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THE IMPACT OF THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT ON YOUNGER STUDENTS AND ADOLESCENTS: MODERN TRENDS IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR AND CRISES

The aim of the study is to determine the role of parents in controlling the interaction of younger school students (primary school) and adolescents with the digital environment during the duration of the martial law, to examine the emotional, evaluative and personal-semantic relations in the family environment that arise as a result of parental control over child's digital interaction.

Research methodology. To solve the research tasks, a number of special research methods were used: unstructured interviews, focus group, questionnaires, and Likert scale.

Results. The study of the vector of children's interaction with the digital / family environment during the active military invasion in Ukraine made it possible to state there are different trends in the assessment by children of different ages of the ease/difficulty of communication with parents (primary school children mark their own communication with parents as "very easy" by 10% more, adolescents, on the contrary, show a decrease in the share of those who find it easy to talk to their parents – by 8%). Aware of the dangerous trends of arbitrary and uncontrolled stay of the child in the digital environment, only 9.3% of parents refused to control network activity due to trust in the child. On the other hand, 57.1% of parents among those who answered that they exercise control "constantly" and "often" stressed that they face conflict situations from time to time. Relationships between parents and children that are based on feelings of kindness, love, care, concern, and respect for each other have a positive influence on the development of the child, determined by meaningful emotional and volitional efforts and manifested in real interpersonal situations.

Novelty. The study of the factors of favorable / unfavourable influence of the digital / family environment on the emotional and psychological state of children against the background of active hostilities in Ukraine, clarification of the role of parents in controlling the interaction of younger students and adolescents with the digital environment under martial law is carried out for the first time.

The practical significance. The obtained results will contribute to the study of the impact of the social environment on the development of children, taking into account different age groups of children; defining a system of indicators for the successful impact of the digital environment on children of different age groups.

Keywords: digital environment, network activity, social networks, virtual agents of socialization.

I. Introduction

In the modern society with its informational challenges and environmental threats, transformational changes in the institution of family, blurring of established educational traditions and ideals, growing social alienation between parents and children, social influences on the personality acquire fundamental importance and outstanding significance. T. Bilan, reflecting on the social risks of Ukraine of the 21st century, draws attention to the fact that «a child in a particular historical era, in a certain period of life and social experience, enters into ready-made, objectively given social structures. Respectively, the social environment should contribute to the child's activity being socially oriented. The conditions and situations of social space should not interfere, but on the contrary – they should contribute to the manifestations of such social activity» [3, p. 40]. D. Gubareva emphasizes that it is the surrounding social environment that forms the personality's confidence, flexibility of thinking, responsibility and ambitions [5, p. 66]. Meanwhile the relationships with the social environment are established through verbal, communicative and ego-competence during social communication [5, p. 107]. Currently, the social environment is not only the existing socio-economic system, a set of different groups (family, reference group, group of coworkers, etc.), social institutions, the immediate environment of the individual, but also virtual agents of socialization (Internet, social networks, blogs, etc.) [2; 6]. Globalization challenges, the political and socio-economic situation of modern Ukraine determine the rethinking of the role of virtual agents of socialization, social environment, family, environment in the life of the youngest generation of Ukrainian citizens. These factors prove the relevance of the study.

II. Problem statement and research methods

The aim of the study is to determine the role of parents in controlling the interaction of younger school students (primary school) and adolescents with the digital environment during the duration of the martial law, to examine the emotional, evaluative and personal-semantic relations in the family environment that arise as a result of parental control over child's digital interaction.

In developing the empirical research design, we relied on a *multimethod design*, combining critical and interpretive research paradigms. Within the *critical* paradigm, we focused on the potential positive social changes that will occur in the lives of the research participants and in the systems that were studied [12]. The critical paradigm is represented in the study by non-standardized interviews and focus groups. Non-standardized interviews allowed us to find out the emotional, evaluative and personal-semantic relations that arise among primary school students and among adolescents. It is worth pointing out that we were able to independently change the questions and their order. Focus group interviews were conducted according to a single set of guidelines, which were intended to survey the following points of assessment: possibility / impossibility to exercise parental control over the child's interactions with the digital network environment; reasons why parents do not control the child's interaction with the digital network environment; what techniques parents use to regulate the conflict situation that arises during the implementation of restrictions on the Internet use. The meetings were held in ZOOM, which allowed to conduct three focus group sessions. The respondents were selected on a voluntary basis. The *interpretive* paradigm we used focuses on the analyzing the actions of small groups (families) in order to analyze how the digital/family environment affects their evaluation, attitudes, perception of the social world. The interpretive paradigm "involves recording the routine actions of respondents in a familiar environment, as well as analyzing their characteristic behavioral practices in everyday conditions" [8]. The interpretive paradigm is represented in the study by the questionnaire method and a Likert scale. The survey was conducted while we were working with parents of primary school children and parents of teenagers by distributing a questionnaire through Viber and Telegram messengers, which contained the following questions: do you check how your child interacts with social networks, do you set restrictions on Internet use, are you familiar with your child's friends (I know a lot of friends / I know a few friends / I do not know friends); ordinal Likert scale was used to record the respondents' evaluative attitude towards the parameter «family support and understanding».

The research was carried out on the basis of Odesa's secondary schools of I-III levels in Suvorov district of Odesa city council, Odesa regional society of education, enlightenment, culture and sports «Language Academy», public organization and sports club «White Tiger». In total, the study covered 220 respondents: 130 students (58 junior schoolchildren and 72 teenagers), their parents (40 parents of younger schoolchildren, 35 parents of adolescents), 15 teachers (4 primary school teachers, 6 secondary school teachers, 3 teachers of the «Language Academy», 2 coaches from the sports club). The study was conducted during May - November 2022.

III. Results

The aim of the study was to obtain information on the vector of children's interaction with the digital / family environment against during active military actions in Ukraine; to determine the factors of favorable / unfavorable influence of the digital / family environment on the emotional and psychological state of children.

Thus, according to the results of a sociological study within the framework of the international project «Health and Behavioural Orientations of Young Students», it was found that «psychological support from relatives, the opportunity to be heard, to receive advice and / or support in a difficult life situation are the basis of the child's well-being today» [10, p. 33]. Taking into account the guidelines developed by the participants of the study «Health and Behavioural Orientations of Young Students», we used Likert scale to record the respondents' evaluative attitude towards the parameter «family support and mutual understanding» [7, p. 126–128].

Respondents were asked to answer a number of questions: 1) «*How often do you (child) discuss topics that really embarrass / interest / make you nervous when you are with your parents?*»; 2) «*How easily do you (child) discuss topics that really embarrass / interest / worry you when you are with your parents?*» The exposition of the obtained results allowed us to draw the following conclusions: 1) 40% of children constantly discuss topics that embarrass / interest / make them nervous around their parents, 36% – from time to time, 24% – almost never; 2) the survey of children of different age categories demonstrates a discrepancy in measuring the criterion of «mutual understanding». Thus, the answer «constantly» to the question «*How often do you (child) discuss topics that really embarrass / interest / make you nervous when you are with your parents?*» was given by 58% of primary school children (the total number of children of this age category is 58 people) and 25% of adolescents (with a total number of respondents – 72 people). A similar discrepancy is demonstrated by the percentage of answers «almost never»: 10% and 35% respectively; 3) almost the same number of answers «from time to time» – 31% and 40%. It should be noted that generalization of the results without regard to age categories represents the preference for trusting, reliable and comfortable relationships between parents and children. Certain concerns are caused by the low level of the indicator «family support

and mutual understanding» in adolescents, since the lack of communication with parents, lack of spatial close communication, «negatively affects the adolescent, makes it impossible to create models of trusting relationships. Adolescents have a high rate of mental development, so they have many needs that can only be satisfied by a socially rich, friendly environment» [11, p. 166].

The next step of our research was to identify the respondents' perception of how easy it is to discuss topics that really embarrass / interest / worry them when around parents. The survey results show a generally positive trend in the organization of an atmosphere of mutual understanding and support in the family. Thus, 58% of respondents said that they easily discuss with their parents topics that are of interest, interest, excitement. The indicator of «easiness» decreases for the age category of adolescents: 27% of adolescents easily communicate with their parents, while 33% experience significant difficulties. The average indicator of ease of communication with parents for primary school age children is 65% (out of a total of 58 children), 35% of children marked the quality of communication with parents as «difficult». It is noteworthy that the survey indicates different trends in assessing the ease / difficulty of communication with parents: primary school children mark their own communication with parents as «very easy» by 10% more (25% «very easy» and 15% «very difficult»); adolescents, on the contrary, demonstrate a decrease in the share of those who find it easy to talk to parents – by 8% (25% «very easy» and 33% «very difficult»).

If psychological support is almost unambiguously interpreted as a positive phenomenon, based on the responses of the participants of the international project «Health behaviour of school-aged children» (HBSC) emphasize, then parental control has both positive and negative sides: «On the one hand, for a child who cannot yet be responsible for all his/her actions and faces a lot of new risks, parental control is necessary, and its absence can be interpreted as a poor performance of parental duties. On the other hand, excessive control can easily turn into interference in the adolescent's private space, which opens up the possibility for various negative scenarios – from the child's lack of independence and inability to make decisions and take responsibility for them to conscious resistance to such control and risky behavior as an extreme degree of disagreement with parental instructions» [10, p. 32].

We analyzed the «involvement» of parents in the social environment of children by measuring the parameter of «awareness» of parents about their children's friends and their Internet activity. At the first stage of the study, we distributed a questionnaire through Viber and Telegram messengers that contained the following questions: do you check how your child interacts with social networks, do you set restrictions on the use of the Internet, are you familiar with your child's friends (know a lot of friends / know a few friends / do not know friends). The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Parents' awareness of their children's friends and Internet activity

| Statement | Parents of children of primary school age, % | Parents of adolescents, % |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| I check how my child interacts with social networks | 77,5 | 40,0 |
| I set restrictions on my child's use of the Internet | 35,0 | 22,8 |
| I know many friends of my child (from 5 people and more) | 52,5 | 34,2 |
| I know several friends of my child (up to 5 people) | 37,5 | 42,8 |
| I do not know my child's friends | 10,0 | 22,8 |

The distribution of respondents' answers shows that the least controlled sphere of life is Internet activity. Thus, only 14 parents (total number – 40 people) of primary school age children deliberately restrict their child's access to the digital space. 31 respondent closely monitors which pages the child visits and with whom interacts on social networks. The situation with parental control of teenagers' behavior in the Internet space is worse: 14 parents (total number – 35 people) check how the child interacts with the digital environment, and only 8 (!) set time limits for access to the Internet. Against the background of these trends, it is noteworthy that the «live» reality is still under certain control of parents: only 10% of parents (4 persons) of primary school children and 22% of parents (8 persons) of adolescents do not know their children's friends.

The dangerous trends that we identified regarding the arbitrary and uncontrolled stay of the child in the digital environment became a factor in conducting the actual test study – a qualitative survey in a focus group. Focus group interviews were conducted according to the single guidelines. By prior agreement with the parents, the status of the parents (biologically related / unrelated), the gender of the parents (father / mother), the age of the parents, the gender status of the child were left out. The guidelines developed for the focus group contained a number of points: assessment of the possibility / impossibility of exercising parental control over the child's stay / interaction with the network environment; reasons why parents do not control the child's interaction with the network environment; what techniques are used to regulate the conflict situation that arises during the implementation of restrictions on Internet use.

The meetings were held on ZOOM, which allowed for three focus group sessions. The respondents were selected on a voluntary basis:

- Group 1 – 10 people, 5 parents of primary school age children and 5 parents of teenagers. During the actual test study, the focus group was asked about their own experience of parental control. The respondents had to decide whether the material status of the family, professional employment of parents affect the control of the child's interaction with the Internet space; whether the material status of the family affects the child's attendance of out-of-school education institutions (sports clubs); how often there is a conflict situation provoked by the unwillingness of children to comply with the requirements and recommendations of parents regarding their stay in the digital environment;

- Group 2 – 8 people, 4 parents of primary school age children and 4 parents of teenagers. A prerequisite for the respondents of the second group was the participation of their child in extracurricular educational / sports activities. The respondents were asked to focus on discussing how they resolve conflict situations provoked by children's unwillingness to comply with the requirements and recommendations of their parents regarding their stay in the digital environment.

Overall, 51.9% of respondents monitor their child's digital/networking activity «constantly» or «often». When working with focus groups, we focused on identifying the reasons why other parents do not control their child's stay / interaction with the Internet space. Thus, parents emphasized the following points: «total workload at work» (19.2%), «any attempts to restrict access to gadgets, social networks provoke or lead to a conflict situation» (38.5%), «sometimes it is quite convenient that the child has something to do, especially when there are a lot of household chores at home» (15.4%), «I don't have the capacity to monitor this as well» (7.7%), «I trust my child, we constantly discuss topics that interest him/her, and we try to solve difficult situations that arise in his/her life together» (11.5%), «the child is busy with extracurricular activities, he/she does not have time to stay in the Internet space for a long time, to stay so long that it would cause anxiety... So I don't see the point in controlling it» (7.7%).

It is noteworthy that only 9.3% (5 parents out of 54 respondents) refused to control online activity because they trust their child. According to the researchers, trust unites family members, integrates their relationships, «provides for a safe family environment»; «a child who trusts and is trusted is open to parents, to the world of people», «a child's trust is based on the belief that family members act correctly, in good faith and honestly towards him/her» [13].

On the other hand, 57.1% (out of a total of 28 people) of parents among those who answered that they monitor «constantly» and «often» mentioned that they also face conflict situations from time to time when they directly check their child's gadgets: «I ignore the child's negativity and do my own thing anyway» (10.7%), «I forcefully take the phone away and look through the browser history» (7.1%), «I try to check it without the child seeing it, otherwise a conversation in high tones cannot be avoided» (25.0%), «I first ask to show what the child is watching online, why he/she does not respond to my requests / appeals / is distracted from his/her affairs for so long, but I can't stand it and then it all starts» (14.2%).

The emergence of a conflict situation due to the desire of parents to control the activity / interaction of the child with the digital environment was reported by 26 parents: 10 among those who gave answers «rarely» / «never» and 16 parents among those who gave answers «constantly» / «often». When discussing the situations of conflict, we moderated the respondents' answers in the direction of outlining specific actions that they and their children resort to, and found out the techniques that parents use to stop the conflict without violating ethical rules and norms of behavior. The results obtained are in line with the techniques and methods of ethical protection identified by T. Alekseenko [1]:

– *Projection of the future situation with the opposite decision.* For this technique, we have included the answers such as «Please, dear, in the future, set the alarm clock yourself so that I don't have to take the phone away by force» (Iryna O., mother of a teenager), «Think how quickly we would have come to an agreement if you had responded to my restrictions on hanging out online» (Kateryna M., mother of a teenager). The technique is quite effective, the child begins to think about strategies for the conflict-free behavior in the future.

– Parents of primary school age children use the technique of «taking the blame», for example, «Yes, it's my fault, I didn't want to notice your excessive interest in the screen» (Maryna R., mother of a primary school age child), «It's my fault that I was busy with my own affairs and didn't teach you to play other games instead of surfing the Internet» (Roman P., father of a primary school age child). It should be noted that during the discussion of the problem, parents emphasized that such a technique works not only for the child, but also has positive consequences for the parents themselves – it is the organization of joint activities, the introduction of the tradition of outdoor games, encouraging the child to do household chores, etc.

– Parents of adolescents actively use the technique, according to which the child as a partner is offered to find out the essence of the problem together, to outline possible solutions, to choose an appropriate, motivated solution: «Believe me, I also find this situation not very pleasant. We can solve it only together» (Rita A., mother of a teenager), «Stop arguing! We can agree only together, by listening and understanding each other! So sit down and let's look for a compromise solution» (Olena K., mother of a teenager).

– The technique of «*motive substitution*» allows parents to correctly switch the child's attention from claims to parents towards their own behavior: «*Do you think I am hard of hearing? You can speak quieter, I hear your claims quite clearly*» (Rostyslav B., father of a teenager). This practice of parents' behaviour in a conflict situation allows them to defend their own positions without playing by the rules of the child, who deliberately strikes an ethical blow – raises his voice and demonstrates an aggressive attitude.

– Parents of primary school children shared their experience of using the technique, as defined by T. Alekseenko, «*naive surprise*». For example: «*I didn't think that you would mind me looking at who you communicate with in social networks*» (Kateryna G., mother of a primary school age child), «*Do you really mind that I look through the pages on the Internet? This is a surprise for me!*» (Gabriela R., mother of a primary school child). Parents admitted that such a technique creates some discomfort for them, as in most cases it forces them to tell the child a lie, so they do not evaluate the technique as good-quality and positive in the situation of conflict resolution.

The work in focus groups highlighted the fact that much fewer problems provoked by the child's interaction with the digital environment arose before the Russian military invasion of Ukraine: 67% of parents noted that children actively attended extracurricular clubs, had the opportunity to communicate live, had the opportunity to discuss topics related to peaceful life and common interests.

IV. Conclusion

The results of the study demonstrate a generally positive trend in the organization of an atmosphere of mutual understanding and support in the families of primary school children and adolescents, the responsible attitude of parents to assess the possibility / impossibility of exercising parental control over the child's interaction with the network environment. It should be noted that positive emotional, evaluative and personal-semantic relations in the family environment are based on feelings of kindness, love, care, concern, respect for each other, «are determined by meaningful emotional and volitional efforts and are manifested in real interpersonal situations» [9, p. 67]. The basis of such relations «is the synthesis of moral knowledge, motives, feelings, which leads to a conscious mutual emotional and value attitude of parents and children, which is steadily manifested in real behavior» [4, p. 97].

Nowadays, the factors of successful influence of virtual agents of socialization on primary school children and adolescents in the conditions of increasing tension and alienation of the individual, the dominance of the information space with a huge amount of aggressive content, the dominance of contacts and interactions mediated by social networks, etc. should be the creation of the necessary prerequisites for the development of the child's internal and external activity; providing each child with the opportunity to assert himself in the most significant spheres of life, which are developed to the fullest extent. The search for ways, methods and means of the fullest disclosure of the personality of each child, the identification and development of their individuality through the network environment during the ongoing military invasion or warfare will be the subject of our further research.

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Порпуліт О. О. Вплив цифрового середовища на молодших школярів та підлітків: сучасні тенденції в контексті війни та криз

Мета дослідження – з'ясувати роль батьків у контролюванні взаємодії молодших школярів і підлітків із цифровим середовищем в умовах воєнного стану, опрозорити емоційно-оцінні й особистісно-сміслові відносини в сімейному середовищі, що виникають на тлі батьківського контролю за цифровою взаємодією.

Методологія дослідження. Для розв'язання поставлених завдань використано низку спеціальних методів дослідження: нестандартизоване інтерв'ю, фокус-група, анкетування, шкала Р. Лайкерта.

Результати. Дослідження вектора взаємодії дітей із цифровим / родинним середовищем на тлі активних воєнних дій в Україні дало змогу констатувати: мають місце різновекторні тенденції щодо оцінки дітьми різного віку легкості / складності спілкування з батьками (діти молодшого шкільного віку на 10% більше маркують власне спілкування з батьками як «дуже легко», підлітки, навпаки, демонструють зменшення частки тих, кому легко розмовляти з батьками, – на 8%); усвідомлюючи небезпечні тенденції щодо свавільного і неконтрольованого перебування дитини в цифровому середовищі, відмовилися від контролю за мережевою активністю через довіру до дитини, всього 9,3%, з іншого боку, 57,1% батьків серед тих, хто

дав відповідь, що здійснюють контроль «постійно» і «часто», підкреслили, що стикаються з конфліктними ситуаціями час від часу, коли безпосередньо перевіряють гаджети дитини; позитивний вплив на розвиток дитини мають такі взаємини батьків і дітей, що ґрунтуються на почуттях доброзичливості, любові, турботи, піклування, поваги один до одного, визначаються осмисленими емоційно-вольовими зусиллями і набувають вияву в реальних міжособистісних ситуаціях.

Новизна. Дослідження факторів сприяєливості / несприяєливості впливу цифрового / родинного середовища на емоційно-психологічний стан дітей на тлі активних воєнних дій на території України, з'ясування ролі батьків у контролюванні взаємодії молодших школярів і підлітків із цифровим середовищем в умовах воєнного стану проводиться вперше.

Практичне значення. Отримані результати сприяють вивченню впливу соціального оточення на розвиток дітей з урахуванням різних вікових груп дітей; визначенню системи індикаторів щодо успішного впливу цифрового середовища на дітей різних вікових груп.

Ключові слова: цифрове середовище, мережева активність, соціальні мережі, віртуальні агенти соціалізації.

Porpulić O. Wpływ środowiska cyfrowego na młodszych uczniów i nastolatków: współczesne tendencje w kontekście wojny i kryzysów

Cel badania – wyjaśnić rolę rodziców w kontrolowaniu interakcji młodszych uczniów i nastolatków ze środowiskiem cyfrowym w warunkach stanu wojennego, rozjaśnić emocjonalno-oceniające i osobiste semantyczne relacje w środowisku rodzinnym, wynikające na tle rodzicielskiej kontroli nad interakcjami cyfrowymi.

Metodologia badania. Do rozwiązania zadań zastosowano szereg specjalnych metod badawczych: wywiad niestandardowy, grupa fokusowa, kwestionariusz, skala Likerta.

Wyniki. Badania wektora interakcji dzieci ze środowiskiem cyfrowym / rodzinnym na tle aktywnych działań wojennych w Ukrainie pozwoliły stwierdzić, że: istnieją wielowektorowe tendencje dotyczące oceny łatwości / trudności komunikowania się z rodzicami przez dzieci w różnym wieku (o 10% więcej młodszych dzieci w wieku szkolnym bardziej zaznacza własną komunikację z rodzicami jako «bardzo łatwe», nastolatki wręcz przeciwnie, pokazują spadek udziału tych, którym łatwo rozmawia się z rodzicami – o 8%); uwzględniając niebezpieczne tendencje dotyczących samowolnego i niekontrolowanego przebywania dziecka w środowisku cyfrowym odmówili kontroli aktywności sieciowej ze względu na zaufanie do dziecka tylko 9,3%, z innej strony 57,1% rodziców wśród tych, którzy odpowiedzieli, że sprawują kontrolę «stałe» i «często», podkreślili, że od czasu do czasu spotykają się z sytuacjami konfliktowymi, kiedy bezpośrednio sprawdzają gadżety dziecka; pozytywny wpływ na rozwój dziecka mają takie relacje pomiędzy rodzicami a dziećmi, które opierają się na uczuciach życzliwości, miłości, troski, opieki, wzajemnym szacunku, są determinowane znaczącymi emocjonalnie-celowymi wysiłkami i przejawiają się w rzeczywistych sytuacjach międzyosobowych.

Nowość. Badanie korzystnych / niekorzystnych czynników wpływu cyfrowego / rodzinnego środowiska na stan emocjonalny i psychiczny dzieci na tle aktywnych działań wojennych na terytorium Ukrainy, wyjaśnieni roli rodziców w kontrolowaniu interakcji młodszych uczniów i nastolatków ze środowiskiem cyfrowym w warunkach stanu wojennego jest prowadzona po raz pierwszy.

Znaczenie praktyczne. Uzyskane wyniki przyczynią się do badań wpływu otoczenia społecznego na rozwój dzieci z uwzględnieniem ich różnych grup wiekowych; zdefiniowanie systemu wskaźników dotyczących skutecznego wpływu środowiska cyfrowego na dzieci w różnych grupach wiekowych.

Słowa kluczowe: środowisko cyfrowe, aktywność sieciowa, sieci społecznościowe, wirtualni agenci socjalizacji.