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PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN'S VANDALISM

The Problem of Upbringing and Interaction in Russian Families[**]

The study is devoted to the problem of primary school children's vandalism, and particularly its connection with child-parent relationships on the example of Russian families. We define the main predictors of a child's vandal activity on the basis of psychological diagnostics of 228 8–9-year-old children and the assessment of the frequency and specifics of their vandal behaviour by their 228 parents. The children are classified into 3 groups by the extent of their propensity for vandalism. The complex analysis identifies personal and emotional factors influencing the frequency of a child's acts of destruction and transformation of other people's items, devaluation of their own and others' things including those explained by the covert desire to acquire new items. The research findings confirm a significant role of the parent-child relationships in the formation of the child's readiness for vandal behaviour. In particular, we prove that limitation of a child's freedom by excessive strictness and hyper protection aggravates children's propensity for vandalism.

Keywords: vandalism, vandal behaviour, attitude to things, child's emotional sphere, child-parent relationships, destructive behaviour at primary school age.

Vandalismus bei Kindern: Das Problem der Erziehung und die Interaktion mit der Familie: Zu den wichtigsten Faktoren, die die Herausbildung und die Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit in der Kindheit bestimmen, gehören gewöhnlich Beziehungen, die sich auf die Vorstellung von der externen Welt und von dem Platz, den das Kind darin einnimmt, auswirken. Das Ziel des Forschungsvorhabens war die Ermittlung der sozialen und psychologischen Determinierung von Vandalismus bei Kindern im Grund- und Hauptschulalter. Die Grundannahme war, dass diese einerseits in der

Interaktion von Kindern in diesem Alter mit der Welt der Dinge infolge des gegenwärtigen Systems der Eltern-Kind-Beziehungen und andererseits in den Besonderheiten der emotionalen Umgebung von Kindern und ihrer Attitüde gegenüber wichtigen Objekten, Aktivitäten, anderen Menschen und sich selbst besteht (wobei diese Attitüde vor der Umsetzung des erzieherischen Potenzials der Familie entsteht).

Die Frage wurde mithilfe der psychologischen Diagnostik von Kindern im Alter von acht bis neun Jahren und ihrer Eltern beantwortet. Im Ergebnis wurden die Kinder im Hinblick auf ihre Neigung zu Manifestationen vandalischer Aktivitäten in drei Gruppen eingeteilt, und es wurden grundlegende Prädiktoren emotionaler und persönlicher Art identifiziert, die die Häufigkeit, mit der die Kinder Gegenstände zerstören, beeinflussen. Während des Forschungsvorhabens wurde bewiesen, dass übermäßige Strenge und übermäßige Beschützung, die die Freiheit der Kinder einschränken, wichtige Faktoren für die Bereitschaft von Kindern zu vandalischem Verhalten sind.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Vandalismus, Manifestationen vandalischen Verhaltens, Attitüde gegenüber der Welt der Dinge, Dingwelt, emotionale Umgebung von Kindern, Eltern-Kind-Beziehung, Grund- und Hauptschulalter

1. Introduction

Among scientists and practitioners there is no prevalent view on the motives underlying the actions causing considerable damage to public or private property. But all agree with one accord that vandalism is a common social phenomenon; there is only a small percentage of vandals who destruct material objects for particular ideological reasons or because of congenital mental disorders. According to the results of the statistical researches, the age of most vandals is between 12–20 years, they generally belong to the group of teenagers and youth (MAWBY 2001; ELLIOTT 1988; LE BLANC & FRESHETTE 1989; VATOVA 2007; VOROBYEVA & KRUZHKOVA 2015b).

However, the child's desire to destroy material objects does not appear immediately, its roots can be found in the earlier stages of ontogenesis. The child's attitude to the material environment reveals itself clearly after the first year of the child's life. Nevertheless, conscious actions in terms of possessions are possible at preschool age only. In this period the child's space expands beyond family borders and they merge into the network of preschool social relations. Volitional activities, inner plans of actions, and behavioural reflection begin to form at the primary school age. The process of the formation of these mental phenomena promotes the child's need to receive social recognition. To achieve that, they have to develop their own system of social relations (FELDSHTEIN 1985). This system gets reflected in their relationships with the objects of the material world. However, in the case of malfunctioning, the children's negative emotions transform into acts of vandalism.

1.1. The problem of the child's relationships with a world of things

A world of things, created and used by humans is a necessary condition of human existence and personal development (MUKHINA 2005). People develop strategies of

interaction with a world of things throughout all their life from the earliest stages of ontogenesis. In psychology "the attitude to the world of things" and "the attitude to the world of people" are investigated as two sides of the existence of a single, indivisible activity process (FELDSHTEIN 1985). Thus, some aspects of the child's relationships with the social environment can be studied through children's vandalism. In childhood, actions of destroying things are not something absolutely reprehensible or immoral, because at this age moral norms and rules of behaviour in society only begin to be assimilated and the foundation of moral conduct is being laid (KRUTETSKY 1972). Children understand their wrongdoing in case of deliberate destruction of public or other private material objects and that it is to be followed by punishment. But the assessment of the destruction done is still stipulated by external factors (possible punishment) rather than internal (such as a sense of responsibility for the damage, moral liability, ethical feelings, or emotional empathy).

There are different reasons of children's vandal behaviour. Firstly, destructive actions towards material objects can be a form of inadequate expression of their relationships with another person. Things signify their masters or owners and a child can demonstrate their attitude to the owner (master) of the things through interaction with them (MUKHINA 2003). This form of expression of different feelings toward another person is used by a child as a more secure form of emotional release (ABITOV 2015). Sometimes, a child seeks to obtain a thing owned by another person with whom the child wants to be identified, but wrong or inaccurate usage of the thing may result in its damage or destruction. Here vandalism appears as an indirect outcome of social relationships or communications with a definite person, which cause flashes of children's emotional reactions mediated through the interaction with a thing of another person.

Secondly, the destructive actions with material objects in public or private property may express a child's inadequate self-affirmation. The feeling of power over the situation, over the material objects help children to raise their own self-esteem, feel important and register their will to transform the space of interactions. At the moment of the vandal act children realise themselves as subjects on the level of understanding and, moreover, feel the need to be realised as active subjects at the level of acting (FELDSHTEIN 1985).

Thirdly, actions that result in the destruction of material objects, which do not belong to a child, may be the result of investigating the material world, the structure of a particular thing or a creative act of its transformation. Disassembling an item into parts means the destruction of an old thing and the creation of a new one (UEMOV 1963). Therefore, a child's creativity may be directed not to co-creation, but to destruction (KYSHTYMOVA 2012) when their moral sphere is still immature.

Fourthly, the destruction of one's own objects may be motivated by a desire for a 'novelty effect', it can be a tactical action to force adults to buy new things for the child. MUKHINA points out, that modern Russia, following the developed countries, turns into a consumerist society and children adopt this tendency very fast. Their 'consumption have grown immensely' and their activeness aimed at the acquisition of new things becomes more aggressive and persistent (2005). Many children feel

strong positive emotions when acquiring new possessions and impatience and pleasure from the thought that there will be soon more (EVERT et al. 2013). The desire for novelty in the material environment can be a great incentive for the destructive behaviour towards their own things or things owned by other family members. There can be situations when a child deliberately breaks somebody else's thing as a trick to obtain it afterwards when its owner does not want it anymore.

In general, all these motivations can be aggravated with a decreased external control of adults. In particular, the study of ERVASTI and colleagues (2012) illustrates this tendency with situations of teachers' absence due to illness and a lack of children's voluntary control and moral responsibility for the material environment (SMITH 2015). Moreover, children view such situations as a good chance to realise their ambitions.

1.2. The role of the parent-child relationship in the development of children's vandal behaviour

The forming of children's culture of interaction with a world of things is the prerogative of the family (PETERSON et al. 2012). In the early periods of childhood, children imitate their parents' models of interactions with the world of things. At the same time, the influence of the family on a child's vandal behaviour is not limited by the simple assimilation of parental behaviour patterns. Family educational influence, the degree of the child's independence and autonomy and the extent of emotional acceptance of children by their family affect the formation of the child's sets of possible and acceptable behaviour in relation to the material and social worlds and the awareness of the consequences and limitations of their own activities. The social space of the family is a very important systemic space of relations, interactions and guideline values for the child's personality (AVDULOVA 2013). In this space children learn both a certain compromise of their own and others' interests and the ways to achieve it.

> Parent-child relationships become a model and a means of self-organised relationships between the forming of a child's personality and the environment. They define the senses in the social space between the poles of activeness – passiveness, openness – closeness, empathy – detachment, axiological approach – normativeness. (AVDULOVA 2013, 4, our trans.)[1]

Negative educational influence and a general disharmonic style of family upbringing can lead to the child's sustained assimilation of deviant forms of behaviour, which can be exhibited explicitly or implicitly in the family as well as in other social relationships.

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[1]   Original text: 'Roditel'sko-detskie otnoshenija stanovjatsja model'ju samoorganizacii otnoshenij rastushhej lichnosti i sredy, otkryvajut smysly social'nogo prostranstva mezhdu poljusami aktivnosti-passivnosti, otkrytosti-zamknutosti, blizosti-otchuzhdennosti, aksiologichnosti i normativnosti'.

A strong correlation was revealed between the child's behavioural problems and the family atmosphere, characterised by hostility, preferred orientation to strict discipline, emotional problems and conflicts (KUZNETSOVA 2013). Furthermore, GAIK and colleagues (2013) found that adolescents, who do not feel parental affection, have a higher level of delinquent behaviour (including vandal activity) than their peers, who experience it. This is particularly important for the period of a child's inclusion in the school social community because in this period the accumulated problems of family interaction, destructive behavioural strategies towards material and social worlds are activated in external forms. If these negative strategies become embedded in the patterns of social behaviour, it will significantly harm material school property and, what is more important, substantially defect the individual system of social relationships and complicate children's further personal growth.

It was proved that the ineffective and inconsistent parenting style of upbringing (LITTLE et al. 2003), a loss of the emotional contact with the child, dismissive attitude, mistrust and excessive control over the child's behaviour and activities, on the one hand, and a lack of interest in the child and parental involvement in the child's life (ссылка) on the other can evoke negative feelings in children and incline them to destructive actions with material objects. But there are no researches investigating interdependence between parent-child relationships and children's vandal behaviour in primary school. Thus, the aim of our research is to find correlations between certain styles of parenting upbringing and children's propensity for vandal behaviour in primary school.

2. Methodology

We base on the assumptions that in primary school a child's interaction with the world of things is substantially stipulated by:
  – the current system of parent-child relationships;
  – specifics of the children's emotional sphere, their attitude to significant objects, activities, other people and themselves, which have already been formed in the family.

The methodological foundation of our research is a theoretical concept of the maturity of the children's emotional sphere, their evaluation of the system of objects and attitudes to themselves as a result of mainly family upbringing and their interaction with parents (ZAKHAROVA 1988; EIDEMILLER 2002; SPIVAKOVSKAYA 2000).

2.1. The research procedure and methods

The research was done in three main steps:

2.1.1. Developing and selecting diagnostic tools

To identify the extent of children's vandal behaviour we used an *expert method*. Parents performed the role of experts estimating the frequency and specifics of children's vandal behaviour. We modified *the questionnaire 'Motives of vandal behaviour'* (VOROBYEVA & KRUZHKOVA 2011) rephrasing the questions in order to consider the specifics of destructive behaviour in primary school and used it to survey parents of primary school children. This survey consisted of 22 items. Respondents (parents of primary school children, participating in the research) gave answers in accordance with a Likert scale (from 1 to 5 points) assessing frequency of children's vandal acts and different motivational aspects in children's vandal behaviour. These estimates were grouped into three complex scales: 'children's propensity for destruction of objects', 'children's preference of other's items' and 'children's desire for novelty'. We calculated indexes for each group (average rate) and also the total index of children's propensity for the destruction of items (intergroup average rate).

  To identify the socio-psychological determinants of vandal behaviour of primary school children we used the following psycho-diagnostic methods and tools, which allow to single out the style of parenting/upbringing and socio-psychological predictors of children's vandal behaviour:

  – *Parental Attitude Questionnaire:* developed by A. YA. VARGA and V. V. STOLIN (1989; KARELIN 2001). This diagnostic tool is presented in a form of 61 statements about parental attitudes to children. Respondents (parents) express their agreement or disagreement with them. The results are described as a scale consisting of five dimensions: rejection, cooperation, symbiosis, control and infantilisation.
  – *The method of 'Houses':* developed by O.A. OREKHOVA (2002) is a projective test for the diagnostics of children's attitude to the objects and activities significant for them and to the social emotions. This test employs the concept of emotions as needs and is based on the author's model of the structure of personal emotions. We tested children's preferences among 10 emotional conditions: happiness, grief, fairness, offence, friendliness, quarrel, kindness, anger, boredom, admiration. We also investigated children's attitude towards social objects: school and museum, and activities which are important for primary school age group: painting, dancing, singing, counting, reading, playing. Also a child could choose one object arbitrarily and draw their attitude to it; children chose their family or pets the most often.
  – *The method of Dembo-Rubinstein:* developed for studying self-assessment (GOLOVEY & RYBALKO 2002). The method supposes a rating (by means of the 9-point scale) of the current and desirable level of such personal qualities as health, intelligence, character, and happiness. An analysis of children's self-assessments of the different personal qualities determines the area of psychologically

comfortable self-confidence and the area of children's stress and problems caused by a substantial difference between the current and a desirable self-esteem.

2.1.2. Collection of empirical data

The sample of primary school children consists of 228 children from Ekaterinburg schools (including 109 boys and 119 girls; 53% of primary school children are second-graders and 47% are third-graders). Only those schoolchildren participated in the survey whose parents also agreed to take part in it. There were 228 parents (189 mothers and 39 fathers). We tested if there is a difference between mothers and fathers in their assessment of the frequency of their children's vandal behaviour manifestation on the basis of *the questionnaire 'Motives of vandal behaviour'* and we did not detect any statistically significant differences in assessments between mothers and fathers (Student's t-test results: $-1.53 < t < 1.11$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, we did not take into consideration parental gender factor and the parental sample was further analysed as homogeneous.

2.2. Statistical analysis

Statistical processing of the data was done with the professional software IBM SPSS Statistics V.19. The choice of statistical methods was defined by the logic of our research.

First, we made a goodness test for the normality of the distribution of the children's propensity for vandalism (on the base of parents' expert estimation of children's vandalism) using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (KS test) and analysis of variation.

At the first step we detected no normality of the distribution of the children's propensity for vandalism. We did a two-step cluster analysis of parents' estimations of children's vandalism to classify the children into three groups according to the extent of their propensity for vandal behaviour.

Hence, at this third step, we did a linear regression analysis in order to determine the role of emotional evaluations in the manifestation of the elements of children's destructive behaviour.

We used a frequency analysis and the Fisher z-transformation to detect the style of parental upbringing in groups of children with different propensity for vandal behaviour.

Finally, we used the Pearson correlation analysis to determine the correlation between the style of parenting upbringing and manifestations of children's vandal behaviour.

3. Results and discussion

Expert (parents') estimates of children's propensity for vandal behaviour showed that primary school children are already quite active in the manifestation of destructive forms of interaction with material objects. Children use strategies of destruction

towards their own toys, items of home interior and other people's things. In addition, children are sufficiently focused on seeking new experiences by the renewal of the material environment and use vandal behaviour to facilitate the replacement of the damaged items.

An analysis of normality of the distribution of the children's propensity for vandalism showed high variability of the total index of children's propensity for vandalism (Average = 11.94, Standard deviation = 2.73) and the absence of its normal distribution (coefficient of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z = 1.49 p = 0.024). On the basis of these results we suppose inhomogeneity (different levels) of propensity for vandalism among the children in the sample.

Thereon, we classified the children into three relatively homogeneous clusters by the extent of propensity for vandalism using the procedure of a two-step cluster analysis (silhouette value > 0.5) *(Table 1)*.

Table 1
Characteristics of clusters

Cluster features in accordance with the level of propensity to vandal act	Evaluation parameters of tendency to vandal act		In total, children
	Mean	*Standard deviation*	
Cluster 1 – high level	16.17	1.32	44
Cluster 2 – medium level	12.33	0.97	112
Cluster 3 – low level	9.05	1.39	72

Children from Cluster 1 have a high level of propensity for vandal behaviour. They systematically use destructive behaviour strategies while interacting with the environment, in particular with material objects. We suppose that a substantial part of the children may have already formed a 'subject-object' interaction strategy, as they performed not random acts of vandalism, but repeated them over and over again. This statement is confirmed by the results of the analysis of vandal behaviour among primary school children: the teachers' expert assessment showed that at least 10% of the pupils demonstrate vandal behaviour systematically (VOROBYEVA et al. 2015). They often break toys and other objects for different reasons: from 'spontaneous splashes of negative emotions' to 'focusing on the destruction or damage in order to achieve some personal goals'. For instance, in a situation of being offended by the classmates' actions, a child can intentionally damage their (i.e. classmates) items – spoil, hide or draw some offensive signs in public places (drawings and inscriptions on the school walls, desks etc.; VOROBYEVA & KRUZHKOVA 2015a).

Children with an average propensity for vandalism show a similar type of behaviour depending on the situation. In compliance with the findings of the teachers' survey, nearly 27% of primary school children made destructive or transforming actions towards the school environment (VOROBYEVA et al. 2015). For this type of

children vandalism is a tactical action aimed at setting up relationships with the external environment. It can be a form of emotional displacement against certain forms of social influence (school discipline, homework etc.). For these children, the damage of things is not the final goal, only a demonstration of their disagreement with the requirements of adults (VOROBYEVA & KRUZHKOVA 2015a).

Children with a low propensity for vandalism are characterised by rare occasional and unintentional destructive actions towards material objects. A child damages objects in public or others' private property mostly because of the lack of accuracy and experience of interacting with the items, so the damage of the items is a result of an accidence. Also, the vandal behaviour of a primary school child can be the result of high emotional tension and guilt (VOROBYEVA & KRUZHKOVA 2015a).

A further study of determination of children's interactions with the material environment was carried out using a regression analysis in groups of children identified earlier (children with high, medium and low propensity for vandalism).

The independent variables were:
– the children's subjective assessments of their attitudes towards social objects and activities important for their age group and also their preferences of certain emotional conditions *(The method of 'Houses')* and
– the children's self-assessments of different personal qualities: health, intelligence, character, happiness *(The method of Dembo-Rubinstein).*

The dependent variables were parental evaluation of the frequency and motives of children's vandal acts: propensity for destruction, desire for getting other's items and desire for novelty. The model in *Table 2* includes only the values having statistical significance.

Table 2
Results of a linear regression analysis of socio-psychological determinants
of vandal behaviour of primary school children

Predictors	Propensity for destruction		Preference for alien things		Desire for novelty	
		R^2 (%)	β	R^2 (%)	β	R^2 (%)
Children with a high propensity for vandalism						
Happiness[a]	0.304[*]	30.4			–0.647[**]	40.8
Boredom[a]	–0.291[*]	30.4				
School[a]	–0.357[*]	30.4				
Playing[a]	–0.424[**]	30.4				
Character[b]			0.528[**]	27.8		
Friendliness[a]					0.571[**]	40.8
Own answer[a]					0.539[**]	40.8

Children with a medium propensity for vandalism

Happiness[a]	−0.180*	12.7			0.267*	7.1
Singing[a]	0.207*	12.7	−0.215*	23.7		
Reading[a]	0.180*	12.7	0.287**	23.7		
Own answer[a]	0.178*	12.7				
Anger[b]			−0.334***	23.7		
Intelligence[b]			−0.354**	15.8		
Character[b]			0.302**	15.8		

Children with a low propensity for vandalism

Happiness[a]	0.259*	23.8				
Reading[a]	−0.314**	23.8				
Own answer[a]	0.310*	23.8				
Grief[a]			−0.341*	29.6		
Fairness[a]			−0.344*	29.6		
Offence[a]			−0.428*	29.6		
Friendliness[a]			−0.429**	29.6		
Kindness[a]			−0.280*	29.6		
Admiration[a]			−0.365*	29.6		
School[a]			0.378*	29.6		
Playing[a]			0.338*	29.6		

Note: a - dependent variable was taken from The method of 'Houses'; b – dependent variable was taken from The method of Dembo-Rubinstein; *: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$; ***: $p < 0.001$; R^2 (coefficient of determination) estimated for the whole model of independent variable by the groups of children with different propensity for vandalism.

We should note that *Table 3* contains only statistically significant socio-psychological predictors of children's vandal behaviour. Hence, children's self-assessment influences (The method of Dembo-Rubinstein) the preference for others' things only in the groups of children with a low or high propensity for vandalism. In this groups preference for others' things (taking other's things and their unauthorised using) is a compensatory-demonstrative strategy of social relationships.

Investigating specifics of child-parent relationships, we revealed its difference among families, having children with low, medium and high propensity for vandal behaviour.
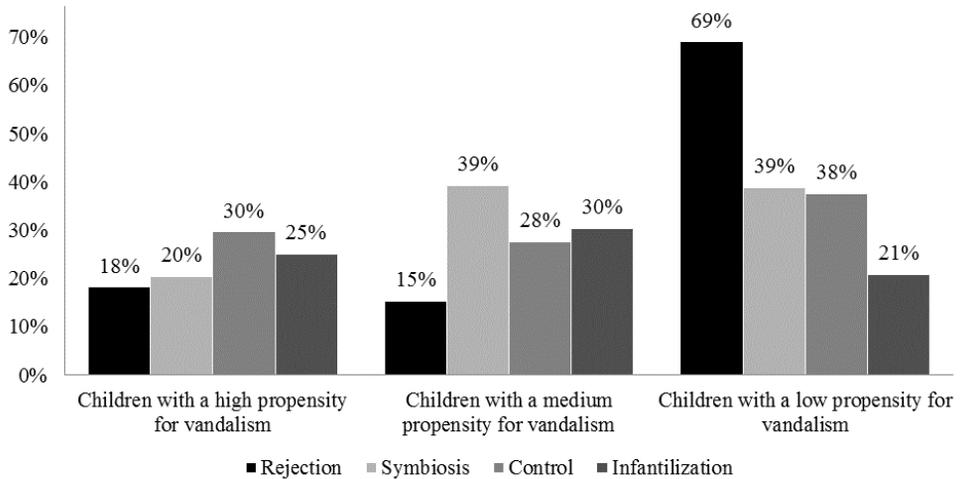
Figure 1
Distribution of children with different propensity for vandalism by different style
of parental upbringing (in percentage)

Note: There is no 'Cooperation' as a style of parental upbringing because of its low representation in the sampling families.

Statistical correlation of children's attitude to material objects and the parent-child relationship was analysed using the Pearson's coefficient (*Table 3*).

Table 3
The results of the correlation analysis of the child's attitude to objects
of the material environment and the parent-child relationship

Indicators and styles of parent-child relationship	Propensity for destruction		Preference for others' things		Desire for novelty	
	Pearson's coefficient, r		Pearson's coefficient, r		Pearson's coefficient, r	
Symbiosis					0.198**	0.003
Infantilisation					0.163*	0.014
Verbalisation			−0.203**	0.008		
Excessive strictness	0.175*	0.024	0.163*	0.036		
Parity relationship			−0.156*	0.043		
Optimal emotional contact with the child			−0.179*	0.021		

*Note: *: $p < 0.05$; **: $p < 0.01$.*

3.1. First cluster: Children with a high propensity for vandalism

The model of personal determination of propensity for vandal behaviour in this cluster of children includes such emotional states as happiness and boredom (with a negative sign), as well as key objects – school (with a negative sign) and play activities (with a negative sign). The children in the first cluster systematically demonstrate vandal behaviour. Its main predictors are positive emotions, interest in some things, a generally negative attitude to school and play as forms of a task-oriented activity. Children destroy or transform material objects because of a lack of preformed prosocial behavioural expressions of emotional attitude to things, both negative and positive, even enthusiastic. Primary school children are often not able to perceive and express negative emotions (anger, fear, terror, etc.), which can lead to a behavioural imitation of adults' behaviour at the moments of expressing their emotions (LEITES 1997; JACOBSON 1998). The object of imitation can be not only a real adult, children are quite sensitive to copying bright behavioural models of movie stars and television heroes.

The desire to get other people's items does not have any statistically significant correlation with children's emotional state and attitude to any activity, but correlates with children's self-esteem and character. High self-esteem, a self-image as a person with a 'perfect' character can be a predictor for propensity to focus on the desire to possess the items that do not belong to these children. We suppose the position when children think about themselves 'I'm good, so they cannot say 'no' to me' allows them to appropriate other people's things without thinking about the violation of social norms. According to BOZHOVICH (2008), such self-attitude may be formed due to positive attitudes towards them from others (parents, peers, teachers) and a lack of reasonable critique of their actions. The common positive attitude of others transfers onto the children's self-attitude, the children's self-assessment of their activities and behaviour, and self-endorsement of any form of their own behaviour (BOZHOVICH 2008).

The desire for novelty, the search for new experiences by means of changing the environment is determined by such personal characteristics as attitude to friendship, school (with a negative sign) and preferred activities. The children from the first cluster tend to choose a strategy of vandal behaviour when they have a steady negative attitude to the school, but at the same time have friends and interesting activities. Most likely, games and hobbies promote the development of such peer relationships that allow unauthorised exchange of items (toys, games, gadgets etc.). As to the observations of IZOTOVA (2015), acts of vandalism can happen as residual effects from earlier preschool age, when new toys and communications with peers used to have a high emotional load and could lead to the child's reduced control over their behaviour. Furthermore, WARREN and colleagues (1996) mentioned in their study a positive role in the externalisation of children's destructive behaviour.

3.2. Children with medium propensity for vandalism

In this group of children the destruction of objects occurs mostly occasionally, not systematically. It is connected with a lack of children's happiness as well as with their involvement in a variety of self-selected activities: mostly games, singing and reading. These results reveal bipolar mechanisms in the initiation of destructive actions. Children are likely to express a very negative emotional state by means of vandal behaviour. It happens mostly during activities which are imposed on a child and which are regularly monitored and controlled by parents. And vice versa, children can destroy things in the process of doing something very exciting. In this case, vandal acts are random and happen due to the child's deep involvement in the game.

Preference for other people's things is initiated by children's emotional states and certain types of activities. One popular example in the primary school is the frequent taking and using of somebody else's personal books. On the one hand, this can be explained by the practice of using common public textbooks and other printed study material in schools. On the other hand, it can be stipulated by the social approving of a child's desire to interact with the book as during reading children have the opportunity to acquire an indirect experience and compensate for the gaps in understanding the social and cultural environment (CHUDINOVA 2007). But children may not always have easy access to the desired books or other information resources. In addition, the focus on others people's things is connected with children's self-assessment. Primary school children often assess their intellectual capacity as low, while their character as high. Probably, acquiring things of others may have a compensatory effect when the qualities of the item are transferred (projected) to the personality of its owner.

Primary school children mostly focus on things that do not belong to them in the situation of experiencing positive emotions. The desire for novelty among children with a medium propensity for vandalism is determined mostly by the children's desire for a feeling of happiness. The possession of new things and toys evolve positive feelings which children seek to reproduce by getting more new items. If parents refuse to buy new things, then vandal acts can be used as a destructive strategy, as an attempt to stimulate adults to buy the desirable object or it can lead to the children's own efforts to acquire the item using socially acceptable methods and by violating social norms.

3.3. Children with a low propensity for vandal acts

Primary school children rarely destruct material objects intentionally. They perform such actions in the state of happiness and absence of any purposeful activity which require concentration of attention and also in various game situations. We should note that games are their favourite pastime activities. These children damage things or do unauthorised changes in the material environment mostly occasionally. Their actions are unconscious, unintentional and situational.

Children from this group do not focus on negative feelings – sorrow, soreness, but they may begin to doubt the friendly attitude of the society toward them. Preference of other people's things can be explained by a group of emotional factors such as a sense of injustice, a lack of admiration, and a negative evaluation of others. These emotions can appear in the school environment and during playing games. Children can make some destructive acts under the influence of strong emotions; and later will regret it and feel remorse.

Nevertheless, even occasional elements of children's vandal behaviour occur because their inaccuracy or emotional expression can lead to interiorising destructive behaviour models. In the case of adults' positive reactions and an absence of expressed censure on the children's vandal behaviour, children can adopt vandal behaviour patterns as a tactical method in the space of social relationships. On balance, benevolent or even neutral parental attitude to rare unintentional cases of deviant (vandal) behaviour leads to repeated and constant behaviour deviations (ZAIDULLINA 2013).

We should mention that attitude to reading can be a very ambivalent predictor of a child's destructive behaviour in groups of children with medium and low propensity for vandalism. Hence, reading for children with a low propensity for vandalism have a positive attitude to reading in general and it can be sublimate activeness which distract them from destructive actions. But when parents compel children to read, it can increase children's destructive behaviour because they feel pressure from the side of the adults or a pressing educational situation.

3.4. The role of the parent-child relationship in the manifestation of children's tendency to vandalism

Groups of children with low, medium and high propensity for vandalism substantially differ in styles of parental upbringing. In families with children characterised by a high propensity for vandal actions, the 'rejection' style of parental upbringing ($\varphi = 1.82$; $p < 0.05$) is applied more often than in families with children making vandal acts rarely and occasionally. Parental rejection of a child, an absence or lack of love and warmth as well as parents' attachment to their children can initiate psychological problems in children (ROHNER 1984) and hamper children's social adaptation (TASOREN 2016). Herewith, if parental rejection and indifference go together with hostility, a child will express patent destructive impulse behaviour and propensity for deviant behaviour in general (NAGLIERI & GOLDSTEIN 2011).

We also revealed that the symbiotic style of parental upbringing is more frequent in families with children having a low propensity for vandalism ($\varphi = 2.13$; $p < 0.05$) than in the families with children having a high propensity for vandalism. In this case parents' interest in the child's life and parental 'soft control' over their child's behaviour and activities do not leave the child a chance of intentional destruction. The general atmosphere of love and care ties children's behaviour with moral responsibilities (KUZMISHINA et al. 2014). Nevertheless, only this style of parental

upbringing (symbiosis) provides social success with primary school children in the school environment and their acceptance by peers (SAMYKINA 2010).

The results of correlation analysis revealed specific statistically significant relationships between specifics and the frequency of a child's vandal behaviour and the styles of parental upbringing in the groups of children with different propensity for vandal behaviour.

3.5. Propensity for destruction

In the group of children with a medium propensity for vandalism destructive actions are evolved mainly because of excessive parental control, high regulation of a child's life, excessive rules and taboos. Feeling pressure from their parents, children cannot consciously release their negative emotions, feelings or negative attitudes to something. Negative emotions have a destructive effect on children who perceive their own negative emotions as a response to the absence of love (JOŚKO-OCHOJSKA et al. 2012). Therefore, a child interprets excessive parental control as the absence of care and love. According to ZAHAROVA (1988), superfluous parental regulations, limitations and prohibition have a negative influence on the development of children's neurosis as it increases their level of excitability and suppression. As a result, an increased parental control leads to the development of children's depressions and asocial behaviour (BARBER et al. 2005). This problem occurs when a child becomes involved in something new without their parents, who could advise them how to act or react. Absence of voluntariness, creativeness and initiative can stipulate a child's destructive actions toward material objects at school and other public places where the child is far from their parents and feels anxiety in the unusual atmosphere of communication and personal responsibility.

3.6. Peference for other people's things

Preference for other people's things among children with a high propensity for vandalism negatively correlates with such style of parental upbringing as 'Cooperation'. An absence of interest in a child's life, or an absence of understanding their needs and interests can be a reason for the parent's refusal to buy things which are significant for the child butthe functional necessity of which is not obvious for the parents. When children experience deprivation because their parents do not realise their need of possessions popular among peers, they they often decide to get the desired items in an anti-social way of unauthorised borrowing. Active child-parent contact and communications, parent's argumentation of their position and attitudes to the things important for a child, explaining the reasons of their refusal to buy the desired things can decrease a child's propensity for getting other people's things. Parents' interactions with a child as with a partner in situations of decision making foster the feeling of responsibility and involvement, create premises for the development of a mature psychological position of children toward their material environment

and other people's items. 'In a partnership, under guidance, with somebody's help a child can always do more and solve more difficult tasks than when he/she is alone' (VYGOTSKII 1934, 218; our trans.)[4]. A cooperative style of parental upbringing stipulates the development of children's social skills and increases their adaptivity to life activities (KALASHIKOVA 2013).

In the group of children with a medium propensity for vandalism preference of other people's things is stimulated by the children's infantilisation on the part of their parents. Parents perceive their children as absolutely helpless, not able to be responsible for their own actions. Children's desire to use other people's possessions is justified by their age, game motivation or stress level. Therefore, parents consolidate the assurance of children by accepting this behaviour in special circumstances and by the absence of an imminent punishment. Children's infantilisation favours the development of egoism and hostility (TARASOVA 2007) and can consolidate destructive behaviour patterns.

3.7. Desire for novelty

We found positive correlation between primary school children's desire for novelty and a symbiotic style of parental upbringing. A child is in the centre of family attention, but he/she does not have enough self-sufficiency and is constantly looked after by adults. Parental indulgence of the child's whims (including those projected by adults to a child), loading him with new, expensive gifts gradually form a neglectful attitude to things (GRANOVSKAYA & NIKOLSKAYA 2010). These children get used to perceiving material objects without realising how much effort was spent for their creation; do not perceive things as objects of human work and it leads to the devaluation of public and other people's possessions, as well as their own, and to the acceptance of their arbitrary destruction.

In the group of children with low propensity for vandalism the desire for novelty statistically correlates with parental rejection, setting distance between parents and children. In this group of children, vandal behaviour is a way of provoking buying new things and also a strategy of getting parental attention and a proof of their love.

4. Conclusion

Vandal attitude to material objects is demonstrated not only by teenagers but also by children of primary school age. Their destructive activity is usually manifested in the form of breaking or destroying other people's things as well as in attempts to transform particular elements of the school environment (by means of drawings or inscriptions). They are mostly focused on the systematic acquisition of new items as it is easy to devalue the existing ones. In this study, we defined a clear differentiation

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[2]   Original text: 'v sotrudnichestve, pod rukovodstvom, s pomoshh'ju rebenok vsegda mozhet sdelat' bol'she i reshit' trudnejshie zadachi, chem samostojatel'no'.

among primary school children by their level of propensity for vandalism; we sorted them into groups with high, medium and low propensity for vandalism. It has been found that these groups may differ not only by their attitude to vandal activity but also by the individual predictors that initiate destructive activity. Children's emotional state, accepted ways of its expression, the attitude to significant objects or certain types of activities, as well as self-assessment play key roles.

It is obvious that different variants of a disharmonic style of family upbringing and deformations of parent-child relationships will form specific motives for vandal behaviour with primary school children. The results of our research correspond to the ideas of T.A. Popova, S. Suleimanova, G.G. Zaidullina, A.Ya. Varga, L.P. Gaik, M.C. Abdullah, and J. Uli about influence of the style of parental upbringing on children's propensity for vandal behaviour and can be summarised in a table form (*Table 4*).

Table 4
Correspondence of the style of family upbringing and the child's attitude to public or private property

Style of family upbringing	Characteristics of the styles of family upbringing	Attitude to public and private property	Possible motives for vandal behaviour
Infantilisation	A parent's behaviour can be characterised by two main consequences for a child: 1) infantilisation and 2) a conviction in their own personal and social incapacity. Parents perceive their children as younger than their real age. Children's interests, hobbies, thoughts and feelings seem to be childish, not serious for their parents. Parents see children as maladapted, unsuccessful and open to bad influences. They do not trust their children and often get disappointed by their children's failures and clumsiness. At the same time parents strictly control their children, trying to protect them from the difficulties of life.	Children have no opportunity to own anything. Everything is under the parents' control and at their disposal but formally a child can be considered as an owner of some things. There is no clear differentiation between 'one's own' and 'someone else's'. Children have no ability to control the environment and organise it.	Vandalism is a convenient form of releasing negative emotions and an opportunity to show disappointment with the relationships with the owners of certain things. Vandalism reveals itself as the basic reaction of a young child. Vandalism is used as a tactic for stimulating parents to buy new things. A child damages things by accident.

Control	Authoritarian parenting. A child's unconditional obedience and discipline is required. Parents are not able to share the child's point of view and impose their will on the child. Children's manifestation of self-will is severely punished. Parents intently control children's social achievements, individual characteristics, habits, thoughts and feelings.	The concept of property and the boundaries between 'one's own' and 'another's' are clear for a child, in spite of the fact, that personal things do not fully belong to children. A child has a number of things that have special meaning for him and hide them from everyone, including parents to get full power over them. A child can acquire things by stealing from others.	Vandalism is a convenient form of releasing negative emotions and an opportunity to show disappointment with the relationships with the owners of certain things. Vandalism is a form of protest against the pressure of the social environment. Vandalism is used as a tactic for stimulating parents to buy new things. A child damages things by accident.
Cooperation	Parents are interested in the life and plans of their children and try to help them in everything. They sympathise with them, rate their intellectual and creative abilities high, and are proud of them. They encourage children's initiatives and independence; try to treat them as peers. Parents trust their children and try to share their point of view in controversial issues.	Adequate understanding of the difference between 'my own' and 'another's' things. Mistakes in differentiation are possible, but the boundaries of permissible child's activities can be clarified rather easily.	Vandalism, as an imitation of others' destructive behaviour patterns, can have negative examples from the extended social environment, not only from parents. Vandalism as a convenient form of releasing negative emotions. A child damages things because of curiosity in the process of research activities. A child damages things by accident.
Rejection	Parents consider children bad, maladapted, and unsuccessful. They think that a child will never seek success because of bad habits and a low level of skills and intelligence. Mostly, parents feel anger, annoyance, irritation and offenciveness towards children. They do not trust children and do not respect them.	A clear differentiation between 'my own' and 'another's' things. The other's property is an object of vengeance for the offences. Anxious attitude towards things of their own.	Vandalism is a convenient form of releasing negative emotions and an opportunity to show disappointment with the relationships with the owners of certain things. Vandalism is a manifestation of the power over others. Vandalism is an imitation of the destructive behaviour patterns of adults, and an identification with the aggressor.

| *Symbiosis* | Parents perceive themselves as one single entity with their child. They strive to satisfy all of their child's needs and protect them from the difficulties and troubles of life. They perceive children as small and helpless, constantly feeling concern for them. Parents feel trouble when a child gets more independent and separates from them. Parents' attitudes do not contribute to children's independence. | The world of things is divided into 'my own' and 'another's' very conditionally. All things are for a joint and equal usage. Children tend to bring this attitude to the world of things in the extended social environment. | Vandalism is a tactic act, stimulating parents to buy new things. Vandalism manifests children's desire to separate from parents. A child damages things by accident. |

Relations with parents have a significant impact on children's choice of behavioural strategies. Excessive strictness of parents and their distancing from the children can lead to distress in relations with material objects and become a basis for forming propensity for vandal behaviour and a realisation of destructive activities. This result can be used by psychologists working with children at their preschool and primary school age to prevent a propensity for vandal behaviour and an interiorising of destructive behaviour patterns at the early stages of children's development.

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