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SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN WITH DEVIANT BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of the socio-psychological characteristics of children with deviant behavior. The essence of deviant behavior, its formation factors, and its impact on emotional, social, and personal development are examined. The issue of deviance is considered through sociological and psychological approaches and interpreted within the framework of Émile Durkheim's theory of anomie, Robert K. Merton's concept of social adaptation, and John Bowlby's attachment theory. The study also analyzes such characteristics of children with deviant behavior as emotional instability, aggressiveness, social maladjustment, недостаточность communicative competence, and self-esteem problems. The importance of preventive measures and psychological correction is substantiated.

Keywords: deviant behavior, social norms, aggressiveness, emotional instability, socialization, anomie, attachment theory, self-esteem, prevention, psychological correction.

Social development, social stability, and the formation of a healthy generation are directly connected with the upbringing of the younger generation. In recent years, the increase in cases of deviant behavior among children and adolescents has attracted growing attention from educators, psychologists, and sociologists. Deviant behavior refers to a system of actions that deviate from socially accepted norms and rules and lead to negative consequences. This article analyzes the socio-psychological characteristics of children with deviant behavior, the factors influencing its formation, and its psychological features on a scientific and theoretical basis.

First, it is necessary to clarify the concept of deviant behavior. From a sociological perspective, deviance is considered a violation of social norms. The psychological approach links deviant behavior to individual personality traits, problems in the emotional-volitional sphere, and disruptions in the process of socialization. In this regard, Émile Durkheim explained deviance through the concept of anomie in society, while Robert K. Merton emphasized that the imbalance between social structure and legitimate opportunities contributes to the emergence of deviant behavior.

Among children, deviant behavior often manifests in forms such as theft, aggression, violation of school rules, lying, truancy, and interest in psychoactive substances. Such actions are not accidental but are shaped by specific socio-psychological factors. In particular, an unhealthy family environment, neglect, violence, lack of supervision, or excessive strictness create conditions for the development of negative behavior patterns.

From a psychological perspective, children with deviant behavior often demonstrate emotional instability, impulsivity, and a tendency toward affective outbursts. They



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frequently struggle with regulating their emotions and have low frustration tolerance. According to the theory of psychosocial development proposed by Erik Erikson, adolescence is characterized by an identity crisis. If a child lacks social support during this stage, role confusion and negative identity formation may occur, increasing the likelihood of joining deviant peer groups.

According to attachment theory developed by John Bowlby, if a secure emotional bond with parents is not formed in early childhood, the child may develop feelings of insecurity. As a result, distrust, anxiety, and aggressiveness may arise. Such children often experience difficulties in peer relationships and demonstrate low levels of social adaptation.

One of the key socio-psychological characteristics is the insufficient development of communicative competence. Children with deviant behavior tend to use aggressive or manipulative strategies instead of constructive communication. They lack effective conflict-resolution skills, which leads to frequent interpersonal conflicts.

Self-esteem is another important indicator. Research shows that children with deviant behavior may have either excessively low or unjustifiably high self-esteem. Low self-esteem can lead to emotional distress and aggression, while inflated self-esteem may manifest in rejection of criticism and denial of social norms.

Reference groups play a significant role in shaping deviant behavior. During adolescence, peer influence often outweighs parental influence. If a child becomes involved in a socially negative peer group, deviant patterns of behavior become reinforced. This process is explained by differential association theory proposed by Edwin H. Sutherland, who argued that deviant behavior is learned through social interaction.

The school environment is also a significant factor. Pedagogical neglect, negative teacher-student relationships, and repeated experiences of academic failure contribute to the development of a negative self-concept. As a result, the child begins to perceive themselves as “bad” or “unworthy” and internalizes this role. Social stigma may thus become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

From a socio-psychological perspective, children with deviant behavior often display low social responsibility, lack of empathy, high anxiety, aggressiveness, indifference to normative values, and weak volitional control. They tend to prioritize short-term benefits over long-term consequences.

Prevention and correction are of particular importance. Individual psychological counseling, group training sessions, and programs aimed at developing social skills are considered effective interventions. Working with families, improving parental pedagogical competence, and creating a positive emotional climate are essential. Cooperation between school psychologists, teachers, and parents plays a decisive role in preventing deviant behavior.

Strengthening social support systems and engaging children in sports, arts, and other socially beneficial activities can redirect their socialization in a positive direction. Interaction with positive role models and experiencing success enhance self-confidence and promote healthy personality development.



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In conclusion, the socio-psychological characteristics of children with deviant behavior are complex and multifactorial. This phenomenon should not be viewed solely as an individual deficiency but rather as the result of interaction between social environment, family conditions, and personal development processes. Through a comprehensive approach, early prevention, and psychological support, it is possible to ensure the healthy social development of children.

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