

ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOR FORMATION IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the socio-psychological factors influencing the formation of addictive behavior in adolescents. The study examines personal and social factors affecting adolescents' addictive behavior, particularly behaviors related to the internet, gambling, alcohol consumption, eating habits, and dependence in romantic relationships. The article reviews the perspectives of scholars such as V. Mendelevich, M. Drepa, E. I. Belinskaya, A. Abolonin, and Y. Nakhimov, providing a scientific explanation of the mechanisms underlying the development of addictive behavior during adolescence. The study investigates adolescents' propensity for various types of addictive behaviors based on the "Determining Addictive Behavior" methodology developed by V. G. Lozovaya. The influence of family environment, peer pressure, emotional stability, social support, and the level of information technology usage on the formation of addictive behavior is highlighted. In addition, the importance of psychological prevention and corrective approaches in reducing addictive behavior is emphasized.

Keywords: Adolescence, addictive behavior, dependence, socio-psychological factors, internet addiction, gambling, alcohol consumption, emotional state, personality development, mental health, corrective approach, psychoprophylaxis.

Introduction

Nowadays, studying addictive behavior in adolescents, developing effective methods for its prevention, addressing mental health issues, and informing parents, educators, and psychologists with health-related data about long-term negative consequences is crucial. By paying special attention to this problem, conducting scientific research, performing empirical analyses, and developing recommendations and corrective programs, we can reduce the prevalence and impact of addictive behavior among youth. Taking these issues into account, the aim of our study is to identify the socio-psychological factors contributing to the formation of addictive behavior in adolescents.

Based on the aim of our research, the term "factor" refers to various variables or conditions that can either contribute to or hinder the development of addictive behavior. A factor is an individual or social aspect that affects adolescent behavior and can be either positive or negative. Below, we discuss the socio-psychological factors influencing the intensification of addictive behavior.

According to V. Mendelevich, this type of deviant behavior in the form of addictive behavior involves subordinating one's interests to those of another person or group, as well as consistently focusing on certain objects or activities that hold high importance for the

individual. At the same time, the person's autonomy and independence decrease, and self-regulation of behavior worsens [1].

Regarding internet addiction, M.Drepa, summarizing the results of Russian and international studies, identifies the following personality traits: accentuations of the schizoid, hysterical, labile, or epileptoid type; difficulties in accepting the physical "self"; high need for communication coupled with difficulty in immediate fulfillment; tendency toward intellectualization; feelings of lack of mutual understanding; emotional tension; inclination to negativism; presence of hopeless needs; undifferentiated or excessively exaggerated ideas about the ideal "self"; and increased tendency to avoid responsibility. According to O.V.Zaretskaya, these traits are observed in adolescents addicted to online computer games [2]. V.D.Mendelevich explains the negative changes in the psyche of adolescents addicted to the internet as follows. The time spent online can lead adolescents to neglect face-to-face interactions with people around them, which are crucial for the development of social skills and emotional intelligence, due to increased feelings of isolation and loneliness. A lack of connection with real life intensifies anxiety and depressive moods. Regular nighttime use of the internet disrupts sleep cycles, negatively affecting mood and cognitive functioning throughout the day. It is noteworthy that prolonged online activity leads to increased impulsivity and difficulty in maintaining attention [3].

E.I.Belinskaya links adolescent internet addiction to the following socio-psychological factors:

1. The internet provides a social interaction platform that may be particularly attractive to adolescents.
2. Adolescents often use the internet as a means of escaping academic pressure, family problems, or stress related to peer relationships, which can lead to excessive use as a coping mechanism.
3. The desire to fit in or stay connected with peers can motivate adolescents to spend more time online, especially if their friends are active on social media or playing online games.
4. Adolescents with low self-esteem may turn to the internet to seek online approval.
5. The immediate reward provided by achievements in online games.
6. Unstructured excess free time in adolescents' schedules.
7. Constant updates and the fear of missing out on online interactions compel adolescents to remain continually connected.
8. The competitive nature of online games can attract adolescents who achieve success in rankings and victories, leading to prolonged gaming sessions [4].

According to observations by A.Abolonin, I.Nazarova, and N.Aslanbekova, boys with chemical addictive behavior are characterized by increased anxiety, need for attention, and exhibitionism, while girls are distinguished by a need for social connection, anxiety, hypochondriacal tendencies, and susceptibility to depressive reactions [5].

Y.Nakhimov and G.Romashkina, studying adolescents addicted to drugs, emphasize the compensatory function of substance use, noting that it allows adolescents to improve their emotional state and cope with difficult life situations, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction with the present. In this context, accessing the internet can also be considered a coping strategy. However, it is important to remember that active interaction within the internet environment is

not only a reality of modern life but also an essential requirement. The increasing trend of digitalized education forces adolescents to interact online with teachers and peers, search for information, collaborate on assignments, and more. This environment can contribute to the emergence of psychological issues among students [6].

The problem of addictive behavior in adolescents is not merely a medical or moral issue but a significant socio-psychological concern, as the mental health of adolescents is closely linked to the health, safety, and genetic preservation of both the state and humanity.

Addictive behavior during adolescence is a complex phenomenon that can manifest in various forms, including substance dependence (alcohol, drugs), technology dependence (internet, video games), and other types of dependence (e.g., gambling). To identify the specific nature of these behavioral tendencies in adolescents, we used the “Determining Addictive Behavior” test developed by V.G.Lofovaya. This methodology is a unique test that allows for the assessment of adolescents’ tendencies toward social networks, alcohol, television, romantic relationships, gambling, sexual activity, food, religion, work, medications, smoking, healthy lifestyle, drug addiction, and overall dependence. The results obtained using this method were analyzed on a sample of 680 adolescents, and the analysis is presented in the following table.

Results of the “Determining Addictive Behavior” Methodology in Adolescents by Gender (Student’s t-test, n=680)

Types of Dependence	Adolescents’ Gender	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Tendency to consume alcoholic beverages	Boys	216	6,75	2,98	2,24*
	Girls	464	6,27	2,38	
Tendency to watch television	Boys	216	11,72	3,90	-0,75
	Girls	464	11,98	4,49	
Need to love and be loved	Boys	216	12,68	5,15	0,14
	Girls	464	12,62	4,91	
Tendency to play gambling games	Boys	216	7,46	2,96	2,20*
	Girls	464	6,93	2,89	
Tendency to consume food	Boys	216	12,31	4,86	-1,86
	Girls	464	13,09	5,24	
Tendency to use a computer	Boys	216	9,42	3,79	2,62
	Girls	464	8,63	3,62	

*p ≤0,05;** p ≤0,01;*** p ≤0,001;

A statistically significant difference was found on the scale of propensity to consume alcoholic beverages (t = 2.24;p < 0.05). On this scale, compared to girls, adolescent boys showed a lower tendency to consume alcoholic beverages. This can be attributed to social factors, cultural norms, and gender roles, which play an important role in shaping the inclination to consume alcohol. In our society, the stereotype that boys are allowed to consume alcoholic beverages explains why boys tend to show a higher propensity for alcohol consumption compared to girls. A statistically significant difference was also observed on the scale of propensity for gambling (t =2.20; p<0.05). On this scale, adolescent boys demonstrated a higher tendency toward

gambling than girls. This can be explained by social gender stereotypes, as traditional gender roles often associate risk-taking and competitiveness with boyhood. Adolescent boys, unlike girls, pay particular attention to competitiveness and social status. Gambling provides the opportunity to experience the thrill of winning quickly and easily, which increases the likelihood of boys engaging in such activities.

In the results obtained for the tendency to watch television, no statistically significant difference was found ($t = -0.75$; $p > 0.05$). Television is a form of mass media available to both boys and girls regardless of their social and economic background. Its easy accessibility, especially when combined with smartphones, means that both genders have equal opportunities to develop a tendency to watch television. On the scale of the need to love and be loved, no statistically significant difference was found between adolescent boys and girls ($t=0.14$; $p>0.05$). Adolescence is a period of hormonal changes and intense emotional experiences, with romantic relationships playing an important role. These relationships can manifest in temporary connections, love based on physical closeness, deeper and more meaningful forms of love, emotional intimacy, trust, and loyalty. Such relationships are important for personality development, and both boys and girls seek recognition, acceptance, and validation from others. The need to love and be loved is shaped by common factors for both genders, such as self-esteem, attachment style, and personal emotional history.

Regarding the tendency toward food consumption, no statistically significant difference was found ($t=-1.86$; $p > 0.05$). Both boys and girls live under similar socio-cultural influences, and adolescents of both genders may use food as a means of coping with stress, sadness, or loneliness, which explains the absence of significant gender differences in this domain.

In conclusion, the study results indicate that addictive or dependent behaviors during adolescence are influenced by various factors, including social, psychological, and cultural aspects. Based on the analyses conducted, boys showed higher tendencies than girls toward alcohol consumption and gambling. This reflects the influence of societal gender roles, cultural norms, and social stereotypes. Boys' stronger desire for independence, competitiveness, risk-taking, and social status makes them more likely to engage in risk-related activities, including alcohol consumption and gambling.

No significant gender differences were observed in the tendencies to watch television, the need to love and be loved, or food-related tendencies. This indicates that the current socio-cultural environment in which adolescents live is similar for both genders, information technologies provide equal opportunities, and emotional needs manifest in almost the same way across genders. Adolescents are likely to use activities such as eating, media consumption, or virtual interaction as protective mechanisms in response to stress, loneliness, or emotional challenges. Adolescence is one of the most sensitive and complex stages of life, emotionally and socially, during which the need for self-awareness, emotional stability, independence, and social recognition increases. Therefore, dependent behaviors often emerge as a means of alleviating internal experiences or reducing psychological pressure. However, in the long term, such behaviors negatively affect adolescents' mental health, social adaptation, and self-regulation abilities. In this regard, the family environment, pedagogical approaches, psychological support, and healthy social relationships play a crucial role in preventing addictive behaviors

among adolescents. Collaborative preventive work by parents, teachers, and psychologists can effectively develop adolescents' emotional stability, ensure meaningful use of leisure time, and promote a healthy lifestyle, thereby reducing tendencies toward addictive behaviors.

Overall, the study indicates that adolescent addictive behaviors are a complex socio-psychological phenomenon that requires a systematic and comprehensive approach to address. Promoting positive self-awareness, developing emotional intelligence, and strengthening family and social support can reduce the spread of addictive behaviors and ensure healthy personality development in adolescents.

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