HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

FACTORS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FORMATION OF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR IN ADOLESCENCE

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doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24507515

Abstract. The article analyzes the psychological and social conditions influencing the formation of destructive behavior during adolescence. It examines the establishment of behavioral norms at the early stages of ontogenesis, the essence of the adolescent crisis, and adolescents' behavioral reactions to the social situation (opposition, imitation, emancipation, grouping, etc.). The criteria for the transition of normative reactions into pathological forms are identified, and the preventive potential of the family, peer group, and educational environment is substantiated.

Keywords: adolescence, destructive behavior, behavioral reactions, adolescent crisis, family upbringing, peer group, prevention.

Introduction

In the context of modern globalization, youth upbringing remains one of the most critical tasks facing the state and society. The Law "On State Youth Policy" [1] and the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan [2] define the upbringing of harmoniously developed, independent-thinking youth loyal to their Motherland as a priority task. At the same time, cases of aggression, harmful habits, delinquency, and susceptibility to various destructive ideas among young people demonstrate that this issue has not lost its relevance.

Destructive behavior refers to a set of maladaptive actions that contradict social norms and cause harm to the individual, others, or society. According to E.Fromm, destructiveness arises when a person's basic needs remain unmet and they are unable to express themselves, leading to an attempt to assert their "Self" through destruction and devastation. Therefore, in studying the roots of destructive behavior, it is necessary to pay special attention to developmental psychology, particularly the adolescent period.

The purpose of the study is to theoretically analyze the psychological conditions of the formation of destructive behavior in adolescence and identify preventive directions. The methodological basis consists of the views of L.S.Vygotsky, L.I.Bozhovich, A.E.Lichko, E.Erikson, A.Bandura, and other scholars on developmental periods and the psychology of deviant behavior, as well as theoretical analysis, comparative-descriptive, and systemic approach methods applied in the research.

Formation of Behavioral Norms in Ontogenesis

The core traits of behavior begin to form in early childhood. In preschool age, moral concepts are reinforced through communication with adults, observation, and imitation—especially through parental praise and criticism. During this period, the child constantly strives for evaluation, particularly praise; personal and task-oriented communication motives emerge, and traits such as willpower, independence, and initiative begin to develop [3, 4].

In primary school age, learning activity becomes leading, and the child begins to evaluate themselves through the assessments of teachers and peers. Because children of this age exhibit high

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levels of trustfulness and obedience, the opportunities for educational influence are broad; however, under improper upbringing conditions, these same traits can reinforce dependency and a tendency to imitate others. It has also been noted that premature and illogical demands for independence can lead to the formation of negative qualities [3]. Thus, the foundation for behavioral problems in later age periods is often laid by upbringing shortcomings at earlier stages.

The Adolescent Crisis and Its Behavioral Manifestations

Adolescence (from 10–11 to 14–15 years old) is referred to as a "transitional," "crisis," or "difficult" period. During this time, the organism grows rapidly and disproportionately, puberty begins, and the endocrine system undergoes restructuring. However, as L.S.Vygotsky emphasized, the specifics of adolescent behavior cannot be explained solely by biological maturation: sexual maturation influences behavior not directly, but through social conditions [4]. Specifically, relationships with peers, interactions with adults, and the adolescent's status in school and family give rise to traits such as stubbornness, negativism, and aggression.

The psychosocial cause of the adolescent crisis lies in the mismatch between the adolescent's sense of feeling "grown-up" and their actual social status (as a school student financially and legally dependent on parents). This contradiction between needs and opportunities often pushes the adolescent to fulfill their aspirations outside of school and family through risky pathways. As a result, they may fall under "street influence," join groups detached from school, and acquire antisocial behavioral skills. On the other hand, if stable personal motives—such as a drive for knowledge and aesthetic, spiritual, and moral self-improvement—are sufficiently developed, the crisis proceeds relatively smoothly. From this perspective, J.Arnett also reconsidered the view of adolescence as a period of "storm and stress," showing that while the likelihood of risky behavior is high, it is not inevitable for all adolescents. Research by L.Steinberg further substantiates that the rapid maturation of the socio-emotional system alongside the slower development of the cognitive control (self-regulation) system increases susceptibility to risk-taking.

The leading activity of adolescence is intimate-personal communication with peers. Adolescents are characterized by group dependency, a sense of "We," and adherence to a code of friendship, while responding with protest to authoritarian adult influence. In families dominated by an authoritarian parenting style, it becomes difficult for adolescents to make independent decisions, increasing the likelihood of resistance and depressive states. Studies by D.Baumrind have also demonstrated that a firm yet supportive (authoritative) parenting style enhances competence and behavioral stability in adolescents.

Behavioral Reactions of Adolescents

In psychology, the following main types of behavioral reactions of adolescents to their social situation are distinguished (Table 1).

Reaction	Essence	Risk Factor
Opposition	Active resistance to excessive demands or neglect from adults	Neglect by parents and educators, overwhelming demands
Imitation	Copying or emulating a specific role model	Behavioral disorders if the object of imitation is antisocial

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Hypercompensation	Striving for superiority in an area where one is weak	Nervous breakdowns in the event of failure
Emancipation	Striving to break free from adult control and guardianship	Running away from home, vagrancy
Grouping	Uniting into peer groups	The group's "autonomous morality" contradicting societal norms

Table 1. Primary behavioral reactions of adolescents (based on the classification of A.E.Lichko and others).

These reactions in themselves do not yet constitute pathology and are observed within the bounds of adolescent norms. The problem arises under conditions where they transition into stable, destructive forms.

Criteria for Transition from Norm to Pathology

According to A.E. Lichko, behavioral reactions may acquire a pathological character in the following cases [6]:

✓ When the reaction extends beyond the specific situation and microgroup in which it originated;

✓ When neurotic disorders become attached to it;

✓ When its manifestation intensifies across various situations or in response to disproportionate stimuli (generalization);

✓ When it takes on the character of a pathological stereotype;

✓ When it exceeds the "ceiling" of deviations tolerated in society;

✓ When it disrupts or complicates social adaptation.

In such cases, delinquent behavior, running away from home, substance abuse tendencies, and other deviations may occur. According to T. Moffitt's taxonomy, a distinction is made between adolescence-limited antisocial behavior and life-course-persistent forms, which underscores the importance of early detection and timely intervention.

Research on child and adolescent neuropsychiatric health (V.V.Kovalev and others) evaluates adolescence as a critical stage of ontogenesis: during this period, the organism's sensitivity to external influences increases, and factors that were previously non-pathogenic may acquire dangerous significance [5]. Therefore, psychohygienic and psychoprophylactic measures must take age-specific characteristics into account.

Social Environment Factors

According to U.Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, a developing personality is formed within the interaction of family, school, peer, and societal systems. The following factors are crucial in preventing destructive behavior:

- the psychological climate in the family, relationships between parents, and the absence of unfavorable conditions such as alcoholism;
- an objective assessment of the adolescent's personality, taking into account their individual-psychological and intellectual capabilities;
- meaningful organization of leisure time;
- according to A. Bandura's social learning theory, the presence of positive role models observed by the adolescent, as behavior is largely acquired through observing and imitating models.

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Discussion

The analysis indicates that destructive behavior is not the result of a single factor, but rather the outcome of the interaction between biological (uneven development of maturation and self-regulation systems), psychological (identity crisis, low or unstable self-esteem, unmet basic needs), and social (family, peers, educational environment, information flow) factors. Failure to positively resolve the identity crisis described by E. Erikson can direct adolescents toward dangerous groups and ideologies in search of themselves. Therefore, prevention should not be limited solely to prohibitive measures, but must aim at developing the individual's value system, sense of responsibility, and self-awareness, as well as enhancing the psychological competence of parents and educators.

Conclusion

Adolescence is a crisis stage combining biological, psychological, and social changes, in which behavioral reactions (opposition, imitation, emancipation, grouping) are normative phenomena, though under unfavorable conditions they can transition into destructive forms.

The criteria for determining the transformation of reactions into pathology include their extension beyond the initial situation, generalization, stabilization, and disruption of social adaptation.

In preventing destructive behavior, cooperation among family, school, and community (mahalla), objective evaluation of the adolescent's personality, an authoritative parenting style, and the creation of positive role models are of paramount importance.

For practicing psychologists, it is necessary to develop and implement diagnostic and correctional programs that take into account the age-related and individual characteristics of adolescents.

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