

Third Annual International Conference «Early Childhood Care and Education»

The Genesis of the Theoretical Foundations of "Psychology of Suggestion" of V. M. Bekhterev

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of an early stage of formation of views of the well - known Russian doctor, the physiologist and the psychologist V. M. Bekhterev on a problem of the forming potential of a phenomenon of Suggestion. On the basis of the analysis of program performance on the First World Congress for Paedology, that was held in Brussels in 1911, from 8 to 12 August, subsequently issued in work "Education and suggestion" (1912), genesis of his views of the questions connected with a children's impressionability and suggestibility is shown. Bases of "Psychology of suggestibility" of V. M. Bekhterev are characterized; influence of foreign science and literature on formation of his views of rather leading methods of education of children in a context of the accounting of a factor of impressionability is shown.

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Russian Psychological Society.

Key words: Bekhterev V. M., childhood, psychology, physiology, children's impressionability, suggestibility, hypnotic suggestion as technology of re-education

1. Introduction

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Multidimensionality of the impact of various factors of contemporary social practice determines the need to re-evaluate many aspects of the epistemological problems of formation of human consideration. The transition to new technological orders qualitatively changed the terms of preparing children for life in a society based on a complex balance of interests. In scientific projections that necessitates recourse to the theoretical understanding of the origins of the problem of human evolution at various stages of his life. There is a need for new approaches to the identification and evaluation of the qualitative uniqueness of the original ideas that have shaped the genesis and evolution of the factors forming impact within the national schools of psychology.

The problem of definition of the influences rendering significant effect on formation of the personality in the childhood always was in the center of attention of the psychologists, teachers, writers and philosophers [1]. At the same time during disciplinary registration of various branches of the social sciences, falling on the end of XIX – beginning of the XX century, these matters were put in the center of scientific interests not only representatives of humanitarian knowledge, but also a wide range of experts of a natural-science profile [2], [3]. Formation of theoretical positions of the Russian pre-revolutionary psychology concerning definition of mechanisms of forming impact on children was characterized by emergence of various scientific conceptualizations. Outstanding Russian scientists stood at the origins. The circle of their scientific interests was very wide. One of them is the well - known doctor, the physiologist, the psychologist and the teacher V. M. Bekhterev.

V. M. Bekhterev was one of the first Russian scientists who has addressed to the analysis of a phenomenon "suggestion" in its medical, psychological and pedagogical contexts. In this regard there is a question of how original his approach to treatment of this phenomenon was, whether he came under influence of foreign and domestic colleagues at a formulation of the idea of the forming potential of this phenomenon.

2. Review of Literature

The issues of studying the scientific heritage of scientists, whose professional interests have covered various fields of science, is theoretically significant. However, the importance of this problem is not in accordance with the degree of its methodological development. Interdisciplinary vector V. M. Bekhterev's heritage has been studied with respect to certain of his projected level of dissertation research.

M.V. Ivannikova [4] investigated the value of ideas of V. M. Bekhterev and his scientific school in relation to their importance to the development of modern methods of treatment for alcoholism. O.A. Kostina [5] stopped on the analysis of mental health problems in V. M. Bekhterev's heritage, having considered these aspects as the core issues in relation to the subject of psychology. Issues of education of "difficult brought up" children in V. M. Bekhterev's heritage in comparison with the positions of psychologists P.P. Blonsky and L.S. Vygotsky were the subject of the PhD thesis of A. Mihashinoy [6]. This approach allowed us to identify qualitative uniqueness V. M. Bekhterev's positions in the context of his Reflexologic concept. Influence of ideas of V. M. Bekhterev on the development of natural science and philosophical thought has been considered in the thesis of M.N. Mamedov [7]. Foreign researchers were interested of the facts of his life [8], [9].

2. Concept and methods of research

The concept of research aimed at clarifying the question of what is the qualitative uniqueness V. M. Bekhterev's position on the problem of suggestion at an early stage of formation of his views on the matter. Hypothesis of this study is the assertion that there is "invisible college" as a non-institutional research team, whose members are developing a common range of problems, but still do not consider themselves bound to each other in any combination. Logic approach to identifying positions of V.M. Bekhterev is to implement the following research steps:

- Clarifying the range of domestic and foreign researchers, to whose work V.M. Bekhterev appeals;
- Identification of representatives of various disciplinary communities, whose views have been studied by V.M. Bekhterev;

- Identification the specific theoretical and empirical reasoning gleaned by V.M. Bekhterev from the works of representatives of "invisible college" to refer to the system of his own claims on the use of suggestion in practice. To identify the above-mentioned methods of quantification, content analysis, interpretation, comparative analysis, thematic classification, generalization are used.

3.1. Source base research

As an empirical source the text of V.M. Bekhterev "Suggestion and education" has been elected. This work is the text of a paper read at the International Congress in Brussels (13 -18 August 1911). As for the status of this Congress interpretations are different: a lifetime edition in 1912 this Congress was called "the first pedagogical Congress" [10], in the Soviet edition due to ideological reasons, it was named "The First Teaching Congress." We analyzed the text of the publication of the Soviet version [11].

Choice is justified by the fact that at this Congress V.M. Bekhterev represented Russian psychological and pedagogical science. His speech was of a programmatic nature. At the same time his statement summarized and concretized with regard to the practical aspects of his own theoretical position on the role of suggestion in public life, which were expressed in the work "Suggestion and its role in public life" in 1908.

3.2. Instruments

Various research tools have been used for resolving specific research problems.

Text of performance is seen as an objective reflection of the intentions of the communicator, who is V.M. Bekhterev. The analyzed work is complex in its structure and composition owing to the novelty of subjects, identifying the proposed by V.M. Bekhterev practical projection. Therefore, we used the method of thematic classification and generalization in order to concretize the views of V.M. Bekhterev on "suggestion". Semantic whole statement is defined as the unit of analysis capturing the essence of his position on the issues raised (regardless of what part of the text it is). The unit of account is a judgment.

In determining the range of scientists, to whose ideas V.M. Bekhterev refers, content- analytic study includes an analysis of the disciplinary unit direction to which scientists belong. The unit of account is the name of the scientist.

In determining the categories of argumentation of analysis is the concept "the argument in order to prove", the unit of account – the ways of justification of an argument.

3.3. Procedure

The first step. The circle of judgments of V.M. Bekhterev regarding the phenomenon of suggestion was originally identified and generalized while research. They are represented by the following thematic blocks: 1. Suggestion is possible because of the natural sensibility of the child 2. Suggestion plays a big role in the mental life of the child and can cause mental illness, 3. In education an example and oral exposure and hypnotic suggestion can be used.

The second step was to identify and clarify the professional focus of the personalities of science and culture, whose names are given in the paper.

The third step was to analyze the value judgments of V.M. Bekhterev in relation to the content of the views of the mentioned personalities.

3.4. Data analysis

For each item of content analysis the results of quantitative measurements tabulated in EXCEL. Based on the data simple histograms that graphically represents the element dimensions were constructed. Histogram-based qualitative analysis of the data was conducted.

4. Results and Discussion

Formation of a new scientific field always goes by so - called "normal phase". It is characterized by fragmented research directions of representatives on close -themed content. Their communication is through formal channels, which in this case is the Congress. In "Suggestion and education", represented to the world scientific community by V.M. Bekhterev, contains references to the contribution of science and art representatives of various typological groups. Frequency of references in the "Education and suggestion" names of foreign and Russian scientists within their belonging to different disciplinary communities is reflected in Fig.1

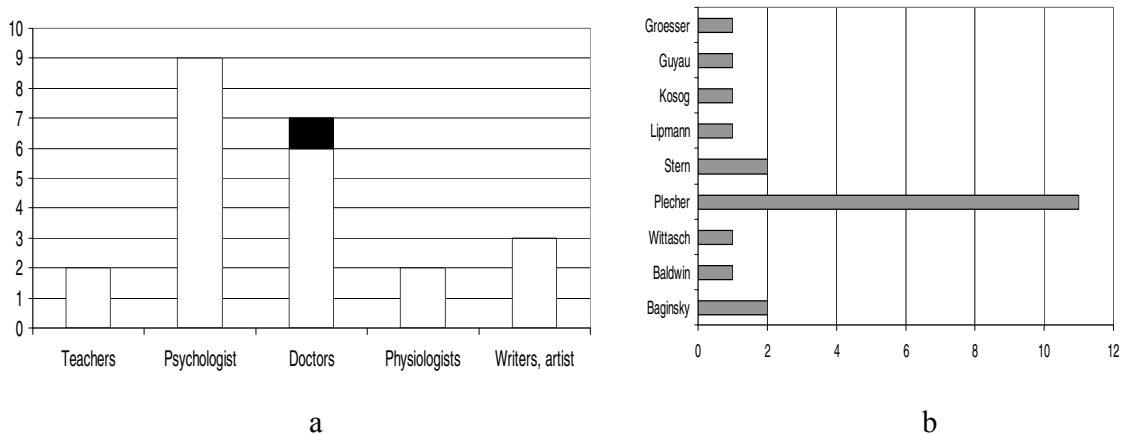


Fig. 1. (a) Range of the distributions of rate of mentions representatives of professional groups: (□) - foreign authors, (■) - the Russian authors. (b) Range of the distributions of names of psychologists (□).

On Fig. 1 it is clearly shown that the bulk of the names, to the works of which V.M. Bekhterev refers constitute psychologists and physicians. As part of the report on the International Congress of surprising a modest representation of references to the names of teachers, the number equal to the number of physiologists. It should be noted that their names are followed in the order listed; their views are not being disclosed. The number of names and cultural figures mentioned outnumber names of mentioned teachers. This group includes writers Main Rid and Jules Verne, and the well known outside the Russian writer and artist John Ruskin. Out of the number of local physicians V.M. Bekhterev refers only to himself.

An appeal to the writings of psychologists in general does not go beyond the normal distribution, except for special attention to the works of H. Plecher [12], whose work is used in the empirical argument of the importance of Suggestion.

V.M. Bekhterev’s ideas concerning formative potential of suggestion, as noted above, with certain reservations can be represented by three judgments. The first of position (a) contains a statement that the suggestion is possible because of the natural sensibility of the child; (b) suggestion can lead to mental illness, and (c) has the effect of suggestion as if it is applied in a state of clear consciousness, and under hypnotic influence.

In the work data judgments with varying degrees of severity are presented. On Fig. 2a the total number of appeals to the content identified above statements is reflected on Fig. 2b - the number of names from different typological groups mentioned in the context of the disclosure of this problem.

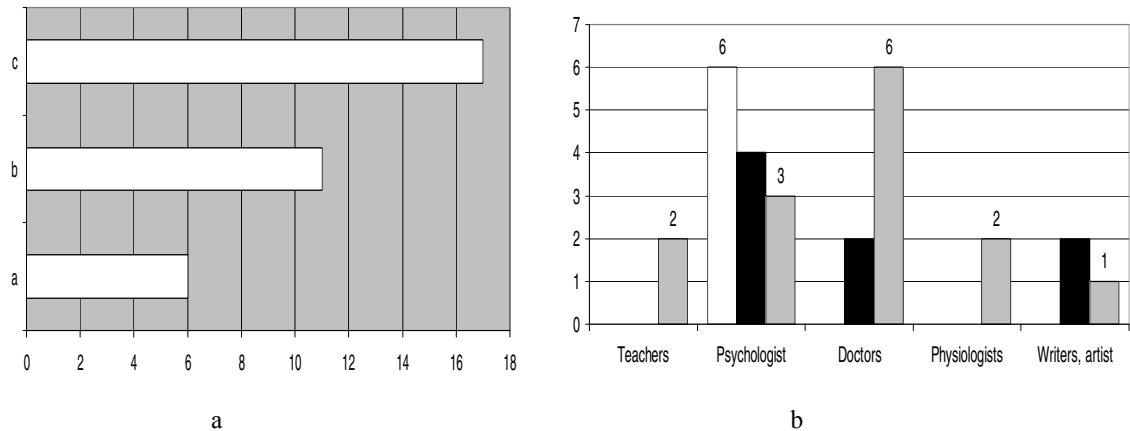


Fig. 2. (a). Range of the distribution of number of appeals on basic theses of "Psychology of suggestion". (b) – Range the of distribution by quantity of mentions of provisions of the theory of "Psychology of suggestion" by criterion "professional group". (■) – position a, (■) – position b, (□) – position c.

As the histogram shows cluster (a), reflecting the position of the natural sensibility of the child, is represented exclusively by appeals to the writings of psychologists. Reproduced and analyzed by V.M. Bekhterev information about mental epidemics (Children's Crusade in 1212, school mental contagion and convulsive epidemic accompanied by hysteria and hysterical chorea, etc.) is of considerable interest

Cluster (b) is characterized mainly to practice of psychologists, fixing the beginning of mental illness due to improper training. In this medical component, contrary to expectations, does not dominate. Names of writers have a negative connotation, because, according to V.M. Bekhterev, romance of their works adversely affects the imagination of children and encourages them to escape from the house.

Based on the histogram, pedagogical projection (c) is accompanied by a number of appeals to educational authorities, but without specifying their positions. The names of two teachers are exclusively in the order listed, while information from the works of H. Plecher, completing an enumeration of three names, is considered in details (Fig 3b).

When considering educational problems medical discourse dominates over all others. An appeal to the authorities in the field of physiology is observed only in this section show.

The clarification of the question of what type of argumentation used by V.M. Bekhterev to confirm or disprove the whole theory postulates is of certain interest. On Fig. 3 the distribution of theoretical and empirical arguments used by V.M. Bekhterev based treatment to the views of members of his "invisible college" is shown.

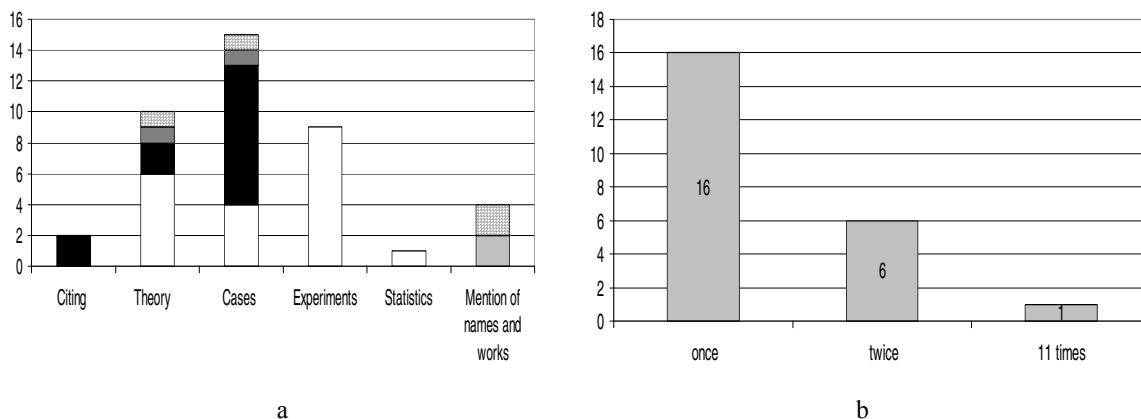


Fig. 3. (a) Range of the distributions of tools of the theoretical and empirical argumentation: (▨) - writers, artist, (▤) - teachers, (▥) - physiologists, (■) - doctors, (□) - physiologists. (b) - Quantity of the mentions of surnames.

As follows from the data presented in Fig 3. V.M. Bekhterev uses the tools of both theoretical and empirical reasoning. Theoretical arguments are used by him in justifying his own valuation assertions. For this purpose an appeal to the opinion of the authority - Dr. Forel, expressed in quotational form is used. Noteworthy is the fact that the quote for the influence of suggestion on education: «A good part of pedagogy rests on correctly understood and executed by suggestion." Also detailed quote of doctor Trömner about underestimation by educators of teaching about suggestion is provided.

V.M. Bekhterev also appeals to the theoretical positions expressed by doctors, psychologists and physiologists. Most extensively and with a focus on the education of children of preschool age with a deep sympathy for the views presented by artist John Ruskin. Following John Ruskin V.M. Bekhterev develops his ideas about the need to aesthetic design of children's rooms and creation a sound atmosphere for the development of hearing child. By the methods of empirical arguments the analysis of cases drawn from publications physicians and psychologists, and descriptions of experiments conducted by psychologists are applied. In presenting this material contribution H. Plecher (6 cases) and clinical expertise of the VM Spondylitis (5 cases) played a leading role. Cases, selected by V.M. Bekhterev have a pronounced bias Medical - a description of suicide in adolescence, the murders committed by children during role-playing games, children's imitative crimes with lethal, exam stress, sexual perversion children, mania (kleptomania).

Conclusion

Thus, referring to the phenomenon of suggestion in its psychological and pedagogical projection V.M. Bekhterev sees it as a natural and social framework that allows to form the spiritual world of the child. Issues of education and child study are presented as a holistic problem- themed complex. It includes such areas of education, as a moral, intellectual, physical, musical, and sexual. Mechanisms of suggestion are outlined that should be used in the education of young children: imitation, adoption, repetition, demonstration example, habituation, conviction. An approach to the use of suggestion, not only in the waking state, but also hypnotic suggestion, which was called "re-education method of treatment», was developed by V.M. Bekhterev. More exactly it is considered as an effective way of overcoming and prevention "unmoral inclinations." He confidently asserts that "one simple

education is almost always powerless and only therapy proves to be the method which corrects sometimes very heavy and running education cases" [11].

Laying the foundations of "psychology of suggestion" of V.M. Bekhterev preceded his knowledge of the scientists and artists who made up his "invisible college". V.M. Bekhterev ignores all domestic educational, psychological and medical ideas in the field of impact on child development. However, Russian psychology already had a similar experimental research issues, including the works of N. Nechayev. Despite an appeal to many authorities, V.M. Bekhterev focuses primarily on works of H. Plecher, which were closed and apparently available to him.

Analysis shows that the formation of the theoretical foundations of psychology of suggestion of V.M. Bekhterev the German school of psychology, physiology and medical achievements greatly influenced, while the ideas of foreign and native teachers did not become a reference point for his scientific research.

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