

PSYRGGU 2019
**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary
Tendencies of Development**

**IMAGE OF MODERN YOUTH AS A REFLECTION BELONGING
TO A PARTICULAR SUBCULTURE**

M.M. Mishina (a)*, E.V. Dekina (b), S.V. Pazukhina (b), E.V. Panferova (b), S.A.
Filippova (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Russian State University for the Humanities, 6, Miusskaya Square, 125993, Moscow, Russia,
mishinamm@yandex.ru

(b) Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University, 125, Lenin av., 300026, Tula,
kmp pedagogika@yandex.ru

Abstract

The article presents the results of an empirical study of students' attitude to the components of the image as a reflection of their belonging to a particular subculture. The study involved Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University students in the amount of 100 people (students of the departments of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science, Foreign Languages, Psychology, and Physical Culture). Image actions are considered as external (behavioral) characteristics due to internal psychological (ideological and axiological) attitudes. The subcultural context is represented by the peculiarity of verbal language and non-verbal communication channels, including gestures, fashion, rituals, etiquette, etc. The study used a questionnaire and free description technique "Who am I?". It is suggested that integration and interpenetration of the symbolism of some youth subcultures into others takes place today, which leads to their confusion, loss of identity. Image preferences are identified, the causes and individual personality characteristics of the respondents that influence the formation of a specific image are studied. The importance of external and internal image components and etc. for self-identification of modern youth is shown. It is revealed that modern young people negatively relate to nationalism and violations of traffic rules; they do not see anything bad in careerism, they are indifferent to imitating the western way of life, consumerism, thingism, dependency. According to respondents, to be considered modern, a young person should be socially active, patriotic, tolerant.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Image, subculture, student youth, attitude.



1. Introduction

The relevance of this topic is dictated by the current political, economic and socio-cultural situations in the Russian society. Young people now have freedom of expression, using a variety of ways and means, starting with the appearance and ending with the freedom of artistic creation. Young people are characterized by increased manifestation of social activity, as well as, due to age, have the greatest chance to realize their own interests. This age manifests itself by the following processes occurring with a young person: physiological maturity, final formation of personality, formation of a full member of all spheres of public life, including economics, politics and family relations (Erokhina, 2006).

Youth is a social and demographic social group distinguished basis on a set of characteristics, peculiarities of social status and determined by certain socio-psychological properties, which are specified by the level of socio-economic and cultural development, features of socialization in the society. Modern age limits are from 14–16 to 25–30 years (Kalinina, Dekina, & Romashina, 2012).

2. Problem Statement

The disclosure of psychological patterns of human perception and understanding, specifics of the first impression phenomenon formation, socio-psychological effects and mechanisms of interpersonal and intergroup perception, study of the content of social representations and stereotypes, mass communication processes have prepared the basis for meaningful appeal to image issues. The image is not isolated, it is initially included in a “package” of images, allowing it to realize its functions, especially the function of psychological protection (Shepel, 2002). The number of images depends on age (a critically large number of images falls on the age of socialization) and gender; it has a threshold saturation limit associated with worldview and power requirements.

At the present stage of Russian society evolution, the development of various subcultures takes place in the youth environment.

Youth subculture is a form of self-actualization of young people. Representatives of subcultures use their particular forms of culture coding and create semiotic diversity in it. It is in the youth subculture that not only a peculiar verbal language of communication is created, but also non-verbal communication channels, including gestures, fashion, rituals, etiquette and much more. Fashion is one of the regulators of social and economic relations in modern society (Lukov, 2002). Fashion is not only a means to demonstrate social status, but also a means for people to communicate, a form of mass communication. Fashion can function as intergroup communication and as intragroup one. Fashion is associated with the main social and psychological mechanisms of communication: suggestion, infection, persuasion, imitation (Turkatenko, 2007).

Currently, the concept of image is interpreted widely enough and includes a number of components. The image clearly shows not only the personality of the young person, their personality, but also professional affiliation. Consciously built image allows a person to gain the authority of others, to outline the path of career growth, self-design, personal development. To competently build your own image, it is important to exercise self-knowledge in order to reveal your strengths and weaknesses (to understand your Self you need to answer such questions as who I am; what I am; what my personality is;

what my originality is; what confirmed achievements in the chosen field I have already had; what positive features are manifested in the most evident way; what my abilities are developed; and what can I rely on when building my own image); learn self-presentation (reflect on what impression I make on others; what emotional background I create around myself; what others feel next to me; whether they want to continue communication with me; and also to design what level I want to go to; what image I want to create; the carrier of what idea I am, in order to become interesting for others as a person and a professional). In general, it can be said that the image includes a stable set of associations that people have after contacting or mentioning a person; in other words - "aftertaste".

The term "image" is legitimate to use in relation to a particular subculture. The external image of the youth subculture consists of various forms of verbal, visual, ethical, aesthetic expression and behavior, and the subjects are the people who come into direct or indirect contact with it (Shepel, 2002). The diversity of lifestyles in modern society generates a variety of image mass actions, openly expressing their interests and slogans, which are filled with a special meaning and are understood as a sign of protest or support for something that has a certain idea. Thus, it is possible to speak about image as a sign system, which is a complex of external symbols and behavioral (internal) attitudes of a particular person or group of persons. Image actions are a complex sign system that includes not only external symbols, but also internal characteristics of a particular social group, for example, a youth subculture. All this proves the importance of the image in the youth subculture (Erokhina, 2006).

As one of the assumptions of our study, we put forward the idea that at present many symbols of the youth subculture are erased; integration and interpenetration of the symbolism of some subcultures into others takes place. They are no longer of paramount importance and subcultures themselves often do not try to observe the longstanding traditions of their predecessors. As a rule, each emerging youth subculture is initially an individual manifesto, a challenge to society. Preservation and observance of group symbolism allows to show individualism and possibility of self-expression, both in appearance and in creativity.

Image actions are a complex sign system that includes not only external symbols, but also internal characteristics of a particular youth subculture (Erokhina, 2006). Therefore, we can talk about the importance of the image in the youth subculture as one of the main ways of self-expression. The image not only plays an important role in the lifestyle of the youth subculture, but also dictates its own rules and norms as interpersonal (intragroup) communication, and is a distinctive sign of social groups, thanks to which one subculture recognizes its members and recognizes people belonging to another subculture, which allows subcultures not to mix and lead a more or less peaceful coexistence. The image appears as a sign of identification as of young people and as of a protest symbol of modern society. For some youth subcultures, this protest turns into a political one; on the basis of such a manifesto, the subculture of punks, which symbolizes disagreement and disobeying social norms and laws of the state (Levikova, 2004), was born in its time.

3. Research Questions

Image actions are a complex sign system which includes both symbols of the appearance of youth subcultures and symbols of various forms of young people's artistic creativity and their spiritual

experience. How do subcultures, as a social and cultural phenomenon, influence and shape certain attitudes, lifestyles and behavior among young people (Shepel, 2002).

4. Purpose of the Study

4.1. The purpose

To explore the students' attitudes towards the image of contemporary youth; to identify the motives and reasons influencing the formation of an image as the background of a young person in a certain city.

4.2. The objectives are:

4.2.1. To study the characteristics of the students' attitude to the image.

4.2.2. To analyze the image preferences of modern youth.

4.2.3. To consider the individual and personal characteristics of the respondents and their influence on the formation of a particular image.

5. Research Methods

In order to study the students' attitude to the issue of image and to identify the motives, reasons forming one or another image within the framework of the organization of the activity of the student research laboratory 'Opinion' (Kalinina & Pazukhina, 2018), a monitoring study was conducted in the form of a questionnaire. The developed questionnaire consisted of 15 questions. The questionnaire used closed, open and semi-closed types of questions.

5.1. Research methods are the following:

5.1.1. Survey (in-person questionnaire);

5.1.2. Method of free description "Who Am I?", or The Twenty Statements Test (TST) (Kuhn & McPartland, 2006);

5.1.3. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained.

5.2. Sample Description:

The study involved Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University students in the amount of 100 people (students of the departments of Mathematics, Physics and Computer Science; Foreign Languages; Psychology; and Physical Culture).

6. Findings

As a result of the survey on the studied issue, the following results were obtained.

6.1. Characteristics of the students' attitude to the image

42% of 100 students believe that the image of modern young people is made up of appearance (well-groomed hair, nails, appropriate makeup, haircut, respect for personal hygiene, etc.), 26% believe

that it is made up of the level of education, 32% of students note that the main point in the formation of the image is the level of good manners. When studying ideas on image, it has been revealed that 20% of students consider image as a way of self-expression, realization of their individuality; 10% consider it a sign of belonging to a particular group; 28% correlate image with a general impression that is created with the help of clothes, speech, behavior, appearance; 32% associate the image with fashion; 10% of respondents answer that image does not matter to them. Analysis of the students' answers to the next questionnaire has shown that 40% of students consider music as the main component of fashionable lifestyle, 26% prefer sport, 10% – dancing, 24% – literature. Answering the question “How do you learn about what is fashionable now?”, students indicate that 34% rely on fashion trends on the Internet and social networks; 22% are focused on fashion magazines; 22% of respondents indicated that they learn about it from friends and acquaintances.

6.2. The image preferences of modern youth

Of the proposed options for action in the framework of following the fashion, students indicate the following: 25% have changed their appearance (hairstyle, etc.), 25% have bought equipment (mobile phone/tablet, etc.), 22% of students, following their friends, have enjoyed new musical styles (individual performers), 18% have bought particular clothes and accessories.

Pointing to good habits, young people noted that most of them have begun to play sports (yoga/dancing/fitness, etc.), 26% have started to keep a well-balanced diet, 22% have stopped using “parasitic words”.

Among the factors shaping the positive perception of fellow students among students, sincerity and friendliness have been equally highlighted (28% each), 26% have noted gaining self-confidence.

The students have also pointed out the qualities that a modern young person should / should not have. According to the students, young people mostly need social activities (35%), patriotism (27%), tolerance (13%). Among the qualities that modern youth should not have, such ones have been highlighted as aggression (5%), pragmatism (3%), willingness to take risks (2%).

Describing various kinds of ambiguously assessed phenomena among students, young people have a negative attitude towards violations of traffic rules and nationalism. Nothing bad is seen in careerism (10%), they are indifferent to imitation of the Western way of life (10%), consumerism and materialism (4%), dependency (3%).

The most important areas of youth education students consider the following: patriotic education (34%), physical education (26%), legal education (15%) and civic education (13%).

Answering the question "What is the most valuable thing in your life?" the majority of students have chosen such answers as "to get a good education, to become a highly qualified specialist" (25%), "to visit various countries of the world" (23%), "to achieve material well-being" (18%) and "to create a strong happy family" (15%). The answer “getting a prestigious job” has been chosen only by 9% of the respondents.

Students are concerned about situations related to studies (46%), health (27%), living in a dormitory (10%), future careers (13%), relationships with fellow students and friends (4%). Among the students, no one has been identified who combines studying with work. Regarding financial independence

and ability to live normally, the students have noted that income should average 45-70 thousand rubles per month.

We were wondering what answer the students would give to the question: “What is needed to make a student’s life successful?” Surely, getting higher education, the majority of respondents (28%) consider quality education. 22% tend to money; 18% – to hard work; entrepreneurship and resourcefulness are considered significant by 6%; the need for strong is regarded by 9%; 7% of respondents see the main role in the connections and necessary acquaintances; ability and giftedness are considered important by 6%; a good combination of circumstances and luck – by 4%. It is interesting that none of the students considers the financial support of parents necessary for a successful life.

6.3. The individual and personal characteristics of the respondents and their influence on the formation of a particular image

Image building should be based on the knowledge of oneself, one’s own strengths and weaknesses, one’s own individual personality and activity characteristics. In order to study this component of the image, we used the free description of “Who Am I” (the Twenty Statements Test), which was processed using content analysis method. The categories of analysis recorded in accordance with the objectives of the study were exhaustive and covered all parts of the recorded content.

With regard to our study, the following categories of assessment are highlighted: social characteristics (1st place), age characteristics (2nd place), physical characteristics (3rd place), activity characteristics (4th place), individual psychological characteristics (5th place). After identifying the registered categories, the corresponding units of analysis and the frequency of the analyzed units in the amount of information have been determined. The category "activity characteristics" is specified by the following analysis units: interests, abilities, hobbies, attitude to work and things, intelligence, education, etc.; the category “individual psychological characteristics” is “active, creative, having its own life principles, looking for oneself and meaning of life, unique, striving for self-realization, independent, builder of one's life, making non-standard decisions, etc.” Individual psychological characteristics make up 6% of the total number of characteristics used by students.

7. Conclusion

Thus, the external image of the modern young people consists of various forms of verbal, visual, ethical, aesthetic expression and behavior, and the subjects are the people who come into direct or indirect contact with them. The diversity of life styles in modern society generates a variety of images of young people who openly express their interests and slogans, which are filled with a particular meaning and value in the subculture and can be understood in this community as a sign of protest or support for something that has a specific idea. The image of modern youth is a sign system, which is a complex of external symbols and behavioral (internal) attitudes of a particular person or group of people and reflects their belonging to a particular subculture.

References

- Erokhina, N.N. (2006). Molodezhnyye subkul'tury: semioticheskiy aspekt [Youth subcultures: semiotic aspect. *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya [Sociological Studies]*, 11, 95-102.
- Kalinina, Z. N., & Pazukhina, S.V. (2018). *Adresnaya podderzhka i psikhologo-pedagogicheskoye soprovozhdeniye studentov v vuze: iz opyta raboty tsentra psikhologo-pedagogicheskoy pomoshchi studentam «Kontakt»* [Targeted support and psychological and pedagogical counselling for students at the university: from the experience of the center of psychological and pedagogical assistance to students 'Contact']. Tula: TSPU Lev Tolstoy publ.
- Kalinina, Z.N., Dekina, E.V., & Romashina, E. Y. (2012). *Ponyatiynyy spravochnik spetsialista sfery gosudarstvennoy molodezhnoy politiki* [Conceptual guide for a specialist in the field of state youth policy]. Tula: TSPU Lev Tolstoy publ.
- Kuhn, M., & McPartland, T. (2006). Kuhn's test. The test "Who am I?". In T.V. Rumyantseva (Ed.), *Psychological consultation: diagnostics of the relations in pair* (pp. 82-103). St. Petersburg: Piter.
- Levikova, S.I. (2004). *Molodezhnaya subkul'tura [Youth subculture]*. Moscow, Moscow: Phair publ.
- Lukov, V. A. (2002). Osobnosti molodezhnykh subkul'tur v Rossii [Characteristics of youth subcultures in Russia]. *Sotsiologicheskiye Issledovaniya [Sociological Studies]*, 10, 79-87.
- Shepel, V. M. (2002). *Imidzhelogiya: kak nraivit'sya lyudyam* [Imageology: how to make people like you]. Moscow: National Education.
- Turkatenko, A. (2007). Molodezhnyye subkul'tury segodnya [Youth subcultures today]. *Znaniye-Sila [Knowledge-Power]*, 1(955), 59-64.