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CYBERLOAFING AS A TRAIT OF A NEW GENERATION: EXPLORING PERCEPTION OF TEENAGERS

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of stereotypes of perception of generations associated with the use of cybertechnologies. The question of the existence of intergenerational differences remains open in science. But the existence of steady stereotypes of generations in society does not raise doubts at anybody. These stereotypes define features of interaction between representatives of different generations. A number of researches indicate the existence of differences between generations, connected with the use of modern technologies. But researches of how these distinctions are perceived in society insufficiently. They are absent concerning new phenomena, such as cyberloafing at all. Therefore, studying features of perception by teenagers of a cyberloafing as treat of generations became an objective of this research. Results of a survey of 80 teenagers living in Chelyabinsk region (Russia) are presented in the article. Jonckheere-Terpstra test was used for the analysis of differences in perception a cyberloafing of behavior of representatives of different generations. Results of the research showed that teenagers consider a cyberloafing behavior which is inherent in all people, irrespective of belonging to generation. The tendency to increase in values in estimates by teenagers of the frequency of use of cyberloafing representatives of different generations to transition from senior to younger generations was found in research. Results of a research are of interest to studying of the relationship between generations and to studying of a cyberloafing. The paper notes future research directions. Limitations of the research are discussed at the end of the article.

Keywords: Cyberloafing, generational media consumption, generational psychology, generational stereotypes, teenagers.

1. Introduction

The relevance of the study is dictated by a number of reasons. On the one hand, the process of the digital transformation of society has increased the gap between generations. Older people (grandparents) born in the age of television are thought to have a fear of new digital technologies (Logvinyuk, 2012; Kuznecov & Sergeeva, 2014). Members of the generation of modern parents are commonly referred to as digital migrants (Prensky, 2009; Wang, Myers, & Sundaram, 2013), as they grew in the world without the mass spread of digital technologies and were forced to adapt to them. Their children are described as a generation of digital natives, as they have been used to using the information and communications technology to meet their needs almost since birth (Prensky, 2009; Wang, Myers, & Sundaram, 2013; Shestakov, 2017; Rudenkin, 2019). These children are different than their parents and ancestors once communicate, engage in creativity, play, socialize, engage in the activity, grow up (Hsin, Li, & Tsai, 2014; Sivrikova, Harlanova, Stolbova, & Ageev, 2019; Besbogova & Iontseva, 2016). Modern children are believed to be focused on the widespread use of information technology. Researchers note the positive and negative aspects of the influence of cyberspace on the process of socialization. New forms of behavior are emerging related to the use of gadgets, which need scientific study and evaluation. These include fabbing (Krukova & Ekimchik, 2019) and cyberloafing (Andel, Kessler, Pindek, Kleinman, & Spector, 2019).

On the other hand, researches of generations and intergenerational differences are now in demand. Such interest is due to the multi-generations nature of modern society (Maximova, Noyanzina, & Maximova, 2017), which is reflected in the age diversity of the labour force (King, Finkelstein, & Ryan, 2012) and the complication of intra-family relations (Forkosh & Erstad, 2018). Researchers note that the change in the demographic situation (increase in life expectancy) against the background of the processes of globalization and digitization of society leads to a change in interpersonal relations between different age groups (King, Finkelstein, & Ryan, 2012). An important factor in this relationship is social perception, including stereotypes about other generational groups.

Researchers believe that intergenerational perception and expectations are likely to develop in society due to increased attention to generations and as a result of the societal discourse associated with generational differences in general and in the workplace in particular (Perry, Golom, Catenacci, Ingraham, Covais, & Molina, 2017). Furthermore, closer attention to generations and intergenerational differences today probably makes membership in each generation valuable and meaningful. As a result of these processes, it is possible and probable that generational stereotypes are formed in society that influences intergenerational relations.

However, little attention is paid to the study of the peculiarities of the perception of generations by people of different ages.

2. Problem Statement

The features of generational perception are a very poorly studied field of psychological science. So far, age stereotypes have been in the field of attention of researchers. Part of the content of age and generational stereotypes is the same, but may also differ significantly, as age and generational affiliation

are not always identical (Lyons & Schweitzer, 2017; Perry et al., 2017). In addition, there are differences between age groups and generational groups. For example, a generation is permanent and an age group is temporary. The type of generation is related to the national-historical context (different generations are allocated in different countries), and age groups are independent of nationality and historical events (the same in different countries).

Modern studies of age stereotypes are distinguished by the originality of research approaches and methods. Researchers analyse the content of age stereotypes in the media (Oró-Piqueras & Marques, 2017; Bae, Jo, Han, & Lee, 2018), folk proverbs and online humor (Nimrod & Berdychevsky, 2018), the influence of culture on age stereotypes (Schloegel, Stegmann, Van Dick, & Maedche, 2018). Research results point to a number of paradoxes related to age stereotypes: the paradox of reinforcing real negative age stereotypes (Spangenberg, Zenger, Glaesmer, Brähler, & Strauss, 2018; Levy, 2017) despite positive representation of older people in the media (Oró-Piqueras & Marques, 2017; Bae, Jo, Han, & Lee, 2018); The paradox of ambivalence of age stereotypes (Vauclair, Rodrigues, Marques, Esteves, Cunha, & Gerardo, 2017). The effects of age stereotypes are studied. They are internalization and dissociation (Nimrod & Berdychevsky, 2018; Weiss & Kornadt, 2018).

Empirical evidence supporting differences between the perception of age groups and generational groups exists despite a strikingly small amount of research into generational stereotypes. For example, researchers argue that the perception of the "baby boomers" generation is more positive than that of the appropriate age group (Perry et al., 2017). Therefore, it is important to study generational stereotypes.

Some studies have provided indirect data on how people from different generations are perceived in society (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Jovic, Wallace, & Lemaire, 2006). But because the subject of these studies was not differencing in generational perception in itself, their findings on the issue are limited conceptually and methodologically (Perry et al., 2017).

A study of generational identification has shown that by identifying themselves as a certain generation, people stereotype perceptions of other generational groups (Roberto & Biggan, 2014). An analysis of the values of generations and perceptions of people, of what is significant for different generations, revealed that differences in generational perception significantly outnumber the meanings of actual differences between them (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012). The study of the content of stereotypes of different generations has revealed that "baby boomers" are perceived as hard-working and low-content in modern technologies, "millennials" and members of Generation Y - as naughty but confident in technology (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Roberto & Biggan, 2014; Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015).

Researchers conclude that generational stereotypes have a systematic effect on human activity, play a key role in the perception of different generational groups and generational identification (Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015). They can hinder communication, trust, knowledge sharing and coordination in collaborative activities (Schloegel, Stegmann, Van Dick, & Maedche, 2018) and depend on intergenerational contacts, legislation and social climate (Levy, 2017).

Thus, research into generational stereotypes associated with their media features is important both in terms of theory and practice.

3.   Research Questions

In Russia, interest in the peculiarities of perception of different generations has not been developed in the form of empirical research, but the problem of intergenerational relations is widely discussed. Therefore, we turned to the analysis of differences in the perception of cyberloafing behavior in different generations by teenagers.

We based on the concept of the generational mentality of Pishchik, Gavrilova, and Sivrikova, (2016), according to which in Russia it is possible to distinguish 3 generational groups: The Soviet generation, the transitional generation, and the post-Soviet generation. This classification is based on the most significant event in the history of modern Russia. It is the collapse of the USSR. Researchers (Nosova & Kuzheleva-Sagan, 2013; Rudenkin, 2019; Pogodina & Vlasova, 2019) believes that the proposed generational classification is comparable to the concept of Prensky (2009), according to which 2 types of generations are distinguished: digital migrants and digital natives. This title emphasizes the fundamental differences between those who were born and grew at the same time as the advent and development of digital and computer technologies and those for whom these technologies will always remain new to varying degrees.

In Russia, the process of collapse of the USSR coincided with the process of intensive development of digital technologies. But the first of these events put an indelible mark on the formation of the mentality of an entire generation. That is, if for most countries the older generation is one of the generations in the historical row, the collection of aged citizens, for Russia it is a generation torn from the process of natural transformation with a completely reformatted ability of judgment, and as a result, with a special picture of the world and world view. This generation has a specific mentality and this specificity affects, in particular, the attitude towards information.

This particular attitude towards information is enshrined in age stereotypes, most often reflecting information inequalities between different age groups. Kuznecov and Sergeeva (2014) say about the emergence of a new form of discrimination against older age groups in the process of technology diffusion and call it "technoageism" (p. 103). It can be assumed that stereotypes will be reflected in the perception of the prevalence of cyberloafing among different generations.

4.   Purpose of the Study

Studying the features of teenagers 'perception of cyberloafing as generational characteristics have become the purpose of this research.

5.   Research Methods

80 teenagers aged 13-15 living in the Chelyabinsk region (Russia) took part in the study. Of these, 36 are male and 44 are female. A modified scale developed by Lim (2002) and supplemented by Blanchard and Henle (2008) was used to collect empirical data on the perception of cyberloafing as a feature of generation. The changes made to the scale are reflected in Table 01.

Table 01. Factor Analysis for Cyberloafing

Scale Created by Lim (2002), developed by Blanchard and Henle (2008)		Scale modified by Sivrikova N.V. (2019)	
Items	**Factor* Load**	**Items**	**Factor** Load**
Check non-work email at work	0.769	Check non-work (non- learn) email at work (learn)	0.76
Visit news sites at work	0.459	Visit new sites while studying or at work	0.864
Send non-work email at work	0.757	Send non-work (non- learn) email at work (learn)	0.869
Visit social media sites at work (facebook, twitter, etc.)	0.684	Visit social media sites at work (facebook, twitter, VK etc.)	0.873
Check my personal information at work	0.8	Send non-work text through messaging systems (Viber, WhatsApp, etc.)	0.759
Visit sports sites at work	0.611	Visit my favorite sites while studying or at work	0.863
Shop online at work	0.646	Shop online at work or while studying	0.85

* Data, submitted by Derin and Gökçe (2016)
** Current study data

During the survey, teenagers assessed on a 5-ball scale (1-never, 2- rarely, 3-sometimes, 4 - part, 5 - constantly) the expression of various forms of cyberloafing in representatives of the Soviet, transitional and post-Soviet generations. Factor analysis showed that the elements of the created scale version formed one factor (CMO = 0.916; p=0.0001). Scale reliability (by Cronbach's alpha), was 0.798.

Jonckheere-Terpstra test was used to analyze the significance of differences in the perception of cyberloafing as the behavior of different generations.

6. Findings

The analysis of the results of the survey showed that teenagers believe that the use of information technologies at work and during training to solve non-related tasks is characteristic of the transitional and post-Soviet generations (Figure 01). Teenagers believe that members of the Soviet generation are not inclined to cyberloafing. In this case, the opinion of teenagers reflects the main trends of the senior generation perceptions. Such perceptions are particularly dangerous given that digital technologies are commonly developed and used by young people, and the interests of older generations are rarely taken into account in their advancement (Kuznecov & Sergeeva, 2014). Domestic ageism stereotypes can create obstacles to the adoption of digital technologies by older generations.

Teenagers believe that the structure of cyberloafing in representatives of the transitional generation and the post-Soviet generation is in many ways the same. They believe that people born in the era of the collapse of the USSR (parents) and members of the post-Soviet generation allow themselves to exchange personal messages more often by e-mail and with the help of messengers at work and during their studies and are less distracted from work to visit websites, social networks and shop through the Internet.
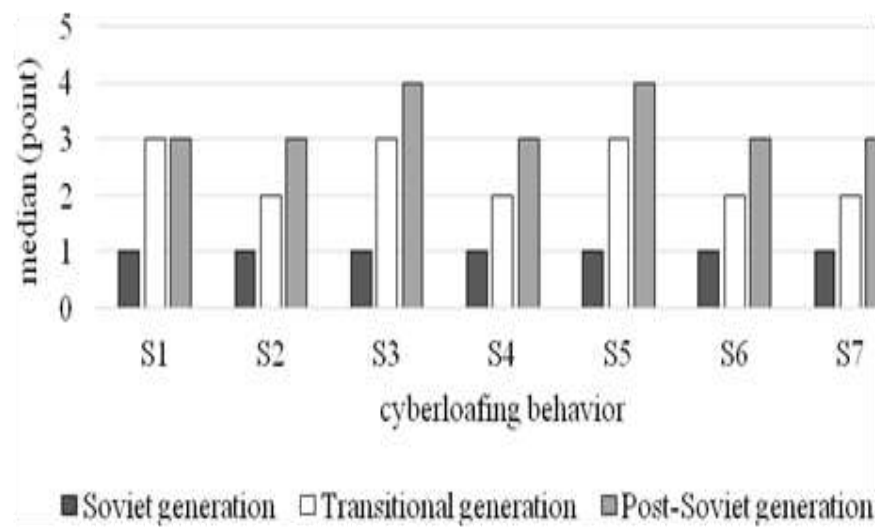
Figure 01. Adolescent perceptions of prevalence cyberloafing behavior across generations

S1 - Check non-work (non- learn) email at work (learn)

S2 - Visit new sites while studying or at work

S3 - Send non-work (non- learn) email at work (learn)

S4 - Visit social media sites at work

S5 - Send non-work (non- learn) text through messaging systems

S6 - Visit my favorite sites while studying or at work

S7 - Shop online at work or while studying

Analysis of trends in the influence of the generation factor on the perception of the prevalence of cyberloafing among people has shown that teenagers believe that younger generations use cyber technologies on work (class) by non-work (not-learn) tasks significantly frequenter than older generations (Table 02). This feature is characteristic of the perception of all forms of cyberloafing as a trait of the behavior of different generations.

Thus, the results of the research allow drawing a conclusion that teenagers consider a cyberloafing the most typical type of behavior of representatives of the Post-Soviet generation, and the least typical type of behavior of representatives of the Soviet generation. In general representations of teenagers' match results of objective researches of the prevalence of a cyberloafing in different age groups. The researchers conducted in Norway (Andreassen, Torsheim, & Pallesen, 2014) and Turkey (Akbulut & Dursun, 2017) showed that age is negatively related with cyberloafing behavior.

Table 02. Dependence of perceptions of teenagers of the prevalence of cyberloafing behavior among people on generation

cyberloafing behavior	generation			Standardized Test Statistic	p-value
	Soviet	Transitional	Post-Soviet		
S1 - Check non-work (not-learn) email at work (learn)	82.6	133.2	147.2	6.112	0.00001
S2 - Visit new sites while studying or at work	85.1	120.0	155.3	6.802	0.00001
S3 - Send non-work (not-learn) email at work (learn)	80.0	124.7	157.6	7.472	0.00001
S4 - Visit social media sites at work	82.5	127.5	153.3	6.868	0.00001
S5 - Send non-work (not-learn) text through messaging systems	77.2	119.9	166.5	8.549	0.00001
S6 - Visit my favorite sites while studying or at work	86.0	123.6	153.8	6.599	0.00001
S7 - Shop online at work or while studying	78.7	126.1	158.6	7.778	0.00001

7. Conclusion

The results of the study confirmed the existence of generational stereotypes in adolescents related to the use of information and communication technologies. There is a steady perception among adolescents that the younger (post-Soviet) generation is more likely to use information and communication technologies for personal purposes during work (study) than the older (transitional and Soviet) generation. Such stereotypes can be explained by the fact that in society the stereotype of the elderly person is formed and maintained as a responsible but not competent professional in information technology (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012).

Limitations of this study are related to sample size and method of study. The number of participants in the study and their limitations in one region does not allow for a synthesis of the findings. The absence of scales of measurement of cyberloafing in the Russian language forced us to use a translated version of the methodology. In order to reduce the risks associated with this, we checked the factor structure and reliability of our version of a scale. Important is the fact that the method used does not contain Items reflecting game behavior. Workplace play is a common form of cyberloafing. The study of this form of behavior should be included in further studies of the problem.

In the light of the obtained data, the peculiarities of perception of the peculiarities of media consumption of generations by representatives of other age groups are of interest. Therefore, in the future, we plan to carry out a similar study among representatives of the Soviet and transitional generations. It will be interesting to compare stereotypes and the real spread of cyberloafing among different generations too.

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