

# Generation Specific Patterns of Supply Chain Communication in the Digital Society

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**Abstract-** The overwhelming digitalization of society has affected all the spheres of an individual's life, be it one's worldview, the mechanisms of thinking, the ways of dealing with information, and, obviously, the patterns of communication in supply chain management. The changes of the field of communications are manifest in the style and the symbolism of language as well as its emotional intensity. Both Russian and foreign experts point at a difference between generations when it comes to communication. Similarly, researchers contend that this difference owes to information and communication technologies. The authors of this article set a goal to find out generation specific features of communication and focus on how these features show in different areas of life. The awareness of the different ways of perceiving messages by different segments of the target audience will enable professionals in the field of communications to draft those messages in the most appropriate way and be most efficient when addressing the respective target audience. This article presents the results of a study and an analysis conducted by the authors, which aims at finding out the differences in the area of communications shown by generations X, Y and Z. Based on the results of the research and the analysis mentioned above, the authors offer specific recommendations for each one of the target audience segments considered.

**Keywords-** information society, cyber socialization, clip thinking, communications, supply chain management, digital natives.

## 1. Introduction

Conceptualizing communications in the today's rapidly changing society, we need, first of all, to consider the most significant trends related to the transformation of the humankind into a digital civilization. With this in mind, what we see as the target of this research is to consider the most important characteristics of the emerging consciousness of the present day society currently stepping into the information era. The main subject of this article are the communication patterns specific to different generations shaping up and coexisting in the designated period of transition. In view of the problems in the field of communication that emerge between

representatives of different generations and are manifest in, actually, all the spheres of social interaction, such as education, economy, politics, and, what is especially relevant for the purposes of this study, advertising and public relations, we believe the research into the matters specified above to be topical and of current interest. The purpose of this research is to draw up recommendations for forming effective messages in the framework of the communications industry based upon generation specific differences revealed in the study.

## 2. Literature Review

Quite significant research into the initial stages of development of the information society (or: the digital civilization), came out as early as on the verge of the second and the third millennia. In 1995, a book [1] was published, in which the author explores the specific changes in the younger generation's thinking in the course of educational activities. The author studied emotions in the process of thinking and in the everyday visions of a young person, which had been basically an unexplored subject. The book by [2] is also centered around the phenomenon of everyday consciousness. This monograph, published in 2001, ponders on the specifics of formation of the process of thinking at an early stage of the digital civilization. The book by [3] titled *Clip Consciousness* [3] focuses on particular modifications of the everyday consciousness against the background of clip perception of reality. The author sees such worldview and such consciousness as an affective activity (in the same way, as does [1] in the above-mentioned research). Besides, the book offers a large-scale study of the subject of communication in the information society. The article by [4] titled *The specifics of communication on the Internet* [4] drew our special attention as it ponders on the new forms of

communication in the information society, the central argument being that the subjects of communication "are almost totally deprived of supporting (paralinguistic) means [of communication]." What seems to be of high relevance for our research, is that the author of this pioneering work offers grounds for the concept of the new form of linguistic interaction.

The book *Digital Generations: Children, Young People, and the New Media* by American sociologists D. Buckingham and R. Willett [5] explores the consciousness of the generations formed in the era of information. Taking into account the subject of this article, the said book appears to be of special relevance. The authors give a detailed analysis of communication taking place between representatives of the digital generation in the new media. Another very significant piece of research for us is the article *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants* by a futurologist and a writer Marc Prensky [6]. According to Prensky, digital natives are a product of the information society or a product of cyber socialization. They do not accept social hierarchies and are willing to share information or enter in communication with audiences from any region of the planet, that is, almost all of the humankind. We see the value of Prensky's popular article in the way he looks at consciousness and communication in the digital age considering these phenomena in, so to say, their pure form. Digital natives are those who from their early childhood start to explore the world being given digitized audiovisual images. Such people perceive the world and communicate with it via gadgets. The vision of Marc Prensky correlates with T.Y. Vinogradova's argument [4] envisaging the emergence of a new form of language referred to as "written colloquial language". Speaking about the new language used by digital natives, with their highly developed visual thinking, Marc Prensky [6] points at such features of this language as the pursuit for conciseness, clarity and the capacity of a language element (such as an emoticon, a sticker or a .gif file, the latter seen as a video illustration of an emotion) to transmit the needed emotional state. Giving credit to the publications reviewed, we have to note that the results of this empirical study, focused on communication in social networks, confirmed the findings of the works mentioned above that we see as very useful in terms of topicality and their heuristic nature.

### **3. Methodology and logic of the study**

The basic methodology and the logic of our research is based on the concept of socio-historic conditioning of communications, and, in the first place, the idea that communication is conditioned by changes in the nature and forms of social activity. Such methodological approach implies a rather definite sequence in considering the subject and a definite logic of such consideration. First of all, we need to define the target of our study by means of describing the current stage of social transition, i.e. the period of transition of the society from the industrial into the information era. In doing so, we need to pay special attention to the factors that determine the new forms and the new content of people's communication. The changes in the content of people's labor activities taking place in the course of transition from the industrial to the information age, cause changes in people's motivation, behavior, relations in the field of education and training, and, in general, in the conditions of personal socialization. Communication between individuals, in its turn, is conditioned by socialization taking place in the context of emergence of new forms and types of social activities. It appears to be likely that communication between people from different age strata will lack mutual understanding. One of the reasons for such possible misunderstanding is the difference in the communication cultures that play a key role in the process of formation of a personality. As the most important aspect of our research is the interaction between the subjects of communication via network services in the virtual environment, we conducted our empirical studies using the Internet. Therefore, our research is based on the analysis of documents and information found on companies' official websites, in corporate accounts, and in social networks. The paper analyzes messages in social networks sent by representatives of generations X, Y, and Z. As well, we made an Internet survey answered by representatives of these generations. The purpose of the survey was to identify the communication-related differences of the said generations so to establish generation specific trends that are manifest in the field of communication.

#### **3.1. The object of research in the context of scientific discussions**

According to the opinion of the majority of researchers, the contemporary global society is in

transition from the era of industrial capitalism to an economy based on information and knowledge. Describing the society where scientific knowledge and intellectual work is key for the process of production and achievement of economic success, P. Pavlidis uses the term "cognitive capitalism" [7]. In the context of this new model, the processes and the results of cognitive activities become one of the basic economic resources alongside those traditional: the land, the labor, and the capital. Such are the settings in which the today's digital civilization is changing and evolving. Against the background of shaping of the information society, the process of coming into being and development of a personality, their communication skills and specific features, becomes particularly significant. Representatives of different generations, whose formation took place in different social environments, are very different in the way they perceive information, which, in its turn, has recently increased in an unprecedented way both with respect to the amount of data and the intensity of circulation of such. As the perception of information is naturally linked with reproduction thereof, the above-mentioned change is directly related to the characteristics of communicative skills of the respective generations.

Facing the transition to the digital civilization, the subjects of communication need to be aware of the changes in the consciousness of their target audiences. One of the key manifestations of such changes appears to be the phenomenon of the so-called "clip thinking". In our view, a very accurate definition of clip thinking is offered by T.V. Semenovskikh [8], who sees this phenomenon as "the process of reflection of a number of properties of objects without account of connections between those. Such thinking is characterized by fragmentary information flow, lack of logic, high heterogeneity of the incoming information, fast switching between pieces of information, and an incoherent worldview"[8]. The given interpretation of the phenomenon of clip thinking (and, for the purposes of this paper, clip consciousness [3], which quite spontaneously emerged in the information society, appears to be relevant for considering the phenomenon of everyday consciousness. Listing the key parameters of the today's everyday consciousness, [2] points at the "irrational nature, ignorance of the laws of logic, and rejection of scientific information" [2]. It should be noted that the phenomenon of everyday

consciousness became an object of systematic conceptualizing as early as in classical German philosophy. Hegel was one of the first philosophers to consider everyday consciousness in the framework of a comprehensive philosophical system. The father of the modern dialectical philosophy emphasized the illogical and undialectical nature of everyday consciousness [9]. In the today's world witnessing a fight for the public opinion between the competing political and economic actors, the phenomenon of everyday consciousness appears to have acquired significance. It should be borne in mind that the said actors also use technological vehicles of affecting the everyday consciousness of their target audiences. Admitting the general validity of conclusions concerning the everyday consciousness and the phenomenon of clip consciousness [3], we proceed to analysis of the specific modifications of the most common manifestations of everyday consciousness conditioned by the clip perception of reality. First of all, we need to identify the social determinants that caused the total proliferation of clip thinking. The transformation of society, unthinkable of in the previous millennia (and having opened up new facets of social perception and cognition), is determined by the process of transformation of industrial capitalism into "digital" or "cognitive" capitalism [7]. These social changes are global in their nature and, therefore, important for the development of all the humankind. An incredible leap in technical development, the new applied sciences and the innovative technologies (including artificial intelligence, self-learning neural networks, large arrays of data, quantum technologies, robotics, neuroscience), as well as explosive development of mass communications, changed the forms, the styles and the content of communications and, coincidentally, the people's consciousness and thinking. First of all, the proportion of Internet communications has significantly increased, which is particularly true with regard to communication in social networks, via instant messengers and chat rooms, such as ICQ, Vkontakte.ru, Odnoklassniki.ru, My World on Mail.ru, RuSpace, Soratniki.ru, Fakultet.ru, Gamesport.ru, Facebook, MySpace, LiveJournal, Viber, Skype, WhatsApp, and Telegram. The total spread of information and communication technologies has transformed the traditional culture of communication. Today, a subject of communication communicates mainly on the level of direct expression of feelings. Facing the

information tsunami, such subject is not always able to understand the content and the logic of the process of communication and is often unaware of the possibilities of achieving the goals of such communication. Quite naturally, under these circumstances, we witness a general decline in literacy. Basing upon surveys conducted among students, [10] notes that "students come across mistakes in social networks and it happens very often" [10]. At the same time, students admit that "they often make mistakes themselves, but believe that it owes to the fact that they are in a hurry when texting" (Ibid). Besides poor grammar noted [10], we have to point at such features of online communication as colloquial style, abbreviations, emoticons, and memes. Another peculiar characteristic of this communication is the use of slang, swear words, and even deliberate distortion of spelling, particularly, the so-called 'olbansky' language. The emergence of new social phenomena is usually perceived very differently. Having received completely opposite evaluations, online communications make no exclusion. Depending on their ideological standpoints, researchers assess the phenomenon in contradictory ways: either it is seen as an essential innovation or it is characterized in the spirit of Ecclesiastes: "It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time." [11]. In our opinion, such contradictory visions can be appeased if considered within the paradigm proposed [12]: "The Internet, as a means of transmitting information, while changing the form of such transmission, does not change the content. An e-mail is primarily about *modified* stylistics [Henceforward: italics ours. V.K., T.S., M.S., S.A.] of presentation" [12]. We cannot but agree with the author arguing that "the language of communication is very quickly updated, being saturated with shortened or transcribed foreign words, which leads to the emergence of a new semiotic system" (ibid). At the same time, the research gives quite a cautious evaluation of online communications in general, the conclusion being that there is no essential innovation about online communications: "... Electronic communication basically develops the intentions of communication of the pre-Internet era, both with respect to the content and the form. What the Internet does, is just providing general access to the kinds of communication and self-presentation that were previously available only for those able to launch a virtual environment on their own. The Internet switches communication to a *faster mode* and

forms a new semiotic system" (Ibid). We see this stance as contradicting the argument of the same author concerning the fast-changing language as a factor contributing to the emergence of a new semiotic system. In our view, the generally recognized internal relationship between language and thought, which manifests itself in the development of semiotic systems, directly reflects not only in the fundamentally new forms of communication, but also in the perception of reality and, consequently, in purposeful activities. Besides, what should be necessarily taken into account is the perception of the online environment as a special social space where a person identifies himself or herself as a subject of communication. For instance, a teenager creating several accounts in different social networks, can present him or herself quite differently depending on the purposes of communication and the target audiences. The online environment can become a playing field, a vehicle of self-identification in the process of communication with the target audiences, and even a space where a person can manifest their deviant behavior. The virtual character, which the subject of online communication associates themselves with, shall be characterized by "dissolved physicality" [4]. "As a result, people can be introduced to each other through nothing else but texts... The residents of chat rooms are almost totally deprived of supporting (paralinguistic) means of communication, such as the speech pattern, the emphasis given to some part of a statement, the emotional filling, the tone and the strength of voice, the peculiarities of articulation, gestures, or facial mobility" [4]. Continuing the argument proposed [4], we have to note that the conditions of virtual environment place the subject of communication in the situation of an obvious lack of the usual means of expressing emotions. At the same time, the traditional epistolary genre characterized by temporal lengthiness, which appears to be unacceptable in the today's world, also fails to meet the modern requirement of instant exchange of information. "Today we actually witness the emergence of a new form of linguistic interaction, a written colloquial language. On the Internet, the Russian language exists mainly in its written form. However, in the conditions of interactive network communication, the speed of utterance is close to oral language"(Ibid). The spoken-like language used in the online communication spaces of the global network is characterized by gradual rejection of rational

concepts and replacement of those with emotional messages in the spirit of the emerging emoticon culture. Another feature of online communication, which needs to be necessarily considered, is the significant acceleration of the process of communication. "Communication has become hasty and extremely simplistic" [13]. Since "the possibility of the inverse effect of the virtual identity upon the real identity" [14] has become reality, we can speak about the beginning of the transformation of the modern society into a qualitatively different state (as compared with the industrial society), the state of cyber-civilization. Prolonged exposure to virtual reality or cyberspace, with its artificial intelligence and almost instant access to Internet resources, significantly alters human behavior. Thus, cyber-socialization, which our contemporaries are passing through, appears to be an essential component of cyber-civilization. One of the features of the new civilization is that changes in the way and form of communication tend to transform the content of a person's behavior. Since there is permanent reciprocal influence and interconnection between language and thought, the formation of a new type of communication implies shaping of a new type of consciousness. The psychological need to be always up-to-date and track the flow of relevant information, gives rise to the desire to promptly respond to the coming messages. This, in turn, leads to "acceleration" of thinking, that is, faster evaluation of behavioral situations (followed by assessment of situations of goal setting, decision-making, and conducting research). It is important to note that such expectable "acceleration" of thinking in the information society cannot but manifest itself in the loss of depth of reflection, emotional poverty, and sliding of consciousness on the surface of the subject of thought. This transformation, which we referred to as "acceleration of thinking", is also described as "technocratic thinking." In the opinion of [1], such thinking "it is not a feature of those involved in science in general and technical knowledge in particular. It can be inherent in a politician, a military leader, an arts person, or someone involved in humanities. Technocratic thinking is a worldview characterized by primacy of the means over the goal, primacy of the goal over the sense and general human interest, primacy of the sense over being and the realities of the modern world, and primacy of technology (including psycho-technique) over the human and human values.

Technocratic thinking is Reasoning devoid of Understanding and Wisdom, guided by targets that are external with respect to thought, thinking, science, and the human being. Therefore, it is characterized by one more purely psychological trait. It is *impatient and hasty*: it does not aim for remedies that would justify the objective, but strives to achieve the objective by any means "[1]. The superficial, hasty perception of data shifts the comprehension vector from understanding to reasoning, and from reasoning to feelings and emotions. In this context, looking at the mentioned process of transformation of thinking, we consider it appropriate to refer to the conclusions of V.V. Dunayevsky indicating at the increased intensity of speech linked with the accelerated associative process. [15] refers to such thinking as pathological: "The flow of thoughts is defined by external associations, each of which becomes the starting point of a new theme for reasoning. The accelerated way of thinking leads to superficial, hasty judgments and conclusions. Patients speak hastily, without pauses... Their speech assumes features of "telegraphic style" (patients omit conjunctions, interjections, "swallow" prepositions, prefixes, flexions). *Racing thoughts* is the extreme form of accelerated thinking "[15]. [16] describe this sort of degradation of mental activity in the following way: "Thinking retains its focus, however, it becomes unproductive, as simple associations start to predominate (associations by consonance, similarity, contiguity, contrast); thoughts become superficial and unpersuasive". [16]. The given descriptions of "hasty" thinking appear to correspond to the characteristics of communication taking place in the cyberspace (social networks and chat rooms), however, it is only the appearance. In its essence, online communication is very much different from communication of individuals with pathological consciousness. It should be taken into account that the transformation of humanity into cyber-civilization is taking place in the conditions of unprecedented intensification of information flows. Thus, accelerated thinking proves to be a "technical" prerequisite for cyber socialization of a person. Probably, there are some grounds for looking at this prerequisite as a pathogenic factor, however, it should be kept in mind that we are dealing with global changes of the entire social space. Therefore, there is a qualitative difference between the causes of paralogia and the causes of altered thinking in the modern era. Now we would

like to take a closer look at communications taking place in the new social conditions. As the society is going through the process of informatization, communication in the form of audiovisual and graphic messages becomes more and more relevant. Generation Y and especially generation Z are a growing audience that perceives information in the form of audiovisual and sensory-visual images depicting the instances of their reasoning. The transformation of the humankind into a cyber-civilization manifests features of the pre-text era, when the process of thinking was evolving in the conditions of undivided domination of audiovisual perception of the world. A modern child may see no particular need to learn to write: uttering the command «Ok Google», this child starts the “brain of the humankind” and not only receives an adequate explanation for the respective question, but also gets a video illustration, which fully satisfies his or her information needs. The situation appears to be even worse if we consider conceptual, textual thinking. While in the case of small children, their caregivers and teachers can still persuade them to learn, the need for conceptual thinking is not self-evident. The relevance of systemic consciousness and structured conceptual thinking appears to be reduced in the social consciousness, at least at the early stages of development of the information society. Uninterrupted flows of information resulting from the modern “tectonic shift” of civilizational layers cause fragmented, mosaic perception of reality. Through synthetic/metaphoric reflection of the modern era, arts show the nascent trends in a very vivid manner. For instance, in *Unbreakable*, a film, “the director figuratively shows that adaptation to the conditions of the modern communication environment functions as a kind of return of the human mind to the archaic, pre-text age” [17]. The idea of the “return” is also noticeable in the term *digital natives* used to refer to the generation that has gone through cyber socialization [7]. The term is a reference to *native peoples*, i.e. indigenous peoples that have preserved the primitive way of life. As for digital natives, those are people who almost from their birth begin to perceive the world through gadgets and learn about it through digitized audiovisual images. Such perception of the world, which becomes the basis of cyber socialization of a whole generation, also becomes the informational basis of their intellectual activity. As it was already mentioned, clip thinking emerges as an adaptation mechanism of consciousness trying to attune itself

to the conditions of the explosive proliferation of information flows, which is at the same time characterized by a decrease in systemic and critical thinking. In clip consciousness, images are fragmentary and are not linked in a conceptual manner. “An image does not require involvement of imagination, reflection, conceptualization... It is about perpetual resetting, updating of information, when what you see first without a time gap loses its meaning, becomes obsolete” [8]. However, bearing in mind all the critical remarks concerning clip thinking, we would not reduce our conceptualization thereof to purely negative evaluation. The development of the world is controversial. We would not agree with William Irwin Thompson who gave a sort of sentence to the digital civilization. According to the researcher, in the world of information overload, numbed citizens no longer read or think, they rather look and feel” [18]. We consider that numbness cannot be universal. Digital natives (as representatives of the socially active layer of society) not only look and feel, but also realize the limitedness of resources needed for a person’s life and development. Therefore, they try not to waste time on moral reflections or lengthy discourses about emotional experiences. Nevertheless, they do not deny moral norms and the value of feelings in relationships (communication). The need to instantly speak out and respond to messages in the conditions of intensive information flows leads to formalization (but not elimination) of moral norms, declaration of emotions and visualization thereof in the communicative culture of emoticons [19]. However, it is not a fundamental rejection of emotions. As far as in the information society, the need for professional productive activities does not decrease, and as its creative component is becoming more and more relevant, the new generations of our contemporaries consider the means of digital communication not as an opportunity to satisfy their hedonistic needs, but rather as a condition of optimization of their activities, a possibility of automation of routine mental operations, and, therefore, liberation of a person’s creative potential. As noted by N. Raduzhnaya, the most creative representatives of the generation of digital natives, “consider technologies not just as devices and soft needed for communication; for them it is a way to improve life, something that helps make the right choices, as well as contribute to the development of the society” [18]. According to E. Inozemtseva, it is

"the first and the only generation that sincerely wants to make the world and the country a betterplace» [20]. Summing up our considerations on the transformation of the society passing from the industrial to the information age, we feel obliged to emphasize the controversial social changes related to the process of thinking and communication of humans. The first change is acceleration of thinking and a passage from text-based thinking to clip thinking. The second is visualization of messages, filling of those with illustrations of feelings and emotions, which requires significantly less mental and creative costs than the traditional epistolary genre. The third change, which is a consequence of the first and the second trend, is actualization of rational attitude to personal resources in general and the creative resource in the process of communication in particular.

#### 4. Results

The authors of this paper make an attempt to consider the features of communication of a modern human based on a very popular theory of generations of Howe and Strauss supply chain management [21]. However, before analyzing the communication-related differences between generations in the framework of the Howe-Strauss theory, we will consider the content and the meaning of the concept of human generations and the logic of interaction between those in the process of social development. Proceeding from the theory of transformation of industrial society into information society, we believe it to be logical and expedient to consider this transition process in the context of global historical succession of generations and relations between those. For instance, Marx and Engels define human history as "nothing but the succession of the separate generations, each of which exploits the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity"[22]. Thus, the renowned scientists rightfully consider the succession of generations as a fundamental basis of not only reproduction of the human society, but also its development. At the same time, the quoted authors define generations as historical subjects transforming the social activity, the latter being considered an essential feature of a human being. If

the social activity changes, the person involved in it also changes. That is, if a generation "modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity" (Ibid), this generation also transforms, becomes qualitatively different from the previous one. It should be noted here that a significantly greater difference can be noted in the next generation, born and shaped in the qualitatively different social environment. Such perspective sheds light on the origins of communication-related differences between the current and the previous generation. However, in order to specifically address the problem of communication of generations, we need to consider the concept of "generation" with account of its multidimensional nature. Most generally, the term "generation" describes very diverse facets of age-related relationships in society. We will consider four aspects of use of this concept in social communications:

- 1) in case the population is broken down into age groups, a generation may mean the period from birth to sexual maturity;
- 2) a generation can be a loose definition of an age cohort: children, old people, young people;
- 3) the term "generation" may be used in the ontogenetic context: as life expectancy of a person (and their peers). In this case, they speak of a "chronological generation";
- 4) The term "generation" may also be used as a metaphor, i.e. in a symbolic meaning. For instance, the "powerful and valiant tribe" of heroes of the Patriotic War of 1812, or "the generation of the Great Patriotic War victors".

In the context of the topic of our research, what appears to be relevant for us, are the distinctive features of people born within the same period of time. Approaching the concept of generations, we address the theory proposed by the American sociologists Neil Howe and William Strauss, which dates back to 1991 [21]. Although the theory is not very strict from the scientific point of view, and though it lacks the necessary and sufficient empirical justification, its conclusions proved to be very timely and intuitively understandable. Moreover, the ideas of the said authors happened to be in high demand and were quickly picked up not only by journalists and popularizers of science, but also by specialists in various fields of social communications. It is generally believed that the above "theory of generations" emerged at the intersection of several fields of study including

economics, demography, history, and mass communication theory. What Neil Howe and William Strauss (Ibid) were concerned about, was a "generation gap" that was not associated with the age-related contradictions. It was not about the difference between children and parents, who have different roles, irrespective of what sort of upbringing they receive.

In their writings, the authors define the term "generation" as people born within a certain period. Such period makes approximately 20 years and embraces one "phase of life": childhood, young age (including teen years and adolescence), the medium age, or the old age. According to this theory, values in a person's life make the core or the nucleus, around which attitudes, beliefs, or needs of a person are centered (the authors' interpretation). Those are the values that work as a so-called filter in the choice of a person's goals in life. Accordingly, those are the values and their homogeneity, and not the age that shape and define a generation. A change in values entails a transformation in the field of communications. Generation-related values are shaped in the age of 10 to 12. Those are conditioned by different circumstances (of economic, political, social, and technological nature) and the process of upbringing in the family as well as at educational institutions (such as kindergarten and school), which play quite a significant role. In the course of the process of acquiring values, a child is unable to assess what is happening, however, he or she learns the most effective life patterns. The values define a person's behavior, which includes the communication-related features, the ways of solving conflict situations, the features of development and motivation, the principles of perception of information, and consumer preferences. Sociologists distinguish between generations X, Y and Z. Below we are trying to present a detailed picture of these three generations. *Generation X (born in 1963 to 1984)*. The maturing of Generation X in Russia hit the years of the "cold war", the Perestroika, and the transition to market economy. The distinctive features of this generation include openness to changes, individualism, and pragmatism. The X people are also sometimes referred to as "children with a key necklace", which implies that they were left for themselves from morning till late evening when their parents came home from work. During the day they were learning to be independent staying on their own,

coming home from school, doing their homework, heating or making their lunch, planning their free time, etc. This explains the phenomenon of their early becoming independent and their inclination for paddling their own canoe. Gen X highly appreciate their time, however, they do not refuse from live communication. The information society has undoubtedly affected these people; however, this impact is smaller than in the case of the other two generations considered. The Gen X people are quite comfortable both in situations of a face-to-face talk or an online chat room. *Generation Y (born in 1983 to 2000)*. Generation Y witnessed the collapse of the USSR, and the change of the Russian economic and political model. They witnessed the rapid development of the Internet, mobile communications, and digital technologies. Having gone through so many changes, this category of citizens has no belief in long-term perspectives and does not make long-standing plans. Generation Y is the first generation that shattered the pillars of traditional communication in a significant way. These people spend a lot of time online, and increasingly prefer texting to live communication, their real emotions being replaced with emoticons. Y people are able to check any information by means of accessing the Internet. They do not trust anyone, unless they find the corresponding confirmation in the virtual space. The representatives of the Y generation are a little bit more selfish, they feel like standing out and being special. *Generation Z (born within the period of time starting from 2000s)*. Generation Z is being shaped in the country slowly getting out of a deep economic crisis and striving for stability. The vertical of the state power is becoming more imminent, while the state apparatus is gaining power. Smaller companies tend to be absorbed by major chains. However, from the political viewpoint, the situation can be characterized as stable. According to forecasts made by researchers, the representatives of the Z generation are likely to become idealists. They tend to become full-fledged, free, and purposeful individuals only in the virtual space, which they easily and naturally access. It is a generation of creators, artists, and musicians. Their world is a world created by them for their own selves, which exists in the virtual networks. Accordingly, extra communication may be perceived as an unwanted duty. According to the Federal State Statistics Service (Rosstat), as of January 1, 2018, the number of people that may be referred to generation Y amounts to about 38.7



million people, the generation X, about 29.4 million people, and the generation Z, about 44.6 million people. The percentage of representatives of the said generations in the total population of Russia (143 700 000 people) is as follows: Generation Y makes 30.5%, Generation X makes 28.7%, and Generation Z makes 36.3%. The authors of this paper conducted an analysis of communication activities of different generations in the following social networks: Facebook,

Vkontakte, Instagram, Odnoklassniki. The research embraced over 120 profiles of representatives of the generations considered. The parameters considered in the analysis of messages included the number of words in a message, the emotional intensity (evaluated on the basis of the approach proposed by the authors), the use of photos, graphic elements, and accompanying video and audio materials (See Table 1).

Table1. Comparative analysis of the communication-related features of messages in social networks manifested by different generations in Russia (the authors' interpretation)

	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Average number of words	43	5	2
Use of emoticons	1	1	6
Average use of photographs in a message	3	1	2
Average number of posts per day	Not more than 1	Not more than 3	1
Use of music (average number of links)	0	5	7
Use of videos	0	1	1
Emotional intensity	high	medium	neutral

In addition, the authors conducted a survey among representatives of different generations, asking the respondents about the frequency and the amount of time spent in social networks. As well, the face-to-face survey made it possible for us to reveal the emotional intensity of messages generated. In order to determine the correspondence between the emotions experienced

by people and those indicated in text messages, the authors used a special parameter defined as "emotional identity." Using this indicator, we checked the correspondence between the real emotions and the graphic symbols (smileys and emoticons), as well as the accompanying text. The interviews involved more than 180 people. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table2. Results of the survey concerning the frequency of accessing social networks, the time spent in such networks, and the emotional identity manifested by different generations (the authors' interpretation)

	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Average time spent in social networks	1.8 hours	6.5 hours	2.2 hours
Average frequency of accessing social networks per day	11	36	23
Emotional identity	identical	non-identical	non-identical
Preferred type of communication	real	virtual	virtual

## 5. Conclusions

The research brought us to the following theoretical conclusions. First. The features observable at the stage of transition of the society into the information age include acceleration of mental activity, fragmented perception of reality, and dominating clip consciousness, characteristic of all target audiences distinguished by the communications industry based on the supply chain management. Second. In the information society, the forms of intersubjective communication are changing in a significant way. In the context of the new communication culture, visualization of messages can be observed: the meanings and feelings are presented in the form of graphic images. Third. The change in the format of communications in the conditions of unprecedented intensity of information flows, is related to actualization of rational attitude to the creative resource of a person. The results of the empirical research

brought us to the following conclusions. The communication-related features of Generation X include long-term emotional attention, the desire to use various communications, the inclination for transmitting information in the text format without cluttering it with emoticons and additional visual elements. Besides, the communication performed by X people in social networks is normally not much dependent on ethical obligations. In their virtual communications, Gen X can easily ignore some repost of a close friend or acquaintance, a message describing their feelings, or a happy holiday greeting [23]. Such ignoring is believed to cause no harm to their relationship with the authors of the ignored messages. This generation showed the highest level of involvement in face-to-face interpersonal relationships. At the same time, it should be noted that the real emotional state of X people almost completely corresponds to the text and graphic images that they use (emoticons and smileys). In the survey, the

representatives of this generation, would definitely prefer face-to-face communication to online interaction. If X people are interested in communicating with a specific target audience segment, they prefer to give more text information, saturating it with additional details and not forgetting about emotions. Naturally, they always prefer live communication (meetings, face-to-face marketing). Generation Y can be characterized by such features as superficial attention and replacement of live communication with online communication. At the same time, they care for the opportunity to plan their communication and build it in an efficient way. Y people show a strong tendency for substituting their real emotions with graphical images of feelings that are supposed to be suitable in the given context. The representatives of this generation tend to simplify and visualize their messages using a language relevant for the target audience. Since one of the features of Generation Y is clip thinking, this segment uses textual information much less than Generation X. Messages emitted by representatives of the Y Generation can lack coherence both in the stylistic sense and content-wise. The emotions displayed in the process of communication do not correspond to real feelings. Much preference is given to photos, graphic images, videos, and music. Generation Y speaks the language of metaphors, "trendy clichés", and fashionable phrases. Y people tend to hide their true emotions and feelings. In order to build successful communication with this segment, a format with dominating visual images can be recommended. This format can include graphic images depicting some points, while verbal information should be minimal. Generation Z is characterized by brevity of initial attention, the desire to have the opportunity to choose and participate in communication rather than be a passive object thereof, the inclination for visual communication using a language familiar to the specific target audience. Unlike Generation Y, Generation Z tends not to load their communications with meaning. This generation preserves the clip format of perception of reality, however, it becomes even more simplified. The use of text is reduced to a minimum. The emotional load is low; the symbolic images do not correspond to real emotions experienced by people. This segment prefers virtual communication, which should be characterized as poor in terms of its information content and emotional intensity. Such communication is perceived as psychologically safe [24]. It should be emphasized that incredibly often the avatar that a person uses does not correspond to their real face (in the studied sample, this was observed in 87% of cases). The recommendations for building communications with

Generation Z imply using as many pictures and as few words as possible. The emotional subtext is not as important for this generation as for the other segments; however, it should be fully consistent with their values and interests. The data obtained are completely relevant for Russia, as the analysis was carried out in different regions of the Russian Federation.

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