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PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OF DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION IN ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the psychological mechanisms involved in the development of self-regulation during adolescence. Emotional control, volitional regulation, self-esteem, learning motivation, social adaptation and stress resistance are considered as interconnected components of personality development. The article substantiates that an adolescent's ability to plan behavior, understand emotional states and maintain goal-oriented activity is an important indicator of psychological maturity. Special attention is paid to the influence of family, educational environment and peer group on the formation of self-regulation.

Keywords: adolescence, self-regulation, emotional control, motivation, social adaptation, stress resistance, self-esteem, psychological mechanism.

Introduction.

Adolescence is one of the most sensitive stages in personality development because the individual moves from external control to internal regulation of behavior. At this age, emotional experiences become more intensive, social relations expand, learning demands increase, and the adolescent begins to evaluate the self through both personal expectations and the reactions of others. Therefore, self-regulation is not only a behavioral skill but also a complex psychological capacity that connects emotion, cognition, motivation and social responsibility.

Self-regulation may be understood as the ability of a person to set goals, control impulses, organize actions, evaluate consequences and correct behavior according to changing conditions. For adolescents, this capacity is especially important because many developmental difficulties - anxiety, unstable self-esteem, impulsive reactions, conflicts with peers, low learning motivation and weak stress resistance - are related to insufficient self-regulatory mechanisms. In this sense, the present article is logically connected with studies of emotional intelligence, self-esteem, anxiety, social adaptation and stress resistance, as all these phenomena depend on the adolescent's ability to manage inner states and external behavior [1].

The relevance of the topic is determined by the fact that modern adolescents live in a rapidly changing social and digital environment. They receive large amounts of information, communicate actively in virtual spaces, compare themselves with peers and experience strong pressure related to academic success and social recognition. Under such conditions, the ability to pause, analyze, choose appropriate behavior and maintain psychological balance becomes a necessary condition for healthy development.

The object of the article is the psychological development of adolescents. The subject is the psychological mechanisms that influence the formation of self-regulation during adolescence. The purpose of the article is to analyze the main psychological mechanisms of self-regulation and to identify practical conditions that support their development in the educational environment. To achieve this purpose, the article examines theoretical approaches to self-regulation, determines its main components, analyzes the role of family and school, and formulates practical recommendations for psychological and pedagogical work.

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Literature Review.

The problem of self-regulation has been widely studied in psychology. A. Bandura considered self-regulation within the framework of social-cognitive theory. According to this approach, a person does not simply react to external stimuli but evaluates goals, observes personal behavior, compares results with internal standards and changes actions accordingly [1]. This idea is especially relevant for adolescence, when the individual begins to form personal criteria of success, moral responsibility and independent decision-making.

B. Zimmerman analyzed self-regulation in the context of learning activity. He emphasized that effective learning depends on goal setting, planning, self-monitoring and reflection [2]. For adolescents, these processes are connected not only with academic achievement but also with the development of autonomy. A pupil who can organize learning activity, evaluate personal mistakes and correct strategies becomes more independent and psychologically stable.

R. Baumeister and K. Vohs interpreted self-regulation as one of the central resources of human behavior. Their works show that regulation includes impulse control, attention management, emotional stability and persistence in difficult situations [3]. From this point of view, weak self-regulation may lead to impulsive decisions, avoidance of difficult tasks, conflicts and reduced motivation.

W. Mischel's studies on delayed gratification demonstrated that the ability to postpone immediate satisfaction for a more significant future result is related to further personal and social success [4]. Although these studies were conducted with children, their conclusions remain important for adolescence. Teenagers often face situations in which short-term emotional impulses conflict with long-term goals. Therefore, the capacity to delay impulsive reactions becomes a key psychological mechanism of self-regulation.

L. S. Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach is also important for understanding the development of self-regulation. According to this approach, higher mental functions are formed first in social interaction and then become internal psychological processes [5]. This means that the adolescent learns self-regulation through dialogue with adults, cooperation with peers, rules of activity, language and reflection. External guidance gradually becomes internal control.

Research on emotion regulation also shows that self-regulation cannot be reduced to willpower alone. It includes the ability to recognize emotions, understand their causes, choose adaptive ways of expression and prevent destructive behavioral reactions [6]. This position connects self-regulation with emotional intelligence and stress resistance. An adolescent who cannot identify anger, fear or shame usually reacts directly through conflict, withdrawal or avoidance. Therefore, emotional awareness is the first step toward conscious self-control.

In Uzbek psychological literature, E. G‘oziyev emphasizes the interrelation between motivation, activity, communication and personality development [7]. This approach allows self-regulation to be studied as a system that develops under the influence of social environment and personal experience. In educational practice, this means that self-regulation is formed not only through individual exercises but also through the organization of communication, assessment, discipline and cooperation.

The reviewed literature shows that self-regulation is a multidimensional psychological phenomenon. It includes cognitive planning, emotional control, motivational stability, volitional effort, social responsibility and reflective evaluation. The specificity of the present article is that these components are analyzed in connection with adolescent self-esteem, anxiety, social adaptation and stress resistance, which creates a continuous thematic line with previous psychological studies.

Methodological Basis.

The article was prepared using theoretical analysis, comparative interpretation, psychological-

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pedagogical generalization and a systematic approach. Theoretical analysis made it possible to identify the core concepts related to self-regulation and to clarify their psychological content. Comparative interpretation was used to compare cognitive, behavioral, motivational and socio-cultural explanations of self-regulation.

Psychological-pedagogical generalization was applied to group the factors that influence the development of self-regulation in adolescence. These factors include emotional awareness, self-esteem, family communication, teacher support, peer relations, learning motivation, stress resistance and reflective skills. The systematic approach allowed these factors to be considered not separately but as parts of one developmental mechanism.

The methodological position of the article is based on the idea that adolescent self-regulation develops gradually. At first, behavior is regulated mainly by external requirements, such as family rules, teacher control and peer expectations. Later, these external norms are transformed into internal standards, personal responsibility and conscious behavioral choices. Therefore, the development of self-regulation requires both individual psychological work and a supportive social environment.

Analysis and Discussion.

The first psychological mechanism of self-regulation is emotional awareness. An adolescent can control behavior only when he or she understands the emotional state that influences this behavior. For example, anger may be hidden behind feelings of injustice, anxiety may appear as avoidance, and low self-esteem may be expressed through aggression or isolation. If the adolescent does not understand these internal causes, behavioral control remains weak. Therefore, psychological education should include exercises aimed at naming emotions, identifying their sources and connecting them with specific actions.

The second mechanism is goal setting. Adolescents often want quick results, but stable development requires the ability to formulate realistic goals. In learning activity, this means understanding what must be done, why it is necessary and how progress can be checked. Goal setting reduces chaotic behavior and gives the adolescent a sense of control over personal activity. When the goal is clear, the adolescent is less dependent on temporary emotions and more capable of maintaining effort [2].

The third mechanism is volitional regulation. It includes persistence, patience, the ability to overcome difficulties and the capacity to continue activity despite temporary failure. Volitional regulation is closely related to stress resistance. If an adolescent perceives every mistake as a sign of personal weakness, he or she may refuse further effort. If the mistake is perceived as a normal part of development, the adolescent can correct actions and continue working. Thus, the teacher's attitude toward mistakes has a direct influence on self-regulation.

The fourth mechanism is self-esteem. Adequate self-esteem helps adolescents evaluate their abilities realistically. Overestimated self-esteem may lead to ignoring rules and rejecting criticism, while underestimated self-esteem may cause fear, passivity and dependence on external approval. Balanced self-esteem allows the adolescent to accept feedback, analyze mistakes and improve behavior without excessive emotional tension. Therefore, the development of self-regulation must be connected with the formation of stable and adequate self-evaluation.

The fifth mechanism is reflection. Reflection is the ability to analyze one's own actions, motives and consequences. In adolescence, reflection becomes more active because the individual begins to ask questions such as: Why did I behave this way? What result did my action produce? What could I change next time? These questions transform external discipline into internal responsibility. In educational practice, reflection can be developed through diaries, short written self-analysis, discussion of behavioral situations and feedback after group work.

The sixth mechanism is social regulation. Adolescents are strongly influenced by peer groups.

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Sometimes group pressure supports positive behavior, but in other cases it may encourage risky decisions, conflict or neglect of learning responsibilities. Therefore, self-regulation includes the ability to preserve personal position in the group, resist destructive influence and choose socially acceptable behavior. This mechanism is directly related to social adaptation and communication culture.

The family environment also plays an essential role. If parents use only strict control, the adolescent may obey externally but fail to develop internal regulation. If parents give complete freedom without boundaries, behavior may become unstable. The most effective style is supportive guidance, in which adults explain rules, discuss consequences, respect the adolescent's opinion and gradually transfer responsibility. Such communication helps the adolescent internalize norms and develop autonomous self-control.

The school environment is another important factor. Self-regulation develops better when the teacher creates clear requirements, fair assessment and psychological safety. If the classroom atmosphere is based on humiliation, fear or constant comparison, the adolescent's internal control is replaced by defensive reactions. In contrast, respectful communication, constructive feedback and cooperative tasks support motivation and responsible behavior. This shows that self-regulation is not only an individual trait but also a result of educational interaction [5].

Digital behavior is a modern field in which adolescent self-regulation is especially visible. Social networks, games and online communication often stimulate impulsive reactions. An adolescent may write offensive comments, spend excessive time online or compare personal life with idealized images of others. Therefore, digital self-regulation should be developed as a part of psychological education. It includes controlling screen time, evaluating online content critically, protecting personal data and managing emotional reactions in virtual communication.

The analysis shows that self-regulation develops through the interaction of internal and external factors. Internal factors include emotional awareness, motivation, willpower, self-esteem and reflection. External factors include family communication, teacher support, peer relations and the digital environment. If these factors are coordinated, adolescents become more capable of controlling emotions, organizing learning activity, solving conflicts peacefully and resisting stress.

Practical work on the development of self-regulation may include several directions. First, adolescents should be taught to recognize emotional states and their behavioral consequences. Second, they need simple planning tools: daily goals, step-by-step tasks and self-monitoring sheets. Third, educational discussions should include real-life situations involving conflict, anxiety, peer pressure and decision-making. Fourth, teachers and parents should provide feedback that evaluates not only the result but also effort, strategy and progress.

It is also important to avoid reducing self-regulation to obedience. A well-regulated adolescent is not simply one who follows instructions silently. True self-regulation means understanding norms, accepting responsibility and making conscious choices. Therefore, psychological-pedagogical work should develop autonomy rather than mechanical discipline. This distinction is essential because adolescence is the period when personal independence becomes a central developmental need.

Conclusion.

The analysis confirms that self-regulation is one of the key psychological mechanisms of adolescent development. It connects emotional intelligence, self-esteem, anxiety control, social adaptation and stress resistance into one functional system. An adolescent who can understand emotions, set goals, control impulses, reflect on actions and resist negative social influence becomes more psychologically stable and socially mature.

The development of self-regulation requires consistent support from family, school and the peer environment. Parents should combine emotional acceptance with clear boundaries. Teachers should

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create a psychologically safe classroom atmosphere, use constructive feedback and involve adolescents in reflective tasks. Psychologists should organize training exercises aimed at emotional awareness, planning, communication and stress management.

As practical recommendations, it is advisable to introduce short self-reflection tasks, emotional diaries, goal-setting exercises, role-playing situations and discussions of digital behavior into educational practice. Such activities help adolescents transfer external rules into internal standards. The main conclusion is that self-regulation is not formed automatically; it develops through systematic psychological-pedagogical guidance, meaningful communication and gradual expansion of personal responsibility.

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