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# ПСИХОЛОГИЯНЫҢ ӨЗЕКТІ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ

## АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ПСИХОЛОГИИ

### ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF PSYCHOLOGY

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#### **Period of Early Adolescence as a Subject of Psychological Analysis**

This article discusses the specifics of mental development in early adolescence. Chronological limits of this period is marked. The basic methodological approaches to understanding development in early adolescence are represented. The basic problems of development at this age are formulated. Emphasis is placed on the role of the social situation of development and the leading activity to the development of personality. From this perspective, the specifics of social situation of development is described, the problem of the leading activity in early adolescence is posed. The peculiarities of cognitive sphere, personal new formations in early youth are analyzed. Specific types of personal development during early adolescence are given.

*Key words:* early adolescence, the social situation of development, leading activity, cognitive development, personal new formations.

Adolescence has been allocated in a separate age stage relatively recently, in the late XIX century, under the influence of industrialization and urbanization. During this period, the process of maturation continued to lengthen as increased professional, legal, and moral demands that society imposes in its members. At the same time, the society has been able to bear the additional cost of long-term maintenance and training of the younger generation [1].

Today youth is considered to be a separate period of life, which has its own value.

The chronological framework of adolescence is not clearly defined, but most authors adhere to borders from 15–16 to 21–25 years old [2; 419]. According to the point of view of St. Hall adolescence or puberty lasts from 12–13 to 22–25 years old. According to A. Gesell youthful age ranges from 11 to 21 years old. Eduard Spranger believed that adolescence for girls lasts from the age of 13 up to 19, and for the boys from 14 up to 22 [3]. B. Livehood considers youth ages from 16 to 21 years old [4; 478]. According to the periodization by D.B. Elkonin youth is defined as older adolescence. This definition emphasizes historical relationship of the two stages of adolescence as start and finish. The length of this age period by Elkonin is from 14 to 17–18 years old [5; 162]. M.V. Ermolaeva indicates the border from 17–18 to 23 years old [6; 254].

Most often researchers identify early adolescence (15 to 18) and late adolescence (18 to 23) [7; 264].

Understanding of the specificity of mental development in this segment of life contributed by representatives of different psychological approaches. Depending on their fundamental attitudes the focus was on various aspects of development.

Adherents of biogenetic theories (St. Hall, A. Gesell) believed that biological growth processes dictate all aspects of development. In this regard, they considered the youth first as the stage of development of the body when strong growth of various abilities and functions occurs.

Representatives of the psychoanalytic theories (S. Freud, A. Freud) saw in youth a certain stage of psychosexual development. During this period defense mechanisms must compensate the influx of libido energy. Struggle of trends of Id and Ego springs up. As a result of increased anxiety the number of conflict situa-

tions grows. These manifestations are gradually being overcome establishing at least a new harmony between the Ego and the Id.

Within the framework of sociological theories adolescence appears as a socio-psychological phenomenon. Human development is happening in society and a family is its part. A person may belong to religious organizations, schools and different groups that exist in society. He is affected by contact with parents, other adults and peers. Events occurring in the world and the cultural environment have special effect. U. Bronfenbrenner studied the effect of these social factors on human development. As a result he developed ecological model where social factors are presented with several systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. All of them include public institutions, affecting the social development of a man and his behavior.

One of the psychological theories of adolescence is the Spranger's concept of Personal orientation. According to the scientist, it is the period of adolescence when the person grows into the culture, into the objective and normative spirit of his time.

Erikson's psychosocial theory of adolescence insists on that that this is the time for achieving personal identity and for creating harmonious image of self-perception in the multiple-choice conditions (roles of partners, discussion groups, etc.) [8].

In Russian psychology, the youth is traditionally considered in the frame of L.S. Vygotsky's theory of development of higher mental processes, which explains the role of the social situation of development and leading activity in the development of personality. In addition, Russian psychologists follow the position where combination of socio-psychological approach with keeping in mind internal laws of development is significant [6; 257]. The followers of the ideas of L.S. Vygotsky are V.V. Davydov, L.I. Bozovic, A.N. Leontiev, A.V. Petrovsky, D.B. Elkonin and others. They studied the specific social circumstances that characterize adolescence. They singled out, above all, a change of the child's place in the society, a change of his position. A young person is aware of himself as a member of society, interprets his place in human society and his purpose in life at this age. The process of self-determination is going on here. In this context, youth is considered as a psychological age of transition to independence, period of self-determination, acquisition of mental, ideological and civic maturity, formation of ideology, moral consciousness and self-awareness [9; 473, 474].

Youth is a transition from adolescence to independent adulthood. The transition is characterized by a variety of individual options. Because of this, the researchers introduced the concept of «development tasks». For the period of adolescence, R. Havigherst identified the following age-related tasks:

1. Attainment of emotional independence from parents and other adults. For parents it is difficult to realize the child's right to independence. They would like to have as long as possible to maintain the family structure of the mutual dependence of children and parents, with all the desire to educate their children self-reliant.

2. Preparing for a professional career. Education in adolescence is directly (young people at work) or indirectly (in the school, in high school) aimed at the development of the profession.

3. Preparation for marriage and family life. Boys and girls acquire knowledge and social readiness, which are necessary for a successful partnership and family. Today, in connection with the development of society, often extension of study time is going on until the third decade of life. This fact makes search for new solutions to the issues of partnership and family.

4. Formation of socially responsible behavior, preparation for participation in socially useful activities, the assimilation of political and social responsibility of the citizen.

5. Construction of a system of values and ethical consciousness as marks of own behavior. Analysis of the values of an environmental culture should lead young people to form an independent «internalize» framework of values which they will use as a guide in their life [4; 479].

The solution of these tasks does not always end in adolescence and often continues or is revised in later years.

The common and the main result of mental development in youth is achievement of the level of psychosocial maturity that allows to successfully performing all the functions of a full-fledged member of society.

The social situation of development in adolescence is defined as follows: adolescent occupies an intermediate position between the child and adult. The position of the child makes him dependent on adults. Adults continue to define the basic content and direction of his life. Roles that he performs significantly different from the adult roles. The complication of life in adolescence lead to the quantitative expansion of the range of social roles and interests. In addition, social roles and interests are qualitatively changed in this pe-

riod of life. There are more and more adult roles, the level of independence and responsibility increases. From the age 14 up to 18 adolescent receives a passport, the right to vote, the ability to marry, begins to bear responsibility for criminal offenses. At this age, young people are either already beginning to his career, or are thinking about a choice of profession and so forth. Nevertheless, despite elements of the adult status, the young man still keeps lines of dependence, which pull together his situation with position of the child. In economic terms, a secondary school student depends on the parents. At school, on the one hand, they remind him that he is an adult, and on the other hand, demand his obedience. It creates uncertainty of situation and requirements [6; 255]. The peculiarity of a social situation of development is the solution of an important task of professional self-determination which society sets for a young man. In the 9th and 11<sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school student has a choice — to complete or continue their education in one of its forms, or to start to work and so on. Thus, the social situation of development in early adolescence can be described as «threshold» of independent life [7; 255].

According to D.I. Feldstein, in adolescence main activities are labor and learning. They determine the nature of development in this period.

Other psychologists speak of professional self-determination as a dominant activity in early adolescence [7; 267].

D.B. Elkonin in his works says that the leading activity in adolescence is learning professional activity [10].

Learning activity in secondary school gets a new focus and new content, future-oriented. It is expressed in the selective relation to subjects (seniors pay more attention to those disciplines which are connected with the planned professional activity and are necessary for entering a higher education institution), in attending training courses, etc.

Few seniors carry out the learning as the activity directed only to development their knowledge. For the majority of students the main focus of learning activities (what it is directed to) is structuring, systematization of individual experience due to his extension, addition, introduction of new information. Learning activity acts as the ground for development of independence, creative approach to decisions, ability to make decisions, to analyze them [5; 164].

Thus, the process of learning activity demands very high mental activities and independence of seniors.

In these conditions, there is an improvement of the intellectual sphere, first of all improvement of thinking. In early adolescence a high level of generalization and abstraction is developed. It allows seniors to operate with concepts, to use cogitative operations, to argue, to reason, allocate essential features, to make profound conclusions and generalizations, to use rational methods of memorizing and so on. The critical thinking, the ability to connect the learning things into system are developed. In general, indicators of an intellectual maturity of this age are the sufficient formation of theoretical thinking, ability to knowledge and understanding of the general laws of the surrounding world, nature and the society [5; 164].

Along with development of the informative sphere, there is also a development of the personality of seniors.

Interests are transformed, in particular steady interest in this or that field of knowledge, activity is defined.

Such interest promotes formation of a professional orientation of the personality, defines choice of profession. Existence of interests stimulates continuous expansion and increase of knowledge in the chosen sphere [11; 137].

The age feature is the rapid development of special skills, which are often related to the chosen professional field (mathematical, technical, educational, and others.).

Important factor of development of the personality in early adolescence is the aspiration of the senior to make vital plans, to comprehend creation of vital prospect. The vital plan extends to the whole field of personal self-determination (an occupation, lifestyle, level of aspiration, level of the income and so on.).

Most often in early adolescence, vital plans are quite vague. The senior represents himself in various roles, estimates degree of their attractiveness for himself, but does not make a final decision and does not take steps for the achievement conceived.

It is only possible to speak about the created vital plans when they have included the purposes, ways of their achievement, the assessment is given to own subjective and objective resources. L.S. Vygotsky considered vital plans as an indicator of mastering the personality of own inner world. Nevertheless, such preliminary self-determination, the construction of vital plans for the future is the central psychological new formation of early adolescence [7; 273].

In the western psychology, process of self-determination is designated as identity formation process. E. Eriksson considered this process as the central task of adolescence. Identity assumes an awareness of identity of the person to himself, a continuity of the personality in time. To reach new quality of identity, it is necessary to comprehend and unite the properties into the consistent integrity connected with various roles: family, gender, professional. If this crisis of identity is successfully overcome then it will be easier for an individual to cope with similar experiences in the future. This crisis can be also solved in negative option. In this case, there is an identity diffusion (role mixture). It is characterized by the inability of a person for a certain period of time to complete the psychosocial self-determination; sense of time pressure or stretching of time and emptiness, boredom, and worthlessness; malfunction; the negation of all the proposed roles and values [12].

Thus, forming of vital prospect can take place safely, but can proceed also in crisis forms.

In youth, there are plans and desires which realization are delayed in time. Therefore, a number of authors consider that it is not self-determination itself but psychological readiness for self-determination is a new formation of this period [13].

Development of the self-concept in early adolescence is actively investigated. The positive self-concept is manifested in a sense of self-respect, self-worth. It has a positive effect on the formulation of long-term goals (including professional) and promotes their active achievement. The negative self-concept is manifested in low self-estimation and low level of aspirations, weak self-confidence. It leads to social passivity, conformity [7; 275].

The development of self-concept is closely related to the development of self-estimation. It is interesting that self-estimation of pupils of the 10th and 11th grades is very special. Typically, youthful features of self-estimation are inherent for tenth-graders. Their self-estimation is relatively stable, high, relatively conflict-free, and adequate. Tenth-graders are optimistic about themselves and their capabilities. The eleventh form, graduating class situation becomes more intense. It is time for secondary school students to make a vital choice. In this regard the self-estimation changes. Part of seniors is still positive. The self-estimation is average, it combines the desires, aspirations and assessment of their own capabilities. There is a high global self-estimation among the other part of pupils. It extends to all aspects of life. The self-estimation in this group includes desired and what is really achievable.

The third group of secondary school students (mostly girls) are inherent of self-doubt, emotions because there are contradictions between their aspirations and capabilities. Their self-estimation is low, conflicting. Despite of the described features of the self-estimation, in early adolescence the general stabilization of the personality is observed [13].

Development of self-consciousness plays key role in adolescence. During this period, the opening of I, the world of his own thoughts, feelings and experiences take place. The aspiration to know himself as the personality leads to a reflection, to depth introspection. Thinking of his character, about his advantages and disadvantages the young man begins to compare the personality traits and behavior of other people with his own. This knowledge of others and self-knowledge leads to aspiration to self-improvement, to be engaged in self-education and self-development [8].

In youth, there are valuable orientations (scientific, theoretical, philosophical, moral, and esthetic). They manifest the essence of a person. The world outlook is formed as a system of general concepts about the world in total, about surrounding reality and other people and themselves and readiness to be guided by it in the activity. The conscious attitude to life is formed. In this regard in youth favorable conditions for formation of the meaning of life are created. The attitude towards personal meaning of life becomes interested, emotional [7; 277].

To sum up, it is possible to allocate several types of personal development during the early adolescence.

For part of seniors this quite stressful as there is an active search of the meaning of life, the own place in the world. New intellectual and social needs satisfaction of which will become possible only in the future are formed. There can be both internal conflicts and difficulties in the relations with people around. As soon as contradictions stimulate the development of a person the above described searches and doubts will influence the formation of the personality. As a result seniors become more independent, have creative attitude towards business, have more flexible thinking, are able to make decisions in difficult situations.

Part of seniors smoothly and gradually move ahead to a turning point in their lives. They quite easily join in a new system of relations. Quiet, ordered tenor of life, the standard values are close to them. They are guided by assessment of people around, rely on authority, maintain good relations with parents and teachers. However, with such a prosperous flow of early adolescence, there are some shortcomings in personal devel-

opment. Seniors are less independent, more passive, sometimes more superficial in the affections and passions.

Two more options of development are described. In the first case rapid, abrupt change are observed. They are well controlled thanks to the developed self-control and do not cause sharp emotional manifestations. This part of secondary school students defines the vital purposes early and persistently seeks for their achievement. At the same time at high arbitrariness and self-discipline, they have weakly developed reflection and emotional sphere. In the second case particularly difficult search of their own path is observed. Such pupils are distinguished by self-doubt, lack of development of reflection, lack of deep self-knowledge. These features are not compensated by the high arbitrariness. Seniors are impulsive, inconsistent in acts and relations, insufficiently responsible. They often reject the values of parents, but also do not offer anything in exchange. Having entered adulthood, they continue to look tensely for the place in their life, do not make the important decisions connected with self-determination [13].

Many authors describe mental development at early youthful age. However, there are still new questions that arise new aspects in studying of specifics of this age stage appear. All these make early adolescence promising field for perspective psychological researches.

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### Ерте жастық шақ кезеңі психологиялық талдаудың пәні ретінде

Мақалада ерте жастық шақтағы психикалық дамудың ерекшелігі туралы мәселе қарастырылды. Берілген кезеңнің хронологиялық шекаралары белгіленген. Ерте жастық шақта дамуды түсінудегі негізгі әдіснамалық бағыттар көрсетілген. Берілген жастық кезеңде тұратын дамудың негізгі міндеттері қарастырылған. Тұлғаның дамуындағы әлеуметтік даму жағдайы мен жетекші іс-әрекеттің роліне назар аударылды. Осы тұрғыдан әлеуметтік даму жағдайының ерекшелігі сипатталған. Ерте жастық шақтың когнитивті саласының ерекшеліктері, тұлғалық жаңа құрылымдары талданып, тұлғалық дамуға тән типтер көрсетілген.

## Период ранней юности как предмет психологического анализа

В данной статье рассматривается вопрос специфики психического развития в раннем юношеском возрасте. Обозначены хронологические границы данного периода. Представлены основные методологические подходы к пониманию развития в ранней юности. Сформулированы основные задачи развития на данном возрастном этапе. Сделан акцент на роли социальной ситуации развития и ведущей деятельности в развитии личности. С этих позиций описана специфика социальной ситуации развития, поставлена проблема ведущей деятельности в ранней юности. Проанализированы особенности когнитивной сферы, личностные новообразования ранней юности. Приведены характерные типы личностного развития в период ранней юности.

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