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THE PANDEMIC OF CORONAVIRUS COVID-19: THE FOCUS IS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract. *In the article the author reflects on the strategies of actions / interactions of the “pandemic society”. It is noted that in a situation of global turn, everyone discovers new meanings and understands their value for themselves. It is emphasized that the process of comprehension and reassessment of individual axiological directions inevitably actualizes the issue of self-reference of identities and intensifies the search for the meaning of life.*

It is considered how social isolation affects the nature of interpersonal relations of spouses / partners. Taking into account the results of the pilot study, the goal is to generalize and interpret socio-psychological data on the nature of interpersonal relationships in conditions of long-term quarantine. The study is based on the methodology of postmodernism, which determines the justification of explanations of identified social phenomena and events based on a combination of empirical data with their interpretation.

It is concluded that the results of the express questionnaire allowed to take a comprehensive approach to the voice of the questions that arose in response to the challenges of the endemic of Coronavirus COVID-19 to each family. The reflection of the obtained data, according to the author, gives grounds to believe that in the social reality there is a turn of interpersonal relations of spouses / partners in the direction of their humanization. It is emphasized that changes at the level of interpersonal relationships show that you need to appreciate the simplest things - to take care of each other.

Keywords: *social isolation, relationship crisis, relationship healing, self-reference of identities, interpersonal relationships.*

Problem’s statement. The analysis of topics often repeated in the media suggested that in parallel with the sad statistics of human casualties and the statement of negative economic consequences, the key socio-psychological problem in a COVID-19 pandemic is the problematization of marital / partner relations.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. We completely agree with Ding & Kalashnyk (2020) that “pandemic of Coronavirus COVID19 faced the world with a new social phenomena: worldwide quarantine and self-isolation of countries and regions as well as families and individuals. Prolongation of this situation has already led to disappearance or global transformation of subjects` interaction old forms (absolutely of all forms and at all the levels), rapid emergence of new types of communication (in particular) and being (in general) and the need for the world to be adapted to new realities when the post-Corona period comes”. In fact, we are talking about living by new rules, about a new reality that is difficult for us to accept: forced quarantine, physical isolation, social isolation, social distancing, distance in work and learning, virtualization of social contacts. In this context, Antonio Sandu explores a phenomenon of virtualization of social space, which in his understanding is perceived as “transferring socializing interactions to virtual environments - with special and somewhat unpredictable consequences for the evolution of being and even the human species” (Sandu, 2020).

Thus, the “pandemic society”, as it has already been defined, faces threatening challenges, for which everyone must find an explanation and develop a strategy of action / interaction. The global turn, that we are all experiencing, makes us realize that it will not be the way it was before.

For some, this means something they do not want to admit, because the style of “living like this” has been developed, without thinking about the meaning of “such a life”. Others discover new meanings and understand their value to themselves. That is, there is a difficult process of comprehension and reassessment of individual axiological directions, which inevitably actualizes the issue of self-reference of identities and intensifies the search for meaning in life. As rightly noted by researchers, “the effectiveness of the search for the meaning of life in the real world is directly dependent on the development by people of the new islands of freedom, life forms and directions of creativity, corresponding to the realities of the break of millennia” (Salnikova, 2020). All this is happening against the background of deteriorating economic conditions (according to UNICEF analysts, poverty will increase from 27% to 44% and this means that every second family with children is in financial difficulties) and the psychological health of families (there is a tendency to increase domestic violence, outbreaks of divorce are recorded). Unfortunately, these extremely relevant topics do not subside, but become more acute. Therefore, the above is considered as a postmodernist interpretation of the pandemic situation of Coronavirus COVID-19, which is based on “the disintegration of the ontology of the virus by the reality of non-binarity of nature” (Melnik, 2020).

First of all, let us consider how we are affected by social isolation, in which due to the influence of subjective factors we are limited in social interaction, excluded from the context of social life, deprived of freedom of movement. It is clear that such an experience is unnatural and burdensome. The reason is a violation of our basic needs in a normal lifestyle, which for most consisted of two segments: home and work. Forced long-term quarantine in order to preserve our own health and that of family members and reduce the risk of spreading the virus has defined the boundaries of our stay - home / apartment. We functionally transformed them: we added the option “home office”, which limited the play area, recreation room. Received unusual and uncomfortable conditions: in limited square meters increases the length of stay with each other, lacks free space and time for yourself.

In our opinion, all this can lead either to negative emotional tension and exacerbation of conflicts, or to reset the relationship and change the lifestyle of the couple. In the first scenario, we get physical violence: parents against children and / or spouses / partners to each other. By the way, in social psychology there is a considerable theoretical and empirical case related to this problem. So, due to Beckmann Laura examined the extent to which beneficial and hazardous family relationships altered the link between childhood exposure to parent-to-child physical violence and self-reported adolescent-to-parent physical violence (APV) (Beckmann, 2020). As moderating factors, the author took into account current levels of family cohesion, family conflict, and interparental violence were assessed.

In the context of this problem, in our opinion, it is also important to get acquainted with the results of research conducted before the pandemic and on financial conflicts in pairs (Koochel, 2020), gender differences in the conflict between work and life (Trzebiatowski & Triana, 2020). The research reveals many socio-psychological phenomena of the family, including the work of the author of this article, which is devoted to the analysis of postmodern transformations of marital and family partnership and parenting practices (Yatsyna, 2018), which receive theoretical and methodological explanation. The explicit results of the researchers indicate systemic changes in the social institutions of the family, marriage, and parenthood, which are related to both gender aspects of family roles and axiological polyphony of values that are difficult to live in and affect the construction of relationships in pairs. We assume that quarantine becomes a catalyst for feelings in a relationship. Therefore, some couples are experiencing this crisis, which ends in a breakup. Other couples perceive this period as a turning point that tests and heals the relationship in the couple.

This corresponds to the fact that during the crisis we suffer, renew and come out, gaining new adaptive qualities, or “stuck” and get a negative experience, which affects the mental state. If we evaluate the content of the crisis, then at first we are confused and do not know how to react, what ways to use self-defense to try to cope with their condition. Then begins a complex process of clarifying the situation, finding answers to the questions “why”, “what for”, “how” and, finally, overcoming the crisis with an understanding of the meaning and certainty about the ways of action /

interaction. Accordingly, the socio-psychological content of the situation pandemic of Coronavirus COVID-19 can be correlated with the idea of Arnold van Gennep (Gennep, 1999), according to which the meaning of life is a consistent change of stages - transitions from one state to another; the end of one stage and the beginning of another form systems of the same order. Thus, first the stage of separation in the form of social isolation and social distancing, then the period of liminality, which in a situation of uncertainty, fragmentation and singularity of postmodern sociality is associated with rethinking meanings, values (individual and family) and self-reference identities (individualization of constructed marital practices partnerships and parenting and articulation on the intransigence, fluidity and flexibility of identity (Yatsyna, 2015)).

Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic destroys almost all aspects of everyday life, which are accompanied by anxiety, fear, stress. At the same time, however, it pushes people to comprehend what has been, is and will be, adding hope for recovery. According to researchers, the pandemic situation can teach us a lot to identify strategies that will be effective, "because they help individuals make sense, build distress tolerance, increase social support, foster a view of our deep human interconnectedness, and take goal-directed value-driven actions in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic" (Polizzi, 2020).

The purpose of the research. The purpose of the article is to generalize and interpret socio-psychological data on the nature of interpersonal relationships in conditions of long-term quarantine based on the results of a pilot study. Interpretation of research results and formulation of conclusions will supplement the existing scientific knowledge about the features of actions / interactions and their consequences in interpersonal relationships: marital / partner / parent and holistically test the survey results, make them available for open discussion, modifications and improvements.

Methods and methodical instrumentation of the research. This study is based on the methodology of postmodernism. This presupposes that substantiated explanations of the revealed social phenomena and events are made on the basis of a combination of empirical data with their interpretation. Therefore, the interpretive design of the study is aimed at subjective interpretations of the studied social phenomena as perceived by the sample.

Online survey software was used to collect data. The ideal tool for this was the online form Survio (<https://www.survio.com/survey/d/K6Q5T1Y3Z9C9A7T6S?preview=1>), the interface of which is easy to use, and the analysis of the results takes place in real time. In this way, the survey method provided adequate representativeness of the sample. The chosen research method and the online form that ensured its implementation prove their advantage, which is manifested in external validity (because the data were collected in real conditions) and internal validity (cause-effect relationship). It follows that the probability of respondents to provide not true but socially desirable answers is minimized.

The questionnaire consisted of a set of structured questions, which are designed to receive answers from respondents to the provided answer options, to which you can also enter your own formulated answer. The choice of a semi-closed form of the answer provides the respondent with the freedom to disclose his position and ensures the receipt of answers that expand the content of the study. Data collection of the express questionnaire, in which 40 respondents who are in quarantine for a long time and stay at home for the day took part, was carried out via the Internet. The questionnaire contained 10 questions. In essence, we have grouped the issues into four blocks: 1) the relationship of spouses / partners - a rethinking of family values; 2) destruction of relations - divorce; 3) child-parent relationship - baby boom; 4) the practice of loneliness - virtualization of interpersonal and intimate-personal contacts.

The results of the research and their discussion.

Analysis. Explication of some similarity between the answers of the respondents and the results of modern scientific research

To analyze the data obtained on the first block of questions, the following questions were proposed and the following answers were obtained:

- Does prolonged quarantine change your relationship with your spouse, partner?

7,5 %72,5 %<https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	11	27,5 %
	no	29	72,5 %

- How does this manifest itself?

30 %10 %60 %<https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	relations have improved	12	30 %
	relations deteriorated	4	10 %
	the relationship has not changed	24	60 %
	the relationship became unbearable	0	0 %

- Do you agree that long-term quarantine returns society to traditional family values?

60 %35 %5 %<https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	24	60 %
	no	14	35 %
	answer 3	2	5 %

Based on the analysis of the received answers, we state that isolation affects all those who are forced to stay at home with their spouse, partner, but in different ways. It is hard to deny that spending time at home with people close to us on weekends and holidays, we get an emotional resource that inspires in professional activities, brings us closer spiritually. It is another thing when we are forced to live in a monotonous everyday life and face daily domestic inconveniences, difficulties that cause irritation, because they signal SOMETHING that we are no longer satisfied with the relationship with a husband / wife, partner, but before that we did not notice, or pretended not to notice. We assume that this may apply to those 27.5% of respondents who say that the relationship is changing. However, they clarify the nature of the changes in the answer to the next question, according to which 30% state that relations have improved, and 10% note the opposite.

Aggregate data on the answer to the second question indicate that the number of those who record changes (both positive and negative) is about 40%, while the number of those who do not notice the changes is 60%, which is slightly below 72.5 % on the first question. In our opinion, such a spread is within the margin of error and cannot preclude the assumption that, despite emergency measures, the family system remains stable. It follows that the relationship between spouses / partners is based on common values - emotional and spiritual intimacy. The correctness of this is confirmed by the answers to the third question, where 60% of respondents believe that the situation of forced quarantine returns society to understanding traditional family values, which in social reality provide basic needs for security, support, intimacy.

The second block is revealed in the answers to the questions:

- Do you agree that isolation destroys families?

20 %70 %10 %<https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	8	20 %
	no	28	70 %
	answer 3	4	10 %

- Do you agree that prolonged quarantine increases the level of physical violence and verbal (verbal) humiliation against family members?

27,5 % 67,5 % 5 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	11	27,5 %
	no	27	67,5 %
	answer 3	2	5 %

- Do you agree that prolonged quarantine can lead to divorce?

62,5 % 30 % 7,5 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	25	62,5 %
	no	12	30 %
	answer 3	3	7,5 %

It is believed that dramatic times tend to increase emotions and results. Without denying this, however, let us clarify that the meaning of this does not differentiate either the mode of emotions or the quality and effect of the result. By the way, this is demonstrated by the answers we received. Today's publications construct a reality in which the number of divorces and domestic violence is growing. Let's consider this issue in more detail. Undoubtedly, in recent years, statistics show a significant increase in recorded cases of domestic violence (in Ukraine, the police record up to 1.5 thousand cases of threats of domestic violence every day). However, we tend to explain such negative dynamics by the fact that modern victims of domestic violence cease to remain silent about the existing problem.

Regarding the increase in the number of divorces, we see the explanation in the fact that quarantine has become a catalyst for a situation that was hidden from each other spouses / partners. That is, it hastened the realization that problems (irresponsible attitude to the family, to raising children, financial issues, intimacy, etc.) have long accumulated but not been resolved, and it is time to recognize that there is nothing between spouses / partners that can combine a pair. Good or bad - the answer depends on the mode of the relationship itself. However, we note that we consider the severance of relations as a resource in the search for new family practices. The central media of Ukraine reported that 2,387 divorces and 7,359 marriages were registered during the 46 days of quarantine. These statistics are in line with the answers of our respondents, 70% of whom do not believe that isolation destroys families.

The third block raises the question of child-parent relations and provides an answer to the forecast of the sociological outcome of quarantine to increase the birth rate. Despite the fact that the connection between this situation and this result is not proven, although quite acceptable, we obtained the following results:

- Do you agree that long-term quarantine strengthens the bonds between parents and children?

80 % 10 % 10 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	relations have improved	32	80 %
	relations deteriorated	4	10 %
	answer 3	4	10 %

Response statistics show that in most families, the relationship between parents and children is getting better. We assume that their quality changes precisely because parents and children spend more time together in games, watching movies, reading, doing lessons, live communication.

- Do you agree that a long quarantine in nine months will result in a baby boom?

12,5 % 45 % 42,5 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	answer 3	5	12,5 %
	no	18	45 %
	yes	17	42,5 %

The result obtained, it seems to us, can have only one explanation - life goes on.

The last semantic block touches on an important problem of modern social reality - the topic of loneliness and virtualization of interpersonal and intimate-personal contacts, which may well claim a separate study. We obtained the following results:

- Do you agree that prolonged social isolation can lead to loneliness practices?

70 % 27,5 % 2,5 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	28	70 %
	no	11	27,5 %
	answer 3	1	2,5 %

We understand that the question in this form does not allow us to reveal the meaning of building the practice of loneliness, but the answers are articulated on their relevance.

- Does the quarantine situation affect the increase of virtual interpersonal, intimate-personal contacts?

82,5 % 15 % 2,5 % <https://my.surveio.com/R1H3G9B9N9K8N1L7P1L6/data/index>

#	answer options	answers	share
	yes	33	82,5 %
	no	6	15 %
	answer 3	1	2,5 %

The obtained data confirm the results of socio-psychological research of online contacts, which are implemented in various forms: virtual bars, concerts, shops, etc. The unusualness of such forms of interaction is due, it seems to us, to the fact that people want to return to the usual rhythm of their lives and live the desired emotions, satisfying hedonistic needs.

Conclusions and perspectives of further researches. The pilot study provided a comprehensive approach to voicing the questions that each family faced in response to the challenges of the pandemic of Coronavirus COVID-19. The pandemic has also confronted science with socio-psychological phenomena that need to be continued in order to predict trends in changes in interpersonal relationships between spouses / partners, based on explicit data.

The reflection of the obtained data gives us reason to believe that in social reality there is a turn of interpersonal relations of spouses / partners in the direction of their humanization. We believe that in response to COVID-19 and the demands of the world, changes are already taking place at the level of interpersonal relationships. They show us that we need to appreciate the simplest things - to take care of each other.

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ПАНДЕМІЯ КОРОНАВІРУСУ COVID-19: У ФОКУСІ ШЛЮБНО-СІМЕЙНИХ СТОСУНКИ

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Анотація. У статті авторка розмірковує про стратегії дій/взаємодій «пандемічного суспільства». Зауважується, що в ситуації глобального повороту, кожен відкриває для себе нові смисли і розуміє їхнє ціннісне значення для себе. Підкреслюється, що процес осмислення і переоцінки індивідуальних аксіологічних спрямувань неминуче актуалізує питання самореференції ідентичностей та інтенсифікує пошуки смислу життя.

Розглядається, як соціальна ізоляція позначається на характері міжособистісних стосунків подружжя/партнерів. Беручи до уваги результати проведеного пілотного дослідження, ставиться мета – узагальнити й інтерпретувати соціально-психологічні дані про характер міжособистісних стосунків в умовах тривалого карантину. Дослідження ґрунтується на методології постмодернізму, яка зумовлює обґрунтування пояснень виявлених соціальних явищ і подій на основі поєднання емпіричних даних із їхньою інтерпретацією. Тому інтерпретативний дизайн здійсненого дослідження спрямовано на суб'єктивні інтерпретації досліджуваних соціальних феноменів так, як їх сприймають актори. Обраний метод та онлайн-форма дозволяють виявити зовнішню (дані збиралися в реальних умовах) та внутрішню валідність (зв'язок причина-наслідок), мінімізуючи соціально бажані відповіді.

Робиться висновок, про те, що результати експрес-опитувальника дозволили комплексно підійти до озвучення тих питань, які у відповідь на виклики пандемії коронавірусу COVID-19 постали перед кожною сім'єю. Рефлексія отриманих даних, на думку авторки, дає підстави вважати, що у соціальній реальності намічено поворот міжособистісних стосунків подружжя/партнерів у напрямку їхньої гуманізації. Наголошується, що зміни на рівні міжособистісних стосунків показують, що потрібно цінувати самі прості речі – берегти одне одного.

Ключові слова: соціальна ізоляція, криза стосунків, оздоровлення взаємин, самореференція ідентичностей, міжособистісні стосунки.

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