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The Role of Media Education in Reducing the Negative Consequences of Digitalization

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Abstract

Digitalization of all spheres of public life, including education, changes the practices of consumption, use and production of information. In modern conditions, the consequences of digitalization have both positive and negative tonality. Along with the availability of information, one can state the risks of information overload, data falsification, and a decrease in media culture. The aim of the research work was to study the impact of digitalization of education on students' practices of using and consuming information, perception of the value of knowledge and academic education, as well as traditional forms of education. The results of the study showed a deformation of value norms characterizing the attitude towards academic traditions in education. Excess information on the Internet devalues the value of knowledge obtained in the learning process. Students consider lectures to be an outdated practice; most of them would like to change the form of knowledge acquisition, moving from lectures in the classroom to "listening to videos". An illustration of the insufficient level of media competence of a student, the deformation of his media culture is the lack of understanding of clear differences between fragmentary information from the Internet and systemic knowledge obtained during training. The study revealed a low level of students' motivation to work with educational digital materials presented in the educational environment of the university. It is concluded that the key tasks of media education in modern conditions should include those that have a positive impact on reducing the negative consequences of digitalization. In the course of the study, they are systematized as follows: the formation of a healthy approach and conscious attitude to information in young people, the formation of skills for assessing the reliability of information content, the development of a subjective position in students when accessing digital services. It has been established that media education, with the increasing pace of digitalization, should take on the tasks of forming digital ethics among participants in the educational process, become the foundation for maintaining cultural norms and educational values of working with information, broadcasting the importance of academic traditions in the course of obtaining knowledge.

Keywords: media competence, media education, educational environment of the university, digitalization, information.

1. Introduction

The vector of educational policy in most countries of the world today orients schools and universities towards the introduction of digital technologies into the educational process. This trend actualizes the study of issues of digitalization of education, its content and consequences. Heads of universities and schools, as well as teachers, are concerned about the success of the integration of information and communication technologies into the educational process,

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the effectiveness of preparing schoolchildren for the "digital future" (Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020; Polizzi, 2023; Sun, Pan, 2021). The effectiveness of such training is connected, first of all, with the media education of young people, since the "digital future" includes not only the spread of artificial intelligence, virtualization of medicine, education, public services, but also the globalization of the communication space, scaling of information networks (Shestakova, 2019). The digital society is characterized by such risks as information overload, the influence of large volumes of superficial, virtual communication links on the individual, the formation of cognitive disorders, and the crisis of traditional values (Kasavina, 2018). The scaling of attractive advertising content and entertainment in virtual space limits the critical thinking of teenagers and becomes a factor in the deformation of information culture (Feijoo et al., 2023). Scientific research rightly notes the need to develop media competence not only for successful work in the formal educational environment, but also in everyday life (Zhu et al., 2021).

Large-scale digitalization initiates the development of ambivalent processes, on the one hand, information overload, and, on the other, information deficit (Golub, 2018). In these conditions, teachers face quite complex tasks, which include adapting young people to life in a digital society, developing their media competence, digital literacy, and skills for navigating the Internet space (Heersmink, 2018). The scientific papers substantiate the conclusion that successful digitalization of education, the use of artificial intelligence, virtual reality technologies in education is becoming an elusive goal outside of solving the problems of developing media education, increasing the media competence of young people and overcoming the digital divide (Zhang et al., 2024). The development of functional skills for searching for information, evaluating it and producing it should become mandatory components of educational programs in schools and universities (Pangrazio et al., 2020).

Media education provides, on the one hand, effective professional training for young people, the foundation for their successful career in a digital society. On the other hand, media education allows maintaining cultural norms, academic traditions of acquiring knowledge, and educational values. Media competence and digital literacy are the foundation for successful communications, cooperation, and the formation of ethical standards in a digital society (Aydınlar et al., 2024). The integration of ChatGPT into educational systems raises new questions related to ethics, academic integrity, media culture and media competence (Naamati-Schneider, Alt, 2024). The results of experimental studies show that distance learning has a higher rate of plagiarism compared to the traditional format of the educational process (Onyeaka et al., 2024). Violation of ethical standards and cheating in exams are becoming one of the attributes of the digital era, the large-scale penetration of digital technologies into everyday life. These violations undermine the authority of the institute education (Singh, 2021). Punitive sanctions will not be able to cope with the problem of academic fraud. Much more profound and long-term results can be achieved by a well-thought-out policy of developing "that will provide students with a conscious understanding and successful experience of the legitimate use of information content contained in various sources" (Rogach, 2024: 640).

It seems extremely important to study the possibilities and role of media education in the processes of preserving the value of academic education, preventing its devaluation in the context of universal accessibility of information, and scaling up diverse digital content.

2. Materials and methods

During the research activities, the author set the goal of establishing students' attitudes towards the digitalization of education, studying the consequences of digitalization for their practices of searching and consuming information content, perception of the value of academic education and traditional forms of participation in the educational process.

Research objectives:

1. To determine students' attitudes towards digitalization of education and its possible advantages (individualization of learning, increasing student motivation, ensuring accessibility of information).
2. To study the transformation of social norms of young people in the context of digitalization, attitudes to information, learning, traditional teaching practices.
3. To analyze the dependencies between the attitude of young people to digitalization and the formation of skills for searching and systematizing information, critical understanding of digital communication products.

To solve the set tasks, a questionnaire survey of students of Russian universities (N = 633) was conducted. The questionnaire included several blocks to analyze students' attitudes toward digitalization, interpretation of its priorities, risks and possible threats to maintaining the quality of education, self-assessments of young people's digital literacy. In addition, the tools used to collect data included questions that allow us to establish the presence or absence of students' skills in working with information, including skills for its critical analysis. The author also included questions that allow us to establish the transformation of students' behavioral norms and values in relation to working with information and obtaining knowledge in the context of the popularization of digital technologies.

In order to clarify certain points, a focus group was additionally held (N = 12). Students were asked to discuss questions related to understanding the risks of scaling information on the Internet, the importance of skills for critical understanding, and assessment of the reliability of information. A separate block discussed questions about changing the value of education in the context of information redundancy, and the educational needs of young people in modern conditions.

Research hypotheses:

1. Digitalization negatively affects the attitude towards traditional teaching practices (lectures and seminars in the classroom), reduces students' motivation to actively acquire knowledge, limits their readiness for active interaction with the teacher as a bearer of knowledge and experience

2. Students' understanding of the advantages of digitalization and its positive consequences allows them to more effectively develop skills for searching and systematizing information, and critically comprehend the products of digital communications.

3. Discussion

The quality of education and its role in modern society are the subject of scientific and public discourse. Scientists pay attention to the plasticity of opinions and perceptions of education, the dynamic transformation of interpretations of its role and meanings (Santos et al., 2022). Digitalization has had the most significant impact on the public's perception of the value of education. Digital technologies have opened a window of opportunity for obtaining an education beyond territorial and temporal boundaries (Frolova, Rogach, 2022). However, the illusion of ease of obtaining information devalues the value of education, based on excessive digital optimism. The point is that the availability and even redundancy of information in the conditions of a digital society is perceived by young people as an exhaustive condition for the development of personal potential and the acquisition of necessary knowledge.

Scientists draw attention to the transformation of behavioral models of young people in education, the transition to practices of "everyday life, the sofa-and-screen nature of acquiring knowledge" (Narkhov et al., 2021). One can also note deviations in educational patterns of behavior: minimization of interest in reading books, violation of the principles of knowledge acquisition ("lecture as a background" during which the student is engaged in correspondence with friends, games, scrolling through social network pages). Cyberloafing is becoming a common practice of youth behavior today (Arslantas et al., 2023), an attribute of a low level of media competence.

Prevention and mitigation of these problems is in the resource field of media education, which allows us to separate such concepts as "information consumption" and its critical understanding, analysis, synthesis and production. This statement is supported by the conclusions made in the works of A.V. Fedorov. The scientist defines media competence of an individual as "a set of his or her motives, knowledge, skills, abilities that facilitate the selection, use, critical analysis, evaluation, creation and transmission of media texts" (Fedorov, 2010: 64). Thus, reflection on the causes and consequences of the decline in the ethical behavior of participants in the educational process who actively use digital technologies, the development of a critical perception of "digital citizenship" (Nguyen, 2022), will help prevent the devaluation of academic knowledge and the devaluation of the role of the educational institution in modern society.

New digitalization trends, reducing students' motivation to study, pose an extremely serious challenge to the institution of education. In particular, a number of scientists draw attention to the undermining of the transformative potential of education in the context of digitalization (Selwyn et al., 2023). "The tyranny of algorithms" (Rasch, 2020), automated knowledge control systems, "unmanned technologies of assessment" of academic performance contrast with traditional educational values. The negative consequences of digitalization are associated, among other things,

with the narrowing of the creative space in education, the formation of a number of barriers to the formation of media competence of an individual.

Digitalization is fundamentally changing the processes of production, consumption and exchange of information (Vuori et al., 2019). Accordingly, there is a need for theoretical and empirical understanding of new approaches in education to prepare young people for the changing conditions of digital reality. Russian scientists draw attention to two opposite concepts of education in this context: user-consumer and personal-development. The first concept is focused on the technological dominants of education. It includes the formation of skills in servicing digital technologies, automated skills in working with information systems (Shutenko et al., 2022). The second concept (personal development) takes into account the need to develop the student's creative competencies and cultural experience. The dominant feature of this approach is the value of knowledge as a generalized method of cognitive actions (Shutenko, Shutenko, 2023). Thus, in the context of digitalization, it seems extremely important to ensure the formation ethical standards for working with information, and educational values.

The analysis of scientific discourse on the topic of digitalization of education, reflection of its advantages and risks draws attention to the need for a deeper understanding of the role of media education in the context of digital reality, students' skills in working with information. The issues of transforming the behavioral models of young people in the education system, changing the practices of perceiving academic traditions are becoming especially relevant.

4. Results

The results of the study showed that in the modern conditions of digitalization, simplified access to information, the attitude of students to traditional educational practices of acquiring knowledge has changed significantly. Most respondents point to the need to change the established traditions of conducting lectures (Figure 1).

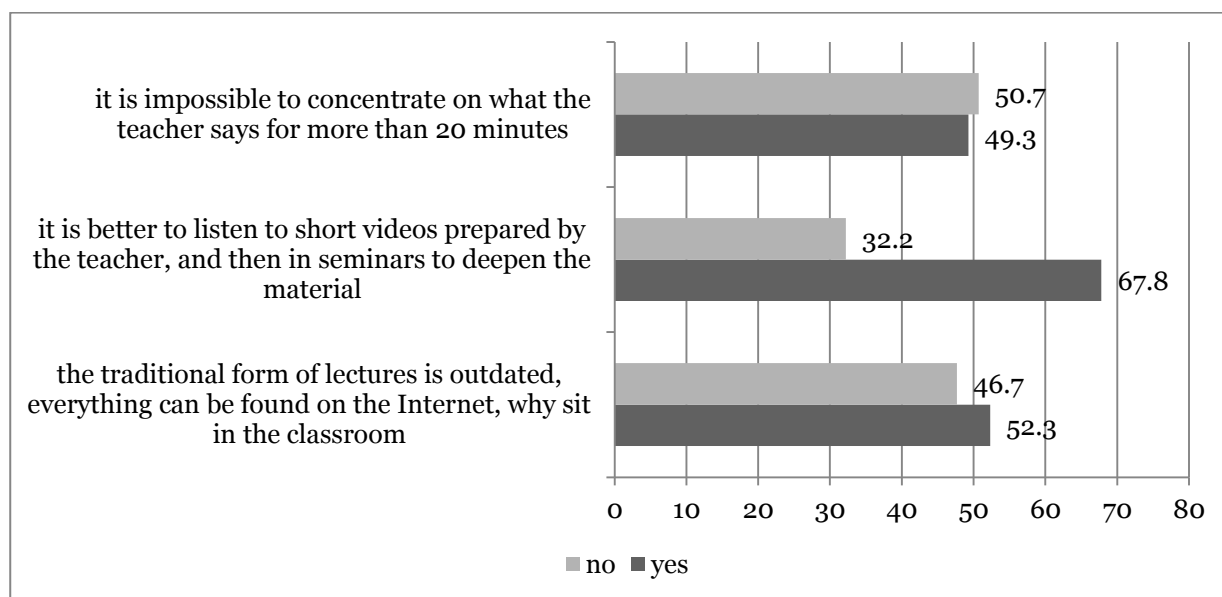


Fig. 1. Students' attitudes towards traditional lectures in the classroom, %

More than half of the students surveyed (52.3 %) believe that the traditional form of lectures is outdated. The ability to find any information on the Internet, according to respondents, reduces the value of knowledge obtained in the classroom. The availability of information ensures "the acquisition of knowledge in a ready-made form, including through images that do not require understanding" (Zeer et al., 2021). Thus, the redundancy of information, the clip form of its presentation on the Internet significantly devalues knowledge. The expansion of the information space inclines young people to the idea that there is no strict need to memorize the material, listen attentively to the teacher.

The results of the focus group confirmed these findings, students very lightly characterize the value of educational materials, justifying this by access to information resources.

Irina K., 3rd year: "I rarely take notes... When I prepare for an exam, I search the Internet for material on the issues... Everything is there..."

Anton M., 2nd year: "There is something interesting, but, as a rule, a lecture is about nothing... I can find it all in one click..."

When answering the question about ways to assess the reliability of information on the Internet, students demonstrate a fairly high self-assessment of their skills.

Darya A., 2nd year: "Yes, I know what 'fake news' is, but it's immediately obvious... Yes, there's a lot of lies, but in this regard I can tell the difference..."

Nikolay D., 3rd year: "There's certainly 'a lot of garbage' on the Internet, but there are also trusted sites..."

The focus group showed that students do not draw a clear line between information on the Internet and systemic knowledge obtained in the course of classical education.

The decline in the prestige of knowledge is expressed in the deformation of value norms that characterize the attitude to academic traditions in education.

It can be assumed that only media competence of young people will allow them to realize the existing gap between fragmentary and unreliable information that is posted on Internet resources and genuine academic knowledge. At the same time, the key role in this process belongs to the teacher, who has the ability to develop such skills in students as analytical and critical understanding of information, a creative approach, and the generation of new knowledge (Frolova, 2024).

It is alarming that half of the respondents (49.3 %) cannot concentrate on what the teacher says for more than 20 minutes. Difficulty maintaining attention, memory impairment, the desire to quickly switch between different information sources in modern conditions are not only attributes of the digital society, but also deformations of media culture. The most significant changes concern students' attitudes to the forms of obtaining knowledge and assimilation of material in the higher education system. The transformation of the media culture of young people has led to the fact that 2/3 of respondents (67.8 %) would like to change the form of assimilation of knowledge, to move from lectures in the classroom to "listening to videos". However, there are serious risks in changing these behavioral models. Virtualization of training minimizes the "feeling of real life", while maximizing communication gaps between the teacher and the student. Such gaps do not allow the formation of socially significant skills of the student, reinforce the ethical standards of working with information. Disruption of social connections in the learning process deforms the cognitive process, narrows thinking to abstract categories (Khlopovskikh et al., 2022).

During the study, students were also asked about their attitude towards the teacher. The overwhelming majority of respondents (83.9 %) agreed with the statement that the teacher should have a sense of humor, use "entertaining content" in the learning process. Thus, a traditional lecture can evoke a positive response from a student if such attributes as "fun atmosphere" are activated (Ideland, 2021); pleasure and positive climate (David, Weinstein, 2023). Thus, the hypothesis put forward during the study was confirmed. Digitalization and, above all, the experience of distance learning had a negative impact on students' attitudes towards the academic traditions of lecture teaching. Negative consequences include the deformation of the teacher's authority and increased demands for an entertaining nature of education. The insufficient level of media competence of the student reduces the criticality of the perception of information presented on the Internet. Most modern students do not draw clear boundaries between such channels for obtaining knowledge as information on the Internet and educational materials in the educational environment of the university.

The study found that students perceive the digitalization of education processes very positively (Figure 2).

The overwhelming majority sees the availability of educational materials in the information space as the main prerequisites for digital optimism. 95.1 % of respondents agreed with this advantage. Indeed, large-scale digitization of educational materials has become a revolutionary turn in the development of the educational institution. The survey results showed that a dominant opinion has formed among students about the positive consequences of the digital transformation of the educational process: 88.8 % of respondents note an increase in the availability of information; 87.5 % note a positive trend in increasing the level of knowledge. This effect is achieved due to the possibility of using advanced technologies to search for information, the advantages of a neural network for creating illustrations. In addition, the availability of

diverse information content makes it possible for students to form individual learning paths, removing territorial restrictions.

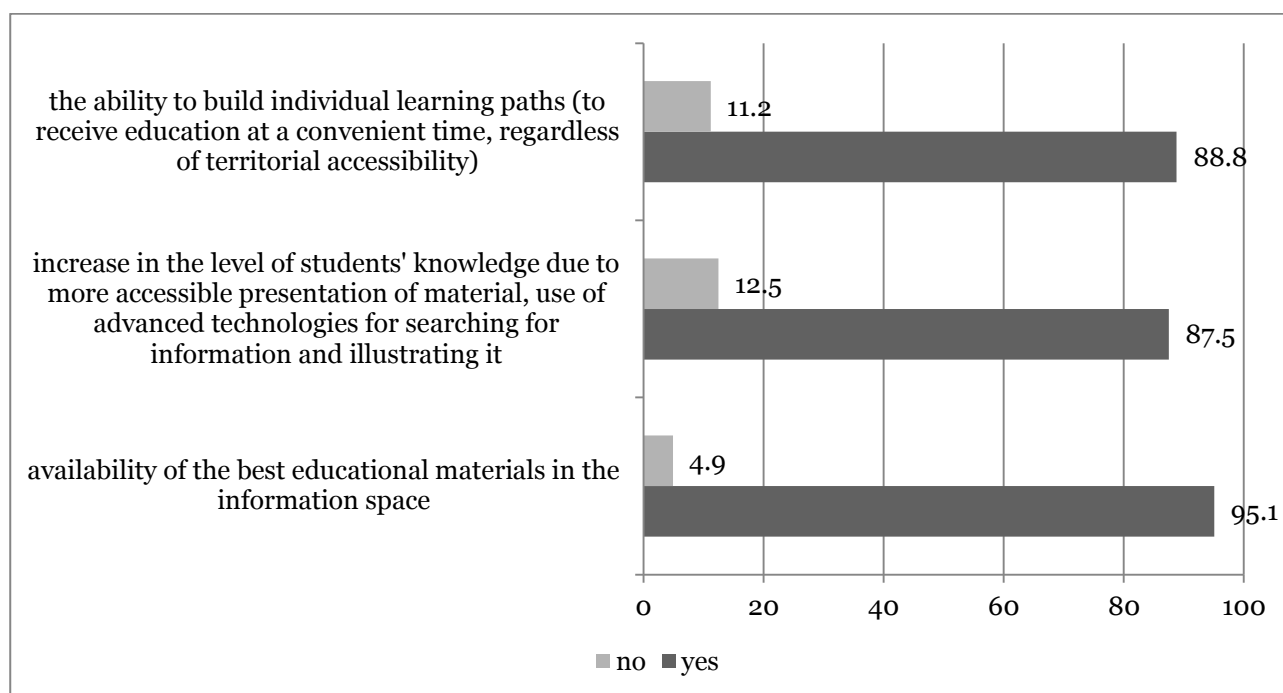


Fig. 2. Benefits of digitalization of education, %

During the focus group, students expressed diverse opinions. On the one hand, attention was focused on the advantages of universal accessibility of information:

Anton M., 2nd year: "You can find information on any issue. If you want to study a subject in depth, you will always find content..."

A number of students expressed their opinion about the limitations in using available information, the need for careful work on its search and verification:

Anna P., 3rd year: "I think that we should be careful with information on the Internet. Especially on professional issues. Another thing is the content prepared by teachers at the university... This is always good..."

During the discussion, students came to the conclusion that it is necessary to differentiate between the processes of digitalization of education and the development of the global Internet. Despite the desire of most universities to ensure the availability of educational materials, students do not always take advantage of these advantages.

Darya A., 2nd year: "I know that there is a personal account. Something is posted there... Honestly, I rarely use these materials. It is more convenient to find them on the Internet..."

Thus, the digital optimism of young people is largely related to the development of the global Internet, the possibilities of unlimited communications. At the same time, the digital achievements of the educational environment of universities where students study remain on the periphery of their attention. Most students use electronic personal accounts to carry out the required communication with the teacher, record the completion of assigned tasks. Much less often, students study digital content in depth, listen to recordings of video lectures. It can be assumed that at the current stage of development of society, one of the tasks of media education is the formation of skills in working with information in terms of interpreting channels for obtaining knowledge, differentiating their significance. Reflection on the advantages of digitalization of education would allow students to more effectively navigate the educational environment of universities.

Analysis of the results of the questionnaire allowed us to establish a relationship between understanding the advantages of digitalization and the presence of skills for critical understanding of information (Table 1).

The results of the analysis confirmed the hypothesis about the existence of a relationship between understanding the advantages of digitalization, involvement in the practices of using

digital content of universities and the formation of skills in searching and systematizing information, critical understanding of digital communications products. Among students who did not appreciate the availability of educational materials in the information space, the proportion of respondents with a lack of skills in searching and systematizing information, critical understanding of digital communications products is significantly higher.

Table 1. Relationship between the assessment of the benefits of digitalization (availability of educational materials) and the availability of information handling skills, %

<i>Do you think that digitalization of education provides...</i>	<i>Assess your presence of the following information processing skills...</i>	
availability of the best educational materials in the information space	I can critically think about digital communications products	
	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
yes	88.2	11.8
нет	67.7	32.3
sample mean	87.2	12.8
availability of the best educational materials in the information space	I can systematize searches on information platforms containing data necessary for study	
	<i>yes</i>	<i>no</i>
yes	90.7	9.3
no	77.4	22.6
sample mean	90.0	10.0

The obtained results require further verification, analysis of other factors influencing students' self-assessment of their media competence.

5. Conclusion

Digitalization of all spheres of public life has radically changed the processes of searching, consuming and producing information. On the one hand, the availability of information facilitates the process of mastering knowledge, but, on the other hand, in the conditions of insufficient media competence, excess information can limit the student's readiness to memorize educational materials, understand and analyze them. As the results of the study showed, the majority of the surveyed students have changed their attitude to traditional academic forms of education in the context of digitalization of education. In particular, the idea of the obsolescence of lecture forms of education is circulating among students, this is said by 52.3 % of respondents. This thesis is justified by the availability of any information on the Internet. At the same time, students do not have a clear idea of the differentiation between "any information" and fundamental knowledge obtained during training. Understanding the term "fake news", comprehension of the phenomenon of the "post-truth era" is reflected in the ideas of modern youth. However, these risks are perceived abstractly – outside of direct personal experience. The role of media education in this context is to develop a critical attitude towards information, differentiating the boundaries between fragmentary, often falsified information from the Internet and systemic knowledge obtained during training.

Students focus on digital communication practices with the teacher, strictly fixed rules for working in a personal electronic account. It can be assumed that students have low motivation to work with educational digital materials. During the focus group, informants said that they are more focused on independent search for information on the Internet than on an in-depth study of materials presented in the educational environment of universities. The tasks of media education in this context are seen in the formation of a conscious attitude to information, a critical analysis of the channels for obtaining it, and the development of the subjective position of students when using digital services. A connection has been established between students' awareness of the benefits of digitalization (expanded access to educational materials) and the development of their skills in systematic information search and critical understanding of digital communications products.

Further research areas may include: analysis of factors that increase students' motivation to work productively with digital content; study of tools for forming the subjective position of young people when choosing a source of information and its further use to obtain new knowledge; development of media skills for determining the reliability of information content. Particular attention should be paid to research into the role of media education in forming the educational values and norms of young people, the culture of information consumption.

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