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STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE COMMUNICATIONS IN AN UNSTABLE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

Valentina Ivanovna Dolgova (a)*, Pavel Lvovich Leonov (b), Aleksandra Pavlovna Leonova (c)
*Corresponding author

(a) South Ural State University for the Humanities and Education, 69, Lenin Ave., Chelyabinsk, Russia,
23a12@list.ru
(b) South Ural State University for the Humanities and Education, 69, Lenin Ave., Chelyabinsk, Russia,
leonovpl@cspu.ru
(c) South Ural State University for the Humanities and Education, 69, Lenin Ave., Chelyabinsk, Russia,
leonovaap@cspu.ru

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to study the psychologically safe communications of older adolescents in an unstable epidemiological situation. The experiment involved the 2nd year students of choreographic class (n=21). According to the course curator, there were both leaders in the group, and children who were not popular with their classmates, there were also microgroups. According to the obtained data, the strategies of behavior in a conflict situation among students in this class can be distributed according to their predominance in the following way: the first position (the most used strategy) is adaptation. The second one is avoidance, the third one is compromise, the fourth is cooperation, and the fifth is competition. This indicates that in this class, adolescents either infringe on their interests completely, or achieve them partially, or avoid the solution of the problem at all, which means that there is no desire to achieve their goals. To different extents adolescents manifest all strategies of behavior in relation to others: avoidance, adaptation, compromise, cooperation, and competition, that is, they are also characterized by constructive strategies of interpersonal relations - compromise and cooperation.

1. Introduction

One of the main factors in the creation of productive communication that affects the life of society is communication, which has a direct impact on the mental and social formation of an individual. Taking into account the unstable environment of social life, a person is forced to adapt to changes, and it is especially difficult for older teenagers to do this (Mion et al., 2021). At this age, self-consciousness is formed and external influence exerts powerful pressure not only on its formation, but in general, on the development of the personality of a teenager and on his search for the "meaning of life". Under this pressure, conflicts occur, which is inextricably associated with the projection of expectations on reality and vice versa. In such situations, communication with parents, senior mentors and peers is of great importance, which can be attributed to a significant area of life of an older teenager. A teenager and his still unstable psyche are subject to the opinions of others, and as a result of external influence, both self-confidence, motivation, independence, as well as fears, anxiety, aggressiveness, isolation can form (Curcuruto & Griffin, 2018; Newman et al., 2017). The result of a careless influence on the emerging consciousness can be destructive behaviour and a negative attitude towards oneself as a person. Therefore, the research problem is conditioned by the need to form strategies for psychologically safe interaction. The theoretical and methodological basis of the study is: the theory of age periodization of personality development, the activity approach, the works on the problems of personality formation and relationships in groups.

The relationship between the concepts of "communication" and "relationship" is manifested in the interaction. Communication is used within the framework of the activity approach and is considered as a special kind of activity. The specificity of interpersonal communication acts as a kind of consequence and function of such indicators as the content, tasks and goals of joint activities and the level of socio-psychological development of this community (Brassard et al., 2020; Gogitsaeva et al., 2019). Interpersonal relationships have their own structure and are a psychologically multifaceted process that involves the passage of periods and stages. They can be situational and can change depending on various types of collective activity in the process of emerging conflicts (Dolgova et al., 2016).

During this age period that the biological and social clash in a person occur, internal contradictions break out and subjugate behaviour and self-control (Effron & Raj, 2021). In adolescence, a special activity arises and develops, which consists in the establishment of intimate-personal relationships between adolescents. This activity has been called the activity of communication. Unlike other forms of relationships that take place in the business cooperation of comrades, in this activity its main content is another teenager, as a person with certain personal qualities (Khalilov, 2016). The above-mentioned is aggravated in the conditions of forced remote interaction (Elkonin, 2017). The formation of relations in a group of adolescents on the basis of a code of camaraderie, which, in its objective content, reproduces the most general norms of relationships that exist between adults in a given society, is of great importance for the development of the personal qualities of a teenager.

Along with this, there is a desire for self-affirmation, a desire to show and prove to others one's adulthood. During this period of life, there is a change in the relationship of a teenager to the world and to himself. A teenager forms his worldview, his life plans, which, ultimately, will allow him to live

independently. Despite the fact that a teenager, neither physically, mentally, nor socially, can yet fully meet the criteria of adulthood, he strives to take an equal social position with adults. On the one hand, this is good, because in the process of communicating with senior mentors and parents, a teenager receives the advice, support, and information he needs about the outside world. On the other hand, in communication with peers, he shares his thoughts and doubts, his experiences with friends andshows empathy better (Wong et al., 2021).

During the process of psychologically safe communication, particular connections are established that help a teenager understand that he is not alone, that there are rational solutions to the tasks he faces, that his experiences are important, deserves attention (Eleferenko, 2010) and contribute to the development of another new formation self-determination. A teenager begins to understand himself and his abilities, as well as his place in human society and his purpose in life (Shao et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2019). Interpersonal conflict in adolescence can be considered as a situation of intense personal development associated with the restructuring of cognitive formations, the dynamics of motives, values, etc., and have both a positive and negative impact on the development of a teenager's personality (Fopel, 2016).

A special group of factors provoking conflict is age-related features. The principles of systemic analysis of school conflicts were formulated by Feldstein (2010). The same options for resolving conflicts are adopted by adolescents in communication with peers, but the causes of clashes are different (betrayal, treason of a group or friend, violation of a given word, greed).

The lack of positive conditions can also be attributed to the restrictions associated with communications in an unstable epidemiological situation. Thus, most of the time a teenager is forced to spend on the Internet, however, interpersonal relationships and loneliness are important factors influencing people's Internet addictive behaviour (Lechner & Mortlock, 2021). Internet addicts report significantly higher rates of loneliness than non-internet addicts. These results suggested that the social cognitive function of Internet addicts is likely to be impaired, especially in the process of learning interpersonal conflicts (Hou et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2022). In addition, Internet addicts are more likely to maintain poor interpersonal relationships, which can lead to even more loneliness and a violation of the psychological safety of a growing person.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of the study is explained by the need to develop strategies for psychologically safe interaction of adolescents in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic.

3. Research Questions

The authors try to explore the strategies of behavior in a conflict situation among students in choreographic class.

    i.   To identify the features of interpersonal relationships in adolescents studying in choreographic class;

ii.   To identify the features of predisposition to conflict behaviour of adolescents studying in choreographic class.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to substantiate and verify during the ascertaining experiment and discuss psychologically safe communications of older adolescents in an unstable epidemiological situation of COVID 19.

5.   Research Methods

The pilot study was carried out on the basis of South Ural State Institute of Arts named after P. I. Tchaikovsky, Chelyabinsk. The experiment involved the 2nd year students of choreographic class (n=21).

There were 1 boy (5 %) and 20 girls (95 %), 2 people (10 %) aged 16 and 19 people (90 %) aged 17 years. All (100 %) of the subjects entered the first year in 2020 and continued to study together. 12 (57 %) people lived in a hostel and 9 (43 %) teenagers lived with their parents. Most teenagers grew up in complete families. According to the curator of the course, there were obvious leaders in the group. The class was friendly. There were leaders in the class and children who were not popular with their classmates, there were also microgroups.

The following methods and techniques were used (Gretsov & Azbel, 2016; Dolgova and Rokitskaya, 2016):

1. Theoretical ones: analysis and generalization of psychological and pedagogical literature, goal setting, modeling.

2. Empirical: ascertaining and forming experiments, testing according to the method of diagnosing interpersonal relations by T. Leary, testing according to the method of diagnosing a person's predisposition to conflict behavior by K. Thomas.

6.   Findings

Diagnostic indicators of the survey of interpersonal relations of adolescents according to the method of T. Leary according to their severity are shown in Figure 01.
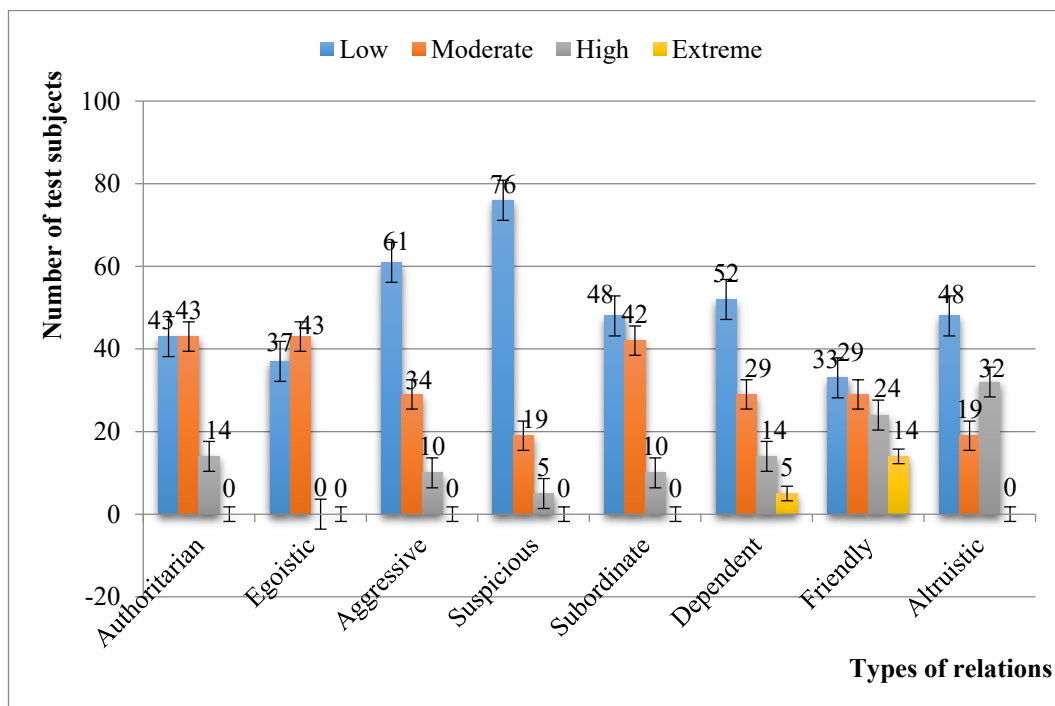
Figure 1. Diagnostic indicators of interpersonal relations of younger adolescents (T. Leary) according to their manifestation rate

Figure 01 shows that, in general, the degree of manifestation rate of types of interpersonal communication is in the low and moderate ranges

The types of interpersonal relationships were highly pronounced: authoritarian (14 %), aggressive (10 %), suspicious (5 %), subordinate (10 %), dependent (14 %), friendly (24 %), altruistic (32 %); the types of interpersonal relationships received an extreme manifestation rate: dependent (5 %) and friendly (14 %). 8 adolescents in the class (38 %) were highly expressed in the altruistic type of attitude towards others. These teenagers were hyper-responsible, they sacrificed their interests, they always strove to help, but they were also intrusive in their help.

5 adolescents (24 %) had high and 3 adolescents (14 %) have extreme manifestation rate in a friendly type of attitude towards others. Such teenagers were friendly, kind to everyone, oriented towards acceptance and social approval, striving to "be good" to everyone. 4 adolescents (19 %) were highly expressed in the dependent type of attitude towards others. Such teenagers were obedient, but fearful, helpless and did not know how to show resistance. 1 adolescent (5 %) had an extreme manifestation rate in this type of relationship. He had obsessive fears and apprehensions, worried for any reason, and therefore he was dependent on someone else's opinion.

3 adolescents (14 %) were highly pronounced in the authoritarian type of attitude towards others. Such teenagers were successful in business, demanded respect for themselves, they were energetic and often were authoritative leaders.

2 adolescents (10 %) had a high degree of aggressive attitude towards others. Such teenagers were straightforward, frank and irritable, tended to blame others for everything.

2 adolescents (10 %) were highly expressed in the subordinate type of attitude towards others. Such teenagers were shy, easily embarrassed, they tended to obey the stronger without regard to the

situation. 1 teenager (5 %) had a high manifestation rate in a suspicious type of attitude towards others. critical and secretive.

Thus, common types of attitudes towards others in this class were friendly and altruistic. Using the K. Thomas diagnostic technique, we assessed the strategies used in conflict behaviour in the subjects.

We presented the diagnostic indicators of the study in terms of their severity in the table shown in Figure 02.
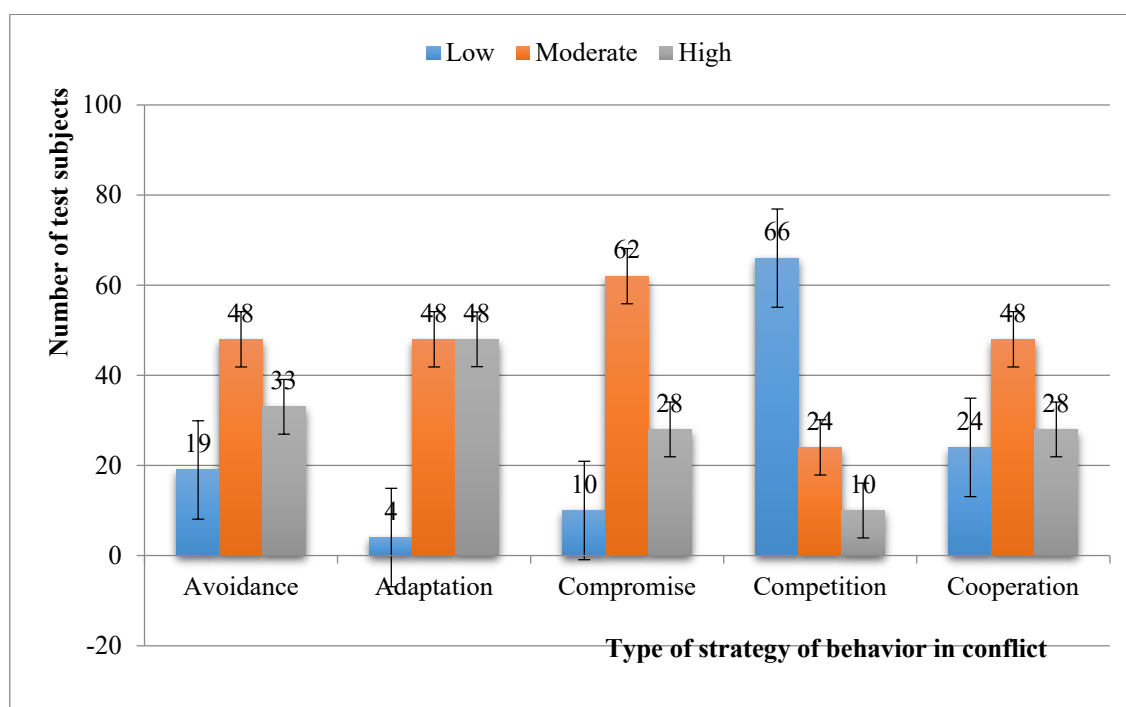

Figure 2. Diagnostic indicators of the study of the behavioral strategy of younger adolescents in conflict (K. Thomas) according to their manifestation rate

Figure 02 shows that a larger number of students corresponded to a strategy of moderate manifestation rate.

10 adolescents in the class (48 %) had a pronounced adaptation strategy: a teenager was forced or voluntarily refused to defend his own interests either for the sake of maintaining good relations with an opponent, or in case of strong dependence on him, or when he realized that he was wrong or the problem is insignificant. This strategy was used when the outcome of a case was extremely important for one teenager and not very significant for another.

7 adolescents (33 %) had a pronounced avoidance strategy: either in the absence of the strength and time to resolve the contradiction, or in the desire to gain time, or if there were difficulties in determining the line of their behaviour, or if they did not want to solve the problem at all, the adolescent had no desire to achieve their goals and the desire for cooperation. Adolescents did not defend their interests and positions, or simply avoid resolving the conflict.

6 adolescents (28 %) had strategy of pronounced compromise, in which there was an exchange of mutual partial concessions. The teenager partly refused the demands put forward by him earlier, but nevertheless, partly defended them. When a teenager understood that he and the opponent had equal

opportunities, either in the presence of mutually exclusive interests, or in the satisfaction of a temporary solution, or in the threat of losing everything, the compromise strategy allowed adolescents to maintain the relationship.

6 adolescents (28 %) had a pronounced strategy of cooperation, in which a joint search for solutions took place that fully satisfied the interests of the participants. The participants in the relationship were not opponents, but allies in the search for a solution. This was a good way to find a mutually beneficial result and satisfied the interests of all parties.

2 adolescents (10 %) had a pronounced strategy of competition, in which there was a strong desire to defend their interests at all costs. Using the style of competition, teenagers were very active and able to make strong-willed decisions. Thus, the following types of strategies received a strong manifestation rate: adaptation (48 %), avoidance (33 %), compromise (28 %), cooperation (28 %), competition (10 %).

7.   Conclusion

Adolescence is a transitional period of development from childhood to adulthood, which is characterized by greater biological, psychological and socio-role changes than any other stage of life. The uniqueness of adolescence is in its spontaneity and a huge number of changes. The study showed that adolescents to varying degrees manifest all strategies of behaviour in relation to others: avoidance, adaptation, compromise, cooperation, and competition, that is, they are also characterized by constructive strategies of interpersonal relations – compromise and cooperation.

The theoretical significance of the study is in the systematization of the available amount of information on the subject of psychologically safe interaction between older adolescents. Practical significance is in the identification of the components of psychologically safe communication among older adolescents and recommendations based on the results of the study, which can be used in the work of other institutions and specialists.

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