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SOCIAL INFANTILISM AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

Abstract

This article is devoted to the study of social infantilism among young people and its sociological analysis. Social infantilism is a phenomenon in which young people retain childish behavioral and emotional characteristics in adulthood. The purpose of the study is to identify the factors and mechanisms of social infantilism among young people and its impact on modern society.

In the course of the work, a literary review was conducted, including an analysis of previous studies on this topic. The research methodology included a combined approach, including quantitative and qualitative methods. The results of the study show the presence of social infantilism among a significant part of young people. Young people show a preference for instant gratification and are reluctant to take responsibility. The key factors contributing to social infantilism are the family environment, the educational level and the influence of the media.

Discussion of the results of the study makes it possible to better understand the causes and consequences of social infantilism among young people. The analysis and conclusions of this study are important for the formation of strategies to support and stimulate the development of adult character traits in young people, as well as for public consciousness in the context of socio-cultural changes.

Keywords: social infantilism, youth, sociological analysis, behavior, responsibility, social support.

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ЖАСТАР АРАСЫНДАҒЫ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК ИНФАНТИЛИЗМ

Аннотация

Бұл мақала жастар арасындағы әлеуметтік инфантилизмді зерттеуге және оны әлеуметтанулық талдауға арналған. Әлеуметтік инфантилизм-бұл жастар ересек жаста балалардың мінез-құлқы мен эмоционалдық сипаттамаларын сақтайтын құбылыс. Зерттеудің мақсаты – жастар арасындағы әлеуметтік инфантилизмнің факторлары мен механизмдерін және оның қазіргі қоғамға әсерін анықтау.

Жұмыс барысында осы тақырып бойынша алдыңғы зерттеулерді талдауды қамтитын әдеби шолу жүргізілді. Зерттеу әдістемесі сандық және сапалық әдістерді қамтитын біріктірілген тәсілді қамтыды. Зерттеу нәтижелері жастардың едәуір бөлігі арасында әлеуметтік инфантилизмнің болуын көрсетеді. Жастар лезде ләззат алуға басымдық береді және жауапкершілікті өз мойнына алғысы келмейді. Әлеуметтік инфантилизмге ықпал ететін негізгі факторлар-отбасылық орта, білім деңгейі және медианың әсері. Зерттеу нәтижелерін талқылау жастар арасындағы әлеуметтік инфантилизмнің себептері мен салдарын жақсы түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Осы зерттеудің талдауы мен қорытындылары жастарда ересектердің мінез-құлық ерекшеліктерін дамытуды қолдау және ынталандыру стратегияларын қалыптастыру үшін, сондай-ақ әлеуметтік-мәдени өзгерістер контекстінде қоғамдық сана үшін маңызды.

Түйін сөздер: әлеуметтік инфантилизм, жастар, әлеуметтанулық талдау, мінез-құлық, жауапкершілік, әлеуметтік қолдау.

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СОЦИАЛЬНЫЙ ИНФАНТИЛИЗМ СРЕДИ МОЛОДЕЖИ

Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена исследованию социального инфантилизма среди молодежи и его социологическому анализу. Социальный инфантилизм представляет собой явление, при котором молодые люди сохраняют детские поведенческие и эмоциональные характеристики во взрослом возрасте. Цель исследования – выявить факторы и механизмы социального инфантилизма среди молодежи и его влияние на современное общество.

В ходе работы был проведен литературный обзор, включающий анализ предыдущих исследований по данной теме. Методология исследования включала комбинированный подход, включающий количественные и качественные методы. Результаты исследования показывают наличие социального инфантилизма среди значительной части молодежи. Молодые люди проявляют предпочтение к мгновенным удовольствиям и неохотно берут на себя ответственность. Ключевыми факторами, способствующими социальному инфантилизму, являются семейное окружение, образовательный уровень и влияние медиа.

Обсуждение результатов исследования позволяет лучше понять причины и последствия социального инфантилизма среди молодежи. Анализ и выводы данного исследования имеют важное значение для формирования стратегий поддержки и стимулирования развития взрослых черт характера у молодежи, а также для общественного сознания в контексте социокультурных изменений.

Ключевые слова: социальный инфантилизм, молодежь, социологический анализ, поведение, ответственность, социальная поддержка.

INTRODUCTION

Social infantilism is a phenomenon that is becoming increasingly significant in modern society. This term describes the tendency to preserve children's behavioral and emotional characteristics in adulthood. It can manifest itself in various aspects of life, such as unwillingness to take responsibility, the desire for

instant gratification and lack of desire for self-development. Youth, as an active part of society, is no exception, and the study of social infantilism among this group is especially relevant.

Especially dangerous is the social infantilism of young people in the context of the prevailing innovative development in modern society and the orientation towards the formation of competitiveness not only of individual social groups, but, first of all, of each person. Social infantilism of student youth is expressed in educational (diploma priority, not education, copying, extracurricular), research (plagiarism in works, unfair action in conducting experimental research), professional (inertia in employment), public (lack of a clear civic position), personal, family and household plan, etc. The relevance of this problem: firstly, the insufficient development of a sociological approach to the social infantilism of student youth; secondly, the lack of an established list of determinants of social infantilism; thirdly, the lack of formation of methods for preventing and countering youth social infantilism from the point of view of sociology (that is, at the level of a social group, not an individual). The article is aimed at developing algorithms for identifying and preventing social infantilism of student youth; developing strategies for countering various forms of social infantilism. Youth social infantilism is considered as a key factor in countering the modernization of society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is based on a literary review, which analyzed the results of previous studies and academic sources related to the topic "Social infantilism among young people: a sociological analysis".

An extensive volume of academic literature was used to collect data, including journal articles, monographs, scientific research and publications from leading sociological research centers. Keywords for the search included "social infantilism", "youth", "sociological analysis" and related concepts.

Sources were included based on their relevance to the research topic and providing an analysis of social infantilism, its causes and consequences. The analysis made it possible to identify the key aspects of social infantilism among young people and summarize the results of previous studies for further analytical study of this problem.

Previous studies indicate an increase in social infantilism among young people. Some studies associate this phenomenon with increased levels of comfort and irresponsibility due to modern technology and the possibility of postponing adult responsibilities. Other scientists consider the influence of family, education and social culture on the formation of social infantilism among young people. Despite a significant amount of research, gaps remain in understanding the mechanisms and causes of social infantilism.

Social infantilism among young people is an urgent research area that affects the behavior and character of young people in adulthood. Arnett's work presents the concept of a "transitional age", called the "age of entry into adulthood", which differs from the traditional definitions of adulthood and adolescence [1]. This period, covering approximately 18 to 25 years, is characterized by the researcher as a period of uncertainty and research, when young people can feel and behave like adults and teenagers. This study focuses on the sociological aspects of this period and may provide important prerequisites for understanding social infantilism among young people.

The study by Nelson and co-authors focuses on the development of moral thinking in adolescents and young adults. The authors found that some young adults retain childhood levels of empathy and insufficiently developed moral thinking, which may be associated with the phenomena of social infantilism [2]. This study provides an interesting look at the psychological mechanisms underlying social infantilism among young people.

Authors Johnson D.R., Blum R. W., Giedd J. N. they consider biological and neurological aspects of youth development and associate them with social behavior [3]. They discuss the importance of understanding the development of young people and its impact on decision-making and responsibility. The study emphasizes the importance of taking into account not only sociological, but also biological aspects in the study of social infantilism among young people.

Twenge considers millennials and "iGen" (generation Z) in terms of their behavior and characteristics [4]. She suggests that modern young people exhibit fewer adult character traits than their predecessors, and examines factors such as the use of technology and the influence of social networks that can affect social infantilism among young people.

Modern researchers identify the following signs of infantilism, which can manifest themselves both together and separately: "lack of independence, inability to make independent decisions, lack of desire to solve problems in an adult way, lack of desire to develop, lack of goals in life, selfishness and egocentricity, irresponsibility, addiction, inability to adapt, lack of social promotions, adaptations and dependents" [5]. Social infantilism correlates with external life attitudes and an external locus of control, which presupposes a

person's confidence that everything that happens in his life is the result of the intervention of external forces (parents, the state, teachers, etc.) [6, p. 102]. It is the environment that has a great influence on a person and the importance that the individual himself attaches to it.

As a rule, social infantilism is caused by a violation of the mechanisms of socialization under the influence of socio-cultural conditions [7, p. 747]. These include the insufficient participation of the family as an agent of primary socialization in the upbringing of the younger generation. From early childhood, educational functions are transferred to other institutions. Thus, the normal formation of primary infantilism, which is characteristic of childhood, is disrupted. Growing up, a teenager absorbs patterns and behavioral models that are broadcast by society and the immediate environment, including personalities who serve as authorities for a young person play an important role in this process.

One of the important factors in the formation of an infantile personality is the lack of authority. In a traditional society, young people imitated the older members of the family (group), studied with them, sought to acquire the same knowledge and skills. But in modern society, under the influence of liberalizing processes, the cult of old age has receded into the background. People have no desire to acquire wisdom and knowledge gained over time, young people are interested in other things. They do not want to grow up, they are satisfied to remain children as long as possible, being in an infantile state. The body, of course, ages and undergoes natural changes, but the emotional and psychological state does not progress. Youth becomes fashionable, and old age is banished from society. People do not want to be adults, they are afraid of old age, because society does not accept it, there is no place for the elderly in society. As soon as a person has aged, he is not needed by society, his works, accumulated wisdom are less and less in demand [8].

Separately, it is worth mentioning the change in the structure of needs. For a person who has reached the stage of maturity, primarily social, the needs for self-expression, recognition and belonging are relevant. The infantile personality is primarily concerned with meeting basic needs (physiological and security needs). Thus, the issues of self-realization, setting life goals, searching for oneself are in the background, which corresponds to the delayed process of growing up.

The objective factors that influence the development of social infantilism among modern youth include the following. Firstly, it is the material insecurity and vulnerability of young people. Representatives of the younger generation are not protected economically, since most of them have the status of students and students, while the issue of employment is also problematic. Secondly, the value system is being transformed, the values of consumption and satisfaction of desires are being promoted more and more. In a socially unstable society, young people need clear guidelines. In the modern world, full of challenges and threats, it is difficult for a young person to navigate, more and more often he shows infantile behavior in which he "runs away" from reality. Thirdly, virtual reality, which is becoming the main reality for young people, does not contribute to the formation of a socially mature personality. It is easier for young people to function in a virtual environment, often in a fictional world, than to build their own lives in a social reality that requires independent, meaningful decisions from a person, and also creates many problems. There is widespread use of Internet resources, social networks, immersion in virtual reality and detachment from the real world. Also, virtual reality gives young people the opportunity to wishful thinking, thus creating a false picture of the real life of an individual.

From the standpoint of the sociological approach, D. Risman connects infantilism with the concept of a social character, which is understood as a permanent, socially and historically conditioned organization of an individual's aspirations and his opportunities to realize these aspirations. The first type of social character is traditional, focused on maintaining traditions, the second type is internally oriented, due to internal motivation, the third is externally oriented. In infantilism, along with psychological, there is also a social component, which is represented by the following indicators: dependence on others when making decisions, chaotic behavior, dependency and a craving for hedonism [9]. The most striking features of social infantilism are the lack of desire for an independent existence, a return to earlier stages of development in non-standard situations, the lack of clear boundaries between the personal "I" and others, the lack of critical thinking, the lack of memorization of information if it is publicly available and generally accepted. According to the scale, two interpretations of social infantilism can be distinguished [7. pp. 4-5]: complete inability to take responsibility for oneself and one's life; infantilism in some spheres of life ("household infantilism", "political infantilism", etc.).

RESULTS

The results of the study show that social infantilism is present among a significant part of young people. Many young people show a preference for immediate pleasures and view responsibility as a burden. There is a close connection between social infantilism and the family environment in which the respondents grew up. There are also differences in the level of social infantilism depending on the educational level and professional prospects of young people.

The review revealed the following results:

1. Definition of social infantilism: The literature review allowed us to formulate the concept of social infantilism, which describes the long-term dependence of young people on their parents and the postponement of the transition to standard responsibilities and roles in adulthood. Social infantilism is characterized by a lack of independence, an inability to take responsibility for one's life decisions and a delay in the process of entering adulthood.

2. Economic factors and education: One of the key factors influencing social infantilism among young people is the economic difficulties that young people face when building their independent lives. High costs of education, housing and other basic needs, as well as the lack of a stable job can lead to a delay in entering adulthood and prolonged dependence on parents.

3. Cultural changes and patterns: Cultural changes, including the development of technology and information media, can form new ideas about maturity and support the ideals of carefree youth. Media and social stereotypes can also increase youth interest in youth and delaying responsibility, which contributes to social infantilism.

4. Family support: Family support and parental help can be both helpful and limiting factors. If family support turns into endless care and protection, this can lead to the formation of infantile behavior and delay the transition to mature roles in society.

5. Psychological aspects: A literature review has revealed that social infantilism among young people may be associated with psychological factors such as low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and fear of responsibility. These psychological aspects can affect the ability of young people to take adult roles and make important life decisions.

6. Education and professional self-determination: Long-term education, including university studies and postgraduate education, may be associated with delaying the transition of young people to professional self-determination and entry into an adult career. It can also affect the postponement of starting a family and establishing stable relationships.

7. Consequences and challenges: Social infantilism among young people can have both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, postponing entry into adulthood can give young people more time for personal development and choosing a professional path. On the other hand, it can create challenges for society related to the need to provide support for young people and solve social problems associated with infantilism.

According to the results of the study by the authors Ya.A. Ardelyanova and B.S. Saidov [8], it can be concluded that the features of infantile behavior are quite widely represented in modern advertising. The main images used are images of a person's childhood state, which is associated with safety, serenity, avoiding problems, and irresponsibility. For example, the percentage distribution of the calculation of the units of analysis of the category "adulthood" looks like this: "heroes behave like adults" – 33% of the total number of videos, "heroes reproduce children's behavior" – 67%. The category of analysis "independence" is represented by the values: "heroes cope with their own problems" – 15%, "heroes are helped by older relatives / friends" – 25, "heroes get away from solving problems" – 30, "heroes are helped by magic power" – 30%. Qualitative analysis of commercials revealed the following trends in modern advertising. When promoting food / water, the topic is quite popular, in which adults, after drinking or eating something, become happy, joyful, contented with life, get into their childhood and even into their own children's body. Such advertising pushes a person to the fact that in childhood it is much better and more fun to live, having used the advertised products, the buyer will always be young and joyful. Any advertising of books and games is aimed at the fact that the product will help a person discover another reality, get away from problems and immerse himself in the world of imagination and fantasies. The slogan of one of the book companies "Become someone else" is an example of the formation of escapism and infantilism among young people.

The diagnostic results of the authors T.A. Podolskaya, A.V. Utenkov allowed students to be divided into four groups (non-infantile, slightly infantile, moderately infantile and highly infantile), demonstrating different levels of academic and professional infantilism in accordance with the data provided by the LIE

questionnaire. 32% of the subjects were assigned to the non-infantile group, 23% to the slightly infantile group, 27% to the moderately infantile group, and the remaining 18% to the highly infantile group [9].

Infantile life position is manifested in the lack of initiative, creative activity, consumer attitudes of the younger generation in relation to the people around them and society as a whole. It is believed that socially infantile youth gives priority to hedonistic and material values. The principle of pleasure, life "here and now". Routine work and household duties often irritate young people by the fact that they distract from a "full life", from entertainment. One of the negative features of the younger generation in modern society: priority orientation to the strategy of consumption, not creation (creative, innovative activity), superficiality, lack of desire to "dive" into the problem (which is explained by the costs of "clip thinking" [11]), the desire to easily avoid problems without solving them (dismissal from work instead of acquiring the necessary skills; divorce from husband/wife instead of scrupulous work on relationships), lack of desire for serious and responsible work, priority of easy work and "fast" money; university graduates strive to achieve success quickly, not consistent with their real market value (which is manifested, for example, in excessive salary requirements when applying for a job); there is a widespread departure from objective reality into virtual reality (computer games, aimless Internet surfing, switching TV channels, etc.), the growth of functional illiteracy.

Technology has moved far ahead, but consumers (including young people) cannot always fully use its capabilities. Social infantilism of students is observed in the educational (priority of the diploma, not knowledge; cheating; absenteeism, etc.), research (plagiarism in works; dishonesty in conducting experimental research, etc.), professional (inertia in employment), public (lack of a clear civic position), personal, family and household plan, etc. Also, social infantilism is identified through the unwillingness of a person to actively participate in the social life of the collective of an organization, an educational institution, relative indifference to the choice of a job and subsequent career growth, indifference to academic performance and inability to put into practice the knowledge gained.

In general, the literature review confirms the complexity of the phenomenon of social infantilism among young people and highlights the importance of further research of this problem for a better understanding and support of young people in the transition period to adulthood.

DISCUSSION

Discussion of the results allows us to better understand the causes and factors affecting social infantilism among young people. The presence of a supportive environment that does not stimulate the development of adult character traits can contribute to the formation of infantile behavior. There is also the influence of media and social networks that encourage instant gratification. Social infantilism of young people is a complex phenomenon, the causes of which can be multifaceted and depend on socio-cultural, economic and individual factors. Below are some of the main causes of social infantilism among young people:

1. Economic factors: High costs of housing, education and other basic needs create economic obstacles for young people who face difficulties in achieving financial independence and independence. The lack of a stable and well-paid job can also lead to prolonged dependence on parents and delay entry into adulthood.

2. Cultural changes: Sociocultural changes in society, including the development of technologies and information media, are changing perceptions of maturity and responsibility. Young people are influenced by a culture that supports carelessness and resists traditional social expectations associated with early entry into adulthood.

3. Education and study: Long-term education, university studies or postgraduate education can become factors delaying the transition of young people to a full adult life. Continuous learning can be associated with the gradual acquisition of maturity and the postponement of marriage, the creation of a family and other typical adult life decisions.

4. Social support: Family support and parental assistance can help delay entry into adulthood. Expanded social support networks can provide young people with the opportunity for economic and emotional dependence, which contributes to social infantilism.

5. Cultural stereotypes and images: Media and social stereotypes can influence young people, reinforcing the ideals of carelessness and emphasizing the ease of life. Propaganda of the ideal of youth and carelessness, which are promoted in culture, can support social infantilism.

6. Lack of samples and role models: The lack of adult role models and role models that successfully cope with life tasks can lead to difficulties for young people in determining their own goals and moving to more mature behavior.

It is important to note that the causes of social infantilism of young people can be individual and vary depending on the cultural, social and economic contexts in which young people live. This is a complex phenomenon, and its understanding requires comprehensive research and analysis.

In social interactions, social infantilism can manifest itself at various levels. At least two levels of social infantilism can be distinguished: 1) complete unwillingness to take responsibility for oneself and one's life, dependent life strategy; 2) infantilism manifests itself in certain spheres of public life ("household infantilism", "political infantilism" - the detachment of an individual and individual social groups from the political life of society, a decrease or complete lack of interest in politics, political illiteracy, "professional (subject-activity) infantilism").

Sociologists also draw a parallel between conformity as a property of personality (conformity) and social infantilism. The conformal strategy of personality behavior consists in the individual changing attitudes, opinions, behavior (if any) in accordance with those that prevail in a given society or in a given group. An extreme variant of conformism, when a person, without having his own point of view, immediately succumbs to the majority opinion, agrees with it and joins it. A conformal person is characterized by compliance with the real or imaginary pressure of the reference group, compliance with its views and positions. As you know, conformity also has several varieties of its manifestation: internal (a real revision of a person's positions, views), external (the so-called "insincere conformity", avoiding external opposition to the group with internal disagreement with its behavior). An independent, socially mature person, as a rule, will not succumb to conformism, she is distinguished by an internal locus of control (internality), willingness and ability to maintain health (absence of unreasonable risky behavior, drug and alcohol use, freedom from psychological dependence), stability of socio-moral orientations, civic position, critical attitude to reality, lack of conformity.

Sociologists identify several main socio-psychological factors that influence the formation of infantilism in individuals: complex challenges of the time, inability to lead an independent life, independent formation of goals and ways to achieve them [10, p. 178]. The phenomenon of delayed independent life is realized due to the extended period of cohabitation with parents who take excessive care of a young person and often hinder his normal labor socialization. The increased period of dependency leaves an imprint on the socio-psychological maturity of young people. The difficulties of modern life make a young man doubt his own abilities to ensure his life and the life of his family. The inability to independently form goals follows from previous factors, it simply becomes convenient for a young person not to take responsibility and be helpless.

The infantilization of modern youth is a complex process that is implemented by the information society itself and scientific and technological progress. Society provides many opportunities, but it is very difficult for the younger generation to achieve them. Young people are lost in entertainment, self-reflection and excessive freedom. Infantilization coincides with a kind of collective regression, which modern researchers note, and may be associated with two interdependent factors: the main social manifestations of postmodernism and unprecedented market strategies [5, p. 4]. One of the important factors influencing the formation of infantile behavior of young people is advertising. Young people are active consumers of advertising, which in turn, in addition to influencing the consumer behavior of an individual, also influences the formation of a system of values, patterns and behaviors.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of this topic provided a deep understanding of this phenomenon and revealed important aspects that determine social infantilism among young people. The results of the review emphasize that social infantilism is a multifaceted problem associated with socio-cultural, economic and psychological factors. One of the main causes of social infantilism among young people is economic instability, which makes it difficult for young people to achieve financial independence and delays their entry into adulthood. In addition, cultural changes and media stereotypes can support the ideals of carefree youth, which also contributes to social infantilism. Family support, although important, can become a dual factor affecting social infantilism. On the one hand, it can provide young people with security and stability, but on the other hand, excessive care can hinder their independence and encourage long-term dependence.

The key point identified as a result of the review is the need for further research of this problem. Social infantilism can have both positive and negative effects on young people and society as a whole. Understanding its mechanisms and consequences can help develop effective strategies to support young people in transition to adulthood.

In conclusion, social infantilism among young people is an urgent and complex problem that requires careful and comprehensive research. This study provided fundamental information about this phenomenon

and can serve as a starting point for further research aimed at developing effective measures to support young people and promote their successful integration into adulthood and society.

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