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PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERACTION ORIENTATIONS OF INFORMAL ADOLESCENTS

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The number of informal groups in which teenagers spend time, learn social norms and rules, and expand their horizons is increasing. Being in such groups, they realize the need for intimate and personal communication, which at this age acquires special importance for personal development. Considering the fact that each activity has a certain determining influence, it can be predicted that the interaction of young people in informal associations largely depends on previous ideas about this interaction, and also depends on a certain set of personal qualities that affect the future process of interaction. In view of this, we believe that the study of such ideas and personal traits, which determine the orientation of adolescents towards interaction, makes it possible to clarify the mechanisms of interaction between them, to more thoroughly illuminate the socio-psychological determinants of their entry into informal groups. Studying and taking into account such features is important both for optimizing the process of interaction of adolescents in the sphere of interpersonal communication, and for building a pedagogical process, carrying out educational and preventive work.

When considering the specifics of orientations for the interaction of young people from informal associations, we took into account the psychological features of this age. Thus, the nature of relationships with others and the fulfillment of life are influenced by the desire for

intimate and personal communication, a sense of adulthood, an unformed self-esteem dependent on external views, and an incomplete worldview [1, 2, 4]. The combination of these factors and the typical adolescent desire to unite with common interests and establish friendships are realized in informal youth associations, where adolescents acquire communication skills, gain social experience and assert themselves as individuals.

Orientations for the interaction of young people were considered as certain features of the motivational, value, emotional and behavioral spheres of the mental life of adolescents. Moreover, such specific features can be attributed to the prerequisites that will determine the nature of interaction in the future, and can be considered as the result of previously performed activities of teenagers [3]. The set of such psychological features serves as the basis for further interaction with others, outlines the specifics of future relationships with peers.

In view of the informal adolescent associations relevance problem studying, the practical significance of the search for psychological factors of their functioning, we focused our attention on the study of the peculiarities of orientations towards the interaction of adolescents from informal associations, which was the goal of our study.

In our research, we proceeded from the following assumptions: the communication of teenagers in informal associations is a complex process that depends on certain personal dispositions. We assume that the propensity of teenagers from informal groups to certain types of behavior in the group is determined by the peculiarities of their motivational sphere and is a kind of reflection of their socio-psychological adaptability and social competence. In our opinion, acting as a motivational basis for young people joining informal associations, it is a kind of projection of the available communicative experience of teenagers, a reflection of their problems and difficulties in building formal social contacts, and has a somewhat compensatory nature.

When planning and organizing the research, we were guided by the principles of systematicity, unity of consciousness and activity, determinism, and the requirements for the validity of the diagnostic toolkit in relation to the investigated problem, established in psychological science. The empirical basis of the study was a sample of 320 teenagers (120 of them belong to informal associations) aged 12 to 16. In accordance with the requirements of psychological research, we used a complex methodology, which included: Q-sorting of behavior tendencies in the group (V. Stefanson); affiliation

questionnaire (by R. Nemov); scale of social competence (A. Prihozhan); method of diagnosis of socio-psychological adaptation (K. Rogers and R. Diamond); method of diagnosing obstacles in establishing emotional contacts (V. Boyko); method of diagnosing the level of empathic abilities (V. Boyko).

The results of our study prove that teenagers from informal groups, in general, are characterized by a rather pronounced manifestation of a tendency to independence. Thus, among those surveyed, 74% of teenagers were found to have a high level of orientation towards independence in social contacts. This can be expressed both in a certain distancing of them from personal contacts, and in removal from the affairs of the team. Accordingly, such young people are less oriented towards active communication and are mainly oriented towards avoiding struggle in a situation of confrontation with the group. At the same time, youth who are not members of informal groups have greater dependence on the group and are more oriented towards communication with peers.

Among the features of the motivational sphere of young people, it is important that teenagers from informal groups experience the fear of being rejected by communication partners to a much greater extent. So, if among the «informal» we found 60% of them, then among the rest this percentage is about 20% (in favor of a more pronounced motive of affiliation). This allows us to say that they are focused not so much on establishing contacts and obtaining information, but on preventing negative emotional experiences from being alone.

Informal teenagers are characterized by a greater development of independence, which is expressed in independence of views, independent structuring of time, while others show a greater tendency to autonomy and, accordingly, demonstrate greater self-confidence.

We discovered that teenagers from informal groups are less adapted to society than other youth. For example, only 13% of our interviewees showed a high level of social and psychological adaptability. This indicates an insufficient level of formation of the ability of informal workers to compare their own needs and psychological characteristics with the requirements of the social group to which they belong. A high level of rejection of others is also pronounced among informal teenagers (such indicators were found in 60% of those surveyed); a high level of emotional discomfort was found in 83% of them. These results preliminarily allow us to assume the interdependence of existing negative experience in communication, features of self-attitude and perception of others. On the other hand, teenagers who do not belong to informal groups, according to the

results of the study, are more adapted and are not prone to frequent negative emotions during communication.

Most teenagers from informal groups have difficulties in establishing emotional contacts with the social environment. Such young people are characterized by a low level of development of the ability to manage their own emotions, their insufficient differentiation and flexibility. Non-formals are prone to inadequate expression of emotions, which can cause conflict situations, and is also reflected in the general tendency of such young people to avoid establishing contacts on an emotional basis. This allows us to talk about the possibility of an organized corrective influence in working with such teenagers, especially since the development of empathic abilities of teenagers (in the compared groups) does not differ significantly.

Summarizing the empirical data, it is possible to formulate the following conclusions. Teenagers from informal associations have the following personal qualities that affect the direction and character of their interpersonal interaction. This is primarily a tendency to independence, self-reliance, frequent fear of possible rejection by other people, feeling of isolation, predominance of strategies to avoid active communication. Informal teenagers are characterized by a low level of social and psychological adaptability, in particular, an insufficiently formed ability to accept other people and a pronounced experience of emotional discomfort during communication. Communicative contacts of such teenagers are accompanied by rigid emotional attitudes, characterized by inflexibility, inadequacy in the choice of means of influence, reluctance to get close to people on an emotional basis, which often provokes conflict situations and misunderstandings.

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