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PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND YOUTH SUPPORT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Abstract: This article examines the fundamental reform of the education system within the framework of the 2022–2026 “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan” of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the priority areas of state youth policy, and the socio-psychological characteristics of adolescents. It also analyzes the pedagogical and psychological mechanisms for providing socio-psychological support to young people in educational institutions and for preventing the social adaptation difficulties and feelings of loneliness that they experience.

Keywords: development strategy, educational reforms, youth policy, psychological assistance, feeling of loneliness, social adaptation, diagnostics, psychological service.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era of globalization, human interests lie at the center of the large-scale reforms being carried out in New Uzbekistan; in particular, ensuring the education and upbringing of young people and safeguarding their spiritual and psychological well-being is one of the most important and pressing issues. A Alongside improving the education system in line with modern requirements, ensuring young people’s personal development, their ability to find their place in society, and their psychological safety is regarded as one of the most vital tasks. The process of renewal that began with the 2017–2021 “Action Strategy,” together with the 2022–2026 “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan,” has set the comprehensive development and advancement of the country as a priority. Direction 4 of the Development Strategy, entitled “Pursuing a Fair Social Policy and Developing Human Capital,” sets goals that include improving state youth policy, creating 1.2 million additional student places in the public education system, launching more than 100,000 free extracurricular clubs, improving the quality of education in schools, and raising higher education enrollment to 50 percent [1]. Through these tasks, attention to the further development of the education system, to supporting young people and ensuring their employment, and to strengthening their mental health has intensified. After all, young people’s educational process and their level of

psychological maturity are of great importance for the progress and prosperity of society. Furthermore, to ensure the provision of assistance, Resolution No. 577 of the Cabinet of Ministers dated 12 July 2019 introduced the Regulation "On the Organization of Psychological Service Activities in General Secondary and Secondary Specialized State Educational Institutions." The introduction of this Regulation is stated to be an important step in strengthening the socio-psychological protection of citizens, improving their quality of life, and creating a healthy environment in society, and to serve to expand the opportunities for identifying pressing social problems in a timely manner and finding qualified solutions to them. According to this Regulation, the purpose of the psychological service is to create psychological and pedagogical conditions for students' spiritual and intellectual development, their formation as well-rounded individuals, their active social adaptation, the protection of their health throughout their age-related development, their self-awareness within the continuing education process, and the expression of their individual psychological characteristics, personal potential, and abilities [2]. Psychological assistance is a set of measures, carried out in accordance with psychological assistance standards, that are aimed at preventing crisis situations and eliminating their consequences, improving interpersonal relationships and mental health, developing personality, or exerting psychological influence to improve a person's social adaptation. Moreover, adolescence is one of the periods most prone to crises and one in which the feeling of psychological loneliness is manifested most strongly [3].

LITERATURE REVIEW

L. Semionova writes: "Loneliness is not merely spending time alone; it is the suffering of a person who lacks someone close to them, and the breakdown of the understanding social relationships within a community" [6]. In Weiss's view, different forms of loneliness may manifest themselves in a variety of symptoms. Emotional loneliness gives rise to anxiety in a person, whereas social loneliness gives rise to depression. However, in both forms of loneliness, impaired concentration, a deteriorating sense of self, and disturbed sleep are observed [4]. Audrey J. Relf, a scholar who has analyzed the phenomenon of loneliness in depth, argues in her work "Man Is a Solitary Being: The Biological Roots of Loneliness" that it is necessary to distinguish between a person's occasionally being alone and prolonged solitude. In her view, being alone from time to time is a normal condition and poses no serious harm; however, if such a condition recurs frequently and lasts a long time, it may lead to psychological pathology and is considered dangerous. The author notes that people sometimes choose loneliness of their own accord, and that some people may sink into their inner world even when they are not alone. Moreover, people who are left alone lack the love and affection of their loved ones; conversely, close contact with people whom one dislikes may deepen the state of loneliness even further. Psychological loneliness is manifested as a voluntary avoidance of communication, an inner self-pity, and the avoidance of human relationships; people in such a state exhibit low activity, lethargy, and depression [7]. The scholars whose views are cited above evaluate the phenomenon of loneliness as a negative occurrence in human life and analyze it in connection with a state of emotional and social restriction under conditions of economic relations [4]. In his book "Loneliness," Mustaskas writes that as a person moves forward, he strives to display his abilities and to reach for the heights,

whereas in loneliness he lives with his own inner world. In the scholar's view, loneliness is a negative state for a person but at the same time creates conditions for creativity. In the twentieth century, philosophical approaches to the problem of loneliness took on social and psychological dimensions: a general view emerged, particularly in militarized states, that human relationships develop under the influence of the individuality of the person, and the concept of loneliness became steadily more widespread. An individual's inability to engage in communication often has a negative effect on social relationships, and constant solitude may cause a person to fall into a negative lifestyle and negative life situations [8]. The American psychologist Margaret Mead regards the problem of loneliness as an important characteristic feature. She asserts that in the American family, children are taught independence very early: sleeping separately is the first step in this direction, and children gradually learn to experience loneliness on their own. As the child grows up and his professional skills increase, he joins a particular social group and feels a need for direct communication in pursuing his personal and professional interests. If a person cannot find his place in society and does not feel the sympathy of those close to him, this causes a serious psychological problem, and as a result the feeling of being lonely arises in the person [9]. Scholars representing various philosophical schools and trends have also addressed this problem within the framework of their own scientific worldviews.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers note that during adolescence, self-awareness proceeds in tandem with the phenomenon of loneliness. In adolescence, self-awareness is the result of the adolescent's interest in himself in response to changes in his outward appearance. Sharp changes in the adolescent's physical and mental state are conflict-ridden and difficult. Adolescents easily idealize those around them and are quickly disappointed in them, and they find themselves caught in the grip of deep moral and emotional feelings and worldviews. It seems to the adolescent that those around him understand him, and he lives with the image of a hero of his own imagination. He constantly strives to perform heroic deeds and to struggle against the problems he encounters along the way. In this way, he tries to prove to those around him that he has grown up, that he is independent, and that his personality is unique; in the process he holds conversations with himself and experiences a state of loneliness. Being alone with his own thoughts gives the adolescent the opportunity to live out in his imagination various situations that are unattainable in real life [4]. I. S. Kon writes that "loneliness is a natural state; it indicates that the adolescent's inner life and inner world are taking shape" [10].As a subjective experience, loneliness can always be present for all people. The distinctive feature of this phenomenon is that it manifests itself differently in each person and differs in its emotional impact. The mildest forms of loneliness usually go unnoticed, and only its strong manifestations are recorded; on this basis, the view arises that loneliness either exists or does not. Loneliness must be distinguished from such concepts as isolation, solitude, alienation, anomie, and depression [11]. As a subjective experience, loneliness has three levels, whose quantitative expression is represented by "denied loneliness" (low level), "comfortable loneliness" (medium level), and "destructive loneliness" (high level). The main criteria for identifying them are as follows: the subjective assessment of the intensity with which loneliness manifests itself; the degree

to which the individual acknowledges loneliness (the level and nature of psychological defense); and the emotional impact of loneliness. The most optimal type of loneliness for a person is "comfortable loneliness" [12]. As a subjective experience, loneliness can be characterized by four main factors: "emotional maturity," "subjective control," "personal neuroticism," and "meaningfulness of life." For men, two factors stand out: "masculinity–femininity" and "emotional maturity." For women, three factors are identified: "emotional maturity," "masculinity–femininity," and "motivation." Loneliness as a subjective experience has gender and age characteristics. Women experience this type of loneliness more often as "denied loneliness," whereas men experience "destructive loneliness." "Comfortable loneliness" is equally characteristic of men and women. The fact that loneliness, as a subjective experience, is independent of a person's age indicates that there is no "exclusivity" of loneliness among representatives of different age groups [12].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The sources reviewed demonstrate the dual nature of loneliness. On the one hand, it is interpreted as a negative state that, when prolonged, leads to anxiety, depression, and withdrawal from social relationships (M. Buber, A. J. Relf, Mustaskas); on the other hand, it is interpreted as a condition that, to a certain degree, fosters creativity and the formation of the inner world (Mustaskas, I. S. Kon). During adolescence, self-awareness, the striving for independence, and changes in the social environment increase the likelihood that a feeling of loneliness will emerge; for this reason, the special study of the problem of loneliness at this age is considered highly relevant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the framework of the Development Strategy, the education and upbringing of young people and the protection of their spiritual and psychological well-being constitute one of the most important tasks of state policy. Preventing and eliminating the problem of loneliness among adolescents not only ensures their personal well-being but also prepares them for future social engagement, independence, and a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, in working with adolescents, understanding their inner world and improving the system of psychological support is the practical expression of the Development Strategy. It is the greatest foundation for raising a highly spiritual, well-rounded generation. In this regard, it is important to expand spiritual and educational activities aimed at increasing young people's social engagement; that is, it is advisable to improve the socio-psychological climate for adolescents in educational institutions, to improve the activities of the psychological service, to identify in a timely manner students in whose behavior changes have been observed in their group, and to provide them with targeted assistance. Strengthening cooperation between educational institutions and families, and launching special trainings aimed at meeting adolescents' needs for love and care, serve as the main foundation for their finding their place in society and preparing for a healthy lifestyle.

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