

FAMILY FACTORS OF PERSON'S IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE AND EARLY ADULTHOOD

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of family factors of personal identity development during adolescence and early adulthood, families with “problem-free” and “deviant” teenagers and high-school students were taken as examples. It was revealed that these categories of children are significantly different in terms of identity development, and their families are essentially different by the parameters of family solidarity and adaptation, by such characteristics of upbringing as positive interest, directive approach, hostility, autonomy, coherence of parents at upbringing.

***Key words:** identity, self-identification, family system, solidarity, adaptation, positive interest, directive attitude, hostility, autonomy, inconsistency.*

Relevance of studies of a family as a factor at child's development is very high because the very foundations of functioning of a family as a social institution are being changed during modern social transformations. This leads to significant distortions in family functioning, in particular in their upbringing function implementation. Yet, a family role as a crucial agent of child's social development remains indisputable that necessitates studying of family characteristics and psychological conditions created in it for child's development, in particular identity development.

Many researchers from different spheres of psychology studied families with adolescents, including problems of child-parent relationships: Benjamin (1974), Вассерман, Горьковская & Ромыцина (2004) etc. At the same time, a present actual problem is to study family relationships as a factor of child's identity development during different age periods.

Analysis of psychological studies

Adolescence is rightly considered as one of the most difficult periods of ontogenesis (Боришевський, 2010; Выготский, 1984; Эльконин, 1989; Erikson, 1968 et al.). At the same time, researchers reckon adolescence years as a very difficult stage of family's activities and development (Варга, 2001; Черников, 2005; Эйдемиллер & Юстицкис, 2000 et al.).

When a family has teenage children, a load of each family's member grows, and the family becomes more sensitive to stress. Stresses and family difficulties at this stage are very diverse, the phenomenon of multiple layer crises is often observed: 1) an individual level of a crisis (a midlife crisis of parents or one of them and an adolescence crisis of a child),

2) crisis of marital relations, and 3) a crisis in family development (Варга, 2001; Дубровина, 1998; Черников, 2005). Complications to the family are present at other levels also: increased demands from the society side and from the extended family. Difficulties of this state are mirrored in the family system characteristics and in the field of child-parent relationships, which are undergoing significant changes during this period.

So, an adolescent has a desire to be detached from parents and importance of communication with peers grows (Выготский, 1984; Дубровина, 1998; Эльконин, 1989; Erikson, 1968; Кош, 1989; Бернс, 1986 et al.). The difficulty for parents lays in the need to review and restructure their relationships with adolescents, to change the style of upbringing and communication. Often parents are unable to see fast, intense processes of maturation during adolescence and to take them into own practice of upbringing and they try in every way to preserve “baby” forms of control and communication with their children, while teenagers need to communicate with adults “on equal terms” (Дубровина, 1998).

Cause-and-effect relationships between parents’ upbringing styles and children’s negative behavior formation are marked by contemporary researchers (Эйдемиллер, 2000; Фурманов, 2010; Варга, 2001 et al.). Thus, high aggression is mostly common for children from families with an upbringing style like “emotional rejection”, when minimal attention to a child correlates with a lot of restrictions, severity of claims; “overprotection”. High intensity of aggression together with strong feeling of guiltiness is characteristic for children from families with “cruel attitudes”, with “dominant overprotection”. Teenager’s negativism during interactions with others is often the result of that indulging overprotection (Фурманов, 2010). Thus, the psychological studies associate formation of child’s negative behavioral forms with non-constructive parenting styles.

An unfavorable situation in a family, in most cases, is the most important condition for formation and development of a “difficult” teenager’s personality. Having explored the family determinants of teenagers’ deviant behavior, Птичкина revealed differences in the characteristics of families with problem-free and deviant adolescents (Птичкина, 2006). Families with problem-free teens have warmer relationships, parental attitudes are not contradictory – they either are similar, or mutually reinforcing, and parents are willing to have dialogue and partnership with their teenagers. These families are characterized by stable, positive emotional relationship of a father and a mother; they are “child-centered”.

Studies on parent-child relationships and adolescents’ identity indicate that apathetic or neglecting parents favor to development of tangled identity for adolescents; parents’ authoritarianism is associated with predetermine identity, but such relationship characteristics as trust, respect and support are often manifested in families where adolescents are characterized by achieved identity (Попова, 2005). However, given the complexity of the studied phenomena, influence of family factors on child’s identity development has been insufficiently studied.

Family factors of identity development in adolescence and early adulthood were the **object of the research.**

The purpose of research is to analyze psychological characteristics of relationships in families with adolescent and high school students in the context of their impact on child’s identity development.

Hypothesis of the research says that family relationships are an important factor of identity development, which can be considered as a system formation, a core of a personality.

Methods of the research

Exploring the psychological conditions of child’s identity development in a family, our working group decided to study the phenomena of family interaction at two scales: at the level of all family and at the level of a parent-child subsystem. Determination of system characteristics

of families with adolescents and with senior school students was performed using the technique "Family adaptation and cohesion scale" (FACES-3) (Olson, 1993); the features of child-parent relationships were investigated using the technique «Teenagers about parents» (Вассерман, Горькова, Ромыцина, 2004). Identity features were studied with a questionnaire based on semi-structured interviews of Marsia (Marsia, 1980; Орестова & Карабанова, 2005).

The system characteristics of the family's model by Olson – the parameters of family cohesion and adaptability – were considered as the main indicators of families' optimal functioning or dysfunction in our study. The first parameter reflects an emotional aspect of relationships, a measure of emotional intimacy, which can vary from extremely low (divided) to extremely high (bounded). The other parameter characterizes families' abilities to change their rules, regulations, structure into the line with actual problems of their lives and development. Families of the base of the adaptation parameter can be ranged from rigid to chaotic (Olson, 1993).

Participants of the research

Since the purpose of our study was to investigate psychological conditions of child's identity development that are developed in families with different children's groups, three groups of studied people of 15-17 years old were chosen to compare:

- 1) teenagers and high school students enrolled in secondary schools who do not have significant personal and behavioral problems, they formed a control group of 62 people (31 girls, 31 boys);
- 2) children enrolled in a specialized art school (44 respondents, including 30 girls, 14 boys);
- 3) children with behavioral problems who are registered at the children's supervision service because of committed offenses (37 boys).

These experimental groups were chosen for the following reasons. Choice for examination of children with behavioral deviations was made due to the fact that the system concepts, which is the methodological basis of the study, considers any psychological symptoms, children's behavioral disorders as a sign of disturbed family interactions (Черников, 2005; Варга, 2001 et al.). Thus, these families are characterized by non-optimal or impaired interactions and family dysfunctions. On the other hand, deviant behavior is directly related to the process of person's identity development, as it is a manifestation of non-formed identity or its deformation.

The opposite pole of the identity is presented by the mature, achieved identity, the core of which consists of conscious, positive self-formed on the basis of individual experience of person's values. Families, that are able to form such a picture of oneself, such experiences and values for their children, are presented among different groups. However, our working group has assumed that most of them are the families of gifted children, who strongly support child's development; this is the reason of choice of the second experimental groups.

Results of the research

What are psychological conditions formed in the families with adolescents and high school students that belong to different groups – the "problem free" and "dysfunctional" ones, and how do they relate to identity characteristics?

The number of teenagers and high school students living in families of different types in accordance with this model are presented in the Table 1.

As it can be seen from the table, the families with artistic gifted children are mostly averagely balanced and balanced, so, they are distinguished by an optimal level of cohesion, they have quite flexible and transparent rules for functioning, a sufficient level of adaptability to stressful situations. The families of this group appear to be more problem-free than the families from the control group, and have differences at a significant level ($p \leq 0,05$ by ϕ^* -Fisher's test) in comparison with the other experimental group. The group with supervised children does not have balanced families, and more than half of the families are unbalanced,

Table 1. The number of studied people from different groups living in balanced, unbalanced and averagely balanced families (n=143, %)

Families' types	Experimental groups			Control group	
	Boys-delinquents, n=37	Artistic gifted children		Girls, n=31	Boys, n=31
		Girls, n=30	Boys, n=14		
balanced	–	40,0	16,7	21,3	16,4
averagely balanced	48,7	43,3	58,3	53,7	56,2
unbalanced	51,3	16,7	25,0	25,0	27,4

which indicates serious dysfunctions affecting different sides of family life. In fact, it means that more than half of the studied adolescents and high school students are living in crisis families who are unable to perform their functions, particularly with regard to children upbringing, to ensure their support and good patterns of behavior, which is important for children's identity development.

The system features that characterize the families with children of different groups to the greatest extent are shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Intensity of system characteristics of the studied families from different groups (n=143, %)

Families' types	Experimental groups			Control group	
	Boys-delinquents, n=37	Artistic gifted children		Girls, n=31	Boys, n=31
		Girls, n=30	Boys, n=14		
<i>Adaptation level</i>					
rigid	10,8	3,3	-	3,8	4,1
structured	8,1	13,3	14,3	12,5	2,7
flexible	10,8	43,4	21,4	28,7	28,8
chaotic	70,3	40,0	64,3	55,0	64,4
<i>Cohesion level</i>					
divided	54,1	30,0	28,6	43,7	42,5
separated	37,8	46,7	64,3	42,5	38,4
connected	8,1	20,0	7,1	13,8	19,1
bounded	–	3,3	–	–	–

As it can be seen from Table 2, the families with children from the control group are described mostly as chaotic and in a lesser degree as flexible concerning adaptation types, and the level of cohesion often gravitate toward the divided pole. This means that most families with children of this group have clear internal boundaries, the emotional distance between family members is average (optimal), but often not optimal, distant; while families' rules are flexible, however, flexibility in a significant number of families is excessive and manifests

itself in fuzziness of family structure, hierarchy, roles, significant inconsistencies that already creates the chaotic pole of adaptation.

Negative trends identified in the families from the control group are even more expressive in the families with boys-delinquents. Thus, from the point of view of adaptation, “golden mean” is very rare in such families, but the poles are presented much more – especially rigid and chaotic types of adaptation. It means that the families with such children often respond erratically to difficulties of life, have problems with family hierarchy, role intelligibility and rule clarity. However, some of them, on the contrary, have too rigid structure. In terms of emotional intimacy, its deficit in these families is even more expressive: the number of divided families is significantly higher than the number of such families in the control group ($p \leq 0,05$), and the number of families with optimal types of cohesion is lower.

Family with art-gifted children are generally more balanced compared to other groups of children: the chaotic type of adaptation is less expressed, which is characteristic for the families from other groups, and levels of cohesion mainly belong to the middle types – separated and connected. The families with girls from this group have more pronounced emotional connection than the families with boys, relationships in the latter are more distanced.

The following results were obtained with the technique “Teenagers about their parents” in different groups (Table 3):

Table 3. The results obtained with the technique “Teenagers about their parents” in different groups (n=143, “raw” marks/stens)

Upbringing characteristics	Experimental groups						Control group			
	Boys-delinquents, n=37		Artistic gifted children				Girls, n=31		Boys, n=31	
			Girls, n=30		Boys, n=14					
	father	mother	father	mother	father	mother	father	mother	father	mother
Positive interest	9,8 2	13,5 2	13,3 3	16,9 3	13,6 3	14,9 3	11,9 3	13,4 2	10,8 2	13,1 2
Directive approach	13,6 4	13,9 4	9,5 3	10,5 3	10,5 3	10,2 3	9,0 3	10,1 3	9,6 3	11,0 3
Hostility	7,2 4	6,8 4	5,2 3	5,0 3	5,4 3	5,9 3	6,2 4	6,0 3	6,7 4	6,5 4
Autonomy	11,8 3	11,1 3	11,4 3	10,8 3	11,4 3	11,7 3	9,9 3	10,0 3	10,6 3	10,1 3
Inconsistency	7,8 3	9,8 4	7,9 3	7,8 3	8,4 3	8,4 3	8,1 3	8,9 3	8,3 3	8,7 3

As the table shows, the main indicators of parental attitudes and upbringing approaches in the families with adolescents and high school students of the control group are: somewhat reduced positive interest to children, with the exception of fathers to daughters, as well as an increased level of hostility of fathers and mothers, with the exception of relationships of mothers to daughters. Adolescents estimate directive approach, autonomy and consistency of their parents at upbringing at an average level.

Surveyed teenagers and youth under supervision evaluated their fathers and mothers as ones who show lack of positive interest to them, high directive approach and hostility and an average level of autonomy. They believe that their fathers are more consistent in upbringing, while mothers, in their opinion, have relatively high inconsistency. The fathers of these boys are less interested in their children, they are more hostile against them; mothers exhibit higher positive interest, but the studied people noted a high level of their hostility, which indicates that mothers have ambivalent feelings leading to inconsistencies in upbringing, the basis of which for them is “a firm hand” (high directive approach).

Both parents in the group of artistically-gifted children have higher absolute values of positive interest to their children, stronger directive approach to girls, significantly lower level of hostility and slightly lower level of inconsistency. The fathers and mothers of these children show higher levels on the scale of autonomy, it indicates that their perception to their children is rather indulgent, undemanding or even unincorporated.

Thus, families of gifted children are marked by positive interest of both parents to their children, moderate directive approach. At the same time, lower parents' hostility towards their children indicates higher degree of acceptance of children, their support from parents' side. These parents are less concerned with upbringing problems that is perceived positively by most children as autonomy necessary for creative person development, in addition, they show greater consistency in upbringing.

The study of identity development, on the base of its statuses appeared in different spheres of individual life activities, showed significant differences between the studied groups (Table 4).

As Table 4 shows, adolescents and youths with behavioral problems have the lowest levels of professional identity: they either do not think about their professional self-determination, or agree with options that significant intimates offer to them. Differences in indicators of identity development for studied people from this group in comparison with the control group reach high levels of significance: for the status of diffuse identity, $\varphi^*=3,77$ at $p\leq 0,000$; for predetermined identity, $\varphi^*=1,61$ at $p\leq 0,054$; for moratorium, $\varphi^*=2,03$ with $p\leq 0,021$. The essential characteristic of gifted children in this sphere is that the most of them have achieved identity or examine several specific alternatives considering career choices (moratorium), and their parents have a “consultative” vote. Indicators of identity status of this group of teenagers and youths are significantly different from the control group (diffuse identity: $\varphi^*=1,65$ at $p\leq 0,049$; predetermined identity: $\varphi^*=3,74$ at $p\leq 0,000$; moratorium: $\varphi^*=2,00$ at $p\leq 0,023$; achieved identity: $\varphi^*=1,51$ at $p\leq 0,066$ as a trend); and compared with a group of delinquent teenagers, these differences are even more significant. Indicators of the art-gifted girls differ significantly also from those of the control group representatives regarding intensity of predetermined ($\varphi^*=2,01$ at $p\leq 0,022$) and achieved identity ($\varphi^*=1,97$ at $p\leq 0,024$).

Religious and philosophical views of most teenagers and high school students are not formed yet or borrowed from their parents and grandparents. The high status of identity in this sphere is shown in the large degree by the gifted children and by the girls from the control group, and at least by the boys-delinquents. Thus, the number of artistic gifted boys having the status of predetermined identity is less than the number for the control group, it indicates their independence and activity in formation of their own world view, and their indexes of achieved identity are significantly different from those of teenagers-delinquents ($\varphi^*=1,66$ at $p\leq 0,048$). Among the interviewed girls in this sphere of identity, higher statuses were recorded also in the group of artistic-gifted children ($\varphi^*=1,96$ at $p\leq 0,025$ for the status of “moratorium”).

The majority of teenagers and youths, regardless of the studied group, is not interested in politics; only members of the control group and quite a few gifted children show some interest in it, the latter explain lack of interest by understanding of other their mission - creativity. A small part of boys from the control group “try on” still possibility to be engaged into politics in

the future, they talk about searching for their own political positions. The greatest differences were determined for the “moratorium” status, its level for the control group representatives was significantly higher than its level for the respondents from both experimental groups ($\varphi^*=2,51$ at $p\leq 0,005$ compared with the group of boys-delinquents and $\varphi^*=1,90$ at $p\leq 0,029$ compared with the artistic gifted boys).

Table 4. The representation of identity statuses of different groups of respondents (n=143, %)

Identity statuses in different spheres of individual life activities		Experimental groups			Control group	
		Boys-delinquents, n=37	Artistic gifted children		Girls, n=31	Boys, n=31
			Girls, n=30	Boys, n=14		
professional	diffuse	70,2	10,0	7,1	16,3	26,0
	predetermined	16,3	3,3	–	18,2	32,9
	moratorium	8,1	26,7	57,1	30,0	26,0
	achieved	5,4	60,0	35,8	35,0	15,1
religious	diffuse	70,2	46,7	57,4	36,2	58,9
	predetermined	24,4	16,7	14,2	38,8	31,6
	moratorium	5,4	30,0	21,3	18,8	6,8
	achieved	–	6,6	7,1	6,2	2,7
political	diffuse	91,9	83,4	85,8	88,8	82,2
	predetermined	8,1	13,3	14,2	5,0	5,5
	moratorium	–	3,3	–	6,2	9,6
	achieved	–	–	–	–	2,7
love	diffuse	67,6	10,0	14,2	17,4	43,8
	predetermined	10,8	3,3	–	15,0	8,2
	moratorium	21,6	40,0	64,5	48,8	42,5
	achieved	–	46,7	21,3	18,8	5,5
friendship	diffuse	40,5	6,6	–	3,8	19,2
	predetermined	8,1	–	–	1,2	1,3
	moratorium	51,4	50,0	42,9	52,5	64,4
	achieved	–	43,4	57,1	42,5	15,1
family	diffuse	54,1	10,0	28,5	26,2	37,0
	predetermined	40,5	40,0	35,5	33,8	53,4
	moratorium	5,4	26,7	21,3	28,0	9,6
	achieved	–	23,3	14,2	12,0	–
gender	diffuse	43,3	33,4	28,6	31,3	45,3
	predetermined	56,7	23,3	43,0	46,2	53,4
	moratorium	–	20,0	14,2	10,0	1,4
	achieved	–	23,3	14,2	12,5	–

As the table show, teenagers and youths committed offenses do not think on the foundations of loving relationships, most of them have the statuses of diffused or predetermined identity, so their results differ significantly from the results of artistically-gifted boys (for diffused identity: $\varphi^*=3,69$ at $p\leq 0,000$; for predetermined identity: $\varphi^*=2,07$ at $p\leq 0,019$) and from the results of the control group (for predetermined identity: $\varphi^*=1,74$ at $p\leq 0,041$). Artistic gifted children have higher statuses of identity in this sphere. This is based on some experience of relationships and desire to understand their essence, nature, make appropriate decisions for themselves as to how to build these relationships. Thus, higher identity statuses of artistic gifted boys in love sphere in comparison with the control group were marked as a trend, and in comparison with a group of boys-delinquents were revealed on a significant level (for the status of "moratorium»: $\varphi^*=2,86$ at $p\leq 0,001$, for the status of achieved identity: $\varphi^*=2,99$ at $p\leq 0,000$). Significant differences between groups of girls were obtained for predetermined identity ($\varphi^*=1,68$ at $p\leq 0,046$) and acquired identity ($\varphi^*=2,37$ at $p\leq 0,008$). Among the artistic gifted children and representatives of the control group, girls are characterized by higher levels of identity in this sphere than boys.

In the sphere of friendship, the representatives of artistic gifted children and the control group showed more uniform pattern, while boys-delinquents are characterized by lower levels of identity, which means less meaningfulness of these relationships, less understanding and acceptance of their value bases. Thus, the artistic gifted boys do not have statuses of diffused and predetermined identity in friendship, and they are significantly different from the control group at this point (for diffused identity: $\varphi^*=2,76$ at $p\leq 0,002$), and especially from the group of delinquents (for diffused identity: $\varphi^*=4,34$ at $p\leq 0,000$, for predetermined identity: $\varphi^*=1,78$ at $p\leq 0,038$). Accordingly, presence of higher identity statuses in this group is significantly higher compared to the other groups. This is especially true for achieved identity, indicators of which are higher compared with the control group ($\varphi^*=2,85$ at $p\leq 0,001$) and with the group of delinquents ($\varphi^*=5,4$ at $p\leq 0,000$)

Identity in family sphere of boys and girls from the control group differs significantly: the boys generally show greater dependence on their families, which is manifested in the predominance of predetermined identity status. This is evident in particular in uncritical borrowing of parents' family patterns, or, on the contrary, in their full rejection without awareness of positive and negative aspects of parental families. These differences for artistic gifted children are not so significant due to the fact that boys have higher levels of identity in this sphere. It was revealed during comparison of different groups that delinquent boys demonstrate lower identity status – diffused one – as irrelevance of this sphere for them (the differences are significant in comparison with the control group as a trend, in comparison with the artistic gifted boys $\varphi^*=1,68$ at $p\leq 0,046$) or predetermined identity, usually in a form of denial of parents' patterns. Achieved identity status was revealed for 14,2% of artistic gifted boys that evidences significant differences of this index between groups ($\varphi^*=2,4$ at $p\leq 0,007$ as compared to the delinquent boys' group and $\varphi^*=2,34$ at $p\leq 0,01$ as compared with the control group). Groups of girls are significantly different only in terms of diffuse identity status that prevails in the control group ($\varphi^*=1,68$ at $p\leq 0,046$).

In the sphere of gender identity, girls in both groups and artistically gifted children have higher statuses: so, along with diffused and predetermined identity, which is manifested in acceptance of their gender and associated with gender roles, stereotypes without critical reflection, these respondents marked statuses of moratorium and acquired identity. Delinquent teenagers and youth are mainly characterized by diffused or predetermined identity in this sphere, resulting in a particularly emphatic masculinity, failure to accept any other points of view, statements about the meaninglessness of this question itself, homophobia. This fact is supported by obtained significant differences between indicators of higher identity statuses

of artistically gifted boys and the control group (for "moratorium»: $\varphi^*=1,67$ at $p\leq 0,047$, for achieved identity: as a trend), and especially the group of delinquent adolescents (for moratorium achieved identity: $\varphi^*=2,39$ at $p\leq 0,007$). The groups of girls in this identity sphere are significantly different by predetermined identity ($\varphi^*=1,9$ at $p\leq 0,029$).

Thus, identity of representatives of different groups differs quite significantly in terms of its development: the most developed identity in different life spheres is notable for the artistically-gifted children, the least developed, immature identity is characteristic for delinquent teenagers and youth. Interviewees from the control group can be found mostly in the middle between the two experimental groups.

The identified differences regarding families' system characteristics, parents' upbringing approaches, as well as significant differences in levels of identity development of children from different groups suggest that families with artistic gifted children create more favorable conditions for children development, in particular for development of their personal identity as a personal core. It includes such all families' system factors as more optimal parameters of family functioning, especially optimal emotional cohesion and adaptation. At the level of parent-child subsystem, it means certain characteristics of parental attitude, parents' upbringing styles, manifested in high positive interest to their children, moderate directive approach, autonomy, a low level of hostility, real parents' consistency at upbringing.

Conclusions

The most favorable conditions for children's identity development in families are determined by optimal levels of family cohesion and adaptability, such upbringing characteristics as positive interest, democratic style of parenting, acceptance of own children, reasonable autonomy, a high degree of parents' consistency during upbringing. Such features are characteristic for most families with problem-free children – gifted adolescents and high school students, and, to some degree, to the control group. Families with "problem" children have often unfavorable conditions for personal development, which are manifested in the sub-optimal levels of cohesion and adaptation – significant emotional distancing, chaotic or rigid structures. Parent-child relationships in these families are marked by low positive interest to children and low upbringing consistency, remarkable directive approach from mothers and fathers' hostility. Various conditions of family environment lead to significant differences in the levels of children's identity development during adolescence and young adulthood.

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Summary

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Relevance of studies of a family as a factor at child's development is very high because the very foundations of functioning of a family as a social institution are being changed during modern social transformations. This leads to significant distortions in family functioning, in particular in their upbringing function implementation. Yet, a family role as a crucial agent of child's social development remains indisputable that necessitates studying of family characteristics and psychological conditions created in it for child's development, in particular identity development.

The purpose of research is to analyze psychological characteristics of relationships in families with teenagers and high school students in the context of their impact on child's identity development.

The research is devoted to the study of family factors of personal identity development during adolescence and early adulthood, families with "problem-free" and "deviant" teenagers and high-school students were taken as examples. It was revealed that these categories of children are significantly different in terms of identity development, and their families are essentially different by the parameters of family solidarity and adaptation, by such characteristics of upbringing as positive interest, directive approach, hostility, autonomy, coherence of parents at upbringing.

The identified differences regarding families' system characteristics, parents' upbringing approaches, as well as significant differences in levels of identity development of children from different groups suggest that families with artistic gifted children create more favorable conditions for children development, in particular for development of their personal identity as a personal core. It includes such all families' system factors as more optimal parameters of family functioning, especially optimal emotional cohesion and adaptation. At the level of parent-child subsystem, it means certain characteristics of parental attitude, parents' upbringing styles, manifested in high positive interest to their children, moderate directive approach, autonomy, a low level of hostility, real parents' consistency at upbringing.

The most favorable conditions for children's identity development in families are determined by optimal levels of family cohesion and adaptability, such upbringing characteristics as positive interest,

democratic style of parenting, acceptance of own children, reasonable autonomy, a high degree of parents' consistency during upbringing. Such features are inherent for most families with problem-free children – gifted adolescents and high school students, and, to some degree, to the control group. Families with "problem" children have often unfavorable conditions for personal development, which are manifested in the sub-optimal levels of cohesion and adaptation – significant emotional distancing, chaotic or rigid structures. Parent-child relationships in these families are marked by low positive interest to children and low upbringing consistency, remarkable directive approach from mothers and fathers' hostility. Various conditions of family environment lead to significant differences in the levels of children's identity development during adolescence and young adulthood.