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**SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS
GROWING UP WITHOUT PARENTS**

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Abstract: This article provides a scientific and theoretical analysis of the socio-psychological characteristics of adolescents growing up without parental care. The psychological features of adolescence, emotional development processes, mechanisms of socialization, and identity-related challenges are examined. The study is based on the developmental stage theory of Erik Erikson, the attachment theory of John Bowlby, and the socio-cultural approach of Lev Vygotsky to explain the emotional, communicative, and social adaptation characteristics of adolescents without parents. Additionally, risk factors for deviant behavior and mechanisms of psychological support are analyzed. The article substantiates the necessity of a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical approach to ensure successful social adaptation and personal development of this category of adolescents.

Keywords: adolescents without parents, socio-psychological development, emotional instability, socialization, identity, attachment theory, deviant behavior, psychological support, communicative competence, personality development.

Introduction

Social progress is directly linked to the upbringing of a well-rounded and psychologically healthy younger generation. Adolescence is considered one of the most complex, contradictory, and responsible stages in personality formation. In particular, adolescents growing up without parents or parental care (orphans, social orphans, children under guardianship, or those raised in institutional settings) require special socio-psychological attention.

The absence of a family environment significantly influences their emotional development, social adaptation, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationships. This article analyzes the socio-psychological characteristics of adolescents growing up without parents, focusing on their personal development factors, emotional and communicative difficulties, level of social adaptation, and mechanisms of psychological support.

1. Psychological Characteristics of Adolescence

Adolescence is characterized by biological, psychological, and social transformations. During this period, the self-concept (“I-concept”) is formed, the desire for independence increases, and peer relationships become especially significant. Adolescents strive to understand their place in society.

According to Erik Erikson, adolescence corresponds to the stage of “identity versus role confusion.” At this stage, the individual must resolve identity-related conflicts. In a supportive social environment, stable identity formation occurs; otherwise, internal conflicts intensify.



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For adolescents growing up without parents, this process becomes more complicated due to the absence of a stable emotional foundation represented by parental figures. As a result, difficulties may arise in self-esteem, future planning, and value formation.

2. Lack of Parental Affection and Emotional Development

The family serves as the primary institution of socialization. It is within the family that children internalize feelings of love, trust, safety, and support. According to John Bowlby's attachment theory, early emotional bonds shape future interpersonal relationships.

Adolescents without parental care often demonstrate:

- Emotional instability
- Distrust and suspicion
- Avoidance of close relationships or excessive attachment
- Feelings of internal loneliness
- External aggression or passivity

The absence of a stable family environment may lead to feelings of rejection, low self-esteem, depressive moods, and reduced social activity.

3. Socialization and Adaptation Processes

Adolescents without parents are frequently raised in boarding schools, orphanages, or under guardianship. In such environments, socialization differs from that within a family setting. Limited individualized attention, frequent caregiver changes, and institutionalized forms of care may reduce levels of social trust.

Common socio-psychological difficulties include:

- Challenges in mastering social roles
- Tendency toward rule-breaking behavior
- Reduced sense of social responsibility
- Conflicts with peers

However, some adolescents develop high adaptability and independence due to early exposure to life challenges, gaining resilience and practical life experience.

4. Self-Awareness and Identity Issues

During adolescence, self-awareness develops actively. Adolescents without parental care often experience intensified questions related to their origins, family roots, and personal history.

Lev Vygotsky emphasized that personality development occurs through interaction with the social environment. Without sufficient social support, internal developmental potential may not fully manifest.

Such adolescents may experience:

- Intensified questioning of "Who am I?"
- Difficulty forming a clear vision of the future
- Decreased self-confidence
- Strong search for idealized role models

In some cases, these challenges may contribute to involvement in negative peer groups or deviant behavior.



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5. Communicative Characteristics

Communication patterns among adolescents without parents often manifest in two extreme forms: avoidance of emotional closeness or excessive emotional dependence. These tendencies are linked to early attachment experiences.

Research indicates that adolescents deprived of family care may:

- Enter conflicts easily
- Defend their opinions aggressively
- Demonstrate lower levels of empathy
- Or, conversely, show excessive submissiveness

Nevertheless, in a supportive pedagogical and psychological environment, their communicative competence can significantly improve.

6. Risk of Deviant Behavior

The risk of deviant behavior (rule violations, aggression, socially inappropriate actions) may be higher among adolescents without parental care due to:

- Emotional instability
- Weak social control mechanisms
- Negative social environments
- Strong need for self-affirmation

However, this does not apply to all such adolescents. Studies show that supportive environments and individualized approaches substantially reduce risk factors.

7. Mechanisms of Psychological Support

Effective work with adolescents growing up without parents includes:

1. Individual psychological counseling
2. Development of emotional intelligence
3. Formation of social skills
4. Mentorship programs
5. Career guidance initiatives

Additionally, creating family-like environments in institutions, implementing small group systems, and conducting continuous psychological monitoring are essential.

8. Positive Resources and Compensatory Mechanisms

Adolescents without parental care are not characterized solely by problems. Many demonstrate:

- Independence
- Psychological resilience
- Adaptability to challenges
- Strong intrinsic motivation

When placed in supportive environments, they have significant potential for achievement and successful integration into society.

Conclusion

The socio-psychological characteristics of adolescents growing up without parents represent a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. The absence of a family environment



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significantly affects their emotional development, social adaptation, and self-awareness. However, this does not imply limited potential.

Scientific evidence suggests that stable psychological support, a positive social environment, individualized approaches, and effective mentorship systems enable adolescents without parental care to achieve successful socialization. Therefore, developing comprehensive psychological and pedagogical programs at the state and societal levels remains a pressing task.

This issue is not only a matter of social protection but also a strategic concern directly related to the moral and psychological stability of society as a whole.

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