Attitudes of Young People to Information and Social Concerns in The Context of Digital Awareness

Baxriddinov Baxromjon Abduboqiyevich

Teacher at Kokand State University, Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article analyzes, based on the results of a survey conducted among young people in Uzbekistan, their attitude to the flow of information in the digital space, their views on the role of digital activity in society, and their understanding of the risk of manipulation. The study was conducted from a socio-philosophical perspective, and the critical thinking and digital culture of young people are considered a strategic factor for the stability of society.

Introduction: In recent years, as digital technologies have become an integral part of human life, the active participation of young people in the digital space in Uzbekistan is increasing. In a country where more than half of the population is under the age of 30, this trend determines not only the level of information access, but also the level of influence on general socio-political processes in society. However, the reliability of information distributed on the Internet, the extent to which it affects the minds of young people and the social consciousness that is being formed through it, still requires serious analysis and scientific assessment.

Literature review

The issue of the crisis of trust in the digital information space is being interpreted as a topical issue in modern scientific literature (Fukuyama, 2018; Castells, 2020). The exposure of the younger generation to the flow of disinformation, the formation of immunity to "fake news" and manipulative content spread on the basis of artificial intelligence is becoming an important cultural and political task today. Digital literacy is not only knowledge of technology, but also the ability to analyze information, understand its social context and take a consistent position (UNESCO, 2021). Also, the cautious attitude of young people towards information directly affects their moral, spiritual and political stability.

Research methodology

The analyses presented in the article are based on a sociological survey conducted with the participation of 467 respondents aged 14–30. The survey asked respondents questions about their trust in information disseminated on social networks, their assessment of digital activity, and their views on the risk of manipulation in the digital environment. The survey was conducted in a closed format, and the results were scientifically interpreted using graphical and tabular analysis methods.

Analysis and results

Trust in online information. The attitude of young people towards information disseminated on the Internet and social networks is also an important indicator. In an era of increasing fake news and disinformation, the critical way in which young people perceive information is indicative of their digital culture. The survey asked the question "How much do you trust the information disseminated on social networks?" and offered four possible answers: "I trust a lot," "I trust selectively" (i.e., I only accept what seems reliable), "I am often skeptical," and "I do not trust at all."

The results show that young people are inclined to think critically. Most respondents are skeptical about the information they receive: the most frequently chosen answer is "I trust selectively," with 223 young people (about 48%) saying that they trust only information they consider reliable. Another 38% (178) said that they are "mostly skeptical" and are generally

cautious about information on the Internet. There are also quite a few young people who take the extreme position of not trusting at all - 63 (14%). However, there are very few complete believers: only 3 respondents (0.6%) said that they blindly trust information on social networks. This distribution shows that almost all young people have a critical attitude towards online information - among them there is a large layer that is aware of the abundance of unreliable information. Indeed, young people are well aware of the abundance of disinformation and fake news circulating online: in a study conducted in the Europe and Central Asia region, 85% of young people said that they often encounter fake news on social media, and 69% considered the online environment to be a source of intense conflict. Our survey results confirm this trend.

Young people are generally inclined to check and compare multiple sources of information, not trusting every piece of information they receive. Such a critical outlook indicates that the younger generation is trying to protect itself from information attacks and the influence of misinformation. At the same time, it is also important to strengthen the role of reliable official sources and independent media so that the increasing lack of trust in information does not lead to a crisis of trust in society.

Youth perceptions of the impact of digital activity on society. Perceptions of the impact of youth activity on digital platforms on social processes are also noteworthy. Respondents were asked the question, "How do you think youth digital activity affects society?" and were offered options such as "positively," "negatively," "both ways (two different effects)," and "don't know." The answers to this question reveal how young people assess their digital activity in the context of society.

As can be seen from the diagram, the overwhelming majority of responses expressed the opinion that "both sides", that is, that young people's digital activity can have both a positive and negative impact on society. 350 respondents (about 75%) chose this point of view. If we look at the distribution of the remaining answers, 12% of respondents (58) assessed digital activity only positively, while only 4% (18) considered it negative. Another 41 young people (9%) were unable to express a clear opinion and answered "I don't know". Thus, young people have a complex and balanced view of the role of digital activity in society: in their opinion, young people who are active on the Internet can, on the one hand, bring positive changes to the life of society (acceleration of information exchange, resolution of problems), and on the other hand, some negative consequences can also be observed (the spread of misleading information, waste of time or conflicts).

This balanced approach shows that young people have a good understanding of the situations related to digital activity. Only a small number of participants have a one-sided (absolutely positive or absolutely negative) opinion on this issue. Most, however, emphasize that the outcome of digital activity can vary depending on the context. In addition, the fact that 9% of respondents do not have a clear position also indicates that most young people have not yet formed their own opinion on this issue. Feeling this, young people come to a cautious conclusion about the effectiveness of online activity. In general, such an analytical approach of respondents reflects a pragmatic understanding of not expecting too much from digital activity, but not denying its power either.

Views on the dangers of digital manipulation. The Internet and social networks are not only a means of obtaining information, but sometimes also become a tool for deliberate propaganda and manipulation by various groups. The question "Do you think there is a danger of manipulation of the minds of young people in the digital environment?" measures young people's perceptions on this issue. The answers were given in the form of "Yes, there is a serious problem", "Sometimes it is observed", "Rarely" and "No, there is no such danger".

This table shows that almost all young people recognize the risk of digital manipulation, the difference is only in assessing its level. The largest number of respondents, 223 (48%), believe that cases of manipulation of young people's minds on the Internet occur occasionally, but not constantly. Those who say "Yes, a serious problem" are 171, or about 37% - that is, more than a third believe that this issue is very serious and widespread. Those who chose the answer "Rarely" (occasionally, very rarely) were 65 (14%), while those who took a completely negative position, saying "there is no such risk", were only 8 (2%). This distribution shows that concern about manipulation and false propaganda in the digital space is very high among young people. Most young people consider such a risk to be a regular or frequent occurrence. Indeed, young people are well aware of the possibility of not only disinformation, but also manipulative methods used by various interest groups in the online environment (fake accounts, bots to change opinions, etc.). Such concerns are not without reason - international experience also shows that young activists are widely subjected to harassment and pressure in the online space, and are targets of dishonest propaganda. Our respondents pay serious attention to this, in most cases they view the digital environment with suspicion and are wary of becoming victims of manipulation. In short, according to young people, the risk of manipulation in the digital world is

real and present, which is why most believe that it is necessary to remain vigilant. Only a very small number of young people believe that such a risk does not exist at all.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that the attitude of young people of Uzbekistan to information in the digital space indicates that significant changes are taking place in social consciousness. They are selectively accepting information, evaluating activity from the point of view of social benefits and harms, and are also vigilant against manipulative influences.

Such processes not only indicate the formation of a digital culture, but also indicate the strengthening of the principles of critical thinking, information security and social responsibility in the minds of young people. This creates the basis for building a stable and intellectual society in the future. If the activities of official and independent information sources are expanded, the digital space will become healthier and serve to positively shape the minds of the younger generation.

References

1. Mirziyoyev, Sh. M. (2022). The Strategy of New Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Uzbekistan Publishing House.

2. Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3. Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. On the Horizon, 9(5), 1–6.

4. Castells, M. (2010). The Rise of the Network Society (2nd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

5. Livingstone, S., & Helsper, E. (2007). Balancing Opportunities and Risks in Teenagers' Use of the Internet. New Media & Society, 9(2), 309–329.

6. Zaytseva, E. V. (2020). Youth and the Digital Society: Risks and Prospects. Sociology of Power, 2, 87–96.

7. Oxford Internet Institute. (2023). Digital Society Report 2023. Oxford: University of Oxford.

8. Official Website of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Retrieved September 12, 2025, from https://www.prezident.uz

9. Boyd, D. (2014). It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens. New Haven: Yale University Press.

10. Qodirov, N. (2023). Digital Literacy and the Information Culture of Youth. Journal of Youth Policy and Innovation, 4, 56–64.

11. Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The Spread of True and False News Online. Science, 359(6380), 1146–1151.

12. Tufekci, Z. (2017). Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protest. New Haven: Yale University Press.

13. UNESCO. (2021). Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers. Paris: UNESCO.