The Role of Teachers in Resolving Conflicts in Adolescents' Interpersonal Communication Through Social Networking

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ABSTRACT

In modern conditions of crisis in all spheres of life, conditions arise for the emergence of psychological tension in interpersonal communication. The analysis of modern scientific research has shown that a special place in the anthology of abnormal communication is occupied by the age group of adolescents. The pantheon of mental, socio-psychological threats to the growing personality affects the ability to interact successfully, forming a supportive and healthy attitude in the process of conflict resolution, which is of particular concern, taking into account that adolescence is the most important moment for personality formation and role-taking, especially with peers. Impaired ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships can have a lasting impact on the social and emotional functioning of young people. They are especially acute in adolescents and are expressed in conflicts. The authors studied and reported to us on the results of their study of this phenomenon. They prescribed several ways to overcome conflicts in the interpersonal communication of adolescents in the social network mode. Emphasizing that there is an urgent need to introduce innovations in the mode of social network connections in the educational process. This should be done by all practicing teachers and psychologists of the world. There were systematic scientific directions of humanistic orientation, scientific schools and approaches to the development of innovative technologies to support training, education and personal development in all available information environments. The authors analyze popular scientific trends and practical findings on the problem of finding ways to resolve conflicts in interpersonal communication of adolescents effectively and overcome them in a social network mode especially by the help of teachers.

Keywords: Conflict, interpersonal communication, teenager, overcoming, social network mode, personality, Teachers’ role

1. Introduction

With the beginning of the new conditions of the social life, there are new threats, and consequently, social demands and requirements for a professional - a teacher-psychologist. Epochal changes in relationships against the background of the coronavirus pandemic and the threat of death from contact with another person have also changed the vector of interpersonal communication. Moreover, the world pedagogical community understands the role of high-quality education aimed at humanizing social relations, increasing trust, and on the other hand, the need for isolation.
The idea of changing the Earth in favor of a value-based attitude to each person as a carrier of a safe, human-oriented education, designed to protect another person from the threats of COVID-19 infection, has become acutely relevant, and should become the norm for all countries. We, being in the spring and summer of 2020 in social isolation during the quarantine period, changed our ideas about health, diseases, a healthy lifestyle of a person, the causes that destroy our social health, received mainly not from the attending physician, but from the media. Hence, there is a real danger of manipulating value meanings in the mass consciousness, which is aggravated by the commercial interests of corporations and enterprises. Against the background of increased anxiety, many specific conflicts arose. It should be noted that the problem of studying conflicts passed the boundaries of pedagogy, psychology, sociology, philosophy, political science, and others long ago and became an integrative definition of all the sciences of human communication. The analysis of publication activity in the field of conflict research in the Elibrary system showed: “a total of 83972 publications out of 35157082 were found” for all time, from 2019 to 2020 only “11 out of 35157082,” and the system gives out 235607 out of 35070811 for a request about interpersonal communication of teenagers. Some mental states of adolescents can have a negative impact on the formation of safe interpersonal relationships in the “peer, parent, teacher” system. Mental illness affects negatively the ability of young people to form supportive and healthy relationships and resolve relationship conflicts successfully, which is of particular concern taking into account that adolescence is a critical time for personality formation and role-taking, especially with peers [9]. The impaired ability to implement effective interpersonal ways of communication has a longitudinal impact in social and emotional terms. Emotionally well-off adolescents show high results in all types of activities, not only in communication [3, 4, 33]. Learning the skills and ways to overcome conflicts in the interpersonal communication of adolescents allows developing resistance, which allows coping with any difficulty and growing into full-fledged, healthy adults. Every year, about 800,000 people worldwide die due to suicidal actions, of which, according to the WHO (World Health Organization), teenagers. The death rate from suicide in Russia reached 44,673 or 2.58% of the total number of deaths. Suicidogenic conflict, according to Yu. Yu. Khanina and M. Yu. Elagina, can be caused by real causes or personal disharmony [22]. Most suicide attempts are made by people who have not been diagnosed with a mental illness. Regardless of the nature of the causes, the conflict is accompanied by severe experiences with a depressive tinge [29]. Separate issues of psychological and pedagogical work with adolescent conflicts in interpersonal communication are raised in their research by many scientists [8, 14, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 26]. In recent decades, the problem of conflicts has become the most popular research problem in both national and foreign psychology, sociology and pedagogy.

A search of bibliographic sources for the keywords network school, network interaction showed “67090 out of 35157082” scientific publications for the entire period of uploading to the electronic library of Russia. These figures emphasize the acute relevance and demand for the development of problems of prevention, and, if necessary, solutions, the search for ways to overcome them, including in the social network mode of conflicts in interpersonal communication of adolescents. Data from Pingdom shows an increase in the number of people included in the global Network to 2.77 billion by mid-2020. Introduced in 1954 by J. Barnes and M. Castells as a term, the “social network” is stated as a structure that establishes virtual rules and forms of sociality, which characterizes innovative social morphology [27]. With the implementation of such a communication contact through the network, a unique form of community appears, entering the virtual communication environment. A social network community based not on the territorial principle, or even on the principle of uniformity of interests or social parameters of gender, age, and others, but on a random sample of the global social community. So, S.G. Shuklin and A. I. Karmanchikov in the paper “Forecasting of information security of high school students” write: “The analysis of information of the Ukrainian and Russian mass media shows that information of absolutely opposite content (objective and false) gives the positive results, forms necessary public opinion, without feeling of any manipulation in those who perceive this information. The objectivity and reliability of information are often secondary factors, and such aspects as its volume and interpretation of specific facts become more important. It also ignores the fact that after some time it may turn out that the information was false. It is important to get the expected reaction to this information at a specific time in a certain group of people, in order to commit any irreversible actions” [25, p. 95]. But a number of academic practitioners believe that conflict behavior can become part of a selfaffirmation strategy, in which a person’s self-esteem may be threatened [1, 2, 22, 31]. People with high moral self-esteem are less likely to show conflict behavior, because they have more resources, they can respond to threats, maintaining internal balance, while showing altruism and voluntary qualities of mutual assistance [28, 32]. For people with low moral self-esteem, conflict behavior is not uncommon, as they have relatively few resources to fend off danger. In the study of interpersonal conflicts in the communication of adolescents, undertaken by Z.I. Ismailova, it is stated that in the course of real interpersonal conflicts, “the whole range of personality qualities, its communicative potential, social significance, human likes and dislikes, love and friendship, compatibility and incomparability, attractiveness and hostility are revealed” [8].

It is therefore necessary to study the relations in each adolescent group, as they form skills and abilities, communication system of a teenager. E.S. Kozhevnikova and E.Yu. Pidshmorga in the paper entitled “Characteristics
of interpersonal communication in the modern information society” [11].

The relevance of the search for ways to reduce interpersonal or intrapersonal conflict is emphasized by almost all scientists, psychologists and educators. Relatively fully as possible in a constantly changing socio-pedagogical and psychological material development of the individual the actual conflicts are examined that arise in interpersonal communication, the general ways of their overcoming are defined, but psychological and pedagogical influence on the personality in a socially-networked mode is studied little, which is a daily and often the only form of communication during the period of quarantine isolation and the transition to distance learning of students. The effect of educational fields and control over the execution of educational and developmental techniques are not clarified, there is no clear understanding how and what control and measuring material to use, what are the consequences of desocialization of teenager and much more. The emergencies caused by the coronavirus pandemic have certainly affected the interpersonal communication of adolescents. The only way for many people to communicate during this period was through social networks. That is why our study is called: “Conflicts in interpersonal communication of adolescents and ways to overcome them in the social network mode”, where the key action is laid down in the verb overcoming. The search for ways of which took the main time of the authors, who united representatives of different regions and ethnic groups.

Materials and Methods
Our study of the nature of conflicts in the process of interpersonal communication of adolescents in the social network mode during the period of self-isolation from March 26 to September 01, 2020 covered 134 people, aged 11 to 14, using the resources of social networks Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram in their communication. The authors of this paper created profiles for themselves in these social networks, taking into account the nickname and posing as a teenager. For the purpose of observation, testing and analysis of conflict generic psych semantic cliches used by adolescents in interpersonal communication in a social network mode. To obtain empirical material, we used the methods of observation, conversation, active listening, testing, and used the “Tendency to adaptive behavior” method, assuming that low indicators on its scales would confirm the risk of involving a teenager in a conflict. The main source of information was the questionnaire of deviant behavior of a teenager (SOP-1), which was launched into the processing by a psychologist. The test questionnaire was created to determine the readiness (propensity) of a teenager to conflict behavior. However, as we could only observe verbal conflict, the focus was on it. Using a set of narrowly focused psych diagnostic indicators that recorded measures of readiness (propensity) implement individual forms of behavioral deviations. At the same time, the gender characteristics of the respondent, masculine and feminine preferences were taken into account. Our sample consisted of 51 boys and 83 girls. As measuring scales, the author of the methodology proposed “attitudes to socially desirable responses”, “propensities to overcome norms and rules”, “propensities to addictive behavior”, “propensities to self-harming and self-destructive behavior”, “propensities to aggression and violence”, “volitional control of emotional reactions”, “propensities to delinquent behavior”. In the female version, all of the above indicators worked, but one specific one was added – the “Scale of acceptance of the female social role”. The psych diagnostic work of the authors of the paper was carried out in parallel with the work of the school psychologist. Later, the results were interpreted and discussed in a real-time video conference in the ZOOM system.

Results Discussion
The results of the diagnostic sections, processed with the help of a Psychometer, were subjected to a thorough analysis and comprehension. Analyzing the data on the “Tendency to adaptive behavior” method, schematically shown in Figure 1.
We observed low rates of conflict in individuals who have the skill of adaptive behavior and use its tactics and strategies, and vice versa, more conflicted adolescents did not have such skills in their arsenal. The results of the application of the adolescent deviant behavior questionnaire (SOP-1) showed the following statistics, which are presented in Figures 2 and 3.

Fig.1

Fig.2.

*B-boys
G-girls
The extremely sudden situation of social isolation and the narrowing of the circle and restriction of communication contacts of our respondents did not cause panic in 86% of teenagers. There was in 91% a conscious and voiced feeling of compassion and empathy, which extended both to “their own” and “unfamiliar strangers”. On social networks, as reports from the front of military operations, information about new cases of infection and death from the insidious COVID-19 virus appeared daily. Teenagers in 87% of our respondents were interested in world news, and not only information about the epidemiological situation of their city, district, and village. Taking care of their own safety, 15% of teenagers surveyed by us provided all possible assistance to strangers, pensioners and disabled people during the period of self-isolation. It is worth noting that volunteer student teams were formed in a number of cities and villages, but their activities were not reflected in the media. 43% of teenagers involved in supporting disabled people and adults put information about their charitable activities on social networks, the rest of the respondents considered it inappropriate to brag about posting videos with themselves – the main character. Volunteers out of teenagers not indifferent to someone else’s problem, quickly delivered humanitarian aid to their homes. The regional association of volunteer associations “Social Network” is actively working. The Club of Volunteer Psychologists “Social Network” together with the Ministry of Youth Affairs of the Russian Federation is working in a difficult epidemiological situation.

The results showed significant individual and group differences in the course of conflict situations in the process of interpersonal relations in social networks. There were atypical reactions to the conflict from the point of view of moral evaluation. There were significant differences in the course of the conflict in groups of adolescents with different bases of moral values. “Passive participants” of social chats showed great goodwill and willingness to compromise in resolving a conflict situation. In the process of interpersonal communication, 13 people with a “victim complex” appeared, while these teenagers were constant active participants in the chat (MD=0.1273; p=0.015). We can note the lack of trust and goodwill in interpersonal communication in 22% of active chat participants (MD=0.2648; p<0.001). The groups also formed a small part of the outcasts in interpersonal communication, 29%, but these teenagers were constantly online, although they did not participate in disputes and conflicts. The data of the correlation analysis of the ratio of different assessments of the exit strategy from the conflict and one’s own conflict behavior, calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficient, confirmed the idea of the dominance of the protective mechanism of repression and projection over self-flagellation and self-criticism. The collection and processing of theoretical and empirical data allowed prescribing several typical classification signs of conflict in the interpersonal communication of adolescents in the social network mode:

Type 1. They participate passively in the discussion of the problem. They do not respond to provocations, they are sustained. Silent presence in the chat has different motivations: some people neglect other people’s opinions, valuing their own too highly, while others simply do not have their own position and remain silent. In the case of a direct question about a point of view or a way out of the conflict, they evade the answer or disconnect by leaving the network. We called them “passive participants”, and the ways to overcome conflict in interpersonal communication are avoidance and isolation. 33.0% of respondents belong to this type.

Type 2. They show average activity. They are flexible and sociable, but for mood or need-motivational reasons. When solving a conflict situation, they resort to consultations with specialists and the help of the Internet community. We called them
“plastic participants”, and the ways to overcome conflict in interpersonal communication are avoidance and isolation. 41.0% of teenagers belong to this type.

Type 3. They are actively involved in all topics and areas of discussion. They have their own, often aggressive, opinion. They argue, they can resort to harsh criticism, which is not always justified. Let us call them “active participants”, and the ways to overcome the conflict in interpersonal communication are pressure and argument. This type includes 26.0% of the subjects.

Communication in a social network, where instead of a face and a name, an icon and a nickname provoke the personality of a teenager to discard moral behavioral clichés and social restrictions. Interpreted as freedom of speech and thought, this tactic of interpersonal communication is much more likely to lead to conflict. The control and self-control that are only formed at this age is lost. Such faces are more suggestible. In order to justify their own atypical behavior, as a rule, the teenager later draws in his imagination the image of the enemy, and in his own eyes, he stands out as a Hero-a zealot of faith, value, i.e. demoralizes the image of the opponent.

The obtained results confirmed the working hypothesis: the process of overcoming conflicts in interpersonal virtual communication of adolescents in the mode of social network interaction will be effective if a compromise dialogue is used with the participation of a teacher-psychologist, in the form of a game reincarnation, with the use of empathic listening techniques and the activation of moral values.

Conclusion

An important characteristic of the collective image of a modern teenager is information openness and participation in virtual communication groups in a social network mode. The main strategic resource in the development of a teenager’s personality is interpersonal communication, as it is the leading activity in the period of social isolation of threats of infection with coronavirus infection, as well as a psychological mechanism for protecting against the destruction of the core of the Self. Information literacy in the field of the social network field is achieved today by a teenager independently and is the task of uncontrolled access to any information. The process of interpersonal communication itself is changing: the multitasking of semantic clichés confuses the creation of an individual moral and evaluative base. Interpersonal communication is increasingly becoming virtual one. All the attributes of this communication, including conflicts, also take place in the network interaction mode. Modeling of interpersonal communication in the “subject-subject” system, which goes back to the ethical moral and philosophical values of humanity, empathy, and mutual assistance, should have a professional methodological basis. The effective use of the transactional model in our study showed the presence of feedback and the possibility of correcting the conflict. We used the technique of transferring and assigning the role of the opponent in the search for compromises, taking as a basis the concept of coordinating “social worlds” and correcting life meanings proposed by B. Peirce [30].

From a multi-month study of conflict situations that arise at the verbal level, in the network mode, from the analysis of respondents’ responses about their attitude, participation and strategies for responding to such situations in interpersonal communication between peers and adults, we proposed the following conclusions:

- a large percentage (77%) of the subjects were very rarely involved in a conflict situation;
- a significant stratum (15%) of adolescents have never entered into conflicts. Although this may hide a variety of motivations: from avoiding verbal criticism, fear of exposing their true face or incompetence, to unwillingness to be the center of attention of the group;
- for 3% of respondents, a conflict-based way of communication is categorically unacceptable, which can be explained by both a puritanical strict upbringing, the dominance of Christian values of “non-resistance to evil by violence”, and a pacifist worldview of non-violence;
- about 5% of teenagers welcome and often use both constructive and destructive forms of conflict, explaining that “good should be with fists”.

A common conflict agent is: antagonism of views on values, lifestyle, behavior and fashion, as well as unwillingness to take other people’s opinions into account. To solve the problems of overcoming a conflict situation, it is necessary to have a voluntary desire to correct the situation and the participation of all active members of the conflict. The difficulty of working in the social network mode is that in the virtual communication of social networks, it is difficult to keep the attention of the participants of the dialogue for a long time, each of whom can leave the chat at any time. The moderator must have a high level of empathy development and empathic listening skills, the ability to compromise, find out all the pros and cons, smooth out sharp corners, the ability to hush up the problem, leave unresolved issues if an acute situation requires it. Psychological and pedagogical competence in the age-psychological features of working with a teenage group will be the key to success in finding ways to overcome the conflict in the social network mode.
References


