



Article

Socio-Psychological Aspects of Youth Socialization in the Information Society

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Abstract: This article analyzes the socio-psychological impact of the information society and the digital environment on the socialization of modern youth. It is demonstrated that the digital environment transforms the communication culture and value system of young people, while triggering new psychological phenomena such as virtual identity, FoMO syndrome, and cyberbullying. Furthermore, practical recommendations for developing media immunity and digital hygiene among youth are put forward.

Keywords: Information society, digital socialization, virtual identity, FoMO syndrome, cyberbullying, correlation, media immunity.

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1. Introduction

The development of human civilization in the 21st century is directly related to global informatization processes and the rapid development of digital technologies. Today, the information society has become not just a set of technological conveniences, but a new socio-cultural environment in which a person is formed and develops. The most active consumers and subjects of this digital environment are modern youth. The daily lives of the younger generation, the education system, communication, relationships, and the organization of their free time have become directly intertwined with the virtual world. Consequently, alongside traditional social institutions (family, school, neighborhood), the digital space has become a leading factor in shaping young people's consciousness. This determines the urgency of in-depth scientific and socio-psychological research into the fundamental impact of this environment on the lives of young people[1].

The unlimited virtual opportunities offered by the information society, while creating positive dynamics in the lives of young people, are also creating serious socio-psychological problems. The main problem is that the virtual world is partially displacing and transforming the traditional socialization process of young people in real life. The lack of real communication, Internet addiction, cyberbullying, social isolation, and new values formed in the virtual environment are creating a conflict (dissonance) in the psyche of young people. Artificial behavioral models formed in the virtual space often do not correspond to the requirements of real social life. As a result, serious psychological challenges and crises are observed among young people in real-life processes such as social integration, starting a family, and professional adaptation. This conflict creates the need for a scientific analysis of the balance between the real and

virtual worlds[2].

The main goal of this study is to identify the specific socio-psychological mechanisms, patterns, and consequences of the formation and development of youth personality in the context of an information society, particularly within virtual spaces. The research also aims to classify the destructive psychological factors of the digital environment that affect the behavior of youth and develop a system of scientific and practical recommendations aimed at preventing them.

2. Literature Review

In the context of a global information society, the relationship between personality formation and the digital environment has been the focus of attention of many foreign researchers. In particular, in Western scientific schools, the concept of “digital socialization” is considered as an evolutionary continuation of traditional socialization models and a completely new stage. According to the German sociologist and media researcher F. Krotch, digital media are not just a means of communication, but a space that fundamentally changes the mechanisms of perception of social reality and self-awareness of modern youth.

American psychologist and sociologist S. Turkle, studying the impact of virtual space on the psychology of the individual, emphasizes that young people in the digital world live according to the scenario of “always together, but alone”. In his opinion, social networks create the illusion of a large number of social connections in a person, but they cause a loss of deep psychological closeness and real communication skills. Also, in foreign literature, researchers such as J. Twenge have associated the era of digital socialization with the concept of “iGen” (the generation that grew up with smartphones) and have experimentally substantiated the psychological properties of the Internet environment and social networks, such as depression, anxiety and fomo syndrome (fear of being disconnected from information) among young people [3]. Russian psychologist G. Soldatova analyzes digital socialization based on a cultural-historical approach, describing it as a process of assimilation of digital culture signs by an individual and the formation of a hybrid reality between the virtual and real worlds [4].

In Uzbekistan, the issues of youth education, ideological immunity, and spiritual growth in the context of an information society are being widely studied from a sociological, philosophical, and pedagogical perspective. In particular, the philosopher and scholar M. Kuronov developed a pedagogical and strategic system aimed at forming national identity, as well as spiritual and moral immunity, among the younger generation in the context of ideological attacks within the global information space [5].

The sociologist M. Bekmurodov analyzed the social activity of young people and the transformation of their value system in the process of modernization of society, and sociologically assessed the impact of information flows on the national mentality and models of social behavior [6]. Also, in the research conducted by G. Tulaganova on the role of interinstitutional cooperation in the socialization of youth in our republic, the role of the family and the neighborhood, the issues of deviant deviations in youth behavior, and their psychological correction were analyzed [7]. National researchers A. Erkeyev and N. Alkarov also studied the issues of forming youth spirituality and preserving national identity in the conditions of globalization and virtual space from a socio-philosophical perspective [8]. In a digital society, not only spiritual, but also legal socialization of youth and its socio-psychological factors are one of the main criteria today [9]. The strategic directions of these reforms are also reflected in state-level conceptual documents.

An analysis of the literature on the topic shows that today, the social aspects of the information society (sociological surveys) or its purely psychological consequences (Internet addiction) are studied separately. However, the combination of social and psychological factors of youth socialization in the digital environment, that is, the mechanisms of the influence of social integration in the virtual space on the real psychological adaptation of the individual, have not been sufficiently studied as a holistic system. This article aims to fill this scientific gap[10].

Research object and subjects. The research subjects are young people aged 14 to 30 years old who have a high direct information consumption and regularly use social networks, messengers, and virtual platforms in their daily lives.

A mixed-methods approach was used to assess the socio-psychological mechanisms of youth socialization in the digital space:

1. Sociological survey (questionnaire): An electronic survey was conducted via Google Forms to determine the activity of young people in the digital environment and their preferred platforms (Telegram, Instagram, TikTok).
2. Psychological tests: A modified version of K. Young's internationally recognized "Internet Addiction Test" (IAT) methodology was used [8].
3. Comparative and statistical analysis: Mathematical and statistical analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS software.

Research sample. A total of 412 people from different regions of our republic were included in the empirical study. Respondents participated. By gender: 53.4% boys, 46.6% girls. By age: 14-18 years old - 28.2%; 19-25 years old - 51.5%; 26-30 years old - 20.3%. By area of residence: 61.2% urban, 38.8% rural.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the empirical study showed that the impact of social networks on the culture of youth communication is two-fold. 68.4% of respondents noted that social networks have expanded the opportunities for rapid exchange of information and mutual knowledge. However, 54.2% of young people observed violations of linguistic norms (the use of slang, jargon) in virtual communication. A transformation is taking place in the traditional value system: the time spent on face-to-face communication and family relationships among young people is being replaced by individual virtual interests[11].

Virtual identity, cyberbullying, and FoMO syndrome

- **Virtual identity:** 42.6% of respondents admitted to appearing as a different person (profile) in the virtual world than in real life. This figure was highest among adolescents aged 14-18 (58.1%).
- **FoMO syndrome:** Analysis conducted using the K. Young methodology revealed that 62.3% of young people reported high levels of anxiety and stress symptoms when left without gadgets or when the internet was disconnected [12].
- **Cyberbullying:** 31.8% of young people surveyed reported experiencing social pressure (cyberbullying) in virtual space at least once in their lives, which is creating the foundation for the development of social phobia in them[13].

Information consumption and real social engagement

Using the SPSS program, the relationship between the time respondents spend in virtual space and their social activity in real life was studied. The level of real social activity (sports, reading) is significantly lower in young people who use the Internet for more than 5 hours a day ($r = -0.42, p < 0.01$) [14]. That is, an increase in the amount of information consumption inversely reduces the real socialization activity of young people in society. On the contrary, it turned out that young people who use the digital environment for 2-3 hours a day for a purpose (for education) have higher adaptation indicators to real life[15].

4. Conclusion

The study confirms that the digital space has become an independent socio-psychological environment that shapes the personality, value system and behavioral patterns of young people. The excessive amount of time spent in the digital environment reduces the social activity of young people in real life. Today, in order to properly direct the socialization of young people, it is necessary not to completely disconnect them from the virtual world, but to form a healthy balance between real and virtual life (hybrid reality).

Based on the research findings, the following practical recommendations are put forward:

- *For the family institution:* Parents should increase face-to-face communication time in the family, implement gadget-free zones and time symbols (for example, no phone use during dinner).
- *For educational institutions:* It is necessary to systematically introduce not only computer literacy, but also in-depth "Media Literacy" and special "Digital Hygiene" courses into the education system.
- *For state and public organizations:* It is necessary to expand the network of social platforms (startups, volunteer movements) that serve to translate youth initiatives in the virtual space into real life, and to establish online anonymous psychological support services.

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