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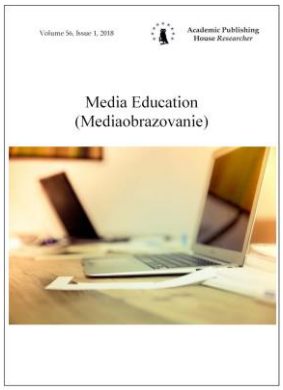

Development of Parental Psychological Media Competence: Milestones, Principles and Methods

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Abstract

The concept of 'parental psychological media competence' was addressed, the significance of its cultivation for the purposes of securing psychological safety of children in the media environment was substantiated. A framework for the development of psychological media competence of parents was presented. Milestones of the development of psychological media competence were described: the value-based and meaning-making, the personality guidance, the creative and pragmatist. During the first stage, development of the meaningful (value-based and semantic parental self-determination, joint parent-and-child activity, psychological competence) came about, at the second – the procedural (psychological media experience, attitude to media, reflexive actions), at the third – the effective (understanding of media, a match of media understanding with a reference, the ability to reproduce accumulated experience of understanding the media) features of psychological media competence. The sequence of the change of stages is determined by individual peculiarities of the development of psychological competence of a parent, personal activity and particular experience, wherein psychological media competence was embedded. The emerging psychological media competence of parents would, aside from bringing parents' media experience into the foreground, also engage deep inner resources of parental personality, significantly expanding their ability to accommodate own actions and activities of a child in the media environment. Analysis and trial of methods to develop psychological media competence of parents afforded us to accentuate the most effective ones, those appealing to personal experience and based on interactive communication: solving situational problems, gaming simulation of challenging situations in a media environment, plot– and activity-based games, discussion. Those methods encapsulated great opportunities for deep value-based and semantic changes, afforded to create an environment psychologically comfortable for parents to assure free, creative approach towards assessment and resolution of situations related to the behavior and emotional response of children in the course of their interaction with various types of media. Examples of methods field-proven by the authors in practical work were given.

Keywords: media competence, media content, psychological media competence, media experience, attitude to media, understanding of media, parents, methods of development.

1. Introduction

Social community is rapidly changing while moving unfalteringly along the information-driven course, expanding and erasing the boundaries of space, communication and contacts. The information complexity of the modern world is escalating. And the 'refresh rate' of today, in

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many ways, would outstrip the willingness of most people, primarily adults, to increase and improve their internal resources necessary to live a fulfilling life in such a complex world.

The transition to a new information environment would naturally lead to obsolesce of old skills. Human success these days would be determined by the development of new skills, a new type of competence - the media competence associated with the ability to cope with the information overload, the ability to work successfully in the digital environment, its employment to arrange cooperation, the ability to evaluate and understand the media environment, finding resources to develop self and one's children there. In that situation, psychological science is facing a new and challenging task - disclosing the mechanisms for perception and understanding of media products, psychological analysis of media texts, criteria for developmental or destructive potential of media for children, adolescents and adults, as well as a quest for the process of development of psychological media competence in order to ensure psychological security in media environment.

One should acknowledge that a child, unlike an adult, is actively engaged in the media environment, feeling home there. Meanwhile, a parent today would make only timid steps, moving in the media environment by touch. However, those are parents who need to understand that a child's leadership in the media world is based on spontaneous, intuitive learning, while only an adult, someone with developed conscious approach, mature ability to act in a situation of uncertainty, is capable of helping a child and promote his skills of meaningful contact with the media environment. Therefore, parents' media competence is considered by us as a kind of a guarantor in ensuring clean, safe information environment for a child, as well as an important parental resource, requiring a special developmental work of a psychologist.

Consequently, the problem of structuring of parental media competence by means of its inclusion into the psychological component and its development in adults (parents) appeared relevant to us.

2. Materials and methods

The authors proceeded from the concept of psychological media competence as a complex entity that included the three components, each of which was represented by a number of constituents: the psychological (cognitive, axiological, reflective, creative, pragmatist), the semiotic (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic) and the aesthetic (aesthetic evaluation of works of literature, cinema, fine arts, music) (Kyshtymova, Skorova, 2018).

The primary sources for writing of this article were academic works and materials of periodicals on the development of media competence and psychological culture, including psychological media competence from national and international contributors. Fundamental provisions of cultural and historical psychology and semiotics served as the methodological basis of the study. The study was based on the concept of psychological competence (Abolina, Ostapchuk, 2011) and media competence (Fedorov, 2017; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2018).

The main research methods were theoretical, targeted at creating conceptual generalizations and determining the essence of the phenomena under investigation. Thus, in the process of abstraction, the essential characteristics of methods for the development of psychological media competency, were identified. Determination of levels and stages of development was carried out on the basis of deducting judgments, which made it possible to associate those with the main components of psychological media competence. By means of comparison and practical application, the most effective methods for the development of psychological media competence among parents were determined. In addition, the method of collecting data on the research subject, analysis of scientific literature, synthesis and structuring (classification), were used. The authors' judgment was based on the problem-content approach.

Besides, the authors used practical methods of working with parents: solving situational problems, gaming simulation of challenging situations in the media environment, plot- and activity-based games, discussion.

3. Discussion

The development of media competence of parents today is associated with the need to maintain togetherness in an adult-child relationship and to preserve the function of succession in the modern world to transfer socio-cultural experience over generations. National researchers noted that, due to the rapid changes in the socio-cultural world, there inevitably was a transformation of the set of skills for the children to master (Loshkareva et al., 2017). Researchers

proposed a new model of modern child's skills, in the formation of which adults, who themselves command a modern system of competences, may participate. Thus, the authors distinguished two strata in the model of skills of a modern child: dedicated, narrowly focused skills (the ability to work with technology and perform specific work with an objectively measured result) and 'soft' skills that are used in broader contexts and contain existential and meta-skills in their structure. In the context of the development of psychological media competence of parents, it appeared necessary to work towards the improvement of the 'soft' broader-context skills that may help parents in their mastering media environment and building rewarding relationship with children.

Numerous studies testified to the need for the formation and development of media competence, those written by A. Perez-Escoda and R. Garcia-Ruiz, registering that, in children aged 6 to 18, indicators of media competence were found at moderate levels. At the same time, the authors came to the conclusion that it was the adult media competence (in their study, those were teachers) that allowed for critical, ethical and responsible view on society and developed willingness to critically perceive information based on values, ethical evaluation, responsible judgments and views in others (Perez-Escoda, Garcia-Ruiz, 2018). Many emphasize the role of a teacher in the development of media competence of an individual. (Gozálvez et al., 2014; Medina, Ballano, 2015). International colleagues registered the need to develop critical and aesthetic thinking, personal autonomy within the framework of media education. (Cruz-Diaz, Ordonez-Sierra et al., 2016). Spanish researchers offered media development practices in educational centers and institutions (kindergarten, preschool, elementary school, high school, higher education, adult education and education for senior citizens) (Cruz-Diaz et al., 2016).

The experience of media competence development was presented in a number of national publications (Fedorov, 2017; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2018; Levitskaya, 2015). We would take note of the interest of the national researchers towards the cognitive-analytical models in the context of media education, which may potentially replace conceptual and instrumental tools of group interaction and active exchange of views to develop consolidating positions (Tarasenko et al., 2018).

It should be noted that, in the international studies, the models of development of media competence were focused not on the development of the structural components of that phenomenon, but on the technology in use. That way, T. Pigozne, A. Pigoznis, in their model, presented the key milestones: a) selection of project concept: general subject understanding, b) collection and analysis of information: study of existing solutions and situations, generation of ideas and partitions, search for associative images, order for design, c) selection and implementation of the best solution: choice of framework, development, budgeting, contracting, design and its implementation at the facility, d) presentation: form and content, e) assessment: reflection, evaluation criteria. Researchers identified value orientations in the structure of media competence, noting that those determined the awareness of ethical aspects. Self-control and self-adjustment, critical network use, awareness of ethical issues related to the visual competence of media users, were also included into the media competence (Aguaded-Gomez et al., 2015).

International colleagues noted that the programs for enhancing audiovisual and media skills were not sufficiently developed, despite the fact that a huge number of people use computers, TV-sets and smartphones as vehicles for leisure-time activities (Pigozne, Pigoznis, 2015). Promotion of parents' readiness to understand the significance of topics in the media environment, their saturation with miscellaneous content appears important (Melnik et al., 2018). Therefore, we concluded that cognitive analysis should be an important domain in the development of psychological media competence of parents.

In the national academic literature, the domain of assessment of media competence of various population groups was the one of interest. In particular, A.A. Levitskaya, having conducted a broad comparative sociological study, noted the ability to analyze and evaluate the media environment as the primary media resources that needed development in adult public (Levitskaya, 2015).

We perceived the analysis of complex structure of the media environment, carried out by E.G. Nim, as an important one for understanding the trends of development of adult media competence (Nim, 2013). The author isolated the three dimensions of a media environment: the mediated environment (the one represented by media containing certain meaning and significance); the media coverage environment (media coverage of politics, religion, work, leisure, etc.) and the environment of the media (room for mass media networks and streams). In the

context of our work, it seemed appropriate to appeal to understanding of the meanings of media and awareness of the peculiarities of media coverage in the domain of child-parent relationships for the development of media competence of parents.

The development and practical implementation of adult education programs revealed active psychological and pedagogical search for effective technologies, teaching methods and the development of psychological media competence. Moreover, the analysis of the work of the international WoS database, conducted by G. Montero, I. Aguaded, J.V. Ferres, testified of poor effectiveness of the measures used for the development of media competence today (Montero et al., 2017), which required new approaches to resolving that problem.

4. Results

The resulting qualitative analysis of the parents' psychological media competence afforded us to distinguish three of its main characteristics, each of which had its own structure. The *Meaningful* component was represented by the following characteristics:

a) axiological parental self-determination (active construction of parenthood by an adult on the basis of life meanings and individual values that would suggest making a decision about the position in interaction with a child);

b) joint activities of a parent and a child;

c) psychological competence (aggregate knowledge about the psycho-physiological peculiarities of the development of a child, particularities of communication, including parental skills of self-knowledge and self-expression, ensuring effective interaction with a child).

The *Procedural* component included such characteristics as:

a) psychological media experience (subjective experience of perception, processing, evaluation of media, based on individual and personal characteristics of parents);

b) attitude towards media (the process of creation of a subjective media environment by a parent to ensure own parental development and development of a child);

c) reflexive actions (capability of parents to subject media experience and relationships to evaluation and understanding of).

At last, the *Resultant* component:

a) understanding of media (understanding the subject, meaning, content format, algorithm of working with it, the degree of impact, evaluation of media content, the ability to analyze, justify, argue the meaning of content, the ability to discuss content, build a dialogue);

b) a match of media understanding of a parent with a reference;

c) readiness (ability) to transfer the accumulated experience of understanding the media (Skorova, Smyk, 2019).

Our resulting analysis of modern international and national experience in the development of media competence and its individual components helped us reveal, firstly, the insufficient level of development of the media and psychological competence of parents, and, secondly, the inefficiency of its development methods. However, it should be noted that the features of psychological media competence can be traced in many parents, but the extent of their completeness and the possibility of free application in practice would differ substantially. This resulted in the need to develop activities and programs for the targeted development of parental media competence while identifying its fundamental milestones and monitoring the effectiveness of each.

With account for the components of psychological media competence that we have isolated in the structure (Skorova, Smyk, 2019), one may be able to determine the following milestones of its development in parents: the value-based and meaning-making, personality guidance, creative and pragmatist (Fig. 1).

During the first stage, the development of the meaningful characteristics of psychological media competence shall occur, at the second- the procedural, at the third - the productive one. That logic was consistent with the formula of external and internal determination of personality known in psychological science: ‘the external acts through the internal’, ‘the internal acts through the external circumstances’. Thus, the sequence we proposed in the development of psychological media competence of parents was able to bring not only the practical experience of parents in the media environment into the foreground, but also engage deep inner resources of parents' personality. We believe that inner changes in the views of parents will inevitably affect external reality and, conversely, external reality that was being structured by a person would inevitably lead to inner personality changes.

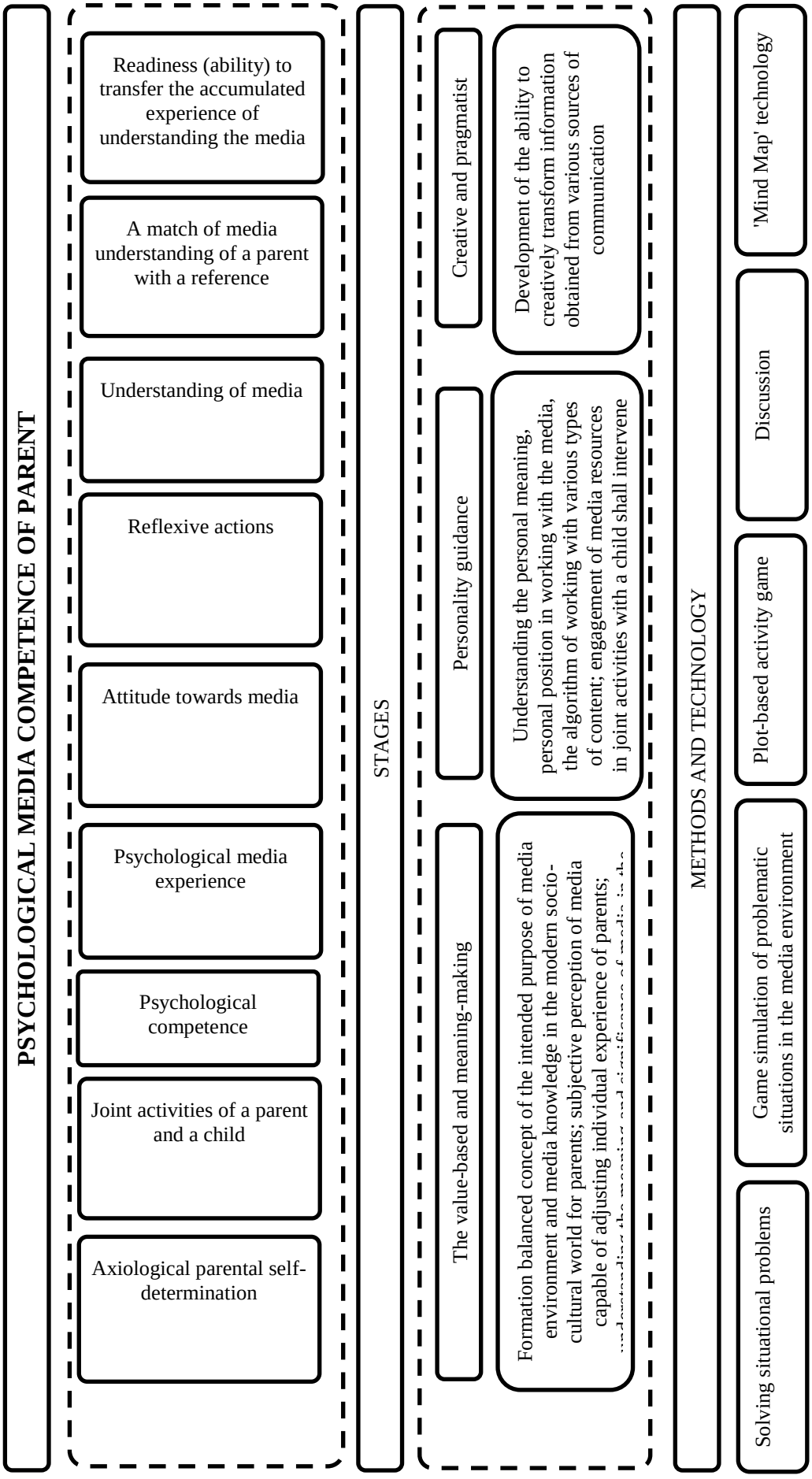

Fig. 1. Development of Parental Psychological Media Competence

And, first of all, we foretell changes not only of the parents themselves, but also the changes they cause in their children's activity: by means of streamlining the activity of children in media environment. As a result of the work, we saw significant empowerment of parents in the adjustment of their own actions and their child's activity in the media environment. Psychologically, a media competent parent would be able to act as a competent mediator in the child's contacts with the wide media world.

So, each stage of development was focused on a certain level, a specific characteristic (substantive, procedural, effective) of the psychological competence of parents.

At the first stage – the value-based and meaning-making one, the following would take shape:

a) balanced concept of the intended purpose of media environment and media knowledge in the modern socio-cultural world for parents,

b) subjective perception of media capable of adjusting individual experience of parents,

c) understanding the meaning and significance of media in the children's world for the development of children's experience,

d) understanding of the subject, meaning and format of the content.

The stage involved creation of a value basis for further development of psychological media competence through a) value- and semantic-based self-determination and b) expanding ideas about the peculiarities of mass communications, reciprocal influence of people in the process of communication, methods of influencing participants to communications, ways of transforming information and identifying false data and distortions therein, ways to solve problems associated with critical analysis of media information.

At the second, the personality-orientation stage, axiological content of psychological media competence was incorporated into the personal experience of parents: personal identity and consolidation of their attitude towards a child, awareness and acceptance of oneself as a parent, development of ideas about the psycho-physiological features of a child, peculiarities of communication therewith. In addition, engagement of media resources in joint activities with a child shall intervene. Through discussion, explanation, transformation of content, understanding of the impact of content on a child, a parent would present the media world in a structured manner, incorporating media into the personality developing domain. That stage was focused on understanding the personal meaning, personal position in working with the media, the algorithm of working with various types of content. There, parent's ability to analyze, substantiate, argue the meaning and evaluation of content, the ability to discuss it, awareness of the importance of their position in the interaction with a child, ability to quickly process and transform content with account for the degree of its effect (neutral, negative or positive) on the emotional state, actions and children's behavior, became important.

The third – creative and pragmatist – stage was focused on several issues. First, mastering the skills of self-cognition and self-expression, providing a parent with the opportunity to effectively cooperate with a child, building interlocutory relationships. Secondly, the presence of own experience of involvement in the media environment, awareness of a set of methods of action and behavior therein. Thirdly, mastering the skills of regulation, control and processing of incoming information from various media sources, as well as the skills of self-regulation of own emotional state, actions and behavior by a parent. Fourthly, the ability of parents to evaluate and critique their own media experience and relationships. That stage involved development of the ability to creatively transform information obtained from various sources of communication. A parent must learn to engage in creative dialogue with the author of content, family members, children; put forward original ideas, reveal own cultural position, behold the position of partners. Those skills would afford a parent to create and see new meanings while working with media, align media with themselves and their child, transform cultural environment of the latter.

The sequence of the change of stages was determined by individual peculiarities of the development of the psychological competence of parents, their personal activity and personal experience, wherein psychological media competence was embedded.

Highlighting the stages of development of psychological media competence of parents, we should separately dwell on the psychological and pedagogical technologies that developed it. From the point of view of exploring new social environment by a personality, one may talk about bringing of the three possible resources into the foreground: adaptation, socialization and development (Gorlova, 2010). Adaptive resources are those of safety, security and stability. The resource of

socialization was geared towards expanding the range of interaction of an individual with the world. A developing resource was a personal-subjective one that afforded a person to create a unique own pattern of interaction with the world. In the context of a dynamic, changeful world, we perceived the work in the personality-developing trend as relevant. Foregrounding of a developing resource would afford a parent to harmoniously enter the changing world, relying on own reserves, create conditions for rewarding interpersonal contacts with a child, ensuring, to a certain extent, predictability of the future.

Following the logic of the personality-developing trend, one may formulate the basic principles, whereupon the development of the parent's psychological media competence should be built. First, the principle of subjectivity, which consisted in understanding that the identity of a parent contained the source of its own 'propulsion'. That afforded us ground in working with parents to focus on various forms of activity: practice, communication, reflection. Secondly, the principle of cooperation as the fundamental form of personal development. It assumed that the development of psychological media competence skills of parents may proceed in an interactive format only, as well as further elaboration of safe media environment for a child became possible only if the latter cooperated with the parent. Thirdly, the principle of individualization, which meant that the completeness, pace, and duration of the development of psychological media competence of parents would be determined by individual particularities, experience of each parent, and would emerge following a specific individual path.

Implementation of those principles afforded to provide a personal-developing (non-adaptive) approach to the development of psychological media competence of parents. Based on those principles, selection of the methods for the development of psychological media competence of parents was carried out by us.

A method is commonly understood as a means to organize activities for the transfer and acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities, values of active participants in the learning process. In the collection of various didactic tools used in the programs for the development of the psychological reality of personality, it was important to identify those that: a) were system-forming and facilitated working on extracting psychological meaning from media content, b) were focused on adults interested in solving problems related to the real situation of interaction with media, and c) involved active participation of parents (Skorova, 2012). Those criteria were met by interactive psychological and pedagogical technologies that had a number of advantages in association with their broad developmental effect and actualization of the participants' personal experience, emotional coloring, high proactivity and interactive communication. It was the dialogue that contained great opportunities for deep axiological changes, enhancing the cognitive motivation of an individual. In the course of a dialogue, joint discussion of a problem, a search for means of its solution, reciprocal generalization of one another by the participants and their divergent views on the issue, arose.

Assessment and field-testing of the technology for working with adults by the authors afforded to identify the following active methods for the development of psychological media competence of parents as the productive ones:

1. Solving situational problems. By situational problems, we understood those that were seated in a life context and that had a personally significant subject of discussion, thereby producing practical value of teaching parents. The method involved presentation of typical situations that they were facing daily, watching the child's behavior, actions and emotional response to the Internet (in social networks, network (computer) games, on educational and news sites, etc.) in the course and in the sequence of watching cartoons (movies, TV shows, commercials) and a number of other situations to parents. Such tasks were targeted at a parent's awareness of the mode of activity (action). Mandatory for a case problem was to describe the conditions and raise a personally significant question important from a practical standpoint. For instance: 'What would you do in the place of your dad (mom)?', 'How would you behave in the place of dad (mom) of the child', 'What would you say to your son (daughter)?' 'What would you relate to your son (daughter)?', 'What kind of things would you discuss with him (her)?', etc. The developmental capabilities of that method were supported by the research activity of the parents. The solution of situational problems was focused on comprehension, building perspectives of one's own behavior, analyzing the media and the author's position, reasoned agreement/disagreement with it, determining the significance of the information presented.

2. Game simulation of problematic situations in the media environment. We proposed procedural description of the media and the development of a pattern (algorithm) of interaction with a child in terms of various types of communications. Simulation was used to build and consolidate general patterns of actions, operations that parents developed in the process of dedicated training. A game simulated real situations of interaction between a parent and a child in media environment, wherein both positive and negative emotional responses and modes of behavior under different communication conditions could be demonstrated. In the course of a simulation, the parents themselves chose the solution system and had the opportunity to implement it in a game. Game simulation was targeted at both the development of a parent's media competence, and at the formation of the child's safe behavior in media environment.

A significant role in the game simulation was assigned to simulation games, which afforded to create a simulation model of a developing environment, while parents cast themselves in the role of experts of the information reality.

For the sake of an example, the *Isolated Station* game developed by us, may be used. Objective: comprehension of changes in the modern information environment, designing an action algorithm for informing children, learning actions in a situation of psychological uncertainty.

Instructions for participants: 'You find yourself in the future, you have to live at an isolated station, where robots will be engaged in teaching children. Your job is to create a program using which robots would be able to train your children of different ages and get them ready for future life. The key issue: 'What should children learn, and what is the sequence information should be released?'.

Depending on the level of competence of a group, you may provide a tentative list of 'knowledge' that children living at the station should digest: robot control, cooperation arrangements, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, etc.

3. A plot-based activity game was a figurative reflection of the real forms of interaction between parents and children in the media environment. During the game, parents were assigned real-life situations and roles: mom/dad (of certain age, having children of different ages), son/daughter (of certain age, giving preference to one or another type of media), characters, personality traits. The game afforded to demonstrate different ways of behavior and response of parents and children in communication with each other, select options that matched the situation, age and specific type of media.

As an example, a 'What if ...?' game may be employed. One part of the group of parents formulated the problem, starting it with the words 'What if ....?', while the second one offered several options for its solution. For example, 'What if ... my child was sitting in front of the computer all day?', 'What if my child received dubious messages from strangers?', 'What if I found out that my child was insulting someone on the network?' , 'What if my child watched a film with aggressive content?', 'What if my child was hanging out in social networks?', etc.

This game has a large variable-based potential, its content may be changed and modified by setting different age, professional, role-based positions of the participants.

4. Discussion as a method for the development of psychological media competence of parents was used to discuss specific types of media in order to develop and support own position. That method anticipated initial acquaintance of parents with specific means of communication (its fragment), an algorithm for its analysis and subsequent discussion. As an option of a discussion method, 'role-playing' discussions were used, with predetermined roles of participants, for example, the role of a doubter, an innovator, a critic, a lawyer. In that format, parents often had the opportunity to discover and develop skills alien to them, and shape their critical thinking with regard of media texts.

There are examples of some of a 'hot' argumentative issue that may be offered to parent groups: 'Is computer a medicine or narcotic?', 'Computer games – hidden desires?', 'To ban a computer – the easiest way to educate?', 'Laws of virtual reality', 'Threats and opportunities of the information environment'.

5. The 'Mind Map' technology proposed by Tony Buzan aimed at structuring the thinking process, visualizing thoughts, working out the skills of transforming and assimilating information. In the mind maps, information was displayed graphically, allowing one to represent the object holistically and, at the same time, focus on details. Mapping allowed parents to master the skills of working with large volumes of information units: combine information, display relationships, visualize thoughts, and also contributed to the development of critical thinking, key assessment of

information flows, understanding of the content and building new knowledge – and, in the future, transfer those skills to children. For example, parents were invited to familiarize themselves with the information and present it in the form of a mind map that was understandable to children. As a source of information that parents should comprehend and process, any information and Internet resources may be used (for example, www. whatisgood.ru, www.culture.ru).

The presented list of methods and technologies, which is not nearly complete, would afford to create a psychologically comfortable environment for parents, providing a free, creative approach to analyzing and resolving situations, provide for parents' work on understanding media, allow them to gain practical experience in solving real problems related to behavior and emotional response from children in the course of their interaction with different types of media.

5. Conclusion

The article theoretically substantiated the model of development of psychological media competence of parents, including its principal features, stages and methods of development. Defined and described were the main stages of the development of psychological media competence among parents: the value-based and meaning-making – the personality guidance – the creative and pragmatist. A system of principles for the development of psychological media competence of parents, revealing the personality-developing orientation in the organization of work, was proposed. Field-proven methods for the development of psychological media competence were presented, examples of the use of interactive and interlocutory methods were provided.

The results made it possible to conclude that the problem of the development of psychological media competence of an adult may be solved in the course of purposeful, specially organized, psychologically based activity taking into account individual features of the development of psychological competence of a parent, its personal activity, personal media experience. However, the results afforded us to outline future prospects for the study and development of psychological media competence: consideration of the phenomenon with regard of the gender-based particularities of a parent media experience needed elaboration; promotion of continuity of the development of psychological media competence in the 'family - school' constellation, and, as a consequence, shaping of psychological media competence and programs for its formation among teachers; development of psycho-diagnostic tools for assessing the level and characteristics of maturity of psychological media competence. Presumably, work along those lines would create a favorable background for the relationship between an adult and a child in the matters of media.

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