SHY PEOPLE AND THEIR LIFE IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

Abstract. The article is devoted to the research problem of shyness in interpersonal communication on the basis of the research of the scholars at Kuban State University, attended by N = 150 respondents (F=100, M=50) aged from 18 to 25 years old, using the Russian version of the SHYQ-Henderson / Zimbardo questionnaire (2017). The aim of our research is to study the personal characteristics of shy students in order to explain how social networks help them to solve the problem of shyness. Shyness doesn't necessarily equate to being introverted or not liking yourself. In this regard, we put forward the following tasks: to study the causes of shyness; to study the personality characteristics of shy people; to reveal the influence of shyness on a person.

Key words: shyness, students, social networks, relationships, self-doubt.
1. Introduction

Shyness is one of the most common and complex problems of interpersonal relationships. Recently psychologists and speech communicators have been focusing on shyness [6;9]. Webster's Dictionary defines shyness as a state of “embarrassment in the presence of other people” [10]. From the point of view of psychology, shyness is a violation of the emotional-volitional sphere and has various degrees of severity [24]. In different people, the forms of manifestation of shyness differ depending on the person’s sex, age and nationality.

Shyness can manifest itself in one way or another: little embarrassment when dealing with strangers, complete avoidance of communication or the appearance of deep neuroses. Most shy people experience medium shyness - these people can usually communicate normally, but experience difficulties in certain situations. It happens that shyness is hidden behind external emancipation, sometimes unnecessary, which can produce an unpleasant impression on the surrounding people [34]. Shyness can be interpreted as a temperamental trait or personality trait [8; 17].

To be shy is to fear people, especially those people who, for one reason or another, negatively affect our emotions: strangers (it is not known what can be expected from them); chiefs (they have power); representatives of the opposite sex (they bring to mind the idea of a possible rapprochement) [18].

In reality the word shyness means various problems, conditions and properties of the individual. In this regard, Zimbardo and his team distinguish the following interpersonal problems:

• difficulty in getting to know people, finding new friends, enjoying new relationships;
• negative emotional states, such as anxiety, depression, and loneliness;
• lack of assertiveness, difficulties in expressing one's opinion;
• excessive restraint, making it difficult for other people to assess the true qualities and abilities of a shy person;
difficulties in communication and thinking in the presence of other people, especially outsiders, or in the team;

- excessive reflexivity, self-concentration, etc.

Most people experience feelings of shyness as reactions when faced with certain difficult social situations [5]. The term shyness is a socially developed symbol for describing and explaining an important aspect of human experience [14].

Clinical results have also found that shy children are known to exhibit more symptoms of the disease and allergies, experience more disorders of the gastrointestinal tract and generally affective complaints [7;32]. In addition, shyness and related anxiety (detached behavior) are associated with an increased risk for late depression, including persistent anxiety and cardiovascular diseases [13].

In a US study, a link was found between the ability to combat shyness in childhood and coping with various difficulties in adulthood [22]. Shy boys demonstrated difficulties in stable career growth, marriage and paternity, however, they had no psychopathological problems. Nevertheless, shy girls did not show such difficulties in maturity. A similar study in Sweden showed similar results, with the difference that shy boys did not fail in their careers, and shy girls received a lower level of education compared to their classmates [15].

Shy individuals’ behaviors often hinder peer relationships. Firstly, compared to the less shy, shy people often avoid social situations [1], such as dating [3], sitting and living near others [24], and everyday interactions [11]. Secondly, when shy people do interact with others, compared to the less shy, they rarely initiate conversations [23], speak less [6;20;23], rarely disagree with others [19], ask fewer questions [16], rarely self-disclose [26], and avoid eye-contact [6].

M.R. Leary notes that shy people, like most people in general, want to make a positive impression, as well as to be well thought of [18]. But shy people doubt their ability to do this, they doubt their social abilities more than other people [2;
For instance, shy people believe that they do not possess the social skills required in society as they consider themselves to be socially incompetent [21; 27].

The Internet may provide a context that facilitates stronger relationships for shy individuals because many of their social difficulties (e.g., avoidance, inhibition) are reduced online [4; 25; 29]. This has led some scholars to suggest that the online environment may provide a comfortable environment for shy individuals to interact with others [25; 29].

The psychologists from the University of Alabama came to the conclusion that those who are less active in everyday life communication tend to get compensation for their unspoken / implicit emotions in other sources, for example, on the Internet. Social networks, in particular, help shy people to reveal their potential [33].

2. Materials and Methods

The current study was conducted on the basis of Kuban State University. The study involved 150 full-time students (M=50, F=100) aged 18 to 25 years old at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Communicative Studies majoring in psychology and pedagogy.

We conducted a survey using a modified Russian version of SSHQ to determine the degree of shyness of the respondents. The text of the questionnaire consists of 15 statements, which describe some degree of shyness. The questionnaire reveals how much the subjects are shy and how social networks help them to deal with the problem of shyness.

With the help of a specially designed questionnaire and the KubSU students’ self-report of the motives for choosing a profession, we identified some common personal qualities (Table 1).
Table 1. Modified Russian version of SSHQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modified Russian version of SSHQ</th>
<th>Модификация рус. версии опросника SSHQ</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am afraid of looking foolish in social situations.</td>
<td>1. Я боюсь выглядеть глупо в социальных ситуациях.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I often feel insecure in social situations.</td>
<td>2. Я часто чувствую себя неуверенно в социальных ситуациях.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Other people appear to have more fun in social situations than I do.</td>
<td>3. Другие люди веселятся в обществе больше, чем я.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If someone rejects me I assume that I have done something wrong.</td>
<td>4. Если кто-то отвергает меня, я предполагаю, что я сделал что-то не так.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is hard for me to express my real feelings to others.</td>
<td>5. Мне трудно выразить свои настоящие чувства другим.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I feel lonely a good deal of the time.</td>
<td>6. Я часто чувствую себя одиноким.</td>
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<td>7. I tend to be more critical of other people than I appear to be.</td>
<td>7. Я склонен быть более критичным к себе, нежели к другим людям.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is hard for me to say &quot;no&quot; to unreasonable requests.</td>
<td>8. Мне трудно сказать «нет» на какую-нибудь просьбу.</td>
</tr>
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<td>9. I do more than my share on projects because I can't say no.</td>
<td>9. Порой, я работаю больше, чем должен потому, что не могу сказать нет.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I find it easy to ask for what I want from other people.</td>
<td>10. Я легко озвучиваю свои просьбы другим людям.</td>
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<td>11. I do not let others know I am frustrated or angry.</td>
<td>11. Я не позволяю другим знать, расстроен я или сердит.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I find it hard to ask someone for a date.</td>
<td>12. Мне трудно спросить кого-нибудь о свидании.</td>
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<td>13. Do you use the Internet or mobile phone-based communication options (email, texting, social networking sites, chat groups, Twitter, etc.)?</td>
<td>13. У вас есть интернет ресурсы или варианты обмена информацией на мобильных телефонах (электронная почта, текстовые сообщения, социальные сети, общие чаты, Twitter и т. д.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. If so, how many social networks do you have?</td>
<td>14. Если да, то сколько у вас социальных сетей?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Has this affected how you coped with your shyness?</td>
<td>15. Повлияло ли это на то, как вы справляетесь со своей застенчивостью?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Results

The analysis of the results of the survey has shown that 20% of the respondents consider themselves to be shy. Thus, when asked if they feel insecure in social situations, 65,3 % female respondents reported that they are afraid to be rejected, 58,3 % of respondents replied that they lack confidence, and 58,7 % of interviewees said that they do not feel confident. In addition, male respondents are afraid of negative evaluation (52 %) and believe that they lack social skills (52,3 %). Based on the answers provided, we conclude that because of low self-esteem, female respondents avoid any communication with a representative of the opposite sex and avoid public speaking by minimizing social contacts. 67 % of female
subjects said that their appearance helps them to cope with shyness, by increasing their self-esteem. 52% of male respondents reported that they find it much more difficult to combat their social fear. They think that literate speech helps them overcome shyness.

**Diagram 2. “I often feel insecure in social situations”.**

75.7% of respondents said they had “3 or more” social networks, 23.3% answered “1 or 2”, and only 1% chose the option “not registered in any social network”. These results have led us to the conclusion that the majority of respondents interviewed spend a lot of time surfing the Internet. This is primarily due to the undoubted convenience of the Internet, as well as the fact that people are "hiding" in social networks.

**4. Conclusions**

Our research shows the undoubted advantages of using social networks, especially for shy people, which allows them to interact with society in a convenient form. Social networks are unlimited, therefore shy people can express themselves more easily.
References


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