



DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES OF SELF-AWARENESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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Abstract: This article explores the step-by-step development of self-awareness processes in primary school-aged children, the psychological factors influencing this development, and its role in personality formation. It analyzes age-specific characteristics of self-awareness based on theoretical sources as well as practical observations and psychological research.

Keywords: Self-awareness, primary school age, reflection, identification, psychological development.

One of the key stages in psychological development is the emergence of self-awareness. During the primary school years (ages 7 to 11), children experience an active phase of self-awareness formation, in which they begin to comprehend their inner world and establish their position within the social environment. Self-awareness extends beyond mere self-perception; it encompasses the ability to understand oneself as a distinct individual, to evaluate one's own abilities and limitations, and to achieve a coherent sense of self through comparison with others. This paper focuses on the psychological foundations and developmental stages of self-awareness in children, along with methodologies for its assessment.

The development of self-awareness in children of primary school age is a multifaceted and stage-based process. It evolves through the accumulation of social experiences, analysis of one's own actions and their outcomes, and ongoing communication with peers and adults. Scholars distinguish the following key stages of self-awareness development:

1. Self-Recognition through External Features:

This initial stage involves the child recognizing themselves through observable attributes. Psychological literature suggests that children at this stage become aware of their physical appearance, name, and personal belongings. Statements such as "This is my notebook" or "My name is Jamshid" reflect the child's growing capacity to distinguish themselves from others. They begin to compare their physical body, behaviors, and speech patterns with those of their peers. This foundational differentiation is a prerequisite for the emergence of individuality.

2. Formation of Self-Evaluation:

At this stage, children begin to form opinions about their capabilities and shortcomings. Self-assessment is largely influenced by external feedback, particularly from parents and teachers. For example, comments such as "You are very intelligent" or "You need to pay more attention" directly impact the child's developing self-concept. Consequently, self-esteem and self-confidence begin to take shape, often reflecting the nature and tone of adult evaluations.

3. Stage of Reflexive Evaluation:

Reflection is the process by which an individual consciously thinks about and analyzes their own actions, thoughts, and emotions. At this stage, the child strives to understand their behavior and its consequences. They attempt to explain their successes and failures and identify the underlying causes. During this period, the child develops a critical attitude toward their own thoughts, asking questions such as “Why did I make a mistake?” or “How could I have acted better?” and endeavors to draw conclusions from their experience. Reflection plays a crucial role in the development of the child's emotional intelligence and social competencies^[^3].

4.Stage of Identification:

Identification is the process by which the child forms their social “self” by comparing themselves with others. At this stage, the child accepts themselves as a bearer of certain social roles. For example, they may perceive themselves as a “student,” “boy,” or “friend.” This reflects the formation of both personal and social identity^[^4]. The child internalizes the behaviors of adults or peers close to them and strives to be like them. This process leads to the development of personal ideals. Through identification, the child gains an understanding of their place in society and attempts to act in accordance with social norms.

The development of self-awareness in primary school-aged children is a complex, stepwise psychological process. Through this process, the child comes to understand their identity and develops both personally and socially. Each stage plays a vital role in the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of the child. Therefore, educators and parents need to have a deep understanding of these processes and create an environment conducive to fostering the child's self-awareness.

Psychological research indicates that in self-awareness development, the child accepts the opinions, evaluations, and attitudes of others as certain standards. In this process, the roles of teachers, parents, and peers are critically important. The socio-psychological environment at school directly influences how the child perceives and evaluates themselves.

The study of this topic draws on the theoretical perspectives of L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin, J. Piaget, and E. Erikson. These scholars have substantiated the stepwise progression of child psychological development and how social environment and interpersonal relations affect this process. Furthermore, the following psychodiagnostic methods can be applied to assess self-awareness: the Dembo-Rubinstein scale, the “Who Am I?” test, and Schneider’s self-identification test.

Self-awareness is a psychological process of critical importance in the personal development of the child. This process gains a solid foundation during the school years and is closely linked to the individual’s social adaptation, self-confidence, and mental health in later stages. To foster self-awareness development in primary school children, it is essential to create a positive environment, consider the child's viewpoints, and provide opportunities for independent self-assessment.

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