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**PECULIARITIES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF
ADOLESCENTS – ACTIVE INTERNET USERS**

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Abstract

Analysis of foreign and domestic approaches to the problem of studying the peculiarities of virtual communication and interpersonal communication in adolescence is presented in the paper. The increasing influence of information-communicative technologies on the social and interpersonal interaction of participants of communication is demonstrated. A significant role of virtual reality (cyberspace), existing on the basis of network technologies (Internet environment), in the life of the human being, and first of all, of the adolescent, was determined. Peculiarities of the influence of the long-term communication in the social networks on the personality of the oncoming generation were discovered. The results of empirical study of peculiarities of virtual and real communication of adolescents, the level of formation of communicative situations are presented. A comparative analysis of peculiarities of adolescents' communication showed that adolescents, preferring virtual communication to the real one, are characterised by a low level of sociability, insufficiently formed communicative abilities, demonstrate dependent and aggressively-competence reactions in the situations of criticism (both just and unjust), of conflict, the necessity to make a request, to show and accept sympathy and support, to come in contact with other person. On the basis of the obtained results, recommendations for parents of adolescents, spending a significant amount of time in cyberspace, which are reduced to setting a time limit, which can be spent on the Internet, blocking the programmes, lacking educational and pedagogical nature; for psychologists of educational organisations, including the complex of psychological-pedagogical measures, aimed at formation of communicative competence in adolescents..

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Keywords: Communication, virtual reality, communicative competence, sociability, virtual communication, adolescents



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1. Introduction

In modern society the processes of active introduction of information technologies in all spheres of human life activity, including the sphere of interpersonal communication, take place. According to the opinion of a number of authors (A.E. Voiskunski, A.E. Zhichkina, I.V. Shevchenko et al), information environment exerts increasingly greater and more significant influence on the everyday life of not only an adult person, but also an oncoming generation. The question of successful development of the personality of the oncoming generation and favourable adaptation to constantly changing conditions of life is dictated by, first of all, increased demands to school and out-of-school education, where formation of skills of effective interpersonal communication in schoolchildren, as a pledge of their successful development, is of particular importance (Zhuina, 2014a; Zhuina, 2014b).

1.1. A problem of communication in psychological science.

In psychological literature, different aspects of the communication problem were considered in sufficient details: structure, communication difficulties, factors that determine its success, peculiarities of communication development in different age periods, etc. were characterised. This is evidenced by numerous proceedings of G.M. Andreeva, A.V. Batarshv, A.A. Bodalev, L.S. Vygotski, N.V. Klyueva, A.N. Leontev, B.F. Lomov, M.I. Lisina, A.V. Mudrik et al.

As of today, it has been defined that communication is an independent and specific form of subject activity; a complex and multidisciplinary process of establishing and developing the contacts among people, generated by needs for mutual activity. In its process, a mutual exchange of activities, ways and results, notions, ideas, attitudes, interests, feelings, etc. takes place. Its result is relationships with other person or people, in the framework of which interdependent motives of the participants of the dialogue are concentrated (Latysheva, Karlova, Koryakina, 2015).

1.2. Influence of virtual reality on interpersonal communication of adolescents.

Influence of the Internet on the adolescent personality is a problem, disturbing parents, pedagogues and psychologists already for decades. Psychological studies in this field have been conducted from the beginning of the 90-s of the XX century, and year by year their intensity increases. Already in the first scientific studies on this topic (A.E. Voiskunski, A.E. Zhichkina, I.V. Shevchenko, E.S. Polat, M.Yu. Bukharkina, E.I. Dmitrieva, V.P. Dolmatov, A.V. Khutorskoy, S.A. Birnie, D.N. Greenfield, P.M. Valkenburg, J. Peter, T. Postmes, K.S. Young et al), two main problem domains were outlined – peculiarities of cognitive processes, mediated by network resources, and specifics of communication of people, inclined to long-term dwelling in the virtual setting and interaction with a virtual interlocutor (Young, 1996). Since the Internet has recently become an essential element of everyday life and a place of pastime of a large number of people, the study of the influence of social networks on the personality has particular importance and urgency, especially in adolescence, since namely at this period, the human being possesses heightened sensibility to the influence of information and communicative technologies. Under the influence of the Internet, there are changes in the value orientations of youth; a type of communication is formed, which is new in its content and quality. Such onrush of information technologies and capture of attention of the overwhelming majority of adolescents by social networks

raise an issue of the influence of virtual communication on their ability to communicate meaningfully in real life, on the development and formation of communicative competence.

2. Problem Statement

One of the urgent tasks of modern psychological science and practice is the study of the influence of virtual communication on the process of interpersonal communication of adolescents in real life. Virtual communication, in the opinion of N.A. Nosov, is such way of communication, with which the contact among people is mediated by a plugged in computer, and interaction is realised in the virtual reality space. Communication in the virtual space can be realised in the form of a dialogue (electronic mail, ICQ) and polylogue communication (conferences, chats). The first form is characterised by a more trusting and personal communication; the second one is more typical for discussion of some questions concerning special topics by a large number of people. During virtual communication, the information, temporal and space pattern of the communicative space, models of communication, priorities change.

Besides, an exchange with situational states in social networks is often the only goal of communication. It has become a simple exchange of statements for the purpose of maintaining a contact and to while away the time. Communication has become hasty and extremely simplified. In the communicative strategies, greater assertiveness and pragmatism appear. As a consequence, a special language of Internet communication appears, as well slang which inherent in this type of communication. A modern social network is a special internet-community of different users, who are united by some definite feature on the basis of some website. In other words, a modern social network placed on the Internet is built on the same fundamental principles as it is in the human world, but at that, it differs quite significantly from usual human communities by the fact that in general functioning of such network, geographical remoteness of all its active participants from each other does not matter at all. Some their community of interests, a place of study or work, a profession, a religion, etc. serves as the basic factor of the common unification of different users into one social network. A social network is an interactive multiuser website, the content of which is filled by its visitors, with the possibility of indication of some information about a separate person, according to which an account (webpage) of the user can be found by other participants of the network. Psychologists indicate the following reasons of communication through social networks:

1. Insufficient satisfaction with communication in real life. In such cases, adolescents quickly lose interest in virtual communication, if there are opportunities for sufficient communication in real life.
2. An opportunity of realisation of personality features, playing out roles, experiencing emotions by persons, frustrated for some reason or other in real life. A similar possibility is conditioned by the peculiarities of communication through the network – anonymity, nonrigid normativity, a peculiarity of the process of perception of a person by a person. A desire to experience some kinds of emotions is explained probably by the aspiration for emotional filling of the text.

Thus, social networks possess essential differences from other kinds of communication on the Internet; they imply communication with people, with whom the relations have already been established

in real life, and offer an opportunity of creation of one's own real personality, placing authentic information about oneself.

This problem is of particular urgency for adolescence, when intimate-personal communication acts as a key activity, dominating at this stage of development.

2.1. Socio-psychological aspects of positive influence of adolescents' communication in social networks.

Social network communication can have positive influence on a child. Yu.D. Babaeva, A.E. Voikunski and O.V. Smyslova point out the following positive aspects of social network communication: psychological experience broadens; social competence develops; the person realises such essential needs as a desire, on the one hand, to stand out in a crowd, be noticed and recognizable, and on the other hand, to join a referent group (idioculture), to hide and to dissolve in it, having shared group values and having felt protected; unlimited opportunities of self-presentations appear; an opportunity to experiment with one's own identity and acting out different roles appears, which can be considered as a peculiar psychological training; prospects of overcoming the communicative deficit and broadening the circle of contacts, an increase in awareness of the discussed questions, exchange by emotional states and moods appear.

French sociologist F. Breton also notes definite positive consequences of Internet communication. In particular, the lessening of personal contacts, implying physical intimacy, and of necessity of corporeal presence, in his opinion, can be accompanied by strengthening social serenity. Along with it, the sociologist fears the fact whether the refusal of real sociality will be an extremely high charge for an opportunity (but not a guarantee) of building a non-conflict society.

Domestic psychologists Yu.M. Kuznetsova and N.V. Chudova, in the framework of the considered problematics, note the following positive moments of communication on the Internet: broadening of psychological experience, development of social competence, an ability to exchange situational emotional states and moods, as well as elaboration of means of protection from rude manipulative influences.

2.2. Negative influence of cyberspace on real communication of adolescents.

Along with exaggeratedly enthusiastic evaluation of the importance of the Internet for psychological and somatic health of many categories of users, for social, economic and ecological development of regions, for intensification of the process of opinions exchange within the worldwide "electronic village", in scientific and popular literature alternative data are presented.

According to the data of the foreign research, obtained by selection from 169 people, having an experience of dwelling on the Internet from one to two years, the use of the Internet appeared to be connected with aggravation of loneliness and depression, as well as with tendencies of stress aggravation. Researchers explained this as "Internet Paradox": replacement of deep relationships in real world (as a strong bond) by superficial relationships on the Internet (by a weak bond). It consists in the fact that social technology, developed for interpersonal communication, can enable social isolation and worsening owing to it of psychological wellbeing of users.

However, in the judgment of French psychologists G. Greziyon and K. Kerdellan, the Internet does not generate solitude; it reveals it. According to the results of their analysis of proceedings, devoted

to the communication process on the Internet of children and adolescents, the influence of the Internet communication on building real social relations does not have a distinctly expressed nature and is determined by personal and situational factors. At the same time, the problems of social and communicative nature arise for those Internet users who experience them in the real world.

Communication in social networks reduces and simplifies language personality. While in correspondence, language becomes simplified; grammar mistakes, to which people get used and subsequently are unable to avoid, are made. Besides, language means, which enrich a national language, are not used and become forgotten. The main principle of instant messages is the economy of efforts and time. All these influence the main characteristics of this language. Abbreviations and acronyms are the most wide-spread means of shortening the words in messages in social networks.

A regular use of graphic images (smileys) for the purpose of optimisation of time of communication leads to impediments when expressing thoughts during a real conversation. The more frequent and intense the communication on the Internet, the more adolescents get used to communicating in a primitive, lacking emotional colouring, language. The speech becomes barren. Thinking and speech exert mutual influence on each other's development. Thus, speech penetrates in thinking, thus becoming inner.

Being a means of expressing thoughts, speech, in the course of its development in ontogenesis, becomes the main mechanism of thinking of the human being. Superior abstract thinking is impossible without speech activity.

V.M. Bekhterev pointed out that high communicative sociability enables successful development of human personality. He wrote that those people, who grew up surrounded by various circles of persons, are more developed in comparison with people, leading their life away from society. Spending their time on the Internet, thus replacing real communication by virtual on a daily basis, people have their language of live communication atrophied. During virtual communication, emotions are expressed through smileys and other signs (images), owing to which adolescents lose skills of expressing their thoughts by means of oral speech.

After daily multi-hour virtual communication, live conversation becomes psychologically difficult. A necessity of speaking with deliberation, of observing the mimics and gestures appears; there is already not much time to deliberate on the stated. Expressing the thoughts and emotions requires much more efforts, as well as, in contrast to the Internet communication, there is no opportunity to instantly interrupt communication. Complexes, which are unconscious during virtual communication, and suppressed parts of personality appear, self-appraisal becomes real; it becomes impossible to apply different roles to oneself; the human being meets himself again. Under such conditions, psychological discomfort arises due to real communication, and adolescents hide behind the "screen" again.

3. Research Questions

On the basis of the mentioned-above review of theoretical and empirical works, performed by modern authors within the framework of the considered problematics, it is possible to make a conclusion that there can be positive and negative consequences of active Internet communication, revealing themselves within real communicative interactions.

Both constant and occasional contacts require specific abilities, which are called as communicative. One must be able to, for instance, make some request to an unfamiliar person; to adequately react to the request of other person, to apologise for involuntary caused inconvenience, to respond with proper modesty to some compliment, etc. Possessing such kind of abilities makes communication easy and pleasant for both partners.

On the other hand, an insufficient level of formation of communicative abilities frequently leads to arousal of conflict situations, with manifestation of aggression, unjustified hostility or, vice versa, to passivity, inactivity, indifference in relation to the needs and requests of other people.

3.1. Influence of virtual reality on formation of personality of adolescents – active users of the Internet.

An active use of the virtual space by the oncoming generation leads to the necessity of operating a great body of information under conditions of time-limitedness, which enables overloading of the organism, appearance of information stress, performance impairment and general resistance of the organism to external actions. As I. Goldberg notes, under conditions of increased information activity, the reduction of significance of the information itself takes place, which, in the long run, can lead to transformation of the value system of modern youth (Goldberg, 1995).

Negative influence of the virtual space covers not only physical state but also formation of the adolescent's personality on the whole. Thus, owing to active communication through the Internet, formation of lop-sided, "fuzzy" and uncoordinated identity, selfish tendencies, isolation from the real world, changes of notions about one's own personality, self-appraisal, emotional depletion, levelling of traditional peculiarities of socialization take place.

3.2. Influence of cyberspace on interpersonal communication of adolescents – active users of the Internet.

The researchers point out the following negative consequences, among the most often encountered ones, of the influence of an active use of the Internet space on interpersonal communication of adolescents in real life: categoricalness in assessment of interlocutors, inability to control one's own emotions and feelings during communication, an urge to dominate an interlocutor in the course of interpersonal communication, loss of the feeling of emotional attachment to an interlocutor, of empathy feelings, changes of motivational attitudes towards communication (Francesca, 2015). Besides, the lack of the opportunity of using nonverbal communication and the full-fledged use of verbal communication in the course of virtual communication enables simplification of speech and thinking, transition of communicative activity into an inner plan, changing the speed of processing and obtaining information, a degree of communication depth, loss of skills of interpersonal communication.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study of the peculiarities of interpersonal communication of adolescents – active users of the Internet – is the purpose of the research.

4.1. Identification of adolescents – active users of the internet.

Obtainment of information on purposes of adolescents' dwelling in social networks, and on time, which students spend on communication in social networks.

4.2. Study of competence in communication.

The study of the level of sociability, communicativeness.

4.3. Study of communicative and organisational inclinations.

Communicative and organisational inclinations represent an important component and a prerequisite of development of abilities in those kinds of activities, which are connected with communication with people, with arrangement of teamwork. They are an important link in development of pedagogical abilities.

Indicated inclinations in behaviour are manifested in the ability to accurately and quickly establish business and comradely contacts with people, aspiration for broadening contacts, ability to influence people, aspiration for showing initiative, etc.

4.4. Study of communicative abilities.

Determination of the level of communicative competence and a quality of the level of formation of basic communicative abilities. The concept "communicative abilities" includes not only assessment of an interlocutor, determination of his strengths and weaknesses, but also an ability to establish friendly atmosphere, ability to understand problems of an interlocutor, etc.

5. Research Methods

The following methods acted as the basic ones of the research:

5.1. Theoretical analysis of the literature on the problem of the influence of the Internet on interpersonal communication of adolescents in real life.

5.2. Survey

- Survey "How often do you communicate through social networks?"

5.3. Testing

- "Methodology of studying competence in communication" of V.F. Ryakhovski.
- "Diagnostics of communicative and organisational inclinations (COI-2)" of V.V. Sinyavski, B.A. Fedorishina.
- "Test of communicative abilities of L. Mikhelson" adapted by Yu.Z. Gilbukha

5.4. Method of mathematical processing of data

- By a ϕ -criterion of Fischer.

6. Findings

50 students of the 9th forms of the municipal secondary school “Gymnasium 19” of Saransk city of the Republic of Mordovia took part in the research. Results of the empirical study allowed revealing distinguishing features of interpersonal communication of adolescents – active users of the Internet.

6.1. Results of theoretical analysis.

Theoretical analysis of psychological literature (G. Greziyon, K. Kerdellan, et al) allowed revealing a number of problems concerning negative influence of the virtual environment on the formation of personality and interpersonal communication of adolescents in real life.

6.2. Results of adolescents' survey.

Results of the survey showed that the majority of adolescents (77%) equate communication in social networks to the real communication. 25% of the surveyed think that it is easier to communicate in social networks than it is in real life. More than 60% of respondents spend time in social networks during meeting with friends, classes or food taking. 83% of the testees prefer to discuss problem questions with friends by phone or through social networks than in person.

6.3. Results of testing.

Results obtained using the methods of competence in communication of V.F. Ryakhovski (see table 1) allowed revealing that a majority of adolescents – 40 % – displayed low indicators of competence in communication, 28 % of students have the average level of competence in communication, 12 % – the level above the average, and 4% – the competence level in communication below the average. At the same time, only 16% displayed a high level of competence in communication.

Table 01. Indicators of the level of formation of competence in communication of adolescents (Methodology of competence study in communication of V.F. Ryakhovski)

Development levels	Quantity (%)
High	8 (16 %)
Above the average	6 (12 %)
Average	14 (28 %)
Below the average	2 (4 %)
Low	20 (40 %)

In the course of using method COI-2, it was established that a significant part of adolescents – 40 % of students – display a low level of communicative abilities development, 34 % of students – average, a high level of formation of a communicative aspect of communication is typical for 22 % of students, and only 4 % of the surveyed demonstrate a high level of communicative abilities development.

Table 02. Indicators of the level of formation of a communicative aspect of adolescents' communication (COI-2)

Development levels	Quantity (%)
The highest level	2 (4 %)
High level	11 (22 %)
Average level	17 (34 %)
Low level	20 (40 %)

In the course of studying communicative abilities (test by L. Mikhelson), it was revealed that in situations, requiring reaction to positive statements of an interlocutor, the major part of adolescents – active users of the Internet, demonstrate a dependent type of behaviour (46%). Their less number (34%, 16% and 4%) display mixed and competent and aggressive types of behaviour. In the situations, requiring reaction to the negative statements of a partner in communication, a dominating type of adolescents' behaviour is aggressive (52%). Approximately a similar number of adolescents demonstrate dependent (22%) and mixed (20%) types of behaviour, and only 6% of respondents – a competent one. Situations, in which a request is made to the adolescent, and the situations of conversation cause a dependent type of behaviour in the majority of respondents (48% and 44% correspondingly). As to the rest of the students, their types of behaviour are practically uniformly distributed: aggressive (22% and 26% correspondingly), mixed (16%) and competent (14%). In the situation, requiring manifestation of empathy, a dependent type of behaviour prevails (54%). The rest of the behaviour types were distributed in the following way: aggressive (22%), mixed (20%) and competent (4%).

Table 03. Indicators of the level of formation of communicative abilities ("Test of communicative abilities of L. Mikhelson"), in %

Types of communicative situations	Behaviour type			
	dependent	competent	aggressive	mixed
Situations, in which a reaction to positive statements of the partner is required	23 (46%)	8 (16%)	2 (4%)	17 (34%)
Situations, in which the adolescent is required to react to negative statements	11 (22%)	3 (6%)	26 (52%)	10 (20%)
Situations, in which a request is addressed to the adolescent	24 (48%)	7 (14%)	11 (22%)	8 (16%)
Situations of conversation	22 (44%)	7 (14%)	13 (26%)	8 (16%)
Situations, in which manifestation of empathy is required	27 (54%)	2 (4%)	11 (22%)	1 20%)

6.4. Results of mathematic treatment of data.

The use of a ϕ -criterion of Fischer allowed establishing statistical significant differences in the levels of communicative competence development and behaviour types in situations of interpersonal communication ($p \leq 0.05-0.01$).

7. Conclusion

In summary, it is possible to conclude that the influence of virtual reality on the modern oncoming generation is immense. Alongside with positive moments, revealing themselves in the form of time saving for information search, an opportunity of distant communication, it is possible to note also quite strong negative influence, which a long-term staying on the Internet exerts on the adolescent. This may include a general impact on physical and psychological health of adolescents, on development of a personality and on their interpersonal communication in actual reality. Taking into account the above-mentioned problems, the authors conducted an empirical study, the generalised results of which emphasize a low level of communicative competence and communicative abilities of adolescence – active users of the Internet.

7.1. Results, obtained by means of methodology of competence in communication of V.F. Ryakhovski

The major part of adolescents – active users of the Internet – are characterised by a low level of competence in communication.

7.2. Results obtained by means of method COI-2

A significant part of adolescents – active users of social networks – displays a low level of communicative abilities development.

7.3. Results obtained by means of the method “Communicative abilities test of L. Mikhelson”.

The general body of adolescents – active Internet users, demonstrates a dependent type of behaviour in the following situations of communication: situations, requiring a reaction to positive statements of an interlocutor; in situations, when a request is addressed to the adolescent and in the conversation situations; in situations, requiring empathy manifestation. In situations, requiring reaction to negative statements of an interlocutor, a dominating type of adolescents' behaviour is aggressive.

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