

Psychological problems and features of modern schoolchildren's communication

Evgenya S. Romanova, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, 129226, Moscow, Russian Federation. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9032-6869>

Ludmila I. Bershedova, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, 129226, Moscow, Russian Federation. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8567-9950>

Tatiana Yu. Morozova, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, 129226, Moscow, Russian Federation. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9044-4988>

Larisa Yu. Ovcharenko, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, 129226, Moscow, Russian Federation. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9129-9540>

Svetlana N. Tolstikova *, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, 129226, Moscow, Russian Federation, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8441-0776>

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Abstract

The study is aimed to identify urgent problems in the field of communication between young men and women and other significant participants in unregulated interaction. Using standardised test methods, questionnaires were adapted for this study and were collected the primary material that reflects the essential characteristics of unregulated communication between high school students in Russia. The sample of the study was 378 people. The main results were the data indicating a serious gap between high school students' need to communicate and the actual satisfaction of this need in the interaction with other significant participants. The main meaning of young people's need for trustful reference unregulated communication is not so much the communicative component as the emotional-affective content, which consists of acceptance, support, emotional exchange and understanding on the part of other people. Currently, there is a gap between the need for unregulated confidential communication of young men and women with significant adults and the real system of such communication. The results were put into the development of recommendations that allow psychologists to build an optimal interaction with family systems and the pedagogical community to optimise communication between high school students. As a prospect for further research, the tasks of developing parent-child relationships are identified.

Keywords: High school students, social interaction, psychological problems, unregulated communication.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Svetlana N. Tolstikova, Moscow City University, 4/1, Vtoroy Selskohoziastvenny proezd, Moscow, 129226, Russian Federation

E-mail address: TolstikovaSN@mail.ru / Tel.: +7 (499) 181-24-62

1. Introduction

The world of child–adult interaction has changed a lot. The unity of relations between an adult and a child has undergone major changes. Communication is a powerful interaction tool, which can not only contribute to the development of the student's personality but also cause great harm and change the quality of life of a high school student. On the one hand, an expansion of the communication space is observed, and its personal and geographical boundaries are levelled. On the other hand, communication values that contribute to personal development are lost and/or greatly changed.

The psychological problems of communication are among the key research issues. The connection of personality and relations with all the aspects of human reality was studied by Rubinstein (2012), Myasishev (2011), Lisina (2009) and Leontiev (1975). The relevance of the issue is determined by the increasing need of young men and women for reference communication, the absolute importance of such communication for the development of young people's personality and the fixation of deficiency of unregulated reference communication among the youth these days.

The research objective is to study topical issues in the field of communication between young men and women and other significant participants in unregulated interaction. To achieve the objective, it is necessary to complete a number of tasks, namely identifying the real need for communication between young men and women and the degree of its satisfaction in informal communication, determining the reference circle of high school students and establishing a relationship between the satisfaction with unregulated communication with the degree of sociopsychological adaptation of an individual in adolescence. As a hypothesis, it has been suggested that the unregulated communication of young men and women with their parents is deficient, whereas there is a serious need for high school students to communicate with significant adults, especially with parents.

2. Literature review

The psychological problems of communication of modern schoolchildren were revealed in the studies by Rubinstein (2012), Myasishev (2011), Lisina (2009) and Leontiev (1975). Currently, the studies of communication among high school students are becoming particularly relevant due to the fundamental qualitative and quantitative changes in the communicative sphere of young men and women. The cognitive and affective–evaluative communication components are changing significantly. An indirect communication becomes the most in-demand in relation to direct interaction. The most important characteristic that distinguishes these types of communication is the feedback, due to which there is an impact on the interlocutor. The most effective feedback is implemented in informal or unregulated communication.

The studies of a person in a communication situation, showing the importance of communication for young adulthood, reflect the idea that a person not only forms an attitude towards others but also recognises and fixes other people's attitude toward him/her. Thus, a person embodies the synthesis of his/her own attitude and properties attributed to other participants in the interaction (Bratus, 2019). Particular importance is emphasised if there are social ties with other individuals for personality formation processes.

The crisis formation of personality in adolescence is characterised by the development of self-awareness of young men and women, which is characterised by a synthesis of awareness of their unique originality and a strong connection with other people's attitudes. This understanding gives rise to the desire to build communication, which will be meaningful and contribute to effective personality development.

Communication in adolescence is determined by two ambivalent aspects. The first aspect characterises communication in terms of its individualisation when high school students clearly choose the subjects of communication and carefully eliminate individuals and communication with whom is unpleasant or uncomfortable. Young men and women take seriously the determination of external and internal boundaries of communication and constantly uphold them. On the contrary, the second aspect concerns the expansion of the communication sphere, the levelling of its external borders and the expansion of the social communicative space connected with the development of the global network.

Contradictions are also manifested in the phenomenon of satisfaction of the need for communication between young men and women and significant others. High school students demonstrate the need for communication, whereas there is a shortage of a high-quality and meaningful communicative process with other subjects. Researchers have shown that the attitude towards other subjects in society is primarily determined by finding out the need for a circle of significant people, motivated communication implemented in the main forms of communication and filled with the necessary content, giving compulsory emotional satisfaction (Bratus, 2019; Laghi et al., 2013; Morozova, 2013; Romanova, Rychikhina, Bershedova, Nabatnikova & Akhtyan, 2019). These characteristics of communication are currently drastically changing in terms of communication content, its meanings, the importance of specific individuals and the impact of such communication on the development of the personality of a high school student.

Numerous results indicate the fundamental importance of the psychological conditions of a high school student's personal development (Dubrovina, 1989; Masia, Klein, Storch & Corda, 2001; Oldmeadow, Quinn & Kowert, 2013; Peleg, 2012). As one of the main conditions, the authors may offer an understanding of the communication process through the prism of the special cooperation of young people and adults in the space of personal self-organisation, self-awareness and personal reflection. An important component of a high school student's personality development is the fulfillment of the need for unregulated communication, which should be trustworthy, motivated by each subject and be a personal value (Bratus, 2019; Dubrovina, 1989).

The studies of adulthood have determined that, in youth, it manifests itself in a change in the orientation of personality of young men and women from peers to relationships with adults, whose opinions and attitudes begin to determine the expected direction of high school students' own changes (Banerjee & Henderson, 2001; Brown, 2013; Saunders & Chester, 2008). Relationships with adults and parents, in particular, become a constant topic of youth reflection (Kon, 1982; Mukhina, 2015). The formation and maturity of a person will depend on how meaningful and high-quality communication of high school students is.

There is a close relationship between high school students and parents (Bershedova, 2013; Dubrovina, 1989; Kon, 1982; Morozova, 2013). The need for communication between young men and significant adults is crucial. The fulfilment of the need for communication is of great importance. The inability to build effective communication makes emotional exchange between children and parents impossible and disrupts the process of socialisation and assimilation of social experience, the transfer of life values and moral and psychological qualities.

For the development of a high school student's personality, various forms of communication are of great importance, mainly unregulated communication formats (Pakhalyan, 2006), confidential and personal communication (Mudrik, 2011). These forms allow getting the maximum satisfaction of the need for communication and social interaction.

Another aspect of high school students' communication is the active expansion of social circles. Parents, close relatives and a group of friends become referential and significant for young men and women. Other adults (teachers, sports coaches and competent teachers) and peers from a wide social environment, including a network of virtual social links (friends and subscribers on social networks,

bloggers, etc.) begin to perform the function of referential communication in youth. At the same time, all these subjects can be included in the circle of significant confidential communication.

Thus, in the current understanding of communication problems among young men and women, a number of psychological aspects are manifested, indicating the importance of the communication phenomenon for young people, the importance of unregulated communication for personality development and the significant impact of the information environment on modern forms and content of the communication process.

3. Materials and methods

The methodological framework of this study is a systematic approach, by means of which the processes of communication between high school students and their immediate environment were studied. The authors were faced with the task of identifying reference communication groups for young men and women, the presence and degree of intensity of the need for communication with significant others and the degree of satisfaction of this need in the life of high school students.

The determination of reference communication groups was carried out in several iterations. The most relevant communication subjects were the participants in the reference circle of young men and women, which included young people's parents (mother and father), teachers, other close adults, peers and classmates.

A number of methods were used to study the psychological problems of communication between high school students.

At the first stage, the methods with a clearly defined vector for the research goal were selected. To identify the need for unregulated communication and the degree of actual satisfaction with it, as well as to determine the reference communication circle of high school students, the methodology of Niemi 'Reflections on the Meaning of Life' and 'Aspects of Life' (in the adaptation of Ginzburg) was proposed (Ginzburg, 1994).

At the second stage, the primary data were processed according to several criteria:

- 'the reference communication circle of high school students',
- 'the need for unregulated communication',
- 'actual interaction of partners'.

Using the results, the authors determined the discrepancy between the need and actual satisfaction with communication among high school students.

When testing a part of the hypothesis, the methodology of 'Socio-Psychological Personality Adaptation of Rogers and Diamond' (in the adaptation of Osnitsky) was used to determine personality adaptability (Fetiskin, Kozlov & Manuilov, 2002). Using such criteria of the technique as 'adaptation', 'acceptance of others', 'internality', 'self-perception', 'emotional comfort' and 'striving for dominance', the relationship between satisfaction in communication and sociopsychological personality adaptation was revealed.

The study involved 378 young men and women; their average age was 17.1-year old. The study was conducted in 2019–2020 by random sampling. The results are presented using the visual formalisation format (Vlasov & Demin, 2017).

4. Results and discussion

A review of psychological problems of communication among modern schoolchildren made it possible to identify a number of problematic aspects in this area. The role of communication in early youth cannot be overestimated. In the modern world, the content of communication has qualitatively

changed, and its new functions and characteristics have appeared. The substantive characteristics of communication, its emotional aspects, value significance and communicative exchange have changed. The development of virtual communication and its relevance in the youth environment functionally and substantively changes the process, and as a consequence, the result of such communication changes.

In the youth period of personality development, communication is of fundamental importance for personal development. For development to be complete, it is necessary to make the process of communication between high school students, their peers and adults high-quality and support its subject–subject orientation. Changes in the surrounding sociopsychological environment entail adjustments in the information environment and affect the young people's need for communication and its implementation. The high-quality process of communication should be filled with cognitive content, be empathetic, reflective, affiliated and capable of supporting personal identification.

The results obtained indicate a serious contradiction in the field of communication, which manifests itself in high school students' need for unregulated communication with adults and peers and in the lack of actual satisfaction with such communication. Figure 1 shows the data on the ratio of the need for unregulated communication and the presence of this form of communication in real interaction between partners.

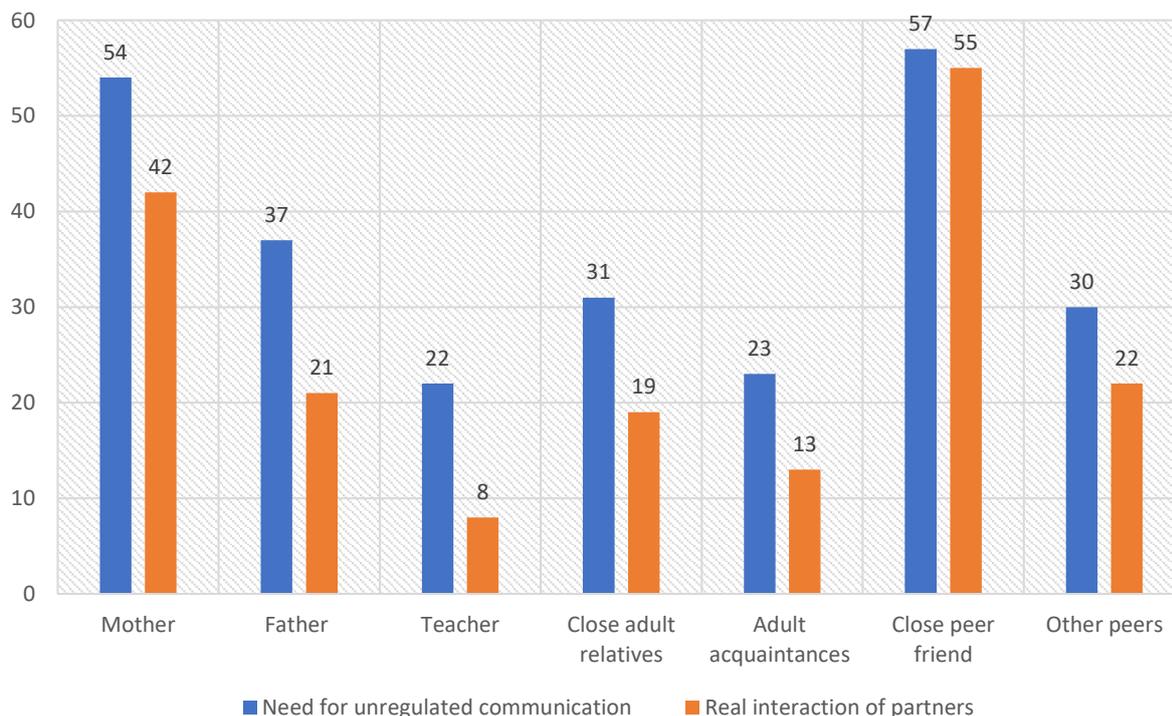


Figure 1. Fulfilment of the need for communication

The results indicate the existence of a real discrepancy between the need for communication with significant others and the degree of its satisfaction in reality. There is an obvious need for a high school student to communicate with parents, friends, teachers and other participants in the communicative environment. The fulfilment of the need for unregulated communication is most fully expressed in the interaction of high school students with their best friends and significant other adults. Moreover, young people's degree of satisfaction with communication with parents is lower than desired by 12%—with a mother and by 16%—with a father. The study showed that teachers were also among the significant adults; high school students were not satisfied with communication with them (14%).

The discrepancy between the need for communication and actual satisfaction is quite serious. Modern high school students need the support of adults, their participation in their lives, the transfer of experience and knowledge, the expression of trust in the world and others. At the same time, young men and women cannot satisfy these needs in interaction with adults. The emancipated behaviour of young men is often perceived by adults as a rejection of significant interaction that is so necessary for high school students during their personal development.

Modern young people compensate for the shortcomings in actual needs in communicating with significant adults in the information environment accessible to them. Media and communications are becoming a substitute for real communication with parents and teachers, which is insufficient. That experience and knowledge, confidential communication, which is not enough for high school students, is compensated by communicative experience in the Internet space. An unprotected information space can become a source of establishing distorted communications, psychological pressure on the personality of a high school student and manipulating consciousness if there is no experience in critical processing of incoming information and inability to perceive alternative sources of information (Bershedova, 2013; Chernova, Tretyakova & Vlasov, 2018; Chernova, Zobov & Starostin 2019; Ovcharenko, 2017; Yessenbekova, 2015; Yessenbekova, Turzhan, Koshanova, Yegemberdiyev & Kutym, 2020).

In the conditions of the lack of communication with significant adults (parents and teachers), high school students are most vulnerable to the risk of imposing irrational thoughts and behaviours, ignoring the real needs of the personality, other people's dominating in case when young people make vital decisions, inadequate rivalry in the Internet space and real life and other disastrous consequences (Ali, Asghar & Mamoon, 2017; Sisulak, 2017).

There is an urgent need to build a new communication system of its main subjects—adults and peers—with the goal of the quality content of communication and its informational and emotional fullness.

The content of communication between a high school student and other significant adults can be filled with very different topics and issues. Obviously, the most important issues for young men and women who are emotionally and financially related to their parents are discussed with them. However, in different families, the sphere of communication in the parent–child system is coloured by different colours. Most often, young people and their parents discuss life's meanings, plans and prospects, the educational route, the scope of future activities and the choice of a partner—these are key issues related to self-determination in life (Bershedova, 2013).

For high school students, the parents' assessment of their life choice is important. Certainly, the phenomenon of feedback from parents is significant for satisfying the most important need for high-quality unregulated communication. Students have the highest level of confidence in communication with their mothers. When talking to their fathers, young people discuss a smaller range of problems and issues. Personal development and formation dictate the need to actualise certain topics raised in communication with parents. Specifically, the most popular topics for young people are the issues of organising the present and planning the future of a young man's personality (Romanova, Abushkin, Ovcharenko, Shilova & Akhtyan, 2018; Sisman, Yoruk & Eleren, 2013).

According to the results of the study, a teacher is included in the list of significant adults, but the degree of intensity of desire to communicate confidentially is the lowest. At the same time, a number of issues related to education and self-development are discussed by high school students specifically with teachers who are in the confidential communication circle (Morozova, 2013).

The leading place in each person's life is played by significant other people, close relatives and friends, who have a significant impact on experiencing successes and failures, losses and gains, new competencies, interests and orientations, hobbies and leisure activities, any life goals, needs, doubts

and experiences. In addition, in the life of every young person, a reference group of peers is important, with whom they discuss the most important experiences, relationships with others, social experience, leisure, hobbies, news and events of interest and learning outcomes (Sofoklis & Megalokonomou, 2016).

The study found that parents, teachers, friends and peers were included in the reference communication circle of young men and women (Figure 2).

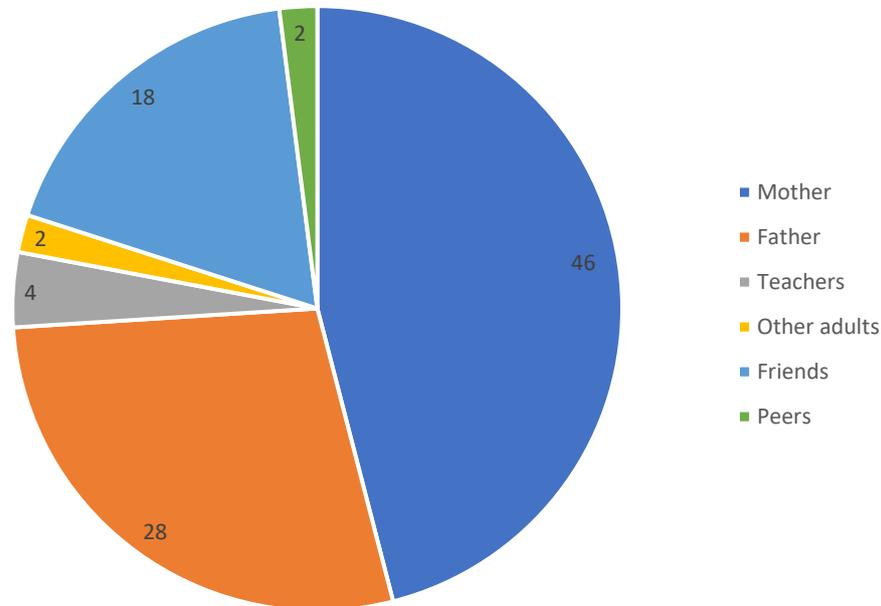


Figure 2. Reference communication circle

Using Pearson's Chi-squared statistical criterion, it was revealed that the degree of satisfaction with communication with referential others depended on the diversity and significance of the issues that could be discussed with these people. High school students include parents (mother and father), friends/best friend, teachers and other adults in their reference communication circle. The specified differences are significant at $p = 0.01$ in communication with the mother, best friend and friends and at $p = 0.05$ in communication with the father.

Thus, high school students' reference communication circle demonstrates that communication plays a leading role in young people's lives and permeates all spheres of schoolchildren's lives. Communication with parents and other significant adults is complemented by the content of communication with peers. Modern psychological work should be based on the optimisation of areas of communication between young men and women. All participants in the reference communication circle are definitely important and cannot interchange each other. Preponderance toward one or another subject of communication can introduce negative distortions in the formation of the personality of a high school student.

The results obtained also showed that satisfaction with unregulated communication was related to the degree of sociopsychological adaptation of a person (Figure 3). High school students, who are most satisfied with communication in the reference circle, have a higher degree of adaptation, in contrast to the peers with a deficit of reference unregulated communication with other adults and friends.

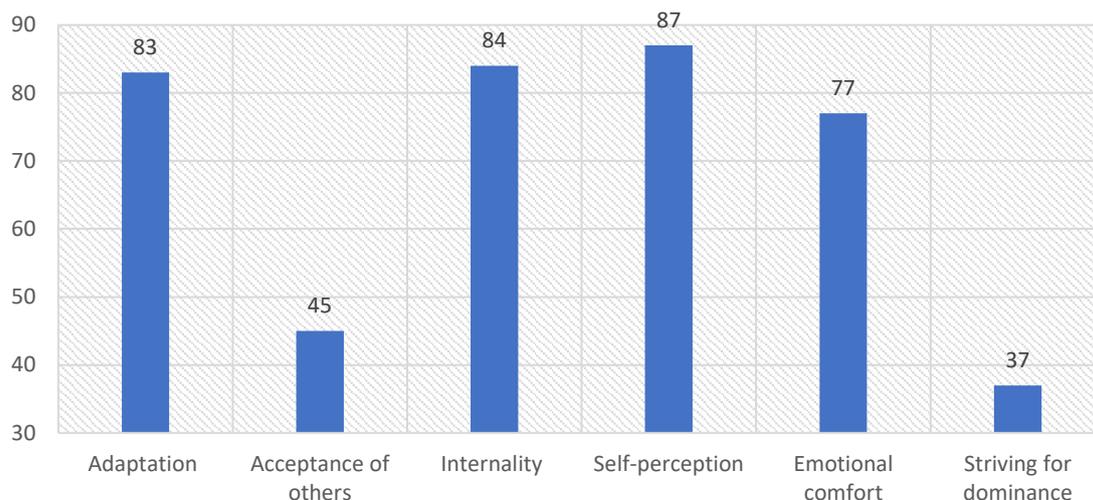


Figure 3. Sociopsychological adaptation [Integral indicators] (the model by Rogers and Diamond)

Young men and women, who demonstrate a higher degree of satisfaction with unregulated confidential communication, show better results in terms of sociopsychological adaptation: the expectation of internal control, emotional comfort and self-acceptance. Such high school students are distinguished by high self-esteem, a level of understanding and certainty of their emotional attitude toward the world, surrounding events and people, a predisposition to the internal locus of control and the ability to take responsibility for what is happening (Morozova, 2013).

The main meaning of young people’s need for trustful reference unregulated communication is not so much a communicative component as the emotional–affective content, which consists of acceptance, support, emotional exchange and understanding on the part of other people.

The study revealed differences in the content of young people’s communication and their satisfaction with it. The data are shown in Figure 4.

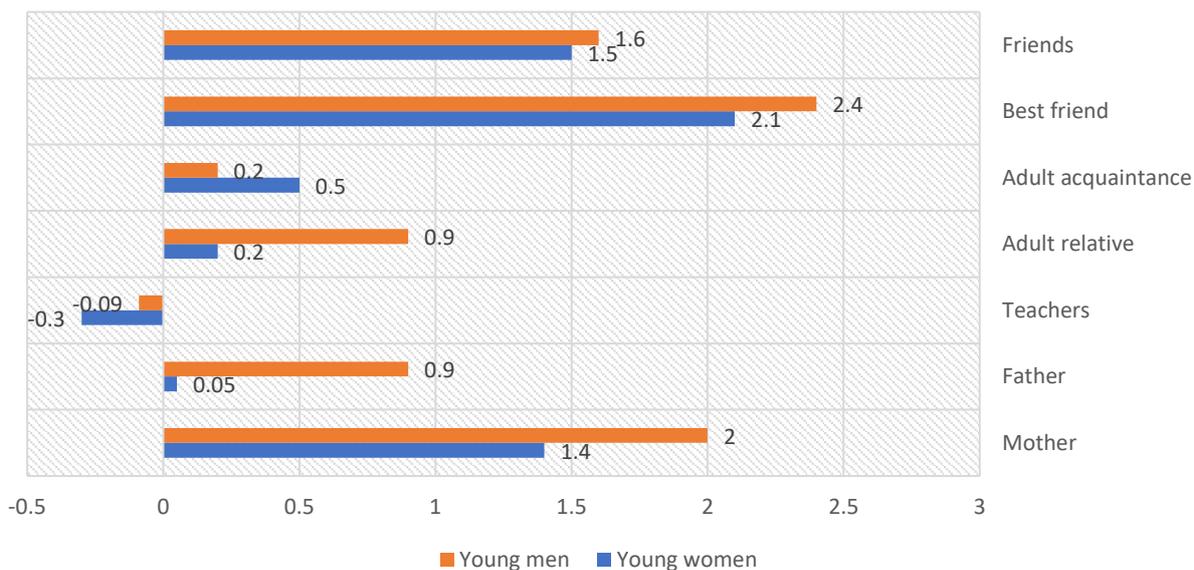


Figure 4. Differences in the content of young people’s communication and their satisfaction with it

It has been established that young men deal with instrumental topics more often, whereas young women prefer confidential issues in communication with other significant people. Undoubtedly, the content and nature of communication with significant other people will dynamically change along with personality development, but, in general, trends that show the demand for confidential communication with parents, close relatives and friends will continue.

A qualitative transformation of the confidential communication system is observed. There is a decrease in the level of satisfaction with communication, which is already actually formed among high school students. At the same time, a decrease in the level of satisfaction with the process and content of communication with significant adults increases the gap between the growing need among high school students to be accepted and understood by adults and the insufficient development of this sphere of significant relationships.

For the formation of the personality of a young man, it is necessary to improve the quality and content of the process of unregulated communication. An increase and meaningful changes in the role of significant adults in the solution of life-meaning problems by young people become obvious. Against this background, the importance of fulfilling the need for communication, primarily with parents is growing, where the range of issues and topics raised for discussion is expanding. High school students clearly demonstrate that they want the adults to accept and understand their needs and experiences.

5. Conclusion

The sphere of communication is extremely important for personality formation. The basis for building a system of communication between high school students is made up of subjects included in their reference circle. Based on the results obtained in the study, the authors determined the main psychological problems of communication between high school students associated with qualitative changes in the social and informational environments, which entail transformations in the parent-child dyad. The data obtained convincingly indicate that the stage of growing up and personal development of young men and women significantly changes the requirements for the communication process as a whole. Particularly, the requirements for building a system of communication between young people and significant others are really increasing. The reference communication circle primarily includes parents, significant relatives, friends, peers and teachers. Currently, there is a gap between the need for unregulated confidential communication between young people and significant adults and the real-life system of such communication. A distinctive feature of young men and women is a clear need for intimate communication with a loved one. This person becomes the centre of the communication sphere. Serious distortions in the direction of increased communication between high school students and one of the participants in the reference circle to the detriment of other subjects may negatively affect personal development. For the full personal development at the stage of growing up, maximum satisfaction of the need for communication with significant others is required, which is characterised by acceptance, understanding and emotional exchange.

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