members of society showed that most respondents (58%) openly speak to other people on terms of equality, some students (38%) are overstrained and 4% try to avoid any contacts. 74% of students do not experience negative attitudes in society. However, sometimes they were humiliated, not understood, they were impudently treated and their things were often

stolen. The situation is rather complicated as at present time 54% of students are not equipped with rehabilitation devices.

72% of students with disabilities attend public events in educational institutions, towns or villages, 8% try to do it regularly while 20% never participate in such events. We are delighted that almost all students with disabilities have hobbies, including fitness, dancing, photography, cooking, boxing, football, constructing "economical" buildings, chess, design, music, reading, beadwork, hand-made.

However, to realize one's own hobby there must be time, health, self-confidence, means, knowledge of English language etc.

87% of girls and 92% of boys with special educational needs stated that they have friendly and positive relationships with other sexes, while some respondents mentioned that they saw such relationships as neutral ones.

The next assignment made students divide the qualities into "female" and "male" (table 1).

Table 1. Representation of the students' distribution of qualities into "male" and "female"

Qualities	Answers of students in %	
	Male	Female
Manfulness	100	
Courage	87	13
Purposefulness	58	42
Resolution	55	45
Ability to sympathize	69	31
Femininity		100
Tenderness	8	92
Being romantic	47	53
Energy	49	51
Persistence	63	37

Analysing the overall picture of answers, we can conclude that 5% of students believe that some qualities cannot be inherent to both males and females. This fact suggests that the students believe that there are qualities that are specific to only women or only men.

18% of students stated that there is no friendship between a boy and a girl. There were also answers that boys are better friends than girls. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that there are certain stereotypes, which we were to overcome in the process of our research.

39% of girls with disabilities have boyfriends. They want to see them as purposeful, intelligent, courageous and strong persons. 32% of the boys have girlfriends and they turned out to be more restrained in describing them, saying that the main thing is true love.

20% of the interviewed boys and 15% of the girls do not see themselves as a husband / a wife. Consequently, 10% and 6% of students with disabilities respectively do not want to have a family and children. Only some respondents said

they wanted to have two or five children and see their future families as healthy, rich, successful and happy.

53% of students with disabilities have heard about the law of Ukraine "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for males and females", 23% are well aware of this law and only 24% do not know anything about it. We have found out very low awareness of student youth in gender issues. Despite the fact that world state administration and political officers promote interest in these issues, students have little knowledge about any terminology or gender tools. 49% of students are not aware of the meaning of the word "gender". One part of respondents (28%) noted that they understand the meaning in general, but it was difficult for them to define this concept. Another part (23%) knows what gender is and can explain the meaning of the word.

We should state that 41% of respondents indicated that gender issues were never discussed in their higher education institution, 25% said that gender issues were discussed with teachers

after classes, 14% studied gender topics within a certain discipline plan, and 15% of students had a special course devoted to these issues. Only one educational institution among all others where the survey was conducted has Gender Education

Centre, but only 20% of students participate in gender-based activities. Other answers of students with disabilities are presented in the form of the Fig. 1.

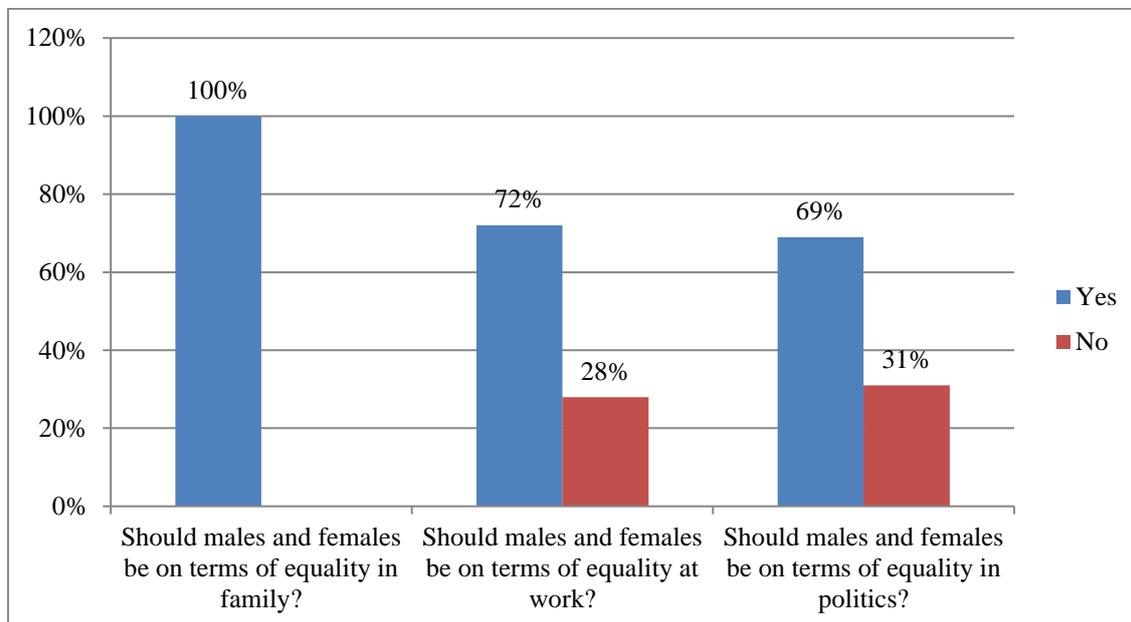


Fig. 1. Equality of males and females

Consequently, we can conclude that students have certain stereotypes in their attitudes and beliefs. When asked about the need to acquire knowledge about gender relations in society, 17% gave positive answer, 49% were not sure about it and 34% were against doing it.

Taking into account the presented facts, we have theoretically substantiated social and pedagogical conditions for the formation of gender socialization of student youth with disabilities in higher education institutions, namely: the creation of a gender-sensitive university environment based on the idea of gender equality, motivation of teachers and students to cooperate in an inclusive environment in the context of gender socialization, engagement of students with disabilities into gender environment in classroom and extracurricular activity of higher education institution.

Justifying the importance of the first socio-pedagogical condition, we proceed from the assumption that, under the influence of global trends, the modern higher education system can become a basic component of the mechanism of dissemination of gender equality principles.

Since 2014 this fact has been monitored by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, but there are still the same drawbacks in textbooks and programs for secondary schools. Existence of gender stereotypes makes girls choose non-technical professions, restricts their access to innovative, advanced professions.

It should be noted that the emergence of gender stereotypes at universities is due to the fact that the gender relation model was historically developed in such a way that sexual differences prevail over the individual, qualitative differences between the male and female personalities. Shaped "gender standards" are fixed in the form of moral gender stereotypes settled into consciousness without being subjected to critical analysis. Moral gender stereotypes reflect the ideas concerning the behaviour and the norms that people need to follow in everyday activities (and they are not equal for both sexes). Considering the concept of "gender stereotype" we should state that gender defines individual opportunities in education, professional activity, and access to power, sexual and family roles, and determines social statuses. And since social statuses are connected with culture, it means that "gender has gender culture"

(Gryshak, 2007). Gender culture creates socially based notions of the specifics of male and female. This is the basis for the division of social roles and functions between men and women and the correlation of their social statuses. Thus, "male" and "female" are peculiarities formed by gender culture and reflected in gender stereotypes.

Section VIII, Article 3 of the State Program contains a statement about activities being done on a regular basis to introduce gender approaches in the system of education, in particular, the development of courses and classes on gender equality, the realization of gender expertise of textbooks and curricula. However, the Program execution was postponed for an indefinite period, and the funding was not foreseen.

Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a main section that relates to all articles, and reminds the member states to take into consideration the rights of women and girls with disabilities while planning all actions aimed at implementing the Convention. In particular, it is necessary to take effective measures to protect women with disabilities from multiple discrimination, and to ensure their rights and fundamental freedoms on terms of equality with others.

Another important aspect of University gender-sensitive environment is a so-called "wall space" (tables, information boards, posters, works of art), which is also gender influenced as on the one hand, it reflects prevailing gender segregation and polarization, gender inequality of society, and on the other hand, it constructs them directly: a student consciously or subconsciously, easily and naturally perceives the "messages" hidden in the content of this space. It is extremely important to pay attention to the gender dimension of such elements of the "wall space" (Boundless, 2016).

For example, the title "They take care of education" (it may be any other similar name) on the wall with pictures of the leaders of the state, region, city, district, or educational sector clearly demonstrates the gender stratification of power: the higher the position is, the more likely it is held by a man. The board with title "Our Excellent Students" ("Our pride" or other similar title) presents bigger amount of photos of girls than those of boys, and such situation forms a stereotype that females are better in learning than males. The grades of girls can really be higher, but the explanation should be found not in innate inclination of this sex to study, and not in their talents being developed by University in a special

way. Girls are more easily adapted to the university's requirements, correspond to the image of an ideal student because of certain personal personality traits, and consequently have better results in education.

Thus, creating a gender sensitive university environment based on the idea of gender equality is to eliminate gender stereotypes, minimize manifestations of sexism, create equal prerequisites for realizing students' potential.

The gender sensitivity of a higher education institution may be determined by the following elements: the availability of regulatory documents, a gender component in the curricula and other informational and methodological materials; the presence of a gender component in the content and the integration of gender issues in the educational process in general; gender balance in the leadership and teaching staff (at least 40% must be given to a single sex); providing regular gender expertise at a higher education institution (curricula, lectures, etc.); Gender Centre (Centre for Gender Education) functioning and its activities; independent gender audit of higher education; creation of the environment that allows students and teaching staff to combine professional and private interests in a balanced way; the degree of access for male and female teachers to material wealth and career development (social support, rise in wages, flexible work schedule, bonuses, etc.) (Zvereva, 2014).

We associate the second socially pedagogical condition of gender socialization of student youth with disabilities with the motivation of teachers and students to cooperate in an inclusive environment. Gender socialization is based on teachers' professional skills, the development and implementation of a new discipline on gender topics in the educational process, as one of the means for the formation of modern egalitarian gender ideas among students, the principles of equal opportunities for girls' and boys' individual and professional self-realization in different spheres of life.

Describing the organization of teaching students in the conditions of Ukrainian university inclusive education, O. Fudorova (2011) noted the low level of centralized teaching and methodological training of teachers, and stated that they independently solve their current issues of inclusive education through self-education. The author proposes to use necessary information, technology and organizational resources, in particular, professional training of

teachers in the university working on the principles of inclusion (Fudorova, 2011). Discussing the role of ordinary students in the inclusive environment, we can conclude that this issue still remains unexplored. Under conditions of inclusion, there is obviously a need for students to acquire inclusive competence, formed by inner qualities to establish communication and productive cooperation with colleagues with special educational needs.

In our opinion, another positive basis for the gender socialization of students with disabilities is the creation of self-help centres. The goal is to develop civic participation and improve the social status of students with disabilities, provide support for their work and social integration. With the activities of such self-help groups, students will solve their own problems by acquiring certain skills. They will be able to help each other in education or simply start new acquaintances with the opposite sex, learn to be independent and overcome difficulties. We also believe that the adaptation of work syllabuses to gender education for students with special needs is one of the elements of self-improvement of higher education teachers and should contribute to the successful adaptation of such young boys and girls to gender socialization.

Improving teachers' gender education and gender competence is impossible without providing the information and analytical basis of educational activities in Institutes of Improvement of Teachers' Skills. Information and communication technologies should become a platform for the implementation of the gender component in the system of postgraduate pedagogical education. Complex gender strategy should be integrated in organizing and conducting thematic and professional seminars, conferences, special courses for teachers during teacher certification period; in the creation of temporary collectives among pedagogical workers who will be engaged in the research of gender issues. Teachers should write and publish gender-specific materials in various scientific and popular publications and present pedagogical ideas and technologies of methodological developments, didactic and visual materials, teaching aids, textbooks etc. at workshops and presentations. Such materials should be aimed at introducing ideas of gender partnership and equality into the content of university education without imposing traditional stereotypes. This will help optimize the gender socialization of student youth with disabilities in a higher education institution.

The fact that a teacher has gender-neutral behaviour will only demonstrate his gender incompetence, and, as a result, his professionalism will be depreciated by students. We consider engagement of students with special educational needs in classroom and extracurricular gender activities as an important socially pedagogical condition for the formation of gender socialization.

The task of the gender environment during classroom and extracurricular activities in higher education institutions is ambiguous: on the one hand, it is necessary to teach students with special educational needs to live in a modern society, to be "like others", and on the other it is valuable to develop their abilities and their individuality through a gender approach, that is, to teach taking into account the abilities of individuals, not to exaggerate the social and sexual features of boys and girls (Kharchenko, 2015).

In general, extra-curricular activity, which goes far beyond traditional education and includes active volunteering, project activity, participation in promotions, forums, trainings, significantly increases the professional skills and competence of both students, teachers and staff, makes them use practical skills, demonstrating real gender equality, and refute existing stereotypes.

Therefore, within framework of gender socialization of student youth with disabilities special attention should be paid to the formation of adequate representations concerning the role of men and women in the society, developing culture of communication and interpersonal interaction, as well as the skills of behaviour and preparation for responsible marriage and parenthood. Consequently, we can state that the experience of students with special educational needs is not gender-neutral, since boys and girls are dealing with different realities that shape the experience and understanding of disability.

Conclusions

The conducted diagnostics shows that the low level of students' knowledge about the gender theory principles, the lack of their awareness in the field of gender relations and of understanding the idea of gender equality do not allow such students to choose among gender values and understand their priority. They cannot resist the challenges made by outdated stereotypes and

such situation can be manifested in the demonstration of behaviour patterns based on traditional patriarchal gender norms of sex-role interaction, and, in general, reflect students' differentiated gender socialization. The experience of students with special educational needs is not gender-neutral, since boys and girls are dealing with different realities that shape the skills and understanding of disability.

Consequently, the gender socialization of students with disabilities will be successful under the following socially pedagogical conditions: the creation of a gender-sensitive university environment based on the idea of gender equality; motivation of teachers and students to cooperate in an inclusive environment in the context of gender socialization; engagement of students with special educational needs in classroom and extracurricular gender activities in the higher education institution.

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