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SUICIDAL PERSONALITY OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE VIRTUAL SPACE

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Abstract

This article presents the analysis of the social and psychological characteristics of the identity of a teenager who joins various online "death groups". The author notes a high correlation between an aggressive victimity and suicidal tendencies and identifies the factors of suicidal behavior: A - victim behavior, B - unrecognized, C - glorification of death, D - negativity towards the world. In the process of cluster analysis, four types of personality of adolescents are identified who participate in online death groups – imitators, suicidal individuals, artists, spectators. The description of these types is given in the article. The prevalence of certain factors of suicide behavior for each of them is noted. In our research, the sociometric status of a teenager became a categorical criterion. It was revealed that persons with suicidal tendencies generally belong to the category of low-status teenagers and have the status an outcast. The correlation with the selected typology is presented as follows: Imitators (A, C), Persons with suicidal tendencies (A, D), Artists (A, B), and Audience (specified factors for this group are not expressed).

1. Introduction

The Internet space, being the most significant habitat for teenagers and youth due to its incorporeity, anonymity and specificity of chronotopes, acts as a catalyst for eroding the eternal values: good and evil, life and death. The teenager, being in fact the producer and consumer of information, faces daily the psychological risks of the information space, the aggressiveness of information, anonymity and physical unrepresentation creator and consumer in the Internet media, manipulative technologies.

Aspiring to meet the social requirements, peculiar to each person, in positive evaluation and self-esteem, in respect, recognition, positive self-realization, adolescents are grouped in social networks and can become victims of experienced manipulators.

The scientific problem consists in identification and the description of typology of the identity of the teenagers inclined to suicidal behavior in Internet-space for prevention of personal deviations and real death.

In 2013-2016 interest in the problem of suicidal behavior of adolescents in virtual groups of death has intensified, but there is still no deep scientific study of this problem, and scientific articles have single character. In one of them influence of the deadly content, which is posted online, on teenagers and youth (Demdoumi & Denisov, 2013) is noted. The authors point to a possible link between the increase in suicide content and the increase in the number of suicides among adolescents and youth (Demdoumi & Denisov, 2013). At the same time, statistically reliable links between these phenomena are not specified. Numerous online publications, newspaper articles on the influence of virtual groups on the suicidal tendencies of adolescents have a pronounced emotional coloring and do not give an idea of what is really going on.

In the studies of Kaslow, it is noted that among secondary school students, 15,8% have suicidal thoughts, 12,8% of schoolchildren planned at least suicide, 7, 8% of teenagers tried to commit suicide one or several times, 2,4% of children made attempt of suicide (Kaslow, 2012).

The factors of suicidal risks include complicated interpersonal relationships with peers, bullying, and mental disorders. Bhuiyan indicates the importance in commission of a suicide at the teenager presence of friends with complete suicides (Bhuiyan, 2016).

In the research by Ali et al. (2011) the phenomenon of social infection of adolescents with suicidal behavior in social networks is also considered. Scientists come to a conclusion about the importance of a social environment of the teenager and influence of this environment not only in real space, but also in virtual. In scientific research, social factor of risk of intimidation of teenagers is also noted [Ali et al., 2011].

Psychological research of victim behavior in adolescents in social networks also does not affect the problems of suicides under the influence of communication in social networks and the so-called death groups (Bovt, 2016). There is no serious scientific experience of a research of a problem of suicide behavior of teenagers. Situation is complicated by transfer of suicide behavior from real in virtual space, anonymity of the last.

Besides, Internet penetration into all spheres of life does of a funeral ceremony a performance for initiates. For example, on the website http://www.sociosite.org/death.php it is proposed to virtualize the funeral in order that the bigger number of persons interested took part in them. It should be noted, that drawing attention stands behind the posting in Network of videos of suicidal persons, on which their last steps are recorded.

The attempt of typology of victim's behavior of teenagers in Internet-space is made in Falkina's researches. The researcher distinguishes four behavior models inherent of teenagers on the Internet: aggressive type, active type, passive type, initiative type, non-critical type (Falkina, 2014).

2. Problem Statement

The available typologies of suicidal behavior, which built with the factors of manipulation-sincerity, affectivity-reflexivity, heteroaggression-autoaggression, openness-closure, allow us to single out demonstratively-blackmail suicides with aggressive motivation, demonstratively-blackmail suicides with manipulative motivation, undifferentiated, demonstrative, affective, true and indirect suicides, impulsive, hyperemotional, depressive, paranoid and schizophrenic. However, the typology of suicidal behavior of adolescents in the Internet-space was not considered (Dronova & Bryshina, 2013).

In our researches of the personality we noted that expansion of teenager's knowledge of the world during Internet-socialization causes a feeling of limitlessness of own opportunities, leads to transformation of the self-presentation, to formation of the new virtual personality. Self-formation installations are transformed. There is a transformation of self-formation. The success of adaptation depends on the acquisition of skills and behaviors for actions in specific situations: technical (language) and social (especially communication, choice of communication group, type of activity). Adolescents are more often in a state of uncertainty, which forms specific behavior in both virtual and real space. Cognitive attitudes, images of the world, and sacredness of personality are changing, which are the basis of the world outlook. Changes in space-time representations, the possibility of time reversal, are based on cognitive attitudes changes, the possibility of virtual death and a new virtual birth lead to a change in the value of human life.

In a modification Razuvaeva (2017) questionnaire of suicide risk for teenagers 8-11 classes as suicidal behavior characteristics distinguished: affectivity, demonstrative, social pessimism, lack of temporal perspective, demolition of cultural barriers, maximalism, uniqueness, insolvency.

The theoretical analysis of scientific literature allowed to construct a two-stage model of suicide personality in virtual space. The first stage presupposes the existence of a cognitive, affective and behavioral component in the personality structure that is realized in real space through such characteristics as representations of one's own uniqueness, temporary prospects, social pessimism, aggressiveness, demolition of cultural barriers, demonstrativeness. In the virtual space to the existing components are added mythological (the acquisition of a personal mythologeme of suicidal persona), cognitive-instrumental and motivational (the implementation of separate motives in a deviant form). The social environment is a factor in the selection of suicidal person.

3. Research Questions

Allocation of the bases for typology of suicide behavior of teenagers in virtual space.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is a description of the typology of adolescents inclined to suicidal behavior in virtual space.

5. Research Methods

5.1. The Methodology and Empirical Methods

Theoretical analysis; experiment. At the stage of the experiment for revealing suicidal risks of adolescents in real space is used the questionnaire of suicidal risks in the modification of Razuvaeva (2017). To determine the degree of victimity of adolescents is used the method of investigating propensity to victim behaviour. For studying of virtual characteristics of the personality is chosen the questionnaire "The identity in virtual space" of Luchinkina (2014); for identification of personal mythemes of teenagers in virtual space is used the content-analysis of pages of the teenagers consisting in groups of death on social networks. For detection of tool literacy of teenagers is applied the author's questionnaire; for determination of the status of the teenager in a class is applied sociometry method.

5.2. Experiment

In an empirical study, 614 teenagers from the eighth-ninth classes of schools in Simferopol participated. The study was conducted in two stages. At the first stage, the sample was divided into participants of virtual groups with suicidal content and teenagers who do not consist in such groups. At the second stage, social, psychological, and personal characteristics of the teenagers consisting in groups of death were studied. The research took place in real space.

During the research, it became clear that 173 teenagers (56 boys and 117 girls) actively participate in communications of groups of death. It should be noted, that at this sample there were both low-status, and high-status teenagers. The sociometric status of a teenager has become a categorical criterion in our study.

6. Findings

The correlation analysis of personal and socio-psychological characteristics revealed an inverse relationship between demonstrativeness and realized victimity, a direct relationship between affectivity and uncriticality, aggressive victimity, aggressive victimity and self-damaging behavior at p = 0.05. It should be noted, that among the teenagers included in the communication of death groups, the vast majority has a low sociometric status in the classes.

In the course of the study, four main factors of suicidal behavior of teenagers of this sample were identified:

1. Factor A - behavior of the victim, which includes affectivity, aggressive victimity, propensity to self-damaging behavior, victim hyper sociality, uncriticality and realized victimity, orientation. The most important is aggressive victimity. Teenagers with the expressed behavior of the victim are not able to constrain the emotions, have dichotomous thinking on the principle of "black and white," are prone to catastrophization, often have an antisocial orientation, which explains their propensity for self-harm in situations that disrupt psychological homeostasis with the social environment.

2. Factor B – unacknowledgement – demonstrativeness, insolvency, uniqueness. Teenagers with prevalence of a factor of unacknowledgement are demonstrative, draw attention to their problems, need the support of the social environment, which attracts them to social networks and to the appropriate groups. Badly perceive other people's examples, are confident in their exceptional and correctness of the made decisions. Suicide is regarded as a challenge to the incompetent world.

3. Factor C – the glorification (heroization) of death – demolition of cultural barriers, involvement in the Internet-space. The severity of this factor implies the attraction of suicidal behavior. Surrounding it with romantic and heroic aureoles - music, poems, painting and films. Borrowing suicidal patterns of behavior from literature and cinema. Blurring the value of life and death in the Internet-space contributes to the game, "cine" attitude to death in general.

4. Factor D – negativity of the world – social pessimism, an activity orientation in Internet-space. This factor is connected with depressive tendencies – the negativity of the world in which a teenager lives, the instability of moral norms in the Internet-space leads a teenager to find groups that are related to the real world also badly, with the underlying trend – the world is bad, they do not understand me.

During the cluster analysis, four main clusters were identified in the studied sample (Fig. 1).
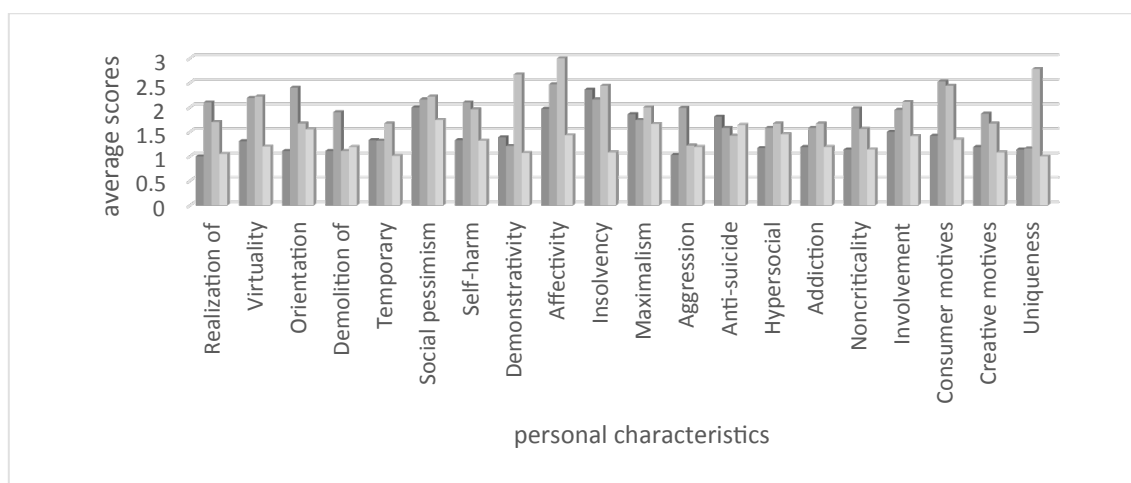

Figure 01. Typology of teenagers sampling

Row 1 - imitators, row 2 - persons with suicidal tendencies, row 3- artists, row 4 - audience.

As seen in Figure 1, the personal characteristics of adolescents assigned to various clusters, are different. Such differences made it possible to give the clusters certain names.

Imitators (42 teenagers - 1 row) are teenagers with a high level of victimhood, but victimhood has rather a blackmail character. This type is characterized by the prevalence of the behavioral factors of the victim (A) and the negativity of the world (D). The implementation of victimity is extremely low. The magnitude of the anti-suicidal factor confirms the imitative character of suicidal behavior. Teenagers of this group have the negative concept of own personality, which is expressed in ideas of the uselessness and incompetence. With high rates of affectivity, teenagers tend to go to extremes.

The main personal mythology: Harlequin. Everyone should see that the teenager is suffering. As an example, we will cite fragments of content on Rita's pages, 13 years old: "Nobody sees as to me it is bad! Every day I force myself to smile through tears ..."

The main motive of activity in the Internet-space is replication in a deviant form of implementation, which leads to replication of its pages in the Internet-space and the antisocial activities.

Level of virtuality is lower than an average: teenagers do not abuse time in Internet-space, but they create many variants of their images. The inclusion is normal. Among teenagers of this group, there are most of all adolescents with the low sociometric status in a class.

As a rule, during the work with such teenager in a cognitive-behavioral key, their wrong installation is loosened.

Persons with suicidal behavior (21 teenagers - 2 rows). The prevalence of factor A (the behavior of the victim) and the factor C (the glorification of death). This group includes adolescents with high levels of victimity and high suicidal risks, consisting of death groups. Teenagers of this group have high rates on the scale of the realized victimity, are inclined to self-damaging behavior. Suicide is romanticized and heroized. They have problems with constructive planning of the future, they do not believe in their own strength. 78% of the group have an antisocial orientation in the Internet-space. They perceive themselves as an exceptional phenomenon, which implies exceptional exit options, in particular suicide. They are aggressive. Including, they have high indicators on the scale of "aggressive victimity". This group includes people, who demonstrate incautiousness, inability to correctly assess life situations. They are not critical. Demonstrate negligence, failure to properly evaluate life situations, tend to idealize people, justify negative behavior of others, and do not notice the danger.

The main personal mythology: an empty space. Content-analysis of the pages of these teenagers in social networks has shown that the teenagers focus their attention on their uselessness, uselessness. Emphasize, if they do not become, no one will notice their absence. They believe, that if they disappear, no one will notice their absence. Betty (14 years old) writes: "My life is an accidental mistake. If I disappear, then no one, no one, will ever remember me. People will have nothing to remember about me».

The main motive is the motive of the embodiment in the role. Deviant manifestation of this motive is expressed in the embodiment in a role of the hero of a suicide orientation that prevents activity in real space. Such teenagers have a high level of virtuality, however, an inclusiveness in Internet-space at the average level.

The social status: low-status teenagers, who are more often isolated or outcast.

Artists (23 teenagers – the 3rd row) are teenagers with a high level of victimity and a tendency to self-damaging behavior. The leading factors for this type of teenagers are factor A (the behavior of the victim) and factor B (unrecognized). These children enter group of death and willingly demonstrate cuts on a body. These teenagers are inclined to scarring-art, which have determined the name of the type. Suicide risks are high, but the anti-suicidal factor is also high. They use the Internet-space to demonstrate new scars. Teenagers of this group are characterized by demonstrative behavior, expressed in the desire to attract the attention of others to their misfortunes, to achieve empathy and understanding. This behavior resembles blackmail and is close to the behavior of imitators. However, unlike imitators, artists are characterized by high affectivity, which can lead to loss of control over emotions. This type is inherent the perception of the world as a hostile, which is not worthy of a teenager's personality. Absorption in the injuring situation blocks ability of the teenager to socially admissible exit from it.

It should be noted, that teenagers of this type have no skills of opposition to difficult situations, are involved in crisis situations with the purpose of obtaining sympathy and support of people around, show helplessness, have a role position of the victim.

The main personal mythology: the victim. Therefore, teenagers of this group most often write that they were deceived, offended, betrayed. The virtual personality of the victim in 53.6% of cases coincides with the real person. Significant differences were found when comparing the results of assessing the possibility of simultaneous representation in several places, living several lives simultaneously ($\rho \leq 0.05$), which indicates the recognition of the features of the Internet-space.

The main motive is a contribution in a deviant form of implementation. These teenagers have a high level of virtuality, inclusion in the Internet-space at a high level. The victim's behavior unfolds according to the following scenario: the person suffered for a long time. The victim's behavior unfolds according to the following scenario: I suffered for a long time. I was looking for my happiness. Found. Believed. I was offended. Again, I suffer. I'll go and look for more.

Social status: low-status adolescents, which often isolated or excluded.

Audience (107 teenagers – the 4th row) are teenagers with average levels of victimity and suicidal risks. Any of factors is not expressed. Teenagers participate in communication in groups of death, comment on events rather from interest. The level of virtuality is average.

The main personal mythology: a traveler. Teenagers note that they came just to look that do others in these groups, sometimes comment on records on walls of other members of group, show keen interest in what occurs in group.

The main motive: the normative consumer and creative motives - personal space, contribution, the embodiment of the role, replication.

The anti-suicidal factor is high.

Social status: a teenager with a small number of choices in the class.

7.   Conclusion

The suicidal personality in virtual space is based on the properties and characteristics of a real person and includes cognitive, mythological and motivational components.

The cognitive component includes beliefs and the level of instrumental competence of the individual; o motivational – motives of being in the network; to mythological – personal mythemes of teenagers.

In the course of the empirical study, four groups of teenagers were identified for their involvement in suicidal behavior. Imitators: the main mythologem "Harlequin", the main motive is replication of representation, tool skills are developed at the sufficient for surfing level in Internet-space, the victimity is high, but the anti-suicidal factor is also high. Person with suicidal tendencies: a personal mythologem "an empty place", the main motive is the embodiment in a role, tool literacy at the sufficient level, the victimity is high. Artists: the main mytheme "Victim", the main motive a contribution in a deviant form of realization, tool skills are developed the victimity and tendency to the self-damaging behavior are high. Audience: a personal mytheme "Traveller", the main motives is personal space, a contribution, the embodiment in a role, replications is normal, tool literacy at the sufficient level, victimity has an average level. All teenagers have the low sociometric status in school classes.

Empirically identified 4 factors of suicidal behavior by author: actor A –behavior of the victim, factor B – unrecognized, factor C – glorification of death, factor D - negativity of the world. The correlation with the selected typology is presented as follows: Imitators (A, C), Persons with suicidal tendencies (A, D), Artists (A, B), and Audience (the specified factors for this group are not expressed).

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