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# Social Network of the Ukrainian Teenagers Whose Parents Are Long Time Abroad

# Yuriy Sydoryk & Nadiia Kogutiak

### Abstract

Background. Long-term absence of parents which is accompanied by their exception from the system of a child's attachment and his/her enhanced orientation on the agemates. Methods 39 teenagers, whose parents constantly lived together with family, (Average age = 13,15±0,93) and 30 teenagers in the families of which at least one of the parents works abroad for a long period (three and more years), and that is why lives long time far from family participated in the research.

Results. It was found that there are no differences in interpersonal distances in the groups of teenagers, whose parents live together with family and respondents, whose parents long time live and work abroad; statistically dependent differences between the number of persons like "brother" (p = 0.015) and "friend" (p = 0.018) were determined.

Conclusions. It can be assumed that teenagers' parents that live together with family do not spare the proper attention to the quality of parents-child interaction (at least in rural districts); co-operating with the agemates contains more features, which, however, cannot be described by the methods used in research. This pilotage research was performed on the statistically unreliable study samples. Therefore, the obtained results can only be used for planning and further researches.

The prolonged stay of one or both parents abroad is becoming wide-spread in Ukraine over the last 20 years. In such situation, usually grandparents take care of a child. In our opinion it can result in the parent's exception from the system of a child's attachment and his enhanced orientation on the agemates.

Goals and hypotheses. The goal of the investigation was to study the differences in the indices of quantitative composition and distance in the social network of teenagers, whose parents live together with family and respondents, whose parents long time live and work abroad. In particular, we tested the hypothesis  $(H_0)$  of absence of differences in depiction of the social network by persons under investigation and their quantity.

Definition of notions. Social network was regarded as the structure of respondent's connections and important and/or authoritative for his/her life persons. Research unites or "knots" in the social network can be the separate persons (Abercrombie, 2000; Pescosolido, 2006).

<u>Method</u>: evaluation of the quantitative characteristics of the social network was carried out by applying the following techniques:

the questionnaire, in which respondents indicated their age, gender, family structure, joint or remote (abroad) place of parents' residence; there were also

- randomly mentioned significant / authoritative persons from the inner circle (mother, father, sister, brother, grandfather, grandmother, neighbor, friends, etc);
- project method of diagnosis of interpersonal distances, in which respondents were asked to identify a comfortable distance for communication with the persons mentioned in the questionnaire. Direction: Please imagine that the circle represented below is a large room with several doors. You are in the center of this room. Persons from your lists enter the room by turns. The first person from your list enters the room and moves slowly towards you. Stop him/her (mark a point and number of the appropriate person from your list inside or outside the circle) at the distance where you wish to talk to him/her.

Then the rest persons from your list enter the room. Identify the points where they have to stop about you. Data processing resided in counting the number of persons under study and in the measurement of the distance between the respondener and other persons, which he placed on the drawing.

<u>Sampling.</u> The study sample included the pupils of the 7-8th forms of a secondary school of one of the villages of Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukraine). 76 pupils from the total number (81 pupils) agreed to participate (7 refused).

The results were grouped into two subsamples according to the criterion of pupil's joint or remote living with parents. The first group consisted of 39 adolescents whose parents lived with the family (MVC =  $13,15\pm0,93$  years), on grounds of gender identity the proportional equality was preserved (19 boys and 20 girls).

The second group included 30 adolescents (14 boys and 16 girls), in the families of which at least one of the parents works abroad for a long period (three and more years), and that is why lives long time far from family (Mage = 13,2±0,86 years). Statistically there were no significant differences between the 1st and 2nd groups in terms of age and gender (Student's t-tests).

**Results.** Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the data.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the data

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Mother	69	,1	6,2	,826	1,0701	1,145
Father	63	,2	3,6	,943	,7186	,516
Brother	47	,3	12,6	1,832	2,4497	6,001
Sister	39	,5	6,1	1,682	1,0602	1,124
Grandfather	43	,2	7,5	1,984	1,6974	2,881
Grandmother	57	,0	6,4	1,582	1,3675	1,870
Classmate	36	,6	15,8	3,678	4,1465	17,194
Friend	61	,1	15,8	1,978	2,8418	8,076
Unkles/aunts	28	,4	5,6	2,200	1,3227	1,750
Neighbours	33	1,1	8,6	3,555	2,4539	6,022

The nature of the distribution of the obtained distances between "I" and members of network was determined by the use of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Analysis of the statistical differences between the distances of the respondents in both groups was performed by Student's t-tests (normal distribution) and Mann-Whitney Test (in the absence of the normal distribution). Differences in interpersonal distances with significant/authoritative persons of the respondents were not found.

The applying of Pearson Chi-Square helped to reveal the statistically significant differences (table 2 and 3) between the number of available social network persons like "brother" (p = 0.015) and "friend" (p = 0.018).

Table 2. Frequency of figures "Brother" in both group

Frequency		0	1	2	Total
Group _	1	10	29	0	39
Group =	2	12	14	4	30
Total		22	43	4	69

Table 3. Frequency of figures "Friend" in both group

Freque	ency	,0	1,0	2,0	3,0	Total
Group .	1,0	10	21	6	2	39
	2,0	4	26	0	0	30
Tot	al	14	47	6	2	69

# Discussion.

The results showed that there are no differences in interpersonal distances in groups of adolescents whose parents live together with the family (group 1) and respondents whose parents long time live and work abroad (group 2). It suggests that the social network of adolescents in both groups is based on similar interpersonal relationships with related / authoritative persons.

It can be assumed that teenagers' parents that live together with family do not spare the proper attention to the quality of parents-child interaction (at least in rural districts). Differences in the number of reported persons like "brother" and "friend" in the social networks of adolescents suggest that interaction with agemates has more features which, however, cannot be described with the use of noted methods (method is not responsive to these characteristics).

**Study restrictions.** This pilotage research was performed on the statistically unreliable study samples. Therefore, the obtained results can only be used for planning and further researches.

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