

SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADDICTIVE SOCIALIZATION

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Abstract

In modern society, the socialisation of adolescents occurs in contexts where various globalisation processes shape individual development. Research in recent decades shows the social multidimensionality of adolescent characteristics, expressed in adolescents' tendencies to disrupt social ties they establish and to transform socially significant values. The socialisation of adolescents takes place in conditions of "decentralisation of values", when the value system formed in society includes age-related value subsystems, which often contradict socially significant value-demand meanings and behavioural models. The age crisis of adolescents is exacerbated in the conditions of the ontological crisis, uncertainty of values, and transformation of modern societies. In this situation, the phenomenon of addictive socialisation arises and is exacerbated. This study focuses on the socio-psychological characteristics of addictive socialisation of adolescence, which were revealed through the method of self-assessment. It has been shown that addictive socialisation develops under the influence of personal and social factors that arise and develop in problematic situations and as a result of distorted perceptions of the consequences of addictive behavioural models, which leads to destructive changes in the socialisation process. Addictive socialisation is characterised by insufficient manifestation of adaptation mechanisms: a distorted perception of reality, increased tension and anxiety, a desire to escape from reality, an emphasis on unmet needs and demonstrative motivation.

Keywords: Addictive socialisation, normative socialisation, perception of reality, behavioural patterns, self-assessment.

ԿԱԽՎԱԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԶԵՎԱՎՈՐՈՂ ՍՈՑԻԱԼԱԿԱՆԱՑՄԱՆ ՍՈՑԻԱԼ-ՀՈԳԵԲԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՌԱՆՁՆԱՀԱՏԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ

ՔՐԻՍՏԻՆԵ ՊԵՏՐՈՍՅԱՆ

ՀՀ Գիտությունների ազգային ակադեմիայի
գիտակրթական միջազգային կենտրոնի
հոգեբանության ամբիոնի հայցորդ

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Համառոտագիր

Ժամանակակից հասարակությունում դեռահասների սոցիալականացումը տեղի է ունենում այնպիսի պայմաններում, երբ համաշխարհայնացման տարաբնույթ գործընթացներն ազդում են անձի զարգացման վրա: Վերջին տասնամյակների հետազոտությունները ցույց են տալիս դեռահասության բնութագրման սոցիալական բազմաչափությունը, որն արտահայտվում է դեռահասների կողմից հաստատված սոցիալական կապերը խաթարելու և հասարակայնորեն նշանակալի արժեքների վերափոխման միտումներով: Դեռահասների սոցիալականացումը տեղի է ունենում «արժեքների ապակենտրոնացման» պայմաններում, երբ հասարակությունում ձևավորված արժեքային համակարգում ներառվում են տարիքային արժեքային ենթահամակարգեր, որոնք հաճախ հակադրվում են հասարակայնորեն նշանակալի արժեք-պահանջունքային իմաստներին և վարքային մոդելներին: Դեռահասների տարիքային ճգնաժամը սրվում է ժամանակակից փոխակերպվող հասարակությունների գոյաբանական ճգնաժամի, արժեքների անորոշության և տրանսֆորմացիայի պայմաններում: Այս իրավիճակում առաջանում և սրվում է կախվածություն ձևավորող սոցիալականացման երևույթը: Այս ուսումնասիրությունը կենտրոնանում է դեռահասության շրջանում կախվածություն ձևավորող սոցիալականացման սոցիալ-հոգեբանական բնութագրումների վրա, որոնք վեր են հանվել ինքնագնահատման մեթոդի միջոցով: Ցույց է տրվել, որ ադոլեսցենտ սոցիալականացումը զարգանում է անձնական և սոցիալական գործոնների ազդեցության ներքո, որոնք առաջանում և զարգանում են խնդրահարույց իրավիճակներում և կախվածություն ձևավորող վարքային մոդելների հետևանքների վերաբերյալ աղավաղված ընկալումների հետևանքով, ինչը հանգեցնում է սոցիալականացման գործընթացի քայքայիչ (դեստրուկտիվ) փոփոխությունների: Կախվածություն ձևավորող սոցիալականացումը բնութագրվում է հարմարվողականության մեխանիզմների անբավարար դրսևորմամբ՝ իրականության աղավաղված ընկալմամբ, լարվածության և տագնապայնության աճով, իրականությունից փախչելու ցանկությամբ, չբավարարված կարիքների և ցուցադրական մոտիվացիայի շեշտադրմամբ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ կախվածություն ձևավորող սոցիալականացում,

նորմատիվ սոցիալականացում, իրականության ընկալում, վարքային մոդելներ, ինքնազնահատական:

Introduction

Addictive socialisation is a phenomenon of personality development that manifests itself in specific socio-psychological conditions. To understand the essence of addictive socialisation, it is necessary to examine the fundamental mechanisms of personality socialisation. Socialisation, as is well known, is the process of assimilating social norms and rules of behaviour accepted in a given society. Socialisation is not only the result of an individual's adaptation to society's socially significant values of society, but also the result of socially induced norms and rules of behaviour that can reflect values recognised throughout society and those formed within specific social strata or subcultures. In the first case, an individual is accustomed to social values through the main institutions of socialisation—the family and the educational system. In the second case, an individual may be socialised in institutions of socialisation that do not reflect general social norms of behaviour. In this case, the result of socialisation is the assimilation of norms and rules accepted in a particular subculture, which do not reflect the values and rules of behaviour recognised by society as a whole. To understand the fundamental mechanisms of addictive socialisation, it is important to clarify:

- which age and social groups are more inclined to adopt behavioural norms accepted in specific subcultures of society;
- what socio-psychological conditions of individual adaptation trigger the need to adopt behavioural norms that are not accepted or condemned in a given society;
- what emotional background triggers the need to adopt socially condemned behavioral norms.

Theoretical-Methodological Bases

As research in the field of personality socialisation shows, the need to adopt addictive behaviour manifests itself primarily in difficult life situations, when a person finds themselves in a problematic, often conflictual, situation. As Starcevic (2016) noted, when faced with a difficult, often insoluble, situation, a person develops a response that is not always adequate or rational. If adolescents find themselves in a difficult, conflictual situation, it is highly likely that they have not yet mastered rational response methods. Therefore, in adolescence, one often encounters examples of responses to problematic or conflictual situations characterised by:

- an inadequate perception of reality,
- a growing sense of tension and anxiety,
- a desire to escape from reality,
- unmet needs,

– demonstrative motivation (Shaffer et al., 2004; Panova & Carbonell, 2018).

It can also be assumed that, depending on personality traits, this tension will be relieved in different ways. Often, during adolescence, due to an inability to think rationally and to see socially beneficial solutions to difficult situations, inappropriate methods of resolving problems or conflicts prevail (Pine, 2004; Lestaluhu & Lukman, 2019; Kon, 1978). Teenagers often resort to various psychoactive substances, which temporarily relieve emotional stress, but gradually, due to addiction, the desired effect fails. In this case, the teenager seeks to add other psychoactive substances or change them in order to achieve the expected pleasure or relieve emotional stress. Maintaining certain emotions, accompanied by escapism, becomes increasingly necessary. This process initially occurs in parallel with primary activities, but then begins to replace them, forcing the teenager into greater and greater involvement in addictive behaviour (Mykola et al., 2019; Rogers, 1994; Sankar & Reddy, 2012).

An analysis of the scientific literature (Sidis, 1899; Tyson & Tyson, 1998; Andreassen, 2015; *Kuss & Griffiths, 2018*) suggests that people with an addiction are individuals with a persistent desire to change their psychophysical state, a reduced tolerance for difficulties, and a tendency to shirk responsibility in decision-making. They also exhibit a loss of a previously significant value system, low frustration tolerance, and social infantilism.

Thus, addictive socialisation is a form of personality socialisation in which the individual accepts and adapts not to socially significant values and rules of behaviour, but to addictive behaviour patterns. In general, it can be concluded that addictive behaviour is a consequence and result of addictive socialisation (Erickson, 1995).

This assertion is important from both a theoretical and practical perspective. Examining addictive behaviour from the perspective of the phenomenon of socialisation allows us to develop a methodological basis for preventing addictive behaviour in adolescence. At this stage, special attention should be paid to psychological consultation with adolescent parents, as the development and progression of addictive behaviour often occurs due to problematic parent-child relationships or a lack of understanding of the nature of addictive behaviour (Elkonin, 1971; Nalchadzhyan, 2001; Rubinstein, 1973).

Based on various socio-psychological studies on addictive behaviour, the following characteristics of the emotional-volitional sphere and cognitive processes of the human psyche can be identified:

- unstable emotional state,
- increased anxiety,
- dependence on the opinions of others,
- impaired self-control,
- difficulty in self-realisation,
- difficulty coping with difficulties,

- destructive transformation of value orientations,
- decreased optimistic, cognitive, work, and altruistic motivation.

It should also be noted that a characteristic feature of addictive socialisation is the persistent nature of the individual's addictive behaviour. This characteristic of addictive socialisation allows us to distinguish temporary maladjustment from the phenomenon under study. This maladjustment can occur at different periods of life and differs from permanent maladjustment in that the individual does not adopt addictive behaviour patterns as a primary model. Temporary maladjustment can last from a few minutes to several weeks or months. It typically occurs in shock, during life-changing situations, or in unexpected, problematic situations. Typically, if an individual possesses a certain internal potential for overcoming life's difficulties, the corresponding psychological resources and defence mechanisms are activated, shaping the individual's behavioural response to the emerging problematic situation. Overcoming temporary maladjustment occurs through previously learned social values and is a consequence of the individual's socialisation (*Kim, 2017*). Permanent maladjustment of personality differs from temporary maladjustment in that addictive behaviour becomes central to the personality's self-structure. The personality utilises the results of addictive socialisation, thereby increasingly strengthening addictive behaviour patterns. In other words, the personality's affiliation with the social environment occurs through familiarisation, assimilation, adaptation, and subsequent persistent application of addictive behaviour patterns.

By people with an addiction, we mean adolescent and young adult individuals who exhibit persistent addictive behaviour, which includes:

- polydrug-seeking behaviour for self-regulation and adaptation in preclinical forms, i.e., individuals who use but are not yet dependent on drugs;
- internet gaming behaviour, which manifests itself in the narrowing of interests and needs to the sphere of internet gaming activity, the intensity, duration, and repetitive nature of internet gaming activity;
- deviant/delinquent behaviour, characterised by a desire to identify with a deviant/delinquent subculture of society.

It is known that a reduced level of socio-psychological adaptation is a risk factor for adolescent addiction. This manifests itself in a spontaneous, undirected, and unstructured nature of adaptation, leading to the destruction of the individual's structural integrity. The crisis of adolescence is always characterised by a loss of security and comfort, a disruption of internal balance, increased anxiety, and heightened existential fears. By overcoming this crisis, adolescents can successfully socialise—that is, develop progressively, assimilating social norms and values, demonstrating adaptability as the ability to overcome frustrations toward a sense of their own significance in society and the assimilation of socially beneficial norms and values (*Abel et al., 2013; Lodi-Smith & DeMarree, 2017*).

However, one often encounters examples of not successful socialisation, but addictive socialisation, which is characterised by lower personal adaptive potential, diminished communication skills, and moral normativity. Manifestations of adaptive activity are associated with any problematic situation, including the experience of conflicts (external or internal), so anyone can experience partial maladjustment. However, this condition is better characterised as situational, which does not alter the degree of socialisation of the individual. Addictive behaviour is determined by the unsuccessful socialisation of the individual (James, 1890; Spurrett, 2016). Research in the field of personal socialisation has shown that people with an addiction are characterised by a state of identity characterised by a weak sense of self, a lack of progressive self-determination and self-realisation, a failure to assimilate socially significant goals, and a distorted perception of these goals. In a problematic situation, a person with addictive behaviour chooses for themselves the values and behaviour patterns defined by the addictive reference group. This status is characterised by an idealised vision of the future, egocentrism, conceit, and a desire for risk. Addictive behaviour develops as a result of a lack of internal resources. In this case, the lack of internal potential must typically be compensated for by socialisation institutions, through which the adolescent chooses socially and personally beneficial ways to resolve a problematic situation. However, with addictive socialisation, the chosen solutions are themselves addictive, as they are learned in an addictive social environment (Splender, 2021; Steven & Bacigalupe, 2001; Sukhov, 2021).

Methods

The addictive socialisation among adolescents was studied with a self-assessment method. This method was used in an empirical study conducted at the Psychological Observatory of the International Scientific-Educational Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. One hundred and eighty adolescents aged 15–17 participated in the study. Respondent selection was based on expert assessments of adolescents with addictive behaviour. As a result, the entire sample (N=180) consisted of adolescents with addictive behaviour. Adolescents were asked to rate the following statements on a 10–point scale, pertaining to the socio-psychological characteristics of addictive socialisation:

1. In a problematic situation, I easily find a solution.
2. In a problematic situation, I am willing to ask my friend/parent/teacher for help.
3. I try to be a leader in conflict situations.
4. My vision of the future is shared only by my peers.
5. In a problematic situation, I often behave like my online game character.
6. I would like my family to be like my online game character's family.

After the adolescents rated all the statements, a comparative analysis of the ratings was conducted. The results of the comparative analysis allowed us to draw conclusions about the socio-psychological characteristics of addictive socialisation

and develop a tool for further monitoring the addictive socialisation of adolescents.

Results and Discussion

To present the results of the study, a nominal scale was first created to represent the selected statements (Table 1).

Table 1.

Nominal scale of the statements

Nominal scale	Statements
1	In a problematic situation, I easily find a solution.
2	In a problematic situation, I am willing to ask my friend for help.
3	In a problematic situation, I am willing to ask my parents for help.
4	In a problematic situation, I am willing to ask my teacher for help.
5	I try to be a leader in conflict situations.
6	My vision of the future is shared only by my peers.
7	In a problematic situation, I often behave like my online game character.
8	I would like my family to be like my online game character’s family.

The respondents’ ratings on the nominal scale were averaged. The results of the assessment are presented in Figure 1.

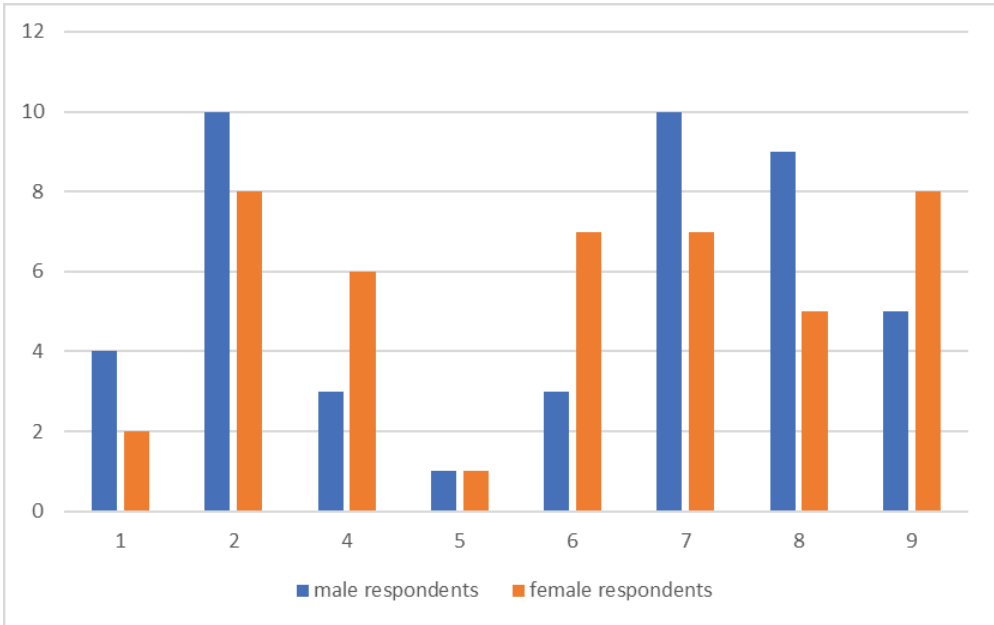


Figure 1. Mean variables of the statements’ assessments among male and female respondents

As the results of the evaluation of statements to identify addictive behaviour showed, the average responses of adolescent boys were more prevalent than the assessments of girls on the 1st, 2nd, 7th and 8th nominal scale. As we see, in conditions of addictive socialisation, leadership is the weakest indicator: adolescents, lacking leadership skills and competencies for rational problem-solving, tend to engage in dependent behaviour. The ability to independently resolve difficult situations is also weak.

Conclusion

Thus, the addictive trajectory of adolescent socialisation is a process of internalisation of deviant addictive patterns based on predisposing personality dispositions and low adaptability, leading to the formation of an addictive identity and worsening maladaptation. Addictive socialisation develops under the influence of personal and social risk factors, misconceptions about the effects of addictive agents, and deviant motives for engaging with them, which inhibit the socialisation process. Individuals with an addictive trajectory of socialisation are focused on the process of activity and the elicitation of positive emotions. This addictive trajectory of socialisation is characterised by the manifestation of maladaptive personality mechanisms: a state of “dynamic discord”, state-focusedness, ego-directed and demonstrative motivation, unconstructive coping mechanisms, and an intrapsychic

tendency to repress and distort reality. Addictive socialization presupposes:

- the formation of an attitude towards regular access to the addictive agent;
- the presence in the immediate social environment of an atmosphere that encourages access to the addictive agent as a way of filling leisure time;
- underdeveloped skills for analyzing and critically evaluating information about the agent's properties;
- the severity of tactical motivation (shortened time perspective);
- traits of an addictive personality;
- the consolidation of mechanisms that provoke access to the addictive agent;
- a deficit of prosocial activity and inclusion in socially useful activities necessary for full development.

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