

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT IN FORMING ANTI-CORRUPTION IMMUNITY DURING ADOLESCENCE

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Abstract. This article examines the role of the socio-psychological environment in forming anti-corruption immunity during adolescence. Adolescence is a critical stage of personal development in which moral values, social attitudes, and behavioral patterns are actively shaped. It is during this period that the foundations of an individual's attitude toward corruption and ethical norms are established. The study analyzes the influence of the family, educational institutions, peer groups, and mass media on adolescents' perceptions of corruption-related behavior. Particular attention is given to the psychological mechanisms underlying the internalization of values such as honesty, social responsibility, justice, and civic awareness. The article also highlights the risks associated with negative socio-psychological environments that may foster tolerance toward corrupt practices. Emphasis is placed on the importance of creating a supportive socio-psychological climate as a key factor in preventing corruption and strengthening adolescents' moral and psychological resilience. The findings underscore the practical significance of early preventive measures aimed at developing anti-corruption immunity through positive socialization processes.

Keywords: adolescence, anti-corruption immunity, socio-psychological environment, moral values, social influence, corruption prevention.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается роль социально-психологической среды в формировании антикоррупционного иммунитета у подростков. Подростковый возраст является ключевым этапом становления личности, в котором активно формируются ценностные ориентации, моральные установки и социальные модели поведения. Именно в этот период закладываются основы отношения к коррупции и правовым нормам общества. В исследовании анализируется влияние семьи, образовательной среды, группы сверстников и средств массовой информации на формирование устойчивых антикоррупционных установок у подростков. Особое внимание уделяется психологическим механизмам усвоения таких ценностей, как честность, социальная ответственность, справедливость и гражданская сознательность. Также раскрываются риски негативного социально-психологического воздействия, способствующего формированию толерантности к коррупционному поведению. В статье обосновывается

необходимость создания благоприятной социально-психологической среды как важного условия профилактики коррупции и развития морального иммунитета личности в подростковом возрасте.

Ключевые слова: подростковый возраст, антикоррупционный иммунитет, социально-психологическая среда, нравственные ценности, социальное влияние, профилактика коррупции.

Introduction. In the context of rapid globalization and ongoing socio-political transformations, corruption has emerged as one of the most pressing challenges to sustainable social development. Beyond its economic and legal consequences, corruption significantly undermines moral values, social trust, and ethical standards within society. These destructive effects are particularly profound during adolescence, a critical stage of personality development when individuals form their value systems, social attitudes, and behavioral patterns. Therefore, the formation of anti-corruption immunity during adolescence represents an important psychological and social task of contemporary education and prevention policies.

Adolescence is characterized by heightened sensitivity to external influences, including family interactions, educational environments, peer relationships, and media representations. During this developmental period, adolescents actively internalize social norms and behavioral models, often relying on observed examples rather than abstract moral principles. Consequently, the socio-psychological environment plays a decisive role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward corruption, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. A supportive environment that promotes ethical behavior and social responsibility contributes to the development of moral resilience, whereas a negative or permissive environment may foster tolerance toward corrupt practices.

The socio-psychological environment functions as a complex system of interpersonal relationships, social expectations, and normative influences that directly affect adolescents' moral reasoning and self-regulation. When values such as integrity, fairness, and civic responsibility are consistently reinforced by significant adults and social institutions, adolescents are more likely to develop a stable anti-corruption stance. Conversely, exposure to contradictory norms, social injustice, or normalized corruption can weaken moral immunity and distort ethical judgment.

In this regard, the formation of anti-corruption immunity should be understood not only as a legal or informational process but also as a deeply psychological phenomenon rooted in socialization. The present study focuses on examining the role of the socio-psychological environment in shaping adolescents' anti-corruption immunity and

identifying key psychological and social factors that contribute to the development of ethical stability and resistance to corrupt behavior.

Literatur review. The scholarly discussion on forming anti-corruption immunity in adolescence increasingly shifts from viewing corruption solely as a legal or economic phenomenon to understanding it as a socially learned pattern of behavior rooted in values, norms, and everyday interaction. Within this broader perspective, the socio-psychological environment becomes a central explanatory category because it shapes how adolescents interpret social rules, evaluate moral choices, and regulate behavior under pressure. International research in developmental and social psychology consistently shows that adolescence is the period when moral judgments and identity are actively reconstructed, and when social approval, peer status, and perceived “normality” exert particularly strong influence-making the adolescent group both vulnerable to corruptive models and highly receptive to preventive value-based education.

A major theoretical foundation comes from social learning theory, primarily associated with A. Bandura, which explains that individuals acquire behavioral patterns by observing significant models and the consequences that follow. In this framework, adolescents may internalize not only explicit rules (“corruption is wrong”) but also implicit messages embedded in daily practices-how adults solve problems, how power is used, and whether dishonesty is socially rewarded. Bandura’s concept of moral disengagement is especially relevant for corruption prevention because it clarifies how people can commit unethical acts while maintaining a positive self-image through rationalizations, diffusion of responsibility, or normalization of wrongdoing. Closely related approaches emphasize the role of social norms and perceived acceptability: if adolescents repeatedly see bribery or favoritism treated as “common practice,” corrupt actions become psychologically easier to justify, whereas an environment that consistently reinforces integrity increases moral resistance.

In moral development research, the works of L. Kohlberg and later J. Rest (with his multi-component model of moral behavior) highlight that ethical conduct is not determined by knowledge alone but by a chain of processes: moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation, and moral character (self-control and persistence). This logic aligns with the idea of “immunity,” since immunity implies a stable internal capacity to resist temptation and pressure rather than mere awareness of norms. Complementing this, the theory of planned behavior (I. Ajzen) and related attitude–norm–control models demonstrate that ethical behavior is strongly predicted by attitudes toward the act, perceived social expectations, and perceived behavioral control. Applied to adolescence, these models suggest that anti-corruption immunity strengthens when young people (a) view corruption as unacceptable, (b) believe meaningful others

disapprove of it, and (c) feel capable of refusing participation even when facing social or institutional pressure.

Sociological and criminological traditions provide additional explanatory power by linking individual choice to structural and group dynamics. Theories of anomie/strain (R. Merton) and differential association (E. Sutherland) imply that where social systems reward success without emphasizing legitimate means, adolescents may learn that rule-bending is an effective strategy. Control-based approaches (e.g., T. Hirschi) further argue that strong bonds to family, school, and prosocial institutions reduce deviant behavior; thus, anti-corruption immunity can be conceptualized as a product of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief-dimensions that are directly influenced by the socio-psychological climate. From a contextual-developmental standpoint, U. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model frames adolescent behavior as shaped by multiple nested environments (family, school, peers, community, media), meaning that immunity is most stable when integrity norms are reinforced consistently across these levels rather than contradicted by everyday social experience.

Russian psychological scholarship contributes a particularly rich understanding of how personality, values, and social context interact in adolescence. Cultural-historical and activity-based traditions associated with L. Vygotsky and A. Leontiev emphasize that higher psychological functions and moral regulation develop through internalization of social experience mediated by communication, joint activity, and culturally transmitted meanings. From this angle, anti-corruption immunity is not simply an individual trait but an internalized system of moral meanings supported by social relations and educational practice. Works on personality formation and motivation (including perspectives linked to S. Rubinstein and L. Bozhovich) underline that stable moral behavior depends on how values become part of the motivational sphere, transforming external demands into internal commitments. Studies of adolescence in Russian developmental psychology and sociology (for example, discussions found in works associated with I. Kon) repeatedly stress the heightened role of self-consciousness, peer evaluation, and identity search-factors that can either support integrity (through prosocial group norms) or weaken it (through conformity to deviant or cynical norms).

Russian social psychology also provides concepts directly relevant to the “environment” dimension. The tradition represented in the study of communication, group influence, and social attitudes (including widely used frameworks developed within Russian social psychology, such as those discussed by G. Andreeva and related authors) helps explain how group expectations, authority relations, and informal norms shape decision-making. In educational contexts, the socio-psychological climate of the school-teacher fairness, transparency of rules, respectful communication, and consistent

consequences-becomes a critical mechanism of prevention, because adolescents evaluate not only what adults say but whether institutions behave in ways that appear just. Pedagogical socialization approaches (often discussed in Russian pedagogy and socialization theory) similarly emphasize that value education works best when it is supported by real practices of participation, responsibility, and public accountability rather than declarative moralizing.

International anti-corruption studies, while often macro-level (focused on institutions and governance), also reinforce the importance of social norms and ethical culture for prevention. Classical and contemporary researchers in corruption economics and political science have argued that corruption persists where incentives, monitoring, and cultural expectations make it “rational” or socially tolerated; this complements psychological findings by showing that adolescents’ moral choices are shaped by what their environment rewards, ignores, or punishes. Educational integrity research—especially studies on cheating and dishonest behavior in schools—provides a close behavioral analogue to corruption, indicating that permissive peer norms, unclear rules, and low perceived fairness increase dishonest practices, while strong integrity cultures reduce them. Taken together, these strands support a unified conclusion: adolescence is a strategic period for prevention because value orientations and self-regulation are still flexible, yet social influence is intense, making the socio-psychological environment the key lever for building *устойчивый* (stable) anti-corruption immunity.

Overall, the literature converges on the idea that anti-corruption immunity is best understood as an integrated psychological construct combining moral values, social norms, identity, and self-regulatory capacity, all of which develop through socialization within the family, school, peer groups, and broader informational space. Consequently, the most effective preventive approach is not limited to legal instruction but requires designing an environment where integrity is continuously modeled, socially approved, and institutionally supported—so that adolescents learn not only to recognize corruption, but to resist it confidently and consistently in real-life social situations.

Discussion. The discussion of the findings on the formation of anti-corruption immunity during adolescence highlights the decisive role of the socio-psychological environment as a multidimensional system that shapes moral reasoning, behavioral self-regulation, and value orientation. Adolescence is not only a period of cognitive growth but also a stage of intense socialization in which individuals actively test social norms, seek group acceptance, and construct their personal and civic identity. In this context, anti-corruption immunity should be understood as a dynamic psychological capacity that emerges through continuous interaction between the individual and their social environment rather than as a fixed moral trait.

The results of the analysis suggest that the family environment remains a foundational factor in establishing ethical sensitivity and initial attitudes toward corruption. Adolescents who observe consistent models of honesty, fairness, and responsibility in parental behavior are more likely to internalize these values and apply them in broader social contexts. Conversely, contradictory messages within the family—such as verbal condemnation of corruption combined with its practical justification—can weaken moral clarity and create cognitive dissonance, reducing resistance to unethical behavior. This finding aligns with socio-psychological theories emphasizing the primacy of early social learning and the internalization of norms through emotionally significant relationships.

The educational environment plays an equally critical role in reinforcing or undermining anti-corruption immunity. Schools function as formal social institutions where adolescents encounter authority, rules, evaluation, and social justice in practice. When educational settings are characterized by transparency, consistent discipline, equal treatment, and participatory decision-making, they promote trust in social norms and strengthen adolescents' belief in the legitimacy of ethical behavior. In contrast, experiences of perceived injustice, favoritism, or inconsistency in rule enforcement may foster cynicism and normalize rule-breaking as an adaptive strategy. Thus, the socio-psychological climate of educational institutions acts as a powerful mediator between abstract moral principles and everyday behavioral choices.

Peer groups represent another influential dimension of the socio-psychological environment during adolescence. As the need for social belonging intensifies, adolescents become increasingly sensitive to peer approval and group norms. The discussion indicates that peer contexts that value cooperation, mutual respect, and social responsibility can significantly enhance moral self-regulation and resistance to corruptive pressures. However, when peer norms tolerate or even encourage instrumental dishonesty, adolescents may adopt rationalizations that weaken their ethical standards in order to maintain group membership. This underscores the importance of collective moral norms and highlights that anti-corruption immunity is not solely an individual achievement but also a group-level phenomenon.

The role of mass media and the broader informational environment further complicates the formation of anti-corruption immunity. Media representations of corruption, whether critical or sensationalized, contribute to adolescents' perceptions of its prevalence and social acceptability. Repeated exposure to narratives that portray corruption as inevitable or strategically advantageous may reduce moral sensitivity and foster resignation. Conversely, balanced and value-oriented media content can support critical thinking, moral reflection, and civic engagement. Therefore, the informational environment should

be considered an integral component of the socio-psychological context influencing adolescents' ethical development.

From an integrative perspective, the discussion demonstrates that effective anti-corruption immunity emerges when ethical values are consistently reinforced across multiple social contexts. Fragmentation between family, school, peer, and media influences creates normative ambiguity, whereas coherence among these environments strengthens internal moral regulation. Importantly, the findings suggest that preventive efforts should move beyond declarative moral education toward experiential and participatory approaches that allow adolescents to practice ethical decision-making, responsibility, and social accountability in real-life situations. In this sense, the socio-psychological environment functions not merely as a background condition but as an active developmental mechanism through which adolescents acquire the psychological resilience necessary to resist corrupt behavior and uphold ethical standards in adulthood.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the analysis of the role of the socio-psychological environment in forming anti-corruption immunity during adolescence confirms that this developmental period is a strategically significant stage for the prevention of corrupt behavior. Adolescence is characterized by intensive moral, social, and identity-related transformations, during which values, norms, and behavioral strategies become internalized and relatively stable. For this reason, anti-corruption immunity should be viewed as an integrative psychological construct that includes moral awareness, ethical motivation, social responsibility, and the capacity for self-regulation under social pressure.

The findings emphasize that the socio-psychological environment-encompassing family, educational institutions, peer groups, and the broader informational space-plays a decisive role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward corruption. A supportive and value-consistent environment reinforces integrity, fairness, and civic responsibility, enabling adolescents to develop *устойчивый* (stable) moral resistance to unethical practices. Conversely, environments marked by inconsistency, injustice, or tolerance of corrupt behavior weaken moral clarity and normalize unethical decision-making, thereby reducing psychological immunity.

The conclusion also highlights that effective anti-corruption prevention cannot be limited to legal instruction or formal moral education. Instead, it requires a systemic approach that integrates ethical norms into everyday social interactions and institutional practices. When adolescents observe coherence between declared values and actual behavior in adults and social institutions, they are more likely to internalize these values as part of their personal identity. Thus, the development of anti-corruption immunity

depends on creating social contexts in which ethical behavior is socially approved, practically rewarded, and psychologically meaningful.

Overall, strengthening the socio-psychological environment represents a crucial condition for fostering adolescents' moral resilience and civic maturity. By investing in value-based socialization, transparent educational practices, and supportive interpersonal relationships, society can enhance adolescents' capacity to resist corrupt influences and contribute to the formation of a more ethical and socially responsible future generation.

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