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## **INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON THE FORMATION OF ADOLESCENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND IDENTITY**

### **Влияние социальных сетей на формирование самооценки и идентичности подростков**

Given the rapid increase in the number of adolescents using social networks and their penetration into all spheres of life, there is an important issue of the influence of digital space on the mental health and personal development of young people. Social networks have become a new social environment in which the characteristics of self value and identity are formed, which requires an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms of this influence. The aim of the study is to identify how social networks transform self-perception processes in adolescents, and also to identify factors that have a positive or negative impact on these processes.

Adolescence is characterized by the identity crisis described by Eric Ericsson and the active formation of «I-concepts» through social comparison with others. Social networks create unique environments for formative communication, as adolescents design and demonstrate their digital identity. This process requires analysis from both a psychological and sociocultural point of view.

The negative mechanisms are social comparisons – adolescents compare their real life with idealized images, which often leads to low self-esteem. Dependence on approval in the form of likes and comments provokes the formation of an unstable self-esteem, dependent on external validation. Cyberbullying and negative comments have a direct destructive effect on the psyche of adolescents, raising anxiety levels and causing feelings of social inferiority. The FOMO phenomenon, meaning fear of missing out on something important, further increases anxiety and contributes to the formation of destructive psychological states.

Positive aspects are opportunities for self-expression and experimentation with different roles, which is an important part of adolescent development. Social networks create conditions for the search of reference groups and support of like-minded people, which promotes social adaptation, especially those adolescents who feel marginalized in the online environment.

The results of the study showed the dual role of social networks in the formation of self-esteem and identity of adolescents. On the one hand, social networks amplify risks: social comparisons with idealized images reduce self-esteem and increase anxiety. The culture of «likings» creates a dependence on external approval, and cyberbullying and fear of missing have an important negative effect on the psyche of adolescents.

On the other hand, social networks provide opportunities for self-expression, support and safe experimentation with identity. These platforms help to find like-minded people, as well as access educational content and social feedback.

Thus, the key factor of the influence of social networks on adolescents is not the use of platforms itself, but the level of media literacy, critical thinking and psychological resilience of the adolescent, as well as the presence of support from the family and educational environment. These factors have the potential to transform the digital space from a source of threat into a resource for personal development and the formation of adolescents' healthy self-esteem and identity.

This study confirms the complexity and ambiguity of the impact of the digital environment on adolescents and highlights the need for an integrated approach to their education and support in the age of digitalization.

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## **INNOVATION AND APPLICATION OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

### **Иновации и применение образовательных технологий в цифровую эпоху**

With the rapid development of information technology, education is undergoing profound digital transformation. Modern educational technology has transformed knowledge imparting, teaching concepts, learning methods, and educational management. This research explores the types, advantages, and challenges of educational technology in the digital age, analyzing applications of AI, VR, and online platforms in higher education, and proposing related challenges and strategies.

Since the 21st century, digitalization has deeply influenced education. The traditional «teacher-centered» model has shifted to «student-centered» and «intelligent collaboration». Education, integrating multimedia, networks, and AI, is no longer classroom limited. Research shows educational technology improves teaching efficiency and learners' active participation and creative thinking [1].

Main types and characteristics of digital educational technology