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YOUTH EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the pressing problems of youth education in the digital age and possible solutions to them. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the internet and information technologies on young people's minds, the negative aspects of the virtual world, changes in young people's interest in learning, cybersecurity threats, the transformation of personal culture, and issues of ideological immunity. The thesis also examines problems such as the effects of digital technologies on health and social isolation, and presents the concerns expressed by international organizations such as the UN, WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO in this regard. Based on the study, comprehensive solutions and recommendations are put forward for improving digital literacy, strengthening the role of parents and teachers, promoting a healthy lifestyle, reinforcing cybersecurity measures and preserving cultural values. The thesis offers a theoretical and practical basis for ensuring the well-rounded development of young people in the digital environment.

Introduction. The 21st century is a digital age marked by the rapid development of information and communication technologies, and this process has a significant impact on all spheres of society, particularly on the upbringing of young people. The internet and information technologies play an important role in shaping young people's worldview, values and behavior [1]. However, this process also gives rise to specific problems and risks. It has been noted that the virtual world, which emerged in developed countries a quarter of a century ago, has already revealed its negative aspects and has fundamentally changed the younger generation's interest in

learning and education [1, 2]. Protecting young people from the harmful effects of cyberspace is one of the most pressing tasks in today's information society. International organizations such as the UN, WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO have also expressed serious concern in this regard [2]. The transformation of personal culture, the weakening of ideological immunity and cybersecurity threats call for new approaches to youth education [3, 4, 5].

Digital technologies have become an integral part of modern life, offering conveniences such as electronic payments, online learning and internet banking [5]. However, this far-reaching digital integration also creates a number of serious problems for youth education. Digital transformation and its impact on young people's minds. The digital transformation under way in the country demonstrates the profound influence of the internet and information technologies on young people's consciousness [1]. Although digital resources can accelerate the learning of mathematics and improve literacy and numeracy skills in primary education [4], their improper use leads to serious consequences.

Declining interest in learning: The appeal of the virtual world is reducing young people's interest in traditional education and drawing their attention towards games and social networks [1, 2].

Social isolation: Constant virtual communication increases the risk of social isolation among young people, which in turn weakens their real-life communication skills [2].

Health problems: Improper use of digital technologies can lead to various health problems, including developmental disorders, musculoskeletal diseases, reduced physical activity, obesity and sleep disorders [4]. A study conducted at the University of Tabuk showed a significant relationship between technology addiction and both physical and psychological health [4]. It is therefore important to monitor screen time, content and frequency of use, and to promote a healthy lifestyle [4].

Cybersecurity threats: Digital integration gives rise to serious cybersecurity problems. Cybersecurity is defined as a system for protecting information systems, computer networks and user data from unauthorized access, theft, malware and other threats [5]. The most common types of cybercrime are:

Phishing: an attempt to obtain confidential information (passwords, card details) by fraudulent means [5].

Ransomware: malicious software that encrypts a user's files and demands a ransom for their release [5].

DDoS attacks: flooding servers or online services with an excessive number of requests, making them unavailable to legitimate users [5].

Young people's vulnerability often stems from a lack of awareness, carelessness and excessive trust in online advertising [5].

Ideological immunity and cultural change: Digital technologies affect young people's ideological immunity [4]. Globalization, digital technologies and mediated communication are fundamentally changing personal identity, interpersonal relationships and local cultural traditions [3]. While digital communication greatly facilitates intercultural exchange and global awareness, it simultaneously poses serious risks such as cultural homogenization, fragmentation of personal identity, invasion of privacy and cultural appropriation [3]. The paradoxical nature of these cultural changes is that they offer unprecedented opportunities for self-expression and diversity, yet at the same time disrupt genuine cultural continuity [3].

Based on the analysis above, the following measures are proposed to address the identified problems:

Improving digital and media literacy: introducing systematic instruction in safe internet use, critical evaluation of information and recognition of online fraud into the curricula of general education schools and higher education institutions.

Strengthening the role of parents and teachers: raising parents' awareness of screen-time control and age-appropriate content, and training teachers to integrate digital tools purposefully into the educational process.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle: encouraging physical activity, a regular sleep schedule and offline leisure activities as a counterbalance to excessive screen use.

Reinforcing cybersecurity measures: teaching young people basic data-protection practices (strong passwords, two-factor authentication, caution with suspicious links) and raising awareness of common types of cybercrime.

Preserving cultural values: creating high-quality national digital content that presents the people's history, culture and values in an engaging form, thereby strengthening young people's ideological immunity.

Conclusion. This thesis has comprehensively analyzed the complex problems of youth education in the digital age and proposed solutions to them. The findings show that, while information technologies create limitless opportunities for young people, they also pose serious challenges such as declining interest in learning, health problems, cybersecurity threats, cultural transformation and the weakening of ideological immunity. International organizations, including the UN, WHO and UNESCO, have emphasized the global relevance of these problems and noted the need to improve media and information literacy. The main solutions put forward in this thesis focus on improving digital literacy, ensuring the active involvement of parents and teachers, promoting a healthy lifestyle, strengthening cybersecurity measures and preserving cultural values. These solutions serve to ensure the safe and effective development of young people in the digital environment.

This thesis relies on a theoretical analysis based on existing scientific literature and reports of international organizations. Its limitation is that no empirical research — for example, surveys of young people, parents or teachers — was conducted in the context of Uzbekistan.

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