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DESTRUCTIVE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE PSYCHOEMOTIONAL STATE OF ADOLESCENTS IN WARTIME CONDITIONS

The article analyzes the destructive impact of social media on the psychoemotional state of adolescents during a full-scale military invasion. It highlights the role of the digital environment as a factor of retraumatization through access to "shocking" content, disinformation, and information-psychological operations. The study examines the vulnerability of the adolescent psyche to manipulative influences, manifesting in increased anxiety, aggression, and the spread of cyberbullying. It is identified that intensive interaction with traumatic content provokes emotional tension and impairs the quality of real-life interpersonal communication. The importance of developing media literacy as a key protective mechanism for maintaining mental health during wartime is

substantiated. Recommendations are formulated for strengthening stress resilience and information hygiene skills in the online space.

Keywords: *social media, adolescents, psychoemotional state, wartime conditions, information-psychological operations (IPOs), media literacy, stress resilience, destructive impact.*

During the period of full-scale military invasion in Ukraine, a deterioration in the psychoemotional state of adolescents has been observed, characterized by increased instability and vulnerability. The social environment in which adolescents are developing is marked by the presence of both real threats and a continuous flow of war-related information, which intensifies feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Under such circumstances, social media platforms serve, on the one hand, as tools for communication, support, and emotional exchange; on the other hand, they function as sources of significant negative influence and retraumatization. Frequent and uncontrolled exposure to “shocking” content—such as scenes of combat, violence, and traumatic events—along with disinformation, deliberately disseminated panic-inducing materials, and information-psychological operations (IPOs), imposes additional psychological strain on children. As social tension escalates, manifestations of cyberbullying and online aggression intensify, further undermining adolescents’ sense of safety and trust in the digital environment.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The impact of war-related traumatic events on individuals of different age groups, particularly adolescents and children, has become the subject of extensive scholarly and practical inquiry. T. Halytska-Didukh (2023) and K. Borshch (2023) emphasize that due to the protracted nature of the military conflict in Ukraine (since 2014 to the present), psychological reactions in children—such as anxiety, fear, and depression—constitute inevitable consequences of prolonged traumatization. According to O. Yatsyna (2022), personality-related mental disorders are characterized by systemic disturbances encompassing multiple interconnected domains of the psyche, including emotional regulation, personality structure, and cognitive processes. O. Borukh (2021), in turn, examined the psychological characteristics of mass media influence on adolescents’ anxiety levels.

Research on the socio-psychological characteristics of adolescents in the context of contemporary warfare encompasses several key areas. In particular, N. Harkavenko and M. Harabazhiu (2022) analyzed the influence of social networks as a specific developmental factor during periods of armed conflict. Simultaneously, L. Tereshchenko and I. Tolkunova (2023) focused on identifying effective strategies for enhancing adolescents’ stress resilience, which is critically important for adaptation to wartime conditions.

The majority of existing studies primarily document trauma and its consequences, whereas the issue of comprehensive prevention of the negative impact of social media on adolescents—especially considering contemporary threats such as IPOs and cyberbullying, as well as the necessity of fostering sustainable media literacy as a principal protective mechanism—remains highly relevant and requires further in-depth investigation.

Purpose of the Study. To examine the role of social media in shaping the psychoemotional state of adolescents and to substantiate strategies for neutralizing their destructive influence under wartime conditions.

Main Body. War constitutes a tragic social phenomenon and a powerful source of chronic psychological pressure that significantly transforms an individual's worldview and value system due to persistent threats to personal safety and uncertainty regarding the future [9, p. 112]. Prolonged emotional tension, fear, and negative experiences leave a profound imprint on the human psyche and psychoemotional state. Under such conditions, the preservation of psychological resilience among the population, particularly children and adolescents, becomes especially urgent. Researchers emphasize that adolescence is characterized by heightened sensitivity to traumatic factors due to developmental characteristics and the incomplete formation of emotional self-regulation mechanisms [3, pp. 60–65; 1, pp. 47–51]. Accordingly, exploring the limits of adolescents' adaptive capacities and identifying effective strategies for reducing stress load constitute key directions of contemporary socio-psychological research.

In wartime conditions, the functioning of social media as a component of the information space acquires particular significance. Social media platforms ensure rapid exchange of news, personal messages, and visual content; however, during war, their informational content is largely associated with military themes. The dissemination of materials depicting combat scenes, violence, destruction, and loss generates a high level of emotional tension. Empirical studies confirm that intensive exposure to such content exerts a significant impact on the psychoemotional state of individuals [8, pp. 104–108].

While consuming social media content, adolescents experience a wide spectrum of emotions—from positive (a sense of support and belonging) to negative (anxiety, envy, and lowered self-esteem). Continuous comparison with idealized representations of other users may provoke feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and emotional strain, subsequently affecting overall well-being and stress levels. Such emotional responses may divert attention, weaken concentration, and impair memory, as cognitive resources are allocated to processing emotionally charged information rather than to productive

intellectual activity. Moreover, negative emotions experienced in virtual environments may deteriorate the quality of real-life interpersonal communication, contributing to social isolation and the development of apathetic attitudes, whereby adolescents lose interest in offline interactions and everyday activities [6, pp. 64–69].

Additionally, social media may function as a space for the dissemination of aggressive communication and cyberbullying, further intensifying psychological discomfort.

Particular attention should be paid to the phenomenon of information-psychological operations (IPOs) as a component of hybrid warfare. According to S. Derevianko, IPOs constitute a deliberate комплекс of informational influences aimed at altering the emotional state, worldview orientations, and behavioral reactions of a target audience with the purpose of demoralization and destabilization [2, p. 120]. Such influences are implemented through the systematic dissemination of manipulative or distorted information, fostering panic sentiments and feelings of helplessness [5, pp. 42–49]. The high speed of digital content dissemination significantly enhances the effectiveness of such informational attacks.

Adolescents represent one of the most vulnerable groups to these influences due to the active formation of identity, value orientations, and critical thinking. An insufficient level of media literacy complicates the recognition of manipulative messages, thereby increasing the risk of anxiety, fear, and maladaptive reactions. Studies examining the impact of social networks on adolescent development in wartime confirm that intensive digital interaction contributes to transformations in value orientations and heightened emotional tension [4, pp. 71–74].

In light of the above, minimizing the negative impact of social media requires a comprehensive approach. Key directions include the development of media literacy and critical information analysis skills, the promotion of information hygiene (conscious selection of sources and regulation of time spent online), and psychological support aimed at strengthening adolescents' emotional resilience. Within educational institutions, the implementation of programs designed to foster safe behavior in social media environments is advisable [7, pp. 57–59].

An analysis of the interaction between wartime conditions and the functioning of social media in shaping adolescents' psychoemotional state suggests that the combination of chronic stress and intensive informational load generates additional risks for mental development. Consequently, a priority direction of scientific inquiry involves the development and testing of preventive

programs aimed at enhancing media literacy, fostering safe digital behavior skills, and strengthening adolescents' psychological resilience under wartime conditions.

Prospects for Further Research. Future research should focus on the development of training programs aimed at fostering adolescents' media literacy and information hygiene, with the objective of enhancing stress resilience and critical thinking in the context of wartime realities.

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