

50

DIGITALIZATION OF THE EVERYDAY LIFE AND EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN YOUTH: PRACTICES AND ACTIVISM

DIGITALIZACIÓN DE LA VIDA COTIDIANA Y COMPROMISO EDUCATIVO DE LA JUVENTUD RUSA CONTEMPORÁNEA: PRÁCTICAS Y ACTIVISMO

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the significant role and influence of the digital environment in the daily lives of contemporary Russian youth, focusing on their behavioral practices and activities within this realm. The results of a survey conducted in 2023 among young people in eight Russian regions using online questionnaires are presented. The types of digital activities and practices most common among young people are analyzed. Findings, derived from extensive survey data, indicate a substantial daily engagement with the digital world: 85% of respondents use the Internet daily, with considerable portions spending upwards of 3 hours online. Specifically, 29.7% are engaged in digital activities for more than 8 hours, 32% for 6-8 hours, and 29% for 3-5 hours daily. Even among those who assessed their financial situation as less than ideal, digital learning tools remain accessible and utilized. This research highlights the digitally optimized routine practices of modern youth, underscoring their high adaptability in digital spaces. This adaptability enables the youth to design personalized digital paths with a routing scheme that efficiently combines various digital resources to meet their individual needs and interests. The study provides valuable insights into the pervasive role of digitalization in shaping the everyday life and educational engagement of contemporary Russian youth.

Keywords:

Youth, young generation, civic activism, digitalization, practices, attitudes.

RESUMEN

Este estudio investiga el importante papel y la influencia del entorno digital en la vida cotidiana de la juventud rusa contemporánea, centrándose en sus prácticas y actividades de comportamiento dentro de este ámbito. Se presentan los resultados de una encuesta realizada en 2023 entre jóvenes de ocho regiones rusas mediante cuestionarios en línea. Se analizan los tipos de actividades y prácticas digitales más comunes entre los jóvenes. Las conclusiones, obtenidas a partir de datos exhaustivos de la encuesta, indican un importante compromiso diario con el mundo digital: el 85% de los encuestados utiliza Internet a diario, y una parte considerable pasa más de 3 horas en línea. En concreto, el 29,7% participa en actividades digitales durante más de 8 horas, el 32% entre 6 y 8 horas y el 29% entre 3 y 5 horas diarias. Incluso entre quienes consideran que su situación económica no es la ideal, las herramientas digitales de aprendizaje siguen siendo accesibles y utilizadas. Esta investigación pone de relieve las prácticas rutinarias optimizadas digitalmente de la juventud moderna, subrayando su gran adaptabilidad en los espacios digitales. Esta adaptabilidad permite a los jóvenes diseñar itinerarios digitales personalizados con un esquema de rutas que combina eficazmente diversos recursos digitales para satisfacer sus necesidades e intereses individuales. El estudio aporta información valiosa sobre el papel omnipresente de la digitalización en la configuración de la vida cotidiana y el compromiso educativo de la juventud rusa contemporánea.

Palabras clave:

Juventud, Generación Joven, Activismo Cívico, Digitalización, Prácticas, Actitudes.

INTRODUCTION

At present, the intensive digital transformation of all spheres of social life contributes to the optimization and acceleration of many processes in key areas of social life, changing their pace, intensity and quality, forming the image of a new person of the digital age (Orlova, 2022; Gerasimova et al., 2023). In the flow of dynamic and large-scale digitalization, new generations of young people are being formed with a lifestyle determined by the digital socialization environment, whose qualitative characteristic is a sufficiently high level of digital maturity.

Similar to the speed with which the Internet creates, transmits and operates information in the modern world, information technologies change and improve, and the rapid rejuvenation of the contingent of the user audience of social networks and gadgets, new generations of young people are being formed in the digital environment (Nikolaeva et al., 2023; Pertsev et al., 2023).

The digital environment, which has become an integral part of the everyday life of representatives of younger generations, fills the life space of young people more and more extensively every year, often occupying the dominant, primary importance in it, radically changing everyday behavioral practices and habits, giving them new specific features (Maximova et al., 2017, 2018; Eflova et al., 2023). Therefore, in the rich research agenda of digital reality, the issues of its impact on young people still remain a priority and do not lose their relevance, which is due to the need to create a holistic picture of the digital everyday life of representatives of young generations with inherent behavioral scenarios (Deryuga et al., 2022; Voronina et al., 2023).

The need to understand the place and role of the digital environment in the life space of young people makes research on this social group in the context of digitalization processes particularly relevant. Therefore, the aim of our study was defined as the identification of specific features and peculiarities of the digital everyday life of contemporary Russian youth, the specifics of their everyday behavioral practices and activities in the digital environment (Berezina et al., 2022; Turanin & Posokhova, 2023).

The need to understand the place and role of the digital environment in the life space of young people makes research on this social group in the context of digitalization processes particularly relevant (Hernández García de Velazco, 2022; Safonov & Mayakovskaya, 2023). Therefore, the aim of our study was defined as the identification of specific features and peculiarities of the digital everyday life of contemporary Russian youth, the specifics

of their everyday behavioral practices and activities in the digital environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to study young people in the aspect of interest to us, we conducted a survey of their representatives using the online questionnaire method, the argument in favor of using this method was the very topic of the research, which involves discussing issues of the digital environment using only similar tools. In accordance with the representative sample, 2206 people were interviewed in 8 regions of the Russian Federation: Central, North-West, South, North Caucasian, Urals, Siberian, and Far East. Among the surveyed representatives of the socio-demographic group - young people aged 18 to 35 years old were divided into two age groups - from 18 to 25 years old and from 26 to 35 years old, which was explained by the desire to make more valid conclusions on the results of the study, finding and catching the presence of the slightest differences that distinguish the digital everyday life of close age groups, but given the speed of change in digital technologies at the present time, still existing and observable even with an insignificant difference in the age of respondents. Among the respondents, 51.7% were women and 48.3% men, characterized by different levels of education, financial status, and place of residence - in villages and rural areas, as well as cities with different population sizes: from less than 50,000 inhabitants to a million.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The conducted research made it possible to draw the following conclusions and dwell on some of its results.

Digital minimalism, as a style of behavior in the information field, which many people insist on the need to implement, is not typical of modern Russian youth. And this fact is confirmed by the results of the study, according to which 85% of our respondents use the Internet daily, with 29.7% spending more than 8 hours in the digital space, 32% - from 6 to 8 hours, 29% - from 3 to 5 hours, 7.8% of respondents - from 1 to 2 hours, and only 1.5% of respondents use the Internet for less than an hour during the day. Such data on the time of online presence in the digital space, regardless of whether this time is devoted to study, work or other activities, does not allow us to say that representatives of younger generations follow the principles of a healthy lifestyle in the digital environment. Most of them actually spend most of the day online, which has a negative impact on young people's health. It is no coincidence that the actualization of digital minimalism has become a kind of reaction to the high level of young people's inclusion in the digital environment, their excessive dependence on

various gadgets and uncontrolled spending time in the information environment.

This does not mean, however, that young people should be categorically forbidden to transform themselves to the latest information achievements, especially since such a scenario is hardly possible in view of the irreversibility of digital transformations in modern conditions. In this case, we are talking about the reproduction in everyday life of the scenario of young people's behavior in the digital space, indicating that "under the influence of info-communication technologies an active subject of social relations is formed, a person "active", i.e. an "advanced" user, rather than a passive, zombified Internet addict" (Kargapolov, 2017). In this regard, it seems that introducing young people to elements of digital culture, including digital minimalism, should be an integral part of the process of educating young generations from an early age.

Otherwise, it makes no sense to talk about reasonable consumption of Internet information, the formation of positive behavioral practices and communication skills in the digital environment at an older age, when habits have already been formed and the foundations of digital behavior have been laid by years of constant presence in the Internet space, especially since scientists have proved that generations that acquire certain values at a young age, as a rule, do not lose them in later life (Inglehart, 2016). Only the process of socialization of young generations, accompanied by the ability to find a balance between the two sides of life space - real and digital, education of digital culture, is able to provide the right vector of their personal development in the conditions of information society.

In response to the question about how often young people use digital and Internet technologies in various spheres of life and, in particular, in education, 60.6 % of respondents said that they often use digital technologies and the Internet for educational purposes, while 22.5 % of respondents use them sometimes, against a small number of those who "rarely" and "never" (11.9 % and 3 %, respectively) do not use digital opportunities in the educational process. As for the proportion of men and women who use the Internet in education, contrary to the widespread stereotype that men are more oriented towards using digital educational resources, women demonstrated, albeit insignificant, but still greater commitment to digital technologies in education - this was noted by 66.6% of women and 56.5% of men, respectively.

It is quite expected that the age group of respondents from 18 to 25 years old more often accesses and uses digital resources in the learning process than older, 26-35 years old. Here the gap in the numerical indicators, although quite significant: 71.9% versus 40.3% of

respondents (in the age groups of 18-24 and 25-34 years old respectively, who use "often"), but is quite explainable from the position that the age from 18 to 25 is a period of active professional education. At the same time, the frequency of use of digital and Internet technologies in education in respondents' assessments did not show significant dependence on the level of education already available (for example, the range of numerical values in the answer option "often use" - from 55.6% to 62.5%), the district of residence (the range of numerical values in the answer option "often use" - from 61.8% to 66.1%). A more favorable financial situation (the level of which was assessed by respondents themselves) also increased the frequency of using digital technologies in the learning process - from 44.4% of those who noted that "money is not enough even for the most necessary products" to 80.6% of respondents who assessed the level of material well-being as "we can afford almost everything".

Despite the fact that the numerical indicator of the use of digital and Internet technologies in learning among those respondents who assessed their financial situation as insufficiently high (44.4% of respondents) is not so high, it does not exclude the possibility of using digital learning tools, including those provided in educational institutions. Currently, the task of "creating a modern and safe digital educational environment by 2024, ensuring high quality and accessibility of education of all types and levels" is being solved (Strategiya 24, 2019) within the framework of the current implementation of the national project "Education. The outlined priority of digitalisation of education and recent events in the world related to the period of quarantine for coronavirus infection made it necessary for all groups of people to quickly master software complexes for videoconferencing in order to ensure the continuity of the educational process. The Internet space has become an alternative learning platform that has formed strong skills and habits of young people to learn effectively in the digital space, to communicate using videoconferencing services such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Yandex Telebridge, VK Calls, Google Meet.

An analysis of the answers of respondents to our survey showed that in the 18-25 age group, 81.9% of respondents use videoconferencing, with 33.6% interacting on a regular basis and 48.3% "occasionally". Although the 26-35 age group is less involved in online interaction via videoconferencing: 27.8 % of respondents say they use videoconferencing frequently and 37.9 % say they use it occasionally, the overall percentage allows us to speak of a majority in this case. In the question under consideration, no dependence of answers on such socio-demographic indicators of the interviewees as gender, level of education, financial situation, place of residence (district

and type of settlement) was revealed. There was a fairly even distribution of numerical values in the respondents' answers regarding the use of digital products.

Mastering new computer software helps to improve IT skills, while raising the bar for self-assessment of digital competence. It is therefore no coincidence that the majority of young people surveyed rate their digital competence as high - 43.4 % of 18-25 years old and 37.4 % of 26-35 years old - and also rate it as medium - 48.7 % and 50.4 %, respectively. However critical young people may be of their digital skills, the figures undoubtedly show that they are firmly entrenched in the competence set of the younger generations.

Nowadays, the digital environment, which has a powerful potential, constantly demonstrates the deployment of internal resource capabilities, offering more and more innovative and advanced products with a high degree of frequency. The special sensitivity to everything new and the demand for the quantity, quality and capabilities of modern gadgets and software that facilitate and optimize activities in various spheres of life, which is characteristic of the current generations of young people, contributes to a constant increase in the number of behavioral practices implemented by representatives of young generations in the digital environment.

In addition to the significant share of digital education and the Internet in young people's lives, the role of digital communication is no less important. Young people's everyday communication in the digital environment has reached the level of not just regular but constant interaction, thus defining a style of digital behavior that is necessary, according to their representatives, for a "full life" in modern society. Young people's communicative practices in the digital space are centered on the use of various messengers and social networks. The leaders among the most popular among the young people surveyed were the following: the Russian social network VKontakte, which was preferred by 73.9% of the respondents, Telegram, in which the respondents also actively communicate, and WhatsApp, which is in demand by 70.6% of the respondents. At the same time, high frequency of communication was demonstrated both by the group of 18-25-year-olds, which is a group of supporters of "permanent online", and 26-35-year-olds with numerical indicators of 79.9% and 69.5% respectively, as well as female respondents with the value of 80.1% against 72.7% of men who use Internet technologies for communication purposes. It is indicative that, along with residents of cities with different populations, 70.7 % of rural youth surveyed are often present in the communicative Internet space, which indicates not

only the availability of digital services, but also a high level of Internet coverage of the vast territory of the country.

Modern young people have digitally optimized routine daily practices that are part of every person's obligatory list of household tasks. For example, grocery shopping and food preparation, which are in fact everyday mandatory conditions for maintaining vitality, have been replaced by online orders for delivery of ready-to-eat food and groceries using a variety of services that advertise and provide nutritional services - Yandex Food, Yandex Lavka, Delivery Club, Samokat, SberMarket, etc. Representatives of the age category of 18-25-year-olds who order on a regular basis are especially inclined to use them - 33.8% of respondents do so, and 42.9% order periodically. The services are no less in demand in the older category of respondents 26-35 years old: 27.2% have ordered food or meal delivery on a regular basis over the last six months to a year, while 39.1% of respondents have ordered it "from time to time". Both residents of different districts of the country and young people of different education levels are active in this respect. As for the factor of financial situation, its higher indicator simultaneously raised the frequency of online orders, demonstrating a direct correlation between these two parameters, confirmed by the distribution of respondents' answers ranging from 24.2% of those who "do not have enough money even for the most necessary products" to 49.2% of those who can afford almost everything.

Digitalization has markedly stimulated young people's activity with regard to purchasing goods and services offered by various websites and applications, effectively minimizing visits to shops and shopping centers. The results by age subgroups of young people showed that the practice of online shopping is quite widespread among them: 55.5 % and 49.2 % of 18-25 and 26-35 years old often make purchases in this way, while 30.3 % and 31.5 % of respondents in the age groups in question "sometimes" order goods and services online, respectively. Women (59.2%) have a greater preference for making purchases in the Internet environment than men (47.3%), using online shops and marketplaces Ozon, Wildberries, Yandex Market, Sbermegamarket, KazanExpress, Aliexpress; in cities with different numbers of residents slightly more than rural residents (distribution of respondents' answers in the numerical range from 37.8% of those living in rural areas to 47.5% of respondents living in a city with a population of 100,000 to 500,000); the district of residence is slightly larger than that of rural residents (distribution of respondents' answers in the numerical range from 37.8% of those living in rural areas to 47.5% of those living in cities with a population of 100,000 to 500,000). to 500 thousand); the respondents' district of residence was not

a factor influencing the frequency of Internet purchases of goods and services (the spread of numerical values in the answer option "I often use" - from 59.7% to 50.6% depending on the district of residence).

The digital consumption zone of the younger generations includes services that provide an opportunity to buy tickets for trips, cultural events, buy and rent real estate, and order a taxi. Without going into the details of analysis of the specifics of each type of digital behavioral practices implemented by young people, we can only note that the commitment to carrying out various types of activities in the digital field tends to increase, which means that the activity of young people in providing various life needs through the Internet will only increase.

Digitalization has touched the aspect of young people's lives related to finding a partner and romantic relationships. In the study by the authors of the article, respondents noted their experience of using services for finding a partner and romantic relationships - Badu, Tinder, Mamba - over the past six months to a year. Among male respondents, the distribution of answers to this question is as follows: 10.3% of respondents regularly turn to such services, 21.5% periodically or from time to time, and 21.75% of men have only once used digital services to solve purely personal issues. The indicators of women according to the results of the analysis of answer options in this question of the online questionnaire look more restrained: only 6.2% of respondents regularly use the services of dating services, 19% - occasionally, and 24.2% only once had such an experience. The above figures show that men go beyond the boundaries of traditional forms of dating much more easily than women, using all the opportunities provided by the digital environment, both in the search for a marriage partner and romantic relationships. At the same time, there were no sharp numerical shifts or significant differences in the answers of respondents on this issue, determined by the level of education, financial status, place of residence.

In the system of life goals significant for any person, finding a life partner, along with the tasks of health and professional development, occupies an important place, remaining relevant for each new generation of young people. In an attempt to avoid the complexity of finding and choosing a marriage partner, today's youth, as they should, do not change their digital habits, offering their own new developments of digital dating services. In this regard, the experience of a student of Kazan Federal University, who won the contest of youth projects "Student Startup" with the development of a mobile dating application "Murror", which is to replace the foreign service, which recently left Russia, but significantly differs from it in search algorithms

and has wider functionality (Ivanova, 2023), is indicative. The author of the idea, as a representative of the youth community, sees the key task of developing a domestic software product in *"creating such an application for dating, in which it would be possible to find your "other half" according to your preferences. So far there are no services that would allow to find a mate according to individual requests"*. (Ivanova, 2023)

Representatives of the generations of today's youth are able to combine life in two spaces - virtual and real - and do not even question this possibility. The digital space, which has become a familiar living environment that has not replaced or displaced, but has formed a different reality parallel to social reality in which young people live, demonstrates the possibilities of bringing the two worlds together.

A good example in this context is the presence of cyber sports or phygital sports in the digital agenda of young people, which combines classic sports, cybersports and the achievements of modern science in the field of information technology. Phygital games, which include a competitive sporting moment provided by the implementation of athletes' game skills in the digital environment and similar sports practices in real sports grounds, are a modern developing trend, the demand for which will increase.

This assumption is substantiated by the results of our research, according to which, among the spheres of social life most interesting to modern domestic youth on the Internet, the subject of sports and physical culture is relevant for 34% of respondents aged 18 to 25 years old and for 32% of respondents over 25 years old, as well as the fact that the respondents themselves, when answering the open question of the online questionnaire about whether they are members of any communities, quite often indicate that they are gamers.

CONCLUSIONS

The high degree of adaptability of young people in the digital space makes it possible to design a personalized digital path in it with a routing scheme that promotes convenient, comfortable and, most importantly, fast implementation of a variety of practices and activities, combining different combinations of digital resources according to individual needs and interests.

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