Rimma Mukhametovna Fatykhova,
Darya Vasilyevna Mingazova
Russia

Diagnostics of Teenagers' Disposition towards Destructive Communication as a Way of Youth Extremism Prevention

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Abstract

The article presents the authors' methods of determining teenagers' disposition towards destructive communication, identifies the main types of destructive communication and provides their psychological characteristics. It specifies the correlation between destructive communication and certain personal qualities of teenagers. It also determines the main role of the diagnostics of teenagers' disposition towards destructive communication as a way of youth extremism prevention in the system of correcting conditions of this type of interactions.

Keywords: *diagnostics, destructive communication, deviant communication, mercenary communication, barrier communication, conflictogenic communication, narcissistic communication, extremism, correction, prevention*

Introduction

Extremism is one of the severest issues among the multiple contemporary issues. It is a wide-spread fact of the life of the 21st century society, which does not depend on borders, class or gender. This is evident from the fact that the vigorous destructive activities of the numerous parties and social movements increasingly appear in the political, economic, social, religious and other areas of society (Zubok and Chuprov, 2008, Seifert, 2012). Analysis of extremism as a negative phenomenon leads to the conclusion that it is a model of aggressive socio-political communication, built on the inequality of its parts and the opposition of their interests (Golovin and Aristarkhova, 2013). There are many views on the

nature and expressions of extremism. Briefly, its principal directions are as follows: extremism has increased; extremism is forming; extremism is reacting in strong emotions, extremism is a reasonable strategy in the race for power; extremism rises from an apolitical, eschatological ideology; extremism is a pathological disease (Seifert, 2012, Bartoli and Coleman, 2003, Czina, 2013).

On the basis of the definition given by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and due to the targets for determination of the role of education against extremism, Lynn Davies defines extremism as follows: "when you do not allow for a different point of view; when you hold your own views as being quite exclusive, when you do not allow for the possibility of difference and when you want to impose this view on others using violence if necessary". (Davies, L., 2014).

Extremism among teenagers has unique features. They appear from the nature of teenagers as a social category and are defined by the transitional nature of the formation of their personality. In course of investigation into the formation of teenagers' personality in the process of realization of their main social functions, which are reproduction and innovational, U.A. Zubok points out that it (formation) is associated with the overcoming of both internal and external contradictions. Young people, especially youngsters, are often forced to overcome internal contradictions that are the result of ambivalent manifestations, such as shyness and aggressiveness, openness and restraint, nihilism and fanaticism in an effort to gain self-sufficiency and independence from adults. External contradictions arise at the joint of interaction between teenagers and society, when meeting with its strict requirements. Realization of the contradictions promotes the extreme types of mind and behavior of youths, as its social group essential characteristics. This process is intensified under the influence of teenagers' social status characteristics associated with the transitional nature of the formation of their personality. Teenagers are only in the process of becoming subjects of social reproduction, so their social position is characterized by incompleteness of social status, marginality of social attitudes, and uncertainty of social identifications.

Adolescence has a special place in human life. During this period there is a large number of difficulties and disruptions in communication, related to both personal characteristics and environmental conditions and activities. Analysis of scientific sources of communication barriers and irregularities makes several forms of dysfunctional interpersonal communication stand out. These include: difficult communication in the form of shyness or modesty, deficiency in communication, which is evident as a disposition towards loneliness and strangeness, defective communication, i.e., a combination of an emphasis on personality, rigidity and anxiety of the person, as well as destructive communication, which is the subject of our study.

The term “destructive communication” is absent in psychological literature. Analysis of encyclopedic and philosophical literature allowed for identification of definitions and concepts of destruction and destructive human activity. Destruction (Latin: destructio – demolition) – demolition, damage of the phenomena structure. In the English language the term destructive means damaging, harmful. A well-known researcher, I.V. Lysak, gives the following definition of this phenomenon: “Destructive human activity is a specific form of an active relation of the subject to the world or to himself, the main content of which is the destruction of the existing objects and systems” (Lysak, 2004).

Foreign psychology describes a number of terms with the meaning close to our understanding of destructive communication, among them there are “miscommunication”, “communication breakdown”, “deficiency in communication”, and “destructive communication”. All of these terms are considered in the issue of communication as in foreign science interaction is regarded as a form of communication. The terms closest to our understanding of the destructive communication phenomenon are “deficiency in communication” and “destructive communication”, since they describe situations in which the parties of communication are dissatisfied with each other, and unable to establish positive dialogue, and as a result barriers and conflicts appear (Di Cioccio R.L., 2008, Infante and Wigley, 1986, Miczo and Welter, 2006, Rancer and Avtgis, 2006).

Based on the characteristics of the phenomenon peculiarities (Kunitsyna, 2001), we adopt the following definition of destructive communication: destructive communication is a form of interpersonal communication, which is represented by a subject-object interaction, which has complicated nature due to the personal characteristic of the communicants, which as a result affects the personality of the partners and disrupts the interaction.

Methods

The problem of the content, psychological characteristics and forms of the occurrence of destructive communication in scientific literature remains understudied. Existing techniques give an opportunity to detect certain destructive communication appearances, but, unfortunately, do not cover the entire range of the studied phenomenon in the respondents, and do not allow for the identification of the disposition towards destructive communication (Mingazova, 2011). Therefore, the *objective* of this study is the creation of the authors’ questionnaire “Methods of determination of teenagers’ disposition towards destructive com-

munication" (MDDC), review of its psychometrical characteristics and standardization.

Participants in the study. The study was carried out on the basis of secondary general education institutions, among which there were: Municipal Educational Institution (MEI) Secondary General School (SGS) No.1 of Chishmy village, MEI SGS of Alkino village of the Chishminsky district of Bashkortostan (RB), MEI SGS No.34, 54 and MEI Grammar School No. 96 of Ufa city.

Totally, 578 people took part in this study. Five experts-specialists in psycho-diagnosis, professors of leading universities of Ufa city (M. Akmullah Bashkir State Pedagogical University, Bashkir Academy of Public Service and Administration under the President of the Republic of Bashkortostan) participated in the stage of questionnaire validation.

Study procedure. Research on the formation of the psychometric properties of the method was carried out in six steps. More detailed description of the steps is presented in the article (Mingazova et al., 2014). The developed questionnaire provides an opportunity to study destructive communication as an integral phenomenon and determine the disposition of the teenager towards one or more types of destructive communication.

Factor analysis of the characteristics which were obtained from the analysis of the participants' responses to the statements of the developed diagnostic methods for determining the disposition of teenagers towards destructive communication was used to define the types and structures of destructive communication (Mingazova et al., 2014). Factor analysis found out five factors, which represents five principal types of destructive communication (deviant, manipulative, barrier, conflictogenic and narcissistic), which in themselves combine types that are similar in their properties.

"Deviant communication" includes the proclivity for aggression, authority, egotism and criminality. It manifests itself in communication by lust for power, aspiration to take control of other people, inability to recognize wrongness, ostentation and often rudeness.

"Manipulative communication" is an aspiration to manipulate the partner and mercenary forms of destructive communication (falsehood, lies) dominates in this phenomenon. In this case, the partner is considered as a carrier of the properties which may be helpful in the achievement of his goal. It manifests itself in the form of deception, hypocrisy, clinginess and attempts to deceive the partner due to self-interest or the desire to find enjoyment in the process of deceiving others.

"Barrier communication" is an interaction which is based on the communication barriers – shyness, loneliness and strangeness. A person is characterized by low

extroversion, a constant sense of discomfort, tension in the interaction, which can be caused by low self-concept and self-esteem, sensitivity to the opinion of others, fear of being rejected, and at the same time, fear of emotional bond and distrust of people.

“Conflictogenic communication” manifests itself in behavior and interaction in the form of a disposition towards jealousy, envy, and high proneness to conflict. The behavior is based on conflict as a complex personal quality. It is characterized by susceptibility, quick temper, suspiciousness and envy or jealousy towards others. A person disposed towards envy in the process of interaction with people experiences hostility toward success, popularity, the moral ascendancy of another person, and the desire to destroy the object of envy. He/she feels bad when perceiving his/her lower position in comparison with other people. This jealousy is caused by the desire to be in the center of attention, by the fear of being left, becoming unpopular, as well as the distrust of the immediate circle.

“Narcissistic communication” takes its name from narcissism as a personal property manifested in the process of interaction, influencing the result of communication. Narcissism represents a borderline state of a person, and is expressed in the form of a hysteroid behavior and highly contradictory self-construction (Sokolova, 2001). Such a person is characterized by infantilism, egocentric motive orientation, a sense of inferiority, constant mental and physical fatigue, often hypochondria, strangeness, insane quest for excellence, internal permissiveness, lack of lofty aims, excessive idealization of people from the circle of contacts, lack of creativity, and low motivation to work.

Results

Correlation analysis of personal qualities and types of destructive communication was carried out given the fact that destructive communication is based on certain personal qualities. It showed significant relationships between the outlined characteristics (Table 1).

Deviant communication has significant associations with egoism (0.48, $p < 0.01$), negativism (0.32, $p < 0.01$), verbal aggression (0.81, $p < 0.01$), disposition towards transgression of norms and rules (0.34, $p < 0.01$), authority (0.74, $p < 0.01$) and negatively correlates with obedience (-0.42, $p < 0.01$). It can be seen that deviant communication is basically developed thanks to a high level of the person's egoism and a desire to dominate over the partner in interaction, in the absence of acquiescence and emotional restraint it is often expressed in the use of different ways of achieving their aims verbally by altercation, menace, and abuse.

Table 1. Correlation relationships between the personal qualities types of destructive communication (DC) (N=207, $p<0.01000$)

Personal qualities \ DC types	Deviant communication	Mercenary communication	Barrier communication	Conflictogenic communication	Narcissistic communication
Manipulation	0.20	0.79	0.18	0.34	0.21
Egoism	0.48	0.59	0.16	0.41	0.34
Negativism	0.32	0.16	0.08	0.24	0.26
Verbal aggression	0.81	0.04	0.04	0.22	0.06
Displaced aggression	0.25	0.36	0.09	0.31	0.01
Soreness	0.17	0.21	- 0.01	0.34	0.21
Suspiciousness	0.19	0.45	0.61	0.23	0.24
Susceptibility	0.14	0.12	0.10	0.28	0.10
Disposition towards transgression of norms and rules	0.34	0.17	0.04	0.18	0.16
Authority	0.74	0.09	- 0.35	0.23	0.14
Dependence	0.06	0.23	0.74	0.01	0.10
Obedience (shyness)	-0.42	0.01	0.61	-0.51	0.07

Mercenary communication, in turn, has relations with personal qualities such as a disposition towards manipulation (0.79, $p<0.01$), egoism (0.59, $p<0.01$), displaced aggression (0.36, $p<0.01$), suspiciousness (0.45, $p<0.01$). The basis of this type of destructive communication is egoism and a high degree of manipulation.

The positive correlation shows the association of the barrier form of destructive communication with suspiciousness (0.61, $p<0.01$), dependence (0.74, $p<0.01$) and obedience (0.61, $p<0.01$), and also negatively associated with authority (-0.35, $p<0.01$). The person initially relates to the outward things and people suspiciously and incredulously, they are not able to protect their own interests.

Significant positive relations were found between conflictogenic communication and disposition towards manipulation (0.34, $p<0.01$), egoism (0.41, $p<0.01$), displaced aggression (0.31, $p<0.01$), soreness (0.34, $p<0.01$), susceptibility (0.28, $p<0.01$), and a negative association with obedience (-0.51, $p<0.01$). This means that the person demonstrates distrust, envy and hate towards others, uses gossip and jokes against others, is very irritable and disposed towards manipulation

The last form of teenagers' destructive communication is narcissistic communication, which has significant associations with egoism (0.34, $p<0.01$) and negativism (0.26, $p<0.01$).

Based on the results, personal qualities have a close interrelation with the occurrence of destructive types of teenager communication. This applies primarily to such qualities as a disposition towards manipulation, egoism, displaced aggression, and suspiciousness, which have significant associations with a variety of types of teenagers' destructive communication. What is conspicuous is the fact that all types of destructive communication, except the barrier one, positively correlate with the person's egoism. The obtained results confirm the hypothesis and opinions of some authors that destructive communication is based on the qualities of the person (Kirsanov et al., 2014, Musdybaev, 2000).

Discussion

Analysis of the content abundance, frequency of occurrence and the interrelation of destructive communication with personal qualities, mostly negative, allows for the conclusion that early diagnostics of teenagers' and young people's disposition towards destructive communication is necessary in order to prevent the transformation of the disposition into stable extreme forms of behavior. The necessity of diagnostics and subsequent correction of teenagers' destructive communication caused by the fact that the inconsistencies of views, marginality and unformed state of persuasion and worldview, which are common at this age can lead to aggression, fanaticism and criminogenic communication in the absence of such work and under unfavorable conditions of the social situation of development, rejection of the immediate circle.

The results of our research correlate with the opinions of some researchers in the field of formation of resilience to extremism among young people: «the key ingredients that should guide teaching outcomes for building resilience are:

1. A focus on building personal resilience and a positive sense of identity: supporting young people to be emotionally resilient to life's pressures and able to foster a positive sense of self.
2. Development of critical thinking skills, i.e. continually encouraging young people to think for themselves and in doing so take account of a balanced range of evidence and alternative perspectives.
3. Opportunities for interaction and team-work, so that young people develop transferable skills for positive collaboration and ongoing engagement (Joe Bonnell et al., 2011).

Diagnostics of a disposition towards destructive communication is one of the main conditions of the prevention of this phenomenon, but not the only one.

There is a variety of conditions which are essential to the successful prevention and correction of teenagers' disposition towards destructive communication. These include: the creation of a communication culture in the system of teacher-teenager, parent-teenager, teenager-teenager, realization of purposeful awareness-raising work with teachers and parents, the use of different methods of active social-psychological education and non-directive work methods. The solution that will help to take into account and implement the conditions of effective correction of teenagers' destructive communication is to create a program of complex type. Such a correction program should be based on proper diagnostics and realized in three directions: work with teenagers; work with teachers; and work with parents.

Extremism as the major problem of modern times is becoming increasingly widespread in the world. In most cases, extreme forms of behavior are observed among young people. This is caused by the transitional nature of personality formation of young people, associated with overcoming of both internal and external contradictions. Awareness of contradictions contributes to the formation of extreme types of mind and behavior of young people as their social group, essential characteristics. The greatest number of communication difficulties and defection accrue to teenage years. The most characteristic form of bad interpersonal communication of teenagers is destructive communication, which is based on mostly negative personal qualities. The above determines the necessity of preventive activity with teenagers for the prevention of aggression, violence and fanaticism. For this purpose, early diagnostics of various types of destructive communication and their correction is extremely important.

Further studies could be aimed at the determination of the causes of disruptions in communication and on the basis of these causes – identification of certain groups of teenagers. This will help to make preventive maintenance more individual and to perform it systematically as well as to predict teenagers' negative behaviors during communication.

Conclusion

1. Active formation of the communicative and personality spheres of the human, whose development is immediately interconnected, takes place in the teenage years. Successful passage of this step contributes to the formation of a person who effectively functions in society. The occurrence of various disorders, destructions in the process of communication is not uncommon at this age stage, much of which is due to the fact that a teenager

is a developing person and in many respects the formation of models of interaction and communication with society is still continuing.

2. The “Methods of determination of teenagers’ disposition towards destructive communication” (MDDC) questionnaire is primarily focused on the diagnostics of the main types of destructive communication as a form of dysfunctional communication that adversely (destructively) affects the personality of the participants in the interaction. Diagnostic material allows for effective detection of the disposition of respondents, and simultaneously the level of expression of the five major types of teenager destructive communication: deviant, mercenary, barrier, conflictogenic and narcissistic communication.
3. Analysis of the content abundance, frequency of occurrence and the interrelation of destructive communication with personal qualities allows for the conclusion that corrective work with teenagers in educational establishments is necessary in order to prevent the transformation of the disposition into stable extreme forms of behavior. The necessity of correction of teenagers’ destructive communication caused by the fact that the inconsistencies of views, marginality and unformed state of persuasion and worldview, which are common at this age, can lead to the development of criminogenic communication as well as negativism and fanaticism in the absence of such work and under unfavorable conditions of the social situation of development.
4. Objective and early diagnostics of teenagers’ disposition towards destructive communication is an essential condition and principal part of the complex target program of prevention and correction of youth extremism, based on the principles of dialogue, subject-subject interaction and non-directive work methods.

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