



The Specificity of Teenagers' Mental States as Prerequisite of Deviant Behavior Emergence

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ABSTRACT

The article covers the issue of teenagers' deviant behavior, in particular, their mental states which can act as a factor of deviant reaction. It is shown that teenagers' behavior is determined by the variety of intellectual, psychophysical, social and emotional development. The research results of such mental states as joy, anger, calmness, exhaustion flow specificity experienced by 9-10-year-old children, 13-18-year-old teenagers and young men/girls of 19-20 years are presented in the article. It has been revealed that mental states of 9-10-year-old children flow smoothly and evenly; teenagers' states are unsteady and flow expressly, intensively. The structure of teenagers' mental states is "loosened" hence the states move to another energy level, transform, and are subject to influences. Gender distinctions of mental states flow have also been defined.

Keywords: Mental state, deviant behavior, teenagers, intensity, content-richness, structure.

INTRODUCTION

In the "Fundamentals of state policy in the field of environmental development of Russia until 2030" clearly the idea is formulated that the development of the country's economy directly depends on the solution of the educational task for the formation of ecological culture among young people. The formation of eco-vocational consciousness is directly related to eco-vocational training which is carried out by various social institutions of society. A special place among belongs to the higher vocational school.

Individual's deviant behavior can be designated as a system of acts contradicting the norms accepted in the society and manifested in the form of unbalanced mental processes, inadaptability, self-actualization process disorder or evasion from moral and esthetic control over own behavior [1].

The psychological approach considers deviant behavior in connection with the intra personal conflict, destruction and personality self-damage. That is, the deviant either consciously or unconsciously strives not to dare to realize available inclinations and to destroy self-worth [1]. Within the phenomenological approach any individual complete mental experience and the related behavior is the cornerstone of deviant behavior [1]. In

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general it is possible to assert that the state of self-dissatisfaction, destructive experiences of the self, hence inability to control, regulate own states determine deviant manifestations in behavior [2].

In the psychology of deviant behavior, the concept of mental processes and states balance the characteristic of which is emotional stability is significant [1]. Emotions unbalance leads to a frequent change of mood, difficulties in steady relations establishment with people around, and emotional stiffness, fixing in the form of these or those experiences. Thus, to maintain intensive emotions the deviant artificially changes their mental state which does not satisfy them and is considered by them as "gray", "apathetic" etc. [1; 3].

Speaking about deviant behavior, the availability of certain norms, which establish an admissible framework of behavior, is always implied: legal, moral, esthetic. Legal regulations are issued in the form of the body of laws, and ethical and esthetic standards are not specified [1; 4]. It is also possible to single out norms of psychologically comfortable state of health (experience), reflection, self-satisfaction the violation of which may take the individual to emotional discomfort [1]. It is impossible to call norms, bound to the characteristic of these or those mental states, universal. On the one hand, they depend on the carrier of this norm, on the other hand, they depend on the situation of this norm application [5].

The subject of deviant behavior psychology is situational reactions deviating from various norms, and mental states leading to individual's maladaptation in the society or to self-actualization disorder [5].

So, mental states and their unbalance act as a basis and reasons of deviant behavior, and norms determining the borders of deviations as well.

A.O. Prokhorov [6; 7] defines mental states as individual's reflection of a situation in the form of a steady complete syndrome (set) in the dynamics of mental activity which is expressed in the unity of behavior and experience. Categorical signs of mental states are specified in this definition: situatedness, integrity, stability in time, unity of experience and behavior, connection with personal features and mental processes [8; 9].

Mental states are divided into motivational (desires, interests, inclinations), emotional (stress, affect, frustration), volitional (states of initiative, purposefulness, determination, persistence, etc.) [5].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods of research

In the process of research, the following methods were used: the study of scientific and regulatory sources, forming a psychological experiment, analysis and generalization of psychological experience, review, questioning, conversation, observation, testing, expert evaluation; psycho-diagnostic techniques; mathematical, statistical methods and methods of computer data processing.

Experimental research base

The experimental base of the research was the Kazan (Volga region) Federal University.

Stages of research

The study of the problem was carried out in three stages:

- at the first stage, the short version of the questionnaire "Relief of mental state" including 18 indicators reflecting the activity of experiences, cognitive and somatic processes, behavior was applied in the research. Questionnaire data represent objective characteristics of states;

- at the second stage, the content analysis of self-reports (examinees described their mental states) was carried out; there were singled out 9 parameters as a result: desire/goals/opportunity/readiness; action/acts/reactions/activity; time/ expectations/dreams/belief; physiological/ energy processes; events/ situations; relations/ assessment/comparisons; metaphors/transcendence; emotions/feelings/moods/experiences; thinking processes. Self-reports data represent subjective characteristics of states;

- at the third stage, the obtained numerical values by two techniques were mathematically processed with the application of the SPSS-16 program: short statistics, signs criterion (comparison of average means), correlation analysis with the subsequent calculation of structure organization index (the number of links * $p \geq 0,05$ was multiplied by 1, number of links ** $p \geq 0,01$ – by 2, number of links *** $p \geq 0,001$ – by 3; the received values were summarized). The processing results are presented graphically.

RESULTS

The relief of the mental state at various ages

224 persons were recruited for our research (girls/maids – 130, boys/young men – 94). The research was aimed to detect age and gender specificity of often met mental states of different levels of mental activity and modality (joy – a high level of mental activity, positive modality; anger – a high level of mental activity, negative modality; calmness – an average level of mental activity, positive modality; exhaustion – a low level of mental activity, negative modality). Respondents of the following age groups make the sample: 9-10-year-old persons – 54, 13-year-old persons – 54, 16-year-old persons – 45, 17-18-year-old persons – 58, 19-20-year-old persons – 13 (boys, young men – 94 persons, girls, maids – 130 people).

The state joy according to objective characteristics shows high intensity at ages of 9-10 years old, 13 years old, 17-18 years old, 19-20 years old. At the age of 16 years old the intensity of characteristics is reduced (fig. 2).

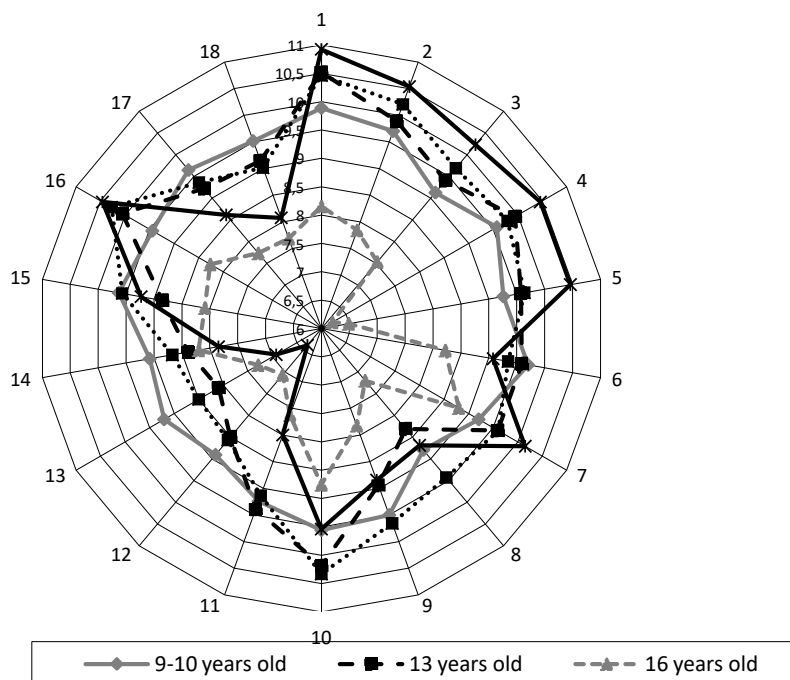


Figure 1. The relief of the mental state joy at various ages.

Note. Scale of experiences activity: 1 – melancholy-cheerfulness; 2 – sadness-optimism; 3 – grief-frolicsome; 4 – drowsiness-cheerfulness; 5 – slackness-liveliness. The scale of cognitive processes activity: 6 – clearness, consciousness of perception; 7 – features of representations; 8 – memory; 9 – thinking; 10 – imagination. The scale of behavior activity: 11 – inconsistency-consistency; 12 – rashness-reasonableness; 13 – uncontrollability-controllability; 14 – inadequacy-adequacy. The scale of somatic processes activity: 15 – coordination of movements; 16 – physical activity; 17 – cardiovascular system; 18 – manifestations from respiratory organs.

Let us consider in more detail the relief of the mental state joy. 9-10-year-old children experience the state joy actively, evenly in all respects: experiences, cognitive and somatic processes, behavior. The intensity of this state characteristics at teenage and youthful age (13-20 years old) is diverse, with the expressed dispersion of values (fig. 1). The specificity of the state joy flow of 13-year-olds is as follows: expressed cheerfulness, increase of physical activity, energy, fussiness up to uncontrollability of behavior, relaxedness in imagination, phantasy. Teenagers of 16 years old revealed the activity of cognitive processes: clearness, clarity of representations, easy imagination, cheerfulness and smartness of experiences within average borders coming nearer to flaccidity and sleepiness. Expressed cheerfulness, relaxedness in imagination and phantasy, hyperactivity, vigorousness of behavior are characteristic to teenagers of 17-18 years old. Young men and girls of 19-20 years old have

high values according to all characteristics of the state joy, but at the same time they reveal rashness and uncontrollability of behavior, respiration change (“a lump in the throat”).

Next by analogy we will consider objective characteristics of the state anger which show various intensity due to the age. 18-year-old testees reveal high-intensity of the state anger and 10-year-olds have a less intensive level (fig. 2). Thus 9-10-year-old children have an average level of somatic processes activity, and in experiences, on the contrary, melancholy, sadness, grief are specified. The specificity of the state anger flow at teenage and youthful age is very similar; there has been singled out a wide range of characteristics values. Liveliness, quick temper, swiftness, vivacity of experience are specified especially at the age of 17-20 years old. The flow of cognitive processes is in norm; values vary within average borders. Rashness, uncontrollability, inadequacy have been revealed in behavior; it is especially expressed at the age of 16 and 19-20 years old.

Characteristics of the state calmness have high intensity in testees' estimations at the age of 17-18 years old, 19-20 years old; the least intensity is noted at the age of 13 years old (fig. 2). The values of the state calmness vary within average in children of 9-10 years old and teenagers of 16 years old, i.e. the state flows smoothly. At the age of 13 years old the decrease of experiences activity (melancholy, sadness, grief) and behavior (tendency to rashness, uncontrollability, inadequacy) is revealed. Teenagers and young men/girls (17-20 years old) specify the activity of cognitive processes and behavior in the state of calmness.

Age specificity of mental states

The state exhaustion is experienced more intensively at the age of 13 and 16 years old. At the age of 19-20 years old this state is estimated less intensively (fig. 2). The specificity of the state exhaustion flow at the age of 9-10 years old and 16 years old is as follows: characteristics have approximate values which vary within the borders below average and average respectively. Teenagers of 13 and 17-18 years old reveal controllability, adequacy of behavior; characteristics of somatic processes (cardiovascular system and respiratory organs manifestations) are also intensive. As for experiences they are characterized by slight melancholy, expressed sleepiness and flaccidity. At the age of 19-20 years old indexes of the state exhaustion have a wide range of values. Upon the controllability and adequacy of behavior the decrease of physical activity, apathy, akinesia is observed.

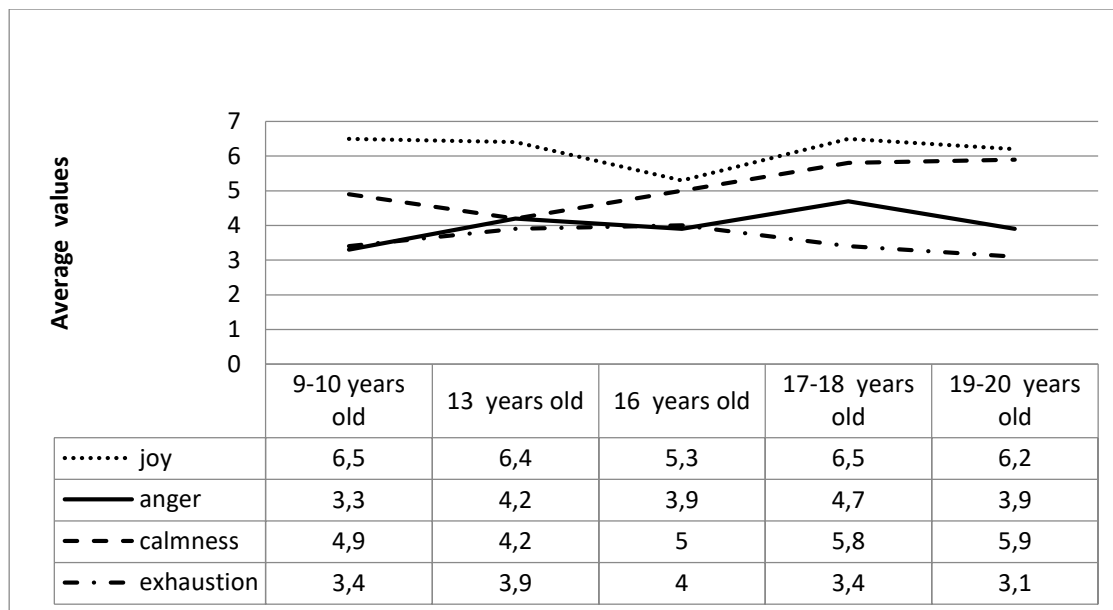


Figure 2. Age specificity of mental states joy, anger, calmness, exhaustion intensity flow.

The comparative analysis of mental states experience intensity according to the gender sign has been carried out. It has been revealed that young men's objective characteristics of states joy, anger, calmness are more intensive than those of girls'. Whereas the state exhaustion of young men is less intensive than girls have, i.e. it testifies to young men's stronger tiredness.

According to subjective characteristics, the following specificity has been revealed. The description of the state joy is of more content-richness at the age of 10 years old, the state anger is more content-rich at all ages but at the age of 21 years old, the state exhaustion is content-rich at all ages but 16 years old. Subjective descriptions of the state calmness have no age distinctions according to content-richness. The comparative analysis according to gender signs showed that girls have a content-richer joy; the state anger, on the contrary, is more expressed in boys. Subjective descriptions of the state calmness and exhaustion according to their content-richness have no gender distinctions.

So, the statistical analysis showed age and gender specificity of mental states intensity and content-richness. The significance of the revealed distinctions is * $p \geq 0,05$, ** $p \geq 0,01$, *** $p \geq 0,001$.

Mental states organization structures

Then, considering the structure of mental states, we will note the following (Tab. 1).

Table 1. Mental states organization structures

IOS	9-10 years old	13 years old	16 years old	17-18 years old	19-20 years old	women	men
Joy	472	242	203	114	199	511	218
Anger	390	239	253	168	64	406	418
Calmness	580	242	271	225	112	487	475
Exhaustion	561	137	162	341	46	527	484

Note: IOS – an index of organization structure.

The index of mental states organization structure represents a complete picture of interdependent characteristics. The bound indexes create a dense, steady formation that results in a high organization of the image structure. Mental states joy, anger, calmness, exhaustion have a more difficult organized structure at preadolescent age (9-10 years old). The “loosened” structure of the state joy has been found at the age of 17-18 years old, as for other states – at the age of 19-20 years old. The comparative analysis according to the gender sign showed that states joy, calmness, exhaustion of girls/maids have a more complex bound structure; boys/young men reveal a high index of the state anger structure organization.

Thus, at the senior teenage age boys/young men have a less steady and complete structure of states of all modalities and mental activity levels, i.e. states can easily move to another energy level, transform and are subject to influences more. The degree of mental states characteristics coherence is various in various age groups. The high density of states correlative structures testify to their integrity.

DISCUSSION

Taking into account that the violation of teenager’s socialization process is considered one of the reasons of their deviant behavior [5; 11; 12; 13], teenagers’ further growing and behavior is determined by a variety of psychophysical, intellectual, social and emotional development [14; 15; 16]. Teenager’s disposition to deviation may be determined by the aspiration to become a part of the group irrespective of their normative preferences [17; 18; 19], exacerbated feeling of injustice [20]. All these factors determine these or those mental states of the teenager who have extreme lability, and they change often and sharply. The regulation of mental states depends on many reasons, including age and individual features [21]. Everything depends on the mood caused by this or that state – state of health, appetite, efficiency, etc. [5].

In this regard it is necessary to investigate the specificity of mental states flow in pre-adolescent children when latent deviation is formed, in teenagers when deviation may have latent and expressed character, and in individuals of youthful age when the revaluation of values takes place and the steady outlook is formed.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the results showed that at the age of 9-10 years old the studied mental states flow softly, smoothly; the characteristics of a separately taken state have similar values. The structure of mental states has a complex organization, indexes are densely interdependent. All this testifies to the stability and steadiness of states at this age. Teenage and youthful age differ in characteristics instability, a wide range of their values. The mental states flow reveal uncontrollability, rashness of behavior up to quick temper in the state of anger, also melancholy and sadness of experiences in the state of calmness and exhaustion. The structure of teenagers and young men/girls' states "is loosened", poorly organized that testifies to instability and variability of states.

Young men and girls' mental states flow have distinctions. Young men's states joy, calmness, anger are more intensive, but their structure is less organized. Also young men are getting tired more easily.

So, the research has showed that teenagers' mental states are unsteady, they flow in an expressed intensive way that may make the basis of latent deviation or become the reason of deviant response to the situation.

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