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EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR MODERN YOUTH: DYNAMICS OF CHANGES IN THE PRACTICES OF ONLINE ACTIVITY

IMPLICACIONES EDUCATIVAS PARA LA JUVENTUD MODERNA: DINÁMICA DE CAMBIOS EN LAS PRÁCTICAS DE LA ACTIVIDAD EN LÍNEA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the educational implications of the digital environment on modern youth, focusing on how digital transformations influence online activities and civic engagement. The digital environment, with its powerful influence on modern youth, shapes a wide range of online activity practices among young generations. This requires a sociological diagnosis to understand how digital transformations affect the online activity and civic engagement of young people, given the high demands on their communicative qualities, emotional sensitivity and empathy. This article presents a comparative analysis of the online activity practices of russian youth and their forms of civic engagement based on two representative surveys conducted in 2021 and 2023. The results indicate a significant increase in digital competencies, with a marked increase in the use of social networks and messengers for education, communication and receiving information. The study highlights a trend towards greater moral and civic awareness among young people, contrary to the common criticism of their individualism and pragmatism. The authors conclude that educational strategies should therefore focus on improving digital competencies while emphasizing the value of real-world social interactions. The combination of digital and offline participation

is crucial to achieve effective civic participation and address social challenges.

Keywords:

Youth, civic activism, digital skills, education.

RESUMEN

Este estudio examina las implicaciones educativas del entorno digital en la juventud moderna, centrándose en cómo las transformaciones digitales influyen en las actividades en línea y el compromiso cívico. El entorno digital, con su poderosa influencia en la juventud moderna, configura una amplia gama de prácticas de actividad en línea entre las generaciones jóvenes. Esto requiere un diagnóstico sociológico para comprender cómo las transformaciones digitales afectan la actividad en línea y el compromiso cívico de los jóvenes, dadas las altas demandas de sus cualidades comunicativas, sensibilidad emocional y empatía. Este artículo presenta un análisis comparativo de las prácticas de actividad en línea de los jóvenes rusos y sus formas de compromiso cívico basado en dos encuestas representativas realizadas en 2021 y 2023. Los resultados indican un aumento significativo de las competencias digitales, con un marcado aumento en el uso de redes sociales y mensajeros para la educación, la comunicación y la recepción de información. El estudio

destaca una tendencia hacia una mayor conciencia moral y cívica entre los jóvenes, contrariamente a la crítica común de su individualismo y pragmatismo. Los autores concluyen que, por lo tanto, las estrategias educativas deben centrarse en mejorar las competencias digitales y, al mismo tiempo, enfatizar el valor de las interacciones sociales del mundo real. La combinación de la participación digital y fuera de línea es crucial para lograr una participación cívica eficaz y abordar los desafíos sociales.

Palabras clave:

Juventud, activismo cívico, competencias digitales, educación.

INTRODUCTION

Young people of the era of qualitative technological changes are experiencing a strong informational impact, the digital environment has become an integral part of their life and communication space and even its dominant zone (Way & Redden, 2017). Digitalization has changed the basis and orientation of the whole process of socialization of new, digital, generations (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). This situation necessitates the search for ways to regulate the civic and social activity of young people, including in the online environment, to orient them in a positive direction of participation in socially important activities (Starikova & Demidova, 2021; Sundstrom et al., 2022). The future of humanity, its ability to withstand a multitude of challenges depends on the social actions realized by young people in various spheres of public life, their energy level and compliance with the new requirements of modern reality. In this aspect, it is also important to carry out the training of professionals of the highest qualification through the system of higher education.

In the conditions of the new digital paradigm, which largely determines the life orbit of young generations, it is necessary and important to study the whole range of online activity practices of young people (Eflova et al., 2023). The search for an answer to the question of what practical actions should be taken in order to strengthen the role of the digital environment in the formation of positive behavioral practices of young people and to neutralize and exclude the formation of their negative forms is relevant. In this regard, it is relevant to study the dynamics of changes in the digital behavioral trends of young people and identify their main directions.

METHODOLOGY

The materials of the article are based on a comparative analysis of the results of two sociological studies conducted in 2021 and 2023 by a group of researchers from

kazan (volga region) federal university, with the participation of the authors of the article, to study the generations of young people in the context of their digital behavior.

The purpose of the study was defined as the study of the dynamics of changes in the practices of online activity of russian youth in correlation with the analysis of the realized forms of civic engagement in the information environment of the period of the two research projects in 2021 and 2023.

The empirical material turned out to be suitable for comparison, as the studies were conducted using the same tools. During the implementation of the two research phases, an online survey was used as the tool most appropriate to the topic of the discussed problems, as well as allowing to quickly obtain sociological information. The realized repeated research in 2023 contributed to the formation of a panoramic view of the studied phenomena in their temporal change.

Online questionnaire survey of young people was conducted on a representative sample of 2210 and 2206 people respectively by year, conducted in 8 regions of the russian federation: central, north-west, south, north caucasus, volga, urals, siberia, far east. The respondents were young people aged 18 to 35, divided into two age groups - 18 to 25 years old and 26 to 35 years old.

DEVELOPMENT

The analysis of the data obtained during the years of research allows us to draw conclusions regarding the emerging trends of changes in the online activity practices of russian youth in the period under study.

Every year the level of digital competencies of young people demonstrates steady growth. The rapidly increasing speed of digital transformations contributes to the arrival of new generations in the information space, whose distinctive feature is digital thinking with its inherent intensity of knowledge growth in the field of information technologies. The inextricable connection of young people with the digital environment, the ordinariness and naturalness of the perception of its representatives in the internet context at all levels of life, allows us to assess the level of digital competence of young people as quite high. Thus, if in 2021 21.9% of respondents assessed their digital skills as high, 38.4% as "above average", 35% as "average", 6.8% as "low", then in 2023 the numerical indicators have fundamentally changed. 41.5% of respondents reported a high level of their own digital competence, 49.2% rated them as "average" and 6.6% considered the level of digital knowledge and skills as "low". In this case, significant increases in the indicators in the responses and a

clearly expressed trend towards actualizing the demand of young people to master digital competencies in the conditions of a digital society are evident (Van Laar et al., 2017; Jackman et al., 2021; Tinmaz et al., 2022).

There is an increase in the use of social networks and messengers by young people, which respondents consider a convenient format of communication with minimal time consumption and steadily increase the intensity of interaction in the information space. According to the results of our research, the leaders among the Russian youth audience are the social networks vk and tiktok, messengers whatsapp and telegram. Used most actively, they showed an increase in the number of users in the study period from 2021 to 2023.

For example, the popularity of the social network tiktok increased from 26.4% in 2021 to 33.7% in 2023, the share of young people surveyed, who more often began to use telegram in communication increased from 60.8% to 84.4%. The multiplicity of online platforms and applications existing on the market of software products, constantly demonstrating an increase in functionality, is of interest to today's youth. This fact inevitably entails the need to master these platforms for the purposes of online communication, concentrating representatives of younger generations in the digital environment, for most of whom it has also become a source of information about significant events in society and the country. The research results illustrate the dynamics of changes in the number of respondents who prefer to get information from the online environment: if in 2021 forums, blogs, messengers, social networking sites were a source of information for 77.3% of respondents, in 2023 their number increased to 90.7%. There has also been an increase among those respondents who prefer digital media to other ways of obtaining information - from 73.6% at the first stage of the survey to 86.6% in the second wave.

The life of modern youth is filled with manifestations of online activity, characterized by a variety of its types and forms, the most typical of which is the use of digital environment for educational, work, leisure purposes, young people communicate in internet networks and messengers, implement daily routine practices using online tools, which certainly increases the time spent in the information space and the number of "heavy users", which, according to the research of the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (vciom) (2023). The consequence of this situation is quite natural is the observed preference of young people for the online format of interaction in various life spheres, which is also shown by the data of our survey in 2023.

Thus, the survey participants, determining the extent to which their communication has moved to the digital environment on a scale from 0 to 100%, noted that 59.3% of communication with relatives, family members take place in the internet space; the rate of online contacts with friends was 62.7%; online communication with colleagues was estimated at the level of 54%. Respondents believed that their online interaction with representatives of state institutions (tax authorities, public services, doctors, etc.) At the time of the survey corresponds to 56.2%, and discussion of information about the world, life, country, society, carried out in chat rooms, forums, corresponds to the indicator of 66%. At the same time, no significant differences in the respondents' assessments determined by the dependence of these numerical data on gender, age, level of education, financial status and place of residence by federal districts were revealed in the course of dispersion analysis.

The observed increase in the importance of digital space in the implementation of communication ties, at the same time, does not indicate its exclusive preference in the communication practices of young people. The understanding of the role of the real social environment in the enrichment of social experience in the process of interaction, its recognition as an invariable basis for the socialization of young generations and a source of their social activity is also preserved.

Against the background of the existing mode of youth presence in the internet environment, online activity in relation to the manifestation of civic initiatives, the desire to solve both global and local problems using the resources of the digital environment is noticeable and requires analysis. The analysis of the results of the surveys of two years showed the following dynamics of changes in the opinions of the representatives of the surveyed youth regarding the reasons for people's manifestation of civic activity on the internet. The number of respondents increased slightly - from 46.6% in 2021 to 48.4% in 2023 - indicating the fact that "association in real life takes too many resources" as such a reason. At the same time, the number of those who believe that "the internet allows you to reach more people" has decreased (from 60.5% in 2021 to 53.6% in 2023), as well as those who previously stated that "digital media help people mobilize more powerfully and effectively" (from 40.6% to 32.3%, respectively).

A significant drop in the number of respondents who hold the view that civic engagement on the internet guarantees security - from 50.3% in 2021 to 29.2% in 2023 - was also recorded: "the rhythm of modern life involves digitalization and acceleration of the pace of life, a huge flow of information envelops people, so the internet allows a person

to process this information”; “it is more convenient and saves time”; “because it is convenient and accessible”.

Thus, young people, with the increasing digital impact on them, adequately assess the possibilities of the internet environment, see the dangers emanating from it, in fact, realizing that in the presence of simplicity, convenience, speed of information dissemination in the digital field, it is not always possible to ensure the effectiveness of actions carried out there. Therefore, only “the connectedness of activity in the online environment and the forms of activity realized in the offline environment” (Shamionov et al., 2023, p. 38), based on the interconnectedness of the digital field, can ensure the effectiveness of activities carried out there, based on the complementarity of the two environments - digital and real social, can lead to the desired results in the realization of civic achievements.

The modern digital format of interaction provides a wide range of opportunities for young people to choose how to initiate and implement civic initiatives in accordance with their goals, life preferences, motivations, worldview orientations and attitudes. In order to analyze the most priority forms of activity carried out by young people in the digital environment, the interviewees were asked the question: “what have you had to do on the internet in the last six months to a year?”. A comparative analysis of the answers to the question recorded the following trends: young people have become more likely to join groups of parties/political leaders in social networks: while in 2021 this was indicated by 28.1% of respondents with such experience, in 2023 it was indicated by 30.4% of respondents. - 30.4% of respondents. In fact, there have been no changes in the aspiration of young people to speak out on public and political issues in blogs, social networks, and news sites: in 2021, 45.7% of respondents did so, and in 2023, 45.6%. - 45.6%.

The number of young people joining groups of public (non-profit) organizations, initiatives to solve public problems and help those in need in social networks has not decreased either (44.7% and 45.8%, respectively, by year). Moreover, the desire to help was expressed both by respondents who assessed their financial situation as high enough, and those who noted that “money is not enough even for the most necessary products” (73.1% and 53.2% of respondents, respectively, with different levels of wealth), and this position, according to the results of the surveys, looks quite stable. The years between the two surveys have not changed the opinion of young people regarding active participation in solving significant social problems, further realization of the practice of supporting people in need of help, at a level accessible and understandable to young people - in the digital

environment. Thus, not only the active civic position of young generations is confirmed, but also a positive forecast regarding the sustainability of their moral attitudes, which are not disturbed by information influence.

The digital life of young people with a variety of configurations of online practices and preferences, the ability of representatives of younger generations to freely navigate in the information space, contribute to the growth of those convinced that “the actions of users on the internet can change the world”. In 2023, the share of respondents sharing this point of view amounted to 22.8%, in contrast to 18.2% of respondents in 2021. Despite the fact that the dynamics of changes in opinions is insignificant and the indicator increased by only 4.6%, it can still explain the existing confidence among young people in the expediency of civic engagement in the digital environment. Among the factors that also determine the inclusion in online discussions and participation in solving problems at various levels - local and global, our respondents noted “the desire to highlight their position”, and the indicator of this answer option in 2023 practically remained at the level of 2021 and amounted to 33.6%. The decisive moments of active participation in online actions to solve socially significant problems of the society, the respondents named the desire “to achieve wide publicity of any problem”, “to refute false information”. The numerical indicator of these answers also remained at the level of 2021 and amounted to 40.6% and 43.2%, respectively.

Respondents’ opinions regarding the factors of inclusion in online discussion, determined by purely personal goals of solving their own problems, were subject to changes. The number of respondents who believe that the most significant motive for inclusion in online activity is the situation when “the problem concerns me and my relatives personally” decreased from 48.6% in 2021 to 43.3% in 2023, with no dependence of answers on gender, age group, level of education, financial well-being and place of residence.

Contrary to the existing criticism of young generations, reproached for their individualism, pragmatism, and focus on their own success, there is a positive change in the priorities of young people with regard to the combination of personal and public. The desire to solve the problems of the city, region, and country, not remaining indifferent to what is happening in the social space, confirming civic interest and participation, has become more pronounced among young respondents.

Young people clearly state their readiness to be civically active when it is necessary to solve various problems, using the means of the internet environment that are

familiar and available to them. At the same time, the key tactics of civic participation, as perceived by young respondents, are “giving “likes” under a post about a problem”, “signing online petitions”, “reposting a post made by other users on their page/to their contacts”, “creating author’s posts/messages in social networks”, “creating posts to protect consumer rights/publicly exposing organizations that violate such rights”, “making/organizing online donations to solve problems”. The range of distribution of these response options was determined by indicators in the numerical interval from 15% to 60% of the number of respondents in 2021, and in 2023 was expanded and was in the area of numerical values 17.3% - 74.7%.

And although the expression of approval in the form of “likes” - “clicktivism” - as a form of effective means of solving problems often raises certain doubts and therefore is called “passive activism”, it still allows to expand the coverage of the informed audience, to focus the attention of a large number of people on the problem and is a certain standard of digital behavior of modern youth, which is seen by young generations as the most effective, providing support for the ideas, opinions and initiatives expressed.

Many young respondents agree with the opinion that “all the ways to solve society’s problems have moved to the online space, and there are not so many offline channels” (the indicator increased from 17.9% to 31.3% in the years of research). This peculiar form of complicity of modern youth in solving problems is due, to a certain extent, to the age peculiarities of the social group of young people, insufficient experience of real life, which allows to skillfully and creatively combine and involve both online and offline reality in solving problems.

Interviewees’ preferred actions in the digital environment also included: “creation of open “repositories” (online groups, forums on the topic) for sharing data on the problem”, readiness to “compose and post an appeal to a politician, celebrity or other influential person to draw attention to the problem”, but they occupied more modest positions in the hierarchy of response options. Moreover, in the context of gender analysis of respondents’ answers to the question about their readiness to take certain actions in the digital environment in order to solve significant problems, women were more active than men, as well as the group of adult youth aged 26-35. The answers were not conditioned by the indicators of education level, financial status, and place of residence in the years of the surveys. In the survey of the second wave in 2023, among the respondents who noted that they already have some experience of participation in the implementation of such types of activities in the internet environment and “ready

for such experience”, the number of the latter increased compared to the results of 2021, reaching 31.7% for some of them. Therefore, young people should be supported in every possible way to realize positive practices of activism in the digital environment, both political and non-political forms of activism, in combination with activities carried out as part of educational work, implemented offline and contributing to the activation of aspirations for civic service among young generations.

The specifics of the digital behavior of today’s youth are manifested in their choice of ways to be heard in the internet space, their desire to convey their position to more people, and to try to get a response from them. Thus, unacceptable, from the point of view of our respondents, are actions in the digital environment, which are of a malicious nature and aimed at gaining access to confidential information of a person and influencing him/her. Therefore, the option of solving problems through cyberattacks is neither approved nor accepted by survey participants. And according to the conducted research, the number of those youth representatives who categorically do not accept “hacking to solve a problem” and “leaving comments as part of an “attack” on the account of a political figure or celebrity to draw attention to the problem” has increased.

Indeed, in modern conditions, interaction in the digital environment should be based on active strategies of digital culture, which are based on the ability to determine priorities, respect the opinion of others, not to give in to impulsive reactions, not to take actions against other people who hold an opposing point of view, a high level of personal self-control, that is, behavioral practices that do not contradict both human norms and unspoken rules of digital behavior. And young people are fully aware of the inadmissibility of violating socially significant behavioral frameworks in the process of implementing various types of activity in the digital environment.

CONCLUSIONS

For each new generation of young people, the value of digital space is gaining more and more weight, becoming a place of concentration of interests, aspirations, and a platform for the realization of initiatives. Therefore, the higher the creative activity of young people manifested in the digital environment in conjunction and unity with offline civic participation, the more obvious and tangible will be the decisive role of young people in solving the problems facing society, and thus the more confident and optimistic will be the prospect of tomorrow in an irreversibly changing world.

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