HSE UNIVERSITY

As a manuscript

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SELF-ATTITUDE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AS A PREDICTOR OF COPING WITH DIFFICULT LIFE SITUATIONS

Summary

of the dissertation for the purpose of obtaining academic degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (PhD)

Academic supervisor:

Doctor of Sciences, professor

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Moscow 2021

THE GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The relevance of the research. The contemporary space of school education is distinguished by enhanced requirements and higher regulation of schoolchildren's behavior. This offers them new challenges and affects the development of their personality and self-attitude and ultimately the state of their psychological well-being. According to the World Health Organization and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, mental health in children under 14 is quite vulnerable (UN, 2019). As part of the WHO annual monitoring, there is a dynamic growth in social risk factors, emotional upheavals and physical stress at school age, which in turn increases the levels of stress and the statistics of school neuroses, and there is higher incidence of schoolchildren showing depressive symptoms (WHO, 2020). Also, according to the reports of the Russian Fund for Supporting Children in Difficult Life Situations, the number of calls for emergency psychological help to the children's helpline between 2020 and 2021 significantly exceeds the indicators of previous years (Fund, 2020; 2021).

The social situation at primary school age is characterized by serious changes in the lifestyle of children caused by their transition to a new social institution (school) that is a source of requirements and assessment (factors missing at the previous stage of child development). In this work, these changes are supposed to be described from the point of view of difficult life situations typical for this age and coping with them.

Difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren are associated with developmental tasks that are normative for this age, such as the need to overcome an egocentric position, collaborate with other children and adults, work in a team, make friends, and resist peer pressure (Havighurst, 2013). The development of these social skills, along with the formation of learning as a leading activity, fosters the formation of adequate self-esteem and self-efficacy. Obviously, the acquisition of these new psychological formations is accompanied by high tension and stress caused by external and internal factors. Harmonious development of personality in the next adolescent stage depends on the success/failure of coping with these challenges. Therefore, we can say that the efficacy of solving problems by primary schoolchildren prepares them for

adolescence that is a particularly critical age associated with numerous risks (according to most researchers) (Baumeister et al., 2003; Kuftyak, Samokhvalova, 2015). Coping with difficult life situations is the most important aspect of optimal adaptation to society (Khachaturova, Nartova-Bochaver, 2017).

The relevance of exploring primary school age through the prism of difficult life situations typical for this age enables the focus on possible sources of risks for psychological distress and resources to effectively cope with them, in order to: a) identify the content of these difficulties, b) determine resources and strategies to effectively cope with them, and c) offer a theoretical frame for the substantiated development of psychology and pedagogical recommendations for working with primary school age children and the adults around them.

The state and development of the research problem

The main contradiction of primary school age as a stage of development is that children, on the one hand, need to develop normativity as a personality trait that reflects sensitivity to external (both explicit and implicit) requirements and rules; on the other hand, they have to develop an attitude towards themselves as a fairly autonomous personal formation that enables the child to preserve their independence, maintain psychological boundaries and be self-sufficient. If normativity is the result of the interiorization of external requirements, self-attitude is the result of the integration of various life skills reflecting the degree to which the child is being accepted by others and his or her personal vision of their own effectiveness in their interaction with the world. Children can obviously (depending on the levels of normativity) experience various kinds of difficulties associated with socialization and development, while, depending on the content of self-attitude, they will more or less effectively cope with these difficulties. Thus, the correlation of typical difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren with the levels of their normativity (as a personality trait) and self-attitude (as a predictor of coping) comprises the central problem of the study.

Most of the works related to the stated research problem are aimed at studying various aspects of the general spectrum of exogenous and endogenous causes of

difficult life situations and their overcoming, and are based on the environmental model of stress (Lazarus, 1966; Ryan, 1989; Folkman, 1997), according to which psychological stress occurs in the case when the individual's capabilities do not meet the requirements and expectations of the environment (this perfectly reflects the social situation of a primary school student). At the same time, the approach from the point of view of difficult life situations, (that is highly profiled in adult studies), is hardly used in relation to childhood.

Primary school students may daily face difficult life situations; these can be both objective and subjective situations perceived by the child as difficulties. Difficult situations play a special role in child development, as they enable the child to test their capacities and abilities, and this experience can be successful in some cases or cause anger or disappointment in other cases (Nikolskaya, Granovskaya, 2000).

The concepts of gender differences at a young age are contradictory and inconsistent; some studies show they exist, and others do not (Brown, 1958; Silvern, 1978; Huston, 1983; Ananiev, 1986; Serbin et al., 1990; Kon, 2003; Mukhina, 2008). It is also important to note that the set of difficulties and behavior of primary schoolchildren can vary depending on gender (Bledsoe, 1961; Bentzen, 1963; Nikolskaya, Granovskaya, 2000; Eremeeva, Khrizman, 2001; Eschenbeck et al., 2006). Since most of the data supports their existence, we intend to also study the gender factor in the content of all the variables in our study.

Difficult life situations have been studied as a phenomenon of the subjective and/or objective component of the personality's life space (Granovskaya, 1988; Antsyferova, 1994; Bardier, Nikolskaya, 1998; Bityutskaya, 2007; Kuftyak, 2012; Cywińska, 2013; Babaeva et al., 2013, Hachaturova, 2013; Kryukova, Gushchina, 2015; Kuftyak, Samokhvalova, 2015; Bityutskaya, Petrovsky, 2016; and others).

A difficult life situation can cause problems as it may be considered a blocker that prevents the achievement of a goal (Petrovsky, Shmelev, 2019). Thus, coping behavior can be used to resolve difficult life situations. Coping behavior was studied in the context of the problems of social and psychological adaptation of the personality, and

psychological well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Carver et al., 1989; Ryan-Wenger, 1990; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004; Sergienko, 2008; Belinskaya, 2009; Nartova-Bochaver, 2012, Khachaturova, 2013; Poddiakov, 2015; Kryukova, 2010; 2013; etc.).

Primary school age is substantiated by a change in the social situation and the transition to a new socially significant activity that regulates the child and correlates with their new responsibilities, rules, and requirements (Nizhegorodtseva, Shadrikov, 2000). The educational activity of a primary school student has a fundamentally determining role in the formation of personality, the manifestation of the child's behavioral patterns, as well as their current and further normative preferences.

Culture, including norms, rules and values, is considered as a socio-cultural background in the perception and the assessment of ways to cope with stress or difficulty. The model of sociocultural contextualization of coping is presented by the need to take into account the cultural indicator in coping behavior of the individual (Kryukova, Gushchina, 2015). This model stipulates that normativity in primary schoolchildren should be studied as a moderating variable from the point of view of their interaction with the rules and norms.

We consider the normativity of a primary school student as a personality trait that reflects a generalized way of interacting with everyday rules and norms. Normativity is mediated by the individual's disposition and their activities. In this context, normativity regulates the behavior and activities of a primary school student, as it determines their socially important role and student status (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Bobneva, 1978; Veraksa, 2000; Kalish & Shiverick, 2004; Pashchenko, 2010; Bayanova, 2013; Belinskaya, Dubovskaya, 2014; Nielsen et al., 2015; et al.).

Interaction with rules is born at the junction of the two dichotomies of normative and descriptive. The specificity of the interaction of a primary school student with rules is determined by the utilitarianism of social norms and is represented by a range of routine conventional requirements and tasks that are typical for this given age period.

Normativity acts as a moderating component and determines self-attitude in the integral structure of coping with difficult life situations.

Primary school students personalize themselves. "I in the Eyes of Another" becomes especially significant for the child; their immersive "I" that is regulatively reflected in relation to the activity of the subject, and that is also used as the basis for the formation of "I in my Own Eyes" (the Esoteric "I"), self-attitude and self-esteem (Petrovsky, 2010).

The productivity of an individual in relation to themselves and a positive attitude towards themselves is determined by the established coherence of oneself in the external and internal world (Starovoitenko, 2010). Distortions of self-attitude are possible if there is disharmonization of the Cognizing Self and Oneself as Assessed by Others, and of the relations with the world, when faced with difficulties and stressful situations.

Self-attitude is actualized by an adequate, predominantly positive, attitude towards oneself, one's qualities and one's activities (Ziller et al., 1969). This condition seems to be unfeasible in a difficult or stressful situation, that is why it is advisable to consider coping behavior in difficult life situations from the position of the conditioned self-attitude of primary schoolchildren.

Thus, the outline of a student's social role implies that the child will adopt patterns of behavior. Taking into account the observance of typical rules expected from a primary school student, it defines their position and the resulting normativity as a personal quality. Thus, a primary schoolchild is often encouraged as a subject of activity, and is condemned for inability to comply with socially significant forms of interaction that record an assessment from the outside, which may affect the child's self-attitude.

An exhaustive number of works are devoted to the study of coping with difficulties and stressful situations in adolescence and adulthood. However, despite the variety of works, studies of childhood coping behaviors are insignificantly presented, as well as methods for studying difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren. In Russian psychology, there is a need to theoretically substantiate in more detail,

systematically reveal and empirically prove the problem of coping with difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren.

The main research questions are: what range of difficult life situations is present in modern primary schoolchildren; what methods of coping boys and girls use; how the content of difficult life situations and coping strategies is set by the levels of schoolchildren's normativity depending on gender; and how these variables are set by the characteristics of self-attitude.

The object of the research is difficult life situations at primary school age.

The subject of the research is coping with difficult life situations through self-attitude and interactions with rules (normativity).

The objective of the study is to explore the coping of primary school children with difficult life situations, depending on their self-attitude and normativity (interaction with the rules).

Research objectives:

1. To systematize Russian and foreign experience in researching the problem of coping with difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren.

2. To create a method for express diagnosis of urgent difficult life situations in primary school age.

3. To determine the range of difficult life situations in primary school age.

4. To identify the most typical rules governing the daily life of primary school children.

5. To reveal the content of difficult life situations of primary school students depending on their attitude to the rules (normativity).

6. To investigate the role of self-attitude as a predictor of coping behavior at different levels of normativity and depending on gender.

7. Describe coping strategies depending on self-attitude, normativity and gender of primary school students.

The following assumptions were put forward as **hypotheses in the study**:

1. Difficult life situations (content and frequency) differ depending on the gender of primary school students.

2. Difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren differ depending on their levels of normativity.

3. Self-attitude determines the ways of coping with difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren.

Self-attitude and gender are the independent variables, and coping behavior and difficult life situations are the dependent variables.

Normativity, on the other hand, acts as a moderating variable that indirectly partially reveals the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

The methodological and theoretical foundations of the study were: the provisions of the subject-activity approach (S. L. Rubinshtein, V. D. Shadrikov); situational approach (L. I. Antsyferova, 1994, L. I. Dementiy, N. V. Grishina); theory of coping behavior (R. Lazarus, A. D. Kanner, S. Folkman, R. M. Granovskaya, I. M. Nikolskaya, T. L. Kryukova, E. P. Belinskaya, S. K. Nartova-Bochaver, E. V. Kuftyak, M. R. Khachaturova), studies of difficult life situations (I. M. Nikolskaya, R. M. Granovskaya, T. L. Kryukova, E. V. Kuftyak, V. A. Petrovsky, E. V. Bitutskaya, M. Cywińska), concepts and approaches to the study of self-attitude in primary school age (G. A. Tawney, N. I. Sardzhveladze, A. N. Leontiev, V. V. Stolin, B. Long, R. Ziller, R. Henderson, V. S. Mukhina, M. I. Lisina, I. I. Chesnokova, A. K. Bolotova, O. N. Molchanova, N. Ryan-Wenger), theoretical concepts and empirical studies of normativity (W. Bronfenbrenner, M. I. Bobneva, E. P. Belinskaya, N. E. Veraksa, L. F. Bayanova, C. W. Kalish, S. M. Shiverick, M. Nielsen, R. Kapitany, R. Elkins, A. K. Paschenko).

The choice of research methods and techniques was based on the theoretical and methodological background and in accordance with the research objectives. We used an expert survey, the Delphi method, focus group, non-standardized self-report, semi-structured interview, and standardized questionnaires.

Quantitative (mathematical and statistical) processing of the results obtained in the R package was used to calculate Kendall's concordance coefficient to check the consistency of expert assessments; Cronbach's alpha to check the internal consistency of scales; Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests to check the compliance of the data with the normal probability law; descriptive statistics, the Mann-Whitney test and the Kruskal-Wallis test to establish differences between the variables; Pearson's Chi-Square test to assess the significance of differences; and logistic regression analysis. Frequency analysis and content analysis were also applied.

The psychodiagnostic tools used in the study included:

1. The original checklist method, "Difficult life situations of a primary schoolchild", that consists of 20 statements related to the units of difficulties arising in primary school age (Bayramyan, 2019).

2. Questionnaire for coping strategies for schoolchildren, "Schoolager's Coping Strategies Inventory", developed by N. Ryan-Wenger and adapted by N. A. Sirota and V. M. Yaltonsky as modified by I. M. Nikolskaya and R. M. Granovskaya (Ryan-Wenger, 1990; Sirota, Yaltonsky, 1994; Nikolskaya, Granovskaya, 2000); the questionnaire consists of 26 statements about coping strategies.

3. The method "Who am I?" on the definition of self-attitude developed by K. Kuhn and T. McPartland, and modified by T. V. Rumyantseva (Kuhn & McPartland, 1966; Rumyantseva, 2006, pp. 83–103); it is utilized as a non-standardized self-report.

4. The questionnaire of the cultural congruence of primary schoolchildren, developed by L. F. Bayanova, E. A. Tsivilskaya, R. M. Bayramyan and K. S. Chulyukin (Bayanova et al., 2016); it is designed to determine the interaction of a primary school student with rules and their normativity; the questionnaire contains 36 statements included in 6 factors.

The sample and empirical base of the study. The study involved 272 respondents belonging to two different age groups of 263 primary school students: children of primary school age (Mage = 9, SDage = 0.64), 149 girls and 114 boys; 9 primary school teachers (class teachers) in the middle adult age group (Mage = 37.2, SDage = 4.2). At

the stage of creating a methodology for difficult life situations (2017-2019) the study also involved teachers and parents - 283 participants. Also at the stage of creating a methodology for cultural congruence (2013-2016) - 437 primary school students, 324 parents of primary school students and 26 primary school teachers took part. The representativeness of the sample was ensured by the randomized selection. The research was performed on the basis of secondary general education schools in Russia.

Ethical principles of research procedure were followed; consent was obtained from the parents of the respondents and the school administration for the children's participation in this study.

The scientific novelty of the research is substantiated by the fact that this is a first ever study of difficult life situations and ways of coping with them on a sample of primary schoolchildren, and that the content of difficult life situations is considered to be related to normativity (the tendency to follow rules and norms) and that coping with these difficult situations is studied in connection with self-attitudes of primary school students. Thus, the research design is defined by two pairs of related phenomena, normativity (attitude to the rules) – difficult life situations and self-attitude – coping.

The novelty of the formulation and solution of the stated problem is reflected in a perspective that is new for Russian psychology, namely of studying difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren as predetermined by their individual attitudes to everyday rules that regulate their lives; it is also manifested in understanding the preferred methods of coping as predicted by self-attitudes, as well as in creating a new ecologically valid research tool (a questionnaire for the diagnosis of difficult life situations in primary school age) that helps obtain new empirical facts and use them to create an empirical model linking self-attitude, attitude to rules, difficult life situations and coping with them.

During the development of the method, the identified difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren reflect the stereoscopic nature of three factors, child, parent, and teacher. This determines the focus of this research and its scientific novelty.

The theoretical relevance of the study lies in the fact that the results of this study can contribute to theoretical enrichment and filling the gap in studies of age characteristics of coping in primary school age. The study can enable the application of the situational approach in developmental psychology and help correlate the methods of coping with the content of difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren, and also clarify the role of normativity in the content of difficult life situations and self-attitude in the preference for the strategy of coping behavior.

The practical relevance of the study lies in the development of the original questionnaire (checklist) for express diagnosis of difficult life situations in primary school age to be used in counseling and psychological and pedagogical practice, as well as in the possibility of using the obtained substantiating psychological, pedagogical and developmental programs aimed at maintaining the psychological well-being of primary school students. Also, recommendations were offered for the provision of psychological and pedagogical assistance and preventive measures regarding coping with the difficulties primary schoolchildren encounter in life.

The reliability and accuracy of the study is confirmed by a comprehensive theoretical analysis of the research problem; consistency of the goals, the hypotheses, the theoretical and methodological base and applied methods; sample size; the use of complementary qualitative and quantitative methods; the correct application of relevant methods of statistical processing of research results; and the adherence to the basic research principles.

Statements to be defended:

1. Primary school age is characterized by an internal contradiction that is caused, on the one hand, by the need for children to comply with the rules, requirements and restrictions inherent to the beginning school life, and, on the other hand, by the need and opening opportunities for self-fulfillment in the social space. Normativity determines the content and number of difficult life situations that arise before a primary school student. The student's emerging self-attitude sets a repertoire of strategies for coping with these situations.

2. Difficult life situations at primary school age are externally and internally conditioned and include academic difficulties (learning activities, learning conditions, school rules, learning patterns); family and household circumstances (home environment, conflicts, misunderstandings with parents/family members); relationships with peers (bullying, conflicts); relationship with teachers/class teachers (trust/distrust, seeking approval, encouragement, seeking protection); and interaction with digital devices and technologies (the situation of deprivation).

3. The number of difficult life situations are equally represented in both boys and girls, while the content of difficult life situations (diligence, discipline, relationships with parents and/or family members, the inability to use gadgets, the Internet, inconsistency with the expectations of adults, loneliness, relationships of parents with one another) differs depending on the gender of primary school students: dominates high ranking positions in boys, these difficulties are less common in girls.

4. The content of difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren differs depending on the levels of normativity, while the content and frequency of difficult life situations differ at different levels of normativity depending on the gender of primary schoolchildren. Three levels of normativity (high, medium and low) are presented in all difficult life situations in primary school age, but in varying degrees of intensity. Boys are more likely to have difficult life situations than girls (difficult life situations of cruelty toward animals, and worries about the health and life of their parents). Minor differences are presented in relationships with peers and in learning. In other difficult situations there are significant differences with a predominant shift in boys in the lives of primary schoolchildren: the use of gadgets and the Internet, diligence and discipline, inconsistency with the expectations of adults, relationships with parents and family members, parental relationships and loneliness is more pronounced in girls than in boys.

5. Self-attitude is a personal resource that determines the ways of coping with difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren at different levels of normativity depending on gender. Self-attitudes in primary schoolchildren determine the preferred coping strategies used in difficult life situations at different levels of normativity and depending on gender. Boys use more behavioral and cognitive strategies, while girls use

emotional and cognitive methods. Depending on self-acceptance (autosympathy), self-rejection, indefinite attitude to oneself and indifference to oneself and one's qualities, certain coping strategies can be used.

Approbation of the research results

The main results of the study were presented at the XXII April International Scientific Conference on the Development of Economy and Society (NRU HSE, Moscow, 2021), the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference with international participation, "Social, Professional and Personal Responsibility of the Individual in Modern Society" (Omsk State Dostoevsky University, Omsk, 2020), the VIII International Conference of Young Scientists "Psychology is the Science of the Future" (IS RAS, Moscow, 2019), the International Scientific Conference of Young Scientists, Psy-HSE "Urgent Problems of Psychological Science" (NRU HSE, Moscow, 2018), the Interregional Youth Forum "The Russian Province: Socio-Cultural Dimension" (ChSU, Cherepovets, 2018), the II All-Russian Forum of Social Projects and Scientific Developments "From a Concept to a Business" (VlSU named after A. G. and N. G. Stoletovs, Vladimir, 2018), the All-Russian Forum of Psychologists as part of the Congress of the Russian Psychological Society (Kazan Federal University, Kazan, 2018), and at the V International Conference "Education and Teaching for Young Children" (Moscow, Moscow State Lomonosov University, 2016). The content of the thesis is reflected in 14 publications, four of which are included in the list of HSE journals recommended for defense.

The structure and volume of the thesis reflects the general logic of the study and consists of an introduction, two chapters, conclusions, conclusion, a list of references and appendices. The list of references contains 248 sources, 147 of which are Russian references and 101 are foreign sources. The work contains 6 tables and 7 graphical representations, and is presented on 180 pages: the volume of the main part is presented on 150 pages and 6 annexes from 151 to 177 pages.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE WORK

The Introduction substantiates the relevance and describes the problem of the study, formulates the research questions and indicates the object and subject of the study. It also determines the aim and objectives of the work; research hypotheses are put forward and the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study and the methods and techniques used, and the study sample and the empirical foundations are described. The scientific novelty, the theoretical and practical relevance, reliability and accuracy of the research results are revealed. Statements to be defended are formulated and the data on approbation of research results and the characteristic of the structure and scope of work are provided.

The first chapter "Russian and foreign studies of coping with difficult life situations in primary school age" consists of seven sections. It is devoted to the analysis of classical and contemporary theoretical and empirical studies by Russian and foreign researchers on the problem under study. This chapter enables the systematization of Russian and foreign experience in researching the problem of coping with difficult life situations at primary school age.

Section 1.1. "The psychological content of primary school age as a stage of development" describes the psychological characteristics, leading activities, psychological formations, the social situation and the system of relationships in primary school age.

The psychological content of primary school age is a phase of development that is strongly regulated by the social institution. There is a shift of the aspects of a child's life outside their family, mainly towards the school environment; primary school students have new tasks, requirements and rules that should be complied with. Development tasks in this period consist, on the one hand, of the acquisition of normativity as it helps a growing person to exist in society, and, on the other hand, of the development of self-attitude that allows one to realistically assess their resources and capabilities in solving everyday problems (Vygotsky, 1956; Erikson; 1963; Elkonin, 1989; Shadrikov et al., 2012).

Section 1.2. "Difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren" clarifies the understanding of difficult life situations in various approaches. The difficult life situation is an integrating concept in relation to stressful, extreme, traumatic, challenging or difficult situations and other frequently used synonymous terms. In the psychological literature there is no generally accepted definition of a difficult life situation due to the specifics of its manifestation, characteristics and heterogeneous conditions of its course, as well as the subjective perception of such situations by the individual (Bityutskaya, 2007).

The tension caused by the increasing pressure of the environment, with its requirements and rules, leads to difficult life situations. We understand a difficult life situation as an immediate situation that unites objective and subjective circumstances during a given period of time, and causes inner tension, anxiety and emotional turmoil and is a temporary blocker in the implementation of activities. Being within a difficult situation, a person experiences pressure of the environment that exceeds their abilities and capabilities, and therefore causes stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Aleksandrova, Dermanova, 2016).

The range of difficulties is quite extensive and can occur in various spheres of a person's life, and affect both the personal and impersonal structures (Nikolskaya, Granovskaya, 2000). It is possible to distinguish exogenous and endogenous causes of difficult life situations and their overcoming, as well as various psychological phenomena that are predictors of difficult situations. This may be a situation with a higher degree of uncertainty, but at the same time it contains a resource for overcoming it. Difficult life situations can be real, current, illusory, or potential (Petrovsky & Shmelev, 2019).

Section 1.3. "The phenomenon of coping and coping strategies" analyzes the terms used to describe concepts that are synonymous and differentiated to coping behavior (coping behavior, coping strategies, psychological overcoming, defensive behavior).

Within this study coping behavior is understood as a purposeful voluntary behavior that allows the subject to cope with stress or a difficult life situation using conscious strategies that are adequate to the personal characteristics and the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ryan-Wenger, 1990; Nartova-Bochaver, 1997; Khachaturova, 2013).

The phenomenon of coping behavior reveals the specifics of interaction with and management of stress or a difficult life situation of primary school students through adaptive/non-adaptive coping strategies. Using different types of coping strategies, a primary school student is able to cope (overcome) a difficult life situation, and minimize the depressing effect of this life event on their psyche in order to ensure/maintain physical and mental health and psychological well-being (Rasskazova, Gordeeva, 2011; Kuftyak, Samokhvalova, 2015).

Section 1.4. "Coping with difficult life situations in primary school age" specifies the mechanism of coping with difficult life situations applicable to primary school age.

When an individual is overcoming difficulties, he or she relies on own internal resource capabilities, mechanisms of regulation and self-regulation, or on external support from others (Leontiev, 2014; Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2018).

When studying difficult life situations, it is worth noting the particular importance of coping methods that depend on individual typological characteristics, personality traits, gender, age and the situational factor, as they influence the elimination of the stressor, stabilize emotional balance, mobilize cognitive processes, and optimize the psychological state in general. A non-adaptive coping strategy can be a negative factor in psychological well-being (Zaretsky, Kholmogorova, 2017; Kanonir, 2019).

Difficult life situations at primary school age can be caused by various exogenous and endogenous factors, hence it is logical to assume that the external conditioning of coping behavior seems to be more complicated in comparison with the internal influence, since the subject of coping is not always able to cope with difficult situations due to age characteristics and lack of resource opportunities.

Section 1.5. "Self-attitude as a personal resource of coping" differentiates the concept of self-attitude and a range of related definitions (self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-concept, the image of "I" and self-esteem). Self-attitude within this work is understood as an umbrella concept in relation to self-identification and self-esteem, as it reflects the most general attitudes of an individual towards themselves.

Self-attitude is a reflexive emotional-value attitude towards oneself based on cognition of self that strives for transformations. This is a person's correlation of their own qualities with those that are necessary to effectively overcome the pressure of the environment in everyday life (Sarjveladze, 1974; Burns, 1986; Pantileev, 1991; Kon, 2003; Starovoitenko, 2010; Leontiev et al., 2011). A person's attitude to oneself directly depends on personal resourcefulness, resilience and the ability to reflect on things and is directly consistent with physical, mental and emotional well-being (Kurginyan, 2010).

Primary school students are able to evaluate themselves, their qualities and actions from the standpoint of their own observations or public assessments, and are also capable of evaluating others and comparing themselves with others (Granovskaya, 1988; Harter, 1999).

Many researchers agree that self-awareness and its components, including attitude towards oneself, are associated with psychological well-being and help alleviate the course of stress or a difficult situation (Gu et al., 2015; Kreibich et al., 2020). Self-attitude, through the available range of difficult life situations) can vary from positive to neutral and negative. In coping with many difficulties, a stable self-attitude can contribute to the successful course of this process and be considered as a personal resource.

Section 1.6. "Interdisciplinary concept of the situation and the situational approach" discusses understanding the situation in different approaches, and also considers the situational approach that is valuable for studying coping with difficulties in the lives of primary school students. This approach determines and accompanies variables of the external and internal aspects of a specific situation or a particular case at each age period (Burlachuk and Korzhova, 1998; Dementiy, 2004; Grishina, 2012).

Section 1.7. "Normativity of a primary schoolchild as an attitude towards observance of everyday rules" develops the concept of normativity and describes a range of norms and rules typical for a younger age.

The normativity of a primary school student can be seen as a stable attitude towards observance of everyday rules. We understand the normativity of a primary school student as a situationally stable feature of behavior, i. e. a child's setting aimed at acting in a certain way in interaction with everyday rules. Normativity is a regulating factor in the behavior and activities of a primary school student (Bronfenbrenner, 1976; Bobneva, 1978; Bayanova, 2013; Belinskaya, Dubovskaya, 2014; Veraksa, 2014).

Norms and rules are a standard developed by a significant composition of established social standards. Rules can be understood through the prism of a norm and conditioned by it. In the system of public relations, rules mainly perform a regulatory function (Andreeva, 2002).

The specificity of adaptation to the new social conditions of primary school age, as well as the standardized world of relations, suggest the need to determine the content of difficult life situations in compliance and non-compliance with everyday rules included in the normative situations of this age. The child's behavior of compliance with the required norms and rules is socially approved and contributes to the formation of normativity as a personality trait. But most children find it difficult to comply with social prescriptions in a situation of sociocultural interaction.

Chapter 2 "An empirical study of coping with difficult life situations in primary school age" consists of five sections and three subsections and is devoted to the description of planning and organization of the stages of empirical research; to the design of a diagnostic apparatus; and to an empirical study of the issue of coping with difficult life situations at primary school age.

Section 2.1. "The organization of the empirical research and characteristics of the sample of respondents" describes the design and type, and the sample and empirical base of the study, and also specifies the stages of the empirical part and ethical principles and norms of the research procedure.

At the first (preparatory) stage of the empirical research the planning and design of the study was performed on the basis of the theoretical and methodological base and the aims and objectives of the study. Russian and foreign sources on the research problem were also analyzed and systematized, and relevant methods and techniques were explored and selected.

The second stage included the design of a checklist for express diagnosis of difficult life situations in primary school age using methods of expert survey, focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

The third (organizational) stage of empirical research involved the search for an empirical basis for the study and organizational sessions with research participants.

The fourth stage included the collection and diagnosis of the respondents' empirical data using all methods.

The fifth, technical, stage, involved a mathematical and statistical procedure for the quantitative analysis of data using a block of statistical processing R.

The final sixth stage was analytical; it included a qualitative analysis and interpretation of the results obtained, the formulation of conclusions and summing up the study results.

Section 2.2. "The creation of a method for diagnosis of difficult life situations in primary school age" reflects the procedure for compiling a checklist "Questionnaire for difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren" that consists of six steps; the procedure was also psychometrically evaluated.

The content validity of the checklist "Difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren" can be confirmed by the theoretical validity; the ecological validity can be confirmed by the selection of current life situations in children's lives through frequency analysis and by the empirical validity of the comparison of three positions: child-teacher-parent; by the consistency of scales using Cronbach's α and expert assessments as part of the Delphi method using the M. Kendall coefficient of concordance (W>0.69, with a significance of p$\leq$0.05).

Based on the results of testing the checklist, it was found that the range of difficult life situations in primary school age is externally and internally determined and can be represented by: a) the academic environment (learning activities, learning conditions, school rules, learning patterns); b) family and household circumstances (home environment, conflicts, misunderstandings with parents/family members); c) relationships with peers (bullying, conflicts); relationship with teachers/class teachers (trust/distrust, seeking approval, encouragement, seeking protection); and d) interaction with digital devices and technologies (the situation of deprivation).

Section 2.3. "The design and psychometric assessment of a method for determining the disposition in primary school students to follow rules (normativity)" describes a psychometric procedure that enables the assessment of the validity, reliability and discriminatory power of the method.

The factor analysis procedure using Varimax rotation made it possible to group the rules into factors that can be used in the future as subscales of the questionnaire to measure the disposition of primary school students to follow rules. After the assessment by Varimax rotation, 36 statements out of 55 remained in the questionnaire that were subjected to the psychometric evaluation.

The method also has a high discriminative index that is measured using the Ferguson's δ coefficient.

The test-retest reliability of the method was measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient between the results of the method performed with a three-month interval. Cronbach's alpha coefficient showed higher levels of one-time reliability.

The reliability of the method was examined through the consistency of each item in the questionnaire with the indicators applied to the individual scales and to the entire test, as well as through the statistical significance of differences between the upper and lower parts of the sample measured using the Student's t-test.

The main positions of this technique have been psychometrically assessed. Since it was developed as part of the academic school for the study of primary school students

as a subject of culture (Veraksa, 2000; Pashchenko, 2010; Bayanova, 2013), it was called the cultural congruence of primary school students.

As part of the method testing, the most typical rules were identified that regulate the daily life of primary school children and are reflected in the factors Social Interaction, Learning Competence, Self-Control, Obedience, Self-Care Skills, and Regulated Actions. Also, three levels of normativity were identified, high, medium and low.

Section 2.4. "Research methods" substantiates the use of research methods and techniques, their relevance to the goals, objectives and the problem of coping with difficult life situations in primary school age.

Section 2.5. "Results and discussion" contains three subsections and describes the use of nonparametric methods, as according to the results of the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, a distribution was found for each of the variables that was different from the normal (at $p \leq 0.05$); also the variables and the future course of the empirical research were described.

Subsection 2.5.1. "The content and frequency of difficult life situations depending on gender" presents the results of varying difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren depending on gender (the Mann-Whitney criterion was used). There are statistically significant differences between girls and boys in the frequencies of the following difficult situations: inconsistency with the expectations of adults and relationships with parents and/or family members (at $p \leq 0.001$), diligence and discipline (at $p \leq 0.01$), loneliness, inability to use gadgets/the Internet, and the relationship of parents with each other (at $p \leq 0.05$).

The incidence of difficult life situations in boys is higher than in girls. This is most likely due to the fact that boys are more active, but less capable of overcoming difficulties inwardly and of coping with stress; they experience difficulties and stressful situations more profound levels; girls, on the other hand, are more diligent, obedient, and communicative, hence they may encounter difficulties to a lesser extent, which is

confirmed in other studies (Nikolskaya, Granovskaya, 2000; Eremeeva, Khrizman, 2001; Eschenbeck et al., 2006).

Our assumption as part of Hypothesis 1 that difficult life situations (their content and frequency) differ depending on the gender of primary schoolchildren was confirmed.

Subsection 2.5.2. "Difficult life situations with varying levels of normativity depending on gender" reveals the content of difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren that significantly differs depending on their attitude to rules (normativity). All difficult life situations can be represented at one of the three levels of normativity (high, medium and low); however, they demonstrate different frequencies (the Kruskal-Wallis test was used). The group of children demonstrating high normativity mainly included girls, and the low normativity group mainly consisted of boys. In high-normativity boys, difficulties of diligence and discipline, inconsistency with the expectations of adults, and relationships with parents prevail; the same difficulties are presented in girls but slightly less significantly. Low normativity boys have difficulties of inconsistency with the expectations of adults, relationships with peers and with parents/family members; girls also have difficulties in learning activities. Moderately normative boys have the same difficulties as those at a higher level, and there are additional difficulties in relationships with peers (in girls as well).

The differences between the groups in most cases are quite considerable; as a rule, the group showing moderate levels of normativity stands out more, where the frequency of occurrence of difficult life situations among respondents is most represented. Probably, non-normative children (those who are reluctant to follow everyday rules) do not encounter such significant difficult life situations, because their spontaneity and low self-control work as resource components of personality. Normative primary schoolchildren (those who strive for the actual observance of norms and rules) have high social responsibility and self-control, therefore, rather, they are also slightly less vulnerable to difficulties. The group of primary schoolchildren with

moderate normativity do not have the required amounts of resources and this may put them at risk.

Thus, at each level of normality (high, medium or low), there is a statistically significant difference in the amount and content of difficult life situations, including depending on gender. Hypothesis 2 on the differences in the content and frequency of difficult life situations at different levels of normativity has been confirmed.

Subsection 2.5.3. "Self-attitude as a predictor of coping behavior types at different levels of normativity depending on gender" describes the outcomes of coping strategies used by boys and girls of primary school age. Boys more often resort to behavioral coping strategies, such as: going for walk, running, cycling; running or walking; playing; fighting, going of one's head; walking around one's house. Girls more often use emotional coping strategies: staying on one's own, alone; crying and being sad; hugging someone dear or a favorite thing or petting an animal. At the same time, it is difficult to identify the relationship between coping and the number of life difficulties in boys; in girls it is worth discussing the coping strategy "I watch TV or listen to music", as this coping is used by girls much more often with an increase in the frequency of difficult life situations. Indeed, the representation and preferences of coping strategies differ between boys and girls of this age (Ryan, 1989).

Statistically significant results were obtained by using logistic regression to verify Hypothesis 3 stating that ways of coping with difficult life situations can be conditioned by the self-attitudes of primary schoolchildren. Boys who demonstrate higher levels of self-acceptance and positive self-attitudes (autosympathy) more often use the strategy "I talk to myself", while girls use the strategy "I draw, write or read". At the levels of self-rejection or negative self-attitudes boys use coping strategies "I walk around my house or down the street" and "I kick, break or throw things"; girls use "I scream and yell", "I apologize or tell the truth". When a person has an indifferent attitude towards themselves, the strategies can be "I draw, write or read" and "I apologize or tell the truth". If the attitude toward oneself is indefinite, boys use the strategy "I talk to

myself", "I watch TV or listen to music"; girls use the strategies "I play a game" or "I watch TV or listen to music".

Linear regression results indicate that the predictor (in particular, self-attitude), gender, and normativity as a moderator variable are significantly associated with the dependent variable of coping strategies, where the regression coefficient does not differ from zero.

Therefore, it is possible to confirm Hypothesis 3 that self-attitude determines the ways of coping with difficult life situations of primary schoolchildren. Boys use more behavioral and cognitive strategies, while girls use emotional and cognitive methods. Depending on self-acceptance (autosympathy), self-rejection, indefinite attitude to oneself and indifference to oneself and one's qualities, certain coping strategies can be used.

Each chapter has a description of the main **conclusions**.

The paper also presents **guidelines for psychological counselling and preventive measures regarding coping with difficult life situations at primary school age**. Since a primary student who is at risk of getting into a difficult life situation or who has already experiencing one, is not always able to cope with it on their own, psychologists, teachers and parents were selected as persons who can be considered the most significant by primary school students; they can contribute to a milder and more successful method of coping with the difficulties in the life of a primary student. Recommendations were drawn up enabling psychological assistance and preventive measures in relation to primary school students in keeping with the roles of a psychologist, teacher and parent in the child's life.

In the final part of the work, the conclusions and the obtained results are given, and the prospects for further research on this topic are described.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE WORK IS REFLECTED IN THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS:

1. Bayramyan, R. M., Chulyukin, K. S. (2020). K probleme sootseneniya tvorcheskogo myshleniya i sub"yektivnogo blagopoluchiya v mladshem shkol'nom vozraste [On the problem of correlating creative thinking and subjective well-being in primary school age [Electronic resource]]. *Psikhologicheskiye issledovaniya*, 13 (71). URL: http:psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2020v13n71/1775-bairamyan71.html

2. Bayramyan, R. M. (2019). Rol' trudnykh zhiznennykh situatsiy na raznykh urovnyakh sootvetstviya pravilam v mladshem shkol'nom vozraste [The role of difficult life situations at different levels of compliance with rules in primary school age]. *Mir psikhologii*, 100 (4), 125–136. https:.www.mpsu.ru/upload/iblock/be2/be2c2c90db8e9b63be18c3266d0c7c2f.pdf

3. Bayanova, L. F., Tsivilskaya, E. A., Bayramyan, R. M., & Chulyukin, K. S. (2016). A Cultural Congruence Test for Primary School Students. *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art*, 9 (4), 94-105. DOI: 10.11621/pir.2016.0408

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

1. Bayramyan, R. M., Chulyukin, K. S. (2020). Razrabotka kachestvennogo metoda identifikatsii deskriptorov autentichnosti lichnosti shkol'nikov [Development of a qualitative method for identifying the authenticity descriptors of the identity of schoolchildren]. All-Russian scientific and practical conference with international participation "Social, professional and personal responsibility of the individual in modern society" Dostoevsky OmSU, Omsk, p. 68-70. https:.www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=44611661

2. Bayramyan, R. M. (2019). Spetsifika samootnosheniya mladshikh shkol'nikov i sootvetstviye pravilam v shkol'noy srede [The specificity of self-attitude of primary school students and compliance with rules in the

school environment]. The VIII International Conference of Young Scientists "Psychology is the Science of the Future", IS RAS, Moscow, p. 23-27.

3. Bayramyan, R. M. (2019). Trudnyye zhiznennyye situatsii mladshego shkol'nika pri raznom urovne normativnoy situatsii [Difficult life situations of a primary schoolchild at different levels of the normative situation]. Aktual'nyye problemy psikhologicheskoy nauki: tez. dokl. mezhdunar. nauch. konf., 10-12 maya 2018 [Topical problems of psychological science: abstracts of report at the international scientific conference, May 10-12, 2018]. Moscow, p. 228-230. DOI: 10.12731/978-5-6042232-1-5

4. Bayramyan, R. M. (2017). Osobennosti samootnosheniya detey mladshego shkol'nogo vozrasta v normativnoy situatsii [Features of self-attitude of children of primary school age in a normative situation]. In The collection of materials of the congress of the Russian psychological society. Artischeva, L. V. (comp.), Prokhorova, A. O., Popova, L. M., Bayanova, L. F. and others (Eds.). Kazan, Izd-vo Kazan. un-ta, 2, p. 14-15.

5. Bayramyan, R. M. (2016). Samootsenka mladshego shkol'nika kak sub"yekta kul'tury v normativnoy situatsii razvitiya [Self-esteem of a primary school student as a subject of culture in a normative situation of development]. Collection of materials of the V International conference Education and Teaching for Young Children, Moscow, Moscow State University. Lomonosov, p. 388-391.

6. Bayanova, L. F., Bayramyan, R. M. (2016). O vzaimodeystvii rebenka i pravila v zarubezhnoy psikhologii razvitiya [On the interaction of the child and the rules in foreign developmental psychology]. *Sovremennoye doshkol'noye obrazovaniye. Teoriya i praktika,* 2, 14–21. https:.sdo-journal.ru/journalnumbers/bayanova-lf-bajramyan-rm-o-vzaimodejstvii-rebenka-i-pravila-v-zarubezhnoj-psihologii-razvitiya.html

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9. Bayramyan, R. M., Bayanova, L. F. (2016). Tipichnyye pravila detey mladshego shkol'nogo vozrasta v normativnoy situatsii [Typical rules for children of primary school age in a normative situation]. The international scientific and practical conference "Scientific knowledge in the context of interdisciplinary interaction". Smolensk, p. 44–45.

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