IDENTITY CRISIS IN THE DIGITAL AGE AND THE DEPENDENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

(Raqamli davrda shaxsiylik inqirozi
va ijtimoiy tarmoqlarga tobelik)
Xalilova Tabassum Akmaljon daughter
Student of pedagogy and psychology
Email address: sarvarbek15_11@icloud.com

ANNOTATION

This article analyzes the psychological consequences of the digital age, in particular, the factors that lead to the identity crisis of social networks. Virtuality on digital platforms, the creation of artificial images, constant comparison syndrome, and the occasional FOMO syndrome (fear of missing out) threaten the mental stability of modern people.

Keywords: digital age, identity crisis, social networks, psychosocial development, identity, virtuality, psychological risk**.**

ANNOTATSIYA

Mazkur maqolada raqamli davrning psixologik oqibatlari, xususan, ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning shaxsiylik (identiklik) inqiroziga olib keluvchi omillari tahlil qilinadi. Raqamli platformalardagi virtuallik, sun'iy obrazlar yaratish, doimiy solishtirish sindromi, vaqti-vaqti bilan yuzaga keladigan FOMO sindromi (hayotda nimanidir o'tkazib yuborish qo'rquvi) kabi holatlar zamonaviy insonning ruhiy barqarorligiga tahdid solmoqda.

Kalit so'zlar: raqamli davr, shaxsiylik inqirozi, ijtimoiy tarmoqlar, psixosotsial rivojlanish, identiklik, virtuallik, psixologik xavf.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В статье анализируются психологические последствия цифровой эпохи, в частности факторы, приводящие к кризисам идентичности в социальных сетях. Такие ситуации, как виртуальность на цифровых платформах, создание искусственных образов, синдром постоянного сравнения и периодически возникающий синдром FOMO (страх что-то упустить) угрожают психической устойчивости современных людей.

Ключевые слова: цифровая эпоха, кризис идентичности, социальные сети, психосоциальное развитие, идентичность, виртуальность, психологический риск.

In the modern world, social networks have become an integral part of our lives. They allow us to connect with friends and family, keep up with the news, and enjoy a

variety of content. However, excessive use of social networks can negatively affect our mental health. The rapid development of digital technologies and social networks is leading to fundamental changes in the formation and expression of human personality. Today, how people present themselves in a virtual environment, how they interact with others, and the impact of these processes on mental health are in the focus of psychological research. Social networks allow users to express themselves in various ways. This has a significant impact on the formation of personality, especially among adolescents and young people. Studies show that presenting oneself and comparing oneself with others on social networks can have both positive and negative effects on the formation of personality. On social media, users tend to compare themselves with others, which affects their self-esteem and level of satisfaction. Studies show that spending a lot of time on social media can lower self-esteem. Social media is known for its ability to engage users in a constant "news feed." The release of dopamine creates a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction, which encourages a person to return to the network again and again. This condition is called digital addiction and leads to a loss of psychological independence. In the digital age, personality formation has become a complex and multifaceted process.

1. Loss of connection with real life. Through social networks, people are more immersed in virtual life. This leads to a weakening of interpersonal relationships in real life. As a result, feelings of social isolation, loneliness and anxiety increase.

2. Depression and low self-esteem - According to studies, seeing "ideal" images of other people's lives on social networks forms a habit of comparing oneself with others. This can lead to a decrease in self-confidence, dissatisfaction with life and even depressive states.

3. FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) syndrome FOMO - that is, the fear of missing out on events in the lives of others - is exacerbated by constant monitoring of social networks. This condition leads to anxiety, distraction and mental fatigue in a person.

4. Sleep disturbance - Staying connected to social media at night via phone or computer disrupts a person's sleep pattern. This leads to chronic fatigue, irritability and a decrease in cognitive functions.

5. Internet addiction - The habit of excessive use of social media, over time, leads to psychological dependence. A person feels empty and aimless without these platforms. This condition is called "social media addiction" and it poses a serious threat to mental health. Social media plays an important role in this process, through which people express themselves, interact with others and evaluate themselves. At the same time, these processes also affect a person's mental health. Therefore, a conscious approach and self-awareness when using social media are important. Psychologist Erik Erikson, in his theory of psychosocial development, argued that the main task during adolescence is to "form a personality." The digital environment, however, makes it

difficult for adolescents to maintain a balance between real and virtual identities at this stage: In the digital world, adolescents compare themselves to friends or celebrities and strive to have the "most acceptable" appearance. This is detrimental to their real identity. Role confusion in Erikson's theory is exacerbated in the digital environment. "If an adolescent sees himself through the eyes of others, he can lose his identity."

Today's youth are constantly under the demand for "appearance": profile pictures, stories, "likes" and affirms himself through "shares". Erik Erikson explained the development of the human personality based on an eight-stage psychosocial model, at each stage of which a person faces a certain social and psychological crisis. In particular, the "Identity versus Role Confusion" stage, which covers the age range of 12–18, is extremely relevant in the digital age. At this stage, a teenager forms a personality, seeks to understand his "I", and tries to understand his role in society. According to Erikson, if a person cannot find his personality during this period, he will experience an identity crisis, that is, he will not find a clear answer to the question "who am I?" The digital environment, especially social networks (Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, etc.), has a direct impact on the formation of this identity. The way teenagers present themselves in a virtual environment, and their attempts to build their "ideal self" by comparing themselves with others, actually deepens the role confusion that Erikson mentioned. For example, users often try to create a socially acceptable image, rather than their real-life situation - this leads to a conflict between internal identity and external image. Therefore, constant comparisons with the success, beauty or social activity of others on social networks can lead to low self-esteem, dissatisfaction with oneself, and even depressive states. What are the negative effects of social networks? Anxiety and depression: Constantly seeing other people's "perfect" lives can make us feel more insecure and compare ourselves to others. This can lead to anxiety and depression. Studies show that people who spend a lot of time on social media are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Sleep disturbances: The blue light from phones and computers can interfere with the production of the hormone melatonin, making it harder to fall asleep. Constant updates on social media can also distract us and disrupt our sleep.

Low self-esteem: The idealized images and filtered photos on social media can make us feel dissatisfied with our appearance and life, which can lead to low self-esteem.

Attention problems: Social media provides a constant stream of new information, which can weaken our ability to focus. Many people try to escape from everyday stress and anxiety on social media. However, research suggests that social media does not reduce stress, but rather increases anxiety and depression. In a study of 1,800 volunteers, women who use social media were more likely to experience anxiety than men. Studies have shown that Twitter, where people share their stress and anxiety,

is the biggest source of stress among social media, and that women experience less anxiety than men when using Twitter. Erikson's next stage, "Intimacy versus Isolation," is also reflected in the digital world. While social media allows people to connect, this connection is often superficial and technologically driven. As a result, people are unable to achieve deep emotional intimacy and fall into a state of psychological isolation. This is a dangerous signal in personal and social development from the perspective of Erikson's theory. In this way, Erik Erikson's theory remains relevant in today's digital era. In particular, the conflicting experiences of the younger generation between virtual and real identities, the intensification of the identity crisis, and the impact of social networks on the human psyche can be analyzed in depth based on this psychosocial model. This is a modern manifestation of the identity crisis that Erikson mentioned, which leads to a loss of balance between virtual and real identities in the digital age. Digital platforms provide ample opportunities for young people to form their "self", strengthen self-confidence, and find their place in society. They develop creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression skills in this environment.

Conclusion. The digital era is a new stage in the development of human civilization, in which technologies have penetrated almost all aspects of our lives. In particular, social networks have become one of the main factors in communication, interaction between people and the formation of personal identity. The analysis conducted in this article has shown that the process of existence and self-expression in the digital environment in many cases negatively affects the psychological state of a person, the process of self-awareness and personality development. First of all, against the background of the unlimited possibilities of social networks, the human personality is becoming increasingly fragmented. A person tries to create an artificial image that is different from his real-life image. Such artificiality, over time, causes confusion in the person's self-awareness, self-evaluation and identification of his "I". This situation is associated with the psychosocial crises noted by Erik Erikson, and is especially manifested in adolescence and early adulthood. Secondly, stereotypes about the "ideal life" that appear on social networks increase people's feelings of constant comparison, inferiority complex, and dissatisfaction with their own lives. "FOMO" (Fear of Missing Out) syndrome, that is, the fear of missing out on events in the lives of others, is widespread. This leads to psychological stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and other psychological disorders. Thirdly, the increase in communication through social networks is leading to the weakening of real social ties. Real-life communication is being replaced by artificial and superficial communication. This leads to the fading of people's skills such as empathy, listening, live communication, and social responsibility. As a result, spiritual loneliness, isolation, and emotional deficiencies are increasingly increasing in society. A person begins to determine his or her worth based on virtual assessments. Such an approach weakens the internal motivations for personal

development and makes a person dependent on external approval. This situation also weakens important competencies such as critical self-analysis, defending one's own opinion, and independent decision-making. In the digital era, children and adolescents, as the most vulnerable group, require special attention. Their psycho-psychological development is still in its formative stages, and negative information, scenes of violence, and wrong values in the digital environment can have a strong impact on them. This leads to the early manifestation of a personality crisis and an increase in self-harm, radicalism, and instability among young people. Therefore, in the modern information environment, systematic measures are needed to protect the human psyche, promote information hygiene, and support the mental health of social network users. To prevent a personality crisis, attention should be paid to the following:

• developing digital literacy;

• systematically educating the younger generation about real-life values;

• limiting the time spent on social networks;

• expanding digital psychological support services;

• Establish open dialogues on personal development in school and family.

In conclusion, despite all the conveniences of the digital age, it also comes with negative aspects that pose a threat to the human personality. Considering that social networks have become one of the factors that exacerbate the crisis of personality, each user should participate in the digital space based on a conscious, critical and cautious approach. Then a healthy psychological environment can be formed in which digital technologies control people, and not people.

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