

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING THE DEGREE OF SOCIAL ISOLATION OF CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

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Abstract

Social intelligence includes processes such as adaptability to socialisation, self-esteem, and spiritual attachment. Due to a lack of awareness of social feedback loops, especially in children with visual impairments, feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem may permeate their behaviour.

Keywords: Isolation, loneliness, adequate assessment, low self-esteem, social circle, emotional loneliness, attachment to adults, measurement of loneliness.

Introduction

The level of loneliness experienced by visually impaired children studying in special schools begins to manifest itself as a result of low self-esteem, anxiety, shyness, fear of rejection, frustration, and rigidity of thought. In children with visual impairments, the subjects of our study, loneliness manifests itself as an imbalance between the personal self and the outside world. This discomfort is accompanied by negative emotions and often leads to crises. They often fail to find like-minded, spiritually minded people within a narrow social circle, leading to significant dissatisfaction with communication and the environment. In our study, we effectively used the "Determining the Level of Loneliness" method to identify and address emotional difficulties in the socialisation of children with visual impairments and to determine the level of isolation from their existing social environment.

This method allows us to determine the degree of socialisation difficulties in children with visual impairments, i.e., the level of loneliness, anxiety, and stress.

Unfortunately, almost all students with visual impairments experience social isolation. The modified loneliness scale serves to confirm the hypotheses presented in our study, in particular, to obtain reliable and effective diagnostic statistics for a comprehensive assessment of the emotional, social, and psychological state of children with visual impairments.

Feelings of loneliness manifest differently in primary school-aged children with visual impairments and adolescents in a quantitative analysis conducted among primary school-aged children with visual impairments ($M = 42.77$) and middle school-aged children with visual impairments ($M = 59.30$). The differences between them were significant ($p \leq 0.001$), and the level of reliability was statistically significant. Compared with primary school-aged children, adolescents are characterised by an increased need for socialisation, but difficulties in socialisation due to their deficiencies lead to increased feelings of loneliness. These indicators indicate the need for a more in-depth analysis of age-related changes in the psyche, psychological functions, and interactions of our subjects with external factors (family, school, friends). This is mainly explained by the fact that self-reconstruction, awareness, and increased activity in performing collective functions, that is, integration, come to the fore during adolescence. In elementary school, children's socialisation occurs within narrow circles, primarily limited to family, teachers, and peers. The underdeveloped need for peer acceptance results in a relatively low level of loneliness for this age. High levels of attachment to adults in children of this age lead to an increased sense of helplessness in their independent actions in various situations, causing profound stress. As a result, characteristics such as a refusal to act independently, fear of new environments, isolation from various peer activities, and a preference for constant internal communication over real-life interactions develop.

In adolescents with visual impairments, this process occurs with significant difficulties. They experience additional challenges due to their disorder, and as a result, reduced social and external activity due to limitations in interpersonal relationships leads to increased levels of subjective isolation. Consequently, they are highly likely to feel isolated from society, as if they lack emotional support. During adolescence, a proper understanding of one's own identity—that is, a growth in interests, beliefs, career choices, and attempts to define one's place in society—increases reflexivity, manifested by a growth in interests, beliefs, career

choices, and attempts to define one's place in society ("What kind of person should I become"). However, the problems associated with their impairments to a certain extent cause additional difficulty, resulting in increased feelings of loneliness compared to children with visual impairments in primary school age. Particularly during adolescence, the increased need for horizontal communication (peer group interaction) becomes an obstacle to independent action. As a result, loneliness scores begin to increase. Furthermore, it is no exaggeration to say that adolescents compare themselves to their peers, which leads to increased loneliness due to the intensified feeling of "I can't do it." Furthermore, the perception and experience of loneliness depend on external factors and social forces, as well as individual personality traits. It is worth noting that social forces such as changes in modern social structure, unprecedented advances in information technology, and cultural changes can also influence the perception and experience of loneliness. For example, with the development of social media and virtual communication, we see that children with visual impairments feel more connected to others, and that the delay in meeting these needs has a strong impact on the experience of alienation and isolation in the real world. Overall, loneliness is a complex phenomenon that can be viewed as a statistical characteristic of society, but it is also linked to external factors and individual personality traits. While adolescents' leadership is characterised by a heightened need for communication, children with visual impairments experience difficulties in social interaction. Specifically, they are unable to fully communicate with their peers because they have difficulty perceiving facial expressions, gestures, and body language visually. This leads them to feel rejected. From a practical perspective, this outcome indicator highlights the need for educators and psychologists to strengthen support methods for loved ones when working with adolescents with visual impairments. Specifically, developing social skills and providing ongoing support for peer interactions can help reduce feelings of loneliness, improve inclusive education, and enhance interpersonal relationships. Parents and educators, especially in inclusive education settings, believe it is important to use tools such as "You're no worse than others, you just learn differently" when raising children with visual impairments, allowing the child to act independently without overprotecting them.

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