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## **Integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality**

Nowadays, the formation process of interdisciplinary and applied aspects in the human studies is very dynamic. A person is a system object that interacts with other complicated systems (nature, society). The necessity in the systemic approach arises when in order to create a full picture not only object's imminent qualities are studied but also some peculiarities arising during the interaction between the object and other systems. Gender psychology studies men and women as products of biogenetic program or a sociocultural program product on the basis of element-by-element analysis. Despite

obvious achievements of the sciences, there are certain problems of cognitive and methodological character in the studies of individuality of men and women. We do not reject the necessity of an element-by-element analysis of individuality of men and women but we believe they are not enough.

Criticisms of the approach which was effective for psychological conceptions of XIX-XX centuries led Russian science to rejection of the very idea of analysis of psychological reality on the basis of its structural organization. However, the attitude which was later called

«the elementarism» (a path from the simple to the complex) acquired a new meaning as «the integratism» at the modern level of scientific knowledge [7]. By «the integratism» we mean a path of scientific thought from the simple to the complex aimed at the analysis of the nature of complex object's components and the integrative process to understanding of the nature of the internally united which has brand new qualities. Consequently, the category of integration means that various parts forming «the whole» have specific qualities that provide for the opportunity of new ties to appear. The qualities, according to V. Endelgart, can be called desmogenius (from the Greek «desmos» - connection). On the one hand, the integration effect is pronounced in that a part, forming the whole loses some of its qualities (or they get transformed). On the other hand, in that the whole acquires new qualities, born by the ties which were created when the parts got united into the whole [7]. Therefore, the integrative process, occurring «inside» the complex object structure is a mechanism of its existence and a prerequisite for brand new (system) qualities.

Interdisciplinarity in the integrative process involves mutual consent on the usage of images, ideas, methods and models of disciplines of both natural-scientific and socio-humanitarian profiles. Looking for a reference frame for different psychological phenomena, using methodological, theoretic and experimental studies we outlined a new interdisciplinary scientific area in the system of psychological knowledge – the integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality. It is based on some ideas of the integrative individuality theory, integrative development psychology, and gender psychology.

The integrative sex-gender approach enables to study individuality of men and women in a fast-changing world, to view a person as an independent system, which is, in its turn, a part of a bigger system, where all the elements are interconnected, and influence one another. On the one hand, society, as any evolving system has to keep sustainable development and stability, on the other hand – it has to be prepared for a modification. A system has to stay sustainable regardless of any structural changes. At different stages of social development men and women, as parts of the system, are embodiments of the typical «masculine» and «feminine». Through the stereotype-based behavior of men and women society keeps up its sustainability, stability and, at the same time allows for greater variability of gender behavior enabling changes.

At the core of the experimental studies we laid out the leading ideas of the integral individuality theory by V. Merlin [6]. Being guided by two principles: the main methodological principle – the systemic principle, and by the general theory of living self-regulating and self-actualizing systems for the experimenting mode, V. Merlin proved that human integral individuality is a special case of self-developing and self-regulating living system. It consists of relatively closed sub-systems (hierarchical levels) of human qualities that are outlined depending on the level of substance development – biochemical, general somatic, neuro-dynamic, psychodynamic, personal, meta-individual as well as the level of socio-historical individual qualities. There are the so called multi-multi valued ties between the hierarchical levels that open up the non-casual – teleonomal – determination type (unlike

the single-valued ties of the same level that open up the casual determination type).

The integral individuality is the object of an interdisciplinary study, the object of all the nature and society-related sciences. By studying integral individuality we study the multi-level ties between individual biochemical, somatic, neuro-dynamic, psychodynamic, personal, socio-psychological qualities as well as intra-level ties of the qualities. Different levels phenomena are closely interconnected. Consequently, relationships of biological and social qualities are interconnected. V. Merlin opines, that the relationship between biological and social qualities is just a special case of multi-valued ties [5]. The same type of ties exists inside the qualities. For there is no unique or general biological pattern of organism's life activity, it is determined by genetic, ecological, biochemical, neuro-physical, general psychical patterns. The same way there is no unique or general social pattern that defines human's individual qualities. General psychological patterns of personal qualities are different from those that define inter-personal relations and social status of a person in a group. The latter are different from those that define person's position in society. Consequently, individual qualities subordinate to various patterns are involved into multi-valued ties system.

The integral (multi-level) approach enables to identify sources of various phenomena, including social ones, says E. Illin. Unfortunately, he emphasizes, the integral approach still has a long way to go to start being used in different psychological studies on the human being. It has to do with the fact that psychophysiology, including differentiated psychophysiology is not really respected by many psychologists (looks like some even fear it) [3: 213].

Problems that gender psychology is trying to solve with its methods and techniques are substituted by problems relating to the competence of physiologists. When analyzing these problems, major aspects include terminological inexactitude and conceptual apparatus that are still in the making. The integral approach demands a new conceptual apparatus that meets the challenges of integral individuality studies of men and women. There's a need in terminology that would distance from a direct connotation with biological determinism or social constructivism, overcome the normative dualism in the study of «male»-«female», overcome the traditional misogyny and help depolarize both the terminology and the reasoning.

Illin talks about «appropriateness of the «phenotypical gender» term that reflects the composition of the genetic (biological) and psychological gender» [4]. There is still no self-consistent language to describe complicated systems. To emphasize that we are not seeking to develop the problem of individuality gender development in the context of «the struggle»/«the complementarity» of genders but by analyzing achievements and contradictions of the schools, sharing values and principles of integral individuality studies. We didn't coin a neologism but used the synthesis of the terms.

The interdisciplinary character of integrative psychology of gender individuality exposes a common trend of modern science: enhancement of integrative processes, mutual influence and mutual penetration of various areas of knowledge. The logic of scientific studies leads to the synthesis of several sciences, formation of dialectically interconnected complex of scientific visions

of individuality of men and women as an integral and a diversified system. Each science with which integral sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality contacts gives opportunity to enrich knowledge on certain phenomenon. Uniting the knowledge of gender psychology, integral individuality psychology not only fills in the gaps in traditional sciences but also expands the horizons of individuality of men and women in the ontogenesis due to integration of knowledge and applied techniques of the sciences.

Integral psychology develops principles, methods and techniques of the sciences whose knowledge it integrates, helps comprehend theoretically and analyze all the research means, as well as create new methods of the integral sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality.

At the same time, the integral sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality significantly differs from other interdisciplinary sciences in that its terminology and methods are based on findings on non-linear mathematics and those areas of natural sciences and humanities that study development processes of complicated systems.

All these methodological positions have direct importance for the integral sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality for they help formulate the following conclusion: it is impossible to explain the nature of individuality of men and women through analysis of their qualities. It's necessary to provide the analysis of intra-structural organization of the complex phenomenon which predetermines its qualities.

The integrative-structural methodology is a basis for constructing and using techniques of integral studies of human individuality from the gender perspective. It gives the opportunity for a wide-spread, multi-facet study of human nature of both men and women. By studying individuality of men and women as integrity in which one cannot separate the social from the biological but can rather outline social and biological subsystems that are interconnected. So in order to study individuality of men and women it is necessary to study not only the ties between social and biological subsystems, but also between subsystems of biochemical, anatomy-morphological, neuro-dynamic, psychodynamic, personal and socio-psychological qualities as well as qualities inside these subsystems.

In the context of integrative methodology several methodological principles of gender psychology, integral individuality psychology and integral development psychology can be united to create a new methodology that would take into account the interconnection of gender and sex at all levels of existence of men and women in the framework of conceptual scheme of the integrative approach. The integrative-structural methodology implies a change of the research paradigm. It means a transition from the descriptive analysis level of individuality qualities of men and women to the explicative analysis level by outlining their structural organization. The necessity to turn to the integrative-structural methodology is dictated by the very nature of the integral individuality of men and women.

Methodological principles in the integral sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality determine a number of scientific problems and exert indirect influence on theoretical and experimental hypotheses.

One of the principles of the scientific integrative

sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality is the systemic principle. V. Barabanshikov believes that peculiarity of the systemic cognition is in its ability to describe and explain integral phenomena, «dynamic unity of the different, in other words – the system is being analyzed in terms of elements and structure, parts and the whole, organization and coordination, development, hierarchy, dimensions and levels that express the modern frame of any positive science» [1]. The systemic principle defines the following research objectives: the study of levels (subsystems) of the analyzed system and its components; outlining the principles and mechanisms of the system organization. As far as the first objective is concerned we base our reasoning on the integral individuality theory. V. Merlin outlined the following hierarchical levels of the greater system of integral individuality: the system of individual qualities of an organism (its subsystems: biochemical, somatic, qualities of the nervous system, neuro-dynamic); the individual psychic qualities system (its subsystems include: psychodynamic – psychic qualities and qualities of temperament, in other words qualities of a person); the socio-psychological individual qualities system (its subsystems include – social roles in a social group and social roles in socio-historical communities). One correction made during studies at the Pyatigorsk scientific school: prime qualities of an individual are at the psycho-dynamic level of the integral individuality. In other words – secondary qualities of an individual follow temperament and are at the intermediate position between natural and social levels. The secondary qualities include cognitive processes (perception, memory, intellection, attention, imagination) and regulating processes: voluntative and emotional.

Organization of the individuality sex-gender structure is solved by outlining mechanisms and organizational principles of separate components into a system. Principles of multidimensionality, hierarchy, coordination are among these mechanisms. The principle of hierarchy is implemented in the sequence of transition from lower structural-functional levels to higher levels. To recognize multi-level qualities of integral individuality we use two criteria: the mathematical principle of significance and the system useful adaptive effect. The first principle enables to recognize «vertical» (inter-level) and «horizontal» (intra-level) ties of integral individuality. Professor V. Belous proved that the system useful adaptive effect may also be one of the criteria to construct the integral individuality hierarchical model [2:47]. The coordination principle in the integral individuality theory matches intra-level ties. V. Merlin names some varieties of the ties: mutually-single valued ties, where the variable  $a$  is connected only with the variable  $b$ , while the variable  $b$  – only with the variable  $a$ ; single-multi valued ties (the set-variable  $A$  is connected with several set-variables  $B$ ). Multi-multi value ties imply that every set-variable  $A$  is connected with several set-variables of  $B$ , while every set-variable  $B$  is connected with several set-variables of  $A$ . V. Merlin believes, that with time multi-level ties of neuro-dynamic, psychodynamic and personal qualities are developing and the multi-multi value ties increase [6:39].

According the another principle – the principle of activity – individuality of men and women possess the qualities of initiative, freedom of choice and can be characterized with the selective behavior. This pattern is refracted through the principle of determinism in its

interpretation by S. Rubinshtein – «the external through the internal». The principle of activity is denied by the conceptions of the biogenous and sociogenous nature: for the first – a person is a result of genetic paradigm in action, for the latter – a product of social influence and communications.

The principle of development implies the study of individuality of men and women from the standpoint of their regular change. The term «development» is used to identify general, paradigm approach to the problem analysis and means a change connected with a transformation in the internal structure of an object, a transition from a structure of one quality into another. The concept is associated with the form of the modification (evolution or revolution) and the direction (a progress or a regress). The ontogenesis is viewed as a regular modification of an organism from the time of his/her birth until the death. In its turn, the ontogenesis may be studied from two perspectives: the preformism, in the framework of which the modification is viewed as a simple quantitative growth and the epigenesis according to which the modification is a sequence of qualitative, structural changes. In the framework of the development principle the following objectives can be outlined: the problem of development determinants, the problem of development stages and transition criteria from one stage to another. Development of integral individuality occurs in reality and is conditioned by dialectic interaction of objective and subjective determinations. V. Belous believes that any integral individuality determination, in its turn, is realized on two levels: the descriptive and the explanatory. The two-level objective determination implies the following: a) describing structures of integral individuality under extremely different conditions of human life activity; b) the formation of integral individuality in the experiment by means of applied psycho-pedagogical techniques. The two-level subjective determination includes: a) identification of the role of subject's qualities in the structure of integral individuality; b) the study of subject's influence on the making of integral individuality; c) the search of intermediate chains connecting multi-level qualities of integral individuality into an integral system [2:71].

The subject principle views men and women as autonomous, initiative integral individuality capable of changing itself and the surrounding world within certain limits. Contemporary psychological studies enabled to strengthen the category of the subject, developed by S. Rubinshtein. The subject is a person at the highest peak of his activity, integrity and autonomy which is unique for every person. The surrounding reality for the subject is not only a system of irritants, but also an object of action and cognition. A person becomes the subject of unity of the natural and the social while s/he separates himself from the surrounding reality and starts opposing himself to it as an object of cognition and contemplation. Person's peculiarities, as those of the subject include creative approach to problem-solving, initiative, freedom of the will.

The principle of determinism is based on the idea of psychic process causation. It is formed as an antithesis to the understanding of the psychic where it is viewed as an epiphenomenon, determined by internal reasons or as an objective phenomenon triggered by outside factors. According to S. Rubinshtein, the psychic has its own specifics but is not something antagonizing to the material world phenomena. The psychic and the material

are closely interconnected, forming the integral being. The first represents one of the highest levels of the being, having its own specific nature: it defines, regulates, and guides human activity. «The determination theory» introduced by S. Rubinshtein – «the external through the internal» – was not only an answer to but also a means of solving concrete methodological problems facing psychology. It was a result of aggregation of various types of determination in different areas of science and philosophy. The following was identified: the determination specifics, the exposed reflection theory, the determination specifics of the natural level, and, finally, the social determination specifics. The integrative sex-gender psychology of human individuality uses the determination principle to explain the psychic patterns of men and women, to identify connections and relationships between the consciousness and the activity.

The principle of unity of the methodology, theory and experiment enables to check theoretical hypotheses. The necessity to create the integrative sex-gender psychology of human individuality stems from attempts to systematize the received information and, simultaneously, forecast men and women's behavior on the basis of the psychological patterns. The principle of checking theoretical postulates in a concrete empirical study is one of the scientific standards that admits that a hypothesis could be either confirmed or belied. The conclusion that a theory is correct is based on a number of experiment rules – formation of hypothesis and counter-hypothesis, conceptual and formal planning of the experiment, control over side effects and variables, analysis and interpretation of the data received in accordance with the proposed assumptions.

On the assumption of this interpretation of the problem we formed the essence of the integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality – it is a branch of psychology, studying gender-related patterns and processes as well as functioning of human integral individuality.

The research subject of the integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality is the study of the content, structure, dynamics and functioning techniques of integral individuality of men and women at different development stages; the study of characteristics, conditions, means and formation mechanisms of integral individuality of men and women, strategies of its development.

Among the prime research goal of the integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality are the following: the study of peculiarities of integral individuality gender aspects of kindergarten children, teenagers, adolescents, students and adults in various conditions of their life activity; the study of the formation specifics of gender structures of integral individuality of a person in an evolving experiment by means of applied psycho-pedagogical techniques; discovering the place and the role of subject qualities in the development of gender structures.

Our theory of the integrative sex-gender studies psychology of human individuality describing the structure, dynamics and functioning mechanisms of gender structures, creates conditions for concrete principles, stages, methods and techniques of the individuality development of men and women.

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