

# Representation of Psychological Crises of 1, 3 Years in the System of Early Autobiographical Memories

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**Abstract:** The number of early childhood autobiographical memories increases with age. Early childhood autobiographical memories of a negative nature are interrelated with parameters: a decrease in activity, an experience of environmental aggressiveness, threats of rejection, loss of self-confidence, and a depressed state. The age of a big crisis of 3 years is presented in autobiographical memory by events in which the subject appears as active, able to satisfy desires, having the positive emotional richness of memory.

## 1. Introduction

The development of a child is a process of gradual complication of the psyche, passing through the stages of the formation of psychological neoplasms as a result of the accumulation and systematization of experience. A psychological crisis is the result of a delay in adaptation, the inertia of the social system, in a situation where the existing psychological neoplasm does not find a way to realize itself in activity. For our study, periods of small crisis (1 year), large crisis (3 years), the zone of “entry” in the pre-crisis period of 4-5 years are significant.

The essence of the crisis of the first year of life is that the social situation of the child’s merging with an adult disappears, two appear, namely, a child and an adult, but the need for joint activity remains. The child begins to feel more independent [1, 2]. The experience of frustrating situations is easily removed by adult concessions, leading to the fading of affect.

A specific feature of the crisis of three years is the active nature of the child’s behavior. If at an early age the child’s action is woven into a situation of joint activity with an adult through the imitation of his/her activity, then by the age of three, the child opens his/her action as a personal. The experience of the “authorship of action” is when choosing a model of behavior becomes more significant for the child than the expected utility. Any restrictions imposed by adults on active actions lead to the abundance of frustrating situations, the specifics of which are the lack of a system of fading effect after fulfilling the requirements of the child (in contrast to the reaction to the ban under the age of 3 years). Protest reactions form the basis of negativity at this age. In this environment, the child’s immature emotional system is overloaded in the absence of an adequate supportive environment, while the nuclear motivation for the desire for a positive self remains.

## 2. Pilot Research

*The aim* of our research is to identify the features of the representation of the content of crises of 1, 3 years in the system of early autobiographical memoirs (early childhood memories, ECM) of first-year students of the Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy (Altai State University).

*Hypothesis.* There are certain features of the content of crises of 1, 3 years in the structure of autobiographical memory.

*Methods.* The ECM content analysis was used (see figures below). The data were processed in the SPSS 16.0 software. Also, the Mann-Whitney statistics and Wilcoxon statistics were used to determine the significance of differences in average samples, and the one-way analysis of variance was used for unrelated samples.

*The experimental research base.* The article presents an analysis of 77 autobiographical memories. The respondents were the 1st year students of the Faculty of Psychology and Pedagogy. Their age was 17-20 years. Autobiographical memories were obtained in the course of students' practical classes in mastering the technology of content analysis of early childhood memories. The study was conducted anonymously. The resulting narratives were coded by numbers.

*Analysis technique.* The following categories of the ECM analysis were identified [3]:

1. Age of memory;
2. Characters are as follows: mother, father, siblings, cousin siblings, other relatives, people who are not members of the family, "ghosts" characters (not really participating but mentioned; for example, "Mom at work");
3. Number of characters;
4. Type of situation. Inclusion in interpersonal relationships is reduced (I-situation), the respondent interacts with other characters (We-situation);
5. The emotional background is as follows: positive, neutral, negative;
6. The behavior of the subject in relation to the environment (evaluated on a scale of severity of 1-7 points) is as follows: disconnected/communicative; passive/active; aggression/benevolence; dependent – independent;
7. The emotional experience of the environment is as follows: threatening – friendly; rejecting/accepting; lost self-confidence/self-confidence; depressed/joyful; mistreating him/her / treating him/her well;
8. The stages of psychosexual development are as follows: (1) oral: satisfaction of desires/deprivation of what one desires; (2) physical: rebellion, disobedience, harm/cleanliness, obedience, concern for property; (3) phallic: competition with parents/harmony in the family; (4) taking pleasure in power and strength/fear, punishment for pleasure or sexuality; (5) latent.
9. Social maladaptation markers are as follows: a situation of fear or anxiety; open hostility; loneliness, confusion; opposition to authority, violation of the rules; victimization (causing him/her physical or psychological harm by others), ignorance; passive recipient, observer; exceptional praise;
10. Other types of situations: excitement generated by a new situation; getting attention; reciprocity; delivery or transfer of something; misconduct; punishment; death; the birth of a brother or sister; physical injury; fault; other.

### 3. Overview of Research Findings

1. Analysis of the number of memories by age groups shows that the number of memories increases with age, which corresponds to the general psychological patterns of memory development, cognitive development of the formation of self-awareness, overcoming the phenomenon of childhood amnesia [4].

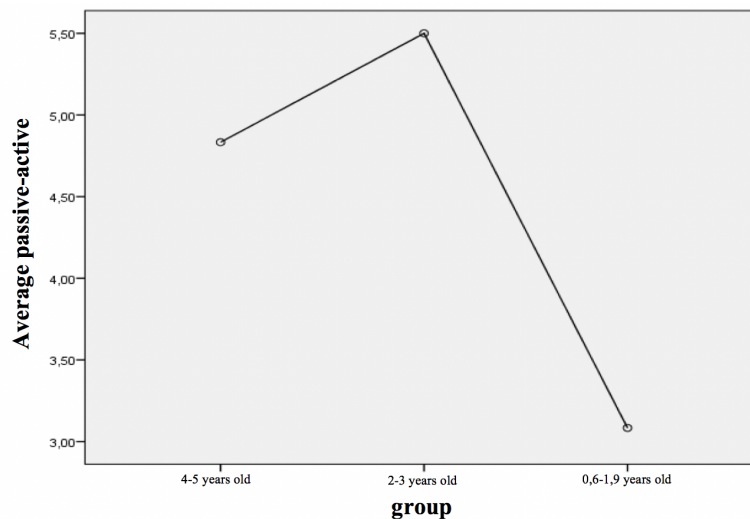
TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE ECM CHARACTERS BY AGE GROUPS

Age	Number of memories	Mother	Father	Siblings	Cousin siblings	Other relatives (grandmother, grandfather, aunt)	Non-family members	Ghosts
6-8 years old	27	10	9	3	0	5	11	9
4-5 years old	24	6	2	4	1	7	6	9
2-3 years old	14	7	3	1	0	5	2	3
0-1.9 years old	12	4	1	1	2	5	4	2
Total	77	27	15	9	3	22	23	23

TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF THE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT BY AGE GROUPS

Age	Threatening/Friendly	Rejecting/Accepting	Lost self-confidence/Self-confidence	Depressed/Joyful	Mistreating/Treatig well
6-8 years old	3,74	4,26	4,15	3,89	5,15
4-5 years old	4,54	4,46	4,04	3,96	4,79
2-3 years old	5,07	4,86	4,57	4,79	5,21
0-1,9 years old	5,08	5,25	4,50	4,17	5,08
Total	4,61	4,71	4,32	4,20	5,06

- It is statistically established that for any period of autobiographical memories, a negative background is interconnected with the following parameters: a decrease in activity, hostility experiences, the aggressiveness of the environment, the threat of rejection, loss of self-confidence, an oppressed state, the experience of being mistreated.
- The age of the great crisis of 3 years is presented in autobiographical memory by events in which the subject appears as active, able to satisfy desires, having a positive emotional richness of memory. An analysis of the "behavior with respect to the environment" parameter using a one-way analysis of variance demonstrates an increase in respondent activity over a period of 2-3 years old (Fig. 1). This corresponds to the period of resolving the age crisis, the psychological content of which is the "want" and "need" clash, which is solved through the emergence of the "can," the emergence of initiative in opposition to guilt [5].

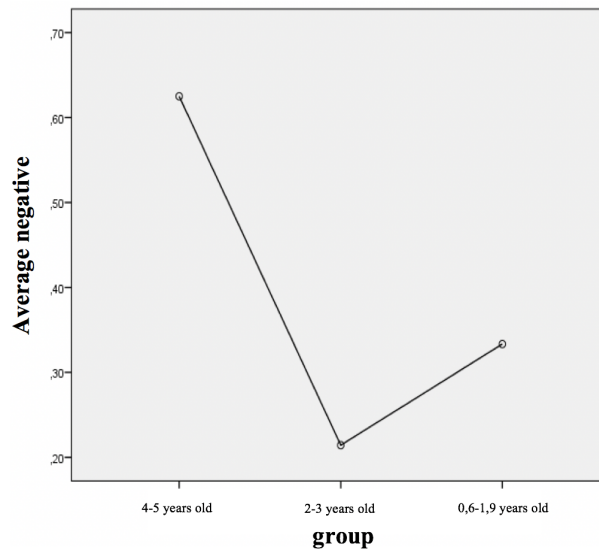


**Fig. 1.** Comparison of average values in age groups by the parameter of passivity/activity. *Note:* An increase in score corresponds to increasing activity.

With successful resolution, the ability to set goals and achieve them is born; there is a finding of oneself. Neoplasms at the end of the crisis are as follows: the subordination of motives and manifestation of the personality characteristics of the child; the formation of internal positions, the birth of "self." A similar analysis of the parameter "emotional background of memory" demonstrates a significant increment of negative emotional background in the memories of 4-5 years of age and the minimum value for the age of 2-3 years old (Fig. 2).

Thus, the sample of respondents demonstrates a favorable course of the crisis of 3 years old. However, neoplasms of the crisis (independent goal-setting, activity) are not supported by the social environment in the future. The period of 4-5 years old is characterized by the predominant level of development of moral consciousness, a focus on approval-disapproval. It is necessary to transform attachment from "dependence" into a feeling of "importance, the value of another person" for the child, but while maintaining his/her own position in social relations, the ability to make decisions regarding his/her property, self-confidence.

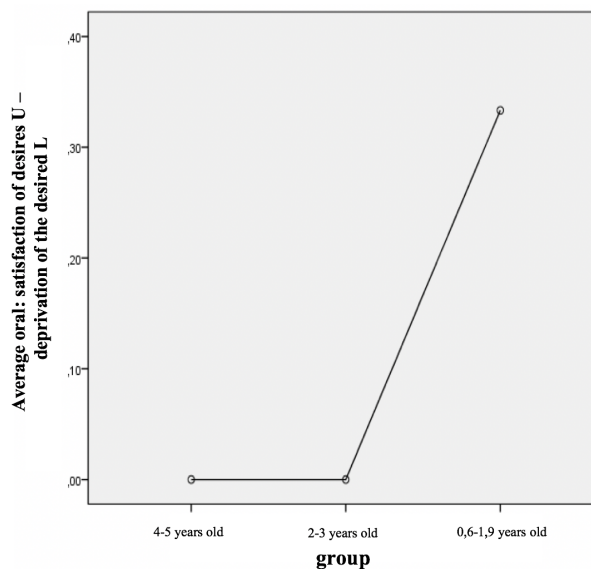
Nevertheless, analysis of averages shows that as age increases, the environment begins to be perceived as less friendly, accepting, lowering self-confidence.



**Fig. 2.** Comparison of average values in age groups by the parameter of the emotional background of the memory.

As we see in Fig. 3, the number of memories associated with the satisfaction of desires increases significantly (minimum values stand for maximum satisfaction) at the age of 2-5 years. This suggests the presence of neoplasms of the personality (psychologically emancipated).

The presence of “deprivation of what one desires” during the course of a small crisis of 1 year old (Fig. 3) in ECM may indicate a tendency to fixate at the oral stage of psychosexual development. Subsequently, in adulthood, fixation at this stage can be expressed in the form of “residual” behavior in a situation of stress. Namely, a person expects from the outside world a “motherly” attitude towards him/herself, always requires approval, he/she is overly dependent and trusting, feels the need support and acceptance, characterized by life passivity [6].



**Fig. 3.** Reliability of differences in the intensity of the presence of satisfaction of desires/deprivation of what one desires topics by age.

#### 4. Discussion

The data obtained allow us to raise questions about the content of the curriculum in the preparation of psychologists at universities, as well as the motives for choosing a profession. The introduction into the curriculum of a system of diverse psychological training for 1 and 2 courses, aimed at restoring the resource capabilities of autobiographical memories, seems reasonable.

#### 5. Conclusion

Directions for further research can be developed in the following areas: increasing the number of respondents in the sample, clarifying statistical, as well as introducing into the research plan a questionnaire aimed at obtaining reliable autobiographical data on the social situation of child development.

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