



## Causes of Social Loneliness, The Influence of the Family on the Mental State of Urban and Rural Adolescents

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**Abstract:** In psychology the phenomenon of "loneliness" became the subject of attention of scientists relatively recently. The main psychological approaches to the study of loneliness appeared and formed in the USA: psychodynamic, phenomenological, system-wide, sociological interactive, intimate, cognitive-biheurlogical, cognitive [2,7]. In domestic psychology the problem of loneliness is much more rarely a separate subject of study. The following studies are interesting: the phenomenon of social loneliness and its socio-psychological features, socio-psychological conditions of overcoming and correcting loneliness of teenagers; factors that cause feeling of loneliness in teenagers; personal qualities of urban and rural teenagers[6,8]. Analyzing scientific literature on psychology, it becomes clear that there is no comprehensive approach to the problem of social loneliness in adolescence. During the analysis of theoretical and applied sources we identified the components of adolescent social loneliness: cognitive, emotional, behavioral.

**Key words:** social loneliness, adolescence, urban, rural areas.

**Topicality:** Social loneliness of adolescents is one of the urgent problems of our modern society. Taking into account the fact that adolescence is important for the development of personality in general and is basic in the process of socialization, the problem of adolescent social loneliness in modern conditions requires special attention from science and practice [1,9].

Social loneliness is a state when a person thinks that he/she has been abandoned, excluded, pushed away, not appreciated. He sees himself as an extra person, a loner, an outsider [4]. In our society nowadays there is a dynamic growth in the number of adolescents who are in a state of social loneliness, leading to depression, conflict, preventing the establishment of trusting relationships, forming a negative type of self-perception and leading to a sense of psychological breakdown, mental distress [3,5]. Taking into account the researchers' results, we came to the conclusion that it is necessary to supplement the model of experiencing social loneliness with a motivational and volitional component [1,10]. In our opinion, the four manifestations of loneliness to a greater extent reflect the processuality of experiencing social loneliness. Thus, on the basis of the principles of the system

approach, there is a need to consider social loneliness as a single system, the integrity of which is provided by the fact that the experience of social loneliness functions on the basis of interaction of several components: emotional, cognitive, motivational-will and behavioral [9]. The big cities and the countryside are of considerable interest for understanding the essence of social loneliness in the adolescent environment in the conditions of global transformation processes taking place in the Russian society. Experience shows that social changes play the most significant role in the fate of adolescent children.

Over the past ten years there has been a narrowing of the "adolescent space" in big cities and the countryside, which negatively affects the realization of children's interests and needs. Against the background of a sharp decline in the educational impact of the family and its role in the socialization of adolescents, the reduction of opportunities for their education in the community leads to an increase in the number of adolescent children who experience social loneliness [2,11].

Adolescents from the city (Navaji) and rural areas took part in our study. The analysis of the literature on the problem of the research showed that, despite the fact that the problem of the psychology of adolescence and the psychological components of social loneliness is sufficiently developed in science, the features of adolescents' social loneliness in big cities and rural areas remain insufficiently studied.

**The aim of the study** was to investigate the characteristics of social loneliness in adolescents in the big city and rural areas.

**Research Methods:** In the study, we assumed that the level of social loneliness among adolescents living in rural and urban areas would be different, namely: the level of social loneliness among rural adolescents is lower than that among adolescents living in a big city. We studied adolescents aged 17-19 years old. The total number was 240 adolescents. All patients underwent pre-psychiatric and psychiatric outpatient inpatient care in the Navajo region. The research was conducted in the period of 2020-2023. To solve the tasks of the study various questionnaires were used to investigate the level of subjective feeling of loneliness, as well as techniques to determine the level of self-esteem and allowing to assess interpersonal emotional connections in the group. There were 134 adolescents living in the city and 106 adolescents living in the countryside. We identified 111 adolescent boys (61 in the city, 50 in the countryside) and 129 girls (73 in the city, 56 in the countryside). We had 42 teenagers from foster and single-parent families (16 from rural areas and 26 from urban areas), 33 teenagers from families with many children (19 from urban areas, 14 from rural areas), and 18 teenagers from families with one child living in urban areas. The following questionnaires and research methods were used as diagnostic tools.

- Loneliness Scale questionnaire (D. Russell, L. Peplo, M. Ferguson) to study the level of subjective feeling of loneliness;
- T. V. Dembo and S. Я. Rubinstein's technique (modified by A. M. Prikhodzhan) to determine the level of self-esteem;
- Statistical evaluation of differences in the mean values of the components of social loneliness of urban and rural teenagers was done using Student's t-test to examine differences in the mean values of the two samples that were distributed according to the normal law. The distribution was checked for normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov criterion. The data were processed using a computer program (SPSS Statistics 15.0,

Let us present the results of the study of the formation of the components of social loneliness of urban and rural adolescents. At the initial stage we will present the results of the study of the cognitive component of adolescents' social loneliness.

Based on the results presented in Table 1, we can conclude that there is a high level of loneliness among urban adolescent boys and girls, as evidenced by the average values. Among older adolescents with a high level of loneliness most of them are girls. They tend to feel abandoned, lost, they assess their existence as detached from themselves, they have difficulties in building communicative relationships with classmates and family members, their social interaction is rather superficial. They look for a close friend among their peers. A high level of loneliness prevails among the younger adolescent boys.

Comparing the indicators of the subjects in urban and rural areas, we come to the conclusion that in the conditions of the big city, most families are characterized by a lack of parent-child communication. High workload of parents at work, their additional employment outside of their main job contribute to the fact that teenagers are deprived of parental attention and control most of the time. Another reason for the lack of full-fledged communication in the family is Internet addiction among teenagers and their parents, who visit social networks in their free time outside of work. Children "go head over heels" into the expanse of the "World Wide Web," hiding from family conflicts, compensating for their own loneliness. These determinants contribute to the emergence and consolidation of a sense of loneliness among urban adolescents. The processing of the results of the study revealed a correlation between the emergence of feelings of loneliness among adolescents and their closeness to family members. Adolescents who have an unfriendly and indifferent family relationship are more susceptible to loneliness than those who have a warm relationship with their parents. The absence of one parent also leads to feelings of loneliness in the adolescent. The most significant factor in the occurrence of loneliness in adolescents is the loss of a parent through divorce than the loss of a parent through death. Rural teenagers live in settlements with small populations, where locals know everything about each other. This justifies the fact that children spend a lot of time in live communication with their peers. Due to the limited availability of supplementary education services, kids create interest groups more often and are less alone than urban kids. Urban adolescents see the positive aspects of being alone. This condition gives an opportunity to rest from a large number of people and forced communication: at school, on the street, in transport, etc.

Thus, a comparative analysis of the obtained results allows us to conclude that the high level of loneliness of adolescents in the big city is due to the lack of proper parental attention and control, and children spend a lot of time in social networks.

Rural adolescents devote a lot of time to lively interaction with peers and joint work activities with family members, hence, they are more sociable and friendly and less prone to the state of loneliness. Rural adolescents are characterized by an "openness" of communication. The lack of large social and cultural differences between residents, the small number of real and possible contacts make communication between rural schoolchildren quite close and covering all aspects of life. The smaller the village, the more inclusive the communication of its inhabitants. After conducting the technique, the subjects were asked qualifying questions, the analysis of the results of which is presented below.

Urban teenagers see loneliness as: emptiness of soul, when parents do not need you, absence of close friends, lack of understanding by family members, when a person has no one to turn to for help or advice, although every urban school has a psychologist position or an opportunity to call a helpline. While most rural adolescents are sure that loneliness is a lack of understanding from their loved ones. Some urban adolescents noted loneliness as a positive factor, being alone with oneself you can do your favorite things despite the daily routine and rules accepted in the family. Thus, urban adolescents see the positive aspects of loneliness and experience positive emotions when they are alone. Rural adolescents consciously avoid loneliness. For girls, the problem of loneliness is interconnected with the sphere of interpersonal relations. This circumstance determines the emergence of negative experiences of loneliness and the desire to avoid the situation of loneliness. Rural adolescents noted

that any person can be lonely, in the opinion of respondents lack of friends, isolation, poor health lead to loneliness. Urban children call a person who has no family lonely, the cause of loneliness can be the nationality of the person, creative people become lonely, low self-esteem, temperament peculiarities. The main reasons for their loneliness urban respondents name: lack of true friends, a loved one, attention from loved ones, as well as lack of forebears and siblings, idleness and boredom, appearance (predominantly girls). Most rural adolescents single out lack of understanding on the part of their parents, and lack of a loved one.

In order to overcome the state of loneliness, the guys take different actions: urban teens: play computer games, communicate on social networks, watch TV, call friends, listen to the player, write "diary", walk with friends, go to the pool or gym, sleep, read books; rural teenagers: walk with friends, call friends, communicate on social networks. Let us present the results of the study of the characteristics of free time spent by the adolescents under study. 37.3% of urban teens have four to five hours of personal time on weekdays, 29.2% of rural teens have one to two hours; 77.6% of urban teens and 50% of rural teens have free time on weekends. More than 50% of urban adolescents are allowed by their parents to move around the city unaccompanied by an adult, to use public transportation. At the same time, 16.4% of urban adolescents are reluctant to use such a resource as mobility, which is available to them. 26.8% of teens very rarely visit other districts of the city; 42.5% go several times a month (to visit relatives), and only a third of the teens regularly move around the city on their own to visit institutions of additional education.

It is important to note that the desire to socialize drives teenagers not only in their choice of leisure time outside the home, but also in their practice of using the Internet. 87.3% of urban and 24.5% of rural respondents noted that while staying at home, the kids prefer to visit social networks. In responses to the question about the purpose of using the Internet, the leading options are those that are not related to learning activities (82%). Only a third of schoolchildren seek information for studies and extracurricular activities, and even fewer teenagers watch educational videos.

Using the Dembo-Rubinstein and J. Moreno methodology, we investigated the behavioral component of social loneliness, which includes the level of self-esteem and social status of adolescents. Analysis of the results presented in Table 2 leads to the following conclusions: the status of rural adolescent boys is significantly higher compared to their urban peers ( $p < 0.01$ ). It is more difficult for adolescents living in a big city to occupy a high status position in the reference group. Urban adolescents take into account the material well-being of their peers' families (e.g., having pocket money, modern gadgets, expensive things, etc.) and their school performance (e.g., classmates hardly communicate with the "excellent" and "favorite" adolescents). Those urban teens who take an active part in extracurricular activities (e.g., volunteer movement, winner of a contest or competition) become popular. Urban teenagers' peers prioritize their interests and hobbies. For example, if a teenager is into Internet games, the boys accept him into their social circle. In rural areas, adolescents take into account the status of the parents of their peers with whom they communicate (teacher at school, chairman of the village council, etc.). Peers who live in the neighborhood or with whom they have family ties are accepted into their social circle. Urban and rural adolescent girls have a higher status than their male peers. It should also be noted that the social status of girls regardless of the territory of residence is in the zone of uncertainty ( $t_{\text{empir.}} = 2.1$ ,  $t_{\text{critical.}} = 2.61$ ), so we can say that the obtained results are at the level of significance  $p < 0.05$ . The post-study data showed that adolescent students experiencing loneliness can occupy any status position, i.e., they can have any number of choices, both positive and negative. Some adolescents are dissatisfied with their position in the classroom regardless of what status they have, i.e., lonely.

**Conclusions:** Thus, the social status of rural adolescents is higher than that of urban kids. Adolescents try to improve or maintain their status in society by any available means, and in urban conditions these processes are most acute. Social status in the peer group (preferred, stars) is conditioned by striving for success. Among urban adolescents, neglected and preferred status prevails, which is explained by the motive of avoiding failure and the fear of being rejected.

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