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SOCIAL PERCEPTION MECHANISMS IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

MECANISMOS DE PERCEPÇÃO SOCIAL NA COMUNICAÇÃO INTERPESSOAL ENTRE JOVENS ADULTOS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study examines the mechanisms of social perception in young people, exploring how empathy, social reflection, and causal attribution influence interpersonal communication and relationships during adolescence, a critical period for personal and social development.

Objective: To identify the characteristics of social perception among young people and assess issues related to the formation of empathy and reflexivity, which are essential for effective communication and socialization.

Methodology: The research employed psychodiagnostic tests and questionnaires to measure empathic abilities, reflexivity development, and frustration reactions. The sample included 123 students aged 18-20 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Results: Three profiles were identified:

1.   Largest group: average levels of empathy and reflexivity; focus on self-defense.
2.   Intermediate group: low empathy and reflexivity; focus on need satisfaction.
3.   Smallest group: very high empathy, high reflexivity; focus on obstacles.

Conclusion: Problems in the development of empathy and reflexivity were identified, emphasizing the need for tools and methods to enhance social perception, which is vital for interpersonal communication and personality development.

Keywords: Social perception; Social relationships; Young people; Interpersonal communication.

RESUMO

Introdução: O estudo aborda os mecanismos de percepção social em jovens, explorando como empatia, reflexão social e atribuição causal influenciam a comunicação interpessoal e os relacionamentos sociais durante a adolescência, fase crítica para o desenvolvimento pessoal e social.

Objetivo: Identificar as características da percepção social entre jovens e avaliar os problemas relacionados à formação de empatia e reflexividade, essenciais para a comunicação eficaz e a socialização.

Metodologia: A pesquisa utilizou testes e questionários psicodiagnósticos para medir habilidades empáticas, desenvolvimento da reflexividade e reações de frustração. A amostra incluiu 123 estudantes de 18 a 20 anos em Astana, Cazaquistão.

Resultados: Três perfis foram identificados:
1.   Maior grupo: níveis médios de empatia e reflexividade; foco na autodefesa.
2.   Grupo intermediário: baixa empatia e reflexividade; foco na satisfação das necessidades.
3.   Menor grupo: empatia muito alta, reflexividade elevada; foco em obstáculos.

Conclusão: Problemas na formação de empatia e reflexividade foram identificados, destacando a necessidade de ferramentas e métodos para desenvolver a percepção social, fundamental para a comunicação interpessoal e a formação da personalidade.

Palavras-chave: Percepção social; Relações sociais; Jovens; Comunicação interpessoal.

1 INTRODUCTION

People's perception of others in communication and interaction is identified as social perception (Doğan et al., 2023; Tosun et al., 2023; Kadim, 2023). Initially, social perception was understood as the social determination of perceptual processes. In the course of research, the concept has been transformed: social perception is the process of perceiving other people, social groups, and large social communities. The mechanisms of social perception include several phenomena, starting from self-knowledge in communication, attempts to understand the state and mood of a

communication partner, putting oneself in their place to form an impression of the perceived person based on developed stereotypes, attributing causes and motives to their behavior, and developing one's own behavior strategy (Han, 2023; Sarmah et al., 2023; Rudrauf et al., 2023; Essom-Stenz & Roald, 2022; Rivadulla-Duró, 2024). Thus, the positive development of interpersonal communication is determined by mutual understanding between its participants (Mambetalina et al., 2024; Sakenov et al., 2016; Orynbekova & Menlibekova, 2019; Chereyeva et al., 2018). The measures of people's reflection of each other's traits and feelings, perception, and understanding of partners in activities largely determine communication, emerging relationships, and methods of joint activities (Bas et al., 2024). Any person becomes a subject of public life in the course of their activities, communication, and cognition. The role of interpersonal and mutual understanding is important for the successful socialization of young people (Falcão et al., 2024). Harmony and disharmony in the interpersonal relationships of young people with other people determine the development pattern of higher mental processes and personality (Santavirta et al., 2023; Pandey & Shrestha, 2023; Lee et al., 2024). These provisions determine the relevance of studying the features of social perception in adolescence. The results open up additional opportunities for the development of the theory of perception and mechanisms for managing perceptual processes in psychological work with young people (Nurumov et al., 2014; Sakenov et al., 2023; Uaidullakyzy et al., 2022; Zhankubayev et al., 2021; Aitbaev et al., 2016). The study aims to explore the features of social perception in young people through the study of its main components: empathy, social reflection, and causal attribution.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in educational institutions in Astana, Kazakhstan in May 2024. 123 students aged 18-20 took part in the study. The following methods were used to conduct the ascertaining study: an empathic skills test; a method to diagnose the level of the development of reflexivity; a method for studying frustration reactions; analysis; and quantitative and qualitative research methods.

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3 RESULTS

Using the empathic skills test (Lanskaya, 2004), we obtained the following results: an average level of empathy was found in 72 students (59%), which indicates a desire to respond emotionally to the problems of others. 46 students (37%) showed low empathy. They are less sensitive to others and less able to feel the emotional state of a communication partner and rely more on logic than intuition and feelings. High empathy was found in five students (4%), which indicates a high degree of cognition and understanding of the surrounding people and their emotional state through empathy, the ability to feel, and penetration into the subjective world of other people. They are more attentive to the emotional state of others, always trying to help, share their joy, comfort loved ones, and delicately feel their emotional state (Figure 1).
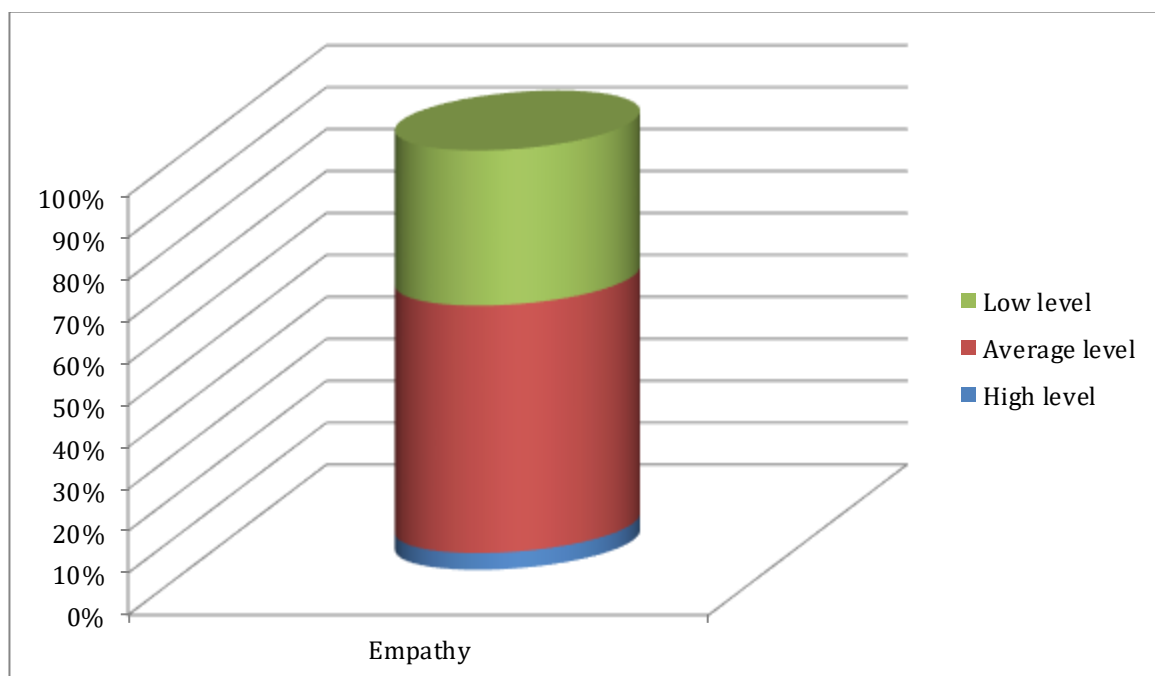

Figure 1. Empathy

Using the method of diagnosing the development of reflexivity (Lanskaya, 2004), the following results were obtained: 92 students (75%) showed an average level of reflexivity. They are moderately aware and understand how they are perceived by others, which helps them in communication. These students were interested in their personalities; the process of self-knowledge was not slowed down. 16 students (13%) showed high reflexivity, which determined a high degree of understanding and

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awareness of how their communication partners perceive them. This helps them to build relationships more constructively because they better understand how their communication partners see them. These students are prone to deeper introspection and self-knowledge and cognize themselves more effectively through others. 15 students (12%) showed low reflexivity. They are less aware of how they are perceived by their communication partners and build relationships with others less effectively (Figure 2).
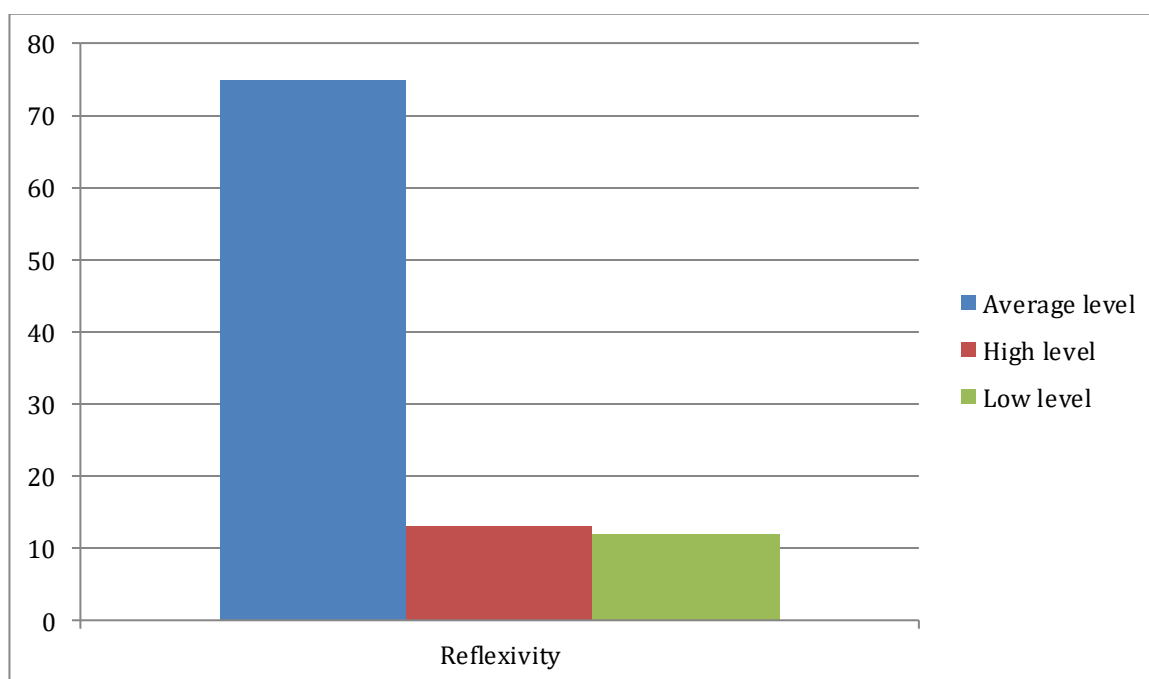

Figure 2. Reflexivity

The identification of the types of causal attribution was carried out using the methodology of studying frustration reactions (Lanskaya, 2004). The following results were obtained. In 60 students (49%), the first type of reaction prevailed, a fixation on self-defense. The main goal for such students is to protect themselves, and they either blame someone, admit their guilt, or note that responsibility for frustration cannot be attributed to anyone. 37 students (30%) showed a predominant reaction of the second type, a fixation on meeting their needs. They are focused on solving problems. They can resolve a difficult situation themselves or believe that time and the course of events will lead to its correction. In 26 students (21%), the third type of reaction dominated, a fixation on an obstacle. When presenting the stimulus material, they focused on the obstacle, which was interpreted as not having serious significance (Figure 3).
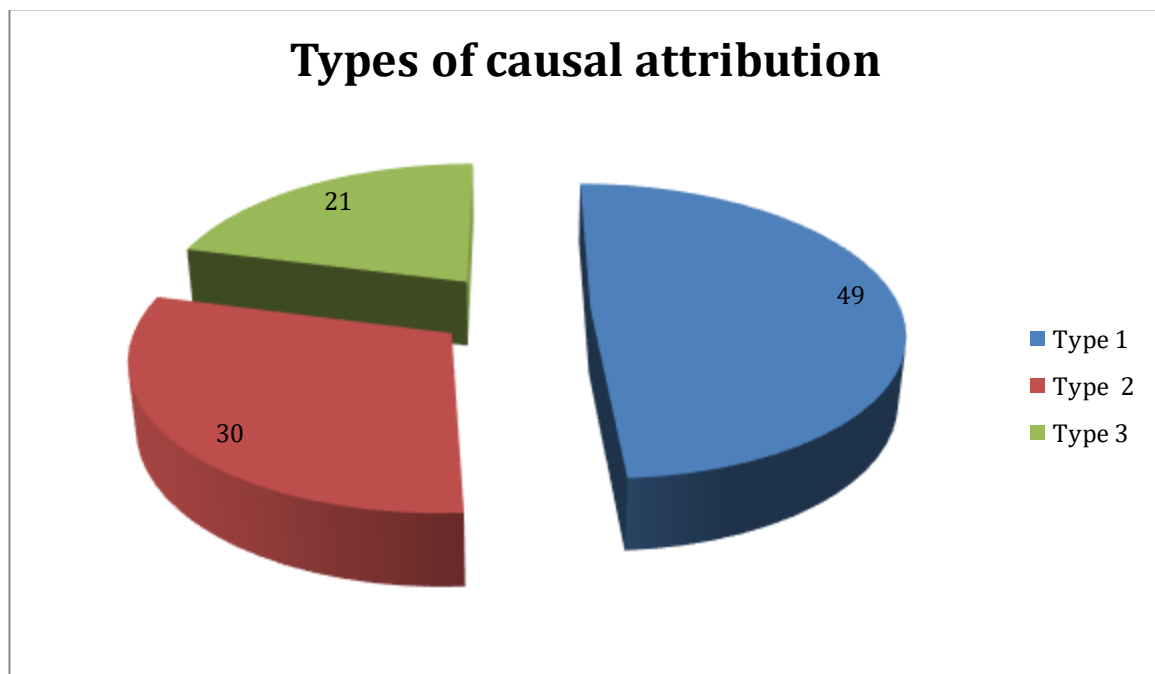
Figure 3. Types of causal attribution

4 DISCUSSION

We agree with Doğan et al. (2023) that social perception is self-knowledge in communication. Our data are consistent with the opinion of Algarrawi (2023) that the essence of social perception is to develop one's strategy of behavior in communication, which corresponds to the results of Sarmah et al. (2023) about the mechanisms of social perception. However, this is inconsistent with the theoretical ideas of Han (2023) about harmony and disharmony in the interpersonal relationships of young people.

Our results allow us to identify three conditionally generalized characters of students based on the features of their social perception. Most students are characterized by average levels of empathy and reflexivity and causal attribution focusing on self-defense. These students seek to respond emotionally to the problems of others, strive to understand others, and have experience in communication. The second largest group is characterized by low empathy and reflexivity and causal attribution focusing on the satisfaction of their needs. These students are less sensitive to the problems, worries, and joys of others. Their ability to feel the emotional state of a communication partner is poorly expressed because they rely on logic rather than intuition and feelings. The smallest group is characterized by very high empathy, high reflexivity, and causal

attribution focusing on an obstacle. These students possess a high degree of knowledge and understanding of people and their emotional state through empathy, ability to feel, and penetration into the subjective world of others. They are attentive to the emotional state of other people, are always ready to help, share their joy, delicately feel the emotional state of loved ones, and strive to comfort them.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The originality of the results lies in the fact that, unlike Sakenov et al., 2023, Han, 2023, and Falcão et al., 2024, we proved that most students seek to respond emotionally to the problems of others and understand their communication partners. For most respondents, what others think about them is an important point of social cognition. During this developmental period, there is a discovery of oneself, awareness of one's individuality, and inner reflection. Most students tend to transfer responsibility for what happens to others, often looking for someone to blame. The emergence and successful development of interpersonal communication between students is possible only with mutual understanding. The success of the formation and course of social perception, in particular, the possession of a sufficient amount of information about how others see one, the desire and ability to respond emotionally to people's problems, and the choice of adequate communication tactics, have an impact on the development of effective interpersonal relationships. Building up interpersonal relationships is an important aspect of adolescence, so we can say that the success of social perception affects the development and formation of the personality in youth.

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