THE INFLUENCE OF THE FAMILY ON YOUTH INFANTILIZATION

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Annotation: *This article analyzes how the psychological atmosphere within the family is one of the main factors contributing to the infantilization of youth. It highlights the negative impact of situations where parents, under the pretext of protecting their children, prevent them from becoming independent and proactive.*

Keywords: *Infantilization, family influence, upbringing, financial independence, responsibility, stereotype, authoritarian family, education system, digital technologies, mass culture.*

The family is one of the primary and most significant environments in the formation of an individual's personality, and it directly influences the process of youth infantilization. From the early years of a child's life, family upbringing lays the foundation for their worldview, ability to make independent decisions, and determination of their place in society. If a child is not taught independence within the family, receives excessive protection, or is not given the opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility, they may face difficulties in presenting themselves as independent individuals in society later in life.

In many families, children grow up overly protected. Parents tend to anticipate and fulfill their every need, and instead of allowing them to solve minor problems independently, they immediately step in with solutions. This hinders the development of initiative and problem-solving skills in the child. As a result, when the child grows older, they struggle to make independent decisions and often develop a habit of waiting for parental guidance, even in simple life matters. Such a style of upbringing contributes to the youth being unprepared for real life and increases the likelihood of them developing into infantilized individuals.

The style of upbringing within the family also has a direct impact on the process of infantilization. For instance, in authoritarian families, parents control every action of their children and do not allow them to express their own opinions or make independent decisions. As a result, young people raised in such environments often struggle to develop independent thinking and tend to wait for instructions from adults or society.

On the other hand, in families where excessive freedom is granted, children may not develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. This can lead to traits such as carelessness and irresponsibility.

Another important factor is economic dependence. When parents try to fulfill all of their children's needs instead of teaching them financial independence, young people may not feel the urgency to transition into an economically independent life. This weakens their ability to live autonomously and results in prolonged dependence on their parents. In some societies, parents take the approach of "We will build your future for you," which can hinder the youth's ability to start an independent life.

The psychological atmosphere within the family is also a major factor contributing to infantilization. Sometimes, under the guise of protection, parents discourage their children from taking initiative. Phrases such as "You can't do this," "You're still too young," or "I'll make the best decision for you" limit young people's ability to make responsible choices and reduce their self-confidence. This increases their insecurity and strengthens their tendency to rely on others' opinions in any situation.

In some families, gender stereotypes also play a role in the infantilization process. For example, overprotecting girls and instilling the belief that "you will depend on your husband in the future, so independence is not important," or providing boys with every convenience without expecting responsibility, can hinder the development of accountability. Such stereotypes obstruct young people's adaptability to real life and weaken their sense of social responsibility.

Preventing and addressing infantilization requires a comprehensive approach, in which the roles of the family, the education system, and society are of great importance. In order to shape young people into independent and responsible individuals, it is essential to develop their life skills, support their sense of social responsibility, and establish a strong psychological foundation.

Key factors in preventing infantilization include:

Firstly, proper organization of family upbringing is one of the most crucial elements in preventing infantilization. Parents should avoid excessive overprotection and instead allow their children to make independent decisions and take on life responsibilities. From early childhood, it is important to teach children to carry out small tasks and to hold them accountable for the outcomes of their actions[1]. For example, in order to develop financial independence, children should be taught financial literacy and guided in managing their personal budgets.

Secondly, the education system plays a leading role in combating infantilization. Schools and higher education institutions should focus on developing young people's critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent

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[1] Twenge, J. M. (2017). iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy–and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood. Simon & Schuster.

decision-making skills. Traditional knowledge-based instruction alone is not sufficient—practical activities, training on solving real-life problems, and opportunities to participate in group projects should be incorporated. Additionally, to prepare youth for social life, it is advisable to implement special programs aimed at developing leadership and entrepreneurial skills.

Thirdly, ensuring active participation of young people in social life is crucial in preventing infantilization. Society must support youth by involving them in various initiatives and projects, and by creating opportunities for them to make responsible decisions. For instance, participation in volunteer programs, social initiatives, and youth organizations enables young people to understand their civic duties, develop teamwork skills, and build the capacity to make important decisions.

Fourthly, to foster psychological maturity, it is essential to enhance young people's ability to cope with life challenges and manage stress. Many infantilized individuals tend to avoid difficult situations or rely on others instead of confronting problems. Therefore, psychological training, personal development courses, and motivational programs should aim to strengthen their resilience, self-confidence, and willpower[2].

Fifthly, the influence of modern mass media and the internet on young people's consciousness also significantly contributes to the process of infantilization. Many young individuals become overly dependent on entertainment content on social media, neglecting important issues in real life. To address this problem, it is necessary to produce motivational and educational content through the media and encourage youth to engage with scientific, cultural, and educational materials.

Sixthly, at the state level, special programs should be implemented to prevent infantilization. For example, initiatives such as preparing youth for the labor market, supporting their economic independence, and promoting startups and entrepreneurial efforts can yield effective results. Additionally, providing assistance to young families in overcoming life challenges and offering parental guidance services focused on effective upbringing are also of great importance.

In conclusion, the process of infantilization is shaped by individual characteristics, family upbringing, and the broader cultural values of society. Factors such as overprotection during childhood, lack of responsibility, excessive pampering, or economic dependency often underlie this phenomenon. Therefore, teaching youth to be independent, giving them the opportunity to manage their

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[2] Qodirov, N. (2021). *Sociology of Youth.* Tashkent: Uzbekistan National Encyclopedia Publishing House.

own lives, and fostering a strong sense of responsibility are essential in preventing infantilization.

Preventing and overcoming infantilization requires a long-term and comprehensive approach. Only through the joint efforts of families, society, the media, and the government can young people be shaped into independent, responsible, and mature individuals who actively contribute to the development of society.

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