Friendship As A Phenomenon Of Interpersonal Relations In Modern Society

Andreeva Nadezhda Vladimirovna¹, Belozerova Irina Aleksandrovna², Davityan Manushak Galustovna³, Krikun Vladimir Grigorievich⁴, Krikun Elena Vladimirovna⁵

¹Teacher, Department of non-infectious pathology, Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Belgorod State Agricultural University named after V. Gorin.

²Associate Professor, Department of Professional Education and Social and Pedagogical Disciplines, Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Belgorod State Agricultural University named after V. Gorin.

³Associate Professor, Department of Professional Education and Social and Pedagogical Disciplines, Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Belgorod State Agricultural University named after V. Gorin.

⁴Associate, Associate Professor of the Department of Theory and History of State and Law of the Belgorod University of Cooperation, Economics and Law.

⁵Associate Professor, Department of Professional Education and Social and Pedagogical Disciplines, Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education Belgorod State Agricultural University named after V. Gorin.

Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of such a form of interpersonal relations as friendship. At the beginning of the study, the authors consider a retrospective of the formation and understanding of the essence of friendship. The article analyzes the development of types of friendship in different age groups, the place of friendship in the leisure of modern Russians, the pros and cons of virtual friendship. Based on the gender approach to the genesis of friendship, the authors characterize such phenomena as female friendship and friendship between a man and a woman.

Keywords: friendship, friend, partnership, interpersonal communication, typology of friendship, virtual friendship, communication, female friendship, friendship between a man and a woman.

Relevance of the problem
The relevance of the research topic of friendship as a form of interpersonal relations is associated with the transformation of the values of friendship. In the 20th century, there was a noticeable tendency to replace friendship with partnership. The development of the dynamics of social relations and the active introduction of the Internet into the everyday life of an ordinary Russian has led to a new impetus to the
growing need for friendly relations. In the 21st century, the value of friendship as a form of interpersonal relationship is once again coming to the fore. These circumstances necessitate a return to the study of this problem.

**Aim of the article**
The aim of the study presented in this article is to consider the main characteristics and transformational trends of such a form of interpersonal communication as friendship, to characterize the types of friendship and to identify the value of friendship in modern society.

**Research methods**
The methodological foundations of the above research are connected with the philosophical and cultural approach, with the synergistic approach and the systematic approach. The empirical basis of this study was the results of our own sociological research conducted among full-time and part-time students of the Belgorod State Agrarian University in 2021. An important role in the conduct of the study was played qualitatively - the survey method of questioning, which made it possible to explore the opinions of respondents both on the topic as a whole and on individual issues. The sample is random. To process a sociological survey (round table, questioning), methods of mathematical statistics were used (n = 870).

**Main themes:** social philosophy, ethics.

**Introduction**
One of the central places in human life is occupied by interpersonal communication. Can be distinguished various forms of interpersonal communication, such as camaraderie, acquaintance, love, friendship. It is the last of these forms of interpersonal communication that is the object of our study. The importance of friendship is evidenced by the fact that on April 27, 2011, the UN General Assembly declared July 30 as the International Day of Friendship.

The reason for conducting this study was the analysis of the results of the round table "Friendship as a value of the modern worldview", which showed the sincere interest of students in the problem posed. In this regard, we decided to expand the study of the problem by conducting a more detailed study conducted among full-time and part-time students of the Belgorod State Agrarian University named after V.Ya. Gorin. Questioning students of the faculty of secondary specialized education helped to identify the specific features of youthful friendship (age group from 16 to 18 years old inclusive). The next group of respondents consisted of undergraduate and specialist students of the age group from 19 to 23 years old inclusive. The involvement of part-time students made it possible to analyze the attitude towards friendship among respondents aged 24 and older.

**Presentation of the main research material**
At all times, philosophers have spoken and continue to talk about the importance of friendship for a full human life. Modern philosophical dictionaries and ethics guides define friendship as a relationship between people based on mutual trust, affection, common interests [21]. However, if you pay attention to the history of the problem, you can see that the understanding of friendship has changed from century to century.

The origin of the word "friendship" is associated with the institution of the late birth society. It was interpreted as a relationship between representatives of the same family, sworn brothers. In antiquity,
friendship originally existed as a military partnership, where friends were united by a common activity. We can say that this period of history is characterized by the cult of heroic friendship. Over time, friendship becomes interpersonal. In it, along with traditional fidelity, emotional values are increasingly present, for example, mutual understanding. Since Socratic times, friendship has been viewed as a virtue and associated with the mutual affection of two or more people.

In the Middle Ages, the concept of "divine friendship" appears, which is opposed to the relationship of real people and expresses love for God. Friendship as a form of interpersonal relations also exists, but is class-based.

In the Renaissance, friendship is considered as the highest human feeling. The statement of M. Montaigne is indicative, for whom friendship is more significant than all other interpersonal relationships [17, p. 157]. The Age of Enlightenment associates friendship with morality and reason. It is regarded as the highest moral value and has no class origin. At the beginning of the 19th century, despite the rapid development of commodity-money relations, and perhaps despite them, a cult of lyrical friendship arose. The main burden of friendship was associated with self-knowledge, with self-disclosure of one's own "I" of the individual.

In the 20th century, after the establishment of Soviet power in Russia, the question of the priority of class, public interests over personal interests was put on the agenda. Friendship, as a form of interpersonal relations, did not coincide with the policy of the Communist Party. In the interpretation of this phenomenon, Soviet society returns to the ancient understanding of friendship as a kind of partnership, where everyone is united by a common idea, a common goal (building a new society), not without reason, the slogan becomes popular: “Human to human is a friend, comrade and brother”. In the future, in connection with the emergence of mass culture and the development of urbanization, the idea of the erosion of friendship as a form of interpersonal relations only intensified. It was believed that the anonymity of life in the metropolis, the growth of social mobility did not allow people to get to know each other better and led to the fact that friendship was replaced by comradely relations. In this regard, the reasoning of Antoine de Saint-Exupery in The Little Prince is very revealing that in modern society people have a habit of not creating things, but buying them ready-made in stores, but there are no stores where friends would trade and therefore people do not have more friends [8]. Today, a writer would be unspeakably glad that in spite of everything, friendship has not died.

Russia's transition to a market economy forced us to consider interpersonal relationships more realistically and prosaically. However, in the 21st century, people have not abandoned the desire for friendship; it is still considered by them as the most important value. When holding a round table among students of the Belgorod State Agrarian University. V.Ya. Gorin "Is friendship possible in the 21st century?" we noticed the genuine interest of young people in this topic. During the discussion, opposing points of view on this issue were expressed. There were those who believed that friendship was an outdated phenomenon. In modern society, it has outlived its usefulness. Today, collective solidarity is mistaken for friendship, leaving only professional relationships based on benefit or mutual benefit. But such opinions were in the minority. The bulk of the students vehemently defended the friendship, expressing their own opinions based on personal experience. Here are some examples. Solovyov Ilya, a 2nd year student of the Faculty of Agronomy, stated: “Friendship is very necessary in life! It is impossible to reveal all the secrets to parents, and a friend will always understand and support”. Anichina Maria, a 3rd year student of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, continued to defend friendship: “I have a real friend, she will not only help in difficult times, but will also be able to share my joy. Let me just say - friendship is needed!”. During the round table, such characteristic features of friendship as mutual
assistance, mutual understanding, joint leisure, coincidence of interests, mutual sympathy, trust, disinterestedness and others were most often named.

The data of the round table were confirmed by the results of a sociological survey that we conducted among students of the Belgorod State Agrarian University. V.Ya. Gorin full-time and part-time education, about what they do in their free time. Among all types of leisure activities, our respondents, regardless of age group, put communication with friends in the first place (53%). In second place were computer games (19%), followed by cultural and leisure activities, such as going to the cinema, coffee, aqua parks, etc. (16%), playing sports (9%), as well as reading fiction and other information (3%) (Figure 1). As our survey showed, friendship remains one of the main life values of modern Russians.

Figure 1 How do you spend your free time?

One can agree with the opinion of I.S. Kohn that "a new, more dynamic form of social relations has not destroyed the elementary need of an individual for warmth and spontaneity in relations with other people and has not led to the disappearance of the desire for reliable and constant confirmation of one's own feelings from other people and the desire to be close to those who evokes sympathy” [14].

The internet has revolutionized the way people communicate in the 21st century. It has become a means of not only mass but also interpersonal communication. Today, people use the Internet not only to find information, but also to maintain friendships or find new friends. Of course, virtual friendship has both its pros and cons.

To the positive aspects of virtual friendship can be included:
- virtual communication allows to communicate with friends who are at a great distance from each other. The use of video cameras when communicating on the Internet is increasingly reminiscent of communication in the real world;
- to communicate with a friend, a personal meeting is not required, which is very important due to the threat of the spread of coronavirus infection, people communicate via WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, Telegram, etc.;
- people are more courageous in making virtual acquaintances, because they are not afraid to be rejected or ridiculed and the like.
The disadvantages of virtual friendship include the fact that a person does not get the same pleasure from communication as in real communication; a person does not know with whom the communication is actually going on, how truthful and honest the interlocutor is; there is an addiction to the gadget (five minutes can easily turn into five hours); at any time, friendship can be interrupted without explanation (even by being included in the "black list").

During the study, our respondents were asked the question "Do you prefer virtual or real friendship?". Most of the young people surveyed do not notice the difference between real and virtual friendships (61%), since most often their real and virtual friends are the same person. In second place were those respondents who chose only real friendship (21%). The smallest number of respondents chose only virtual friendship (18%) (Figure 2). This cannot but cause concern. We must remember and understand that the virtual world is not real and the person at the computer, most often, can remain in deep loneliness. There is a self-deception of a lonely person.

Figure 2 Do you prefer virtual or real friendship?

In the course of our survey of students of the Belgorod State Agrarian University of various age groups of full-time and part-time forms of education, we asked them about their attitude and understanding of friendship as a form of interpersonal communication. As our survey showed, 97% of respondents, regardless of age group, recognize the possibility of friendship and talk about its presence in their lives, or dream of meeting it on their way. The process of adaptation of former schoolchildren to the forms of activity of higher education depends on their choice of the type of interaction with the people around them. Our respondents in their majority (70%) choose cooperation as a type of interaction, and only 30% of respondents tend to compete. The preference for cooperation as a type of interaction is due to the fact that the bulk of the students of our university come from the provinces, where, undoubtedly, the traditions of Russian catholicity are still preserved [4]. The desire for cooperation with classmates leads to the formation of new friendly alliances. Over the years of study at the university, 70% of our students have expanded their circle of friends. Of those who chose competition as a type of interaction, 27% of students preferred not to make new friends, but they did not give up friendship, keeping school friends. Disappointed in friendship 3% of respondents. Among the most repeated causes of disappointment in
friendship are betrayal, loss of common interests, insincerity of a friend, and others. Most often, the opposite side is blamed for breaking off relations. No one takes the blame for the collapse of friendship.

In the scientific literature, different types of friendship are distinguished: 1) "friend-comrade" - implies joint activities and the presence of common interests; 2) "friend-mirror" - helps to perform the function of self-knowledge; 3) “friend-interlocutor” - performs a communicative function and includes mutual understanding; 4) “friend-alter ego” - involves likening oneself to another, that is, assimilation, and on the other hand, self-dissolution in a friend, that is, identification [14].

In the course of our survey, it turned out that respondents in the age group from 16 to 18 years old, inclusive, when choosing friends, most often look for a “mirror friend” (34%) and an “alter ego friend” (32%), followed by “friend-comrade” (22%) and “friend-interlocutor” (12%). These results are understandable, since the youthful age group is characterized by vague ideas about one's own "I", hence the desire to have a "friend-mirror" that performs the function of self-knowledge. One of the common problems of this age is shyness. Alter ego friendships help solve this problem, which is why this type of friendship is often chosen by this age group.

Respondents in the age group from 19 to 23 years old inclusive also strive for self-knowledge and are looking for a “mirror friend” (27%), but interest in an “alter ego friend” is declining (14%), its place is taken by a “friend-comrade” (39%) with whom they are engaged in joint activities. Youthful egocentricity at this age is overcome, so interpersonal communications expand and interest in the “friend-interlocutor” increases (20%). We can say that the friend-double gives way to the friend-interlocutor.

With age, a person becomes more and more interested in objective activities. Respondents in the age group of 24 years and older are focused on professional activities, so they continue the trend of interest in "friend-comrade" (40%), they have a growing interest in "friend-interlocutor" (32%). The majority of people of this age have already reached the level where we can talk about a formed worldview, so the function of self-knowledge is gradually fading into the background and their interest in the “mirror friend” (21%) is decreasing, and their interest in the “friend-alter ego” becomes minimal (7%) (Figure 3).

Changing friendship types across age groups does not necessarily mean changing friends. Here we observe what is called the development of the stages of the same relationship called friendship. The boundaries between youthful friendship and adult friendship are mobile and conditional. In youth, the social circle is determined by a “territorial” sign (common yard, school) or common interests (computer games, football, etc.).

**Figure 3 Comparison of age choice of friendship type**
With age comes the understanding that not everyone with whom we share our hobby are our friends. There is a need to distinguish between friendship and partnership. For a partnership, the unifying feature is the presence of a single team and group solidarity. Friendship, unlike business relations, where people use each other to achieve any results, is a valuable and disinterested phenomenon. People who do not have the ability to show concern for others are rarely capable of true friendship. Their character and attitude tends to build "accidental" friendships based on utility or pleasure. M. Montaigne calls such relationships nothing more than close acquaintances, “which we made by chance or for reasons of convenience” [17, p.161].

Friendship comes with additional responsibility. Its strength is based not only on mutual interest, but also on joint difficulties that friends help each other overcome. Mutual respect for each other forms a high degree of trust, which makes communication between friends more interesting, and therefore more enjoyable. And since there is mutual assistance in friendship, there is also an unconditional benefit in it. And it's not so much about material gain, but about psychological or emotional support. Friendship contains the coincidence of elements of external and internal freedom. The presence of freedom in friendship is very important, because love of freedom is a traditional feature of the Russian character [1].

In the 20th century, a division into expressive and instrumental friendship appeared. Expressive friendship has a more emotional color and is based on mutual understanding. Instrumental friendship basically has a common cause and relies on mutual assistance [23, p.68].

In the course of our research, we asked our respondents to answer the question: "What is the most important thing for you in friendship?". It turned out that in the age groups from 16 to 18 years old and from 19 to 23 years old, the possibility of mutual assistance and disinterested communication, that is, instrumental friendship, came first (62%), and the second place was taken by trust and mutual understanding, that is, expressive friendship (38%). In the older age group, there is a convergence of instrumental friendship (53%) and expressive friendship (47%). Here we see an example of the existence of two registers of friendship: the inseparability and non-merging of the externally oriented side of a person and the side oriented internally, as Yu.V. Sineokaya wrote about in her work [23, p.68].

The attitude towards friendship as a value is largely programmed by family traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. As a rule, the friendship of parents leads to the friendship of children in these families. We found that the presence of childhood friendship forms adaptation to the
team and focus on friendship at a more mature age [5]. It is interesting to consider gender differences in friendship: friendship between a man and a woman and female friendship.

In the following characteristics, gender differences are clearly visible. Female representatives attach importance to feelings and say that friendship requires mutual sympathy, the opportunity to share innermost feelings and the realization that you are valued. For men, it is more important to spend leisure time together and to share interests and life principles.

Friendship between a man and a woman is a controversial topic of discussion at all times. Many argue that friendship between a woman and a man is impossible, others sincerely believe in its existence. The same polar thoughts can be seen in the works of prominent personalities. For example, O. Wilde said that friendship between a man and a woman is an impossible thing, there can be passion, enmity, adoration, love between them, but not friendship. D.B. Shaw wrote that “friendship between a man and a woman is a relationship of either former lovers or future ones” [16].

O. Comte, on the contrary, believed that "the only, sincere and lasting friendship is between a man and a woman, because this is the only attachment free from any rivalry". The thought of the German philosopher F. Nietzsche is interesting: “The cause of unhappy marriages is the lack of friendship, and not the lack of love” [20].

So what is friendship between a man and a woman, and is it possible? What do people think today on this issue? At present, the outlook on life has changed so much that we have absolutely inverted opinions about the role of men and women. Today, not every man is the breadwinner in the family, not every woman is associated with the image of the obedient mistress of the family hearth. Can these circumstances also affect the understanding of the phenomenon of “gender” friendship?

Our sociological survey showed the following: boys and girls of the first and second courses of the university look at the issue of friendship between a man and a woman equally positively (about 60%). Older students, including part-time students, showed significant gender differences in this issue: with age, men tend to treat such friendship negatively, women, on the contrary, positively (over 75%). This trend is connected, in our opinion, not only with the accumulation of life experience (more than 90% of respondents indicated this), but also with the different perception of the world by the opposite genders. Men see women as more of a sexual partner than a friend. And with age, this perception only intensifies. A woman sees in a man first an assistant, a friend. When men pay attention to a person of the opposite gender, a woman perceives this as sympathy, care, friendly manifestations. While she pays attention to a man, he regards it as a sexual signal.

Arguments about the phenomenon of female friendship remain no less controversial. Rooted in history, we can say that the traditional understanding of the phenomenon of friendship was associated mainly with male virtue. So, exalting male friendship, M.E. Montaigne in his work “Essays” wrote: “... the usual level of women is by no means such that they are able to maintain that spiritual intimacy and unity that this sublime union feeds on, and their soul, apparently, does not have sufficient stamina to not be burdened by the shyness of such a strong and long-term connection ... and in the unanimous opinion of all the philosophical schools of antiquity, women have to be excluded here” [17].

Recognition of the possibility of female friendship began to enter the world community relatively recently - in the Renaissance. And so it declared itself that in 1999 the “Kappa Delta” Women's Club, founded in 1897 in Farmville, Virginia, proposed to celebrate the third Sunday of September as International Women's Friendship Day [18]. This circumstance began to ignore prejudices about the lack of female friendship. However, there is still an opinion that friendship between women, if it exists, is
significantly different from friendship between men, since it is significantly inferior to the latter in terms of strength, stability, strength and depth [24].

It can be assumed that such a biased attitude towards female friendship has developed due to the low assessment of the role of female subjective experience on the part of the male half of humanity. In the history of the culture of society, it is difficult to find a description and praise of female friendship. Friendship within the female team remained an insignificant everyday phenomenon, based on the sensual-emotional sphere.

Unlike male friendship, it has never been elevated to the rank of a social institution. While, male friendship acquired a sacred character, passed down from generation to generation. It has long been believed that the ideal characteristics of friendship are inherent in every man, because the most important moral value of young men is belonging to any male group based on solidarity and mutual assistance. Loyalty to male friendship has always been identified with the phenomenon of masculinity. Girl friendship has always been associated with the values of trust, intimacy and psychological support.

Differences between male and female friendship arise relatively early, when a person's self-consciousness begins to form. So, girls have an earlier need to share their experiences, so the main function of female friendship is emotional support, male friendship focuses on the solidarity of boys, united by a common activity.

Psychologists believe that the characteristics of female friendship are ownership and empathy beyond self-sacrifice and problem resolution. Scientists call the following factors in the formation of friendship between representatives of a weak gender as a phenomenon: early emergence (even in childhood), non-interference in the family affairs of each of them, inviolability of the boundaries of trust, unburdened by their problems, similarity of characters, views and interests. In communication between friends, the main thing is the correct emotional presentation and its sensitive perception.

A sociological survey showed the following: 28% of respondents believe that women's friendship exists; 25% - the ability to make friends depends on the maturity of the individual, and not on gender; 16% - in general, does not exist, with rare exceptions; 14% - female friendship is just a non-aggression pact; 8% - female friendship does not exist; 5% - people do not know how to make friends at all; 4% found it difficult to answer. These answers are shown by the respondents mainly from their own life experience (more than 90%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Attitude to female friendship
The best friend is a person who is close in spirit, who can always lend a helping hand, who can always be trusted with the most intimate. We decided to ask who is such a person for our respondents - a man or a woman. As it turned out, the best friend for men is a man (more than 65%). From their position, "no one can replace male friendship, it is more faithful and pure".

However, for 15% of men, a woman is still the best friend. But in many cases this is indicated by the older age group and associates such friendships with the figure of the mother or wife. In turn, almost half of the interviewed female students assure that they have developed the closest friendly relations with females, and among men, only the husband can be considered the best friend.

At the same time, 24% of men and 18% of women indicated the absence of a best friend. The reason for this circumstance, they called betrayal.

As a result of the study on the phenomenon of gender friendship, the following conclusions can be drawn: firstly, there is no exact answer to the question of the possibility of gender and female friendship. This question is purely individual, since everything depends on the individual and personal experience. Secondly, most people can still be friends with both a person of the opposite gender and their own. However, they prefer to see a relative (spouse/wife, mother/father) as a friend of the opposite sex. Thirdly, the percentage of women who consider the possibility of friendship increases with age, while the percentage of men, on the contrary, decreases [12].

It seems that such a discrepancy with traditional views regarding the possibility of friendship between genders is associated with modern trends in the development of society, erasing gender, age, class, religious and other conventions and making it possible to adapt to complex and effective social ties, including those manifested in the student environment [2-4].

**Conclusion**
A monitoring study of friendship as a phenomenon of interpersonal relations in modern society has shown that the tendency of friendship to develop into companionship, which has developed in the 20th century, has been suspended. In the 21st century, Russians demand friendship as one of the main values of life. Among all types of leisure activities, communication with friends is put in the first place, regardless of age and gender.
The development of telecommunications has had a great influence on the preservation of friendship in the modern post-industrial society. Especially this phenomenon has become in demand during the pandemic. Acute loneliness during the period of self-isolation was overcome with the help of modern means of communication. Of course, virtual friendship has its pros and cons, which did not replace real friendship, but only made it possible not to interrupt the interpersonal communication of friends separated by distance, borders and a pandemic.

In the course of our study, it was found that the types of friendships change throughout life. Representatives of the age group from 16 to 18 years old strive for self-knowledge and choose such types of friendship as “friend-mirror” and “friend-alter ego”. Respondents in the age group from 19 to 23 years old prefer this type of friendship as “friend-interlocutor”, although the desire for self-knowledge is also present, which means they need a “friend-mirror” for them. The older age group (from 24 years old and older) is interested in developing their professional activities and strives for such a type of friendship as "friend-comrade". The age-related change of types of friendship does not mean a change of friends, communication moves to a new level, sometimes there is friendship between families.

Instrumental (based on mutual assistance) and expressive (based on mutual understanding) friendship is found in all age groups. However, in the age groups from 16 to 18 and from 19 to 23, instrumental friendship prevails. In the older age group, there is a convergence of expressive and instrumental friendship.

Based on the gender approach to the genesis of friendship, the authors examined and characterized such phenomena as female friendship and friendship between a man and a woman. We have not recorded a single opinion about female friendship, friendship between a man and a woman in the 21st century. It can be noted that the woman's ability to make friends today is not completely discarded, as it was in the history of philosophical thought. Most people can be friends with both a person of the opposite gender and their own. Such a difference between modern views and traditional ideas about friendship between genders is associated with the erasure of gender, age, class, religious views in a post-industrial society.

References


5. Krikun Elena Vladimirovna, Davityan Manushak Galustovna, Belozerova Irina Aleksandrovna, Nikulina Natal'ya Nikolaevna, Andreeva Nadezhda Vladimirovna Understanding the
16. Opinions of the great ones - is friendship possible between a man and a woman?// Access mode: https://zen.yandex.ru/media/id/5abb1bd98139ba0a0c353685 (date of the application: 10.02.2022).

7463 http://www.webology.org