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Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

INTERNET IN THE WORLD-IMAGE OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

The article discusses the attitude of modern students to the Internet space. An analysis of the results of an empirical study on a group of Moscow students is presented. The aim of the study is to identify the features of the influence of the information space on the image of the world and the future. Most quickly, these innovations are accepted and internalized by young people. Modern reality is a complex multilayer construct that is constantly in a state of transformation. The changes that occur in this transitive world affect all spheres of socialization and communication both in real relationships and in the network space of the Internet. Inevitably, they are reflected in the formation of the world image and image of the future, which is also unstable. Attitudes to various aspects of the real and networked world actualize the concept of the internal form of the psychological chronotope, focusing on the emotional experience of personal, social, network spaces and the attitude to present and future time among modern youth. The steady predominance of the Internet as the main source of information trusted by most young people is shown. Preferred sources of information do not change during last 3-5 years. At the same time, the attitude towards the future has changed dramatically. The prevalence of gloomy forecasts of the future reflects the high level of anxiety of modern youth and is a marker of our turbulent time.

1. Introduction

The problem of the influence of the information space on all spheres of life of modern youth is becoming more and more comprehensive. Features of interaction and communication in the era of the information society attract the special attention of specialists all over the world. Modern technologies are rapidly developing and penetrating into all spheres of human activity, they are crowding out the usual means of obtaining information.

Currently, the Internet plays a decisive role in the socialization of modern youth, exerting a huge influence on all aspects of human mental development. That is why the problem of information socialization in today's rapidly changing world occupies one of the central places in psychological research (Ayanyan & Martsinkovskaya, 2016; Martsinkovskaya, 2018; Voyskunskiy, 2010).

Of course, the information that young people receive from the virtual world has a great impact on their tastes and lifestyle. Over the past years (Belinskaya, 2013; Golubeva, 2018) the growth of youth's confidence in the Internet has increased, and now we are talking about absolute trust to the network among young people (Martsinkovskaya, (2019). Ivanova (2018) points out the need for a deeper investigation of the problem of choosing preferred sources of information and their influence on the process of socialization and identity of modern youth.

The development of technology and transitivity lead to significant transformations of the main institutions of personality socialization. So the family, continuing to play an important role in the development of the child's personality in a technological society, undergoes significant changes. The familiar nuclear family is not the only model that sets patterns for behavior for the younger generation. The nuclear family, consisting of children and parents, as the most common model of the 20th century's family, with its clear distribution of gender roles (father, as the main source of income and material support for the family and mother, whose main role is to take care of children and raise them) is transformed to other models and forms. Under the influence of the second wave of modernization, the nuclear model, having lost the function of ensuring the physical survival of children, is becoming a model of the past, preserving the functions of the institution of primary socialization of the child and preparing him for other social institutions.

In addition, from an early age, the family ceases to be the only institution of socialization that affects the children. Digital technologies not only largely perform transmission functions, but also actively influence the younger generation, affecting both cognitive processes and the personal sphere. According to the results of the studies of Soldatova and Rasskazova (2014) in Russia 80% of children aged from 4 to 6 years use the Internet. Now the age of digital initiation is even earlier. 44% of children aged 5–7 years old have their own smartphone; for children aged 8–11 years, this figure is already 74%. In many ways, these trends are associated with the development of technologies, for example, voice assistants, as well as with the advent of a new generation of parents who themselves are Internet users since childhood. According to other studies, almost half of children aged 5-7 in Russia have a smartphone with the Internet.

In the current situation, which is characterized as a situation of transitivity (variability, multiplicity and uncertainty), the most acute issue is planning the future. How definitively can we predict our livelihoods in ever-changing conditions of reality? How quickly we can adjust our plans of the environment, is long-term planning of our life possible as a whole? Positive answers to these questions are a kind of stable basis

on which an adequate image of the future is formed. Actual is the question of shaping the image of the future with uncertain or negative answers to these questions, which are caused by pressure from external uncertainty. Studying this problem will help to better understand the mechanisms of adaptation of the human psyche to the transitive situation of the external world.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of studying the information preferences of modern youth is one of the central in modern psychology and is carried out by many researchers. The questions connected with information's preferences as well as formation of world-image and image of the future in nowadays complex and ambiguous situation become one of the most relevant.

3. Research Questions

What sources of information are most trusted by modern young people? What information are they interested in? What is the content of the image of the future in modern youth?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim was to investigate the changes in attitudes towards information preferences and the future of Russian youth.

5. Research Methods

In the work the following methods were used: the questionnaire "Information preferences" and "Composition about the future" (Martsinkovskaya, 2015). The participants were first-year students at Moscow universities (N = 60).

All participants were aware of the purpose of the study and agreed to participate in the work.

6. Findings

6.1. Information preferences

The obtained results confirmed the data of previous studies on the paramount importance of the Internet as a source of information for modern youth (Figure 1). Among the alternative sources of information, the categories of "own experience" and "experience of your friends" are leading. Young people mark the category of "books" as an important source of information and prefer electronic versions, citing the convenience of reading in this format anywhere (Figure 2). In the category "other sources of information", students indicated YouTube's online video hosting. Periodical print media completely disappeared from the routine of modern Russian students, and thematic Internet portals replaced them. Radio and television are no longer trusted by young people. A small number of respondents note the lack of a TV at home due to uselessness.

The natural, direct reaction to questions about the choice of one or another source for solving the problem is of particular interest. Young respondents do not have the question of choosing a faster or ergonomic source; alternative sources simply do not arise into their area of attention.
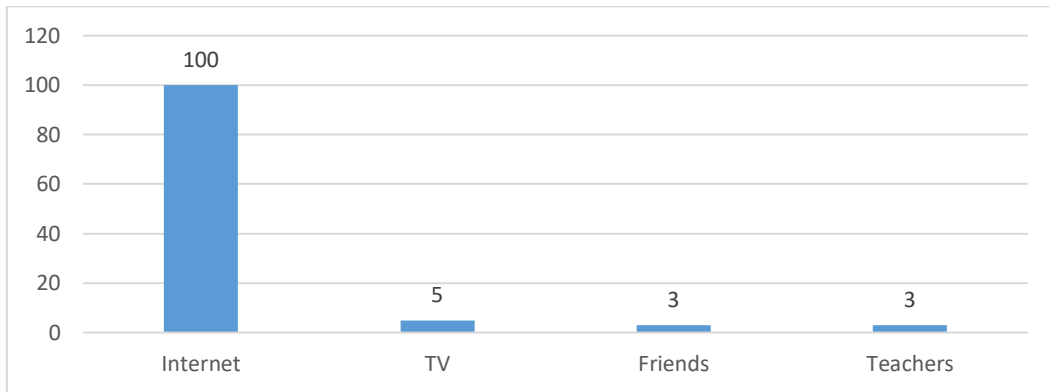

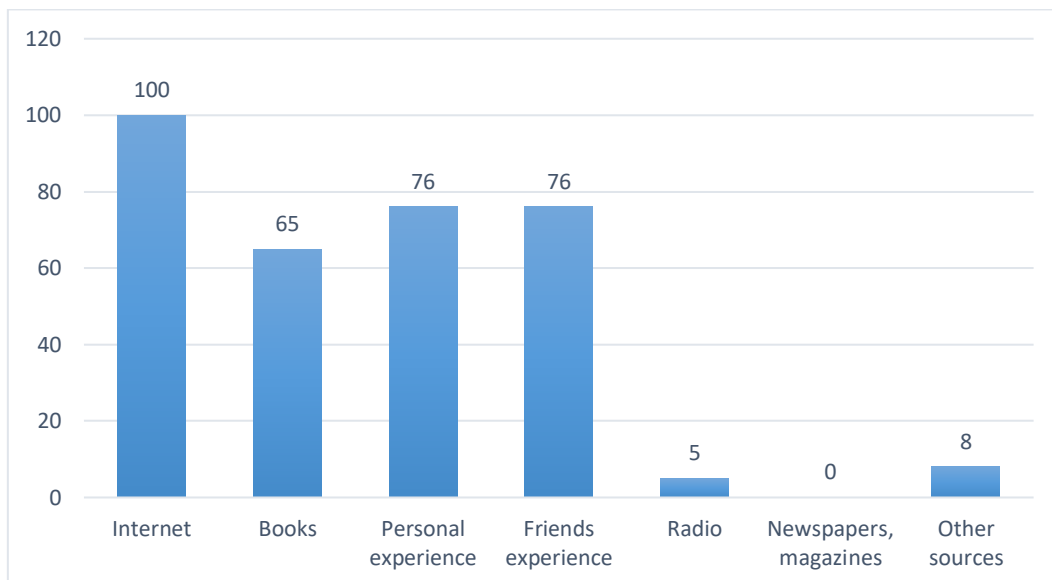**Figure 01.** The degree of trust in the source of information

Figure 02. Preferred Sources of Information

Thus, at present, technology has entered our lives so deeply that young people perceive them as the natural environment of their lives. Unlike older generations, they are not inclined to understand by the term "Internet" everything that the information space offers us. For example, social networks and instant messengers act as a means of communication with friends; game content is seen as entertainment; various video hosting services are a completely unique platform for both obtaining the necessary information and for entertainment. Directly under the term "Internet" modern students understand search engines.

The abundance of Internet gadgets and the functions that they perform in our lives evoke a sense of infinity of traffic and the opinion that "the Internet has always been." Filling absolutely all spheres of life with Internet support, and, consequently, expanding its emotional impact on a person, also leads to the internalization and individualization of the digital space.

Also, during the study, students identified various categories of information according to the degree of importance for themselves (Figure 3): the most significant was information from the categories

"Cognitive" and "News of Culture and Science"; in second place - "News about the ecology, nature and wildlife"; third place is information about politics. Music, sports and entertainment, as shown by the results of the study, are not priority for this sample of students.
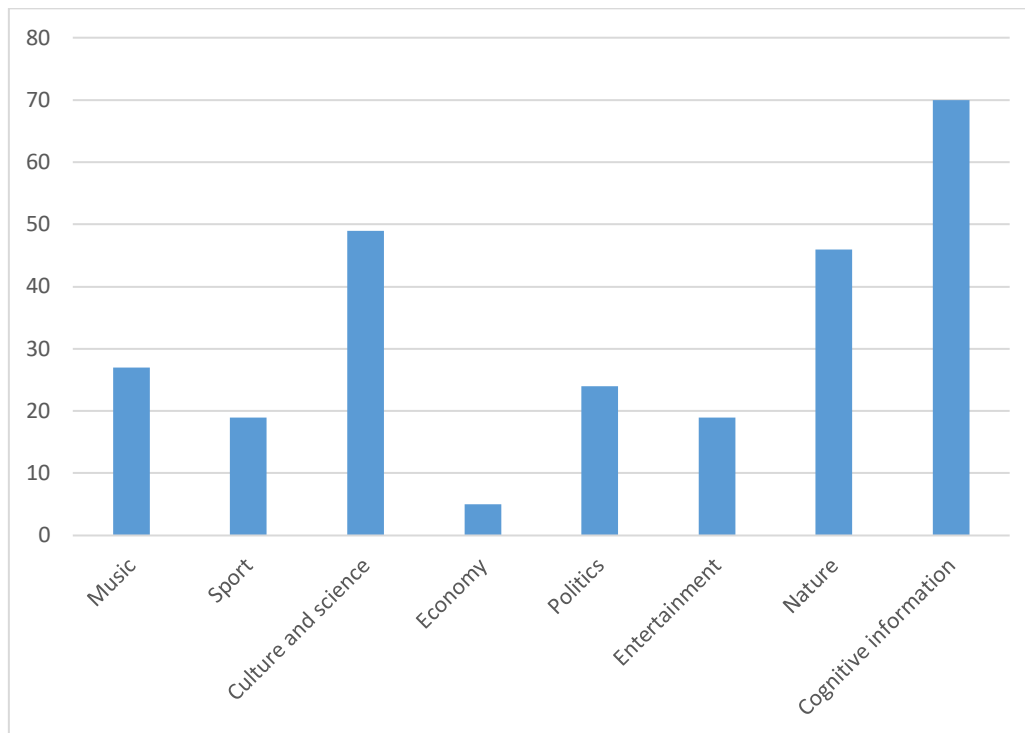

Figure 03. The degree of significance of information by category

From our point of view, the predominance of the choice of cognitive and scientific information is most likely due to the specifics of the social situation of respondents. Since they are first-year students, it is important for them to successfully prepare for the first session. Not long ago they entered universities, and that's why they also needed to read and analyze a large amount of cognitive material.

6.2. Image of the future

An analysis of the texts "Image about the Future" provided the following data: half of the respondents presented clear ideas and a detailed description of their future, the second half was inclined to the abstract and short description using general phrases. The emotional content of the picture of future life is controversial and characteristic of the entire sample: young people describe their future very positively (for example, "I will have no problems in the future. I am able to provide myself and my family with everything I need and even beyond that"; "My future will be happy. I will do things that I like, be among good people"; "I imagine my future as a time filled with interesting ideas, a favorite job. I will just be a happy person."). But as a whole, the students describe the future of humanity in gloomy tones (for example, "There will be war everywhere. People will lose all their spiritual values, which will lead to cruelty and indifference"; "Humanity may collide and suffer greatly due to the fact that living conditions will be impossible for existence"; "Chemical clouds will appear in the sky and will create black and deadly rains and snow"). Often in the descriptions of the ideal image of individual future there are hesitations about the

unattainability of such a result: "These are only dreams"; "But it's unlikely that I will succeed," "But all this is unattainable."

Based on the results obtained, we see that the external unstable situation has a huge impact on the formation of the image of the future of modern youth. On the one hand, we see how in their writings about their personal future students are looking for support, that stable basis that will serve as support. On the other hand, being in uncertain conditions, when the external situation changes very quickly, the news is frightening in nature; young people draw their "stable" future inside the catastrophes that have happened for all of humanity. And, receiving a clear contradiction between "their ideal" and "common tragic", they come to the conclusion - "under such conditions, my ideal is unattainable". No one doubts the pessimistic forecasts of the common future.

Thus, we conclude that feelings of anxiety, insecurity and helplessness are decisive in shaping the image of the future in a situation of a transitive world among modern youth.

6.3. Internet as institute of socialization

The determining role in the socialization of modern students is played by the Internet. At the same time, the entertaining fades into the background, modern youth prefers to use the information space in order to search for cognitive content, to learn the latest news of scientific life, and to more effectively prepare for training sessions. Internet space has firmly penetrated the life of modern people, has become more complicated. Young people tend to describe the Internet as an information field of useful information available at the moment of interest. Categories such as Internet games, Video hosting, various social networks, Instagram, chats - stand out separately and are perceived by students as a natural part of their own life, independent of the Internet space. Most of the communication with friends is also transferred to virtual communication and is perceived as natural.

Despite the high rates of preference for information received from friends and relatives, the degree of trust in them is very low. This can be explained by the fact that the information from friends is more every-day in nature and affects the personal and emotional sphere of the young man, rather than the cognitive one.

Based on the data obtained during the study, it can be concluded that the unstable rapidly changing situation in the world around us, the daily flow of shocking news leads to the formation the attitude towards the world as hostile.

Particular attention is drawn to the description of the future by modern students. Young people imagine the future of all humanity as tragic, filled with wars and natural disasters. They tend to blame the world's population for the depletion of Earth's resources and environmental pollution. At the same time, none of the students offers solutions to these problems. Moreover, the general mood of the inevitability of a tragic outcome is visible. A description of one's own future is too ideal, obviously unattainable. Lack of orientation toward the future indicates a high level of anxiety, lack of formation of a holistic picture of the world and their place in it, deficient of solid professional and personal self-determination.

At this stage of development, informational socialization of youth in the modern rapidly changing world supplements traditional socialization and forms a new stage in the development of society.

7.   Conclusion

The obtained theoretical and empirical materials show that in conditions of transitivity, a large space in the picture of the world is occupied by the digital space, primarily social networks and blogs. At the same time, the divergence in the assessment of the Internet environment by different generations becomes an alarming fact. If for people of mature age the digital space is considered as a means of obtaining information of interest, for young people the digital space is more associated with social networks whose function is communication, obtaining new experience and new information. Discrepancies in the level of development of the operational side of Internet communication are also a serious problem, as it entails not only psychological, but also social consequences.

The materials obtained make it possible to identify both stable and newly emerging trends in the process of informational socialization of young people in the modern transitive world. A steady trend, which can be described as one of the laws of modern information socialization, is the ever-growing influence of the Internet, which over the past years has remained not only the main source of information and entertainment, but also the only source of information that inspires confidence.

The dominance of information coming from various social networks and Internet sources leads to ambivalent consequences for personal and social formation.

The increasing trend towards personalization, which in recent years has manifested itself in the structure of identity, can be considered as a positive fact in both social and personal development. At the same time, a negative trend appears, associated with the fact that an unstable rapidly changing situation in the world around us, a daily flow of shocking news leads to the formation of young people's attitude towards the world as hostile and to the growth of pessimistic expectations related to the future.

Acknowledgments

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