

YOUTH OF TODAY IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The article considers the process of transformation of modern society associated with the development of the digital economy, the main resource of which is digital technology. The author hypothesizes that youth of today (generation Z) is a special social group that can lead the emerging technological changes. Since the new digital biosocial space is a comfortable environment for young people.

To prove the hypothesis, the author used the appropriate scientific methodology, including the value-oriented method, that allowed to identify the specifics of value orientations, psychological and cognitive features that characterize youth of today. It is proved that the global processes of Informatization of modern society have formed a number of specific features of the digital generation.

It is concluded that it is necessary to create a new model of educational paradigm, which will not only meet the requirements of the digital economy, but will also be able to take into account the specifics of the mentality of young people.

Keywords: Digital society, digitalization, informatization, marginalization, prolonged growing up, network community, communication environment, clip thinking, digital generation, generation Z, digital Natives

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, global changes are taking place in the modern post-industrial society, associated with the widespread introduction of digital technologies into many spheres of human practical activity. Information revolution and intensification of production contributed to the fact that the main resource of social and economic development of the leading countries of the world has become information. The formation of a new network space, which has become a place of functioning of socio-economic relations, the success of digital technologies allowed the scientific community to talk about the emergence of a new global trend – the formation of a digital society. It is clear that the main driver of the development of the new society is a special type of economy – the digital economy.

Most researchers understand the digital economy as a specific system of economic, social and cultural relations based on the use of digital information and telecommunication technologies [1]. The concepts of "digital society" and "digital economy" are beginning to be mastered by the scientific community only since the mid-1990s. The term "digital economy" was first used by the famous canadian researcher Don Tapscott, his book "Digital Economy" for the first time describes the economic reality formed by network technologies [16]. As specific features of the new emerging "electronic-digital society", Tapscott highlighted the virtualization of production, focus on knowledge, digital representation of objects, etc. In his book, Tapscott predicted many aspects of the coming changes, including the impact of digital technologies on the development of the economy, on the system of public administration, changing the social structure and nature of social relations in society.

Since the 2000s, many countries have begun to develop strategies for the transition to a digital economy, associated with the widespread introduction of Internet technologies. In 2017, the Government of the Russian Federation adopts the program "Digital economy of the Russian Federation". Its main goal is to launch in Russia a large-scale system program for the development of the economy of the new technological generation. This program identifies five key areas of development of the digital society, among them- personnel and education [2]. Really, in modern conditions, the growth of digitalization of society is accompanied by the strengthening of the role of human capital, which becomes the main resource of the digital economy. At the same time, the penetration of information and digital technologies into all spheres of economic and socio-political life of society leads to serious transformations not only of methods and forms of communication, but also of the ideological paradigm of modern man [6]. These processes affect, first of all, the younger generation, which due to its age characteristics is the most susceptible to new technologies.

II. METHODOLOGY

The presented scientific work is interdisciplinary in nature, it is performed at the intersection of economic, social and psychological Sciences, which allowed to expand the problem field of research and identify the mechanism of interaction between economic and socio-cultural processes. Analysis of global trends characteristic of modern society, including trends associated with the formation of a new digital generation required the use of scientific methodology, which includes the following research methods: functional analysis method, value-oriented, systemic, prognostic and synergetic methods. From the point of view of the system approach, the economic sphere of production is one of the elements of the social system, so the economy is experiencing all the consequences of the transformation of post-industrial society. The use of the value-oriented method allowed to reveal new value orientations and motivations characterizing the modern young generation. The prognostic method makes it possible to predict changes in the psychological and cognitive spheres of the personality of young people associated with the influence of digital technologies. Finally, synergetic methodology helps to understand how the modern education system, which is in a difficult situation of uncertainty, can achieve synergetic effect, if it takes into account the key challenges of our time.

III. DISCUSSION

Youth as a special social group was the subject of intense scientific interest since the mid-twentieth century, when the social structure of most countries in the world, serious changes have occurred related to the destruction of traditional value system. The processes of modernization of society, which captured all the leading countries, including Russia, led to a change in the economic and social status of young people. In the conditions of aggravation of the problems connected with virtualization of social life of youth, with the increasing social stratification of society caused by unequal access to information and knowledge, there is a need for formation of the complex approach to studying of a phenomenon of youth of today and its role in the process of formation of new society.

The relevance of this issue is due to the fact that at present young people are beginning to play an increasing role in social and economic processes, since they are earlier than other social groups pay attention to emerging innovations and can lead the process of transition of society to a new "digital" state.

Then again, the spread of global trends in popular culture has led to the Erasure of distinctive features in the behavior and appearance of children and adults. On this specific socio-cultural background, a special phenomenon was formed, referred to in the scientific literature as the "prolonged growing up" of young people [7]. "Prolonged growing up" manifests itself in the extended period of growing up of young people , when youth of today are in no hurry to move into adulthood: consciously prolong the period of their education, do not seek to leave the parental home, much later than their parents marry and have children. Some researchers associate this phenomenon with the process of marginalization of the youth environment, which was manifested as a result of blurring the boundaries between civil and legal maturity of a person [14, P. 44].

IV. RESULTS

Numerous sociological studies of youth culture, conducted since the early 90-ies of XX century, prove that youth of today, representing a complex and heterogeneous social phenomenon, has retained its integrity due to the interaction of different subcultures, united by the principle of age [8].

With the emergence of new global trends resulting from the development of the information society, young people began to acquire new features that can change not only their status, but also the role they have traditionally played in society. This process, of course, is associated with a change in the nature of interpersonal communication of young people, moved to the virtual space of network communities.

Sociological analysis of these so-called cyber communities or virtual communities shows that most of them are representatives of the younger generation, for whom the network community has become the most comfortable socio-cultural environment [11].

Thus, it is possible to predict that in the conditions of formation of a digital society the main subject of technological changes gradually becomes youth as a social group, earlier than other groups which have apprehended new forms of social communications. The theory of generations, which took shape in Western science, headed by N. Howe and V. Strauss, further confirmed the idea of youth of today as a special social group that has its own specifics within one generation [5]. Representatives of the last generation of youth, called "generation Z", "Net Generation", have the most erased differences among themselves, they have similar values and similar lifestyles, formed under the influence of the Internet, mobile communications and social networks.

In his second book, "Grow Up Digital", published in 2008, don Tapscott described the online generation as a new community of young people, in which there are truly revolutionary ways of thinking, interacting and working [17]. The book "Grow Up Digital" is subtitled: "How the networked generation is changing your world". This proposal reflected Tapscott's deep conviction that the Net Generation has a huge potential for social activity that can radically change the fate of the human community, at least the part of it where new technologies operate. Studies conducted in the last ten years by Russian scientists note the same specific features in Russian youth as in Western ones. The results of the monitoring of the Moscow information and educational space, conducted several years ago, "allowed us to conclude that modern young people are in a new living environment - it is "a digital biosocial space, when the virtual space is a continuation of the physical and social" [9, p. 33]. In 2015-2017, a group of Russian researchers led by M. R. Miroshkina carried out a comprehensive interdisciplinary study on the topic: "Digital generation. Portrait in the context of education" [10]. Studying of fundamental characteristics of representatives of four generations: "baby boomers", generations "X", "Y" and "Z" allowed to allocate specific features of youth of today.

Young people from 13 to 24 years old became the first digital generation, whose growing up took place in close connection with digital technologies. This means that youth of today and teenagers are used to being in touch and have constant access to information. The network nature of their interaction determines the common value system and similar habits. This factor allows us to consider the culture of "digital youth" as a kind of modern youth subculture. As a proof of this thesis, consider the main trends in the behavior of modern youth and highlight its common features.

Digital space, online environment equally affects all its users and participates in the formation of the personality of the modern teenager. According to Google, about 98% of young people use the Internet every day. The presence of a smartphone and unhindered access to the Internet allow digital youth to show constant social activity and create a personal digital environment. The most important values of the representatives of digital youth are independent thinking, good education, creativity, individualism, the right to privacy, civic responsibility, increased emotionality, the desire for vivid impressions and experiences. Openness and accessibility of information makes young people more independent from adults, adults cease to be an absolute authority for their children. At the same time, young people and adolescents need emotional intimacy with their parents, in relationships built on mutual respect.

The opportunity to constantly communicate with people, including peers living in different parts of the world, the use of the same means and methods of communication make generation Z the most global, multinational and tolerant generation in the history of human society. Life in the network, characteristic of generation Z, provokes young people to actively perceive any information. Commenting, reposting, exchanging links, posting their own videos, they become authors and participants of network communication, building new horizontal communication space connections. Young people form their language of communication - it is not only a new verbal vocabulary, but also emoticons, icons, stickers, GIF animation, the main task of which is to express emotions. Increased emotionality, the desire for vivid impressions and experiences become characteristic features of the behavior of digital youth.

It can be assumed that the means and methods of communication used by representatives of digital youth, not only form new behavior, but also in a certain way affect some functions of their brain. So, it is already known that computer games improve eye and hand coordination, and the development of the flow of video content has formed the clip thinking of young people, making youth of today visuals, easily assimilating various graphic images. The term "clip thinking" was first used in his works by American futurist Alvin Toffler [18]. Many researchers have long considered the spread of clip thinking among young people as an unfavorable trend associated with the formation of the information society and the development of the Internet environment [3]. However, the last decade has shown that there is a need to develop a more

objective understanding of this format of thinking, since it must be taken into account by both teachers working with digital youth and their potential employers.

When dealing with information, a modern young person tends to choose such content that will be interesting and useful to him. In this case, the principle of "8 seconds" works: if during this time the information is not perceived as necessary, it will be rejected and forgotten. Another feature of generation Z associated with clip thinking is the ability to multitask. Representatives of this generation easily cope with the implementation of several cases at the same time, without losing the speed of making important decisions. This aspect is devoted to the book "Me, MySpace, and I: Parenting the Net Generation" by American psychologist L. Rosen [13]. At the same time, Rosen notes that the downside of clip thinking, its disadvantage is absent-mindedness, inability to concentrate on details, reducing the amount of "RAM memory".

Preferring visual images to written text, young people have difficulties with deep immersion in the text, they have problems with the ability to identify cause-and-effect relationships, and logical thinking is not well developed. [13. Pp. 104]. At the same time, digital youth have an increasing amount of technological knowledge and skills, which make it possible to quickly find the necessary information, sort it, evaluate it and turn it into knowledge.

The specific features of the psyche and thinking of the young generation should certainly be taken into account both in the educational process and in the labor sphere. This problem is considered in detail in his famous article by M. Prensky [12]. Referring to generations of teachers and students as "digital migrants" and "digital natives," Prensky believes that the differences between these generations are fundamental. This should be taken into account when "digital migrants" (teachers) are trying to teach something to "digital natives" (students). Only by changing the methodology of education, reviewing the goals and objectives of the educational process, teachers will be able to properly organize the training of the digital generation. Many representatives of the educational and scientific community agree with the idea of the need to break down the entire traditional educational system and build a new model of education. [4]. At the same time, today's teachers must learn to communicate with their students in their language, and the methodology of their work must take into account the specific features of students' thinking.

Potential employers who will meet with University graduates should also take into account their characteristics. Building labor relations with the younger generation, employers may have to change their regulations and the format of relations with employees. Youth of today is not inclined to long-term coordination of documents; it resists bureaucratic procedures that interfere with production processes. Young employees often genuinely do not see the point in formal office procedures, which can be a potential cause of labor disputes and conflicts in business communication. In the near future it will be necessary to change job descriptions, because the format "employee must" for youth of today is no longer acceptable. The digital generation of employees is not ready to sacrifice their interests for the sake of a professional career, it is important for them to maintain a balance between work and personal life. At the same time, a necessary measure that can slow down the turnover of young personnel should be the creation of a favorable working atmosphere that promotes maximum professional and personal self-realization of employees with a minimum of directives.

V. CONCLUSION

Thus, it is necessary to speak not about quantitative, but about qualitative transformations of youth testifying to global shifts in mentality of the modern person as a whole. These features characterize digital youth as a whole community with a specific system of values, their own behavior, certain forms and methods of communication.

One of the main factors of cultural globalization of youth is the use of digital technologies, ensuring the inclusion of young people in this communicative environment. In the future, we should expect that this trend will spread to all generations of people living in modern digital reality. As David Stillman rightly points out in his book on generation Z, we will not be able to stop the arrival of a new generation, as we cannot prevent the triumph of new technologies [15]. Now it becomes obvious that only the digital generation will be able to transform traditional social institutions, to continue to develop the priorities of the digital economy and become the creators of new "smart" cities filled with advanced technologies.

Business communities, recruiting companies, marketers and PR managers show an active interest in modern youth. It is no coincidence that Stillman addressed his book to employers who take in their staff of young workers, and are aware of all the possible difficulties that arise when dealing with them. This means that modern business has already developed an idea of modern youth as a specific group of workers with whom it is necessary to create the right communication strategy. For this reason, there is a need for

empirical research of sociological and psychological-pedagogical nature, which will allow predicting further transformations of the young generation. As a result, the scientific community can develop the right methodology of interaction with the digital generation, which will ensure successful cooperation with young people and allow youth of today to realize their creative potential.

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