

## The Capability to Self-Changing in a Varying and Brittle World

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### ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the analysis of human capabilities for professional and personal self-realization in a constantly changing world. The variability and brittle modern digital world are the main challenges and the actual problem for many scientists as well as the question of people's ability to change in accordance with the new reality. The potential for self-changing and the way of coping with new information are becoming the main factors determining a person's psychological well-being and emotional comfort. To assess this assumption, was conducted the research of styles of information identity, the degree of satisfaction with life and the level of self-change. The materials of the study showed that uncertainty and brittle situation reduce the level of satisfaction with life, which is close to the average for most young people. The desire to ignore negative information partially increase emotional stability as the immersion in the news flow reduces life satisfaction. Our results allow us to conclude that there is a close connection between identity style and the ability to self-change. The normative style reduces not only the potential for self-change, but also the level of adaptation. Informative and diffuse styles, in varying degrees of expression, contribute to better adaptation. The diffuse style increases self-changings due to faith in one's capabilities, and the informational style increases self-changing through awareness of the ways to self-change. Personal integrity is commitment to the chosen style of information identity and ability for self-changing.

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**Received:** October 07, 2024; **Accepted:** October 14, 2024; **Published:** December 09, 2024

**Keywords:** Transitivity, Life Satisfaction, Self-Changes, Information Identity

### Introduction

The rapidly developing society and new digital technologies (neural networks, artificial intelligence) have become one of the main challenges of our time. The study of transitive, unpredictable and brittle world is one of the leading interdisciplinary problems in recent years. In addition to new opportunities that open up prospects for the development of society and personal growth, the digital world and new technologies also carry new threats to emotional well-being and personal growth and self-changing.

The digital society has become a challenge for psychological science, although the first concepts were developed in the middle of the last century by D Bell, E Toffler, M Castells and other scientists who emphasized that this society is characterized by a focus on information and knowledge, which become the main parameter for assessing a person and society as a whole [1-3]. The role of information retains its great importance today, so that the problems of information culture that is the ability to navigate in the information flow and adequately perceive and process information received from various sources are at the center of many works. Nevertheless, in recent years, questions of sustainability, increasing uncertainty and variability of the world, which are growing with the development of a digital society, have become no less relevant. For psychology, this is also associated with a partial change in the social structure and an increase in

precarity, anxiety of people due to difficulties in socialization in new social relations, possible loss of status, and sometimes even work.

To study the changing and uncertain world, scientists have proposed various models. American scientist B. Johansen, one of the founders of the Institute for Future Studies in Silicon Valley, in his book "Leaders Make the Future: Ten New Leadership Skills for an Uncertain World" proposed a VUCA world model, the characteristics of which are Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity [4]. We proposed the concept of a transitive world, the main features of which are variability, uncertainty and multiple contexts [5,6].

Transitivity includes variability and associated with it uncertainty, the characteristics of the VUCA and BANI worlds are largely similar. From the point of view of personality psychology, anxiety and precarity associated with the need to socialize and self-actualize in these worlds require a new level of meaningfulness of life, the ability to have a holistic idea of oneself, one's personal uniqueness and one's life path.

Unlike American researchers, in our work the main emphasis was placed precisely on the psychological characteristics of the transitive world, studying people's emotional and cognitive responses to crisis and fluid transitivity, changes in self-descriptions and coping strategies. We began to study as well the positive and negative ideas about future at people of different age. During this

work we asked about personal future and the future of the world in which a person lives as well as the ways of perceiving information about the changes and threats that occur in the environment. There was also found that the most common way to escape uncertainty is everyday life and the desire to separate the general negative picture of the world's future from a personal future, which is more stable and optimistic [7].

Thus, the main differences in the approach to studying a volatile and uncertain world are that in the analysis of the VUCA world, unlike the transitive model, the problem of variability and digitalization was dealt with to a greater extent by anthropologists and futurologists, and the applied aspects of their discoveries began to be actively and very productively applied in business (marketing, branding). The productivity of B. Johansen's approach consisted in the fact that he focused attention not on threats, but on those competencies that help to successfully exist in conditions of uncertainty and instability. This is what brought success to his works.

The same approach, focused more on the success of companies rather than on studying the psychological states of people, was implemented in the development of the BANI model of the world (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear and Incomprehensible) by futurologist and anthropologist Jamais Cascio in his work *Facing the Age of Chaos* [8]. This model, which characterizes fragility, incomprehensibility and anxiety, appeared as a response to the pandemic. The recommendations for business embedded in it have also become widespread, but have not become as productive as the competencies and skills that were embedded in the works of B. Johansen.

Due to the increase in anxiety and the intensification of the situation of uncertainty, severity and duration of quarantine, the tendency towards an ever wider spread of digital forms of work, communication and learning was also growing. Analyzing individual characteristics that contribute to vulnerability and instability, many researches note growing sensitivity to environmental factors, especially informational influences and intolerance to cognitive load. Based on these statements, an empirical study during 2022-2023 years was realized.

## Methods and Respondents

The respondents were young people aged 17 to 25 years (N=350).

### Methods

- Questionnaire of identity styles (M Berzonsky, adapted by E Belinskaya, I Bronin)
- Questionnaire of the Self-Change Potential (N Grishina, V Manukyan, I Murtazina)
- Life Satisfaction Scale (E Diener, adapted by D Leontiev, E Osin)
- Statistical processing (SPSS Statistics 26.0)

All methods were formed in the online constructor "Yandex Forms" in a solitary questionnaire. A link to this form was sent to respondents.

### Questionnaire of Identity Styles

The information style of identity proposed by M Berzonsky reflects a person's attitude to the information flow, his ability and readiness to navigate in a large volume of information. This ability is especially important in the information society. The method proposed by Berzonsky offers three styles of information identity - normative, diffuse and informational. Perhaps the name of the

styles of information processing was associated by M Berzonsky with the types of identity proposed by D Marcia. But the content of information identity is no longer related to the personal or social identity proposed by many scientists.

Respondents with this identity style tend to get maximum information in the new circumstances before making a decision. The increase in the number of people choosing the informational identity style, regardless of age, occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. In our previous studies, we linked this fact with the need to look for important for life information, separating fakes from serious materials on prevention, vaccination and treatment of the disease. The diffuse style of information identity stimulates constant orientation toward new stimuli and standards, especially in the situation that demands to make decisions. They prefer to comprehend how the situation will develop and what can be consequences. People with normative identity style are not inclined to search for information themselves. They want to receive it through transmission from a significant other. They also prefer to be guided by family traditions, social and/or group norms. M Berzonsky separately highlights such a parameter as commitment, reflecting the degree to which a person is inclined to adhere to his views or, on the contrary, constantly change them. In the situation of transitivity, this can have an ambivalent meaning, on the one hand helping to navigate the constantly changing flow of information, and on the other hand preventing timely switching to other sources of new information.

### Questionnaire of the Self-Change Potential

The model of the potential for self-change scale includes four factors.

**Factor 1:** The need for self-changes - the desire for novelty, variety, a positive attitude towards change and a focus on personal growth ("I want to change");

**Factor 2:** The ability to consciously change - a person's ability to consciously work on themselves, the ability to systematically implement their plans in life ("I need to change");

**Factor 3:** Belief in the possibility of self-change - a person's implicit ideas about the ability of people to consciously change their character and behavior throughout life;

**Factor 4:** The possibility of self-change - characteristics of mental rigidity, the degree of flexibility in situations requiring change, the desire for immutability ("I can change").

The final indicator of the potential for self-change allows to determine the general ability for self-change, and by the ratio of the expression of the main scales, to determine due to which components it is realized to a greater extent.

### Results

The results obtained from the study of the level of life satisfaction showed that the majority of young people (81%) generally have a positive attitude towards the future. But almost 17% are not satisfied with their life situation and emotional state and do not predict their improvement. Approximately the same number of respondents (20%) thinks that changes in the future will be rather negative. During two years these results didn't change. At the same time, the number of people who believe that changes will go in a positive direction has increased significantly (from 2% to 13%). These materials show that the majority of young people cannot clearly define their real situation and do not understand their future.

The results obtained in the study of information identity showed that respondents predominantly use two styles: diffuse (44%) and

informational (36%). The level of normative style was 20%. But at the end of 2024 year these results a little bit change. The level of the informational style, which helps to find and classify interesting information in the rapidly changing world, was constant. The level of diffuse style raised (51%), and the level of normative style decrease (14%). Also grow the level of the commitment scale from 43% to 56%. The fact that more than half of the respondents prefer the diffuse style of information identity is likely related to the constantly changing situation that requires adaptation. So they intend to search for information specific to a given situation. In this context, diffuse style can be regarded as a way of coping which helps to adapt to unpredictable situations.

Correlation analysis of the results of the information identity styles gave both - the direct and an inverse relationship with the life satisfaction scale. The normative style of information identity has a direct proportional relationship with the scale of life satisfaction (0.204). The diffuse style has an inverse proportional relationship with the scale of life satisfaction (-0.177) with a weak degree of significance. The information style has inverse relationship with the life satisfaction scale (-0,121) also with a weak degree of significance.

Thus, the normative style does not reduce life satisfaction, unlike the diffuse and informational ones. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in this case, respondents do not look for or receive anything new or particularly alarming in the information they find. On the contrary, the informational and diffuse styles can bring the necessary information, but it can be alarming and reduce the level of life satisfaction. Never the less, the speed of transformations occurring in surrounding world underpin a change in the methods of perceiving information from various sources, selected by users based on new interests and standards.

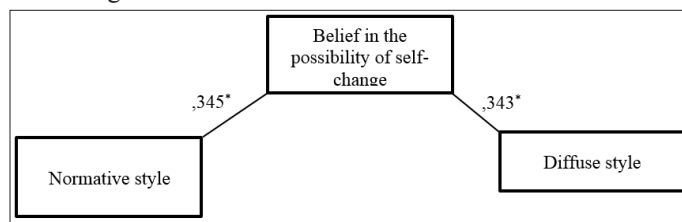
Thus, it is information identity that becomes one of the leading factors in uncertain life. Then were analyzed results of information identity and potential for self-changes (Table 1).

**Table 1: Results of the Mann Whitney U-Test**

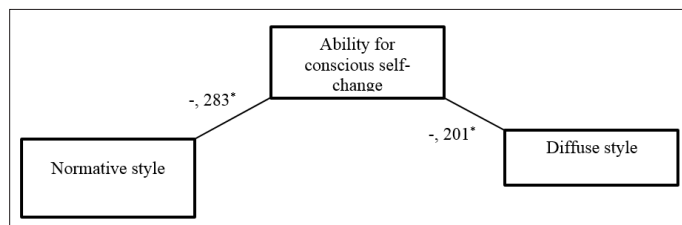
Indicators	Respondents		U Mann-Whitney	Asymptotic significance (2-sided)
	Average	Standard deviation		
Need for self-change	23,49	3,61	897,50	,622
Ability for conscious self-change	24,39	4,31	735,50	,062
Belief in the possibility of self-change	18,78	3,84	911,00	,706
Possibility of self-change	17,67	3,85	584,00	,002
Potential for self-change	48,96	9,53	889,00	,575
Informational style	26,00	3,69	777,50	,130
Normative style	12,59	2,86	919,00	,755
Diffuse style	15,18	5,70	887,50	,564
Commitment scale	24,92	5,65	683,00	,021

According to the results of Table 1, it can be seen that reliable differences were found in the indicators "Possibility of self-change" (U=584, p=0.002), "Commitment scale" (U=683, p=0.021)

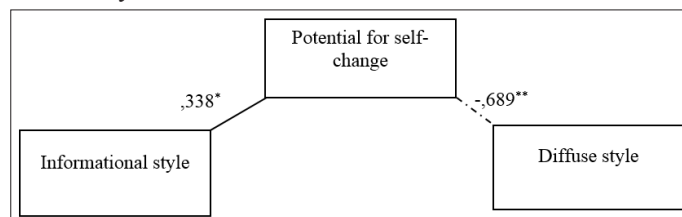
Different parameters of information identity and potential for self-changes were tested between each other.



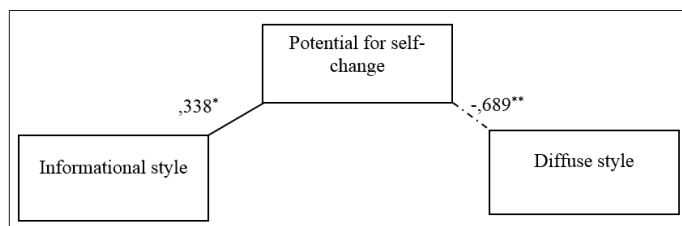
**Figure 1: Belief in Possibility of Self-Change, Normative and Diffuse Style**



**Figure 2: Ability for Conscious Self-Change, Normative and Diffuse Style**



**Figure 3: Potential for Self-Change, Informational and Diffuse Style**



**Figure 4: Informational Style and Possibility of Self-Change**

The difference between the informational and diffuse styles of informational identity is especially clear when comparing their connection with the potential for self-change (Figure 3). People with the informational style have positive potential for self-change. They have the motivation, the need and the ability to change if it is necessary in transformed life conditions (Figure 4). On the contrary, people with the diffuse style showed negative connection with the potential for self-change. These people can choose relevant information to adapt to different conditions. But they are not capable, similar to people with the normative style, to change themselves. In this case, apparently, the matter is not only in rigidity, but also in the lack of will and cognitive potential.

The information style of identity reflects a person's attitude to the information flow, their ability and willingness to navigate the multitude of information and resources offered, which in turn is expressed in a high level of social awareness. The diffuse style of information identity can facilitate adaptation to a nonlinear and fragile world, but does not help to quickly navigate the news flow, which is provided only by the information style of information identity. At the same time, immersion in the information flow with



high sensitivity to information influences can lead to a decrease in emotional comfort.

### Discussion

The impact of the changing world is manifested primarily in a low level of life satisfaction. The desire to overcome the negative influence of instability, both emotional and financial, is revealed not only in level of life satisfaction, but also in expectations about the future, as well as in the desire to ignore negative news.

Thus, our material shows that the inability to selectively percept or classify new information can contribute to life satisfaction in a stable society, but will significantly hinder emotional well-being in a volatile and uncertain world. In this situation, the style of information identity becomes very important. Nevertheless, orientation in information has an ambivalent connotation - on the one hand, it helps "not to see" changes, while emotional stability and awareness decrease. On the other hand, the style of information identity helps to search for and evaluate relevant and important information, increasing awareness, but reducing life satisfaction. These results do not contradict the low rates of life satisfaction which are typical for many respondents.

The main factor of personal stability is commitment to the chosen style of information identity. It confirms the thesis about the importance of internal motivation in obtaining meaningful life. The commitment to the chosen style of information perception is associated with the potential for self-change and the presence of motivation to maintain the chosen style of information processing.

Our data exhibited the connection between the identity style and the ability to self-change. Thus, the information style of identity is directly connected with the need for self-change and the ability to consciously self-change. On the contrary, the normative style of identity is negatively connected with the ability to self-change. It is characterized by low capability to switch from one idea to another. Also, it is a low flexibility in situations requiring change, fear of novelty. All these prevent people with such a style of information identity from changing in accordance with new situations arising in the transitive society as a result these styles of information identity can lead to the decrease in their emotional well-being.

The obtained empirical data made it possible to identify an important fact associated with different styles of information identity. The structure linking the potential for self-changing with the information style of identity allows people quickly and adequately identify new information that is important for a person, but, as the obtained materials show, does not always ensure satisfaction with life and oneself. On the contrary, a diffuse style, which allows one to respond quickly to the demands of the environment, may not always help to identify the information that is needed especially for a given person. The normative style of information identity is even more closely related to life satisfaction, and perhaps this is precisely where its positive significance lies in the situation of transitive reality.

It is important to emphasize that all variables related to working with information (information awareness, information identity) are interconnected, forming a holistic structure that determines the motivation, behavior and emotional state of users in the network. A high level of commitment to one's style of information identity proves that this skill is becoming one of the personality traits, and not just one of the types of information activity.

The new materials, revealing new trends in working with the information flow, require additional research on different age groups. It must be also worked out the research aimed at clarifying the connection between the style of information processing, different styles of information identity and life satisfaction [9-11].

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