



PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS FOR INCREASING THE INDEX OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AND SOCIOCULTURAL SAFETY IN THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The article presents information about the study of the problem of the educational environment and the influence of environmental safety on the student, the methodological and theoretical foundations of the psychological safety of the educational environment. The empirical results of E. N. Gilemkhanova “Index of sociocultural safety of schoolchildren” were obtained through the scales of socio-psychological vulnerability, socio-psychological disintegration, virtual autism and are presented on the basis of the data. An analysis of differences in the index of social and cultural security among high school students is also given.

Keywords: Educational territory, territorial security, psychological safety of the educational environment, index of sociocultural safety of schoolchildren, socio-psychological vulnerability, socio-psychological disintegration, virtual autism, victimization scale, auto-aggression scale.

Introduction

In our country, the adoption of the state policy on youth and, on the basis of this legal framework, the psychological support of young people, the provision of adequate working conditions for the younger generation, as well as addressing socio-economic issues such as identifying threats to the safety of students in the educational environment and eliminating them to create a safe space, are of great importance for ensuring a decent life for them in the future.

Today, developing and implementing socio-psychological methods to identify threats to the safety of students in the educational environment and to eliminate these threats is recognized as an urgent issue.



Since the second half of the 20th century, interest in studying the impact of the educational environment and territorial safety on learners has steadily increased. Russian psychologists have conducted scientific research on issues related to students' personal development within the context of educational safety (V.A. Yasvin, V.V. Rubtsov, V.I. Slobodchikov, and others). In their studies, the psychological aspects of designing modern educational institutions to create safe and peaceful environments, as well as factors that support students' socialization and acquisition of social experience, have been examined.

The methodological and theoretical foundations of psychological safety in the educational environment have been explored by S.E. Chirkina, R.A. Akhmerov, K.S. Bazhin, and E.V. Tsareva. They have widely addressed the problem of psychological safety in interpersonal relationships among participants in the educational environment.

Approaches to the typology and modeling of the educational environment as psychological-pedagogical research methods are found not only in the works of Russian psychologists but also among scholars in our country. These studies have primarily focused on the influence of conditions created within the educational space on the learning process.

O.S. Abdukakhkharova, emphasizing that the educational environment is an essential condition for organizing learning activities, conducted research on how the environment in preschool institutions dynamically develops and stimulates the emergence and development of children's knowledge, interests, voluntary qualities, and emotions. Although she did not specifically address the issue of a safe territory, she expressed important considerations regarding the influence of a harmoniously organized environment on cognitive development.

In our republic, the issue of psychological safety in the educational process has not been sufficiently studied scientifically. If the mechanisms of this problem were to be clarified, it would help enhance the protection of students' dignity, psychological well-being, positive worldview, and self-attitude from various threats.

Receiving education and upbringing in a safe environment creates great opportunities for revealing a learner's hidden potential and for enabling a person to live a positive, meaningful life as a fully developed individual. A school environment that can meet students' needs, ensure complete safety, and

minimize potential risks is considered a safe territory. Establishing such territories requires several conditions. One of these is that the school building has specific design features—for example, minimizing wide open spaces, providing lockers or storage areas where students can keep their belongings and feel secure, avoiding long straight corridors, and so on.

In order to determine the existence of the safe territory mentioned above, the socio-cultural safety of school students was assessed. The study involved upper-grade students of School No. 61 in the Kuva district.

The research used E.N. Gilemkhanova’s questionnaire **“Index of Socio-Cultural Safety of School Students.”** A total of 347 students participated in the study.

The questionnaire consists of 35 statements, each offering four answer choices: “yes,” “probably yes,” “no,” “probably no.” Respondents were required to choose the option that best corresponds to their own typical behavior or emotional attitude. The study was conducted anonymously, and only demographic information about the respondents was collected.

Using the questionnaire, the socio-cultural safety index of school students was identified across three scales:

- **societal-psychological vulnerability,**
- **societal-psychological disintegration (fragmentation),**
- **virtual autism (withdrawal).**

Based on these scales, the socio-cultural safety index was calculated. The test results were obtained by scoring each scale and computing the integrative indicator. The results for each scale were analyzed within the class system. Initially, the **“societal-psychological vulnerability”** scale was examined.

Table 1. Results Obtained on the “Socio-Psychological Vulnerability” Scale

Class	Normative Indicators (12–20 points)	Deviation Indicators (Below 12 points)
9th grade	56.25% (N=72)	43.75% (N=56)
10th grade	69.16% (N=83)	30.83% (N=37)
11th grade	66.66% (N=66)	33.33% (N=33)
Total	63.68% (N=221)	36.31% (N=126)

The results of the “Socio-Psychological Vulnerability” scale were analyzed by dividing them into normative and deviational indicators in accordance with the questionnaire key. The socio-psychological vulnerability scale includes two subscales. The first subscale is **victimization**, which refers to an individual’s



tendency to become a victim of a crime. It represents a stable characteristic of becoming a victim even in neutral circumstances that pose no threat to others.

The second subscale is **auto-aggression**, which refers to conscious or unconscious actions aimed at causing physical or psychological harm to oneself. From the perspective of psychoanalysts, auto-aggression appears as a defense mechanism.

Thus, it was identified that **36.31%** of the participants possess victimization and auto-aggressive characteristics. Such students exhibit tendencies to harm themselves or to become potential victims of criminal incidents. They are more likely to develop **telemania** (excessive dependence on television programs), tendencies toward alcohol consumption, **taxicomania**, interest in risky sexual behavior, as well as a strong inclination toward extreme sports. For such students, conducting **psychocorrectional interventions** is recommended.

According to the table, age-related differences can also be observed. Ninth-grade students demonstrated lower normative results (56.25%) compared to students in grades 10 and 11 on the “Socio-Psychological Vulnerability” scale. This result can be explained by insufficient life experience and lack of psychological awareness. It was revealed that **43.75%** of ninth-graders perceive themselves as socio-psychologically vulnerable within the school environment.

Tenth-grade students recorded the **highest normative indicators** on the socio-psychological vulnerability scale. Compared to eleventh-grade students, more than 3% of tenth-graders indicated that they are not socio-psychologically vulnerable.

According to the overall results, **63.68%** of the participants reported feeling free and comfortable within the school environment. The remaining **36.31%** indicated a high susceptibility to risky situations that may arise in the educational setting. The manifestation of such characteristics can be explained by susceptibility to external influences, passivity, and heightened sensitivity toward social interactions. This, in turn, leads to difficulties in cooperating with others within the educational environment and may manifest as self-destructive tendencies—engaging in harmful behaviors toward oneself, feelings of guilt, irritability, and elevated anxiety.

The main features of this behavioral pattern include: loss of integrity, a negative self-concept, heightened sensitivity to external appearance and external influences. Individuals also demonstrate a strong external locus of control and reluctance to take responsibility. Additionally, they struggle to develop effective coping

strategies (the ability to adapt to stress, manage difficult life situations, and maintain emotional balance). One of the primary causes of this issue is low self-esteem and submissiveness.

Socio-psychological vulnerability leads to a lack of subjective viewpoint, social passivity, apathy, and a dominance of maladaptive processes in socio-psychological adaptation.

The next scale, “Socio-Psychological Disintegration (Fragmentation),” presents the results of participants, which are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Results Obtained on the “Socio-Psychological Disintegration (Fragmentation)” Scale

Class	Normative Indicators (11–18 points)	Deviation Indicators (Below 11 points)
9th grade	63.28% (N=81)	36.71% (N=47)
10th grade	76.66% (N=92)	23.33% (N=28)
11th grade	78.78% (N=78)	21.21% (N=21)
Total	72.33% (N=251)	27.66% (N=96)

The results of the “**Socio-Psychological Disintegration (Fragmentation)**” scale, unlike those of the “Socio-Psychological Vulnerability” scale, showed a higher level of normative indicators. According to the findings, **72.33%** of the participants were free from socio-psychological disintegration, indicating a low level of *individual psychological introject* (desires or attitudes imposed on a person from external sources rather than rooted internally).

The remaining **27.66%** of the participants demonstrated a high level of psychological introject. Such students tend to experience alienation, withdrawal from the surrounding environment, lack of orientation toward social support and expectations, and weak goal-directed behavior. Among students who scored high on the socio-psychological disintegration scale, irritability and difficulty integrating into group activities were commonly observed.

Class-wise analysis revealed that **9th-grade students** showed the highest level of socio-psychological disintegration (36.71%) compared to students in higher grades. The lowest disintegration indicators were recorded among **11th-grade students**. From this, it can be inferred that students in higher grades demonstrate stronger abilities to express their opinions and actively participate in the educational environment. They are also more capable of forming subjective

judgments about changes in the school environment and injustices within the group.

The results obtained from the “**Virtual Autization (Social Withdrawal)**” scale of the “**Index of Socio-Cultural Safety of School Students**” questionnaire are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Results Obtained on the “Virtual Autization (Social Withdrawal)” Scale

Class	Normative Indicators (12–20 points)	Deviation Indicators (Below 12 points)
9th grade	52.34% (N=67)	47.65% (N=61)
10th grade	71.66% (N=86)	28.33% (N=34)
11th grade	72.72% (N=72)	27.27% (N=27)
Total	64.84% (N=225)	35.15% (N=122)

Based on the above table, the results of the “**Virtual Autization (Social Withdrawal)**” scale were analyzed. It was found that **9th-grade students** had the highest proportion of individuals exhibiting virtual autization, with a rate of **47.65%**, which is **12.5% higher** than the overall average of the participants in the study. Students who fall into the deviation category on the virtual autization scale are characterized by low activity in collaborative interactions at school and low effectiveness in social relationships.

In such students, communication breakdowns lead to conflictual interactions with peers and adults. Their life activities within the surrounding environment are often limited to anonymous interactions, and they face difficulties in self-identification. Their level of self-expression within a group is generally low.

In contrast, **10th- and 11th-grade students** showed relatively fewer individuals with virtual autization traits. The research indicated that the characteristic of social withdrawal can be replaced by the ability to express oneself within a group as students gain experience and develop relevant skills.

Based on the results across all three scales, the “**Socio-Cultural Safety Index**” of the school students was determined.

Table 1. Indicators of Socio-Psychological and Cultural Safety among Students (9th–11th Grades)

Grade Level	Social-Psychological Vulnerability	Social-Psychological Disintegration (Fragmentation)	Virtual Autism (Social Isolation)	Socio-Cultural Safety Index
9th grade	56.2	63.3	52.3	57.3
10th grade	69.2	76.7	71.7	72.5
11th grade	66.7	78.8	72.7	72.7
Overall (average)	63.7	72.3	64.8	66.9

According to the diagram, the **socio-cultural safety index** of school students was determined based on three scales. Among these, the highest normative indicator was recorded on the “**Socio-Psychological Disintegration (Fragmentation)**” scale. According to this scale, **72.3%** of the participants in the socio-psychological study were free from disintegration and demonstrated a low level of *individual psychological introject* (desires or attitudes imposed by others rather than rooted internally). Additionally, **11th-grade students** achieved the highest normative results on this scale.

On the “**Virtual Autization (Social Withdrawal)**” scale, **64.8%** of participants showed normative indicators. However, it was noted that **9th-grade students** scored below the overall normative level, with their results **12.5% lower** than the average.

The overall school results for the “**Socio-Psychological Vulnerability**” scale were the lowest among all scales. It was found that **63.7%** of the participants exhibited **victimization**—a tendency to become a victim of a crime—and **auto-aggression**, i.e., activities aimed at causing physical or psychological harm to oneself, consciously or unconsciously. Such students do not feel safe in the educational environment and use these tendencies as a defense mechanism.

Overall, the **Socio-Cultural Safety Index** was determined to be **66.9%**. This indicates that nearly **67%** of the participants perceive their learning environment as safe. These students are able to fully utilize their internal potential, actively participate in community activities and personal development, and demonstrate the capacity to accurately evaluate situations, showing maturity and resilience in various contexts.



The “**Socio-Cultural Safety Index of School Students**” methodology possesses all necessary psychometric properties and allows the questionnaire to be used to assess risks within the educational environment. In educational institutions with a safety index, first, the principle that education should be imbued with humanistic values is applied as a core guideline. This includes fostering cooperative relationships, maintaining a safe environment, respecting personal freedom and independence, upholding children’s rights, promoting children’s development and success, shaping moral outlooks, and similar values. Second, the idea of relying on structured educational technologies and regulating teacher-student interactions based on clear rules is emphasized.

The issue of psychological safety, the protection of children’s rights, and the humanization of education are directly or indirectly addressed in numerous scientific studies. According to A. Maslow, a founder of humanistic psychology, the need for safety (alongside physiological needs) occupies a fundamental position in the hierarchy of human needs. Representatives of humanistic psychology argue that without at least partially satisfying the need for safety, it is impossible to develop self-understanding and personal growth.

According to the internationally renowned scholar E. Fromm, the development of humane relationships among people depends on the presence of conditions in society that ensure and protect individual safety. Therefore, it can be confidently asserted that the concept of protection is closely linked to the concept of safety, and the existence of safe conditions is a crucial factor for the full realization of personal development.

This issue is especially relevant in the psychological and pedagogical domain, as creating psychologically comfortable and safe educational conditions determines the full maturation of the individual.

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