PSYRGGU 2020
Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

INFORMATION APPROACH TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

T. Martsinkovskaya (a)*, N. Poleva (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) School Anthropology of the Future, ION RANEPA, Moscow, Russia; Russian State university for the humanitiesMoscow, Russia, tdmartsin@gmail.com
(b) School Anthropology of the Future, ION RANEPA, Moscow, Russia; Psychological Institute RAE, Moscow, Russia.

Abstract

New information technologies that are becoming more widespread in modern space are considered. Various methods of the influence of modern technological means on the development of personality, identity and positioning in society are revealed. The effect of transitivity on the self-presentation and identification of a person in a new space and in a situation of crisis and uncertainty is analyzed. Data on differences in relation to the Internet and gadgets of generation Y and Z are presented. Differences in information preferences lead to the disruption of harmonious relationships and interaction between generations and family members. The influence of the Internet on the choice and trust in different sources of information among different generations is slowly starting to decline, although significant differences remain. At the same time, the influence of the Internet on self-presentations and the content of identity among young people is changing, while the trend towards personalization continues. The perception of the future is also changing, and the information received from different social networks leads to fears about the environmental situation and interpersonal relationships, although the ideas about the importance of new technologies do not change. It is proved that the main factors determining the personal development of young people in the modern information and technological society are the development of technologies (especially the development of the Internet and digital technologies) and transitivity.

Keywords: Identity, information, self-presentation, social networks, technology.

1. Introduction

1.1. Modern technologies in the information space

The current stage of development of a technological society is characterized by significant civilizational changes that researchers have not encountered before. These civilizational changes are associated with the emergence and development of new technologies and a new information technology space, which are becoming an integral part of the life of a modern person. Their influence is becoming more widespread and comprehensive. The new era is characterized by the transition of a technological society to the next stage, when technology and equipment cease to be something external to the individual. They are so firmly embedded in a person's life that he does not notice their constant presence and constant use and acutely feels and suffers from their lack in situations of deficiency of access to them.

A person perceives technology not only as external tools, but as an extension of himself and his psychic abilities. Technical means and technologies are internalized by a person, becoming one of the psychological parameters of the picture of the world, determining the features of his perception of the world and himself, interaction and communication with others (Emelin et al., 2012; Martsinkovskaya, 2018). The ongoing transformations and civilizational shifts problematize the very understanding and definition of personality, personal development, and set the task to researchers to identify factors that determine the personal development of children and adolescents in a modern technological society.

In a modern technological society, to the traditional factors determining the development of personality (social, biological, genetic factors), a new factor is added - the development of engineering and technology, especially the development of information technology and the Internet. It is this factor that becomes leading at the present stage and leads to numerous transformations of the personality development process. These transformations are a consequence and product of technological development. Thus, modern means of communication and movement significantly change a person's ideas about space and time, transforming the space-time continuum of a person as a framework regulating the formation of world and self-image (Martsinkovskaya, 2018).

1.2. Internet and transitivity

Different aspects of transitivity actualize different personality problems. The multiplicity makes it difficult for a person to choose, including the choice of an identification group (real or virtual) and the space of socialization (Belinskaya, 2013; Martsinkovskaya, 2015). This is only one side of the problem. Plurality and the associated high variability significantly increase the chances of non-adaptive adolescents who have difficulties in communicating offline with their peers and are rejected by society for various reasons. In other words, any teenager with any deviations and perversions can easily find on the social networks the same "strange" peers with similar views and interests (lovers of toy railways and trains, etc.) that will become their desired identity group, making it easier their socialization and the formation of personal identity.

Modern information technologies modify the entire lifestyle of a modern person, which naturally has its own personal consequences. The character of communication is changing, as well as the personal characteristics of a modern person. Of the possible personal transformations, the main attention of researchers was attracted by the transformation and dynamics of personality identification structures.

At the initial stage of the Internet's spread, researchers focused mainly on comparisons of virtual and real identities, the possibilities of a "game with identity", Internet addiction, representative practices, and features of online and offline communication. At this stage, online and offline realities were rigidly divided, based on the position on the differences in phenomena and human behavior in different environments and using different communication tools, including digital technology. Moreover, the virtual space was considered mainly as a recreational and compensatory space, allowing a person to realize his needs, which seemed to him inaccessible or ineffective offline.

Today, the Internet and digital technologies are so widespread and included in everyday practices of human activity and communication that the border between online and offline is blurring, becoming more and more arbitrary, which is one of the manifestations of "fluidity" and transitivity. The blurring of the boundaries between online and offline is also confirmed by studies of identity construction features - today the previous discrepancy between online and offline identities, which was typical for the period when the Internet and social networks appeared and began to spread, is no longer fixed (Soldatova & Rasskazova, 2014). At the same time, the dominant identity style is gaining importance. The development of Internet technologies and the features of network communications have different effects on users with different identity styles. The results of many works make it possible to make an assumption about the information style of identity as the most appropriate in the conditions of a modern transitive technological society. For users with an informational identity style, virtual and real spaces form a single communication space that opens up additional resources for confirming their own identity. With increasing transparency, users of social networks mainly provide reliable information about themselves, which suggests that social networks as a whole are an effective resource for confirming a user's real identity. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that in network communication a person constructs not the identity itself, but its "digital double", "virtual shell", which is a projection of real identity and a way of representing it.

1.3. Personality in the modern information society

A significant consequence of the development of technology and the Internet is the transformation of the mechanism and the nature of the person's communications, which also can be reflected as an important factor determining the personal development in a modern technological society. This influence is associated not only with the expansion of the horizontal connections of the individual and the increase in his social capital. Constant interaction, links and communication with others become an independent value and the norm of everyday life for modern adolescents and youth. The desire to remain constantly online, to maintain communication is noted by many researchers. This applies to generations of "conditional" millennials (Y) and centennials (Z) (Howe & Strauss, 2000). More than 80% of millennials sleep with their smartphones, 32% study social networks everywhere. If at the beginning of widespread use of social networks, the features of internet communication of adolescents were considered as an addition to their direct offline communication, today, with the development of technology and the popularity of mobile Internet, the boundaries of online and offline communication practically disappear, and teenage respondents find it difficult to separate them in their answers. Nevertheless, they say that the same communication standards that are used in real life should be preserved in the online space (Voiskunsky et al., 2014). It should be noted and the transformation of the communication language, which is largely based on visually

images, when emoticons and gifs replace whole phrases and small texts. At the same time, written language is increasingly moving closer to oral colloquial speech and is partially replaced by it. This requires the person to master and understand the language of Internet communications (Belshaw, 2011).

If children receive primary skills in communicating with gadgets and other digital devices from parents and mutual learning during communications with peers, the self-learning mechanism, the algorithm of which is embedded in the device and technology, is subsequently turned on. Thus, the process of interiorization of technologies occurs not only during communication and interaction with parents and peers, but also in direct interaction with digital devices and technologies.

2.   Problem Statement

In recent decades, a new sphere has been discovered that encompasses personal space and time - the sphere of virtuality, which man builds himself and for himself. The appearance of a virtual parameter gives greater freedom for self-realization and at the same time strengthens the disharmony of different spheres of life. Simultaneously, the desire for harmonization of the space and time, for the integrity of the identity — sociocultural, personal, and often somatic - is also being actualized. (Martsinkovskaya, 2015). The barriers built by people in virtual space-time are much more impenetrable to the outside world than the barriers of personal sphere. The "exit" from reality into a virtual chronotope is not only more cardinal than the exit into a personal chronotope, but it is also much easier to carry out. Its creation does not require a high degree of spirituality and / or reflection, which makes this path quite common and accessible even for children. The ability to construct your own reality is both one of the virtues of virtual space-time, and one of its dangers.

3.   Research Questions

Theoretical and empirical studies show that the emergence of a new technological space, the Internet, social networks and gadgets poses several questions that are closely related to each other and with an analysis of the impact of information socialization on the mental development and emotional well-being of children, adolescents and youth. At the same time, the question arises of how the use of gadgets affects the psychological well-being of young people and whether it is related to their life style.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The aim of the work was to study the influence of the information space on the emotional experiences of people included in various styles of real and network communication. The study also aimed to analyze the mechanisms of the influence of information on the content of youth identity

5.   Research Methods

As research methods, a comparative analysis of information preferences and self-presentations obtained in 2015 and 2019, as well as descriptions of the future, were used.

6. Findings

6.1. Modern network: potential capacities

Undoubtedly, the developing potential of computer technologies is very great, but there are also negative consequences of excessive enthusiasm for computers. The ambivalent influence of the Internet is manifested in the fact that, on the one hand, communication on the network, the appearance of new friends (and the process of virtual communication has an undeniable tendency to rejuvenate recipients) seems to be a positive phenomenon. New information expands and enriches consciousness, which, of course, is a positive fact. On the other hand, the passion for virtual games, which gives a feeling of "spare" lives, "fallback options" for building one's own destiny, not only reduces the feeling of real risks, but also reality as such. It makes children and adolescents extremely vulnerable when stressful, adverse life situations arise. The advantages include, first of all, the removal of geographical and social barriers of communication and the development of new ethical standards of communication. The disadvantages are a possible loss of work and a reduction in the number of vital skills and abilities that the Internet performs.

The advantages are manifested in choosing options for network communication where personal preferences show the value of the present. This explains, for example, the passion for streaming video, thanks to live broadcasts and Snapchat, the user appears as he is with all his advantages and disadvantages. If posts on FB and Instagram represent retouched images and specially selected moments of life, streaming video services show a real picture of the world where you can share your state, mood, regardless of whether it is good or bad. The appearance of the "transparency" function also supports the aspiration for the present. The ability to show your whole life on-line to other users, according to the opinion of many young people, keeps them in constant tone. Constant observation from the outside, instant assessment of your actions (likes, comments) help, in their opinion, to become better, but at the same time the personal space disappears, more precisely, its everyday barrier is significantly narrowed. Therefore, this position clearly cannot be comfortable for some young people, reducing their emotional well-being and self-esteem.

6.2. Real and virtual self-descriptions

In an information and transitive society, technological changes are faster than social and mental ones, and a technologically rich digital environment is fundamentally changing the human world, creating a fundamentally new socialization environment. Important is the fact of changes in the nature and mechanisms of communications, when network, horizontal communications have changed hierarchical. In general, significant transformations in the mechanisms and functioning of the processes of socialization and communication, the formation of identity and world-image had a huge impact on the development of the personality of young people. The development of information technology and transitivity is becoming a kind of trigger that activates the processes of individualization and the formation of subjectivity, which allows us to talk about personal development as a priority in the modern information technology society.

In recent decades, not only people's perception of the world, but also their self-descriptions has changed significantly. The share of civic and linguistic identities decreases, but the role identity is significantly increased, and all age groups of respondents, especially older adolescents, consider (and evaluate) themselves precisely from the point of view of conformity / inconsistency with the assumed social roles in large rather than small (for example, in family) groups.

With the increasing role of ethnic identity, the value of sociocultural decreases and the value of personal identity grow. This tendency begins to appear even in older preschool age. At the same time, the national rather than cultural or linguistic component is beginning to occupy an increasingly important place in ethnic identity. Extremely significant are the results showing that even compared to students, children are much more committed to the individualistic standard of life than to collectivism.

While data on informational preferences and confidence to the Internet retain their tendency toward the priority of the Internet and social networks over all other sources of information, materials revealing the significance of self-descriptions related to the Internet have changed significantly in the last two years (see fig. 1).

At the same time, remains the tendency towards personalization, which has clearly manifested itself in different regions in the last 3-4 years. The data obtained in recent studies in 2019 showed a significant increase in personal identity in the overall structure of youth identity (Fig. 2).
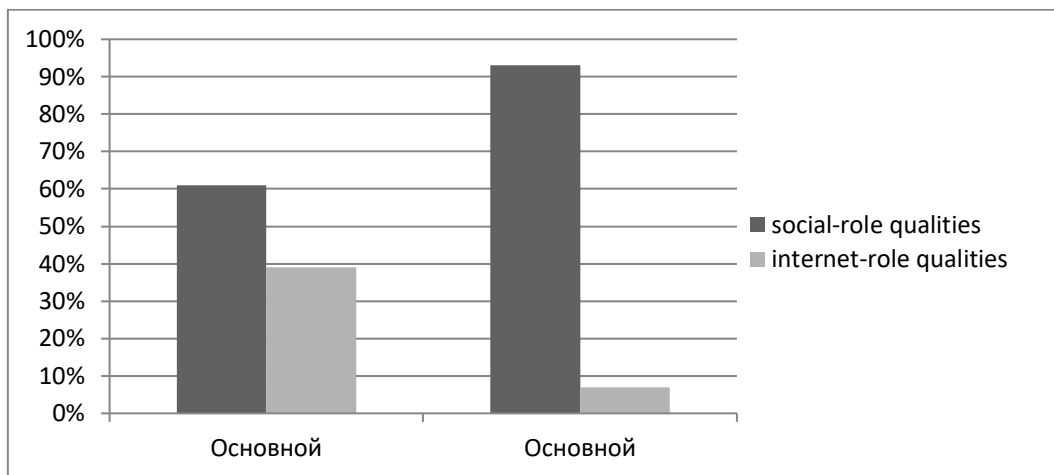

Figure 01. Percentage of self-descriptions related to online roles in 2018 and 2019
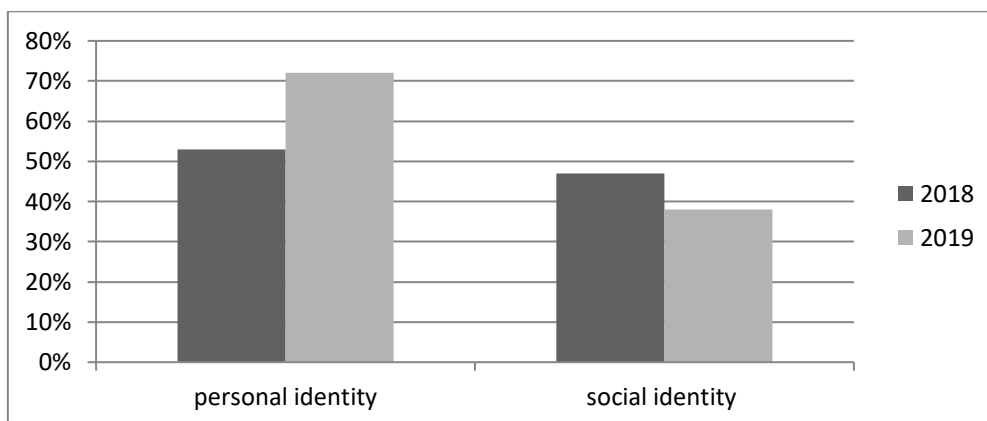

Figure 02. Connection of personal and social role identity

7.   Conclusion

First of all, it is necessary to note the growing role of generalized and depersonalized information, which, as noted at the turn of XX- XXI centuries, will play a leading role in the information society. The increased influence of information is especially evident in the transitive world, in which changing reality leads to the need to constantly monitor the information flow.

The Internet begins to play an increasingly significant role as a leading institution of socialization. In terms of importance and trust, the Internet has not lost its position in recent years. Both personal experience and the experience of friends remain in demand as sources of information, but the trust to other's experience is losing its high position.

A comparative analysis with the results of information preferences of previous years shows that the focus of the media on environmental issues, as well as the "phenomenon" of Greta Thunberg, had an undeniable impact on the priority of information preferences. The music, which in previous years was among the most preferred informational choices, became less interesting. Perhaps, in this case, the choice of information preferences is largely due to the specifics of the particular social situation.

A significant decrease in Internet self-descriptions with a continuing trend towards the priority role of the Internet in the information flow and trust in it deserves special attention and should be checked on a wider selection and for at least one and a half years. It is possible that this is due to the growing tendency to personalize, focusing on interest in personal qualities, rather than the roles that young people choose on social networks and in Internet communication. It is also possible that in this case the fact of the convergence of virtual and real self-presentations, noted by many researchers, affects.

Of particular importance is the discussion of data obtained in the study of ideas about the future. It should be noted that pessimistic ideas about the future show that for a large group of young people around the world, the general state of precariousness associated with the current situation in the social space is becoming characteristic.

Thus, the main factors determining the personal development of young people in the modern information and technological society are the development of technologies (especially the development of the Internet and digital technologies) and transitivity.

The prospects associated with the expansion of digital information socialization, in many respects become the reverse side of the problems that arise in this. Expanding the picture of the world, gaining new experience leads to the development of intellectual and social activity and helps to better see and understand the world. This reduces intolerance to other people and the fear of uncertainty, because increases the willingness to changes.

References

Belinskaya, E. P. (2013). Informatsionnaya sotsializatsiya podrostkov: opyt pol'zovaniya sotsial'nymi setyami i psikhologicheskoye blagopoluchiye [Informational socialization of adolescents: the experience of using social networks and psychological well-being]. *Psikhologicheskie Issledovaniya,* *6*(30) 5. http://www.psystudy.ru/index.php/eng/2013v6n30e/871-belinskaya30e.html

Belshaw, D. (2011). *The Essential Elements of Digital Literacies.* https://gumroad.com/l/digilit

Emelin, V. A., Rasskazova, E. I., & Tkhostov, A. S. (2012). Psikhologicheskiye effekty informatsionnykh tekhnologiy [The psychological effects of information technology]. *Natsional'nyy psikhologicheskiy zhurnal, 1*(7), 81-87.

Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation.* Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.

Martsinkovskaya, T. D. (2015). *Problema sotsializatsii v istoriko-geneticheskoy paradigme* [The problem of socialization in the historical and genetic paradigm]. Smysl.

Martsinkovskaya, T. D. (2018). Psikhologicheskiye aspekty tekhnologicheskogo obshchestva [Psychological aspects of technological society]. *Psikhologicheskie Issledovaniya, 11*(62), 12. http://psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2018v11n62/1654-martsinkovskaya62.html

Soldatova, G. U., & Rasskazova, E. I. (2014). Psychological models of digital competence of Russian teenagers and parents. *Natsional'nyy psikhologicheskiy zhurnal, 2*(14), 25-31.

Voiskunsky, A. E., Evdokimenko, A. S., & Fedunina, N. Yu. (2014). Eticheskaya napravlennost' podrostkov i molodezhi v sotsial'nykh setyakh [Ethical orientation of adolescents, and youth in social networks], *Psikhologicheskie Issledovaniya, 7*(37), 2. http://psystudy.ru/index.php/num/2014v7n37/1036-voiskounsky37.html