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## Figurative and visual transformation of personality in the Internet space

**Abstract:** The relevance of the study is due to the fact that the influence of the Internet and media resources is growing and there is a tendency to develop virtual personalities that have little to do with reality and show the features of an antisocial person. In this regard, this article is aimed at identifying aspects and characteristics of a network personality that is influenced by modern media resources. The leading methods of studying this problem are methods of analysis, deduction and classification, which will help to recognize the most basic aspects of the figurative-visual transformation of a person on the Internet, show the results of the influence of social networks on a person and demonstrate the changes that a person is exposed to in the Internet space. The article reveals and substantiates the features and aspects that are distinctive for an individual in the Internet society, negative and positive characteristics of Internet users. The author substantiates the daily interactivity of social media. Also, the most relevant and influential forms of network interaction are shown and the frequency of their use is analysed. The materials of the article are of practical value for students, teenagers, youth, parents, future teachers who should know the aspect of the manifestation of personality transformation in the Internet space.

**Keywords:** *Virtual identity, Self-presentation, Social networks, Cyberspace, Manipulative media*

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, the influence of the Internet and social networks has become an important aspect of modern life. The growth of social networks has completely changed the way people interact, communicate and perceive themselves. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and many other platforms play a key role in providing greater reach and influence in the Internet space. Today, social networks create a huge independent space for self-expression of people with their individual traits. The negative aspect of frequent visits to virtual reality is psychological problems, privateness, changes in personality and its traits, which is especially relevant for the younger generation. Important reasons for escaping into the virtual world can be the difficulties and problems of communication between many young people with their peers in reality, misunderstanding on the part of parents and the inability to express themselves in the world. Young people are also very keen to satisfy their desire for self-realisation, which the online space can provide them with (Nikolaeva, 2020). Due to the growing popularity of social networks, virtual communities attract increased attention, and the Internet acts as a basis for changes, uniting temporary communities. In addition, social networks provide the most effective means

for communicating about the globalization of humanity, information and help maintain relationships between people through virtual communities. An interesting fact is that the personality is very much transformed in the Internet space. Social networks awaken relationships between people in virtual communities consisting of large and widespread population groups (Dutot & Lichy, 2019). It is this aspect that makes it important to study and analyse the impact of social networks on the culture of the individual, its visual and figurative transformation.

Many scientists pay much attention to the problem of the influence of media and the Internet on personality (Arora, 2019); the study of social networks of immigrants living in the European bicultural space, which is associated with personal adaptation and intercultural interaction (Repke & Benet-Martínez, 2018); the understanding of the influence of network communications on the culture of society and the formation of a new socio-cultural type of personality (“technogenic person”), which has its own set of social, anthropological and other features (Khrapov, 2014; Lopatinskaya, 2018) the problems and various ways of the influence of the Internet, as an information environment, on the life of society and on information culture (Gubanova et al., 2020) are considered. It was also important to study the specifics of the reaction of the

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audience to publications on the Internet, which leads to verbal conflicts in the public (Akhpasheva, 2017). A.P. Markov (2019) approaches the issue of social networks and information technologies from the philosophical side, paying attention to modern civilization, cultural regression, technological marketing trends in the post-industrial world.

The relevance of this research is that under the influence of media resources and social networks, a deep transformation of the personality occurs, its visual and figurative representation on the Internet, which contributes to the distance from reality, the development of self-perception and a fake lifestyle. It is this problem that is important, because its solution will be able to point out the causes and possible methods of preventing virtual addiction and unreal self-perception. In addition, over the past decade, the Internet has become an important part of the life of the younger generation, which since childhood learns the basics of virtual communication and is influenced by images from the Internet space, and under the influence of instant information, adapts its features to its canons. As a consequence, information cross-cultural communication has emerged, which exists in the network space.

The social activity of young people (Dikovska, 2020; Shevchuk, 2020) is realized on the basis of communication on the network, sharing photos and videos, searching for virtual acquaintances, which creates a world for such people. In the modern world, the information culture of a person plays an important role in the society of the XXI century and is an integral part of the culture of mankind. It is also important that the development of information culture is directly related to the formation of a person, their knowledge and skills in the Internet space (Nikolaeva, 2020). Accordingly, for the positive influence of the media and the Internet on a person, it is necessary to be information-aware and be able to filter information, navigate the Internet space.

The purpose of this research is to deepen the understanding of the global consumer culture and to identify new factors that can have an impact. The objectives of the article are:

- to check the level of influence of social networks on personal traits;
- to find out the success of an individual's development and existence in the era of media resources;
- to determine the degree of a person's dependence on the Internet space and the possibility of its modification;
- to reveal the basics of Internet content used by most teenagers and young people;
- to diagnose the positive and negative aspects of information technologies in people's lives.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the process of research, the following methods were used: theoretical methods (analysis; synthesis (connection of the general into a whole); concretization

(deduction); generalization (establishing the general qualities of objects); method of comparing and classifying aspects of the influence of social networks on culture; systematization of social networks of the information age and their impact on personality; diagnostic (questioning, conversation with adolescents and students who are interested in excessive use of media resources, social networks (Facebook, Instagram)); empirical (study of the results of visual-figurative transformation of personality in society; pedagogical observation in natural conditions (without artificial interference) for the frequency of using the resources of the Internet space and social networks); experimental (natural experiment during the use of information technologies); methods of graphical presentation of results (histogram, comparative table or diagram). The experimental base of the study was the Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University (the subjects were a group of students).

The study of the issue was carried out in three stages:

1. At the first stage, the theoretical collection and analysis of existing methodological approaches in cultural studies, pedagogy, philosophy and media psychology were carried out, which are devoted to the topic of self-presentation of a person in the network space and visual-figurative transformation of a person on the Internet; information data of dissertations, articles, books, conferences were studied, in which theories, methods, aspects of the influence of the Internet space, social networks, mass media on the individual and human culture were deeply and comprehensively disclosed; technologies and methods of possible analysis of users of popular networks and their impact on human identity were studied and demonstrated; self-perception in the network society; the facets of adequate use of the Internet space are determined; conclusions from the research of scientists are presented; the problem, purpose, forms and methods (methods) of studying this problem are highlighted, a plan for conducting an experimental study is drawn up.
2. At the second stage, the research itself was conducted and students were observed in natural conditions using social networks (Instagram, Facebook); developing ways of possible opposition to the false perception of one's "I"; the patterns and ways of influence of social networks on the identity of the individual and his transformation on the Internet were assessed; the level of dependence on social opinion was diagnosed and substantiated; the results of the analysis of the questionnaire on the frequency of using social networks and media resources were disclosed and a comparison of real actions with the answers of the respondents was carried out; the complex of the influence of the Internet space on personal formation and self-presentation in the network was identified and substantiated; a survey and conversation with young people, who are potentially the most common users of the network space, were conducted; the conclusions obtained in the course of the experimental work are systematized.

3. At the third stage, the material obtained in the course of monitoring the influence of social networks, mass media and network society on the psychological and cultural component of an individual, his qualities, self-perception and transformation is systematized and classified; theoretical and practical conclusions and results of the study are clarified and substantiated, a comparative analysis of studies of this problem, experiments of scientists devoted to the disclosure of human identity in the Internet space is presented; the results of a natural experiment and survey are generalized and logically systematized; the results obtained are classified and graphically presented. Recommendations and tips on the safe use of social networks among the younger and older generations, their negative and positive aspects of influencing the culture of society are also considered. In the course of the study, the ways of resisting the manipulations of the Internet community are proposed in accordance with the psychological characteristics and cultural and social values of a person.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In modern society, digitalization is becoming increasingly popular, which affects the formation of an individual as a person and creates an image of a special "I" in the virtual world. The problem of personal self-identification in the virtual space began to appear from the period of the birth of the Internet, because there was a need to live in a new communication environment. This is what influenced the social self-presentation of the individual in the Internet space. Although there are many studies on virtual self-presentation, it can be noted that the cultural aspect has not been touched upon or given a socio-cultural character. Today, new technologies, innovative mechanisms for the production and transmission of information, where the personal worldview is displayed, are being produced. Even on the basis of changes in financial, informational, and economic processes, the personality and its attitude are transformed. Through the use of social networks, ethnic, national and gender barriers are removed, which causes interest in the individual. The identity of a person can be considered from the side of cultural studies, where this term includes components of the spiritual world, cultural traditions and customs, features of language, life, mythology and folk culture (Zakovorotnaya, 1999).

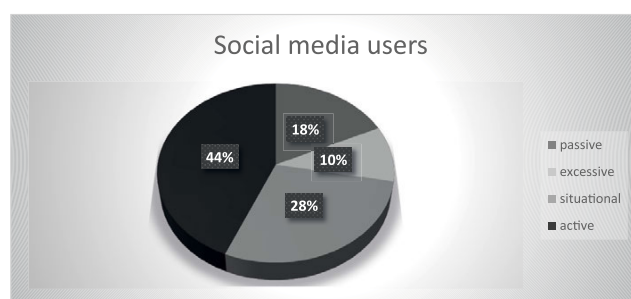
In the interests of achieving an ideal image on the web, a person reduces his own "I". A modern person hides behind a mask in the Internet space, where there are nicknames, statuses, symbols and roles. Virtual self-presentation on the Internet is based on such factors as: gender, age, nationality, professional affiliation (Myshkina, 2015). Virtual communication hides the identity and individuality of an individual, their falsity acts as a kind of protection from external forms of manifestation and hides features that are not ideal. Often, the main motive for virtual communication and interaction is the desire to avoid oneself (Bagayeva, 2021). With the advent of social

networks, people's social life has become virtual, where there are new types of self-presentation ("selfies") in the Internet society. With the help of social networks on the Internet, users can partially show their reality, hiding a lot of truth, posting edited photos, inaccurate information, etc. An example is the situation when Z. Born went on a fake vacation and posted on her Facebook page about going to West Asia, although she was at home for 42 days and only edited her pictures. Interestingly, no one noticed a catch in this situation (Alekseeva, 2019).

Thereby, self-realization is a process that can occur in the virtual world with the help of computer art, blogging, virtual communication and games. In the network, a person has no responsibilities, can communicate with real people via text or video. It is important to understand that the text, the image in the social network are creative acts of the imagination of the individual and contain very little truthful information. False self-realization and self-presentation contain antisocial and immoral forms of personality demonstration. This can be vandalism, excessive aggression, alcohol and use, etc. "Trolling" and "cyberbullying" are the most common forms of false self-presentation on the Internet (Gubanova et al., 2020). They can be dangerous for society and for human psychology. Carrying out this experiment involved the following stages of work: conducting a survey based on a questionnaire and interviews with the most active Internet users; determining the initial level of formation of manipulative resistance skills on the Internet; monitoring the influence of social networks on an individual using the methods of pedagogical observation (natural experiment) conducted on students and young people; representing graphical processing of research results; developing recommendations for the safe use of media resources and the Internet; determining the level of influence of social networks on the culture of society, their positive and negative aspects.

The study included the process of manipulating photos and their impact on the transformation of an individual's identity. The questionnaire "Personality in the Internet space" by A.I. Luchinkina (2019) was also used. In addition, the experiment was based on observing people who edit their pictures on social networks (Instagram, Facebook). In particular, this research focuses on how carefully and perfectly the photos are changed and edited, and how this affects self-perception. In total, the study covered 150 students and young people under the age of 24, the direct participants of the experiment were 84 participants who took a survey on the impact of social networks on an individual, which determined the frequency of Internet use. The students also used Instagram and Facebook during the study. The analysis of the results of the diagnostic examination led to the conclusion that the majority of the respondents succumb to easy manipulation by social networks, change their image to the general canons (48.3%), the average data and relative resistance have 30.7%. Only 21% of the subjects received excellent results and a fairly good level of resistance. Data diagnostics leads to the conclusion that the social network, cyberspace creates an unreal personality, erases identity

and allows the presentation of an ideal and positive image of the “I” as an element of the existential expansion of the personality in the information and communication culture. The results on the activity of using social networks indicate that 18% are passive users. These people do not use the internet much, they rarely communicate there, they are not very active, because reality is more important to them. Situational users (28.4%) show Internet activity, if necessary, they devote 1-2 hours a day to social networks. Active users make up the majority of the studied (43.6%) and can use the Internet up to 7 hours a day, often search for new information, use many tabs at the same time and are quite unstable emotionally. 10% are overly active users who devote most of the day to the virtual community, can do several things at the same time, they have a lot of links and tabs open, their attention is unstable, because the virtual space is more important for them (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Results of the questionnaire “Personality in the Internet space”

This study showed the relationship between selfies on social media and self-perceptions, helping to clarify the internal and personal changes of internet users as they develop their virtual identities. The results show a slight correlation of visual representation with narcissism and deep concern about one’s appearance. In addition, fake and edited images were published by active and excessive users who live fully in the virtual world. Summing up this research, the author can highlight that the Internet space is a more convenient way of communication, because it does not have a rigid time frame. People get tremendous opportunities to express themselves creatively in the best conditions when using various forms of communicative interaction, communicating with many interlocutors. There is also free access to entertainment, educational and informational websites and various forums for creative expression.

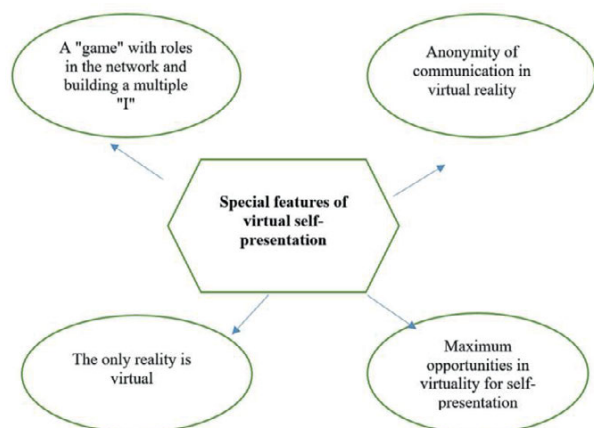
The disadvantages are in the material aspect because not everyone is familiar with technical means, have the opportunity to buy them, have technical literacy. Also, many people lose their identity, become a “mass” and follow the movement of society, losing their “I”, transforming their true image (Gubanova et al., 2020). The issue of “cyberbullying”, which consists of threats, the creation of doubles in cyberspace, flaming (the exchange of rude phrases) and alienation, becomes relevant. The ability to construct and change identity on the Internet leads to the creation of a virtual “I”, where a person

rebuilds their personality with the help of social networks. One can use cyberspace to experiment on their psyche, image, change their ideas and thoughts, create an ideal “picture”. Social networks are often created on the basis of unreal, fantastic data (status, age, financial situation), which forms a person without flaws. People can show themselves to be real, or create a distinctive image, but often an individual strives to present themselves from the best side, neutralize negative features and emphasize positive ones. The development of information technologies has led to the emergence of a virtual personality with special features, and many scientists have turned their research interest to the study of new aspects of the socio-cultural activity of the individual in the Internet space (Lim, 2018; Reed, 2018). Some researchers paid attention to the conditions for the formation of socio-cultural competencies based on the creativity of an individual and studied the forms of activity on the Internet (Shamsutdinova & Turkhanova, 2020). The issue of self-presentation and self-perception on the Internet has become relevant (Taber & Whittaker, 2018; Barry et al., 2019).

The research of such a socio-cultural phenomenon as the information competence of the individual became important, where the analysis of approaches to understanding the phenomenon of “information competence of the individual” was carried out, the digital society, digital competence, risks in the Internet space, creativity, Internet addiction, “clip thinking” were studied. In addition, attention was paid to the study of the development of information competence of the individual, which is based on the introduction of integrative courses, the use of technologies and techniques of interactive methods (Tabachuk, 2019). This study substantiates the personality and its self-perception in a socio-virtual society, when a person’s behaviour can have a significant impact on the consciousness and behaviour of others, which makes this study particularly relevant. This research has proved that an individual wants to create an image of the ideal “I”, which affects the individual and the people around them. On the Internet, a person creates a fake world, which, despite its unreality, is filled with images, creativity, self-expression, life, energy and is able to destroy the inner world of the persona, create depressive feelings and generate apathy. The scientific novelty of the results of the study is that it introduces new ideas to the literature on self-perception and provides a deeper understanding of the influence of photos on social networks.

It is important that self-presentation in the Internet space is the transfer of information about oneself, the expression of emotions and cognitive parts of one’s “I” (Bagaeva, 2021). The transmission and demonstration of certain information about oneself can be a partially unconscious act, because a person endows themselves with unreal features and characteristics. Accordingly, self-presentation can be defined as a conscious or unconscious process when there is a manifestation of aspects of one’s “I” to others (Yanchuk, 2005). In this way, a person can construct a new presentation of themselves that does not

correspond to reality and serves as a means of self-identification. Interesting is the approach of E.P. Belinskaya (2000), who diagnosed that there are certain points that make up the basic features of the virtual reality of the people. These points are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Special features of virtual reality and self-presentation in it

In the course of the study of R.I. Zekeryaev (2020), it was determined that during the growth of the level of an individual's Internet activity, their instrumental values increase (high material needs, hatred of shortcomings, perfectionism, rationalism, courage). It was also revealed that during the active use of social networks, feelings of cheerfulness, firm will, responsibility and efficiency decreased. The study and research of Internet activity is a rather relevant issue. Testing was conducted among adolescents for Internet addiction according to the method of Kimberly (Antimonik, 2018). The survey involved 50 schoolchildren (grades 10-11), who answered 20 questions using this method. The survey results showed that 35% of respondents were typical users who did not have Internet addiction, 65% of respondents were influenced by the Internet and the media, but some could voluntarily limit and control themselves. Out of the second group, 10% had a strong Internet addiction, 30% – an average, and 60% were mildly addicted. Accordingly, the study indicated that the majority of adolescents are active Internet users and have an addiction and addictive behaviour traits.

A study conducted at the University of Michigan diagnosed the influence of Facebook on an individual's mood and well-being (Kiseleva & Ivanova, 2015). The results showed that those users who often visited the social network were sadder and more dissatisfied with life compared to people who were not as frequently immersed in the Internet society. In social networks, people decide for themselves what their profile will be and everything happens according to the will of the owner. Self-perception often changes under the influence of media resources. In 2019, a study was conducted where 40% of young people admitted that they were influenced by images in the media. In India, a study on teenagers showed that 15% were under pressure from manipulative media that impose ideals and spread uncertainty. These facts

indicate that people are prone to artificial standards and easily fall under their influence (Sharma et al., 2019).

It should be noted that the posts shared by the account owners constitute a form of self-presentation of the individual, in which the account owner themselves begin to believe. Interestingly, internally oriented users will not be verbose in social networks and their level of self-presentation will be lower. Often in social networks you can see a large number of selfies, where there is no information support (Tsikhovska, 2018). This can be called "malignant narcissism", when selfishness reaches its peak. The image that is created in communication can also have negative sides, close to deviations, when a person wants to become a victim, complain and get sympathy (benefit). There may also be sublimation on the Internet, when a person cannot find friends in reality and tries to create a virtual world. V. Suleymanova (2017) notes that Instagram is a social network that resembles a scene with actors, where a huge number of people have roles and play with the help of publications. An interesting fact is that it is much easier to hide your manners, gestures, vocabulary in social networks, because it is not revealed in photos. To create an image of a person on the Internet, all that is needed is to buy a suit, create a beautiful location, present ideal lifestyle and show it to everyone, but it is difficult to live in this virtual world for a long time. As a result of this failure, there is disappointment in oneself, insecurity. Often a person starts chasing an unreal image from their social networks and loses personal "I".

Analysis of self-presentation of men and women (18-27 years old) was conducted by O. Kravets (2021). For the experiment, pages on the social network Instagram were selected (a total of 37 pages). To analyse these profiles, the author used the method of "content analysis", where it was important to consider the status, photos, personal data (character traits, appearance criteria, interests, personal achievements, favorite activities, etc.). Also, important information was data on marriage, children and life. The results diagnosed that the image of young women mainly consisted of pleasant pastel-coloured clothes, they had natural long hair, because social approval and praise were important for them. Girls want to be associated with images of calmness and stability. An important aspect of self-presentation for girls and women is self-awareness, the share of self-criticism, thoughts about family, children, loyalty, etc. It can be seen that women are more sensitive to photos with children and pay more attention to these details than men. For men, the first place is occupied by thoughts about career, the meaning of life, work and achievements. Young men want to be thought of as purposeful and wealthy individuals who strive for victory. Much attention is also paid to the appearance in the photos and relationships with the opposite sex.

Communication in social networks often has positive aspects and can increase a person's self-esteem, which was proved by a study conducted by scientists from Cornell University. Scientists have diagnosed that when viewing their profile and photos, a person's self-esteem significantly improved (Kiseleva & Ivanova, 2015). In addition,

social networks can normalize the heart rate, because when communicating, the stress level decreases. Scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Milan studied 30 students and found that social media communication brought a lot of pleasure and reduced stress in an individual. Modern young people often write posts, take photos, because it's easier than real communication. The author understands that it is more important for them to get a good review in the virtual world than to try and improve themselves in the real one. At Harvard University, psychologists conducted an experiment that concerned the effect of photos on memory. To do this, the researchers brought students to the museum, allowed them to use phones, cameras and asked them to memorize the exhibits. The study indicated that the students who took photos remembered the information worse. Young people who studied everything with their own eyes were able to reproduce the data more clearly (Shipitsin, 2011; Alekseeva, 2019). In the modern world, people spend a lot of time for a successful "selfie", enjoy social approval and new comments or likes. It is proved that selfism can have negative or even tragic consequences (Bril, 2016; Kozak, 2019). There is a well-known case of a teenager from England who committed suicide because of unsuccessful selfie. He spent a lot of time on photos and saw the meaning of life in this. Psychiatrists say that taking selfies can lead to the development of body dysmorphism, when a person is very worried about their appearance and body.

Thus, it can be argued that Internet culture is a rather global phenomenon that affects the processes in society and unites cultures. The Internet and social networks consist of international movements, cultures and subcultures. In the modern world, a person creates their own virtual worlds, makes a false identity on the Internet, ceases to value themselves, their real principles, and often falls under the influence of their own fictional world. In addition, there is an integration of natural forms of human activity into the objective-virtual space. It is important to realize that the real identity is lost in the virtual network, because in the "cultural Internet space" there are its own rules and laws.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is established that the global information space creates new opportunities for studying and creating one's own identity. In addition, the creation of a virtual image can actualize the reflexivity of the individual and develop their desire for introspection. This research has proved that young people and teenagers are the most vulnerable to excessive use of social networks. In this regard, it is worth carrying out activities on teaching information culture and literacy. If this systematic work is carried out successfully, it is possible to prevent a negative visual-figurative transformation of the personality on the Internet. This article indicates that the self-presentation and self-perception of an individual are influenced by social networks that change the whole essence of personality.

The materials of this article can be useful for young people, students, teenagers who are the most active Internet users. Also, the data of this study may be relevant for parents, teachers, who can trace the negative impact of social networks on the culture of an individual's personality. This article will provide an important theoretical foundation for scientists who devote a lot of attention to researching the networks Facebook and Instagram, which can transform the visual representation of a person and their self-perception. In the course of the research, new questions and issues arose that need to be solved. It is worth continuing and deepening the research, extending the study of Internet activity, the influence of social networks on culture and teaching young people information literacy based on the use of various methods.

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