

## TEACHER IN THE SYSTEM OF ADOLESCENTS' SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR PREVENTION

*Anatoly Merenkov<sup>1</sup>, Ilya Levchenko<sup>2</sup>, Elena Grunt<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Ural Federal University name after the first President of Russian Federation  
B.N. Eltsin, Yekaterinburg, Russia, e-mail: anatoly.mer@gmail.com  
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5900-0863

<sup>2</sup>Ural Federal University name after the first President of Russian Federation  
B.N. Eltsin, Yekaterinburg, Russia, e-mail: ilevchenko08@mail.ru  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3619-4797

<sup>3</sup>Ural Federal University name after the first President of Russian Federation  
B.N. Eltsin, Yekaterinburg, Russia, e-mail: helengrunt2002@yandex.ru  
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2284-543X

**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the sociological analysis of the issue of identifying the school teachers' readiness level to organize effective prophylactic work to prevent suicidal acts among adolescents in the face of increasing influence of information on the Internet and social networks on their behavior. Today, the Internet is in the first place among the mass-media for the rapid search of information by a person. In modern conditions, the Internet provides ample opportunities for adolescents to search various kind of information, some of which calls adolescents for suicide. Parents and teachers cannot always track what kind of information a teenager receives from the Internet. All this testifies to the relevance of the research topic. Meanwhile, this issue has not been sufficiently studied in Russian sociology. The major research objectives were to study respondents' ideas about the reasons causing adolescents to suicide and the role of school teachers in preventing suicidal behaviour.

The study was conducted in 2017-2018 in the city of Yekaterinburg, in Russia. The research methodology combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The primary data was collected using questionnaires and in depth-interviews. The in-depth interviews (14) were organized for school teachers to obtain information on the degree of their readiness to engage in suicide prevention among adolescents.

Results. The study has shown that the respondents' life experience acquired in the process of transition from school to professional education at a college or at the university affects the suicide causes assessment. The students of these educational organizations revealed more complete ideas about the influence of such factors as loneliness and the level of development of rational thinking on the occurrence of suicidal attitudes under the influence of subjects involved in their formation through the

Internet. No matter the age, young people do not believe that teachers can professionally develop adolescents' skills to resist attempts to impose the destructive behaviour using the Internet technologies. The study has revealed that the respondents believe that only their parents are interested in the inward man and they can be engaged in the prevention of suicidal behaviour.

Teachers note that school did not develop a system of professional educational work with children of different ages. Nobody taught them how to identify the nature and content of children's communication with different subjects in social networks.

The main task of the school is still getting students knowledge in various disciplines, and it does not form the individual's life values and attitudes in the process of growing up. The respondents did not single out those subjects of schoolchildren' socialization who possess the necessary knowledge, techniques to successfully develop resilience, and to resist attempts to impose an attitude on the voluntary deprivation of one's life.

The system of training teachers for teaching and educating students of different ages, whose socialization takes place in qualitatively different sociocultural conditions, requires taking into account the influence of social networks on the content of their value orientations and attitudes. One of the leading tasks of a teacher's activity is to develop the ability of adolescents to select the information flow received on the Internet, that provides increased self-confidence, development of will and patience in overcoming difficulties and the ability to appreciate life in all its manifestations. In this regard, there is a need for teachers to acquire the skills of independent analysis of texts and messages appearing on the Internet, social networks, identifying among them aimed at establishing in the minds of students' attitudes towards destructive behaviour.

**Keywords:** suicide, adolescents, teacher, prevention of adolescent suicide

### **Introduction**

The Internet provides adolescents with qualitatively new opportunities to receive information not only for broadening the general horizon, solving educational issues, but also solving the issues that appear when they communicate with people in the process of self-affirmation as a person. It is not always possible to get the moral support from the parents, teachers and friends that is required the individual in a difficult period of physical, mental, and social development at the age of 13-16. In this case, social networks, in which schoolchildren are already included in primary schools, can be considered as the mass-media for finding people who are ready to understand their difficulties and to offer options for overcoming them. In

this case, there is a danger of falling under the influence of subjects, who purposefully develop attitudes to a radical solution of life difficulties by depriving themselves of life. In the early 2000s, reports about suicides of 14-16 years old children as a result of special psychological treatment by groups and individuals using Internet resources appeared in the domestic media (Lyubov EB, 2016; Myagkov A.Yu., 2003).

E. Durkheim (1994) and modern sociologists (Gulin AK, Morev MV, 2008; Myagkov A.Yu., Zhuravleva S.L., 2003)) analyze factors and causes of the younger generation suicidal attempts. Russian (Mikhailina M.Yu., Nelyubina Ya.K., 2018; Polskaya NA, 2018 etc.) and foreign (Beautrais AL 2003; Chesin MS, Jeglic EL, 2012; Hirsch JK, Webb JR, Jeglic EL, 2011; Mortier P., Cuijpers P., Kiekens G., 2018; O'Neill, S., McLafferty, M., Ennisa, E., 2018; Pollinger A., Hendin HH, Mann JJ, 2003) psychologists and sociologists identify features of schoolchildren' and students' suicidal behaviour and substantiate effective directions of social and psychological activity in their prevention. Foreign (Collings S., Taylor B. (eds.), 2013; Ciffone J., 2007; Ward BR, 1995; School Interventions for Prevent Youth Suicide, 2016.) and Russian (Solomin, VP, Lavrenko, AV, Smorgunova, V.Yu., 2012; Shamardina, MV, Materova, TA, Pershina, NA, 2016) teachers and social workers offer various measures to prevent suicidal behaviour of children and adolescents in educational institutions.

Although the suicidal behaviour has already been studied rather extensively this phenomenon, however, requires further study. To the best of our knowledge, the teachers' role in prevention of adolescents' suicidal behaviour in modern Russia still remain to be revealed. Therefore, the purpose of the present work was to analyse this issue in detail.

#### **Objectives / Purpose of the study**

The main purposes of the research were to study the teachers' activity in prevention schoolchildren's suicidal behavior and the role of the Internet in this process.

#### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in 2017-2018 in the city of Yekaterinburg, in Russia. The research methodology combined both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The primary data was collected using questionnaires and in depth-interviews. 788 young people aged 15to20 years were questioned on the basis of quota sampling with the aim of identifying their ideas about the reasons causing adolescents to suicide, the role of parents and school teachers in preventing suicidal behaviour. Among the respondents there are 35% of grade students, 30% colleges' students and 35% university students. 53% of the respondents are female and 47% are male. The in-depth interviews (14) were organized for school teachers to

obtain information on the degree of their readiness to engage in suicide prevention among adolescents.

### **Results / Findings**

The study has revealed the differences between the respondents' opinion about the reasons for encouraging adolescents' suicide, depending on age, gender, and the education they receive. Men believe that the main reasons are as follows: the emotional impulse caused by the desire to end the suffering that a young man is going through in a difficult life situation (44%); loss of self-control (33%) and feeling of complete loneliness (28%). 49.8% of girls consider the emotional impulse to be the main reason; 37, 2% of the respondents indicate the role of loneliness and 32% of them consider the influence of the betrayal of a loved one as a key factor.

The survey has determined the age differences in the respondents' perceptions about the possible causes of adolescents' suicide. All the respondents put on the first place an emotional outburst, caused by a desire to put an end to life difficulties at once (47%). Meanwhile, with age, the number of those respondents who consider parents' misunderstanding of adolescents as the second most important factor decreases: from 31% among those aged 15–16 years, to 24% among respondents 19–20 years. Significant differences have been found in understanding the role of a rational search for ways to cope with the difficulties in life that are safe for life and health. 26% of the youngest age group respondents' distinguish this cause of suicide, and in the eldest - 33% of them.

Differences have also been found in the interpretation of the causes of suicidal behaviour depending on the respondents' study location (Table 1).

**Table 1 - Respondents' opinion on the reasons for encouraging adolescents' suicide**

Indicators	schoolchildren	college students	university students
Emotional impulse caused by the desire to escape from the difficulties of life	43,8	48,5	46,5
the full sense of loneliness	31,9	26,9	38,0
Loss of self-control	30,6	32,9	30,0
Inability to think rationally when solving personal problems	27,7	26,1	33,8
Treason loved one	26,6	29,4	25,8
Misunderstanding of family members	29,8	24,0	25,0
Inability to find positive in life	26,5	24,5	23,9
Betrayal of friends	20,9	14,7	13,7
Lack of experience in dealing with difficulties	20,3	15,2	17,8
The desire to punish those who hurt	11,1	9,8	14,5
Difficult to answer	13,7	11,8	5,4

The sum of answers exceeds 100%, since the respondent could choose several answers

On the one hand, similarity in opinions has been revealed regarding the role of such reasons as extremely negative emotional reaction, which leads to put an end to life difficulties, loss of control over their actions, inability to find positive in life and desire to take revenge on those who offended a teenager. On the other hand, in the process of receiving vocational education at colleges, at higher educational institutions that requires greater independence compared with schools, in relations with family members, other ideas are formed about the factors (causes) leading to a person's decision to voluntarily escape from his\ her life. Teachers note that modern schoolchildren have become more secretive: *"It is difficult to determine by behaviour what mood the children have. They express their emotions in social networks, they don't even initiate their friends to their problems. How to find out what's on their mind?"* (length of work 18 years). *"Parents should be interested in what is bothering the child, he\she is alone with them. We have 30 children in our class and our task is to teach them. We have no opportunity to find out with whom they communicate in social networks and for what reason, what concerns them ... Those who have an unstable mentality, decide to commit suicide "* (length of work 32 years). Teachers do not focus on internal causes that may induce a teenager to suicide, but try to point out their lack of opportunities to determine them.

This topic is tabooed and it is not the subject of discussion in the classroom and in families' communication, which significantly complicates the search among those around them whose can lead to the refusal of the adolescent to attempt suicide. 49% of schoolchildren, 57% of college students, and 40.3% of higher education institutions students believes that parents demonstrate real love for children. The positive influence of psychologists, if they work at schools, is indicated by 27% of the schoolchildren and by 35% the university students. It should be noted that 18.8% of schoolchildren note the positive role of social networks.

Teachers admit that they are not ready to engage in educational work in the face of increasing influence on the younger generation of social networks. 38% of young people note that prevention of suicide should include family conversations with children about the value of life, ways of developing will. 32% of the respondents believe that teachers and form masters should conduct special trainings with adolescents on overcoming difficulties of self-affirmation in the family, school community, friendly company, and social networks.

## Conclusion

The study has shown that the assessment of the suicide causes is affected by the life experience of the respondents, acquired in the process of transition from school to professional education at colleges or at the universities. The students of these educational organizations have more complete ideas about the influence of such factors as loneliness and the personal's rational thinking development affecting the occurrence of suicidal attitudes formed under the influence of the Internet. No matter the age, young people do not believe that teachers can professionally develop adolescents' skills to resist attempts to impose destructive behaviour affecting by Internet technologies. The study has elucidated that there is a lack of profession education system work with different age children to prevent suicidal thoughts and actions. No one trains teachers how to identify the nature and content of children's communication with different subjects in social networks.

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