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5 SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE, PERCEPTION AND SELF-PRESENTATION OF PERSONALITY IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

The article theoretically substantiates and empirically investigates the features of social intelligence, social perception and self-presentational behavior of an individual in digital communications. It is determined that social intelligence in a digitalized society functions as an integral cognitive-emotional system that provides understanding of social situations, interpretation of online signals and symbols, regulation of interpersonal interaction and maintenance of authenticity in virtual space. The mechanisms of social perception of online communication are analyzed, in particular the influence of the limitations of non-verbal signals and specific effects on the accuracy of perception of communication partners. The psychological features of digital self-presentation are highlighted, its connection with self-monitoring, identity and psychological well-being of the individual.

Empirical research revealed correlations between the level of social intelligence, reflection, empathy and self-presentation strategies of young people in digital interaction. The structural modeling method allowed us to determine the cause-and-effect relationships between the studied constructs and build a hierarchy of their influences. The results obtained expand modern ideas about the social and psychological factors of online communication and outline the prospects for the development of competencies necessary for constructive interaction in the digital environment.

KEYWORDS

Social intelligence, social perception, self-presentation, digital communication, reflection, empathy, identity.

5.1 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Due to changes in the social, economic and political situation in the world, interpersonal communications are increasingly carried out mainly in digital format. One of the current areas of modern research is determining the impact of digital communications on a person's social intelligence. The decrease in the quality of direct communication, the decrease in the number of "live" contacts, the digitalization of interaction are of concern. At the same time, the digital environment provides new opportunities for communication, maintaining relationships at a distance, expanding the circle of communication, meeting representatives of a different socio-cultural environment, etc.

The concept of "social intelligence" (SI) was first introduced by E. Thorndike to define the ability to understand other people and interact constructively with them. The further transformation of the concept

moved from defining SI as a set of human knowledge about the social world to the idea of an integral ability to be successful in interactions due to social awareness and agility. To date, attempts have been made to finally operationalize the concept of SI, but there is still no unity [1].

Digital communication is characterized by the lack of direct contact between people, so many non-verbal signals remain outside the attention zone of partners, which complicates understanding each other's emotions, contextual cues, but instead provides freedom from established roles, stereotypes, prejudices and forms the ability to realize the consequences of one's own influences without the direct reaction of the interlocutor. In these conditions, components of social intelligence that adapt to online communication develop. This includes the ability to understand online social situations and respond to appropriate signals; compliance with "network etiquette", understanding the rules of behavior on different platforms and in online communities, communication ethics; balance between self-expression and compliance with the norms of online interaction; the ability to decode symbolic signals and apply them correctly, etc. [2, 3]. Research results prove that digital communication can have a positive impact on the development of a person's social skills [4, 5]. Active constructive online interaction helps meet social needs, creates a sense of support, and can have a psychotherapeutic effect, which is especially important for young people.

Digital space influences the development and manifestation of social intelligence due to the availability of unlimited access to various images, opinions, cultures, communication styles, etc. A person learns to communicate with different partners, expands communicative experience, is enriched by acquaintance with alternative points of view, masters the culture of mutual evaluation, self-presentation, reflection [6]. According to research, high SI contributes to awareness of the consequences of statements, observance of the boundary between private and public, respect for other people's opinions, provision of reliable information, transparency of intentions. Low SI is manifested in violations of the norms of online communication, vulnerability to negative influences, susceptibility to manipulation and disinformation [7]. It has also been found that users with a high level of social intelligence better maintain a balance between real and virtual life, are less prone to Internet addiction. A low level of SI is a risk factor for excessive immersion in the digital environment. This demonstrates the protective function of SI, the development of which can be a prevention of destructive addictions to online activities [8]. Scientists also determine that people with more developed SI more accurately recognize and interpret digital emotional signals, conventional symbols [9]. It has been confirmed that SI is a significant factor in the success of digital interaction, because even in anonymous communication people value empathy, goodwill, and the ability to listen without prejudice [5, 10]. Differentiation of communicative strategies depending on the level of SI has been revealed, people with a higher level of SI prefer active meaningful communication, participate in discussions, become initiators of interaction, are able to regulate it, usually do not enter into conflicts, critically evaluate information, especially before distribution, unlike users with low SI, who more often passively observe content [2, 11].

Thus, digital social intelligence is a set of knowledge, skills and abilities that allow a person to communicate effectively online, show empathy, collaborate with others, and overcome barriers to virtual communication.

Despite the large number of studies on social intelligence, there are still aspects that require further analysis, especially in the context of digital interaction. Modern definitions of SI were formulated for the offline environment, so there is an urgent need to operationalize the concept and its components. There is

a need to develop an integrated model of SI in the information society and new tools for diagnosing social intelligence that can be used in digital format. A promising direction is the involvement of artificial intelligence in research on online social interaction of large samples. The impact of digital communication on the features of SI development and the long-term consequences of digitalization for the social competence of an individual also remain unexplored.

Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon of social intelligence in the context of digital communication has shown that it remains one of the determinants of constructive and effective interaction. The digitalization of communication requires mastering digital etiquette, understanding indirect emotional signals, the simultaneous development of technical and social skills, and digital literacy. The development of SI reduces the risk of Internet addiction and destructive online behavior, helps overcome communication barriers and resolve conflicts. The need for further scientific research, the development of a modern concept of SI, the improvement of tools and methods for its assessment, and the elaboration of development programs for different categories of the population is obvious. For young people, it is advisable to implement special educational programs aimed at developing empathy, reflection, critical thinking, digital culture, and etiquette.

5.2 SOCIAL PERCEPTION IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

The problem of social perception as the recognition, understanding and evaluation of social objects in digital communication is becoming particularly relevant in connection with the total digitalization of the world. Social perception determines how impressions about the interlocutor are formed, assessments of his/her emotions, motives, prediction of behavior, and the effectiveness of interaction. How a person perceives others depends on his/her previous experience, goals, motives, and specifics of the situation. In the process of communication, partners influence each other in order to form a positive image of themselves in the other person. Interlocutors interpret each other's behavior, personal qualities, highlight the content of communication and evaluate it. The more attractive the other person is, the greater the interest he/she arouses in the partners. That is, social perception is subordinated to current motives, attitudes, and stereotypes; it determines the selectivity of attention and the interpretation of information.

Social perception contributes to the formation of an image of an interaction partner in the mind through the perception of external signs that are compared with internal features and, thus, affect the interpretation of intentions, thoughts, emotions, etc. Interpersonal cognition occurs, the result of which is understanding another person and predicting their behavior in the future. The main mechanisms of social perception are identification (associating oneself with another), empathy (understanding the emotional state of another), reflection (awareness of another's perception), causal attribution (explanation of the reasons for another's behavior), stereotyping (classification and interpretation of another's behavior through social stereotypes). Stereotyping of perception leads to specific errors, which are called "effects of social perception". The most famous of them are the halo effect, primacy, projection, and others. The mechanisms and effects of social perception affect the accuracy, correctness, and adequacy of partners' perception.

The transition of communication to a digital format has led to qualitative changes in people's social perception of each other. Online communication allows for more careful control of self-presentation, which leads to perceptual errors. In addition, the absence of most non-verbal signals narrows the possibilities of perception and contributes to its ambiguity and misinterpretations. This also negatively affects the coordination of the behavior of interlocutors, synchronicity in interaction. The online communicative context does not include background signals (clothing, appearance, meeting place, etc.), which can lead to simplification of the image, projections, conjectures, attributions. Researchers note that the lack of individual information makes it necessary to update social stereotypes and life experience [12]. Anonymity and lack of eye contact can increase aggression, reduce empathy and responsibility. A review of research results showed a connection between online activity and aggressive personality attitudes [13]. This indicates a greater polarization and emotional tension of social perception in digital communication. It is worrying that certain components of empathy and facial expression perception skills may not be formed due to insufficient offline practice.

Online platforms actually transfer control over the impressions on others to the user, thanks to the ability to carefully edit posts, photos, think over the response to the interlocutor, and show only the desired aspects of life. As researchers note, digital communication encourages participants to present themselves in a positive light in order to receive favorable feedback from others and increase social status [6, 14]. A study by T. Dinh and Y. Lee showed that the more often a user deals with social networks, the more likely they are to compare themselves with others and feel a fear of missing out on something important, which increases their desire to post content about themselves and demonstrate success [15]. Questions arise about the authenticity of communication partners, how much their online image is identical to the real person, how accurate is social perception. Thus, the digital format of communication significantly affects the social perception of people. The main features relate to the channels and volume of information about a peurson, fewer direct signals, more opportunities to control self-presentation, reduced spontaneity and synchronicity of interaction, etc. Static and visually rich online contexts have proven to be more conducive to correct social perception than dynamic and minimalist ones. Information restriction enhances the role of stereotypes and previous experience of the perceiver, which activates the categorization mechanism, when a person is assigned to a certain category based on a small fragment of information and is further interpreted through this assumption. On the other hand, when age, gender, social status, nationality are unknown, biases are not activated. The accuracy of perception in digital communications is usually quite low.

Ukrainian scientists' studies address issues of social perception in the digitalization of society. In particular, V. Volynets investigated personal identity and the specifics of its self-presentation in the virtual communicative space [14]. The author argues that in online communication, a person can either reproduce their real identity or construct an image that differs from the real one, or combine elements of both and form a hybrid identity. A. Krasniakova found in her study that about 62% of young people present their real personality online without significant changes, approximately 30% choose a hybrid model, and only 1.5% create a completely fictional image. 93% of respondents use visual symbols in social networks to express their identity (national, civic) – flag elements, national ornament, characteristic avatars, etc. [4]. This refutes the widespread stereotype that most people hide behind fictional images on the Internet.

Yu. Shpakovska and O. Vdovichenko compared data on how people present themselves online with who they really are and found that people tend to project aspects of their real selves into the virtual environment [12].

Foreign scientists are also actively investigating social perception in digital communications. For example, the experiment by V. Romero and A. Paxton confirmed that video contact, although approaching live communication, is still qualitatively different, unconscious mechanisms of behavior synchronization are disrupted by technical frameworks, which can generate the effect of "artificiality" of communication and fatigue from video conferences [8]. In the study by S. Tong and colleagues, lens analysis was applied to text profiles on dating sites to find out whether the image that a person creates in the profile coincides with how others perceive him or her and with who this person really is [16]. The results showed that some characteristics are presented in the text and recognized by users, others are not; the overall correspondence between self-presentation and perception was moderate. In the study by T. Eginli, O. Tas, it was clear that in social networks people try to satisfy certain needs, which affects both self-presentation and social perception of others [17]. That is, social perception online depends on the type of platform and communication goals.

Thus, typical effects of social perception are reproduced in digital communications, but their strength and manifestation may vary depending on the platform specifics. Users develop new ways to signal their state and understand the signals of other people online. Self-presentation largely reflects the true personality, albeit in an adjusted form. Most users demonstrate their real identity in the virtual space, supplementing it in the desired direction. The accuracy of social cognition depends on the context and time spent. The emotional component of perception is complicated by the lack of non-verbal information, which leads to the desire to express emotions in words or symbols, which may result in the development of communication reflexivity. The issues of the long-term effects of online communication on the perceptual abilities of the individual remain unresolved; cross-cultural and intergroup features of digital perception; recognition in virtual and augmented reality using avatars; ethical boundaries of self-presentation and authenticity. This list outlines the novelty and dynamism of the problem.

Thus, social perception is an important mechanism of interpersonal interaction, which is transformed in digital communications. People strive to declare themselves, get to know others and achieve mutual understanding, and digital technologies significantly affect this process.

5.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON OF INDIVIDUAL SELF-PRESENTATION IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Self-presentation in the virtual world is becoming an integral part of modern social life, affecting interpersonal relationships, professional reputation and psychological well-being of a person. The online space provides almost unlimited opportunities for self-presentation of users, allows you to construct the desired image and dynamically change it. Research into this phenomenon is important for scientists, as it allows them to understand how a person's digital identity is formed and interacts with their real image, what risks and resources are associated with existence in the online environment.

The scientific study of self-presentation began within the framework of social psychology and sociology in the mid-twentieth century. One of the founders of the theory of self-presentation is E. Hoffman, who proposed considering social interaction as a theatrical stage. That is, each person in everyday life performs certain roles, consciously or unconsciously demonstrating those aspects of his/her own personality that meet the expectations of the audience, in order to make the right impression on others, to control their perception of his/her own image. It was E. Hoffman who introduced the concept of "impression management" to emphasize that people make efforts to form the perception of others about themselves [18].

Researchers note that online communication has significantly expanded the possibilities of self-presentation, allowing users to select, edit and monitor the content they show to others at their discretion [4, 6]. The concept of "managed identity" has come into use, which means the conscious construction of one's image in digital networks.

Studies of the problem of self-presentation in the digital environment take into account M. Snyder's concept of self-monitoring as an individual ability to regulate behavior in accordance with social requirements. In the context of research on flexible personality skills, Zh. Bohdan notes that people with high self-monitoring are more pragmatic and adaptive in self-presentation — they adjust their image to the situation; on the other hand, individuals with low self-monitoring tend to be principled and constant, trying to remain themselves under any circumstances [18]. Many modern researchers consider effective self-presentation as a flexible social skill that can be trained and developed. At the same time, they warn that too strategic, manipulative self-presentation can harm the authenticity of relationships with other people. Therefore, the current issue remains the search for a balance between strategic goals and identity. It has been found that people with a complex, multifaceted identity are able to present themselves more flexibly depending on the situation and not experience internal discomfort. In contrast, individuals with less complex identities may experience more acutely the discrepancy between their online image and their real self [14].

Online self-presentation depends on the technological capabilities and skills of the person, platform settings, level of privacy, availability of moderation, the ability to make anonymous comments, etc. Digital space facilitates the provision of selective information about oneself in order to hide undesirable features or facts and emphasize desirable aspects, thanks to pre-prepared texts, edited photos, controlled public posts, etc. V. Volynets believes that the anonymity of communication in virtual space leads to "social disinhibition", a decrease in moral barriers, due to which interaction sometimes takes on forms that are impossible offline [14].

The style of self-presentation is also influenced by personal and situational regulatory factors. Personal factors include the level of social and emotional intelligence, self-monitoring, which contribute to the fact that a person intuitively feels what image is appropriate in a certain situation. Situational factors include the characteristics of the environment and community. In particular, online communities consisting of strangers provoke exaggeration of one's own successes and achievements, other status symbols in self-presentation. Thus, digital self-presentation is characterized by controllability of one's own image, multiplicity of images, instant feedback, publicity of personal space, etc. All this creates new challenges for users in terms of maintaining authenticity and psychological comfort, satisfying the need for self-expression.

The problem of the relationship between online self-presentation and personal identity is important for understanding the consequences of the society digitalization. In the digital world, a person can construct

him/herself both internally and externally — through content that is available to a potentially unlimited number of people. Studies show that the creation of a virtual image is often determined by dissatisfaction with one's own personality [6, 19]. In self-presentation there is an opportunity to compensate for what is missing in life, to cultivate an idealized image, to demonstrate an alter ego instead of the real "Me". At the same time, digital self-presentation helps to experiment with different sub-personalities, to explore their features, which is part of the process of identity formation. Audience reactions contribute to the clarification and construction of the "Me-concept", the strengthening and/or correction of certain traits, the strengthening of the personality through self-expression and self-knowledge. On the other hand, digital communication carries risks for the integrity of identity, when the gap between the real and virtual images becomes too large, an internal conflict of inauthenticity may arise. Over time, the virtual image gradually replaces the real personality, and the artificial self becomes a protection against self-doubt, but the person becomes a hostage to a fictional image. Self-perception is negatively affected by social comparison in social networks, where everyone looks successful, attractive, self-realized, etc. Such upward social comparisons can form feelings of inferiority, anxiety about missed opportunities and reduce life satisfaction. This, in turn, creates a desire to improve one's online presentation to match the ideal image, which creates a vicious circle of self-discontent.

Self-presentation, which is congruent with personal identity, supports positive self-esteem, self-perception. Conscious and authentic self-disclosure on the Internet can have a therapeutic effect, help to process experiences, find like-minded people, establish oneself in one's principles and values. When a person uses self-presentation as a development tool, their digital identity enriches and complements the real one, promotes self-realization. If there is a large gap or excessive dependence on someone else's opinion, assessment, this can lead to psychological difficulties.

In the studies of Ukrainian scientists, the problem of digital self-presentation intersects with the study of identity, image and social skills. For example, V. Volynets investigated the construction of personal identity in virtual space and the specifics of its self-presentation [14]. It is noted that the digital space provides great opportunities for self-expression and the disclosure of potential, but a long stay online contributes to the growth of anxiety, fatigue, irritability, and the formation of a fragmented worldview in young people. O. Yegorova developed a structural model of the public image of the personality, which analyzed its components [20]. These are the components of the public "Me" (visual, verbal, behavioral elements of the image) and the relationships between them. Yu. Shpakovska and O. Vdovichenko studied the relationship between self-presentation on the Internet and a person's real identity [12]. The problem of correspondence between images, maintaining the integrity of the "Me" in different environments, and differences between online and offline images is emphasized. The results obtained indicate that under certain conditions, people can successfully integrate real and digital identities, but in other cases, dissociation occurs, which can negatively affect self-perception. In the field of specific manifestations of self-presentation, the work of K. Nastoyashcha, which analyzed the practices of self-presentation in the Internet space, deserves attention [19]. It is shown that the Internet provides unlimited opportunities for self-presentation in the virtual environment, and typical forms of modern self-presentation are described — from blogging to creating alternative personalities in cyberspace.

In foreign studies, one of the key areas is the research of motivation and factors that encourage people to online self-presentation. T. Dinh and Y. Lee conducted a survey to identify psychological drivers of self-presentation in social networks [15]. They found that regular online monitoring of the lives of others leads to increased social comparisons and the emergence of fear of missing out on something important, and this is what forms the motivation for self-presentation. That is, when a person sees the "ideal" posts of others, he/she feels the need to publish something about him/herself, stay "in touch" and not look worse than others. Constant contemplation of idealized images of others leads to negative self-esteem and dissatisfaction with him/herself.

Another area of analysis is the strategies and styles of self-presentation in different cultures. An example is the research by A. Muidi, which studied the youth of Saudi Arabia [21]. It turned out that the most common self-presentation tactics among respondents were trying to be liked, being pleasant, emphasizing one's own advantages, and demonstrating moral virtues. The anonymity of accounts reinforced the tendency towards bold self-presentation, while openness restrained some manifestations of personality. Such cross-cultural studies show that people in different countries try to present themselves in a favorable light, but the specific methods and priorities may differ depending on cultural values.

Despite the growing number of studies on digital self-presentation, aspects that require further attention from scientists have been identified. To clarify the nature of the causal relationships between online self-presentation and self-esteem, longitudinal and experimental studies are needed, as well as improving methods for objective measurement of phenomena and qualitative methods of analysis. It is worth investigating the specifics of self-presentation depending on the platforms and formats of digital communication. There is almost no data on how self-presentations vary in different cultures, so a cross-cultural approach, taking into account subcultural differences, etc., seems promising. There are practically no educational programs that help people create correct self-presentations, consciously manage their digital image without harming psychological health, teach digital etiquette, and form media literacy in the broad sense of the word.

Thus, the analysis of the phenomenon of self-presentation of the individual in digital communications has shown that this is a complex multidimensional manifestation of the structures of the self, which requires a balance between strategy and authenticity, since self-presentation is not an episodic social action, but a continuous process of existence in virtual space. Correct self-presentation requires the development of new social competencies of the individual, criticality, reflexivity, empathy, in the formation of which the leading role belongs to psychologists.

5.4 RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF THE FEATURES OF INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE, SOCIAL PERCEPTION AND SELF–PRESENTATIONAL BEHAVIOR IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The aim of the empirical study was to determine the features of the relationship between the level of social intelligence, reflection, empathy and self-presentational strategies of young people in digital communications.

To achieve the goal, the following psychodiagnostic methods were used: an author's questionnaire developed to collect information about the most popular digital communication platforms, typical online behavior

strategies, attitudes towards the digital image of the "Me" and self-presentation, evaluation of others in social networks, level of emotional comfort in digital communication, etc. The questionnaire contained closed and open questions, which are grouped into blocks by topic. To study the level of social intelligence, the test "Social Intelligence" by J. Guilford was used. The reflexivity of the respondents was analyzed using the "Reflexivity Test" by V. Ponomareva, A. Karpov. Interpersonal empathy was studied using the questionnaire "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" (IRI) by M. Davis. Self-presentation strategies were assessed using the "Self-Presentation Tactics Scale" (SPTS) by S. Lee, B. Quigley and "Methods for assessing self-image in social networks" by S. Goss. To determine the features of the relationship between the studied phenomena, the Pearson *r*-correlation coefficient was used and the structural modeling (SEM) method was used to test the direct and indirect relationships between the latent constructs of social intelligence, reflection, empathy and self-presentation strategies. The quality of the SEM model was determined by the CFI, TLI, RMSEA indices and the χ^2/df ratio.

The study involved 157 first-year (bachelor's) higher education students studying in various specialties (economics, international economic relations, management, marketing, psychology, journalism) at the Semyon Kuznets Kharkiv National Economic University. The age of the subjects was 18–24 years, female (85 people) and male (72 people). The study was conducted in a mixed format, that is, part of the surveys was conducted online using Google forms, part – in person, individually. The research sample was formed randomly. Before the study began, the participants had to read and accept informed consent.

The survey results revealed that the most popular platforms for digital communication are messengers and social networks: 93.7% of the respondents regularly use Telegram, 90.6% – YouTube, 85.4% – Instagram, 62.5% – TikTok, 29.1% – Facebook, 17.6% – Skype. The average time that the respondents spend on the Internet is 4.3 hours, but 33.7% admitted that it is 6 hours or more. The number of online friends and online thematic groups that the respondents have depends on the amount of time spent. 100% of the respondents have personal profiles in the digital space, of which 31.4% act as administrators of some thematic page.

An assessment of the factors that form the first impression of a person with whom online communication occurs showed that visual presentation was considered decisive: 79.1% – profile photo, avatar; 63.7% – page design: background, style, colors, etc.; 71.4% – content of posts, latest posts; 55.6% – number of subscribers. The emotional coloring of messages is also of great importance: 62.3% – emojis, memes, emotional reactions and posts; 67.6% – emotional coloring of the text, tone of the message; 41.7% – style of speech, literacy; 26.5% – the presence of mutual friends and/or subscriptions.

For self-presentation in digital communications, young people mainly use the following strategies: 62.4% – self-praise by emphasizing their own achievements; presentations of staged, studio, aesthetic photos; 58.4% prefer flattery, friendly statements about others to gain their favor; 46.3% – self-promotion, demonstration of competence, information about interesting projects, participation in various activities; 38.1% – providing help, support, advice; 21.5% – self-irony bordering on depreciation to create an image of a simple, accessible person; 15.7% – neutrality or ignoring a specific image.

Among the strategies of behavior in a conflict in digital communication, 42.5% of the respondents noted ignoring, passive avoidance; 31.3% – blocking, unfollowing, deleting, protecting personal space; 18.5% – attempting to resolve differences through argumentation and logic; 9.4% – arguing, open confrontation.

The analysis of respondents' answers to open-ended questions showed that 78.5% of them indicated positive aspects and convenience of digital communication ("it is convenient to always be in touch", "I quickly learn the news", "I can communicate with different people", etc.); 65.3% noted the opportunity to receive support and attention ("I can feel that I am supported at any time", "when I am in a bad mood, someone is always there", etc.); 52.7% indicated the expansion of the communication circle due to new acquaintances ("I met people from other cities", "it is easier to start a conversation than in real life", "it is easier to tell a stranger about myself", etc.); 59.6% of the respondents noted a lack of emotionality in communication ("there is not enough intonation", "I do not always understand what the person meant", "a joke is not always perceived correctly", etc.); 44.1% mentioned the difficulties in understanding emotions, irony, sarcasm ("you can unintentionally offend", "irony is poorly read", etc.); 37.5% are dissatisfied with the unethical behavior of others ("people allow themselves to be rude", "not attentive to the feelings of others", "offend, do not apologize", etc.); 61.3% indicated that digital communication creates dependence on the opinions of others ("I expect likes", "I need approval in the group", "I hope they will pay attention to me", etc.); 47.4% consider online communication a challenge for self-discipline ("I spend too much time online", "sometimes I just go in", "I can't tear myself away", "I have to limit myself", etc.). In general, the answers to open-ended questions confirmed that young people perceive the Internet as a means of communication and self-expression.

Thus, the results of the survey showed that social networks and messengers are the leading space for interpersonal communication among young people, where platforms with multimedia content capabilities are preferred. Perception, the first impression of a person is formed by the visual and speech characteristics of the profile. Emotions are transmitted mainly through symbols and intonations of the text, which can lead to distortions and exaggerations. The motivation for self-presentation in social networks is communicative and self-affirmative. Young people actively form a "digital personality", their own virtual identity by integrating informational, social and emotional aspects of communication.

To study social intelligence, the test "Social Intelligence" by J. Guilford was used, the results obtained are presented in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1 Social intelligence indicators of higher education students (N = 157)

SI components	M(SD)
Understanding behavior results (subtest 1)	9.4 ± 2.1
Understanding nonverbal behavior (subtest 2)	8.3 ± 1.7
Understanding veral messages content (subtest 3)	9.2 ± 1.8
Understanding the inteprsonal situations dynamics (subtest 4)	7.5 ± 1.9
General level of social intelligence	34.4

The respondents showed an average level of social intelligence with differentiation by individual components. The highest scores were obtained on scales reflecting the ability to interpret the behavior of other people (M(SD) = 9.4 ± 2.1) and understand verbal information (M(SD) = 9.2 ± 1.8). That is, young people

interpret the behavior of others based on external signs, paying much less attention to motives, intentions or long-term consequences. Digital interaction occurs based on context, reactions, emotions, and not on logical analysis and prediction. An increase in scores on these components of social intelligence indicates that the subjects are oriented towards visual effects and speech markers of communication.

The lowest results were found on the scale of understanding the interpersonal situations dynamics (M(SD) = 7.5 ± 1.9), which may indicate insufficiently formed reflexivity. This is consistent with the results of studies by V. Romero, A. Paxton, who revealed the fragmentation of digital socialization of youth, which is an unfavorable factor in the development of strategic thinking [8]. The data of empirical studies by R. Swain et al. also confirm that there is a shift from the interpretation of non-verbal emotional signals to the analysis of discursive information in youth communication [22]. The weak ability to understand non-verbal manifestations (M(SD) = 8.3 ± 1.7), which was found in the subjects, may be a consequence of the fact that they prefer digital channels of communication rather than physical interaction.

Thus, the social intelligence of the higher education students who participated in the study is characterized by the fact that they use situational-contextual abilities instead of predictive and reflective ones to analyze and interpret interpersonal interaction situations. This is consistent with the data of O. Lazareva on the uneven development of the social intelligence components in adolescence [1]. The digital environment, for its part, promotes efficiency and accessibility of interaction, but complicates in-depth reflection, interpretation and long-term forecasting of communicative actions.

To assess the ability of applicants to self-reflection and reflection of the inner world of other people, the "Reflexivity Test" by V. Ponomaryova and A. Karpov was used, the results obtained are presented in **Table 5.2**.

Table 5.2 Reflexivity indicators of higher education students (*N* = 157)

Scales	M(sten)
Retrospective activity reflection	5.7
Situational reflection (deals with current activity)	5.2
Prospective reflection (future activity consideration)	6.3
Social reflection (analysis of communication and interaction with others)	5.5

The subjects showed an average level of reflexivity development with a predominance of prospective reflection. That is, the thinking reflexivity of higher education students is focused more on forecasting, assessing and planning future behavior, assessing risks and consequences, responsibility for decisions, etc. In digital interaction, prospective reflection performs a regulatory function, can increase the accuracy of communication strategies, self-control, reflective flexibility. This is one of the important components of personality maturity.

Retrospective and social reflection were also moderately expressed. Retrospective reflection is a purposeful analysis of past experience with the aim of evaluating and correcting it in the future, determining one's own responsibility for successes and failures. In digital communications, retrospective reflection

can be enhanced by access to message archives, publication histories; take on an intrusive appearance or contribute to the suppression of unpleasant memories by hiding or deleting information.

Social reflection refers to the awareness of how a person is perceived by communication partners and how they behave in situations of interaction with them. Digital communication complicates the reflexive understanding of the interlocutor's emotions, which is compensated for by the use of certain symbols (smileys, memes, reactions, etc.); social reflection can be fragmentary, dependent on platform algorithms, but it allows you to adjust self-presentation, avoid conflicts. The least developed was situational reflection, as the ability to be aware of yourself at the moment of interaction, evaluate your own actions, thoughts, emotional reactions, and flexibly respond to changing conditions in real time. In digital interaction, it is complicated by the lack of instant feedback, a decrease in the level of social control, and the accuracy of responding to social stimuli.

The obtained data are confirmed by the empirical results of Ukrainian and foreign scientists. In particular, O. Lazareva indicates that the cognitive and strategic components of social intelligence develop intensively in adolescence [1]. In the work of V. Romero, A. Paxton it was found that digital communication usually does not stimulate deep introspection, but, on the contrary, creates a superficial context for the perception of emotions [8]. R. Swain and colleagues note that low accuracy of emotion identification in digital interaction correlates with a lower level of social reflection, which is also reflected in our results [22]. T. Dinh, Y. Lee, in turn, prove that active online communication does not contribute to reflective awareness of the social context of communication [15]. A. Eginli, O. Tas emphasize the decrease in the accuracy of reactions and flexibility of communicative online behavior due to the limitation of the use of sensory modality [17]. Therefore, the identified features of reflexivity of higher education students allow us to consider it as a functional resource of adaptation in conditions of digital interaction, which provides predictive and regulatory support for the social behavior of young people.

To assess empathy, the questionnaire "Interpersonal Reactivity Index" IRI by M. Davis was used. The results are presented in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3 Interpersonal reactivity indicators of higher education students (N=157)

Scales	M(SD)
Decentration	18.5 ± 3.2
Compassion	17.6 ± 2.9
Empathic care	21.4 ± 3.7
Personal distress	14.8 ± 2.3

The obtained data indicate an average level of empathy development in the subjects. The highest scores were found on the "Empathic Care" scale (21.4 ± 3.7), which indicates a more developed ability of young people to imagine the experiences of other people, compassion, concern for them, a desire to help and support them in difficult moments of life. The indicators on the "Decentration" scale (18.5 ± 3.2)

indicate an average level of readiness of applicants for interpersonal perception without prejudice and limitations, the ability to take into account the point of view of another, his/her experience. The results on the "Compassion" scale (17.6 ± 2.9) indicate a moderately developed ability of the respondents to identify with the feelings of other people, imagining themselves in similar situations. The lowest results were found on the scale "Personal distress" (14.8 ± 2.3), which indicates a sufficient level of emotional stability development in the subjects, their ability to withstand stress when observing the suffering of another person, in conflict interaction with them. Thus, the data obtained indicate that empathy in the subjects is characterized by cognitive activity, a moderate level of affective involvement and emotional stability.

The comparison with the results of some Ukrainian and international studies showed that, in particular, O. Bokovets noted the presence of a stable level of emotional intelligence, empathy in modern students in social interaction in the environment of an educational institution, but less empathetic flexibility in digital communication [23]. M. Zhytynska notes that digital communications provide new opportunities for empathetic contact and at the same time reduce the depth of emotional involvement due to the superficial perception of network information [24]. In a study by R. Swain and colleagues, it was found that the accuracy of emotional identification in digital communication significantly deteriorates, which probably affects the decrease in compassion [22]. T. Dinh, Y. Lee, in turn, indicate that in there is an increase in cognitive empathy digital communications of young people, but a decrease in the affective component, which is partially consistent with the higher rates of empathic care, but lower — distress, which were found in our study [15]. S. Tong and colleagues note that self-presentation in the digital environment involves the management of emotional impressions, which affects the sincerity of empathic reactions — this aspect is indirectly confirmed by moderate rates of compassion and decentration in our respondents [16].

Thus, the results obtained indicate that the empathy of the studied higher education students is characterized by the ability to understand the emotions of other people, including in digital communication, emotional stability and a moderate level of affective involvement in the experiences of other people. The identified trends are consistent with the results of studies by other scientists.

To study the ways, in which people present themselves to others in social situations, the Self-Presentation Tactics Scale (SPTS) by S. Lee and B. Quigley was used. The results obtained are presented in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4 Self-presentation strategies indicators of higher education students (*N* = 157)

Strategies	M(SD)
Avoidance	29.5 ± 3.6
Attraction behavior	30.3 ± 3.1
Self-aggrandizement	33.7 ± 3.5
Self-humiliation	15.2 ± 2.4
Power influence	23.8 ± 2.5

The data indicate the dominance of such self-presentation strategies as self-aggrandizement, attraction behavior, and avoidance. The highest average scores were obtained for the self-aggrandizement strategy (33.7 ± 3.5), which indicates the desire of higher education applicants to exaggerate their achievements and positive characteristics in communication, including in the digital environment. The indicators for the attraction behavior strategy (30.3 ± 3.1) are also quite high, which indicates the desire of young people to create a positive impression of themselves, establish friendly relations with other people, arouse affection and sympathy, this may indicate the desire of young people to build harmonious relationships based on social attractiveness. The avoidance strategy (29.5 ± 3.6), i.e., excuses and complaints, were less common, which indicates a tendency to avoid demonstrating vulnerability in communications. The general profile of respondents' self-presentational behavior is strategic, moderately flexible and socially oriented, with a pronounced desire to maintain a positive image.

The results of our study are consistent with the achievements of other scientists, in particular, Zh. Bogdan indicates that self-presentation is a flexible skill that contributes to a person's social adaptation and allows for varying tactics depending on the expectations of other people [18]. T. Dinh, Y. Lee prove that online self-presentation is often driven by social comparison and fear of missing out on something important, which contributes to the demonstration of positive content [15]. This is consistent with the high level of self-praise found in the respondents in our study. S. Tong and colleagues note that online user profiles are formed according to the "guided impression" model, which aims to increase attractiveness in the eyes of other people [16].

Thus, the results obtained demonstrate the strategic orientation of self-presentational behavior of higher education students, characterized by an orientation towards positive social perception, emotional self-expression and reduced demonstration of vulnerability and generally corresponds to the trends of modern digital self-presentational discourse.

To analyze how young people use social networks to create and maintain their own image, the "Methodology for assessing self-image in social networks" developed by S. Goss was used, the results are presented in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5 Distribution of the activity level of self-presentational behavior of higher education students (*N* = 157)

Active self-presentation levels	%
High	34.7
Middle	41.5
Low	23.8

The data indicate the prevalence of medium and high activity in the self-presentation of the respondents. Profiles in social networks can be considered as a space for managing the impression of oneself, for the purpose of social integration, self-realization, or increasing social (group) status. This may also indicate the orientation of young people towards socially desirable behavior, the desire to look attractive, demonstrate achievements, or follow certain subcultural standards in digital communications.

The results obtained are consistent with the conclusions of other researchers, namely A. Krasniakova notes that the Internet environment is a platform for experimenting with images, roles, and social masks, which is well consistent with the identified desire of young people to actively manage their digital image [4].

Thus, in the digital environment, higher education students show high activity in creating a public image, which confirms the significance of the virtual "Me" in modern society.

Next, we conducted a correlation analysis, the results of which are presented in **Table 5.6**.

Table 5.6 Features of the relationship between social intelligence, reflection, empathy, and self-presentation strategies (*r)*

Variables	*SI1*	*SI2*	*SI3*	*SI4*	*SI int.*
R1	.28	.25	.31	.27	.38
R2	.24	.22	.27	.23	.33
R3	.21	.19	.25	.22	.31
R4	.31	.27	.33	.30	.39
Em1	.26	.29	.28	.22	.33
Em2	.31	.33	.32	.29	.37
Em3	.34	.36	.38	.34	.42
Em4	.18	.15	.21	.25	.29
SP1	–.12	.–10	–.11	–.09	–.15
SP2	.19	.24	.21	.18	.28
SP3	.22	.20	.26	.21	.32
SP4	–.15	–.14	–.16	–.12	–.18
SP5	.05	.08	.06	.07	.0.11

Note: SI1 – understanding of the behavior results, SI2 – understanding of nonverbal behavior, SI3 – understanding of the verbal messages content, SI4 – understanding of the interpersonal situations dynamics, SI int. – general level of social intelligence; R1 – retrospective reflection of activity, R2 – situational reflection, R3 – prospective reflection, R4 – social reflection; Em1 – decentration, Em2 – compassion, Em3 – empathic care, Em4 – personal distress; SP1 – avoidance, SP2 – attraction behavior, SP3 – self-aggrandizement, SP4 – self-humiliation, SP5 – power influence

Positive correlations were found between social intelligence, empathy, reflection and self-presentation strategies. The highest coefficients are observed between the general indicator of social intelligence and indicators of empathy, in particular with empathic care (r = 0.42) and personal distress (r = 0.37). This indicates a close relationship between cognitive and affective sensitivity in interpersonal interaction. All types of reflection have moderate positive correlations with social intelligence (r = 0.31–0.39), which indicates that awareness of one's own mental states, behavior, and experience is an important component of

a person's social competence. Of the self-presentation strategies, the attraction strategy is most closely correlated with social intelligence (r = 0.32), which indicates a relationship between the ability to social predict and the attempt to create a positive impression.

At the same time, the strategy of self-humiliation and defensive strategies demonstrate weak negative relationships with indicators of social intelligence, which indicates their maladaptive role in social interaction.

The obtained results are consistent with the results of empirical studies by domestic and foreign scientists. In particular, O. Lazareva established that the strategic and cognitive components of social intelligence are closely related to the development of reflection and empathic mechanisms [1]. R. Swain and colleagues determined that the accuracy of emotion recognition contributes to the development of social intelligence and, accordingly, affective empathy — similar to the relationship we found [22]. In the study of T. Dinh, Y. Lee, it was demonstrated that social reflection and strategic self-presentation are interconnected with cognitive empathy [15]. K. Wei and co-authors note that the development of emotional intelligence involves a high level of social sensitivity and flexible models of self-presentation in social networks, which is also reflected in the positive relationships in our study [25].

Thus, the correlation analysis demonstrated that the cognitive and affective components of social functioning, namely social intelligence, empathy, reflection, self-presentation, have internal relationships. The identified relationships created the basis for testing the model of the influence of social intelligence on self-presentational behavior. To test the assumption of the mediated influence of social intelligence on self-presentational strategies through reflection and empathy, an extended mediation SEM model was constructed (**Tables 5.7** and **5.8**). Social intelligence was considered as a latent construct with four indicators (*EI1–EI4*), reflection — with four (*R1–R4*), empathy — with three (*Em1–Em3*), self-presentational strategies — with three (*SP2*, *SP3*, *SP5*). The model has the following fit indices: $\chi^2/df < 3$, *CFI* ≈ .95, *TLI* ≈ .93, *RMSEA* ≈ .05.

Table 5.7 Factor loadings of latent variable indicators

Latent construct	Indicator	Loading (λ)
1	**2**	**3**
Social intelligence	*SI1*	.72
	SI2	.69
	SI3	.74
	SI4	.68
Reflection	*R1*	.71
	R2	.73
	R3	.75
	R4	.71

Continuation of Table 5.7

1	2	3
Empathy	*Em1*	.71
	Em2	.78
	Em3	.83
Positive self-presentation strategies	*SP2*	.76
	SP3	.81
	SP5	.54

Note: SI1 — understanding of the behavior results, SI2 — understanding of nonverbal behavior, SI3 — understanding of the verbal messages content, SI4 — understanding of the interpersonal situations dynamics; R1 — retrospective reflection of activity, R2 — situational reflection, R3 — prospective reflection, R4 — social reflection; Em1 — decentration, Em2 — compassion, Em3 — empathic care; SP2 — attraction behavior, SP3 — self-aggrandizement, SP5 — power influence

Thus, all indicators demonstrated sufficient factor loadings (λ = .54—.83), which confirms the validity of the latent constructs in the model.

Table 5.8 Standardized structural coefficients in the SEM model

Path	β (standardized)	*p*-level
SI ⟶ *R*	.45	.001
SI ⟶ *Em*	.38	.001
R ⟶ *CSP*	.22	.03
Em ⟶ *SP*	.35	.01
SI ⟶ *SP (direct)*	.08	.18

In the structural model, social intelligence was considered as a basic resource that affects reflection and empathy, and these constructs, in turn, are predictors of positive self-presentation strategies, that is, parallel mediators of the influence of social intelligence on behavioral manifestations of personality.

It has been found that social intelligence significantly affects both the level of reflection (β = .45, $p < 0.001$) and empathy (β = .38, $p < 0.001$). Reflection affects positive self-presentation strategies (β = .22, $p < 0.03$), empathy also affects positive self-presentation strategies (β = .35, $p < 0.01$). These influences are independent and statistically separate. The direct path from social intelligence to self-presentation strategies turned out to be statistically insignificant, which indicates the predominance of mediated influences. The total mediated effect through reflection and empathy was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), which allows us to consider reflection and empathy as parallel mediators. Therefore, the ability to be aware of one's own states, analyze the features of interaction with other people, understand the behavior, intentions and emotions of others determine the choice of socially acceptable and constructive self-presentation strategies.

5.5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF SECTION 5

Thus, the theoretical analysis and empirical research on the problem of social intelligence, perception and self-presentation in digital communications showed that social intelligence, reflection and empathy form a holistic cognitive-emotional system that provides conscious regulation of interpersonal interaction and self-presentational activity in the virtual space. The correlation analysis revealed stable relationships between social intelligence, reflection, empathy and self-presentation strategies. Structural modeling allowed us to establish a hierarchy of influences and cause-and-effect relationships between constructs, in particular, it confirmed the indirect role of reflection and empathy in the influence of social intelligence on self-presentational behavior. The results obtained clarify the place of social intelligence in the structure of social interaction and expand modern ideas about the psychological factors of self-presentation in digital communications. The proposed model has theoretical and practical value, outlines promising areas of research and development of social competencies necessary for constructive interaction in a digitalized society.

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