



RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING AS A KEY COMPETENCE OF ADOLESCENTS: PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES

Khakimova Barno Muratovna

*3rd year Ph.D. student at the National Institute
of Pedagogy and character education named after Kori Niyoz*

Abstract: *Responsible decision making is one of the basic competencies of social-emotional intelligence, particularly relevant in adolescence, when personal identity is formed and behavioral patterns are established. This article reviews the psychological theories underlying decision making, including Daniel Kahneman's cognitive model and Lawrence Kohlberg's model of moral development. Pedagogical strategies aimed at developing this competence in the school environment are presented, including problem-based learning, role-playing, and reflective practices. The necessity of responsible decision making is discussed.*

Keywords: *Decision-making, responsibility, adolescents, social-emotional learning (SEL), moral development, critical thinking, pedagogy.*

The transition from childhood to adulthood entails the need to make conscious choices and understand the consequences of one's own actions. Adolescence is a critical stage in which not only cognitive, but also social, emotional, and moral guidelines are formed. According to the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) model, responsible decision making is among the five core competencies of SEL along with self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and communication skills (CASEL, 2020).

Decision-making frameworks are theoretical and practical principles that underlie the choice between alternatives. They include cognitive, emotional, ethical, and social aspects. Here are key decision-making frameworks that are particularly important in the context of adolescents and educational settings:

1. problem awareness - understanding that there is a situation that requires a choice. Without a clear awareness of the problem, it is impossible to begin the decision-making process.





2. Gathering information and evaluating alternatives - this stage considers the possible options and the consequences of each option. Rational choice theory (Herbert Simon), which involves “cost-benefit” analysis.

3. Consideration of consequences (foresight) - the skill of anticipating the short and long term consequences of one's decisions.

Functions of the brain's executive system (frontal lobes), actively developing during adolescence. (Psychological component)

4. Values and beliefs - every decision is based on personal or social values. Kohlberg's levels of moral development.

5. Emotional Intelligence - the ability to recognize and regulate one's own emotions and to consider the feelings of others when making decisions. Based on Daniel Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence.

6. Social influence and group pressure - decisions are often made under peer pressure.

Based on Albert Bandura's theory of social learning.

7. Responsibility and Reflection - recognizing that one is responsible for the consequences of one's choices and learning from them.

The foundations of decision-making are a combination of analytical thinking, moral judgment, emotional self-control, and social awareness. Teaching these skills in school is critical to developing a mature and responsible individual. Based on the examples above, we can categorize the psychological foundations of decision-making into the following groups:

1. Cognitive approaches. In this group we can refer to the research of Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (2002) reveals two types of thinking: fast intuitive and slow rational. Teaching adolescents to recognize cognitive distortions and develop analytical thinking helps to avoid impulsive decisions and builds the skill of reflective choice.

2. Moral Development. Based largely on Lawrence Kohlberg's (1976) theory describes levels of moral thinking: from heteronomous morality to autonomous ethics. Adolescents in the transition from conventional to post-conventional levels need systemic support from adults in thinking through moral dilemmas.

3- Albert Bandura's perspective theory. Bandura (2001) emphasized self-regulation of behavior through observation, reinforcement, and self-efficacy. Adolescents learn to make decisions by looking at the behaviors of significant adults and peers.





Based on the psychological foundations of decision-making, pedagogical approaches are formed to promote responsible choice skills in adolescents.

Let's look at some pedagogical approaches to the formation of responsible choice skills:

1. Problem-Based Learning (Problem-Based Learning)

Creating learning situations that require collective analysis and decision-making promotes the development of critical thinking and responsible choice making.

2. Role-playing and ethical games allow adolescents to try on different social roles and evaluate the consequences of their actions in a safe environment.

3. Reflection and discussion. Pedagogically organized discussions and reflection diaries help build metacognitive skills and strengthen students' moral identity.

4. Partnerships with parents and community The integration of civic education elements and dialog with the community allows adolescents to apply decision-making skills in real life.

The importance in learning to make responsible decisions is that it is not just a choice between alternatives. It is an act that shapes personal responsibility, self-esteem, moral beliefs and behavioral habits. Without directed pedagogical support, adolescents are more likely to be impulsive, influenced by the group, and unable to predict consequences.

The formation of responsible decision-making skills contributes to:

- Reduction of risky behavior (confirmed by research Steinberg, 2013),
- development of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995),
- strengthening citizenship.

Supporting adolescents in the development of responsible choice skills should become a systemic task of the educational environment. Educators play a key role in creating conditions in which adolescents can meaningfully practice decision-making, make mistakes, analyze and learn from these experiences.

LITERATURE

1. CASEL. (2020). Core SEL Competencies. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.
2. Kahneman, D. (2011). Thinking, Fast and Slow. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
3. Kohlberg, L. (1976). Moral stages and moralization: The cognitive-developmental approach. In T. Lickona (Ed.), Moral development and behavior.





4. Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 1–26.
5. Steinberg, L. (2013). *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
6. Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books.

