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Attitudes Towards the Speed of Social Processes: Development of a New Inventory and Assessment of Its Validity

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Abstract

Introduction. The article is devoted to the current but understudied problem in psychology: the speed of social processes. The interdisciplinary approach (theories of P. Virilio, H. Rosa) is used when discussing the issue, substantiating the purpose and hypotheses of the study. The article is aimed to propose the author's Attitudes towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory, determine its psychometric properties and test its validity. The attitude towards speed is considered as an aspect of subjective time. **Methods.** The sample size was 521 people. The average age was 31.5 years (min – 21, max – 45), 48.8% of them were men, and 65.6% with higher education; the sample included advanced workers and graduates of vocational educational institutions (work experience 2-3 years). To assess convergent validity, the following were used: Questionnaire of Attitudes towards Technology by G. U. Soldatova, T. A. Nestik, E. I. Rasskazova, E. A. Dorokhova; Personal Flexibility at the Labour Sphere Scale by A. N. Diomin, O. V. Kireeva; scales measuring attitudes towards remote technologies. To assess the criterion validity, the graduates of vocational educational institutions and advancing-age workers were compared (age criterion). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Spearman's ρ correlation coefficient and the Mann-Whitney U-test were used. **Results.** The structure of the inventory is set apart and confirmed. It includes two scales: awareness of the social acceleration (the cognitive component) and rejection of the social acceleration (the affective component); their internal and retest reliability is acceptable. The scales correlate with technophilia, technophobia, technopessimism, attitude to remote technologies, and

flexibility of the individual at the labour sphere. It has been established that graduates of vocational educational institutions demonstrate a significantly higher level of awareness and emotional acceptance of social acceleration compared to advanced-age workers. **Discussion**. The correlations and differences expected in theoretical terms are empirically confirmed. The conclusion is made: the Attitudes Towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory is a new compact psychodiagnostic tool that can be used in psychological and interdisciplinary research. Ideas are formulated that aim to expand the list of criteria for the validity of the new inventory.

Keywords

speed of social processes, acceleration society, attitudes towards the speed, inventory, awareness of social acceleration, rejection of social acceleration

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Introduction

The problem of the speed of social processes is actively discussed by representatives of various sciences due to the rapid, multifaceted, and large-scale changes in the economy, social relations, and culture. In the article, we will first make a brief overview of interdisciplinary approaches to this problem and then, based on them, move into the plane of psychological analysis and relevant methodological developments.

To date, original sociophilosophical and culturological approaches to the study of speed and acceleration have taken shape, among which are the theory of kinematic society by P. Virilio and the theory of social acceleration by H. Rosa.

Paul Virilio is a French thinker, the developer of 'dromology' (from the Greek dromos – running, path), in which speed is understood based on ideas of phenomenology, physics, history, politics, psychology, and other sciences. According to P. Virilio (2004), we live in a world that completes a system that for several centuries has given a key role to

the speed of visual and speech communication techniques. In an interview, he noted that acceleration is a phenomenon without which it is impossible to understand history, especially the history of the West, since the XVIII century (Armitage, 1999).

Speed is provided by a set of technologies that P. Virilio calls a 'time-reducing machine' (Virilio, 1999, p. 69). These include audiovisual, telecommunication, and computer technologies that make objects accessible for perception regardless of spatial distance. The speed of light has become the dominant speed in the modern world, but the question arises: What forms does the speed that has reached its physical limits take? P. Virilio expresses the heuristic idea that technologies become something physically assimilable, a kind of nutrition for the human race through dynamic inserts and implants, which can include additional memory storage, etc. (Armitage, 1999, p. 49). Thus, the human body turns into a carrier of speed and acceleration, it is not something external to speed.

Another key figure is the modern German theorist Hartmut Rosa. From his point of view, acceleration is a non-reducible essential characteristic of modernity, which helps to understand fundamental transformations in society. To a certain extent, social acceleration is a self-moving process due to the interaction of three forms of acceleration: technological, leading to a time reduction in the fields of transport, communications, and production; acceleration of social changes, as a result of which the rate of disintegration of experience increases (for example, in the late modern, professions change faster than generations); acceleration of the pace of life (increased lack of free time and an increase in the number of actions per unit of time) (Rosa, 2003).

H. Rosa argues that the term 'acceleration society' is applicable only if technological acceleration and acceleration of the pace of life act simultaneously (Rosa, 2003, p. 10). At the same time, the second form of acceleration is most closely related to personality (identity and other psychological phenomena).

P. Virilio and H. Rosa work in the same problem area but with different tools. The first one applies the concepts-images revealed in the creative stream of consciousness. The second one has a more rigorous analytical approach, consistent distinction, correlation, and subordination of concepts. Both authors make a new social temporality explicit, accessible to analysis, hinting somewhere, somewhere directly pointing to the combinations and interdependencies of rapidity, technology, social structures, and everyday actions. This is a theoretical basis that can and should be used when studying the psychology of speed.

Comprehending and developing H. Rosa's theory, E. Xiu and E. Elliott consider the acceleration of social life through the perspective of the Self. They believe that there are at least five images of the Self that can be associated with the phenomenon of social acceleration: the detached Self, the reflexive Self, the reinventive Self, and the stationary and decelerating Self (Hsu & Elliott, 2014).

In addition to the image of the Self, various temporal characteristics of the personality can play a significant role in the study of speed and acceleration, for example, time urgency

(orientation to quick execution, achievement). This quality correlates with achievement drive and impatience (a sort of obsession with time). It includes orientation at the time of day, regardless of the environment or circumstances, the creation of work schedules and to-do lists, the peculiarities of eating behaviour, and the setting of deadlines. People who are prone to immediate action experience excitement and anxiety even during short periods of inactivity (Conte, Mathieu & Landy, 1998). If we consider this quality in a broad sociocultural and historical context, then it can be identified with the 'moral of the hour hands' that accompanied the formation of capitalism and, according to the German philosopher K. Geissler, is considered as an acceleration tool (Kustarev, 2002, pp. 15-16).

Another important temporal characteristic of a person is timeliness. This quality determines the measure of correspondence of the person's activity to life situations and affects the continuity of the lifeline (Abulkhanova, 2003), but it has not received further development. Yu.K. Strelkov (2011), analyzing the temporary structure of activity, identifies temporary tasks ("to wait for the right moment", "to be on time"), which are likely, may be related to the speed of social actions. It is obvious that professional careers also have a temporary structure. The opinion is expressed that for specific categories of workers, for example, men and residents of large cities, career cycles occur faster (Tolochek, 2017). That is, there is an acceleration of employment processes. These significant considerations need methodological reinforcement.

H. Ulferts, K. Korunka, and B. Kubicek (Ulferts, Korunka & Kubicek, 2013) turned to the ideas of H. Rosa for testing his theoretical provisions about the three forms of acceleration on the material of labour processes. The authors draw attention to the fact that the requirements associated with acceleration are constantly increasing. For example, the intensity of work increases and the temporary pressure on employees becomes chronic. The study contains useful information on specific manifestations of acceleration in the labour sphere according to the three forms of social acceleration and how employees perceive them. In another study by this team of authors, performed in a longitudinal format on a sample of elderly care workers, it was shown that the intensification of work leads to further emotional exhaustion and decreased job satisfaction (Korunka, Kubicek, Paškvan & Ulferts, 2015).

In general, the literature notes a shortage of specific empirical studies and data concerning the speed of social actions and processes (Bergener & Santarius, 2021; Hsu, 2014; Ulferts et al., 2013), which is quite paradoxical, since in everyday life, we record the prevalence of these phenomena. J. Bergener and T. Santarius argue that currently there is no reliable tool for empirically measuring the actual pace of life simply and understandably. They proposed the General Acceleration Scale (GAS), having carried out the operationalisation of four strategies for accelerating the pace of life by H. Rosa for leisure (Bergener & Santarius, 2021). In the Russian psychological literature, we do not know the tools that directly measure specific aspects of the speed of social processes. Conditionally, they can include methods that diagnose attitudes to uncertainty and social and organisational changes (for example, Bazarov, Sycheva, 2012; Belinskaya,

Dubovskaya, 2009; Shamionov, 2017), but do not directly affect speed. Another battery of techniques is aimed at identifying the relationship between time and time itself. In these terms, the most well-known and actively applied is the concept of psychological time by E. I. Golovakha and A. A. Kronik (1984), but the problem of social speed is also not considered in this one.

The purpose of this article is to develop the author's inventory of attitudes towards the speed of social processes and to evaluate its psychometric properties and validity.

The attitude toward speed is an aspect of subjective time, by which we, following T. A. Nestik, understand the totality of psychological attitudes towards objective temporal attitudes; psychological attitudes include "peculiarities of perception, experience, comprehension, and organisation of time" (Nestik, 2014, p. 10). The study of speed through the attitude of people towards this phenomenon allows us to go beyond the boundaries of specific behavioural acts.-

Research methods

The stages of inventory development

In the first stage, a list of 24 judgments (inventory items) was compiled, revealing a person's attitude toward the speed of social processes. The points describe the speed of communication processes, financial decisions, employment processes, consumption, record a positive or negative attitude towards speed, and the ability or difficulty of managing it. The content of the points fits into the general theoretical structure of relations (cognitive, affective, and regulatory components). The selection of items took into account previously expressed conceptual considerations, generalisations, and published methods (Demin, Demina, 2020; Nestik, 2014; Urri, 2019; Bergener & Santarius, 2021; Rosa, 2003; Ulferts et al., 2013). Each statement is proposed to be evaluated using five answer options from 'completely agree' (5) to 'completely disagree' (1) (Likert scale). To identify the points with the best measuring properties, compliance with the normal distribution was verified. Based on the values of asymmetry and kurtosis, 12 points were selected for which the distribution of points has a weak or moderate degree of deviation from the normal distribution.

In the second stage, the remaining items were subjected to factor analysis, an analysis of its results was carried out, and the psychometric qualities of the inventory (internal and retest reliability) were determined. In the third stage, the convergent validity and criterion validity of the methodology were evaluated.

Sample Group

The study involved 521 people the average age was 31.5 years (min – 21, max – 45), 48.8% of them were men, 65.6% had higher education; the sample included advanced

workers (60.8%) and graduates of vocational educational institutions (2-3 years of work experience) (39.2%).

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses have been formulated as part of the convergent validity test.

Hypothesis 1: It is assumed that the attitude towards the speed of social processes can be related to a person's attitude towards technology in general; in particular, positive correlations can be expected with technophilia, technorationalism, acceptance of remote technologies; negative correlations – with technophobia and technopessimism. We proceed from the fact that modern technologies are one of the sources, and at the same time one of the forms of social acceleration (Armitage, 1999; Rosa, 2003; Virilio, 1999). When testing Hypothesis 1, we used: a Questionnaire of Attitudes towards Technology (Soldatova, Nestik, Rasskazova, Dorokhov, 2021); two scales measuring attitudes towards remote technologies ("How do you assess the use of remote technologies?" (1 – negative, 2 – rather negative than positive, 3 – something between 'negative' and 'positive', 4 – more positive than negative, 5 – positive); 'Taking it for what it is, will remote technologies help achieve your goals in life?' (1 – will not, 2 – rather, will not, 3 – it is difficult to say whether they will or will not, 4 – rather will, 5 – definitely will)).

Hypothesis 2: the attitude towards the speed of social processes may be related to the flexibility of the individual in the labour sphere. On the one hand, this assumption is due to the fact that readiness for changes in the labour sphere refers to the pace of life as a form of social acceleration (Rosa, 2003). On the other hand, personal flexibility correlates with susceptibility to new technologies (Fugate & Kinicki, 2008; McCartt & Rohrbaugh, 1995), which, as mentioned above, can be a source of social acceleration. When testing Hypothesis 2, a Personal Flexibility on the Labour Sphere Scale was used, including six points (Diomin, Kireeva, 2022).

Both hypotheses were tested on a subsample of 175 people (part of the total sample, similar in structure: average age 36 years, 45% men, 70% with higher education).

Under the criteria validity test, we assumed (**Hypothesis 3**): indicators of attitude toward the speed of social processes will differ significantly among young and advanced workers. Hypothesis 3 is based on the provisions of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, in which age is considered as an important moderating variable (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Statistical methods

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, descriptive statistics methods and nonparametric statistics methods were used when performing correlation (Spearman ρ coefficient) and comparative data analysis (Mann-Whitney U-test) data analysis.

Results

First, let us turn to the results of the exploratory factor analysis. The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation was applied to extract the factors. The significance level of Bartlett's sphericity test does not exceed 0.05 (p = 0.000). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy measure is 0.754. It means that the available data are acceptable for factor analysis. In total, there are three factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1.

Focussing on making our tool compact, we adhered to the following standards for the composition of scales. Relevant elements must have a sufficiently high factor load (> 0.5) and a low load on other factors and be accessible to an understandable theoretical explanation. With a unifactor solution, the scale includes 7 points with an explicable variance of 39.9%. Its operating name is Rejection of Social Acceleration. With a two-factor solution, a Rejection of the Social Acceleration scale (6 points) and an Awareness of the Social Acceleration scale (3 points) are formed with a combined cumulative explained variance of 49%. We rejected the three-factor solution because it was not possible to give a compatible explanation for the third scale. The distribution of points for one- and two-factor solutions is presented in Table 1. The significant factor loads are highlighted in bold.

Table 1
Factor loads of items in the inventory

Content in items of the inventory	Unifactor model	Two-factor model	
	F1	F1	F2
Speed is an attractive phenomenon	-0,346	-0,253	0,377
It scares me how fast decisions are made in different spheres of life	0,661	0,679	-0,025
I do not have time to keep up with updates on social media	0,576	0,558	-0,143
At work, everything happens faster than before	0,232	0,358	0,418
I would like to communicate with other people in a calmer, slower mode	0,647	0,646	-0,094
In communication between people, everything happens faster than before	0,004	0,168	0,585
I am of the opinion that it used to be more convenient to manage information	0,560	0,603	0,074

Content in items of the inventory	Unifactor model	Two-factor model	
	F1	F1	F2
Today, it is possible to achieve something much faster than before	-0,312	-0,106	0,777
I am stumped by the rapid change in events	0,669	0,692	-0,008
Now you can make a good career faster than before	-0,256	-,059	0,738
I would like to slow down the pace of events in the life around me	0,676	0,704	0,006
I know how to adapt to the speed of events	-0,511	-0,406	0,447

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to select a model corresponding to empirical data (implemented in the LISREL 8.8 statistical package). Indices and their recommended thresholds were taken into account: CMIN (chi-square); RMSEA (RMS error of approximation) ≤ 0.08; SRMR (standardized RMS residuals) ≤ 0.08; CFI (comparative fit index) ≥ 0.90 (Table 2). Since the chi-square is affected by several factors that worsen its values, we additionally turned to the NFI index (≥ 0.90), which evaluates the discrepancy between the CMIN values of the hypothetical and null models.

Table 2
Fit indices' levels

Fit indices	Unifactor model	Two-factor model
CMIN	52,27 (p = 0,00)	81,16 (p = 0,00)
RMSEA (90% CI)	0,072 (0,050; 0,092)	0,064 (0,048; 0,080)
SRMR	0,041	0,050
CFI	0,96	0,95
NFI	0,95	0,93

The unifactor and two-factor models have similar and acceptable indicators. For further work, a two-factor inventory model (9 items) was chosen, which implements a more complete structure of the attitude to speed: awareness of the phenomenon (the cognitive component); its emotional assessment (the affective component).

The internal reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach's alpha and the test-retest reliability (n = 44, the survey was conducted at intervals of 3 weeks) (Table 3).

Table 3
The levels of internal and test-retest reliability of questionary scales

Scale name	Cronbach's α	Test-retest (Spearman's ρ)
Awareness of the social acceleration	0,603	0,47*
Rejection of the social acceleration	0,746	0,59**

Note: * – 0,01; ** – 0,001.

The internal and test-retest reliability indicators of the scales have acceptable values, including Cronbach's alpha for the scale Awareness of the Social Acceleration (recommended threshold value ≥ 0.60, see Burlachuk and Morozov, 1989). The Spearman correlation coefficient between the scales is ρ = -0.077, indicating their relative independence from each other. In the analysis, it is recommended to manipulate the average values for each scale and the ratio of scales in the resulting profile.

The inventory text is presented in the Appendix. The descriptive statistics of the scales are in Table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of the scales of the Attitudes towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory

Scale name	M	Med	SD	Ske	Kurt
Awareness of the social acceleration	3,84	4,0	0,81	-0,41	-0,51
Rejection of the social acceleration	3,03	3,0	0,84	0,11	-0,49

Note: M – mean value; Med – median; SD – standard deviation; Ske – skewness; Kurt – kurtosis.

The results of the tests of Hypotheses 1 and 2 are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Correlation coefficients between attitudes indicators towards the speed of social processes and scores of methods selected to test the convergent validity (n= 175)

Scale name	Awareness of the Social Acceleration Scale	Rejection of the Social Acceleration Scale
Technophilia	0,339***	-0,431***
Technophobia	-0,141	0,447***
Technorationalism	0,147	-0,091
Technopessimism	-0,284***	0,334***
How do you assess the use of remote technologies? (1 – negative, 2 – rather negative than positive, 3 – something between 'negative' and 'positive', 4 – more positive than negative, 5 – positive)	0,167*	-0,203**
Will remote technologies help you achieve your life goals? (1 – will not, 2 – rather, will not, 3 – it is difficult to say whether they will or will not, 4 – rather will, 5 – definitely will)	0,104	-0,190*
The flexibility of the individual in the labour sphere	0,176*	-0,178*

Note: * – 0,05; ** – 0,01; *** – 0,001

To test Hypothesis 3, on the one hand, graduates from universities and colleges with 2-3 years of work experience (n = 204) and, on the other hand, workers of advanced age 30-45 years (n = 317) were compared. It was found that young and mature workers differ from each other in awareness of social acceleration (in young people, the indicator is higher: U = 28032.0, p = 0.01) and in the emotional assessment of speed (in advanced workers, the level of rejection of social acceleration is significantly higher: U = 26502.5, p = 0.0001).

Discussion

The close correlations of the questionnaire scales with indicators of attitude to technology, in general, confirm the theoretical considerations of P. Virillo and H. Rosa on the relationship between social speed and technology (Rosa, 2003; Virilio, 1999). Apparently, awareness of social acceleration is supported by technophilia and blocked by technopessimism. Naturally, technophilia reduces the rejection of social acceleration, while technophobia and technopessimism, on the contrary, increase the rejection. Technorationalism has no statistically significant links with the scales of the inventory developed. Judging by the content of the items included in the corresponding scale of G. Based on the methodology of U. Soldatova and co-authors (2021), we are talking about the utilitarian use of technological innovations plus their affordability. If we correlate this content with the scales of our inventory, then they really lie in different planes.

The relationship between inventory scales and attitudes towards remote technologies can be explained by the fact that remote technologies overcome space. They are included in what P. Virilio called a 'time-reducing machine'. Therefore, it is naturally determined that the higher the rejection of social acceleration, the lower the assessment of remote technologies in terms of their impact on the achievement of life goals.

Correlations of the inventory scales with the flexibility of the individual in the labour sphere indicate that awareness and acceptance of accelerating technologies contribute to the acceptance of updated working conditions and organizational changes, as well as the opposite. Such interdependencies can be considered as a manifestation of more general patterns in the relationship between the flexibility of personality and technology (McCartt & Rohrbaugh, 1995; Torrent-Sellens, Ficapal-Cusí & Boada-Grau, 2016).

The results obtained confirm Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 and indicate the convergent validity of the Attitudes towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory.

The result of the test for Hypothesis 3 is consistent with the results of studies of intergenerational differences in interaction with technology. For example, parents and children have different structures of attitudes towards technology in terms of technophilia and technopessimism (Soldatova et al., 2021, p. 178); age is a factor of inequality when looking for work through the Internet (Karaoglu et al., 2021), and, in general, it affects the digital gap between social groups and individuals (Riggins & Dewan, 2005). Thus, Hypothesis 3 has been confirmed. The Attitudes towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory has validity according to the age criterion.

In the future, it is advisable to expand the list of criteria by adding them, for example, employment status. When developing the model of J. Ronen (Wärneryd, 1988), it can be assumed that entrepreneurs will differ from employees in their attitude toward speed since they are more often faced with the novelty of social and labour circumstances. Another criterion is taking into account the professional affiliation of people. Its importance is due, in particular, to the spread of information-type professions that not

only have psychological specifics (Karpov, Lenkov, Rubtsova, 2021), but also contribute to the acceleration of social processes. Representatives of this type of profession can be compared with representatives of those that are not directly related to social acceleration (for example, information and communication technologies are rarely used in work).

Expanding the validity criteria of the proposed inventory will allow us to study the emerging speed gaps between social groups in more detail. It is significant in psychological and socio-political aspects, which the followers of P. Virilio paid attention to (McQuire, 1999). Speed gaps and speed inequality seem to be an inevitable consequence of the implementation of modern accelerating technologies.

Conclusion

1. The article contributes to the development of a psychological approach to the interdisciplinary problem of social speed and acceleration. The authors rely on the theory of the kinematic society of P. Virilio and the social theory of H. Rosa, developing them with the help of psychological conceptual and methodological instruments.

2. A compact inventory has been created with acceptable psychometric properties and convergent and criterion validity. It allows an instant diagnosis of a person's attitude towards the speed of social processes and thus studies a significant aspect of human adaptation to social and technological changes. Considering the selected scales, the attitude toward speed has a two-component composition: awareness of social acceleration (the cognitive component) and rejection of social acceleration (the affective component).

3. Awareness of social acceleration is positively correlated with technophilia, attitude towards remote technologies, and individual flexibility in the labour sphere and negatively correlates with technopessimism. The rejection of social acceleration is closely related to technophobia and technopessimism and negatively correlates with technophilia, attitude to remote technologies, and flexibility in the labour sphere.

4. Graduates of vocational educational institutions demonstrate a significantly higher level of awareness and emotional acceptance of social acceleration compared to advanced-age workers.

5. The study conducted can stimulate the psychological examination of phenomena related to social speed, including the creation of new methodological tools in this area.

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Appendix 1

Attitudes towards the Speed of Social Processes inventory

Directions

To what extent do you agree with the statements below? Answer each line, circling the corresponding number.

Statements	Completely agree	Rather agree than disagree	It is hard to say agree or not	Rather disagree than agree	Completely disagree
1. It scares me how fast decisions are made in different spheres of life	5	4	3	2	1
2. I do not have time to keep up with updates on social media	5	4	3	2	1
3. I would like to communicate with other people in a calmer, slower mode	5	4	3	2	1
4. In communication between people, everything happens faster than before	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am of the opinion that it used to be more convenient to manage information	5	4	3	2	1
6. Nowadays, it is possible to achieve something much faster than before	5	4	3	2	1

7. I am stumped because of the rapid change of events	5	4	3	2	1
8. I would like to slow down the pace of events in the life around me	5	4	3	2	1
9. It scares me how fast decisions are made in different spheres of life	5	4	3	2	1

Answer key

Awareness of the social acceleration: 4, 6, 8.
Rejection of the social acceleration: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9.

Processing of results

The average score on each scale is calculating to analyze the profile and severity of the ratio r components of the speed of social processes.

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Andrey Nikolaevich Diomin– development of the idea and purpose of the article, conducting a literature review, planning and organization of study, participation in data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, writing the text of the article.

Anastasiya Valer'evna Stepanova – source analysis, data collection, data processing and statistical analysis, participation in writing the text of the article.

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Conflict of interest information

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.