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Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary Tendencies of Development

COMMITMENT TO GENERATION SUBCULTURE AS A FACTOR OF BUILDING A LIFE SCENARIO

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Abstract

The article presents the study of the life models of youth (as fragments of a life scenario realized by a person in concrete life spheres) in the context of intergenerational relations. The topicality of the research is related to the modern understanding of intergenerational transmission as the interaction of subcultures and the need to study the role of commitment to the subculture of a generation in creating a life scenario by young people. The sample consists of 100 St. Petersburg State university students, average age 21.02 ± 1.11; the semi-structured interview was used to investigate human activity in two areas - professional self-determination and close relationships. The factor analysis revealed universal landmarks in a life scenario (active life, orientation for career growth and life success), and the influence of intergenerational and intragenerational relations. On this basis, respondents were classified according to their commitment to the subculture of their generation or their exposure to the influence of parents, traditional values. The cluster analysis identified five clusters, four of which are related to the commitment to the subculture of youth generation and closeness to the parents. The study showed that regardless of closeness with parents, both high and low identification with the subculture of youth generation can take place; young people continue to adhere to traditional landmarks - career, status, and well-being. Identification with the parents' generation has a greater effect on a model of close relationships. Reliance on parental support can shape both active and passive life models of young people.

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1. Introduction

The global nature of the ongoing in society transformation turns us to the issue of transmission of cultural guidelines and social attitudes in the changed conditions. If earlier those processes were based on intergenerational relations, now the transmission of life models (Kostromina, Grishina, Zinovyeva, & Moskvicheva, 2018) occurs both vertically and horizontally. Intergenerational contacts are becoming more perfunctory and superficial and intragenerational transmission of life guidelines through social networks and the digital environment is becoming increasingly intense.

In the current situation Martsinkovskaya's suggestion that intergenerational transmission should be viewed not as an exchange of isolated values and social ideas but as an interaction of subcultures seems quite fair. In this case a subculture is considered to be a way of gaining generational identity and socialization in the chosen group (Martsinkovskaya & Chumicheva, 2015, p.10). The inner semantic field creates emotional passionarity which separates one subculture from another not so much in the external sense as through the description of values, beliefs and ideological positions. This approach allows to fully describe the mechanisms of experience transfer and to identify the specifics of interaction and information exchange of representatives of different generations**.**

2. Problem Statement

For a long time the influence of the microenvironment on personal development, the processes of socialization and building a life scenario was studied in the framework of the age-psychological approach. However, it is necessary to recognize that age limits of a generation today do not coincide with time limits. So, younger and older adolescents can be looked upon as two generations, the same can be said about preschoolers and younger schoolchildren. In the meantime, social, ethnic and cultural factors have an increasing influence on the process of formation of new generations and temporal boundaries between age cohorts (Martsinkovskaya & Chumicheva, 2015).

2.1. Generation as an age cohort and as a subculture

According to the interdisciplinary theory of Howe and Strauss (1992) a generation is a cohort of people born in one twenty-year period and having three features: experiencing the same historical events at about the same age, common beliefs and patterns of behavior, as well as a sense of belonging to this generation.

Meanwhile, it becomes obvious that each generation while maintaining commitment to the values and ideals broadcast by society, has divergent positions on some issues, thereby forming its own subculture at the level of "the system of norms and values that distinguish this group from the majority of society" (Smelser, 1994, p.67). From this point of view, the generation subculture reflects the generation psychotype focusing on motivation, attitude towards life, towards oneself and others. Thus, belonging to a generation is rather a formal sign. Much more important is the degree of acceptance of ideas of a generation. It is likely that the formal affiliation may not coincide with the real-world outlook.

2.2. Closeness to a generation and creating a life scenario

Martsinkovskaya (2013) draws attention to the fact that introduction into subcultures is connected with the search for one's place in life, self-actualization. Building a life scenario is one of the manifestations of this search.

From this point of view, the study of life scenarios of young people opens the way to understanding the psychological mechanisms of interconnection and mutual influence of society culture and generation subculture. There may be variations of presence of the previous generation values and beliefs of their own generation in the life scenarios of young people, their correlation can be viewed as a degree of closeness to their generation, generational identity. The concept of a life model is proposed to be used as a concept that expands the possibilities of empirical research of life scenarios of young people. Life models are fragments of a life scenario implemented by a person in specific life spheres; a set, content and logic of life events related to one of the main spheres of human activity (Kostromina et al., 2018).

3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated on the basis of analysis of the generation subculture and its role in creating a life scenario.

Does commitment to generation values and subculture present a factor influencing the building of a life scenario by young people?

What role in the transitive world is played by a parental family and closeness to it in the formation of life models of young people?

What vectors of building life models can be considered inherent in the subculture of the young generation?

What is the variability of life scenarios depending on the degree of commitment to the generation subculture?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to describe life models of young people in the context of intergenerational relations.

As empirical referents of the life scenario were life models, which being a fragment of the life scenario in a specific sphere of life, reveal the logic of events, actions and human activity in this area.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Description of semi-structured questionnaire

The developed semi-structured questionnaire was aimed at studying human activity in two main areas of life: the sphere of professional self-determination and the sphere of close relationships.

The professional sphere of human life was to be described in characteristics that satisfy the needs of the person (1) in interesting work and activities, (2) in maintaining a certain social status, (3) in ensuring financial position.

The sphere of close relations was specified through the description of (1) the need for close relations, the family and the maintenance of kinship relations, (2) the nature of close relations (distribution of responsibility, rights and powers, the type of satisfying relations: harmonious, conflict, distant), (3) the living space of a family as a vital support (the need for a satisfying space at home, for a feeling of "never-failing back up", vital comfort).

In general, the structure of the questionnaire had four parts: a block of socio-demographic issues, a block of referent questions that describe (a) activity in two leading spheres of life, (b) attitudes and beliefs of people in these areas; (c) experiencing the significance of these spheres of life; (d) a set of questions aimed at determining the degree of identification of young people with their generation ("generational belonging/commitment to generation subculture") and the degree of closeness to the generation of parents. Most of the questions were designed to elicit the participant`s own position and attitudes of his/her parents (father and mother separately).

The whole questionnaire contained 80 questions.

5.2. Markers of "commitment to generation subculture"

The degree of identification with the generation reflects the role of generation subculture in building a life scenario. This measurement is based either on (1) reproduction of life patterns of older generations of the family (for example, choosing the parent`s profession), or on (2) realizing themselves within or outside an institutionalized and structured social context.

Accordingly, the corresponding questions of the questionnaire made it possible to assess not only the degree of conformity of life models of young people and how young people represent life models of their parents, but also the degree of influence of older generations, primarily the parent family. This influence is manifested through the desire (conscious or unconscious) to reproduce the experience of past generations.

The high degree of acceptance and approval of the experience of the elders (the parent family) and the commitment to traditional attitudes handed down from generation to generation were viewed as readiness to reproduce the experience of past generations. The proximity of the respondents' answers regarding their life planning to the assessment of the attitudes of their generation, the adoption of changes in traditional attitudes were viewed as the influence of intragenerational relations. The proximity of the respondents' answers to assessment of their generation attitudes, the adoption of changes in traditional attitudes and commitment to the experience of their own generation were viewed as an influence of the generational relationships.

5.3. Study sample and methods of mathematical-statistical processing of results

The study involved 100 students of St. Petersburg State University, the average age was 21.02 ± 1.11. 42% of respondents live permanently in St. Petersburg, 56% come from different regions of Russia (Novosibirsk, Samara, Perm, etc.). Almost all respondents were born after 1995, which made it possible to classify them on the formal basis belonging to the Z generation (Kulakova, 2018; Tretyakova, 2016; Shamis & Antipov, 2007).

Mathematical analysis of the data was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0 package. The dispersion analysis, as well as factor analysis and cluster analysis were conducted.

6. Findings

6.1. The results of factorization of young people`s ideas about their life scenarios

The factor analysis of the data revealed five factors with a high factor load of the incoming questions indicated in brackets (Table 01).

Table 01. The content and characteristics of factors

Factor 1 Active involvement in life	Factor 2 Peer generation evaluation	Factor 3 Confidence in one`s powers	Factor 4 Independence and autonomy	Factor 5 Family support
Need to make an effort (0.788),	Openness to new (0,798)	Confidence in one`s powers (0,534)	Parents are minimally involved (0,503)	Support and participation of parents in school and student life (0,611)
Active life and activities (0,719)	Striving for broad communication (0,786)	Focus on novelty (0,521)	The school has almost no effect on life (0,521)	Parents`relations are good(0,546), joint family activities (0,513)
Satisfaction from activity (0,759) and exertion (0,754)	Pursuit of personal well-being (0,775) and career growth (0,692)	Persistence in efforts (0,339)	Parents` relations are unfavorable (0,458); difference of views and values (0,379)	Similarity of views and values (0,482)
Focus on success (0,714)	Purposefulness (0,749)	Changing plans due to conditions (0.451)	Mobility (0,435)	Reliance on parents (0,426)
Potential development (0,694)	Striving for personal development (0,643)	Willingness to start over (0,478)	Ability to mobilize (0.393)	Feeling of family circle (0,379)

The first factor was formed by statements revealing an active life position and striving for success in life (in 10 years there will be good work, material wealth, a happy family, active efforts and "investment in life"). The second and third factors in various aspects describe the criteria of identification with their generation. At the same time the variables of the second factor indicate a tendency to be open to new experience, focusing on goals, personal well-being, material well-being and career growth, and the variables of the third factor accumulate statements reflecting a willingness to change one's life and change oneself, self-confidence and aspiration for novelty. The fourth and fifth factors are antipodes. The fourth factor indicates autonomy and independence from the family and a negative attitude toward school; the fifth factor, on the contrary, shows closeness to family, family support, stability and partial conformity.

The results of factor analysis clearly differentiate universal guidelines of a life scenario (active life, orientation to career growth and life success), and the influence of intergenerational (factor 5) and intragenerational relations. Elements of young generation subculture are reflected not only in the second factor, but also in the third (willingness to change and start all over again) and fourth (independence and

autonomy) factors, revealing the main characteristics of the modern generation of young people: willingness to "invest" in life, early independence, lack of fear of changing themselves and changing the world around them (Pishchyk, 2011; Zarubina, 2012). In this regard, the variables that formed the first and fifth factors are closer to traditional values (success, career, material wealth, control, family and etc.). Thus, sufficiently clear reasons were given for classifying respondents with respect to their commitment to the subculture of their generation or their susceptibility to the influence of parents, older generation and traditional values.

6.2. Options of building a life scenario

Clustering of observations given in this five-factor model was performed (Fig. 1). In general, clustering showed that 4 out of 5 clusters actively demonstrate commitment to the subculture of their generation (except for the fourth cluster) and closeness to their parents (except for the fifth cluster).

The first cluster represents young people who value the most the third factor (they are ready to change, start life "from a scratch");among the other factors the top priority was given to the fifth factor (they are close to their parents, follow their advice, focused on them).

The second cluster includes observations with low rating of the first factor - young people with a passive attitude, not ready to invest in their lives; and high rating of factor 5 - support from parents.

The third cluster is formed by observations showing the most importance of the first (active involvement in life) and the fourth factor (independence and autonomy) and less concern for the third factor (readiness for change and self-confidence).
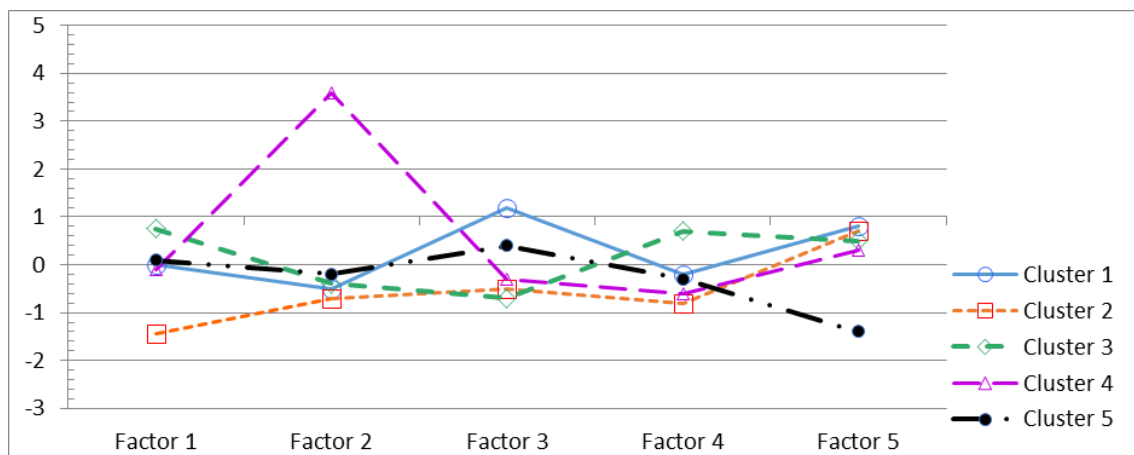

Figure 01. Plot of Means for Each Cluster

The main characteristic of *the fourth cluster* is the highest ratings of the second factor, that is, they are characterized by identification with their generation. However, this cluster was the smallest (5 respondents).

Young people of *the fifth cluster* are distant from the family and are not dependent on its support. Simultaneously, they demonstrate greater confidence and willingness to change than respondents included in the second, third and fourth clusters and readiness to exercise maximum autonomy.

Significant differences between the clusters make it possible to talk about the existence of differences in life models, which are caused not by the sphere of life activity, but specifically by the

mechanisms of intergenerational and intragenerational transmission, as well as *the degree of independence and activity* in building a life model.

Moreover, these differences are significantly determined by additional conditions. For example, there are significantly more residents of St Petersburg (their share is 68.4%) among young people with a passive life position (cluster 2). Among those who are focused on success and career (cluster 1) or declare their independence and autonomy but prefer stability and self-doubt (cluster 3) there are more respondents who came to St Petersburg from other regions of Russia (newcomers make up 66.7% in both clusters). In the meantime, among young people distanced from the parental family, who do not count on its support (cluster 5), residents of St. Petersburg and non-residents are approximately equally divided (52.2% and 47.8%, respectively).

6.3. Traditional values vs. Z generation values

6.3.1. "Traditional" life patterns and the influence of intergenerational relations

Comparison of the life patterns of the third and fifth clusters makes it possible to assess how the influence of intergenerational relations affects commitment to traditional values.

The third cluster is the most vivid reflection of the influence of parents on life models of young people. Family closeness (0.004) and relationship with parents (parents are regularly interested in their studies (0.000) can be traced to the desire to develop a career like the most successful member of their family (0.001). (Hereinafter, the non-parametric Chi-square of Pearson is used to indicate the degree to which this cluster differs from the others). More than half consider their education an investment into their future life (0.038), they believe that life must be "earned" (0.014), and life success reflects the efforts of a person. Of all the respondents they are more focused on material well-being and career but evaluate themselves as people who prefer stability (0.001). Although most of them believe that the changes are useful (0.001) their willingness to invest in life is accompanied by doubts about their success (0.010). They believe that in 10 years they will have a high-status job (0.001) and financially secure life (0.000); they will have a happy family (0.048) and they will definitely be a part of the family circle (0.000). They are confident that the generation of their peers is focused on material prosperity and career growth (0.005).

So, the respondents of the third cluster manifested adherence to traditional values, commitment to traditional subculture of older generations – targeted at financial security, high profile, close relationships and proactive life style.

The subjects who form the *fifth cluster*, unlike the third one, are the most distant from family. They would not like to follow in the footsteps of the most successful of their family members (0,001). They already see themselves successful (0,010) and proactive (0,036), ready for a beneficial change (0,000). Most of them agree that "a life should be earned" (0,014). Their views reflect the values of their generation - the drive for independence and self-sufficiency.

They estimate their generation as oriented towards material prosperity (0.005) and career growth, in this connection their life scenario is determined by these aspirations. They are sure that in 10 years they will definitely have a high-status job (0.001) and material security. Simultaneously, only half of them think that they will have a happy family (0.048), and most are not going to support the family circle

(0.000). Thus, despite distancing from the parental family and the reduced influence of intergenerational relations; traditional values - wealth, high-status work, and good education continue to dominate in building life models in the professional sphere. The commitment to the subculture of the generation is manifested in attitudes towards oneself – they are willing to change, to rely on their own opinion and independently build their life scenarios.

6.3.2. Family influence and commitment to the peer subculture

The subjects in *the first cluster* do not express interest in career building and financial success while showing closeness to the parent family. Most of them believe that in 10 years they will not necessarily have a status job (0.001), and financially secure life (0.002). In the meantime, they associate their future with creation of a happy family (0.048) and a large family circle (0.000). Thus, status and wealth are not the main guidelines for building a life scenario. Whereas, family values remain in the structure of the life scenario.

So, despite the influence and support of the family, they demonstrate their commitment to traditional values mainly in building close relationships, while simultaneously demonstrating their commitment to the subculture of their generation. Closeness to their generation is manifested in the fact that they regard themselves as preferring changes and disliking immutability (0.001), a calm and monotonous flow of life (0.013). They are ready to start all over again if they realize that they have made a mistake in choosing a profession (0.000). They believe that success in life depends on their own efforts (0.000). They most often evaluate themselves as successful people (0.010).

7. Conclusion

The following conclusions can be made comparing the clusters with maximum and minimum closeness to parent family.

Regardless of the degree of closeness to parental family, there can be both high and low commitment to the subculture of peer generation when building a life scenario. The parental family strongly influences the formation of a model of close relationships and the need for them. In the professional sphere both values of the older generation, and the attitudes and beliefs of peer generation can be dominant. In this case, there may be a life model, formed under the influence of peer generation (active, for example, as in the first or fifth clusters), and under the influence of older generations (passive, as in the third cluster);

Reliance on family support can contribute to formation of both active (first cluster) and passive (second cluster) life models; if the support of the family is not accompanied by formation of an active life position or identification with one's own generation, then young people choose "living according to circumstances" or "a bird in the hand" option of the life scenario;

Weak reliance on the family affects mostly the need for building close relationships (or rather, no need for building them). At the same time, closeness to parents minimally affects life models in the professional sphere. Regardless of the distance from the parental family, young people continue to adhere to the traditional orientation – career, status, wealth.

Acknowledgments

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