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## PSYCHOLOGICAL CAUSES AND FACTORS OF BOREDOM IN ADOLESCENCE

### ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ПРИЧИНИ ТА ЧИННИКИ ВИНИКНЕННЯ НУДЬГИ В ЮНАЦЬКОМУ ВІЦІ

The article provides a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of "boredom", which manifests itself in a state of severe mental discomfort, which develops due to the lack of external and internal activity, the weakness of self-regulatory mechanisms. It is noted that under certain conditions in the social environment, boredom can lead to various manifestations of delinquent behavior.

The conclusions of theoretical works of scientists on the category of "boredom" in foreign and domestic psychology are considered. The main approaches in the study of the phenomenon of boredom are analyzed, which emphasize that boredom provokes aggression, risky behavior, attraction to extreme sports and such addictive behaviors as alcohol and drug abuse. It is established that for the first time we paid attention to the concept of boredom in the psychoanalytic direction in which boredom is considered as a state of instinctive tension, in which there is no instinctive goal. In the works of the classics of human psychology, boredom is seen as an innate characteristic that is inherent in all people and determines human behavior and development, and the tendency to boredom is inherent in young people who seek substitutes for true values.

The causes of boredom are considered, namely the predictability and monotony of events, the lack of interesting incentives in the environment, social isolation, loneliness, sensory deprivation and monotony.

It was found that the behavioral signs of boredom in educational activities are a decrease in cognitive interest, superficial attention, increased fatigue, indiscipline; weak motivational involvement and low initiative in the classroom.

Scientific ideas about psychological factors of boredom are expanded, the model of which includes ideas about boredom, value-semantic sphere, personal characteristics, external and internal conditions.

**Key words:** boredom, causes of boredom, tendency to boredom, factors, conditions, adolescence.

У статті здійснено теоретичний аналіз феномену «нудьга», що проявляється у стані вираженого психічного дискомфорту, який розвивається у зв'язку з дефіцитом зовнішньої та внутрішньої активності, слабкістю механізмів саморегуляції. Зазначається, що за певних умов у соціальному середовищі нудьга може спонукати до різних проявів деліквентної поведінки.

Розглянуто висновки теоретичних напрацювань учених про категорію «нудьга» у зарубіжній та вітчизняній психології. Проаналізовано основні підходи в вивченні феномена нудьги у яких акцентується увага на тому, що нудьга провокує агресію, ризиковану поведінку, потяг до екстремальних видів спорту і такі різновиди залежної поведінки як зловживання алкоголем та наркотиками. Встановлено, що вперше звернули увагу на поняття нудьги в психоаналітичному напрямку в якому нудьга розглядається як стан інстинктивної напруги, при якому відсутня інстинктивна мета. В роботах класиків гуманітарної психології нудьга розглядається як вроджена характеристика, яка властива всім людям та визначає поведінку і розвиток людини, а схильність до нудьги властива молоді, яка здійснює пошук заміників справжніх цінностей.

Розглянуто причини виникнення нудьги, а саме передбачуваність та одноманітність подій, відсутність цікавих стимулів у навколишньому середовищі, соціальна ізоляція, перебування на самоті, сенсорна депривація і одноманітність.

З'ясовано, що поведінковими ознаками нудьги в освітній діяльності є зниження пізнавального інтересу, поверхнева увага, підвищена стомлюваність, недисциплінованість; слабка мотиваційна включеність та низька ініціатива на заняттях.

Розширено наукові уявлення про психологічні чинники нудьги до моделі яких входять уявлення про нудьгу, ціннісно-смыслову сферу, особистісні характеристики, зовнішні та внутрішні умови.

**Ключові слова:** нудьга, причини нудьги, схильність до нудьги, чинники, умови, юнацький вік.

**Formulation of the problem.** Today, young people are acutely experiencing negative emotions due to ever-increasing information pressure, and Ukrainian society is undergoing socio-economic changes, which exacerbates the crisis of personal adaptation. Methods of decision-making in conditions of uncertainty include cognitive and emotional-personal regulation and assessment of the consequences of choosing alternatives. The analysis of the scientific literature repeatedly proves that the consequence of the crisis of personal development

is the refusal to seek the potential of self-realization, the difficulty of choosing and constructing young people's individual life path. Socio-cultural tensions are growing in society, aggressive tendencies are intensifying, which are largely due to the stratification of society, increasing the pace of life, expanding requirements for people as a subject of education and work, increasing the risk of destructive behavior of young people. The outlined alarming signs indicate the weakening of the adaptation barriers of modern youth. One of the important causes of

psychological vulnerability and behavioral deviations is boredom, the connection of which with the psychological factors of personality is not defined today. The outlined issues become relevant precisely because the study of the causes and factors of propensity to boredom is the emergence of opportunities for targeted psychological assistance for the development of social well-being and overcoming difficulties in self-realization of students.

**Analysis of basic research and publications.** The scientific achievements of various scientists emphasize that boredom provokes aggression, risky behavior, attraction to extreme sports and such addictive behaviors as alcohol and drug abuse (A. Gordon, R. Wilkinson [11], A. Frankova [10]). The solution of these issues is impossible without theoretical and empirical studies of the structure of boredom and psychological factors of propensity to it, because the outlined issues are insufficiently studied.

Within the psychoanalytic field, one of the first to draw attention to the phenomenon of boredom was Otto Fenichel [7] in *On the Psychology of Boredom* (1934). The scientist considered boredom as a state of instinctive tension in which there is no instinctive goal. As a result, the bored person seeks the object "not to direct the actions of his instinctive impulses at him, but rather to help the object find the instinctive purpose it lacks." The individual understands that he is missing something, but does not realize what exactly. Fenichel argues that boredom occurs when a person is banned from a desired activity. Thus, O. Fenichel emphasizes the importance of internal and external constraints in the development of boredom [7]. Note that Freud did not consider boredom as a specific symptom, explaining the lack of interest in things loss of libido.

Boredom as a psychological response to the development of society is considered by E. Fromm, for the scientist, the search for thrills and novelty, do not become solutions to boredom, but only distract from it, which, he claims, lasts unconsciously [9]. E. Fromm noted that in relation to boredom there are several categories of people: people who are not characterized by boredom, because they respond productively to external influences; chronically bored – people who constantly need additional influence and systematically feel the need to change stimuli; patients are people who are not able to respond productively to external influences.

Describing the category of "chronically bored", E. Fromm explains that these are people who are "doomed to chronic boredom, but because they know how to compensate for it, they do not realize it." The category of "sick" includes people who periodically "acutely aware of their mental state, but often they do not even realize that they are sick." For the "chronically bored" and the "sick", boredom is associated with the dissatisfaction they feel with life. However, according to E. Fromm, "chronically bored" with the help of appropriate stimuli can get rid of boredom, and people who belong to the category of "sick", "it is impossible to get rid of even its symptoms" [9, p. 156-157].

W. Frankl considers the desire to find and realize the meaning of life as an innate characteristic that is

inherent in all people and determines human behavior and development. According to W. Frankl, the problem of boredom is exacerbated as the material prosperity of society increases and over time, meaning and vitality are lost. Experiences of this kind are dangerous distortions of social behavior, changes in personality attitudes, general mental disorganization. According to W. Frankl, it is young people who are most prone to these risks, as they are looking for substitutes for true values. According to W. Frankl, the growth of youth alcoholism and crime is connected with senseless leisure [8].

A.V. Ganchak [1] analyzes the age-specific state of boredom by analyzing the peculiarities of the tendency to boredom. Particular emphasis should be placed on the relationship between boredom and professional performance (G.K. Maroldo [12], J.F. O'Hanlon [13]). In labor research, the meaning of boredom is shifted into the space of factors of labor productivity. Researchers have found that with increasing pace of work, the feeling of boredom decreases significantly. In addition, the ability to work in a team increases resilience to boredom.

In order to form the basis for further thorough research it is necessary to conduct a theoretical analysis of the problem of boredom in psychological science.

**Presenting main material.** Interesting for our study is the opinion of British scientist Peter Toohey, who emphasizing the uniqueness of boredom sees its purpose and meaning as emotions in a person to analyze the circumstances of his life and realize that he needs to change. Along with this, it separates boredom from other emotions: sadness, fear, anger, surprise. P. Toohey gives boredom a secondary role, along with other social emotions: sympathy, embarrassment, shame, guilt, jealousy. In his book, professor P. Toohey points out the main causes of boredom – the predictability and monotony of events and draws attention to the seriousness and destructiveness of chronic experiences of this emotion [14].

In our opinion, it is important to add Philippe Zimbardo, who emphasizes that the basic human need to belong to something comes from the desire to unite with others, and the need for stimulation stimulates research and risky adventures, but can also make us vulnerable to boredom when we end up in a place where nothing happens. Boredom, in turn, can be a strong motivator of the actions observed in the guards of the night shift of the Stanford Prison Experiment [2, pp. 285-286]. Philip Zimbardo, analyzing his fundamental Stanford prison experiment, which consisted of college students, said that "both prisons were bored with long night shifts when things calmed down. Boredom was very motivating to have fun. Both groups of guards decided to do something interesting, something fun. As a result, security guards increasingly mocked and humiliated prisoners and culminated in a series of sexual, homophobic acts against prisoners" [2, p. 432]. That is, boredom is defined as a negative phenomenon and under certain conditions in the social environment can lead to various manifestations of delinquent behavior.

In his scientific achievements K.K. Plato, considers boredom as a mental state. The scientist points to

the lack of interesting stimuli in the environment as the causes of boredom. According to K.K. Platonov, boredom is manifested in a decrease in the level of clarity of consciousness [3].

Psychological features of boredom are revealed in studies of its relationship with other emotional states, such as anxiety, hopelessness, loneliness, hostility, anger. Studying the relationship between states of boredom and anxiety, it was found that both of these states can occur as a result of inconsistency between the requirements of the social environment and personal experience, knowledge, skills. The mechanism of boredom and anxiety is different [5]. Boredom occurs when a person's abilities exceed the situational possibilities for their manifestation, while anxiety arises when the social environment demands more from a person than he can fulfill.

Among the external conditions of boredom can be identified some limitations of the external environment, such as social isolation, loneliness, sensory deprivation [3], as well as monotony as the most common cause of boredom (E. Tardier). Scientists J. Sommers and S.J. Vodanovich emphasize that one of the internal conditions of boredom is physical illness [15]. Physical exhaustion and fatigue can be objective causes of boredom. Conditions that cause mental exhaustion should be singled out. According to E. Tardier, fatigue of any origin is always reflected in the inner world of person in the form of disorder in the mind, mental emptiness [3].

Adolescents are prone to boredom, as the desired and real conditions of students in the classroom are significantly different. Among the desired emotions in students there is joy, interest and curiosity [5]. In the real educational process, these emotional experiences are rarely traced, giving way to the frequency of boredom, indifference and fear.

Considering the problem of boredom through the prism of time, it should be noted that the main factor that mediates the perception of time, are the emotional state of man. Importantly, depending on the tone of the mental state, the subjective speed of time may increase or decrease. Time flows more slowly for a bored person, because in a state of boredom there is a distortion of perception of time. Moreover, people prone to boredom are characterized by inaccuracy in estimating time intervals: for them, one minute subjectively lasts 30-40 seconds [5].

Behavioral signs of boredom in educational activities may include: decreased cognitive interest, distraction and superficial attention; increased fatigue and indiscipline; weak motivational involvement and low initiative in the classroom; willingness to move on to any topic of conversation, if it is not related to the content of the lesson [1].

The emergence and development of boredom in educational activities is largely due to the pedagogical style and manner of teaching. If the teacher demonstrates stereotypes in the content of educational material, the reaction of students may be boredom. This kind of teaching does not involve lively discussion of topics of lesson and defense of one's own opinion. The lack of novelty, creativity, non-standard in this way of teach-

ing, combined with the rare use of humor and jokes by the teacher, leads to boredom in students. The learning process itself is perceived as difficult and uninteresting rather than exciting. This indicates the situationality of boredom and its habit, rather than the loss of cognitive interest in general [1].

Modern researchers also address the phenomenon of educational boredom. According to M.V. Polyakova, boredom is a symptom that signals the uncomfortable conditions of educational work [4].

We share the opinion of A. Hanchak, who emphasizes the importance of studying the phenomenon of boredom from the standpoint of pedagogy and teaching methods, as well as psychological support that should be aimed at preventing boredom in adolescence.

According to the results of an empirical study of students' boredom, conducted in the 2019-2021 academic year, it is emphasized that students experience boredom in educational activities more often than interest [1].

The state of boredom is reflected in various spheres of human activity, in particular in work and education. Boredom is seen as a factor in productivity. The working conditions that lead to boredom in the workplace are identified, including: low pace of work, work alone, a lot of free time during the working day, young age and low-skilled work. The youth of employees is one of the risk factors for boredom in the process of work.

Adolescence is characterized by increased interest in self-knowledge, assessment of their abilities and skills [1]. Reflecting on his character traits, analyzing his strengths and weaknesses, the young man compares his own personality traits and characteristics of his social environment. Specific features of adolescence affect the emotional sphere. The affective area in adolescence becomes much wider and more diverse in content, increases sensitivity to the nuances of human feelings. On the emotional side, adolescence is characterized by a variety of emotional reactions and ways of expressing emotional states [5]. Changes also apply to the value-semantic sphere of personality. Adolescence is primarily sensitive to the formation of sustainable values and meanings. It is at a young age that the evaluation of views on the attitude to the surrounding reality and oneself takes place. As a result, the basic life positions conditioned by these views and the readiness to apply them in real life change. A conscious attitude to life is formed, its semantic content is determined. According to W. Frankl, questions about the meaning of life become especially important and relevant in adolescence [8]. The vital forces, the opportunities for self-realization that open up, set young people up in search of meaning and life prospects. There is an interested, excited attitude to the individual meaning of life.

Theoretical analysis of the outlined issues shows the multidimensionality and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of boredom, as well as its social importance. In this regard, the study of the tendency to boredom becomes especially important. Psychology defines the tendency as a willingness or tendency to act, to respond appropriately to environmental influences. Research aimed at finding factors that predict the emergence,

development and transformation of boredom is of practical importance.

Studying the characteristics of people prone to boredom, it was found that resistance to boredom and monotonous work is mediated by temperamental personality characteristics. It was also found that people prone to boredom are characterized by low social activity, underdeveloped communication skills and low academic and work performance. Among the conditions are also affective reactions and unmet needs [1; 5].

E. Tardier argues that boredom is experienced by those who are highly sensitive to changes in their own inner world. They experience it deeply and for a long time and carefully analyze their emotional states, able to poetize grief and joy. It is quite probable that boredom is also present in passionate, insatiable people who live their lives intensively, are able to resort to sensual pleasures and are constantly looking for "sharp emotions" [6].

Thus, the psychological factors of propensity to boredom are distinguished, which include: communicative, emotional properties of the individual, as well as the properties of self-regulation. We emphasize that the value-semantic organization of the individual is the most important factor, because it is responsible for the feeling of emptiness or fullness of life.

The considered positions of well-known psychologists allowed us to build a hypothetical model of psychological factors of propensity to boredom (Fig. 1).

The presented model reflects the unity of external and internal conditions, psychological factors that are transformed into a state of boredom. Based on the analysis of different ideas about the phenomenon of boredom in our study, we follow the following definition: boredom – a multidimensional mental state of severe mental and somatic discomfort that develops due to lack of external and internal activity, weakness of self-regulation mechanisms.

The tendency to boredom is understood by us as a relatively stable disposition due to such psychological factors as the idea of boredom, value and life orientations, personal characteristics. When planning the research, we took into account the difficulties associated with the empirical study of the phenomenon of boredom and predisposition to it.

**Conclusions from the study.** The theoretical and experimental directions considered by us have enriched the category of boredom in psychological science. Boredom in adolescence is experienced as an asthenic emotional state, accompanied by feelings of loneliness and dissatisfaction with social and material environment, reduced motivation and weakening of mental and

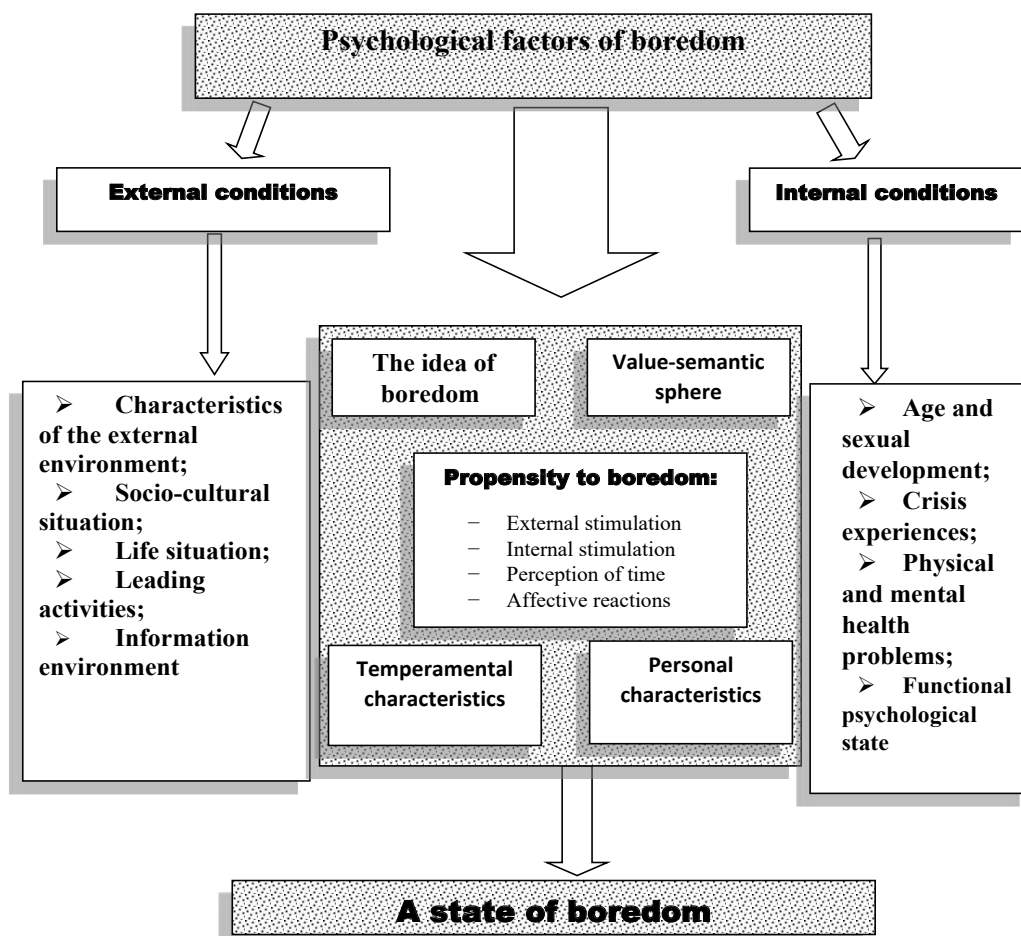


Figure 1. Model of psychological factors of propensity to boredom

somatic tone. The article clearly identifies the causes of boredom and builds a model of psychological factors of propensity to boredom. The tendency to boredom in adolescence is characterized by such psychological factors as external and internal conditions, the idea

of boredom, personal characteristics, value-semantic sphere. Prospects for further research are the empirical study of psychological factors of boredom and the development of psychological support to prevent boredom in adolescence.

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