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DIGITALIZATION AND THE PROBLEM OF CHANGING THE REQUEST FOR PROFESSIONS

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Abstract

This research is based on the hypothesis that the digital world cardinally changes the system of values, the status of high-profile professions and priorities in forms of employment chosen by university students. The research covers the period of 2017- 2020 which is to a high extent associated with the introduction of information technologies in the education process, distant forms of knowledge acquisition. In this context, it is now obvious that students are forming a request for competencies that will be in demand in the labor market, but at the same time will ensure the quality of life – stability, appropriate living standards, social status, free choice of profession, organization of personal time and space, which is largely associated with the availability of remote forms of employment. At the same time, on the basis of digital technologies, in the conditions of global instability and rising economic and social risks, the labor market is bringing itself up to date, putting forward requests for new competencies, possible areas and forms of involvement of specialists in the working process, in particular, the segment of teleworking. The analysis of empirical data allowed us to identify approaches to creating an objective image of the labor market in the youth environment, forming an appropriate professional potential of students on the basis of well-built practice-oriented competences, developed adaptive qualities and creativity. The study defines the ratio and the roles of the teacher and the IT component in this process.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, the Internet is becoming particularly important in the educational process as well as the formation of a specialist who fulfils new professional ambitions, which, in its turn, determines the modification of the labor market. A new educational environment is emerging, which is actively affecting students' vocational choices and preferences in terms of the occupation model. Social media, informational and educational platforms and other dynamic content promote special values and lifestyles which do not often coincide with the world of classical academic knowledge. The problem of vocational guidance, which provides flexibility and a high degree of adaptability of university graduates, as well as their educational and cultural socialization in the modern system of education and science are the key issues studied in this paper.

This study is relevant due to the increased practical interest to this kind of issues on the part of the world research centres which conduct surveys and global social media ranking (in particular, *TNS Digital Life*), covering Russia, Ukraine and some other CIS countries.

2. Problem Statement

The impact of the media on youth values is a traditional subject of theoretical and applied research by representatives of various fields of the scientific community. The impact of digital media, in particular social aspects of the problem, were thoroughly studied by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), Lasswell (1971) and Lippman (1922); social networks and ways of digital communication were analyzed by Evans (2008), Halligan and Shan (2009); youth values in the new social reality were considered by Kaushik (2009), Karlan et al. (2006).

In practical terms, the media are an active factor in social progress: they create new mechanisms for social mobilization, form a new system of life priorities and values. Digital technologies and modern media space activate these processes and form a request for students to search for an adequate model of inclusion in all spheres of life, and, above all, in labor activity. Modern social media, in turn, creates the conditions for a transition to a flexible employment system, which is less dependent on authorities and employers. In this context, new aspects of student behavior in the Internet space in the process of job search and employment itself are of interest. Expert studies of youth requests for a profession, a model of its spatial and temporal organization, allow us to determine the components of the modern educational process, its adaptive component, as conditions for reducing risks in the labor market. The authors laid the foundation for the study of new trends in the relationship of digitalization and the problem of changing the request of students for professions.

3. Research Questions

During the study, the following questions were raised.

- What is the impact of digital media on the formation of the values of the young generation in a new social reality?
- How does the digital world affect the socio-economic activity of university youth?

- What are the new approaches to the professional orientation of future specialists and the reputation risks of higher education institutions in the face of changing requests for a profession?
- What is the role of teacher rebranding in this process?
- What are the new trends in the development of employment in the digital age that are characteristic of today's youth environment?

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the discourse formed on the Internet and social media on a wide range of issues related to vocational guidance, employment, occupation model, and to form effective methods for building an objective image of labor market among the youth.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Methodological bases of the research

The method used in this study is based on the concept of interviewing respondents from 17 to 24 years of age. The study consisted of two main stages: the survey of 1-4 year students studying for an International Relations degree and the questioning of those who opted for remote work after receiving the university diploma.

Cyber metrics of media-related behavior expand the researcher's methodological approaches: web processing as a scientific method (studying the contents of chats, posts and blogs) is the most reliable one in terms of obtaining objective information especially when it is combined with the method of the narrative analysis.

The authors used interdisciplinary research methods (media and communication studies): political science, psychology («connectivity»), family studies, digital humanities, internet studies and computer science, etc.

The study includes such special segments of online personality functioning as the ratio of online- and offline- personality, the problem of a loss of anonymity and privacy on the Internet, legislation and management control, critical inner voice, entanglement of business, family and friendly connections. The factual information has been collected from such social media as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, Tumbler, Snapchat, WhatsApp, QQ, WeChat, SinaWeibo.

5.2. The Impact of the Digital World on the Social and Economic Activity of Young People

When identifying trends and characteristics of students' online behavior in the process of job search, job interview and employment itself, the authors highlight the following new aspects.

We are entering the era of "electronic democracy" – as exemplified by the USA, this issue was studied by Grossman (1995), Browning (1996), Bimber (1998) and others. The surveys show that new mechanisms of social mobilization and management (referring to student audience as well) are being formed on the Internet (Corrado & Firestone, 1997). Social media facilitate the transition to a flexible

system of activities that is less dependent on authorities (teachers) and organizations (universities). This tendency is explained by the theory of accelerated pluralism (Rheingold, 1993).

A modern communication network makes senders both producers and consumers of scientific and popular knowledge, confirming the collective action theory by Olson (1965), Bimber et al. (2005), but violating the logic of the first media age (Poster, 1995). This conclusion is based on the analysis of the recruitment agencies' queries, the content of questionnaires and job search ads in social media (Facebook, Twitter, Vkontakte, Vkontakte-News, Vkontakte-Future, YouTube, Instagram).

Universal information access to labor market reveals the negative side of its accessibility: vocational guidance being a field of scientific knowledge is turning into a sphere of mass interaction, where people who are a long way off from the labor market, promote their views on employment, financial incentives, prestige, skills and abilities. Non-critical use of the Internet materials by the younger generation often leads to the distortion of the images of an expert or a specialist formed in their perception (Lukyanov, 2016). The media system as an intermediary is replaced by horizontal flows of information between the participants (Ruschin, 2018).

Social media publications related to the choice of profession, first and foremost, appeal to the emotions of the audience rather than a deep study of what the specialty is about, its prestige and market demand. Digital world is based on advertising business model (Menshikova & Evstratchik, 2019), therefore, its task is to get clickbait (make us click, scroll and comment). We see a consistent movement towards populism on the pages of Facebook, Twitter, Vkontakte, Instagram and so on, even on pages of serious professional and academic associations. There is no information on the long-term effect of this trend in scientific discourse.

5.3. The reputational risks of educational institutions in the context of changing the request for a profession

The reputational risks of universities and business schools in the context of the changing demand for professions can be summed up in several categories:

- Multitasking and synchronicity of education and other activity – commercial (advertising, translations, event management) and leisure-related (watching a movie, reading social media posts, sharing pictures) – are becoming a sign of the time.
- Multimedia: 89% of students use a smartphone at university, and for 66% of students Internet access is more important than academic results.
- Distant learning: three out of five people from generation Y prefer to study remotely.
- Mobility: 70% of generation Y prefer dynamics to working in stationary offices, 38 % value freedom of movement in the working process ("migrants", "nomads", etc.).
- Shifting to non-standard work schedule: free (freelancers), individual ("owls" and "larks") and so on.
- Hobby mania – 35% of students have additional earnings, and 66% dream of starting a business via smartphone: blogging and freelancing, selling on Ebay, organizing small services on Fiverr and Craigslist, making handmade products and selling them on Etsy and Cafepress, etc.

Distant learning determines the rebranding of the teaching role – today the demand is not so much for a traditional academic teacher but for an advanced IT specialist who relies on fast communication and bright media imagery. Undoubtedly, social media managers, journalists, TV presenters and bloggers are becoming students' mentors in forming professional skills and needs.

Expert research of professional needs, aptitudes and preferences of young people is necessary for the transition to a more effective learning process management model, enhancement of its adaptive component aimed at dynamic social and economic transformations and risk elimination during working process.

6. Findings

Web 2.0 provides many undeniable advantages in the academic activity of universities: interacting, real-time testing, getting feedback and many other. However, the format of distant learning leads to a noticeable decrease in control, excessive information load against deep knowledge acquisition, fragmentation of scientific knowledge: numerous hash tags are included, surveys and tests are launched.

New trends in employment in the digital era:

1. The need for dialogue techniques in corporate cooperation (collaborative social consciousness) via chats in social networks: "Wisdom Cafes", "Open Space Technology", "Bohm Dialogue Groups", etc., the involvement of applied structures, employers to the formation of vocational guidance and competencies;
2. Resonate social consciousness, where employees' emotions and comfort are the key factors in the educational process and work;
3. Changing the vectors of professional growth from vertical to horizontal: professional content is created by reputed scientists and managers as well as ordinary communicators.

The younger generation of Internet users associates the transformation of labor with the transformation of conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1984), which refers to the acquisition of goods and services with the aim to demonstrate their social status. The younger generation is focused on getting the impressions and services of the luxury segment; sometimes they are too demonstrative: people from generation Z constantly take selfies and post photos in social networks trying to show their success, including professional one. At the same time, young people demonstrate customization, individualization, targeting and ethical behavior. In particular, customization is manifested in the fact that young people create their information and professional environment. The ethics of the young increasingly exclude smoking, alcohol consumption and early sex which were typical for the time when the older generation was in the process of growing up. The phenomenon of great crime drops – a decrease in crime rate – has been typical for the entire world for the past 20-25 years. A healthy lifestyle, eco-friendly living, leisure industry is gaining popularity which is directly related to the needs for high living standards and full realization of professional competence.

7. Conclusion

The research allows us to draw some conclusions:

1. Web 2.0 technologies have changed the forms, depth and typology of communication between people. Hence, they are essential research web-analytics tools of the political, social and economic life.

2. Social media are characterized by "scalability": small groups (family and close friends) and larger social groups (professional formal and informal associations, groups of people coming from the same area, communities of migrant workers, etc.) easily interact through them. In these conditions, online management often happens to be more effective and efficient.

3. A distinctive feature of social media is a fast way of conveying messages, the ability to connect a large number of users with each other, and a new opportunity to manage professional ambition, employment and the structure of labor market.

4. Social media (twitter sphere) show the internet involvement of young people not only in the segment of leisure activities but also the increasing social and economic activities especially those related to building professional target competencies, obtaining quality education, including additional education, as a guarantee of successful future.

5. The approaches to the organization of the academic process must be based on the optimization of the interrelation of the IT component in education and the activities of the teacher, their focus on the formation of professional potential and the adaptive qualities of students. At the same time, the authors believe that it is not the information component that teaching should be so much focused on but the formation of practice-oriented competencies and the development of creativity in students. This will allow the graduates not only to take advantage of the existing opportunities on the labor market, but also to offer their own special segments and models of occupation as the basis of successful fulfillment of life plans.

All the statements mentioned above point to the increased responsibility of social media, science, and education system in building the professional future of Russia, and forming the labor market on the platform of digital technologies. By changing public discourse through social media, we are changing society as a whole and its values, including those in the professional sphere.

In this case, the following can be considered as relevant:

▪ the availability of information through digital technologies about the state of the labor market, its modifications and emergence of new professional segments and forms of employment;

▪ the government's initiative to create an appropriate organizational and financial structure for the labor market, to ensure the flexibility of legal regulations, with focus on the development of various forms of employment, and the manifestation of creative personality.

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