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THE IMPACT OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN THE FAMILY ON THE CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

Tulyaganova Dilnoza Ravshanbekovna
Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Pedagogy,
Tashkent University of Applied Sciences
Institution: Tashkent University of Applied Sciences
Address: Gavhar Street, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
E-mail: tulaganovadilnoza80@gmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0002-6696-5265
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Abstract: The topic of a child's mental health and well-being is closely associated with family relationships and the psychological climate within the family, which may be either favorable or unfavorable. This article examines the impact of the family psychological climate on the mental health of children. It provides a detailed analysis of the characteristic features of favorable and unfavorable psychological climates, as well as the main psychological functions of the family as a factor in the development of children's mental health. In addition, examples of methods for conducting group-based assessments involving parents are presented. The article emphasizes the importance of a supportive family environment in promoting children's psychological well-being and harmonious development.

Keywords: psychological climate, mental health, emotional well-being, personality.

Introduction

From early childhood, the fundamental qualities of personality that contribute to psychological stability, positive moral values, cheerfulness, and perseverance begin to develop. These moral and personal qualities do not emerge spontaneously; rather, they gradually develop within the family through parental love, affection, and emotional support. Unfortunately, not all families provide a favorable psychological environment that supports a child's normal mental health. According to statistical data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, 19.4 million families (13.2%) were identified as socially disadvantaged in 2019. Guardianship authorities identified 43,395 children who were deprived of parental care, as well as children whose parents were imprisoned or had been declared legally incapacitated due to illness [1].

In unfavorable family circumstances, such conditions can negatively affect a child's mental, emotional, and physical health, as well as the child's self-realization and perception of the surrounding world. This highlights the need to identify opportunities for preventing, correcting, and compensating for developmental difficulties experienced by children.

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The aim of this study is to demonstrate the relationship between the psychological climate within the family, its educational potential, and the child's mental health in order to encourage parents to participate actively in the educational process and support the child's comprehensive development.

Personality development takes place through interaction with the environment, which exerts a decisive influence through various social factors. As the closest microsocial environment, the family has a significant impact on a child's psychological development.

To promote the development of a child's healthy psyche, the family performs several important functions:

Protective function: ensuring the child's safety when interacting with the outside world.

Educational function: supporting the child's socialization.

Emotional function: meeting the child's needs for empathy, respect, recognition, and affection.

Spiritual function: facilitating mutual spiritual enrichment among family members.

Demographic function: regulating family members' reproductive behavior and contributing to the biological reproduction of society.

The psychological climate affects both mental and physical health. Every family member contributes to creating the family environment, and its quality—whether favorable or unfavorable—depends on their behavior and interactions.

The following characteristics are typical of a favorable psychological climate:

Emotional satisfaction: establishing relationships based on trust, love, and respect, together with constructive and considerate expectations among family members.

Absence of excessive pressure: avoiding domination by one family member and recognizing the right of family members to participate in making important decisions.

Unity in resolving family problems: creating opportunities for comprehensive development and allowing each family member to express their opinions freely.

Shared family values: ensuring that family members' views, actions, and relationships are consistent with common principles of life and child-rearing, thereby reducing conflicts and disagreements.

Family identity and stability: maintaining shared values, aspirations, concerns, and adaptive strategies while fulfilling family roles. Family stability can be understood as the ability to preserve essential relationships while adapting to change and continuing to develop.

Based on these characteristics, a favorable psychological climate contributes to a child's psychological well-being, promotes healthy self-esteem and developed self-regulation, encourages goal-oriented behavior, and provides emotional comfort both within and outside the family.

Children's mental health requires a balance between positive and negative emotions that supports psychological equilibrium and constructive attitudes toward life.

Some families experience circumstances that make their situation more challenging. These may include single-parent families, large families, low-income families, families raising children with

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disabilities, families in which one or both parents have disabilities, families with underage mothers, and substitute families, including guardianship, adoption, and foster-care arrangements [4].

When child-rearing in such circumstances is accompanied by significant stress, specialists should assess the family's situation, identify dysfunctional factors, determine the extent to which these factors are offset by other positive characteristics, and provide timely assistance when necessary.

During the preschool years, children do not yet fully understand interpersonal communication or the reasons behind conflicts between their parents. They may also lack the means to express their own emotions and experiences adequately. Consequently, arguments between parents are often perceived as distressing events. Children may feel responsible for the conflict or believe that they have somehow caused the family's unhappiness because they cannot understand the actual reasons behind what is happening. They may interpret these events as evidence that they are bad, have failed to meet their parents' expectations, or are unworthy of parental love.

Frequent disagreements and loud arguments between parents can therefore create persistent anxiety, insecurity, and emotional tension in children, potentially undermining their mental health.

Furthermore, children tend to imitate parents whom they regard as influential authority figures. If a toxic or emotionally harmful parent dominates the family, the child may adopt that parent's gestures, behavior, and facial expressions. It is therefore important for parents to serve as positive role models and continually work on their own personal development.

Children also perceive their family as their closest social environment. Their attitudes toward the world and other people depend on family structure, relationships among family members, and whether the family demonstrates a positive or negative attitude toward the surrounding world.

If a child observes negative behavioral patterns, such as rudeness and indifference toward other family members' feelings, the child may come to believe that other people will cause even greater difficulties. This can contribute to distrust, insecurity, dislike, and fear of others. Conversely, love, warmth, tenderness, and attentiveness within the family help children develop a trusting and positive perception of other people.

The psychological climate within the family, relationships among family members, and parents' personal characteristics consistently influence children and the development of their character and perceptions. When the family psychological climate is unfavorable, children may develop similar negative behavioral and emotional patterns.

Unfortunately, many parents overlook the significant role that the family environment plays in shaping children's personalities and supporting their mental health. Creating a favorable psychological climate, maintaining respectful relationships, and providing emotional support are therefore essential conditions for children's healthy psychological development.

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