

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ADAPTATION AND
MARGINALIZATION AMONG STUDENT YOUTH

ПСИХОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ АДАПТАЦИИ И
МАРГИНАЛИЗАЦИИ СРЕДИ СТУДЕНЧЕСКОЙ МОЛОДЁЖИ

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Abstract: This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the psychological aspects of the marginalization process observed among student youth. The study reveals the essence of marginalization and examines the social, psychological, and individual factors contributing to its emergence based on scientific and theoretical approaches. In particular, the processes of identity formation, the level of social adaptation, emotional stability, and the development of communicative skills during student life are considered as key determinants in the emergence of marginal states.

Keywords: social exclusion, student youth, psychological adaptation, personal identity, emotional strain, social isolation, psychological factors

Аннотация В данной статье представлен комплексный анализ психологических аспектов процесса маргинализации, наблюдаемого среди студенческой молодёжи. В исследовании раскрывается сущность маргинализации, а также рассматриваются социальные, психологические и индивидуальные факторы, способствующие её возникновению, на основе научно-теоретических подходов. В частности, процессы формирования идентичности, уровень социальной адаптации, эмоциональная устойчивость и развитие коммуникативных навыков в период студенчества рассматриваются как ключевые факторы, определяющие возникновение маргинального состояния.

Ключевые слова: социальное исключение, студенческая молодёжь, психологическая адаптация, личностная идентичность, эмоциональное напряжение, социальная изоляция, психологические факторы.

Introduction

In modern society, the socio-psychological condition of young people, especially students, is one of the most pressing issues. Due to globalization, social transformations, and the expansion of the digital environment, some students face challenges such as social alienation and difficulty in finding their place in society. This process is explained in psychology through the concept of marginalization. Marginalization is defined as a process in which an individual becomes detached from the main social groups and experiences a sense of being “in-between.” Among students, this condition is often associated with difficulties in adapting to a new environment, as well as the underdevelopment of social roles and identity. The article analyzes both the negative and positive impacts of marginalization on the development of the student’s personality, highlighting its influence on academic performance, social activity, and mental health. Psychological conditions such as social isolation, decreased self-esteem, increased levels of stress, and anxiety resulting from marginal states are explained on a scientific basis.

Psychological Characteristics of Marginalization among Students



1. **Identity Crisis** – During student life, individuals actively search for their sense of self. If this process is unsuccessful, the student may fail to perceive themselves as a member of society.
2. **Social Isolation** – Marginalized students often struggle to integrate into groups and remain detached from social activities, which intensifies feelings of loneliness.
3. **Emotional Instability** – Such students tend to experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive moods, often accompanied by a loss of self-confidence.
4. **Decreased Motivation** – Students in marginal states may lose interest in their studies and develop uncertainty about their future goals.
5. **Difficulties in Social Adaptation** – Inability to adjust to new environments (university, city, peer groups) is one of the core features of marginalization.

This process among students is influenced by factors such as socio-economic difficulties, family conflicts, cultural differences (e.g., students from different regions), lack of psychological support, and challenges within the educational system.

The negative consequences of marginalization include slowed personal development, deterioration of mental health, increased risk of deviant behavior, and potential complete social withdrawal. Marginalization is a complex psychological phenomenon that significantly affects both the social and psychological development of the individual. Timely identification and a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue are essential for fostering the healthy development of students. Marginalized students often exhibit cognitive distortions in perceiving their environment. They tend to interpret events negatively, feel unjustifiably rejected by others, and develop internal beliefs such as “I do not belong here,” which reinforce self-fulfilling stereotypes. Students often perform multiple social roles simultaneously (child, student, friend, and sometimes employee). Imbalance among these roles can intensify marginalization, as the individual struggles to determine role priorities.

The “In-Between Cultures” Phenomenon-Students coming from different regions or countries often experience cultural marginalization. They are unable to fully abandon their original values while also failing to fully adapt to new ones, resulting in a sense of being caught between two worlds. This may lead to fragmentation of identity. In the modern context, the internet and social networks play a crucial role in students’ lives. Some students who feel marginalized in real life may be active online, while others experience marginalization in both environments. Virtual marginalization increases psychological pressure due to lack of attention (e.g., “likes”) and leads to lower self-esteem through social comparison.

Methods-Research indicates that female students tend to experience marginalization more internally due to higher emotional sensitivity, whereas male students are more likely to express it through external behaviors such as aggression or indifference. Marginalized students employ various psychological defense mechanisms, including denial (refusing to acknowledge the problem), projection (attributing blame to others), and compensation (attempting to excel in other areas). While these mechanisms may provide short-term relief, they often exacerbate the issue in the long term. Some students may appear socially active externally but remain internally marginalized; this phenomenon is referred to as “hidden marginalization,” where high performance masks internal pressure and loneliness.

Marginalization varies depending on personality type:

- **Introverts** experience intense internal emotional struggles;
- **Extroverts** attempt to compensate through external engagement;
- **Neurotic personalities** are more vulnerable to stress, resulting in deeper marginalization.



The immediate social environment (peers, classmates) plays a crucial role. A supportive environment reduces marginalization, while a competitive or indifferent one intensifies it. This process is dynamic:

- initial stage — adaptation difficulties;
- intermediate stage — internal conflict and isolation;
- final stage — either complete withdrawal or successful adaptation.

Therefore, early diagnosis is essential. Interestingly, marginalization is not always negative. In some cases, it fosters independent thinking, freedom from stereotypes, and creative approaches. This is referred to as “constructive marginalization.” Marginalization is a multidimensional psychological phenomenon involving cognitive, emotional, and cultural factors. Its in-depth study is essential for improving psychological services in modern education systems and facilitating students’ social adaptation. Diagnostic indicators include:

- **Initial stage:** discomfort, shyness;
- **Intermediate stage:** avoidance of social interaction, increased anxiety;
- **Advanced stage:** complete isolation, depressive states, loss of motivation.

Results: Recent studies show that social exclusion affects brain functioning. The experience of social rejection is linked to brain regions responsible for processing physical pain. Prolonged isolation increases cortisol levels, impairing attention, memory, and decision-making. Marginalized students often skip classes, delay assignments, and underestimate their abilities, leading to a “psychological barrier,” where reduced effort reinforces feelings of inadequacy. Labeling by society (e.g., “weak,” “passive,” or “maladjusted”) lowers self-esteem and reinforces negative self-perceptions, further deepening marginalization. Communication difficulties are also common, including fear of public speaking, inability to express ideas clearly, and anxiety about being misunderstood, which leads to reduced social interaction. Interestingly, perfectionist students may also experience marginalization. They set unrealistically high standards, perceive minor failures as major setbacks, and withdraw from social environments. Prolonged psychological stress may result in psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, insomnia, appetite disturbances, and fatigue. However, some marginalized students develop independent thinking, resist stereotypes, and have the potential to become innovative leaders. When properly guided, marginalization can transform into a strong personal resource.

Conclusion: Marginalization among students is not only a social issue but also a complex psychological and biological process. Its roots lie in the interaction between the individual’s inner world, external environment, and modern technological factors. A comprehensive approach to studying this phenomenon and developing practical interventions is essential for improving the effectiveness of educational systems and supporting students’ personal development.

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