

## Individual and Social Self-Perception Determinants Among School Going Adolescents

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### Abstract

The aim of the research is to define individual psychological traits of adolescents that influence the formation of their self-perception. An empirical study was conducted on the basis of general education schools, boarding schools for the hearing impaired students and orphanages of the Kharkiv region (Ukraine). The study included 86 children. In accordance with this aim empirical methods were applied: Self-perception profile for adolescents (SPPA), Freiburg Multifactorial Personality Questionnaire (FPI), An Adolescent's Character Traits Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. It has been found that self-perception of general education school students is determined by depressiveness, shyness, extroversion, and stuck type of accentuation; in adolescents with hearing impairments – friendliness, reactive aggressiveness, extroversion, emotive and anxiety types of accentuation; in orphans – pedantic and dysthymic types of character accentuation.

**Key words:** *adolescence, children with limited abilities, individual-and-character traits, orphans, self-consciousness, self-perception, social environment*

### Introduction

The modern stage of humanity development is characterized by a high level of dynamism and unpredictability (Barczak et al., 2020). These changes are especially reflected in child development (Dahl et al., 2018), which requires constant and consistent research of those social and individual determinants that

shape it. The covid-19 pandemic in the past two years has brought significant changes to education systems around the world, which affect the development of such a sensitive group as adolescents. At the same time, adolescents in different conditions faced different problems. And if someone was deprived of the opportunity to communicate with friends and was forced to study remotely, then some children (boarding school students for children with visual and hearing impairments), who were sent home, were left without access to education at all (Leeb et al., 2020). After the end of the pandemic, the world community will have to make a lot of efforts to help adolescents come back to a healthy perception of themselves and the world around them. In this context, it is of particular interest to study those factors that affect the self-perception of adolescents studying in regular schools and special boarding schools. Knowledge in this area will help create adaptation programs for Internet students, aimed at reducing the influence of negative factors on their self-image.

Harmonious personality development depends on many factors, including the adequate passage of specific development periods, dynamics of age, especially in childhood. Each period is characterized by a certain specificity of the social development situation, which determines the features of building relationships with others, which are the basis for the appearance of major and secondary age changes. It is clear that every period of childhood is unique and it affects the formation of the individual as a whole, but precisely the teenage age is laying the foundation for further adult life, since the self-concept or identity predetermines further optimal psychosocial development, as E. Erickson points out (Erikson, 1995). Therefore, the formation of positive self-perception as a component of self-consciousness, revealed in the self-paced of self-identity and different aspects of life in adolescence will lead to the construction of an optimal life path.

The aim of the article is to analyze the empirical study results of the individual psychological characteristics of adolescents influence on the formation of their self-perception. Objectives of the study are: 1) to reveal the essence and features of the self-perception development in adolescence; 2) to identify the features of adolescents self-perception; 3) to reveal the individual psychological and characterological traits of childrens' adolescence; 4) to establish the psychological determinants of the positive self-perception formation in adolescents with different types of social development situations.

## **Methodology of Research**

An empirical study was conducted on the basis of general education schools, boarding schools and orphanages of the Kharkiv region (Ukraine). Study included 86 children in total, the average age was 13.2 years; 37 out of them are male, 49 are females. Qualitative distribution: 48 people are students of the secondary school, 20 respondents are the children studying at boarding schools for hearing impaired people and 18 are adolescents of orphanages.

To achieve the goal and to solve the tasks a methodical complex was used, which included the following methods: empirical – personal questionnaire “Self-perception profile for adolescents (SPPA)” of S. Harter (Harter, 1986); Freiburg Multifactorial Personality Questionnaire (FPI); questionnaire character trait of V.M. Rusalov; Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; methods of mathematical statistics: descriptive statistics (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, mod, median, excess, normal distribution curve), dispersion analysis (one and multi-factor ANOVA to study the influence of one or more factors on the dependent variable) and multiple regression analysis (with step-by-step inclusion) to study the one-sided dependence of a dependent variable on one or more independent variables and constructing a predicted equation explored certain determinations were made using the SPSS Statistics 21.0 and STATISTICA 12 data analysis program.

## **Results of Research**

Self-perception is the initial concept of individual self-consciousness which is closely related to self-esteem and self-knowledge. The self-awareness formation is a complex and prolonged process of self-knowledge by integrating single images into a holistic entity, which can be called the own “Self” of a subject, which differs from other subjects by different characteristics.

Actually self-perception is a „tool” of the person who controls the orientation process in his / her own inner world, providing self-knowledge and comparing oneself with other people (Great Psychological Dictionary, 2003). It is a feature of self sense as a personality, its dignity and value in society (Cambridge English Dictionary).

D. Bem (Bem, Berkowitz, 1972) believed that „self-perception” is a person’s specific ability to generalize information about own individual-psychological characteristics based on the reflection of own stable preferences and behavioral patterns. It is possible to know both own and another person’s inner world not only through

introspection, but also by observing own behavior and the circumstances where it manifests and regularly realized (Bem, Berkowitz, 1972). A person interprets his or her own life experience, regulates activity on the basis of own strengths evaluation, abilities, and his final product is the formation of the self-concept, with the help of self-perception (Burns & Dobson, 1984).

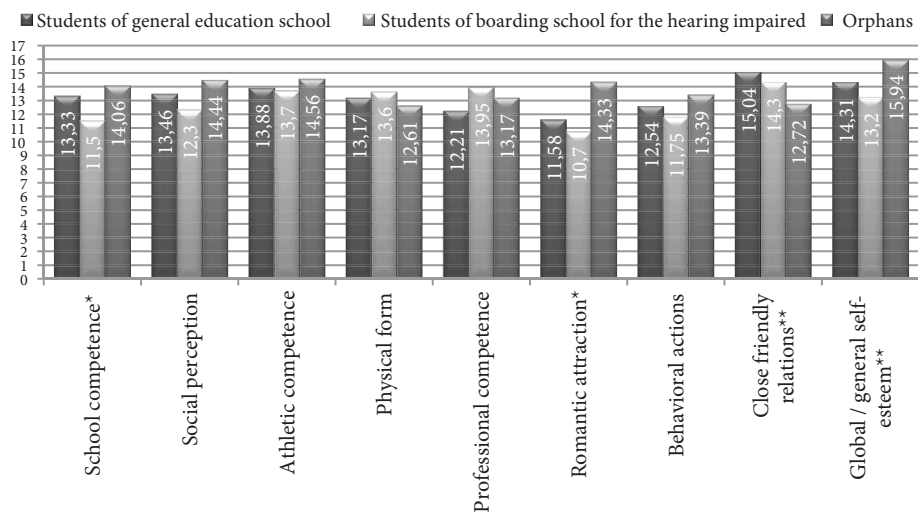
An important age development of adolescence is the formation of self-consciousness, in particular the self-concept, „awareness of own personality as integrity, emotional self-evaluation, the formation of personal and social identity. The basis of these processes in adolescence is self-perception, which acts as a perception form of the child as a special object of knowledge and depends on accepted values, personal meanings, and the extent of orientation to socially developed demands for behavior and activity (Burns & Dobson, 1984).

Self-perception is considered as the basic mechanism of socialization and social adaptation, since reflection, self-esteem, self-affirmation, etc., as its main components predetermine the psychic development of the adolescent. The criteria for self-perception of an adolescent child include emotional and communicative orientation, values, self-reliance, accentuation of character. Self-esteem, communicative behavior, cognitive functions also serve as indicators of the phenomenon under investigation (Van, 2009).

Thus, we consider that the adolescent's self-perception is the basis for the formation of his or her self-consciousness and it is revealed in the possibility of self-awareness and introspection of "Self" own image, its behavioral (actions, control) and value components.

Figure 1 shows that in the samples of self-perception indicators are developed at the average level, in general. But there are some differences. Thus, the „romantic attraction" indicator (10.7) is low among adolescents of the boarding school for the hearing impaired, which characterizes them as those who do not feel attractive to the opposite sex and show a low level of competence in romantic relationships. This is because such features as the way of communication, speech defects and the inability complicate the construction of close romantic relationships. At the same time, hearing impaired children are best prepared for professional activities, which indicates greater independence. In addition, hearing problems greatly reduce the range of occupations for such children, so they do not care about choosing a specialty. Results from other scales indicate a general lack of confidence among children with disabilities.

A higher than average level was demonstrated by the students of the secondary school on the indicator of „close friendly relations" (15.04), because at this age children are characterized by a reorientation of relations from parents to their



**Figure 1.** Individual and psychological traits of adolescents by “Self-perception profile for adolescents (SPPA)” (mean score)

\* – significant difference at the level 0,01 \*\* – significant difference at the level 0,05

peers, therefore these results testify to the effective realization of the leading activity of this period.

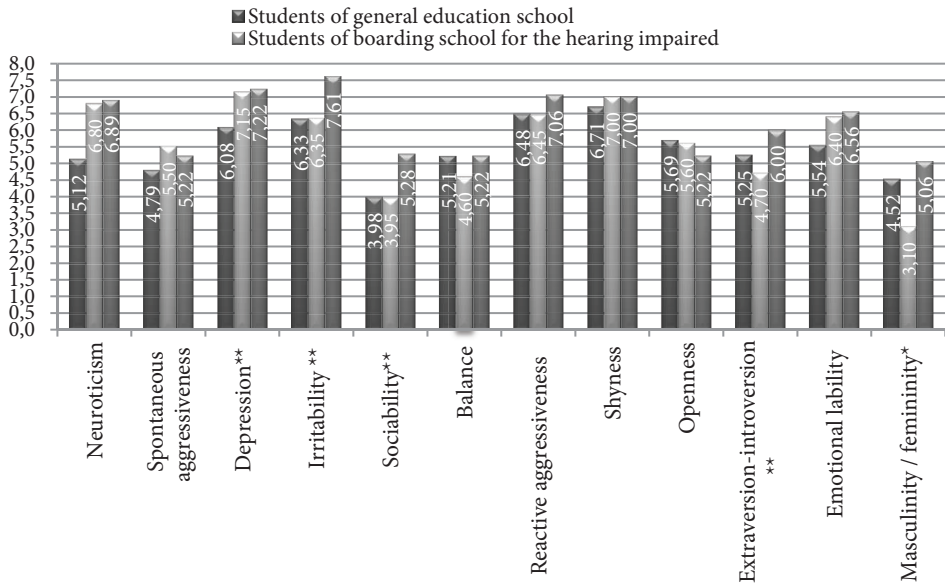
A high level of „global self-esteem” was detected in adolescents from an orphanage (15.94), so they are satisfied with their own personality and life. By the all scales, except „physical form”, „professional competence” and „close friendly relations”, orphanage students showed higher average scores. This may be due to a lower level of social requirements and pressures on the individual, which leads to lower levels of harassment and demands. On the other hand, worse developed scales than the other two samples, indicate that for orphans when comparing them to other respondents, it is more difficult to build friendly relations because they are less ready for professional activity, and they are more concerned with the appearance than others. This is explained by living conditions, social deprivation.

It is important to note that, unlike students of general education schools and hearing impaired children, the results of orphans on the scale of „romantic attraction” are high. It shows, that they are not concerned with the construction of close intimate relations, because they do not feel the importance of couple relationships, family values and spiritual intimacy due to the lack of such an example in their lives. The lowest results were obtained by the „physical form” indicator, which

shows the value of physical strength for these children as a criterion for achieving goals.

According to the dispersion analysis results, there were significant differences on the scales: school competence ( $p = 0.001$ ), romantic attraction ( $p = 0.002$ ), close friendly relations ( $p = 0.033$ ) and overall self-esteem ( $p = 0.034$ ). Accordingly, children from orphanages feel competent in their studies, and they feel satisfied with their own lives, which on the one hand, is a positive personality formation, but, on the other hand, attracts attention, because it can provoke difficulties in further social adaptation.

It has been established (Figure 2) that students of general education schools have the most expressed qualities such as irritability (6.33), reactive aggressiveness (6.48) and shyness (6.71), but in general all of these scales have the lowest average score in comparison with other respondents. The rate of openness prevails among students in a secondary school, which indicates a better ability to establish close friendly relations. At the same time, the lowest results were obtained on the scale of sociability (3.98). For teenagers, communication with peers and close friendships



**Figure 2.** Individual and psychological traits of adolescents by Freiburg multi-factor questionnaire FPI (mean score)

\* – significant difference at the level 0,01 \*\* – significant difference at the level 0,05

are the leading activity, successes and failures in this area are very acute, therefore students often feel uncertain in building strong friendships. It is important to note that the rates of neuroticism ( $p = 0,0001$ ) and depression ( $p = 0,013$ ) are much lower among students of general education schools than in orphans and hearing impaired teenagers, indicating a greater self-satisfaction.

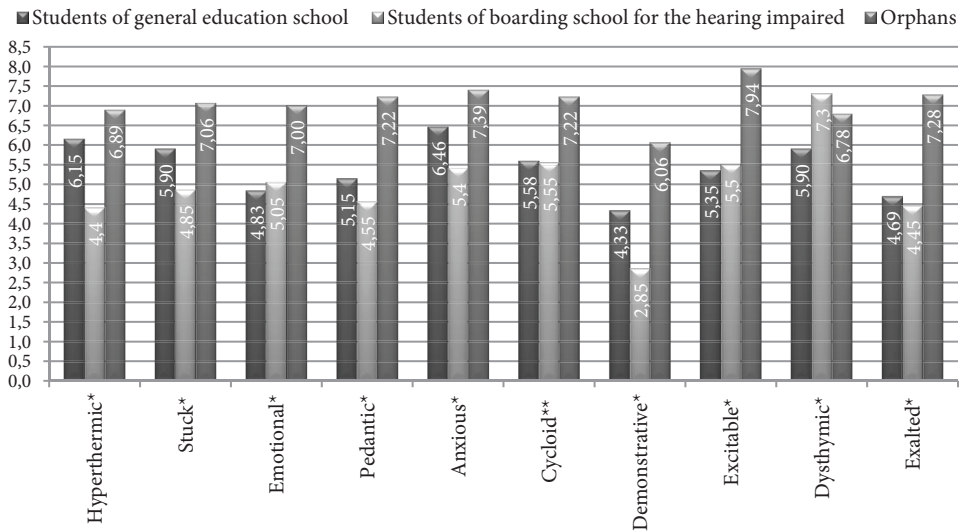
Students of boarding schools for the hearing impaired students have high rates for: neuroticism (6.80), depression (7.15), irritability (6.35), reactive aggressiveness (6.45), shyness (7.00) and emotional lability (6.40). So, hearing impaired students feel tension and excitement about their „peculiarities”, they are ashamed of it, and irritated by misunderstanding of others, children feel that they are not like everyone, which leads to an aggressive reaction towards society. Such teenagers are characterized by high level of femenity in contrast to the other two samples ( $p = 0.009$ ).

Regarding the children from an orphanage, they showed the highest average scores on almost all scales. It should be noted that the highest average score of the orphans was recorded as an indicator of irritability ( $p = 0.026$ ), indicating a tendency to affective reactions and low ability to control emotions. Accordingly, they have a high level of emotional lability (6.56), and reactive aggressiveness (7,06). In general, the orphans have a desire to dominate and show negative attitudes towards others. These data are supported by the results of the previous questionnaire, and explain why the physical strength of the orphans is so important. Indicators of orphans in the category of extraversion-introversion prevail ( $p = 0,031$ ), that is, orphans are not inclined to self-examination, but more focused on the outside world.

Thus, among the teenagers of all samples, such qualities as sociability are worse developed. This testifies that the modern teenager is not characterized by a constant desire to find new social contacts and readiness to communicate with new people. Computer engagement reduces the level of adaptability in society, accordingly increases the level of shyness, which adversely affects communicative qualities, and therefore the establishment of social contacts. This is confirmed by the indicator of dispersion analysis, according to which the sociability of orphans who do not have broad Internet access is better developed than others ( $p = 0.023$ ).

Consequently, at a significant level, with a significant difference, the social situation affects such qualities as neuroticity ( $F = 10.907$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), depression ( $F = 4.62$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), irritability ( $F = 3.806$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ), sociability ( $F = 3.952$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ), level of extraversion ( $F = 3.608$ ,  $p = 0.031$ ), masculinity-femininity ( $F = 4.957$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ).

The peculiarities of teenagers' character features are determined (Figure 3). Thus, the most developed type of accentuation among students of general education school is anxiety, that is, they are concerned with their future, unsure in their own strength. The irrelevant type of accentuation is demonstrative, exalted and emotional. This may be influenced by the excessive significance of the thoughts of others towards oneself, because the adolescent may not want excessive attention to his or her personality because of the fear of being mocked. It also confirms the willingness of adolescents to enter into conflict situations, and not understanding the value of friendship, love and feelings.



**Figure 3.** Features of teenagers' character (mean score)

\* – significant difference at the level 0,01 \*\* – significant difference at the level 0,05

Hearing impaired teenagers are characterized by a dysthymic type of character accentuation, which means sad and gloomy thoughts about their life and future, that is, concentration on the negative side of life, and the inability to control their own psychological state. The low indicator of the demonstrative type is because of the fact that excessive attention from the surrounding can provoke a sense of shyness due to hearing impairment and related speech defects.

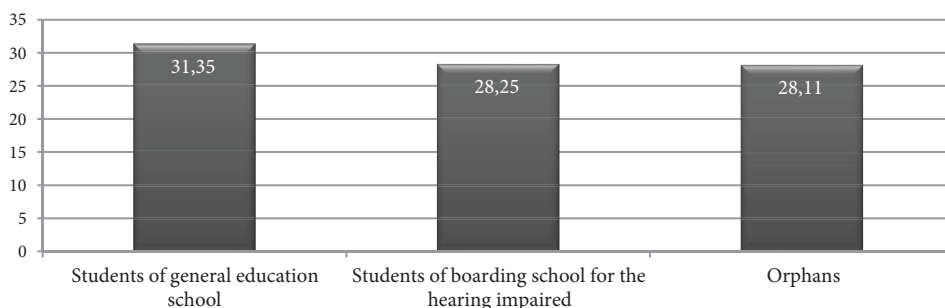
Orphans have shown high rates for all types of accentuation, indicating a tendency to extreme manifestations of their character. The highest rates were obtained for the excitable type that characterizes the respondents as intolerant, impulsive individuals who are guided by instincts and uncontrolled pathogens. We believe



that exactly this accentuation renders orphaned children at risk for students with a possible delinquent behavior.

According to all scales of methods, significant differences were found at levels  $p = 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , indicating the influence of the social situation of development on the formation of the adolescents nature.

An important development aspect of the teenagers' personality is the formation of "Self"-concept, which includes self-esteem.



**Figure 4.** Development of adolescents' self-esteem (mean score)

It is established (Figure 4) that the level of self-esteem as a whole has been developed almost at the same level in three samples, however, students of a general education school can more adequately assess their advantages and disadvantages, maintain respect for themselves in case of failures in comparison with orphans and the hearing impaired ( $F = 7,308$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ).

To achieve the goals and objectives of the research, we've conducted a linear regression analysis that allows to identify personal predictors of the positive self-perception formation in adolescents. As a dependent variable, the criterion of global / general self-esteem was made, and as individual independent variables, individual-psychological indicators, investigated with the use of the above-mentioned methods.

Thus, for students of a general education school, the initial independent variables were shyness, depression, extraversion and a stuck type of accentuation (Table 1).

In accordance with the results we calculated the linear regression equation, that is, the estimation of the dependent variable. The coefficients of regression before the values of individual psychological determinants indicate their contribution to the prediction of the adequate overall self-perception formation in ordinary adolescents.

**Table 1.** Individual psychological determinants of self-perception in ordinary adolescents

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standard. coefficients	R	R – square	t	p
	B	Error	Beta				
1 Constant	,410	1,052		,724a	,525 52,5%	,390	,699
Depression	,318	,115	,321			2,767	,008
Shyness	-,271	,109	-,280			-2,492	,017
Extraversivity	,529	,118	,539			4,479	,000
Stuck type of accentuation	,272	,131	,218			2,075	,044

a. Dependent variable: «global / general self-esteem»

POSITIVE SELF-ADJUSTMENT<sub>forecast</sub> = 0,410 + 0,318 (depression) – 0,271 (shyness) + 0,529 (extraversivity) + 0,272 (stuck type of accentuation).

Depression in the adolescence is aggravated and characterized not only by increased anxiety, constant fatigue, but also by annoyance, by the attraction to constant protests. Focusing on the outside world, the pursuit of high results and excessive demands on oneself, the thirst for justice contribute to self-perception, whereas shyness has a negative impact on the positive perception of oneself by ordinary schoolchildren.

Analyzing the results of the boarding school for the hearing-impaired students, the outgoing independent variables were sociability, reactive aggressiveness, extraversion, emotionality and anxiety (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Individual psychological determinants of self-perception in hearing impaired teenagers

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standard. coefficients	R	R – square	t	p
	B	Error	Beta				
2 Constant	30,393	3,931		,885a	,783 78,3%	7,732	,000
Sociability	-,672	,284	-,551			-2,371	,033
Reactive aggressiveness	-1,200	,318	-,757			-3,775	,002
Extraversion	,932	,394	,371			2,365	,033
Emotional type	-1,242	,455	-,500			-2,727	,016
Anxious type	-,886	,244	-,511			-3,633	,003

a. Dependent variable: «global / general self-esteem»

According to the obtained results, we calculated the linear regression equation, that is, the estimation of the dependent variable in children with hearing impairments.

$\text{POSITIVE SELF-ADJUSTMENT}_{\text{forecast}} = 30,393 - 0,672 (\text{sociability}) - 1,200 (\text{reactive aggressiveness}) + 0,932 (\text{extraversion}) - 1,242 (\text{emotional type}) - 0,886 (\text{anxiety type})$

Sociability for adolescents with hearing impairments is insignificant in social adaptation, so this characteristic has a negative impact on self-perception. The more friends a hearing impaired child has, the more he cares about his own success in communicating, the more difficult to perceive himself as a worthy person. The desire to dominate, the vulnerability, the excitement of their own failures, the excitement of themselves and their close people impede positive self-perception. Only an orientation to the outside world has a positive contribution to the process of self-perception.

For the orphanage teenagers, the initial independent variables were pedantic and dysthymic type (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Individual psychological determinants of self-perception in orphaned teenagers

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standard. coefficients	R	R - square	t	p
	B	Error	Beta				
3 Constant	29,057	4,027		,652 <sup>a</sup>	0,425 42,5%	7,216	,000
Pedantic type	-,643	,280	-,499			-2,293	,037
Dysthymic type	-1,250	,394	-,690			-3,172	,006

a. Dependent variable: «global / general self-esteem»

According to the results obtained, we calculated the linear regression equation, that is, the estimation of the dependent variable in orphanage adolescents.

$\text{POSITIVE SELF-ADJUSTMENT}_{\text{forecast}} = 29,057 - 0,643 (\text{pedantic type of accentuation}) - 1,250 (\text{dysthymic type of accentuation})$

Self-doubt, anxiety about own mismatch with the ideals, taking on actions, the pessimistic orientation of the individual, fixing on gloomy aspects of life interfere with the positive self-perception of the orphan teenager.

## **Conclusions**

Taking into account the specifics of the social situation development in the teenage period self-consciousness and the process of socialization were theoretically justified. Adolescence is the most critical period in the child life, regardless of the social conditions of its development, so it is clear that adolescents are in the situation of parenting deprivation or have certain defects in a certain period development can have developmental problems. Accordingly, the research was conducted with different groups of adolescents, which gave an opportunity to determine, as a whole, the individual psychological characteristics of these groups of adolescents, and to determine the formation of positive self-perception, that would be the basis for further personal formation. It is proved, that certain groups of adolescents differ in such properties of self-perception as school competence, romantic attraction, close friendly relations, general self-esteem, neuroticity, depressiveness, irritability, sociability, level of extraversion and masculinity; by all types of character accentuations and level of self-esteem. The qualities which influence the development of positive self-perception: in students of a general education school it is depression, depressed, shyness, extraversion and a stuck type. For adolescents with hearing impairments such qualities are: are sociability, reactive aggressiveness, extraversion, emotional and anxiety types. For the orphans such qualities are: a pedantic and dysthymic type. The results obtained can become the basis for developing a psychological support program for the adolescent children development, depending on social conditions.

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