

## **Integrated Prevention of Social Dependencies in Adolescents Through the Scenario Method**

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**Abstract:** This article provides a rationale for the need to take an integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies in adolescents. Through this approach, the authors fine-tune the determination of the phenomenon of prevention of social dependencies. The authors bring to light the potential of the scenario method in resolving the above objective. The authors describe the theoretical and practical aspects of scenario planning, concretize its objects and provide a rationale for the method's effectiveness in studying the processes of origination and operation of social dependencies in adolescents and projecting the process of their prevention. The authors provide plots and scenarios for the interaction of pedagogues and parents within the "field of cooperation", "field of building up cooperation potential" and "field of alienation". The authors provide recommendations on pedagogues' and parents' use of forestalling and correcting scenarios in respect of model scenarios for the origination of dependencies generated by adolescents. If implemented in the practice of preventive work at educational and social institutions, the material presented in this article may help boost the effectiveness of work on forestalling dependent behavior in adolescents in respect of various objects of reality.

**Key words:** Social dependencies in adolescents • Integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies • Scenario method • Scenarios for the origination of social dependencies • Social-pedagogical scenarios

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last few decades, social dependencies have become an increasingly common phenomenon in the adolescent environment and are becoming a major barrier to socialization by adolescents. Today we are dealing with an ever-widening spectrum of objects of dependency (alcohol, nicotine, game, computer and TV dependencies, Internet dependency, shopoholism, mobile dependency, technomania, fanaticism, etc.) and their negative impact on the personality of adolescents and their immediate entourage. Traditional approaches towards forestalling social dependencies are normally based on identifying the ins and outs of specific dependencies and seeking prevention methods relevant to them. The growing spectrum of adolescent dependencies and the general nature of their origination reinforce the need for taking an integrated approach to their prevention, while the probabilistic character of their origination and

entrenchment and the dynamic changeability of parameters with the availability of certain generic models substantiate the effectiveness of applying the scenario method in exploring the mechanisms underlying the origination of dependencies and developing ways of preventing and correcting them.

### **MATERIALS**

The general theoretical-methodological basis for developing an integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies in adolescents is formed by a number of psychological theories of addictive behavior mechanisms [1-6]. Studies related to prevention of drug addiction, smoking, alcohol abuse, Internet dependency, game dependency and other social dependencies [7-12]. Studies related to the conceptual filling of the socio-cultural context of formation of one's spirituality [13].

## METHODS

To explore the processes of origination and operation of social dependencies in adolescents, the authors employ the methods of imitational modeling and scenario planning, which help identify model scenarios and bring to light general mechanisms for the origination of social dependencies.

In developing our scenario method as a method for preventing social dependencies, we have relied on the scenario approach to psychological-pedagogical and economic studies [14-18].

Our methodology for scenario planning is based on conceptual tenets and principles featured in the study "An Integrated Approach to Prevention of Social Dependencies in the Adolescent Environment" [19].

## DISCUSSION

Prevention of social dependencies in adolescents implies a set of pedagogical activities aimed at forestalling and minimizing the risks of origination of social dependencies; identifying the reasons and conditions for deviations in the behavior of adolescents which increase the risk of origination of social dependencies; seeking and applying various ways and methods to prevent and avert unconstructive adolescent behavior in respect of objects of dependency.

Analysis of the display of various social dependencies in adolescents and analysis of the practice of correctional and preventive work and relevant scientific literature indicates that taking an integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies works best using the scenario method, which is based on identifying general mechanisms and model scenarios for their origination and developing uniform correctional and preventive scenarios.

We propose the following scenario planning objects for the process of preventing social dependencies in adolescents:

- Behavioral adolescent scenarios in respect of the object of dependency;
- Behavioral adolescent scenarios in respect of the subject of prevention (pedagogues, parents);
- Behavioral pedagogue scenarios which facilitate or impede the origination and entrenchment of social dependencies in adolescents;
- Behavioral parent scenarios which facilitate or impede the origination and entrenchment of social dependencies in adolescents;

- Social-pedagogical scenarios generated by school pedagogues with a view to forestalling social dependencies in adolescents;
- Social-pedagogical scenarios generated by parents with a view to forestalling social dependencies in adolescents;
- Scenarios for the interaction of parents and school pedagogues in pursuing preventive goals.

The use of the scenario method in resolving objectives in prevention of social dependencies in adolescents is effected using the following algorithm: 1) determination of the object of strategizing; 2) analysis of the baseline situation (extraction of key issues and identification of factors that must be taken into account in strategizing); 3) identification of the model plot (the baseline and normative situations); determination of the trajectory of the shift from the baseline situation to the normative-value situation; determination of co-subordinate goals in the development of institutional interaction; 4) construction of a scenario for resolving issues (determination of the role positions of the participants in institutional interaction; determination of the meanings, values and stratagems of the interaction participants; determination of effective governing impacts).

One of the crucial aspects of prevention of social dependencies is the study of the process of their origination in the consciousness and behavior of adolescents. The origination of social dependencies in adolescents can take place under six model scenarios [20].

**Scenario 1:** Dependency as an outcome of interaction with an asocial group/person. This scenario is launched by the adolescent's aspiration to match his/her entourage, oppose them in no way and be accepted within the reference group. Social dependency is formed here as a consequence of seeking reference objects (groups, particular persons) and joining a referent group of asocial orientation, where dependent behavior is a way to achieve and maintain acceptance within the group.

**Scenario 2:** Dependency as a response to a provocation. This scenario is predicated on the curiosity of the adolescent, his/her desire to experience new sensations. When an underage person gets in a provocative environment which lures him/her into "meeting" the object of dependency, he/she grows willing to personally perceive the attractive aspects of interaction with that

object and next, through trying it, master new behavior models. Gradually, the adolescent loses control of the interaction with the object of dependency.

**Scenario 3:** Dependency as a means of deriving pleasure. The reason behind the origination of social dependency in adolescents under this scenario is a distorted system of values, in which deriving pleasure prevails over self-actualization. The adolescent does not enjoy the types of activity which used to make life exciting before, make him/her happy, or allay "boredom". Here, new addictive trials are permeated with the desire and aspiration to experience vibrant sensations and a special pleasure, get one's spirits up, have fun, jolt oneself out of the "dull greyness" of life. At some point, the adolescent realizes the possibility of using one of the objects to derive pleasure and poly-addictive trials, consequently, are followed by the choice of one object- the object of entrenched dependency.

**Scenario 4:** Dependency as a way to escape one's life problems. Under this scenario, social dependency originates as a result of the adolescent's unpreparedness to cope with life's difficulties. In complicated life situations, one chooses strategies to avoid contact with reality or escape resolving issues. One's escape into dependency functions as a compensative mechanism.

**Scenario 5:** Dependency as an outcome of the change of a constructive way of interacting with the object of dependency to an unconstructive one. The cause behind the origination of social dependency under this scenario is one's lack of skill in projecting one's interaction with the object of dependency and foreseeing its possible negative effects. First the adolescent builds constructive ties with the potential object of dependency. At some point, one discovers other attractive ways to interact and then gradually loses control over one's behavior and the latter takes on the characteristics of dependent behavior.

**Scenario 6:** Dependency as a way to express the adolescent's protest. Under this scenario, the adolescent has a negative or opposing attitude towards his/her closest social entourage, is not willing to adapt to reality and takes out his/her attitude towards a parent or a teacher on the entire moral-esthetic coordinate system provided by them.

The dependency origination mechanisms common to the above scenarios are the "motive-to-goal shift", emotional-positive conditioning, social contagion, substitution, compensation for negative emotions and unblocking.

The process of putting together preventive work with adolescents through the scenario method involves analysis of behavioral scenarios generated by them and arrangement of relevant social-pedagogical scenarios.

Behavioral adolescent scenarios can be nominally divided into four groups: unproductive, lowly productive, moderately productive and highly productive. Incipient social dependencies are reinforced in adolescents by unproductive and lowly productive scenarios. Unproductive scenarios include the "Confrontation" and "Ignoring" scenarios and lowly productive- "Pseudo-cooperation" and "Attracting attention through inadequate ways".

Social-pedagogical scenarios can be differentiated into counter-scenarios, which are aimed at complete neutralization of active adolescent scenarios; correctional scenarios, oriented towards pedagogical correction; developing scenarios, associated with the development of active adolescent scenarios and actualization of their positive aspects; reinforcing scenarios, aimed at entrenching active adolescent scenarios. An example of counter-scenarios could be "Shake-up", "Counter-provocation", "Dependency demotivator" and "Parent provocation". Correctional scenarios would be: "Don't let others control you", "Parity with others", "New outlook", "Unveil yourself", "Hidden undertone", or "From conflict to concord". Developing and reinforcing scenarios are "Sensible consumer", "Learn to enjoy life", "Problems as fate's challenges" and "Constructive interaction with the object of dependency".

Taking a scenario approach to prevention is based on identifying model scenarios for the origination of social dependencies in adolescents and selecting relevant scenarios for forestalling and correcting them. Thus, for instance, the scenario "Dependency as an outcome of interaction with an asocial group/person" could be matched with the forestalling scenario "Don't let others control you" and the correcting scenario "Shake-up". The behavioral adolescent scenario "Dependency as a response to a provocation" requires using the forestalling scenario "Sensible consumer" and the correctional scenario "Counter-provocation". Of a forestalling nature in respect of the scenario "Dependency as a means of deriving pleasure" is the scenario "Learn to enjoy life" and of a correctional nature is the scenario "Demotivator".

The effectiveness of preventive work largely depends on arranging the interaction between pedagogues and parents. Scenarios for such interaction can be arranged within the “field of cooperation”, “field of building up cooperation potential” and “field of alienation”. The “field of cooperation” is characterized by such plots as cooperation and co-creation, the “field of building up cooperation potential”-adaptation, compromise, consulting, help and support, participation and engagement, agreements and the “field of alienation”-dismissal, confrontation, pseudo-cooperation, counteracting. “Field of alienation” plots can develop under scenarios for domination by the pedagogue (“Brainwashing”, “Ignoring”, “Misorienting the parents”) or domination by parents (“Shunning responsibility”, “Defying the school”, “Parent Attack”, “Horses in a single harness hurtling headlong into the abyss”, “Swan, Crawfish and Pike”).

## RESULTS

The authors have provided a rationale for the need to take an integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies in adolescents; brought to light the theoretical and practical aspects of putting such an approach into practice; identified the potential of the scenario method in preventing social dependencies; described addictive behavioral adolescent scenarios; identified unproductive stratagems for these scenarios; proposed scenarios for the pedagogical interaction of teachers and parents in resolving objectives in prevention of social dependencies in adolescents.

The authors propound a scenario-planning algorithm. The authors identify and describe model scenarios for the origination of social dependencies in adolescents: “Dependency as an outcome of interaction with an asocial group/person”, “Dependency as a response to a provocation”, “Dependency as a means of deriving pleasure”, “Dependency as a way to escape one’s life problems”, “Dependency as an outcome of the change of a constructive way of interacting with the object of dependency to an unconstructive one” and “Dependency as a way to express the adolescent’s protest”; the authors determine unproductive stratagems for these scenarios. The authors identify the mechanisms underlying the origination of dependency: “the motive-to-goal shift”, emotional-positive conditioning, social contagion, substitution, compensation for negative emotions and unblocking.

The authors classify by the degree of productivity and correlate with behavioral adolescent scenarios model plots and social-pedagogical scenarios for the interaction of pedagogues and parents in resolving objectives in integrated prevention of social dependencies.

## CONCLUSION

Scenario planning is a universal instrument that helps implement the imitational modeling of the processes of origination and entrenchment of social dependencies in adolescents and their prevention. When developing strategy and tactics for preventing social dependencies in underage individuals, it is important to determine baseline behavioral adolescent scenarios, assess the risk of origination of dependencies and put together relevant social-pedagogical scenarios.

The advantages of taking an integrated approach to prevention of social dependencies in adolescents through the scenario method over taking a traditional approach lie in that the former lets us identify the more sustainable, hence predictable, lines in the behavior of adolescents; overcome the rigidity, fixedness of psychological-pedagogical correction of dependent adolescent behavior, when organizers of preventive work, following traditional schemes, do not take account of the conditions for the origination of social dependencies and the special aspects of their entrenchment in adolescents.

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