

OVERPROTECTION AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY TRAITS IN CHILDREN

Buvakhanova Madina

Abstract

This article examines the impact of parental overprotection on the development of narcissistic personality traits in children. It analyzes current psychological research on the role of overprotection, parental idealization, and the limitation of a child's independence. It concludes that overprotection alone does not "make a child narcissistic," but when combined with parental arrogance, a lack of appropriate boundaries, and inadequate autonomy, it can become a risk factor for the development of narcissistic traits.

Keywords: Narcissism, overprotection, upbringing, parental idealization, self-esteem, parent-child relationships.

Introduction

The family is the most important environment for the development of a child's personality. Parenting style significantly influences the development of self-esteem, emotional stability, and social skills. In recent years, increasing research has focused on the origins of narcissistic personality traits and the role of family upbringing in their development. It is widely believed that excessive love and care automatically lead to the development of narcissism. However, modern scientific evidence suggests a more complex picture. Overprotection and its psychological characteristics: Overprotection is a parenting style in which parents exert excessive control over their child's life, strive to protect them from any difficulties, make decisions for them, and limit the development of independence.

- The main signs of overprotection are: constant control;
- overprotection;
- lack of age-related independence;
- solving a child's problems by adults;
- minimizing the child's responsibility for his own actions.

parental idealization is a much stronger factor in the development of narcissistic traits. Overvaluation is a situation when parents convince a child that he or she is superior to other people and deserves special treatment, regardless of their actual achievements. A longitudinal study by Eddie Brummelman and colleagues showed that it is parental exaltation, not a lack of warmth, that predicts an increase in narcissistic traits in children.

At the same time, overprotection can enhance this process, since the child: 1. rarely faces the consequences of their own mistakes; 2. develops a sense of exceptionality; 3. tolerates criticism



worse; 4. expects special treatment from others; 5. has difficulties developing empathy. However, the presence of overprotection does not mean the inevitable development of narcissistic personality disorder.

Possible psychological mechanisms

Excessive care can contribute to the development of narcissistic traits through several mechanisms: 1. Limitation of independence. 2. The child does not learn to make decisions and overcome difficulties independently.

3. Formation of a sense of exceptionality. If parents constantly emphasize the child's peculiarity without objective grounds, a belief in their own superiority is formed. 4. Low frustration tolerance. Lack of experience overcoming obstacles makes the child less resilient to failure.

5. Dependent self-esteem. Self-esteem becomes dependent on the constant admiration and approval of others.

Limitations of modern research:

Most experts emphasize that narcissism is multifactorial. In addition to upbringing, significant factors include: genetic predisposition, temperament, family emotional climate, psychological trauma, and social environment. A meta-analysis of recent studies also shows that adverse childhood experiences and various forms of abuse are associated with pathological narcissism, particularly its vulnerable form.

Practical recommendations

To prevent the development of narcissistic traits, experts recommend: combining emotional support with reasonable boundaries; encouraging the child's independence; praising efforts and real achievements, not perceived superiority; developing empathy and respect for others; allowing the child to face the natural consequences of their decisions. Conclusion: Current scientific evidence does not support the assertion that overprotection alone makes children narcissistic. However, overprotection combined with parental superiority, a lack of boundaries, and limited independence can contribute to the development of narcissistic personality traits. A parenting style that combines emotional warmth, support, reasonable demands, and respect for the child's autonomy is considered optimal.

References

1. Brummelman E., Thomaes S., Nelemans SA et al. Origins of Narcissism in Children. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 2015.
2. Horton RS, Bleau G., Drwecki B. Parenting Narcissus: What Are the Links Between Parenting and Narcissism? Journal of Personality, 2006.
3. Wiley Online Library Gao S., Yu D., Assink M. et al. The Association Between Child Maltreatment and Pathological Narcissism: A Three-Level Meta-Analytic Review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 2024.
4. Sage Journals Cramer P. Young Adult Narcissism: A 20 Year Longitudinal Study of the Contribution of Parenting Styles. Journal of Research in Personality, 2011.

