

PAPER

VIRTUAL IDENTITY OF THE POPULATION OF KHORAZM AND THE FORMATION OF ONLINE COMMUNITIES IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Abstract

Among the major global transformations of the 21st century is the emergence and development of Internet communities. Today, the process of forming online communities can be viewed as generating new forms of ethnic identity. This article examines the rise and popularization of social networks and virtual communities, as well as the promotion of online culture within small ethnic groups, interpreting them as a distinct identity shaped by the Internet and social media. The analysis is carried out using the example of the people of the Khorezm oasis.

Key words: Virtual ethnicity, national internet, virtual identity, Khorezm and Khorezms.

INTRODUCTION

According to recent studies on Internet communities and social networks, the Internet creates ethnic spaces that are not confined by the territorial boundaries of any particular state. It revitalizes and strengthens inter-ethnic relations among representatives of diverse social structures, while also serving as a consolidating and integrative force that provides a basis for the formation of network identity in processes such as acculturation. Researchers emphasize that the most

significant criterion in the functioning of virtual ethnic communities within social networks lies in the establishment of relationships that generate unique ideas and foster inter-ethnic interaction. A. V. Golovnev and S. Yu. Belorusova, in their work *Virtual Ethnicity and Cyberethnography* [1; 36], analyze the concepts of “webnetnik,” “virtual identity,” and “network identity.” They argue that the manifestation of ethnic identity in social networks is becoming increasingly widespread, one of the main reasons being that, in real life, ethnic groups often face discomfort, discrimination, and

Compiled on: November 1, 2025.

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other challenges, while in virtual spaces ethnic identity is expressed more freely—both at the level of individual users and within entire “virtual ethnic communities.”

In his work *Virtual Identity of Russian Germans*, researcher T. S. Kisser explores the relationship between the activation and deactivation of virtual ethnic identity among the Volga Germans. At present, this ethnic group is highly dispersed, residing not only across various regions of the Russian Federation but also in different countries around the world. Due to this territorial fragmentation, the role of social networks in strengthening ethnic cohesion has become particularly significant. Kisser emphasizes that the Volga Germans actively utilize social media platforms to preserve and promote their cultural heritage. According to the researcher, the highest level of activation of virtual ethnic identity within this group is manifested in the aspiration and motivation to create a “Virtual Republic of Volga Germans,” envisioned as an online space where users can symbolically engage with and experience their ethnic identity [2; 108].

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE ANALYSIS

Z. A. Mahmutov examines the concept of virtual or network identity through the example of Tatar national communities on the social network VKontakte. In his research, he introduces the notion of the “national Internet,” which he interprets as a collection of Internet resources directed toward a specific audience. According to Mahmutov, the “national Internet” is composite in nature, consisting of various parts or segments. Within this framework, the ethnic Internet and the “national Internet” represent the most significant communicative segments of communities, serving as platforms for interaction, information exchange, and the articulation of ethnic identity. Such digital spaces enable users to actively engage with others on the basis of a shared ethnic identity and to articulate and reaffirm their sense of belonging. Consequently, in virtual communities the manifestation and activation of ethnic identity occurs, influencing and interacting with other communities as well.

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note that the most popular types of online ethnic communities among users are those organized on the basis of territorial and ethno-cultural aspects, communities of ethnic groups residing outside their historical homeland, as well as virtual groups emphasizing shared ethnic identity. The scholars conclude that the “national Internet” is primarily formed and developed around the issue of user self-identification and the activation of ethnic belonging, a process most visibly expressed among younger users [3].

The main spheres in which users activate and display their ethnic identity include culture and religion, humor, as well as historical and political domains, all of which are expressed through user-generated content. It should be emphasized that “national Internet content” enables users not only to broadcast, transmit, and preserve their ethnic culture, but also to foster inter-ethnic relations, establish communities, and strengthen ties with representatives of their own nationality. In doing so, they are able to generate diverse forms of content reflecting their identity. Scholars argue that the “national Internet” not only activates ethnic identity, disseminates and preserves cultural traditions, unites society, and provides a platform for free expression and the search for like-minded individuals, but also contributes to the emergence of a new form of “virtual ethnicity.” This virtual ethnicity is rooted in the preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage of various peoples, thereby creating a unique phenomenon. Consequently, civic activism and “civic identity” are also strengthened, while the “national Internet” serves as a political and cultural information tool that supports the preservation of national and ethnic sentiments, particularly among smaller ethnic groups.

I. A. Razumova and O. A. Bodrova in their research entitled “Internet technologies in ethnocultural branding” [4; 105] emphasize that “Internet technologies” are an integral part of the socio-cultural system at the corresponding stage of the development of social networks, the Internet and virtual communities.

O. N. Astafieva, under the concept of “virtual identity” understands “a component of a person’s socio-cultural identity” [5; 120], which means

that he belongs to a certain (not always recorded in real society) community. They believe that the computer virtual space and information-communication environment of the Internet is mainly necessary for the consumption and transmission of knowledge and information.

T. Flenina [6;76] emphasizes virtual identity as "a whole set of textual and visual components of a person's network image, reflecting the real and moral aspects of a person, the level of feeling of identity". explains how effects are created.

In her research, L. A. Fadeeva reveals virtual identity as a variation of online identity and "the virtual space of information-communication flows is the environment and, at the same time, a place for self-identification describes "being a guide"[7; 67].

According to A.E. Chichkin and E.P. Belinskaya, virtual or network identities are related to the existence or formation of "psychological masks that is, virtual identity allows to "seem like another person "to be someone"[8; 431]. The spread of social networks is not related to the need to establish communication through their use, but to the desire of users to spend more time in the space of virtual disclosure. A person's active use of social networks allows to significantly determine the processes of personal self-expression in the virtual space.

Under the concept of ethnic tourism, researcher Lisa Nakamura states in her research [9;9]: the possibility of reflecting the ideal image of real ethnic identity, the transformation of ethnic identity in virtual space, users have a new experience through identity is represented by the need to be, where the new "ethnic identity" defines the terms of virtual identity, network identity, virtual communities and reveals its functions.

Spanish researcher Manuel Castells [9;57] in his researches, firstly, stated that "virtual" or "network" identities are the result of processes such as informationization and digitization.

Second, the researcher argues that the information and network Internet societies are the same, that the network Internet community is a social structure based on the Internet itself, which is managed, regulated and controlled by information and communication technologies, the main aspects of which are microelectronics, as well

as digital and computer networks. 'lib transmits data based on the knowledge accumulated at the nodes of these networks, ltb explains.

When ethnologists and sociologists study ethnic and civic identity, the main aspects are studying "signs" and "symbols" that are direct participants in the formation of ethnic or civic identity, from socially organized cultural features to general social and political ones. they research ethnic groups in various modern sciences up to the goals.

The concept of ethnic identity is defined as a form of social organization of cultural differences. Informal leaders of communities, political elites, as well as national intellectuals argue that it allows the study of ethnicity by focusing on cultural elements associated with the heroic and dramatic past of members of a particular ethnic group.

Emphasizing that the uniqueness of online communities is manifested only in the context of interaction with other social groups, they explain the emergence of virtual ethnicity or cyber ethnicity.

American researcher Arjuna Appaduraya [11;20] identified the phenomenon of "global cultural flow" in his work, which, according to the author, creates worlds of individuals, users of social networks and participants of online communities in real offline space that are not tied to a particular region.

According to the author, the spread of deterritorialized groups and diasporic diversity leads to the emergence of local and new translocal solidarity communities.

Through the information space, virtual ethnic communities allow users to search and store information related to social networks and the Internet ethnic group; political discussions provide an opportunity for the expression of a political or ethnopolitical position by users of Internet communities; believes that virtual ethnic communities provide opportunities for users. Also, the author emphasizes that it helps to search, communicate and form inter-ethnic relations with representatives of one's ethnic group, to independently form media content that includes symbols and meanings shared by the ethnic group.

DISCUSSION

According to psychologists, the high importance of the virtual social media space for representatives of the Z generation is dangerous due to the decrease in adaptation to real life, changes in life directions, and age-related tasks that are not solved, and they want to create an identity in the virtual space of social networks. may be the basis.

Based on the opinions of the researchers mentioned above, virtual ethnicity represents a set of complex factors of the ethnic identity of individuals using social networks. The concept of virtual ethnicity can be understood as a form of real ethnic identity in the offline space, such as specific place and time of residence, ethnic or racial affiliation, individual characteristics of socio-economic situation.

According to statistics, 93.6% of the population of Khorezm use the Internet, 90.7% of the population visit social networks every week, and 82.8% every day.

It can be seen from these data that the virtual identity of Khorezm residents and the formation of online communities in social networks, the openness of information sources on the Internet and the increasing popularity of online services, on the one hand, allow effective solutions to various life problems, and on the other hand, mass virtual by users shows that it leads to an increase in the time spent in the space.

With the increase in the flow of information on the Internet and the spread of gadgets that allow one to remain uncontrolled in the virtual space, contradictions in the development of personality among the population are clearly manifested.

Analyzing the Impact of Social Networks on Values and Identity Based on the Offline Mode of the Online World Because social media is no longer an intermediary but an integral part of an individual's life, people cannot separate their activity in online communities from their offline community. The Internet and social networks allow individuals to find groups with similar interests and tastes and to join communities that cannot be accessed offline. Which allows it to grow and develop with the support of those with similar ideals. However, when the process takes place online, the number of people who can be influenced by young people

increases from their small circle of friends and family members to the potential size of thousands of "friends" and "followers". As an example, the presence of 160,951 members of the official channel "Khorazmliklar" in the Telegram messenger means that every message posted on this channel, the first, largest and most popular information provider in the Khorezm region, can be distributed to as many people per second.

It is known that the Facebook page "Khorazm and Khorezmliklar" has about 50,000 members <https://www.facebook.com/groups/khorezmian> "Let's leave a garden" held on March 1, 2019 through this page, all of Khorezm region in the charity flashbomb campaign promoting the planting of tree seedlings in the districts of Khorezm, it helped to spread the geolocation of sapling growers and 3,701 people to use this information. Daniyoz Rozmetov's humorous content on the author's Telegram channel known as "Uch zamon"[11] (<https://t.me/uchzamon>), which was opened in 2013, is causing the ethnic characteristics of Khorezm residents to spread widely in online communities. Local features specific to Khorezm are always broadcasted on this channel. Let's give an example." Only Khorezmians; When you go home, they put all the goodies in front of you and then say "Take it" only once. When they come to your house, they will eat the food on the table even if you don't say "Take it". If you serve half a cup of tea, they say "fill up the tea." If there is no bread left to eat at home or if they are confused about what to cook, they cook pilaf and eat it. Although they speak the Khorezm dialect, they consider themselves both Uzbek and Khorezm. Showing Ymirta barak as a "brand" in the republic, they themselves, in addition to "ymirta barak" also called "kotir barak" "ovuz barak" "tukhum barak" "kadi barak" "gok barak" They cook and eat different types of "meat barak". In other places, they know that the food called "egg barak" is actually "ymirta barak" and the food called "egg barak" is something else. When they say "Aka" they mean "Dada" and when they say "Agha" they mean "Brother". They are one of the few peoples in the world who eat raw meat. "Ijjan" made from raw meat is usually served to the dearest guests.

There are about 100 types of melons, and among

them they chose the "gurvak" type of melon as their symbol. Gurvak can be eaten only for a short period of time, that is, only when it is ripe. Therefore, it is almost not "exported". It can be noted that they are making their contribution.

RESULTS

Social media offers great opportunities to connect with online communities on a larger scale, how to behave or look in order to get 'likes', 'subs' or 'photos' from an online audience. Young people who try to explore their identity through learning can fully express themselves and realize their potential.

As the main features of online communities, it is possible to cite promotion and propaganda activities carried out on the pages of the communities. It is known that propaganda is a technology for influencing the minds of large groups of people, which means that symbols are spread on contradictory grounds that have no alternative.

Based on the analysis of the materials of online communities, we have studied the specific features of using the promotion strategy. They are as follows: - taking into account the fact that different groups of the society perceive the message differently, efforts are made to influence as many people as possible, to expand the sphere of influence; - any campaign relies on an active group of supporters of the idea. It can be a party, public organization, etc. That is, supporters who are part of the population actively participate in promoting the idea among the entire population.

-Without supporters, it is impossible to promote an idea, to fill it with real meaning; - (Almost all failed social media campaigns are due to the lack of an active following group);

- propaganda is not against "public opinion but replaces the content of the message with a language that the people can understand, keeping the form close to the population and understandable;

-propaganda should be focused on the most serious problem of society at the moment and it cannot be used for a long time. Society cannot always be in a state of mobilization. It is considered that society is tired of constant appeals to "problems of transition" or "calls to cope with temporary difficulties";

Choosing a promotion strategy in online

communities depends on assessing the state of social processes in society and the relevance of the topic for citizens. In the world of online media, it is important for each ideology to create a strategy to convey the key messages it expresses in a concise form to the consumer's mind in the most effective way.

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