

**MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY IN ONTOGENESIS:
GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL REGULARITIES
AND PATHOPSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS**

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Summary

This article examines the mental development of personality in ontogenesis through the lens of general psychological regularities and pathopsychological disorders. The study is based on the understanding that personality development is a continuous, stage-by-stage process shaped by the interaction of biological prerequisites, social environment, education, upbringing, and individual activity. Particular attention is paid to the general psychological patterns of personality formation, including the staged nature of development, the growing role of self-consciousness, thinking, self-regulation, and the influence of socialization on the formation of the self-image and adaptive behavior. The paper also analyzes personality development as a multi-dimensional process involving intellectual, emotional, behavioral, and value-based transformations across different age periods. In addition, the article considers the risk of pathopsychological disturbances that may arise under unfavorable developmental conditions. It is emphasized that emotional instability, maladjustment, behavioral dysregulation, and disturbances in interpersonal functioning may result from the interaction between age-related developmental tasks, individual vulnerability, and adverse social influences. Special focus is placed on childhood, adolescence, and youth as the most sensitive periods for mental health disturbances. The article concludes that the study of mental development in ontogenesis requires an integrated approach combining age psychology, personality psychology, and pathopsychology in order to understand both normative developmental patterns and the mechanisms of their disruption.

Key words: age-related dynamics, self-regulation, socialization, self-consciousness, maladjustment, emotional well-being, behavioral dysregulation, risk factors.

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1. Introduction

The mental development of personality in ontogenesis is a complex, continuous, and multidimensional process that unfolds throughout the entire lifespan. At each age stage, age-specific psychological formations emerge, the ways of interaction with the social environment change, and the mechanisms of behavioral self-regulation become more differentiated. Therefore, the study of personality development in ontogenesis requires consideration of the sequence of age stages, their qualitative specificity, and the nature of personal transformations that occur over time (*Gerald & Richard, 1967*).

In psychological science, mental development is traditionally associated with stage-related dynamics, uneven developmental tempo, and dependence on the leading conditions of socialization. At different stages of ontogenesis, emotional functioning, self-consciousness, behavioral regulation, and the system of relations with the surrounding world manifest themselves in different ways. Age acts not only as a chronological indicator but also as an important determinant of the forms through which personality adapts to the demands of the social environment. At the same time, personality formation takes place through the constant interaction of biological prerequisites and social influences. In early development, a decisive role belongs to the family environment, emotional contact with adults, upbringing style, and the internalization of basic moral norms; later, the importance of the educational environment, peer relations, group status, and the mastery of socially approved forms of behavior increases (*Huesmann, 2017*).

A major theoretical issue in contemporary psychology is the multidimensional interpretation of personality itself. Despite the existence of numerous approaches, personality is generally understood as a socially conditioned system of psychological qualities formed in interaction with other people and manifested in behavior, activity, values, and socially significant actions (*Moskalets, 2020; Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*). In this context, the analysis of general psychological regularities of personality development becomes the necessary basis for understanding the mechanisms of normal age-related development as well as the origins of pathopsychological disorders that may arise under unfavorable developmental conditions.

Thus, the relevance of this topic is determined by the need to examine personality development in ontogenesis in the unity of normative regularities and possible developmental disturbances. The purpose of this article is to analyze the mental development of personality in ontogenesis, to identify its general psychological regularities, and to characterize pathopsychological disorders that may emerge under adverse biological, psychological, and social conditions (*Andrusyshyn, 2022; Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*). The scientific novelty of the article lies in the integrated analysis of personality development in ontogenesis through the combination of general psychological and pathopsychological perspectives. The study systematizes the main regularities of personality development and clarifies the conditions under which age-related developmental difficulties may transform into pathopsychological disturbances.

2. General Psychological Regularities of Personality Development in Ontogenesis

Personality development cannot be reduced to the accumulation of separate psychological traits. It is more appropriate to consider it as a restructuring process, where new formations emerge while previous ones are transformed or integrated into more complex systems. Such changes occur unevenly: periods of relative stability alternate with phases of rapid transformation, which confirms the stage-related nature of ontogenetic development (*Gerald & Richard, 1967*).

One of the key patterns observed in ontogenesis is the increasing role of self-awareness. At early stages, behavior is largely externally regulated, whereas later it becomes progressively mediated by internal standards, personal meanings, and reflective processes. This shift does not occur automatically; it depends on both social interaction and individual activity, which are emphasized in contemporary psychological approaches to personality development (*Rybalka, 2018*).

It is also important to note that biological predispositions create only a framework for development. They do not rigidly determine the outcome. Under similar biological conditions, different social environments may lead to significantly different developmental trajectories. This supports the idea that personality formation is the result of continuous interaction between internal and external factors rather than a product of a single determinant (*Huesmann, 2017; Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*).

From this perspective, socialization plays a dual role. On the one hand, it ensures the acquisition of norms, values, and behavioral patterns. On the other hand, it creates conditions for the development of individuality, since the person selectively interprets and internalizes social experience. This position corresponds to the understanding of personality as a socially mediated system of psychological qualities manifested in activity and interaction (*Moskalets, 2020*).

Another essential regularity lies in the role of developmental conditions. The immediate environment, interpersonal relations, and cultural context significantly influence the emergence of new personal formations. When these conditions are insufficient or unstable, the development process may become distorted, leading to maladjustment or delays (*Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025; Khokhlina, 2016*).

Thus, personality development in ontogenesis should be viewed as a dynamic and multi-dimensional process that unfolds through the interaction of biological prerequisites, social environment, cognitive development, and individual activity. Such an approach makes it possible to better understand both normative developmental trajectories and their variability.

3. Factors and Mechanisms of Personality Formation

An important place in the study of personality development is occupied by the analysis of the factors and mechanisms that determine its formation. In psychological science, personality is understood as a socially conditioned system of mental qualities that is formed in the process of interaction with other people and manifested in behavior, activity, values, and socially significant actions. Despite the diversity of theoretical approaches, most researchers agree that personality cannot be reduced either to biological prerequisites or to external social influences alone; rather, it emerges through their complex interaction (*Moskalets, 2020; Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*).

Within different psychological paradigms, the mechanisms of personality formation are interpreted in different ways. In the psychoanalytic approach, development is associated with the adaptation of natural drives to social demands; in trait theories, it is connected with the gradual formation of stable individual psychological characteristics; in social learning theory, it is explained through the acquisition of patterns of interpersonal interaction; and in the humanistic tradition, it is viewed as the process of selfhood formation and self-realization. Such diversity of approaches confirms the complexity of personality as a psychological phenomenon and indicates the need for an integrative perspective on its development.

One of the key factors in personality formation is heredity, which creates the natural basis for development. However, hereditary predispositions do not determine the final structure of personality by themselves. Their realization becomes possible only through activity, communication, and the assimilation of social experience. Thus, biological prerequisites should be considered not as a ready-made determinant of personality, but as a potential that is actualized under specific social and psychological conditions (*Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*).

No less important is the influence of the social environment, which provides the individual with models of behavior, norms, values, and opportunities for entering the system of social relations. The family, educational environment, peer group, and broader cultural context shape the conditions under which personality develops and acquires social experience. Through communication, imitation, role-taking, and the internalization of others' evaluations, the individual gradually constructs a self-image and develops the capacity for social functioning. In this sense, socialization acts as one of the main mechanisms of personality formation, since it ensures the inclusion of the individual in the system of social meanings and interpersonal relations (*Rybalka, 2018*).

An important mechanism of personality formation is the development of self-consciousness, which enables the person to become aware of one's own qualities, abilities, motives, and place in the system of social relations. As ontogenetic development proceeds, self-consciousness becomes more differentiated and reflective, which creates the basis for self-control, self-regulation, and purposeful self-development. In this context, the formation of personality is inseparable from the development of thinking, because it is through thinking that a person critically comprehends life experience, evaluates one's own actions, overcomes internal limitations, and constructs an individual life strategy. Therefore, intellectual development should be regarded as an essential condition for personal maturity and inner organization (*Rybalka, 2018*).

A separate role in personality formation belongs to upbringing as a purposeful and socially organized influence on development. The psychological significance of upbringing lies not only in the transmission of social norms and approved patterns of behavior, but also in the activation of mechanisms of self-control, self-regulation, and self-improvement. Under the influence of upbringing, personality development acquires direction, consistency, and internal coherence. For this reason, upbringing should be considered one of the decisive factors of personality formation, since it creates the conditions for the emergence of new personal formations and supports the individual's movement toward higher levels of self-organization (*Komarnitska & Komarnitsky, 2025*).

Thus, the factors and mechanisms of personality formation should be understood as a complex system of interrelated biological, social, cognitive, and educational influences that operate throughout ontogenesis. Personality is formed through the interaction of hereditary prerequisites, environmental conditions, socialization, self-consciousness, thinking, and upbringing. Such an understanding makes it possible to consider personality development as a dynamic and multidimensional process in which both external influences and the individual's own activity play a decisive role (*Khokhlina, 2016*).

4. Pathopsychological Disorders in Personality Development

A logical continuation of the analysis of the mental development of personality in ontogenesis is the consideration of those disturbances that arise under unfavorable conditions of personality formation and complicate harmonious human functioning. In this context, mental

health acquires special significance as an integral characteristic reflecting not only the absence of mental disorders, but also the individual's ability to maintain inner balance, adapt to change, interact constructively with the social environment, and realize personal potential. Therefore, mental health should be regarded as one of the basic conditions for full personality development at all stages of ontogenesis (*Maksymenko, Rudenko, Kushnerova, & Nevmerzhytskyi, 2021*).

Throughout the life span, the individual passes through a number of age stages, each of which is accompanied by specific psychological formations, crisis phenomena, and adaptive challenges. Under favorable conditions, these changes perform a developmental function; however, when internal vulnerability is combined with adverse external influences, they may acquire a destructive character. In such cases, the risk of pathopsychological disorders increases, manifesting in emotional instability, difficulties in behavioral regulation, reduced adaptive capacity, disorganization of interpersonal contacts, and deformation of personality development as a whole (*Antypin & Savchenko, 2024; Yevtushenko, 2023; Pavlyk, 2022*).

The pathopsychological approach makes it possible to analyze not only already formed disorders, but also early signs of maladjustment that emerge during age-related development. Its importance lies in the possibility of distinguishing normative crisis manifestations from symptoms that may indicate deepening psychological distress. Emotional fluctuations, protest reactions, or communication difficulties accompanying certain age periods do not always have a pathological meaning. At the same time, under conditions of chronic stress, psychotraumatic influence, lack of support, or disruption of significant social ties, such manifestations may transform into stable destructive tendencies (*Oliylyk, Bilyy & Shepel, 2025; Maksymenko, Rudenko, Kushnerova, & Nevmerzhytskyi, 2021*).

Childhood and adolescence are particularly vulnerable periods for the emergence of pathopsychological disorders. In childhood, the foundation of mental well-being is emotional security, stability of the immediate environment, reliable attachment to significant adults, and favorable upbringing conditions. Insufficient emotional contact, lack of support, psychotraumatic events, or prolonged experiences of danger may negatively affect the formation of basic trust in the world, the sense of safety, and the capacity for emotional self-regulation (*Antypin & Savchenko, 2024; Mikheyeva, 2022*).

In adolescence, the risks to mental health increase substantially, since this period is connected with the formation of identity, autonomy, self-esteem, and a new system of social relations. At this stage, instability of the emotional sphere, intensified peer pressure, inner conflicts, and difficulties of self-acceptance may contribute to the emergence of aggressive, self-destructive, isolative, or other maladaptive forms of behavior. In such cases, it is important not only to register external behavioral manifestations, but also to interpret them as possible indicators of deeper disturbances in personality development and mental functioning (*Maksymenko, Rudenko, Kushnerova, & Nevmerzhytskyi, 2021*).

In youth and early adulthood, mental health is closely related to the ability for self-realization, responsible life choice, the building of meaningful interpersonal relationships, and the preservation of inner integrity. However, social instability, uncertainty about the future, information overload, experiences of loss, or chronic psychological tension may provoke anxiety, depressive, and exhaustion-related states. In the absence of sufficient personal resources and external support, this complicates the process of growing up and negatively affects personal integration (*Karamushka, 2022*).

An important factor in the emergence of pathopsychological disorders is stress, especially when it is intense or prolonged. In the psychological dimension, stress arises when external demands exceed the individual's adaptive capacities. Long-term psycho-emotional overload

depletes inner resources, lowers working capacity, increases irritability, causes emotional instability, apathy, and depressive reactions, and may also be accompanied by sleep disturbances, somatic discomfort, and behavioral disorganization. As a result, both mental and physical well-being deteriorate, while the risk of maladjustment significantly increases (*Oliylyk, Bilyy & Shepel, 2025; Arslan & Allen, 2022*).

It should also be emphasized that in contemporary sociocultural conditions, pathopsychological disturbances in personality development are determined not only by individual characteristics or hereditary predispositions, but also by a set of external factors, including war-related events, economic instability, social tension, information oversaturation, and the lack of a safe environment. Under such conditions, stress resistance, emotional maturity, adequate self-esteem, developed self-regulation skills, and the presence of a supportive social environment acquire particular significance. These resources reduce the probability that age-related difficulties will transform into stable disturbances of mental functioning (*Karamushka, 2022; Stoliarchuk, Serhieienkova & Khrypko, 2022; Savchuk, B., Borys, U., Sholohon, L. et al, 2022*).

Thus, pathopsychological disorders in ontogenesis should be understood as the result of a disturbed balance between age-related developmental tasks, individual personal resources, and the conditions of the social environment. Their timely identification requires consideration of the age norm, the dynamics of mental development, the emotional state, behavioral characteristics, and the context of the life situation. For this reason, prevention, early psychological diagnosis, and systematic support of the individual should be regarded as necessary conditions for preserving mental health and preventing destructive changes in the process of ontogenetic development.

5. Conclusions

The analysis carried out in this study allows us to reconsider personality development in ontogenesis as a complex and неоднорідний процес, у якому поєднуються стабільність і зміни. Development unfolds through the interaction of biological, social, and individual factors, none of which can be regarded as dominant in isolation.

It can be argued that the most significant transformations occur at the points where external demands exceed the individual's current adaptive capacities. In such situations, development may follow different trajectories: either constructive (through the formation of new regulatory mechanisms) or maladaptive (through the emergence of persistent disturbances).

Particular attention should be paid to early identification of risk factors. Preventive measures, in our view, are more effective when they are focused not only on eliminating negative influences but also on strengthening personal resources, including self-regulation, emotional stability, and reflective capacity.

Thus, the integration of general psychological and pathopsychological approaches makes it possible to better understand not only how personality develops, but also why this process sometimes becomes disrupted.

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