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**FAMILY INFORMATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AS A UNIQUE  
SOCIOCULTURAL CONTINUUM**

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***Abstract***

This article discloses the family informational context with respect to the psychological values of the family informational environment. The family informational environment is being attended to as the system of intrafamily relationships which encompasses parents' and their children's attitude toward available sources of information, as well as their emotions which may emerge under the influence of any means of obtaining information. The informational environment in the referrals' families was presented by various sources. The article releases results of the empirical study on the family informational environment's value attributes and families' adherence to certain sources of information which make it evident that family informational environment needs to be determined in respect to mutual parents' and their children's acceptance of the Internet as the preferred source of information, their reliance on the Internet, and their mutual values of online news bulletins and information referring to their occupation. The informational environment is asserted to support the existence of a specific parents' and their children's attitude toward sources of information and value settings regarding the Internet. The family informational environment is a multilateral and multifunctional phenomenon. The family informational environment secures personal preferences of family members as well.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Family in the informational context**

The informational context of the communities' existence worldwide affects the modern family institution. Any family as any other system of lifestyle support is exposed to the powers and laws of the world's digital arrangement. Each family which possesses whatever means of obtaining information is engaged into the world's digital space. This exposure results in transforming family's functions, domestic intercommunion and environment of social interaction. Simultaneously, each family becomes part of the digital space arrangements when it is educating the next 'grown up digital' generation. Today any child in any family is being introduced to the digital space either implicitly or explicitly even at the stage of their prenatal development. While they are close to coming-of-age, the digital space limits are becoming significantly broader (Tapscott, 2008).

The researchers are arguing from the extremes of opposite extensions about the technology's impact on psychic and physical advancing of a human being (Grynch & Fincham, 2001; Thompson & Mayer, 2007). Thus, Kolin (2006) holds it for the truth that the fast pace of the technology progress imposes risks of the significant gap between parents' and their children's levels of adaptivity to information torrents. Intrafamily interaction is becoming simpler and more impersonal at the same time. The formation of child's consciousness as well as of each household member is affected by enforced values and behavioural patterns which are but family morals since it is not always when an unbiased family model, family-oriented lifestyle and child-parent interacting patterns are being created. It may result in an increase in the family's anxiety, dissatisfaction, and depreciation of parents' and children's self-esteem (Orlova, 2013).

### **1.2 The family informational environment**

We believe that it is advisable to view the family informational environment as an aggregate of two integral components: a technical one and psychological one (Posokhova, Kolpakova, & Stryapukhina, 2018). The technical component comprises the technology and the means of obtaining information alongside the content that a family may use. The psychological component is being presented as the system of intrafamily relationship encompassing value attitude to the existing means of technology possessed by each family member, their adherence to the certain means of obtaining information, their emotional background while interacting with the technology and their interpersonal communion.

The value constituent of the family informational environment is being determined by the purpose of information sources selection, by the level of interest and reliance on them, by content search preferences, etc. Adherence to the certain information source accounts for the level of competence with which family members are being engaged into interaction with appropriate information sources and are accepting them, which information channel they are keen on for intrafamily communication. The emotional background is being created by the sensations that parents and children may experience together while obtaining the information, by the way, these emotions of the both are being mutually represented (Morris, 2007).

## **2. Problem Statement**

Although technology's advanced penetration into the lifestyle of modern society and of an individual, attributes of informational impact in respect to the family institution are still to be featured. The obvious imbalance between the fact of the informational environment presence in families, the number of family members involved into it and the lack of awareness about its structure, about its value and emotional impact on parents and their children, about family adherence to certain resources to obtain information is emerging. As a result, some research issues are to be enlisted.

## **3. Research Questions**

1. One of the questions that require an empirical study relates to the architecture of the family information environment.
2. On the other hand, the issue about what brings parents and their children together in accepting the modern information sources and what makes the parents' and their children's perception of the information environment be unique appears to be essential as well.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

1. Defining the family informational environment's psychological contents.
2. Defining the family informational environment's attributes that are common for both parents and their children, and those that are specific for each family member.

## **5. Research Methods**

### **5.1. Subjects (cases)**

The teen reference groups comprised adolescences aged 12 - 17 with regular intellectual abilities in the number of 131 referrals: 73 boys and 58 girls among them. The teenagers attended comprehensive school, they didn't have issues with studies and discipline policies. The reference group of parents nurturing children comprised 72 referrals with an average age of 40; 65 mothers and 7 fathers. The study was executed in 2017 - 2018. All referrals gave their voluntary consent to participate in the study.

### **5.2 Methods of the research**

- Questionnaire for adolescences "The family information environment" (Posokhova et al., 2018).
- Questionnaire for parents "The family information environment" (Posokhova et al., 2018).

## **6. Findings**

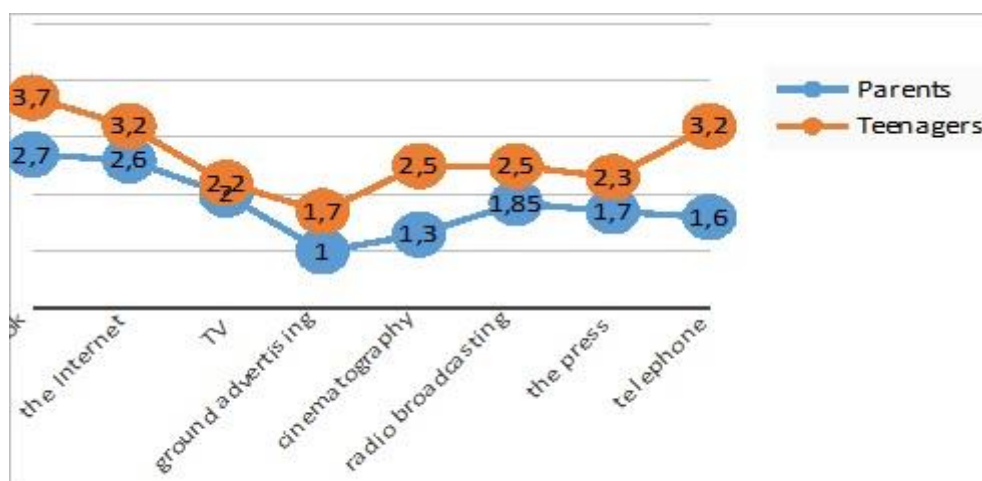
### **6.1 Family information value**

The informational environment in the referrals' families was presented by various sources: TV, telephone, the Internet, books, mass media, ground advertising. A dominating position was held by the Internet. It was found out that 88 % of the parents and 86 % of the teenagers preferred obtaining information via the Internet; 50 % of the parents and 66 % of the teenagers chose a smartphone as their

information source. It was quite reasonable because smartphone enables to provide the Internet connection. Books were considered to be a preferable source of information by 54 % of the parents and 30 % of the teenagers. Radio broadcasting, the press and ground advertising were accepted by only 28 %, 24 % and 8 % of the parents and just by 11 %, 24 %, 3 % of the teenagers. Some imbalance in the family informational environment occurred since parents were selecting TV as their source of obtaining information more often than their children: 58 % of the parents against 30 % of the teenagers ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). They intended to value cinematography as an information source to a lesser degree 13 % of the questioned parents. It was 30 % of such among their children ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

The family informational value is mostly determined by common parents' and their children's purposes while selecting information sources. The survey showed that 54 % of the parents and 49 % of the teenagers could be teamed by their intention of being in the picture of all events. They could also be teamed by the availability of the information sources that were used for self-development: 63 % of the parents for professional growth, 54 % of the teenagers for broadening their world view and studying. 57% of the parents and 40 % of the teenagers compensated the deficiency in needed information by using information sources. Along with above mentioned a dissimilarity in reference groups was detected while they were selecting a preferable information source. Only 36 % of the parents were flexible in shifting from one information source to another for the purpose of communication while the teenagers tended to be more flexible in 82 % case ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Although a larger part of the families referred to the Internet as to the core information source, a hard copy book held the leading position in terms of reliability compared to the rest information sources (See Figure 1). The family unifying factor benefits from the equally high level of reliance on the Internet among parents and their children and their restrained acceptance of TV and the press.



**Figure 01.** The family reliance distribution profile on information sources among parents and teenagers (points)

The dissimilarities among parents and their children are being observed in terms of reliance on telephone, cinematography, ground advertising and radio broadcasting. Parents trust such information sources less than their children. Particularly, that became evident regarding the telephone ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

The family value of the informational environment was manifested in some attributes which parents and their children as well were focusing on while selecting information sources. Thus, 55 % of the parents and 46 % of their children appreciated the validity of the information as a significant attribute of the information source selecting preference, 52 % of the parents and 33 % of the teenagers drew their attention to the connection speed while obtaining the information, 39 % of the parents and 40 % of their children, above all, relied on the information availability.

Despite the evident Internet's significance for families, 64 % of the parents and 80 % of their children preferred transmitting the intrafamily messages via a telephone connection. However, the parents texted their messages via a smartphone SMS, messengers including Viber, Whatsup, Telegram, and others not that often than their children. The parents preferred communicating in the form of personal messages (57 %). The other forms of information exchange, such as social networks, notes and leaving messages via their acquaintances, were rarely used in the households under the survey.

## **6.2 The family adherence to the Internet**

The survey revealed that the frequency of the Internet sessions was bringing parents and their children together easily throughout its entire range. The issue there was how they accepted the Internet. By and large, the parents conveyed their attitude to the Internet either as positive (50 % of the referrals) or as absolutely positive (11 % of the parents only). Some parents accepted the Internet deliberately. 21 % of the parents accentuated both the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet. The strong rejection was conveyed by just 7 % of them. There was a different picture of the Internet acceptance among teenagers: every other teenager questioned by us interpreted their level of the Internet acceptance as extremely high and were defining their personal attitude as "absolutely positive". 30 % of the teenagers interpreted their level of Internet acceptance as mean, 14 % was neutral to it, and just 5 % remained negative. The difference between the parent reference group and teen reference group in 'absolutely positive' and just 'positive' attitude values of the Internet was statistically sound with  $p \leq 0.01$ .

3% of the questioned parents appeared to select the information source considering their suitability for joining their children to it. In fact, the major part of parents lacks the clearly articulated and robust intention to joint their children to the information source used in the family. Apparently, the children's involvement in the informational environment takes place within the natural, according to parents' perception, patterns of child-parent interaction. It is adults who recommend that their children use the Internet for accomplishing their home assignments on school disciplines, for reading online books, for watching educational programmes and films. In 37.5 % case of the study the above mentioned took place on a permanent basis, in 48.6 % - sometimes, and in 14 % - rarely or never. At the same time, the parents had a comprehensive awareness of their children's involvement in digital spaces. In 70 % of case parents themselves defined their children's level of involvement as high. Whereas, the average age when children start to be active independent Internet users was defined as 7 - 8 years by their parents.

## **6.3 Emotional background of the family informational environment**

Emotions due to their unique socio-psychological and physiological features mark the world either as friendly or hostile to a human being, and tab the obtained information as needed or unnecessary (Il'in,

2002; Izard, 2000). The survey showed that parents and their children might experience a vast range of similar emotions while surfing the Internet and observing each other in the run of the Internet sessions. The family emotional background may manifest itself in the following feelings in parents and their children: happiness, affection, surprise, anger, sorrow, shame, embarrassment, contempt, suffering, and disgust. Parents and their children are bound together by emotions while experiencing interest alongside with anxiety during the Internet session; 40 % of the questioned parents and the similar part of the teenagers experienced that feeling. Negative emotions during interaction with the Internet bound parents and their children together more rarely. So, 10 % of the parents and 18 % of the teenagers experienced the feeling of disgust, 7 % of the parents and 13 % of the teenagers happened to expose themselves to anger.

The feelings of happiness, surprise and sorrow drove them far from each other significantly. Among the referrals, only 29 % of the parents but 70 % of the teenagers appeared to experience happiness while obtaining information digitally ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Parents were experiencing surprise more rarely than their children: 30 % against 50 % correspondingly ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). The frequency with which parents were experiencing sorrow yields to the such of their children during their Internet sessions: 8 % of parents and 30 % of children ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

As it was revealed, parents and their children were not quite good at detecting each other emotions during their Internet sessions. Only 50 % of parents succeeded in detecting emotions experienced by their children while surfing the Internet. At the same time the children's emotion of interest was detected by 26 % of the parents, the such of sorrow - by 18 %, and the such of happiness - by 11 %. Anger was projected onto the children by their parents more rarely - in 8 % case, disgust, surprise and, fault - in 5 % case, embarrassment, shame, grief, and contempt - in 3 % case. Children's perception of their parents' emotions ranged in just apathy - in 30 % case of teenagers, happiness - in 30 % case of the teenagers; 14 % of the teenagers presumed that their parents were experiencing surprise, and 5 % that of embarrassment. There was a part of the teenagers that refused to detect their parents' emotions. It occurred probably because emotions always remain restrained in the inner world of a person and their outer manifestation lacks enough vividness.

## **7. Conclusion**

The family informational environment is a multilateral and multifunctional phenomenon. The core attribute of the family informational environment that is now being shaped refers to the similarity of relationship modes, interests, preferences, experiences of children and their parents and is being disclosed by the way they handle the information sources. According to the results of our survey the family informational environment is being featured by the following attributes similar in respect of parents and their children: the Internet option as the preferable channel for data obtaining, reliance on the Internet as the information source, interest in news bulletins and professional data, experienced sensation of interest while surfing the Internet, their intent to be informed about latest events when selecting the informational source, telephone preference for message exchange within the family circle.

It is mutual involvement in digital activity regarding parents and their children that is being proposed by the family informational environment. Parents tend to involve their children into the digital activity offering them to accomplish their home tasks, to read online books more often than the former

become self-engaged digitally. While surfing the Internet teenagers experience sensations of happiness, surprise, and sorrow more often than their parents.

The family informational environment secures personal preferences of family members as well. It supports clearly emphasised accepting of the Internet by teenagers; teenagers' reliance on telephone and radio as the sources of information, and parents' - on books; teenagers' preference of the cinematography, and parents' - of TV as the sources of information; teenager's prioritised choice of educative, entertaining and popular information, and parents' - of professional, news and data from art and culture areas; teenagers' preferable options of the informational source to communicate, study and obtain additional information through, and parents' - of their trade's data.

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