
GENDER IDENTITY OF THE ADOLESCENTS HOSTED IN RESIDENTIAL CARE INSTITUTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN

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Abstract

In studying the gender development process, the perspectives offered by influential theories based upon social learning and social identity stress on the importance of parental models exposure. The paper gives prominence to the way in which gender identity and attitudes are structured in a totally special situation of adolescents abandoned by their parents and placed in residential care institutions. Our investigation is based upon the data obtained for a sample of 177 adolescents, 60 adolescents from residential care units and 117 grown by their own families. The measures used were Personal Attributes Questionnaire for masculinity and femininity, a set of personality characteristics selected from Bem Sex Role Inventory for gender stereotypes content and a version of Ambivalent Sexism Inventory for hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes. The results depict some particular aspects: the boys from residential care units present a lower level of masculinity, and the hostile sexism of girls from residential care units is higher and their image about females is less conforming to social stereotypes content. The results are discussed taking into account the importance of gender beliefs system in interpersonal functioning, especially within the love relations and parental roles.

Keywords: *gender identity, attitudes toward women, adolescence, institutionalization*

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