

# Adolescents` Demonstrative Behavior Research

Gulfiya G. Parfilova & Lilia Sh. Karimova  
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, RUSSIA

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The problem of demonstrative behavior is very topical among teenagers and this issue has become the subject of systematic scientific research. Demonstrative manifestations in adolescents disrupt the favorable socialization; therefore, understanding, prevention and correction of demonstrative behavior at this age is relevant and requires special attention. The purpose of the research is to examine and diagnose demonstrative behavior in adolescents (college students), as well as to develop and implement the program aimed at preventing demonstrative manifestations in adolescents. The experiment involved 90 first-year students of the Kazan College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The leading method in the study of this problem was the diagnostic testing that helped to reveal the level of demonstrativeness and personal accentuation of teenagers. The following diagnostic tools were applied: H. Schmieschek's personality accentuation test (*Schmieschek Fragebogen*) designed to diagnose the type of personality accentuation; test on demonstrativeness. On the basis of the results of the ascertaining experiment, the program containing a variety of forms and methods of preventing demonstrative manifestations in adolescents was developed. Statistical analysis of empirical research was carried out by means of standard techniques of mathematical statistics (Student's t-test). The given program has practical value to educators, psychologists and classroom teachers of secondary schools in the organization of the educational process.

*Keywords:* demonstrativeness, demonstrative manifestations in adolescents, demonstrative behavior, personality accentuation, adolescence

## INTRODUCTION

### Relevance of the subject

Demonstrative manifestation is today one of the most topical social issues in our society; since recently alcohol and drugs consumption by adolescents has developed much; demonstrative and suicidal behavior of adolescents and their adherence to the various groups, or subcultures have expanded.

It's commonly known that adolescence is one of the most interesting and complex periods in the development of the individual, both for adolescents and their parents (Kasimova & Valeeva, 2015). Perhaps, for the parents it's even harder, as they do not only have to accept the metamorphoses of the child, but also to help him overcome their negative impact, as well as to remodel the nature of relations with the outside world (Kostyunina & Valeeva, 2015).

Correspondence: Gulfiya G. Parfilova,  
Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, 18 Kremlyovskaya Street, 420008, Kazan,  
RUSSIA  
E-mail: parfilova2007@yandex.ru  
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Educators and parents are often faced with the problem of children's demonstrative behavior: when a child wants to draw attention to his personality and uses all means to achieve that: lies, playfulness, rudeness; stomping his feet, etc. Such children are usually selfish, not critical towards themselves; their emotions are superficial. This behavior is not the defense, but the way to conquer the space, to assert oneself caused by the desire to subjugate others, or dominate (Ribakova et al., 2015).

Obviously, demonstrative manifestations occur on impact with any ban, or boundary, and the child tests it to the limit (Gabdrakhmanova, Khuziakhmetov & Yesnazarova, 2016). Such a child creates a strong tension in the group environment, while the teacher has to look for various ways to prevent the conflicts.

Thus, demonstrative manifestations in adolescents disrupt the favorable socialization, so understanding, prevention and correction of demonstrative behavior at this age is relevant and requires special attention (Novik & Podgorecki, 2015; Ozbey & Saricam, 2016; Sahin, 2014; Salyakhova & Valeeva, 2015; Ilbay & Akin, 2014).

## **Problem statement**

The problem of demonstrative behavior is currently very topical among teenagers. Demonstrative behavior of adolescents is expressed in their desire to stand out, since this period is characterized by the wish to be unique, but at the same time not to be "like everyone else". This is the period when certain problems arise: the teenager wants to stand out from the crowd, but doesn't know how, so all ways to draw attention, including aggressive behavior, are exploited.

The relevance of the chosen topic is determined by the fact that all too often demonstrative behavior can lead to difficulties in upbringing and educating the child. Although so far there is no definite opinion, whether demonstrative manifestations are negative or positive, a number of educators believe that they can become a source of rather effective motivation: a teenager is ready to expend great efforts on those activities that bring him success and the attention of others. For example, the overwhelming majority of the outstanding students are children with high demonstrativeness level. Moreover, demonstrativeness is needed to pursue almost any kind of art. If a person does not feel the need to attract attention of others to himself and to his feelings, he is unlikely to become a successful painter, to play the guitar or act on stage (demonstrativeness for acting is particularly important).

Demonstrativeness has both advantages and disadvantages. Demonstrativeness does nothing wrong within reasonable limits, but when it goes beyond, doing harm to others, then the task of teachers (as well as psychologists) is to help the child skillfully and safely (Sadovaya, Korshunova & Nauruzbay, 2016).

The problem of demonstrativeness phenomenon has frequently been the topic of educators and psychologists' debate; however, the boundaries of this phenomenon are still not clear. Demonstrativeness is inherent in everyone in different extents, because the desire to be seen and liked by others is a person's natural need. Even so, only in the last century, this issue has become the subject of systematic scientific research.

The problem of demonstrativeness has been studied by such famous Russian and foreign educators and psychologists as M. R. Bityanova (2010), L. I. Bozhovich (2008), L. S. Vygotsky (1999), G. Getper (1936), E. F. Zeer (2007), D. B. Elkonin (1978), E. E. Kravtsova (2009) and others. According to E. F. Zeer (2007); demonstrativeness is a kind of psychological defense - indifference, manifested in high self-esteem "self-image" and egocentrism. E. F. Zeer considers demonstrativeness as the person's quality manifesting itself in emotionally-colored

behavior, the desire to please, the wish to be seen, to express oneself. This trend is implemented in the original behavior, in demonstrating one's superiority, exaggerating, colorization of one's experiences, in the specific poses, deeds, aimed at external effect. G. Getper (1995) defines demonstrativeness as the person's trait associated with an increased need in achieving success and getting attention of people surrounding him. Demonstrative behavior occurs on impact with any ban, or boundary, and the person tests it to the limit. In this situation conflicts between people in one and the same group can take place. According to M. L. Pokrass (2006) demonstrativeness is a lifestyle, manifested in demonstrative behavior, exaggerated external display of emotions and estrangement from a person's tyranny, or inhibition of intrinsic traits, the content of consciousness and actions that do not hold out approval.

Most authors traditionally associate demonstrativeness with various forms of hysterical displays (hysterical personality, neurosis, accentuation and psychopathy). Some even tend to use the terms "demonstrative personality" and "hysterical personality" as synonyms, thus emphasizing the nature of the disease. The issue of demonstrativeness in clinical psychology had the greatest development in its connection with hysteria. The psychiatrist P. B. Gannushkin (1933) believed that the essence of the hysterical personality is defined by two characteristics: the desire by any means to attract the attention of others and lack of objectivity in relation to others and to oneself. Hysterical features often appear at an early age. Such children cannot stand, when people praise anyone but them, when other kids get more attention. They quickly get bored with toys. The desire to be in the spotlight, listen to exaltation and praise of others is becoming a pressing need. They are willing to recite poems, to dance, or sing in front of the audience, and many of them develop into really good artistic personalities. Advances in studies in the early grades are largely determined by whether they put an example to others or not.

It should be noted that, with the onset of puberty there is usually observed sharpening of hysterical features. The main features of the demonstrative teenager are boundless egotism and insatiable thirst for attention to his person, where any manifestation of interest, both positive and negative, is valued. It can be admiration, wonder, respect, compassion and anger or hatred for others. Anything, but not indifference, or the prospect of being unnoticed (Kolominsky, Pan'ko & Igumnov, 2004). The desire to stand out is realized in several ways, which can flow from one to another or even do not change, if the result suits a teenager. The first direction is connected with actions aimed at obtaining the sympathy, respect and admiration of his person. It may remain unchanged if it falls 'on kindly soil' at school and at home. In this case, a teenager tries to stand out in school and sports achievements. The second - with actions aimed at getting sympathy and compassion from others. For this purpose different ways can be used - from stories about one's misfortunes to simulative hysteria, fainting, and even illness. And finally, the third one consists in negative attitudes to attract attention to oneself. The following manifestations were observed: bravado, clowning, rudeness, brutality, misconduct and other abnormalities of behavior; here a teenager is in opposition to society. And as noted by the majority of educational psychologists, the most dangerous thing in this direction is demonstrative escape and suicidal behavior.

Very often, educational psychologists speaking of demonstrativeness turn to character accentuation. Character accentuation is the concept introduced by K. Leonhard meaning excessive expressiveness of certain individual traits and their combinations representing extreme variants of standards bordering on psychopathy (Leonhard, 1989).

According to the A. E. Lichko's interpretation of character accentuation concept (Lichko, 2009), it is the excessive growth of certain traits in which there are norms that don't go beyond the standard deviations in psychology and human behavior,

bordering on pathology. Such accentuation, as temporary mental state, are most often observed in adolescence and early adolescence.

This factor is explained as follows: "... under the influence of psychogenic factors, addressed to" the place of least resistance, there may occur temporary adjustment disorders or behavioral problems". When a child grows up, features of his character that are manifested in childhood remain quite intense, lose their acuity, but with age may again emerge clearly (especially if there is a disease).

According to the degree of severity, two types of character accentuations can be distinguished: explicit and hidden. Explicit character accentuation is the extreme version of the norm. The traits of character are adequately expressed throughout one's life. Hidden character accentuation is the common version of the norm. Traits of this type occur mainly in psycho-traumas. They can transform into each other under the influence of various factors, among the important ones are the features of family education, social environment, professional activity and physical health.

These are the following basic types of character accentuation:

- 1) Cycloidal - phase sequence of good and bad moods with different periods;
- 2) Hyperthymic - constantly upbeat mood, increased mental activity with a thirst for action and a tendency to dissipate, not to get the job done;
- 3) Labile - mood swings depending on the situation;
- 4) Asthenic - fatigue, irritability, susceptibility to depression and hypochondria;
- 5) Sensitive - increased susceptibility, anxiety, a heightened sense of inferiority;
- 6) Psychasthenic - high anxiety, suspiciousness, susceptibility to introspection, constant doubtfulness, indecisiveness, susceptibility to obsessions and committing ritual actions;
- 7) schizoid - isolation, emotional coldness, introversion, emotional coldness, which is manifested in the absence of empathy, difficulties in establishing emotional contact, lack of intuition in the process of communication;
- 8) epileptoid - susceptibility to maliciously dreary mood with accumulating aggression manifesting itself in the form of attacks of rage, anger (sometimes with elements of brutality), susceptibility to conflict, rigid thinking, scrupulous pedantry;
- 9) getting stuck (paranoiac) - increased suspicion, morbid sensibility, susceptibility to negative emotions, the desire to dominate, the rejection of the opinions of others, and as a result high susceptibility to conflict;
- 10) demonstrative (hysteroid) - a strong trend towards repression of unpleasant facts and events, mendacity, day-dreaming and affectation used to attract attention and characterized by susceptibility to adventurism, vanity, "escape into illness" with unmet need for recognition;
- 11) dysthymic - prevalence of depressed mood, a susceptibility to depression, focus on the darker side of life;
- 12) unstable - propensity to be easily influenced by others, constant search of new impressions, companies, ability to easily establish relationships that are shallow though;
- 13) conformal - excessive subordination and dependence on the opinions of others, lack of initiative and criticism, a tendency toward conservatism.

In contrast to the "pure" types, there are more commonly observed mixed forms of character accentuation - intermediate types - the result of a simultaneous development of several typical characteristics. Taking into account accentuation of character is necessary for the implementation of individual approach in the upbringing of children and adolescents, vocational guidance, choice of adequate forms of individual and family psychotherapy.

On the basis of the above-mentioned we are able to note that demonstrativeness is not a disadvantage, but a personal characteristic, which, like any other personal characteristics, results in positive or negative manifestations, depending on the circumstances of life. It should be noted that demonstrative behavior is usually

taken into consideration only when it becomes a negative trend, destructive, anti-social or self-destructive (suicidal). In fact, even if the symptoms are purely positive, it is necessary to pay attention to the prevention of such behavior in adolescents, using a variety of forms and methods.

## **METHODS**

The purpose of the research was to study and diagnose the demonstrative manifestations in adolescents, as well as to develop and implement the program aimed at preventing demonstrative behavior in adolescents.

In compliance with the goal, the following methods have been selected:

1) theoretical (analysis of psycho-pedagogical and methodological literature, comparison, generalization)

2) empirical (ascertaining, forming and control experiments).

The results were processed with Student's t-criterion. The following diagnostic tools were applied to diagnose the studied indicators: H. Schmieschek's personality accentuation test (Schmieschek Fragebogen) designed to diagnose the type of personality accentuation; test on demonstrativeness designed to discover demonstrative behavior (Schmieschek, 1970).

The empirical study was conducted on the basis of the Kazan College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It involved 90 first-year students. The study was conducted in three stages: ascertaining, forming and control experiments.

At the ascertaining stage of the experiment the level of demonstrativeness in adolescents was revealed, as well as the prevailing types of character accentuation. On the basis of the results, the program containing a variety of forms and methods of prevention demonstrative manifestations in adolescents was created.

The purpose of forming the experiment was the implementation of the experimental work aimed at preventing demonstrative behavior of teenage boys and girls by means of various forms and methods. In the process of the experimental work the following forms and methods of prevention were used: educational talks, demonstration of films followed by a discussion, trainings, discussions, exercises, games. Also, after analyzing the psychological and pedagogical literature, it was decided that the program of demonstrativeness prevention should include competitions, creative quizzes that will facilitate the integration of the participants in the process of self-discovery and self-improvement.

At the control stage of the experiment, the effectiveness of the forms and methods of demonstrativeness was evaluated, as well as prevention in adolescents. At this stage, the same procedures as at the first stage of the experiment were conducted.

At the beginning of our study, the sample participants were given a test to check the level of their demonstrativeness. The questionnaire consisted of 36 questions. Students were to give "yes" or "no" answers to each question. For each answer coinciding with the key the participant scored one point. The maximum score made up 36 points, but it was divided into four severity ratios: 0-7 points - low level of demonstrativeness. Students with this level has the problem with self-expression, sometimes are too hung up on the negative experiences, aren't emotional and easy-going in communication. 8-16 points - average, normal level of demonstrativeness. Individuals with this level do not tend to displace negative experiences, but do not dwell on them, don't get on easily with other people, although never happened to be in social isolation. 17-29 points - a high level of demonstrativeness. These individuals are naturally artistic personalities and have a penchant for theatrical effects. Negative feelings are easily displaced, facts are ignored, and senses dominate. They get on easily with other people. When communicating, they are too emotional and are very often prone to affectation. 30 - 36 points - very high level of

demonstrativeness. Such people are characterized by artistry, combined with fantasizing, which often lead to severe problems in interpersonal communication. All real hysterias often take place. Such individuals tend to have psychosomatic disorders.

Then, in order to determine the type of character accentuation, Schmieschek's personality accentuation test was used, which is designed to diagnose the type of personality accentuation, is an implementation of typological approach to its study (Schmieschek, 1970). The technique consists of 88 questions that are to be answered "yes" or "no." With this technique, 10 types of personality accentuation are defined (Leonhard, 1989): demonstrative, pedantic, getting stuck, excitable, hyperthymic, dysthymic, anxious and fearful, cyclothymic, affective and exalted and emotive. For data processing mathematical methods of statistics were used: - testing of hypotheses about the reliability of the mean difference by Student's t- test for dependent samples.

## RESULTS

On the first phase of ascertaining stage of the experiment the level of demonstrativeness in adolescents was detected. Results of the method are presented in Table 1.

Most students have a very high level of demonstrativeness, that is, 37%; 30% of sample participants have average level; 26% - high level and 7% have a low level of demonstrativeness. It indicates that this team has a very high level of demonstrativeness. This suggests that students can often cause problems in interpersonal communication, as such persons cannot take indifference to their personality, and sometimes real hysterias take place.

Next, there were identified the most prevalent type of character accentuation. Results of character accentuation types are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1.** The level of demonstrativeness in adolescents at the ascertaining stage

		Number	%
30-36	Very high	10	37%
17-29	High	7	26%
8-16	Average, normal	8	30%
0-7	Low	2	7%

**Table 2.** Character accentuation types

	Number	%
Demonstrative type	22	81%
Getting stuck type	10	40%
Excitable type	12	48%
Hyperthymic type	18	70%
Dysthymic type	8	27%
Anxious and fearful type	7	26%
Cyclothymic type	11	44%
Affective and exalted type	19	74%
Emotive type	17	66%
Pedantic type	10	40%

Analysis of the data indicates that the group is dominated by the demonstrative type - 81%, 74% are taken by affective and exalted type, 70% - hyperthymic type, 66% - emotive type, 48% - excitable type, 44% - cyclothymic, 40% - getting stuck and pedantic types, 27% - dysthymic type, 26% - anxious and fearful type. The prevailing demonstrative type shows boundless egocentrism, an insatiable thirst for attention to one's person, admiration, respect and compassion. Such adolescents consistently strive to achieve all sorts of benefits and privileges at the expense of others (family, classmates, colleagues, etc.). Attempts to implement it are done in two directions: firstly, steps are taken in order to get as much sympathy, respect, admiration, etc.; secondly, unless the first method works, others are stimulated to show compassion and sympathy.

All the results obtained at the ascertaining stage of the experiment were analyzed in accordance with it and the program was developed to prevent demonstrativeness, which was implemented at the forming stage of the experiment.

At the control stage, the same procedures as at the ascertaining stage took place; but with the changed numerical series after the forming stage conducted. The purpose of this stage was to determine whether there would be enough significant changes in the studied index in adolescents, and whether it would be possible to claim that the special effects had a significant impact on the prevention of demonstrativeness in students.

After analyzing the results of the test determining the level of demonstrativeness, significant changes were noticed. In most teenagers there began to prevail the average level of demonstrativeness - 83%; a high level of demonstrativeness fell to 7%; 7% of teens had low levels demonstrativeness, and the number of adolescents having a very high level of demonstrativeness dropped to 3%. This indicates that, in the student team the average level of demonstrativeness prevails. These teens are not likely to displace negative experiences, but do not dwell on them, they communicate quite emotionally, though not over-performing.

Next, the results of Student's t-test were analyzed, where we wanted to test whether there was a significant difference in the means of the studied parameters for ascertaining and control stages of the study. As a result of applying Student's t-test, the following data were obtained: the differences between the means of the demonstrativeness before the experiment and after it are valid as  $t_{exp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{exp} = 6.1$ ) with  $p = 0.01$ .

At the control stage of the experiment on the basis of the method "Types of character accentuation" it was found that in the group there began to dominate the hyperthymic type - 81%. The main feature of this type is permanent stay in good mood, which is occasionally changed by the outbreaks of aggression in response to opposition from surrounding people. High mobility, sociability, talkativeness, expressiveness of gestures, facial expressions, and pantomime, excessive independence, propensity for mischief, lack of sense of distance in relationships with others are inherent in adolescents with hyperthymic type of character. They often spontaneously deviate from the original topic in the conversations. Such individuals make a lot of noise everywhere, enjoy the company of their peers and tend to be bossy. They are almost always in a very good mood, they feel well; have a good appetite, sound sleep and a penchant for gluttony and other joys of life. These are people with high self-esteem, they are funny, frivolous, superficial, yet businesslike, resourceful, and brilliant conversation partners; these people know how to entertain others, they are vigorous, active and like taking initiative. The number of teenagers having emotive and affective type was 74%, 33% - cyclothymic type, 29% - excitable type, 25% - anxious and fearful type, 22% - dysthymic and getting stuck types. It should be noted that there was a decrease in the number of adolescents who have a demonstrative type of accentuation, which made up 18%.

To test the accuracy of differences in the data obtained before and after forming the experiment by this method, the means of the Student's t- criterion were compared. The differences between the mean values of getting stuck type before and after the experiment are valid since:  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = 1.7$ ) with  $p = 0.1$ ; the differences between the mean values of the excitable type before the experiment and after it are valid as  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = 2.3$ ) with  $p = 0.05$ ; the differences between the mean values of hyperthymic type before the experiment and after it have not been found; the differences between the mean values of dysthymic type before the experiment and after it are valid as  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = 1.6$ ) with  $p = 0.1$ ; the differences between the mean values of anxious and fearful type before the experiment and after it have not been discovered.

The differences between the mean values of cyclothymic type are reliable as  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = 1.2$ ) with  $p = 0.1$ ; affective and exalted type before the experiment and after it - the differences have not been found; the differences between the mean values of emotive type before the experiment and after it have not been found; the differences between the mean values of pedantic type before the experiment and after it are valid as  $t_{emp} > t_{cr}$  ( $t_{emp} = 2.5$ ) with  $p = 0.05$ .

## DISCUSSIONS

The most important conditions that contribute to the prevention of demonstrativeness, in terms of educational institutions, are the relationship of various forms and methods of educational and psychological impact. Various activities enable students to acquire knowledge of all sides of demonstrativeness, the ways and means of its control, as well as in creative expression.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, on the basis of the diagnosis results, we observe the dynamics in the periods before and after the experiment. The number of students with a high level of demonstrativeness declined, the low level of demonstrativeness started to dominate. Also, among the types of character accentuation, the hyperthymic type became the predominant one.

In addition to the complex of developed forms and methods, the dynamics of demonstrativeness reduction, in our view, is due to the following factors: the close interaction of teachers and constant maintenance of a high level of student motivation, the use of active learning methods, organization of students' self-study.

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