THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON YOUTH SOCIALIZATION: CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES AND ANALYSES

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Abstract: This article analyzes the impact of social media on the socialization process of youth in the context of modern globalization. With the rapid development of information and communication technologies, social media has become an integral part of young people's daily lives, significantly influencing their worldview, values, and behavior. Based on VCIOM data, the study examines the high level of internet and social media usage among adolescents.

Keywords: social networks, socialization, youth, internet, social learning theory, information technology, social influence, personality development

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy globallashuv sharoitida yoshlarning ijtimoiylashuv jarayoniga ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning ta’siri tahlil qilinadi. Axborot-kommunikatsiya texnologiyalarining jadal rivojlanishi bilan ijtimoiy tarmoqlar yoshlarning kundalik hayotining ajralmas qismiga aylandi va ularning dunyoqarashi, qadriyatlari va xatti–harakatlariga sezilarli ta’sir ko‘rsatdi. VCIOM ma’lumotlariga asoslanib, tadqiqotda o‘smirlar orasida internet va ijtimoiy tarmoqlardan foydalanishning yuqori darajasi o‘rganiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, ijtimoiylashuv, yoshlar, internet, ijtimoiy ta’lim nazariyasi, axborot texnologiyalari, ijtimoiy ta’sir, shaxsiyat shakllanishi

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируется влияние социальных сетей на процесс социализации молодежи в контексте современной глобализации. В связи с быстрым развитием информационно-коммуникационных технологий социальные сети стали неотъемлемой частью повседневной жизни молодых людей, оказывая значительное влияние на их мировоззрение, ценности и поведение. На основе данных VCIOM исследование изучает высокий уровень использования интернета и социальных сетей среди подростков.

Ключевые слова: социальные сети, социализация, молодежь, интернет, теория социального обучения, информационные технологии, социальное влияние, развитие личности

In the context of modern globalization, the rapid development of information and communication technologies is significantly influencing all spheres of society, particularly the process of youth socialization. Social networks, in particular, have become an integral part of everyday life and are emerging as a key factor in shaping young people's worldview, values, and behavior. Studies conducted by VCIOM also indicate that the level of internet and social media usage among adolescents is extremely high.

Today, social networks are not only a means of communication but are also active used as platforms for education, entertainment, and self-expression. This introduces new forms and content into the process of youth socialization. From the perspective of Albert Bandura's social learning theory, the mechanisms of observation and imitation are further strengthened through social media.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the impact of social networks on youth socialization, identify their positive and negative aspects, and provide a scientifically grounded explanation of their role in the modern social environment.

According to the results of a survey conducted by VCIOM in January, the study was carried out on November 28, 2019, using a random telephone interview method based on both landline and mobile numbers. A total of 219 respondents aged 14 to 17 were interviewed. The findings show that the vast majority of adolescents (98%) access the Internet daily. Furthermore, 89% of teenagers in Russia aged 14 to 17 use social networks every day or almost every day.

At the same time, more than half of the surveyed adolescents (54%) believe that social networks do not have a significant impact on them. In other words, it can be said that they are not fully aware of the constant influence that social media exerts on them (VCIOM, 2019).[1] Social media has deeply permeated society, becoming an indispensable platform for maintaining relationships and connections in every aspect of daily life. Socialization is a crucial process that shapes the personality of young people. In the modern world, the Internet and social networks play a significant role in this process.

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, socialization is connected to processes of attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation, which further strengthen it and enable the repeated reproduction of social behavior.[2]

Individuals learn and acquire social skills, norms, knowledge, and values through socialization. Social networks provide a platform for young people to communicate with their peers, gain access to information and skills, and learn the rules of online interaction. They also serve as a latent aspect of socialization. Social media represents a unique combination of interpersonal and mass communication, offering users a range of benefits. Social networks for both adults and adolescents are increasingly becoming virtual worlds. Once individuals achieve popularity, people tend to spend more time on these platforms, leading to significant changes in social behavior. These platforms

[1] Skaar, H. 2009. Branded Selves. Journal of Children and Media 3 (3): 249–267.

[2] Bandura, A. 2000. Social learning theory. Eurasia, Saint Petersburg, 191 p. (In Russ.)

combine elements of gaming, communication, and digital technologies. Despite research on the harmful effects of social networks on adolescents and attempts to mitigate them, early engagement with social media remains constant. Adolescents tend to place high trust in social networks, which are recognized as legitimate by traditional socialization agents such as the state, schools, and mass media. Social networks should be considered a new socialization tool in the development of youth-related policies.

The use of social networks varies significantly across age groups, with younger and older users pursuing different types of content and experiences based on their distinct needs and motivations. The satisfaction that users seek influences their choice of media, the forms of participation they engage in, and the extent to which they integrate social media into their daily lives.

Young Users (Adolescents and Youth)

For young users, particularly those aged 13 to 30, social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are used for a wide range of reasons that align with their developmental needs and social environment. According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, these users often seek the following gratifications:

1. **Social Interaction and Belonging:** Adolescents and young people are at a stage where socialization and forming relationships are key components of their personality development. Social interaction is one of the primary gratifications sought on social networks. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok allow users to connect with friends, family members, and even strangers, fostering a sense of belonging. Social media also serves as a means of maintaining contact with peers, especially those who may be geographically distant. This is particularly important for young users who

have not established offline connections or who lack supportive social networks.[3]

Example: Adolescents often use Snapchat to stay in touch with close friends or participate in group chats, providing immediate gratification in terms of communication and social interaction. TikTok, with its highly interactive, community-driven content (such as trending challenges), also allows users to feel part of a significant cultural moment.

2. **Entertainment and Distraction:** Social media offers entertainment in the form of videos, memes, games, and other content that helps users escape from daily stress. Young users often turn to social media for amusement or to distract themselves from real-life pressures such as school or family dynamics.

Example: TikTok is one of the most popular platforms among adolescents and young people, providing an almost endless stream of short, engaging, and often humorous videos. It serves the need for entertainment, as users engage with content that delivers pleasure, amusement, and emotional distraction.

3. **Self-Expression and Identity Formation:** The stage of self-discovery is particularly prominent during adolescence and young adulthood. Social media platforms provide users with spaces to express themselves, allowing them to project and refine their emotions. For example, Facebook enables young people to share status updates, photos, and personal milestones that align with the image they wish to present to peers.

Example: On platforms like Instagram or TikTok, young users often post content that reflects their personality, interests, and unique traits, using these

[3] Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1974). *Utilization of mass communication by the individual*. In *The uses and gratifications approach to mass communication* (pp. 19-32). Sage.

platforms as a space for self-discovery and self-expression. The "likes" and comments they receive offer feedback, which in turn helps shape their identity.

4. **Social Comparison and Validation:** Social media also fulfills the need for social comparison and validation. Upward comparison (seeing oneself as better than others) and downward comparison (comparing oneself with those perceived as lower) are common ways young users engage with social media. Platforms provide users with opportunities to seek feedback from others through likes, comments, and followers, which serve as indicators of social acceptance and validation.

Example: Many young users experience satisfaction when their social media posts receive likes or positive comments. This feedback reinforces their social identity and provides a sense of approval and recognition from their peers.

Analyses indicate that social networks have become a vital and integral part of the youth socialization process. Through these platforms, young people not only communicate but also shape their personalities, gain social experience, and internalize various values. In particular, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat hold a leading role in the daily activities of young users.

At the same time, there is a potential for negative effects of social networks, which can impact adolescents' self-esteem, psychological well-being, and social behavior. The fact that many young people do not fully recognize these effects further underscores the relevance and urgency of the issue.

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