

Thesis

1. There is a need for new kind of furniture because of the changing attitude to children

My aim is to design sitting furniture which reflects the advanced thinking of the attitude to the training of children, which helps to integrate further the lifestyle of the parents and the children. It gives an alternative to the separated adult-child furniture concept. For a healthy, original and competent new generation we need to propose new concepts with attention to the growing child's ergonomic needs. The free, independent, safe usage is must be insured too.

Beyond children's claims, the reduction of the parents' workload following from child care is also an important aim.

2. The family is the primary ground of the individual's socialization

According to Giddens (1992), in the modern society the instrumental contacts took possession, the people need more intimacy, which they may find in the partnerships and the family only.

The importance of the family members' emotions between each other is strengthened and the family's production and consumer function decreased. The most important family functions are the children's socialization and the family members' psychic protection.

The family environment affects mostly to the children's development. The parents can influence their children's development in two ways. Partly with the tasks provided to them and with their reaction, partly with their personality and behavior models.

3. Cultural effect to the training of children and to design

To examine how design activity embedded into the culture, the views of the cultural-approaching psychologists provide the best basis. Psychologists with cultural approach say that the biological and experimental factors influence each other, and that the children construct their development themselves by their active participation in the world. They say that a third factor - the culture - is also very important. According to them, the inheritance and the environment are not in a direct connection, but come across through culture. The culture is the collective of lifestyles being found in the knowledge of nation. It is incarnated in habits, activities, beliefs, values and in physical objects which are handed down to the next generation.

4. The family life is getting more democratic

From the beginning of the 20th century, with the progress of the industrialization and the urbanization, the spreading of the modern thinking and the information society, the attitude to children became increasingly democratic. The family's functions are changing continuously and the children's role is changing too. The parents' and their children are

living together in a more interactive way. The spending of the free time and the daily routine tasks are much more interactive. Domestic division of labor turned more flexible and defined less by the traditions. According to international tendencies, the differences between women and men's lifestyle are vanishing.

The number of the one-child nuclear family is increasing. We may interpret the one-child family as a kind of democratic-family where the child takes part in everyday life as an equal family member.

The democratization, of course, not only in the one-child families can be observed, but appears here mostly. As a result of divorces and remarriages the so-called "reunited" families become more and more common, where parents bring child from their old marriage. In the reunited family the members are not necessarily in affinity, there may be big difference in age between the children growing up with each other. A family environment like this requests the democratized lifestyle in itself. Of course, the democratization progression could be possible in families with another construction. The process is generally observable, but the family construction discussed above laid the foundations of the change.

5. The today's solutions are not suitable for the sitting child's ergonomic problems

Several research studies have investigated the design requirements for children's seating. Some studies have shown that standards set by the International Standardization for school furniture (ISO, 1979) appear to focus on the wrong dimensions of the child's body when determining the appropriate chair size. Another study done by Hibar and Watanbe (1994) showed that the Japanese standards for determining chair height for children, based on a calculation between child stature and upper leg (hip to knee) length, resulted in poor posture and increased complaints of lower back pain. They are indicating that lower leg length is important in determining appropriate chair height for good posture.

Research conducted on children's posture in ergonomically designed chairs shows only minor improvement in favor of ergonomic seating as compared to ISO standard chairs (Troussior, 1999). Over the past 150 years there have been two recurrent styles of children's seating: the low chair, which is below the height of an ordinary chair, and the high chair, which raises a child above the seat height of a typical adult (Ollgaard, 2002). These two styles are present in modern children's seating, both in their original form and in new designs. In addition, two other recent designs have been developed to accommodate the seated younger child: the booster seat, and the variable seating furniture. Analyzing this last group of products, I discovered a lot of problems also. The main problem is that the qualitatively and functionally satisfactory solutions are quite expensive, so those can't come into general use.

6. The footrest is essential

Researchers from Cornell University made an extensive study about the chair concept with the footrest. It was proved that the seat with footrest provides basic stability upon which movement is based and is essential in alleviating strain and reducing fidgeting. In conclusion, the study shows that the seating with footrest does help improve the young children's functioning while seating, and it opens doors for future exploration in these concepts of ergonomic seating for children.

7. Simplicity and creativity belong close together

It is generally believed that children prefer simple things which allow their fantasy plenty of scope. This means things that do not proclaim loudly what they are for, but whose possibilities can be gradually discovered. Design should be aim at simple shapes and structures which help to improve associative ability. Perceiving and "decoding" these forms needs more intellectual performance thus motivates creative thinking.

8. My masterwork has social mission

I always considered important the social usefulness of my work. Examining the table-chair context, it becomes clear that improper seating may cause serious problems for the next generations. Because of increasing school requirements, children spend more time at a desk, and – as a daily need – at computer. Thus, it is exceptionally important to look for efficient solutions for these problems.

My masterwork can be produced at low price compare to other solutions without any drawback to quality or function. If the commercial price remains low too, the product contributes these concepts to become into general use. I think that until children's chairs which can be adapted to the required body size are rare examples, even in the developed part of the world, the most important thing is to find solutions for these problems.

Irodalomjegyzék

¹ Andorka, Rudolf: Bevezetés a szociológiába, Osiris Budapest, 1997, 358.l.

² Michael Cole-Sheila Cole: Fejlődéslélektan, Osiris, Budapest, 2003. 428.l.

³ M.Cole-S.Cole: i.m. 59.l.

⁴ Ergonomic Evaluation of the KinderZeet Child Seat in a Preschool Setting, Cornell University, 2002, 14.l.

⁵ New Furniture 12, szerk:Klaus-Jürgen Sembach, Verlag Arthur Niggli AG, Teufen 1982, 281.l.