

FEATURES OF VIRTUAL SELF-PRESENTATION OF YOUTH IN THE MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Natalia Golubeva^{1,2}, Anna Ayanyan^{1,2}, & Svetlana Preobrazhenskaya¹

¹*Institute of psychology, Russian State university for the humanities, 125993, Miuskaya square 6,
Moscow (Russia)*

²*Psychological Institute RAE, 125009 Mochovaya 9, Moscow (Russia)*

Abstract

The article provides an overview of current research on the problem of digital socialization, as well as the features of constructing a virtual self-presentation. The proposed problem is up-to-date due to the fact that digital environment and social networks in particular, become more and more integrated into the process of socialization. The questions of how a person develops, lives and realizes his or her needs in digital environment turn out to be more and more significant. This article highlights the features of virtual self-presentation built by modern adolescents and young men (n=144). The obtained data show the features of creating a virtual self-presentation as well as internal and external factors affecting the characteristics and content of digital identity, which is mostly relevant for teenagers and youths. It was also found the relation between the level of social self-control and construction of self-presentation in social networks.

Keywords: *Digital identity, virtual self-presentation, information socialization, social networks.*

1. Introduction

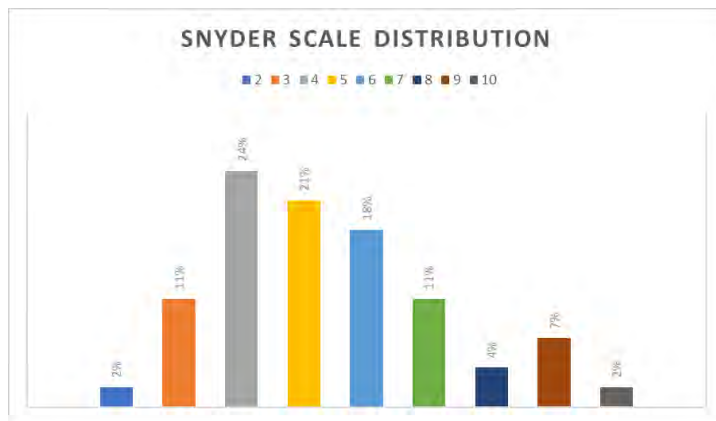
Modern researches prove that mass media and mass communication are becoming one of the important institutions of socialization (Ayanyan, Martsinkovskaya, 2016). The majority of communications today take place in social networks, which have become widespread in modern society. Such Internet communications form new features of social perception and self-presentations (Belinskaya, 2018). Modern young people pay a great attention for self-presentation in the process of communication. At the same time, creation of the ideal "self-image" in virtual environment is easier than in real one and gives the possible to change the existing image. Such transformation of a virtual identity is explained by a desire to make the most attractive impression in the process of Internet communication. At the same time, recent studies have shown an increase of true personal information provided by users in social networks. It claims that today social networks have become an effective resource for expressing the real identity of the user in most cases. People construct not the identity itself, but rather its "virtual shell", a projection of the real identity (Belinskaya, Martsinkovskaya 2018), (Back et al., 2010).

In modern society, social networks have turned into a widespread, complex and multi-level phenomenon. Social networks form their own unique culture, standards and traditions. Thus, the virtual space of Internet communication creates new opportunities for self-presentation: everyone is able to find a circle of interests, friends, learning or creativity opportunities faster and easier than in a real context (Golubeva, 2020). The focus on self-disclosure can be a consequence of the fact that any social networks user, who can view the content of someone else's profile, can be considered a potential audience. Even if a person hides a profile from public, he or she still has an audience of "friends" and subscribers. The presence of a large audience has a positive relationship with the level of self-disclosure, which is determined both by the amount of published posts and the presence of personal information contained in it (Rui, Stefanone, 2013).

2. Design, method, participants

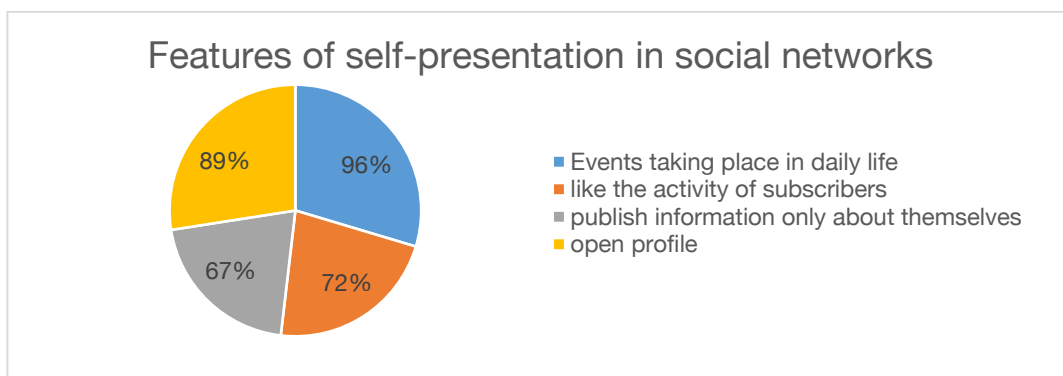
The aim of the study was to compare the features of self-presentation in social networks created by people with low and high levels of social self-control. Our sample included 35% of respondents with a low level of self-control (from 1 to 4) and 24% of respondents with a high level of self-control (from 7 to 10). The level of social self-control of the remaining respondents is in the range from 5 to 6 (figure 1).

Figure 1. Snyder Social Self-Control Scale.



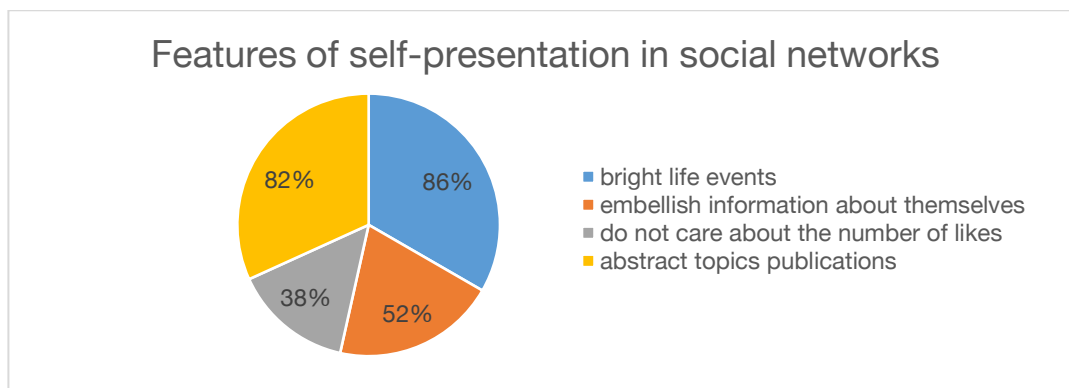
People with a low level of social self-control make posts in social networks based on their own feelings and events from their lives. They publish content about their daily life and bright life events, not paying attention to the activity of other users under their publications and not trying to become popular on social networks. However, the majority of respondents (72%) like when other users are active on their page. 67% try to fill their pages with information about themselves without details and not trying to embellish their own lives. Most profiles of such people are open (89%). Respondents with a low level of social self-control believe that the opinion, which is formed about them by other users corresponds to the real image of respondents (figure 2).

Figure 2. Features of self-presentation in social networks.



People with a high level of social self-control are also used to publish content related to events of their own lives, but most of them prefer to highlight bright life events, rather than everyday reality. Half of the respondents with a high level of self-control embellish information about themselves. They also do not care about the number of likes and comments, and they do not seek popularity on social networks (figure 3).

Figure 3. Features of self-presentation in social networks.



Publications on the page of such users are devoted to more abstract topics, rather than information about themselves. They describe their own lives in general using a few sentences. Respondents with a high level of social self-control also believe that other people's opinions about them correspond to reality. They do not emphasize their belonging to any social group. We assume that due to a large audience, a person may be anxious about a negative assessment of other people, which can lead to defensive tactics of self-presentation and increase control over the degree of one's openness when publishing content.

The common for all our users is the fact that the most preferred type of content for publishing is photos and videos. This may be due to a general trend which makes publishing texts unpopular. However, the presence of a photo can lead to bias in further communication. It is worth noting that when we asked respondents about a relation between the amount of personal information and the level of trust in him or her, the majority replied that these two facts are not related in any way. On the one hand, it may indicate that the respondents are not aware of this connection, and, on the other, that communication with a person is much more important than the content of one's profile. The same is true with the number of friends and subscribers: most respondents do not believe that photos can reflect one's social status or it can be a key to comfortable communication with a person.

3. Conclusions

1. For the majority of respondents, the activity of other people under their own publications is not important, that is, when publishing content, they are guided by their own feelings and meanings, and not by the desire to collect as many likes as possible.

2. The optimal periodicity of publications in this sample is several times per month. By posting publications several times a month, people maintain interest to their person and their audience does not get bored with a constant stream of weak content.

3. When evaluating other people's profiles, the presence of a photo is an important factor for most respondents. This may indicate that people feel more trust to the person, as they see his or her face, which can be a factor of openness.

4. People with a high level of self-control prefer publications that reflect bright events of their lives, while people with a low level of social self-control focus on everyday life.

5. People with a high level of self-control publish content on abstract topics, and not information about themselves, as people with a low level of self-control do. At the same time, people with a high level of self-control tend to embellish information about their lives.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the Russian Science Foundation, project 19-18-00516 “Transitive and virtual spaces - commonality and differences”.

References

- Ayanyan, A. N., Martsinkovskaya, T. D. (2016). Socialization of adolescents in the information space. *Psychological research*, 9 (46), 8. <http://psystudy.ru>
- Back, M. D., Stopfer, J. M. & others (2010). Facebook profiles reflect actual personality, not self-idealization. *Psychological Science*, 21 (3), 372-374.
- Belinskaya, E. P. (2018). Accuracy of interpersonal perception in social networks. *Digital society as a cultural and historical context of human development*. State Social and Humanitarian University, Kolomna, 48-52.
- Belinskaya, E. P., Martsinkovskaya, T. D. (2018). Identity in a transitive society: virtuality and reality. *Digital society as a cultural and historical context of human development*. State Social and Humanitarian University, Kolomna, 43-48.
- Golubeva, N. A. (2020). Features of digital identity of teenagers and youth in the modern technological society. *Vestnik RSUH. Series: Psychology. Pedagogy. Education*. 1, 130-150. DOI: 10.28995/2073-6398-2020-1-130-150
- Rui, J., Stefanone, M.A. (2013). Strategic self-presentation online: a cross-culture study. *Computer in Human Behavior*, 29 (1): 110-118, doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2012.07.022