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#### DIGITAL CULTURE AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF STRATEGIES OF EDUCATED STUDENTS

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#### *Abstract*

The article is devoted to transformation of behavioral strategies of students, caused by technological innovations and the advent of digital culture. Serious changes in socialization conditions caused by the increasing role of mass media and multimedia, social networks, informal communities, etc. are reflected in the evolution of behavioral models of modern generation. The nature of this evolution and its driving forces are not so clearly manifested in everyday life. However being summarized in the statistical totality, they attract much attention and represent the subject area of the research. Nowadays other behavioral forms largely determine not only the social and professional mobility of new generation, but also its moral and communicative reception. This fact raises many questions. What are they - modern students of the faculty of journalism? With what moral, mental attitudes did they come for education? What kind of specialists do they want to become? What knowledge and how should they get it in students years? In order to answer these and a number of other questions, the third stage of the field research “Digital culture as a competitive advantage of future journalists” was conducted. The sample of students was 712 students – the representatives of the faculties of journalism in Moscow universities and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The results of the study were processed by appropriate statistical methods. They helped give answers to a number of important questions, and also led to the conclusion that being in the continuum of digital culture changes the behavioral strategies of students.

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**Keywords:** Digital culture, communicative level, ontological level, Generation Z, behavioral strategies, students-journalists.



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## **1. Introduction**

In the beginning was the Word, the Middle Ages replaced it with the Symbol. The current digital revolution has established a digital dictatorship, which in turn led to the stratification of consciousness, both private and collective, creating the prerequisites for the emergence of a new communicative environment called the “digital culture”. Digital culture initially considered as a phenomenon mediated by the development of technology and information innovations, as a cultural and technological imperative, arising and functioning in the process of human and computer communication, later expanded its representation to the social and spiritual spheres of society.

Socialization in modern science is understood as “the process of assimilation and reproduction by a person of social experience through the entering into social environment and the system of social connections” (Andreeva, 2008, p. 214). The works of Mead (2009), Cooley (2005), Hoffman (2000), Harré (Harré & Secord, 1972), Berger and Lukman (1995) contributed to the creation of the framework of philosophical and general scientific views on socialization and social construction of personality.

In order to better understand the specifics of the socialization of the younger generation, let us turn to the reflection of the recent past of this concept.

Nowadays, talking about the social construction of a person, it is necessary to consider it in strict connection with the spread of new forms of communicative and social interaction. Under new conditions of digital culture, such processes as socialization as well as the identity of the individual start to change.

## **2. Problem Statement**

There are serious changes in the conditions of socialization, caused by the increasing role of mass media and multimedia, social networks, informal communities, etc. It is reflected in the change in behavioral models of the modern generation. The most common features of such models generated by digital culture epoch, on the one hand, the desire for individualization of strategies and, on the other, the tendency towards collective behavioral models. The widespread proliferation of new forms of participation (freelancing, downshifting, webinars, workshops, etc.) indicates the emergence of fundamentally different nonlinear behavioral standards.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the article is the study of the impact of digital culture on the transformation of behavioral strategies of students. The division of such a specific subject area from the synopsis of the object - digital culture - once again indicates the relevance of this subject both for researchers and for practitioners.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to show how the emergence of a new cultural and communicative space, called digital culture, changes the behavioral strategies of students.

The purpose involves the solution of a number of tasks, such as: to identify the levels of perception of digital culture, both from the methodological and socio-communicative points of view; to characterize

the “generation Z” behavioral model; to analyze changes in behavioral strategies of students - students of humanitarian universities.

## 5. Research Methods

The study of digital culture uses the principles of comparative analysis of the main methodological approaches. The analysis of the development of digital culture uses the ideas of McLuhan (2007), Toffler (2003), Kaku (2011) on the impact of information revolutions on the change of types of communication, public consciousness and culture in general. The technocratic-oriented philosophical discourse of digital culture is presented in the works of Gere (2004), Galkin (2012) according to which the methodology of digital culture analysis should solve two problems: to determine the prerequisites for the development of digital culture and to analyze its key phenomena.

Galkin (2012), conducting a study of digital culture, identified four methodological levels of its perception: material, functional, mental and spiritual.

And if material level determines its technological imperative, the other two - functional and spiritual - predetermine the inevitability of philosophical reflection and the selection of new levels of perception. In our opinion, there is a need to consider also the communicative and ontological levels of perception. The first, in turn, is dichotomous in distinguishing a binary human-machine union, created by the industrial revolutions of the past centuries and elevated to a new level of understanding by the digital revolution.

The implementation of the communicative level of digital culture undergoes through several stages. At the first stage, a request is made for an addressee — a person — of the initial awareness of an addressee (machine), and initial conditions for coming into contact are created. The second stage is related to the transfer and acceptance of information. The third stage is aimed at the formation of the assessment of results.

The ontological level is distilled from the spiritual and mental levels, and rather indicates the technological crisis of anthropodeficiency crisis, giving rise to the opposition “moral – technology”.

These indicated levels mediate in their unity and numerous conflicts the value foundations of digital culture and raise questions about the ideological determination of the further development of digital technologies.

The analysis of the scientific literature showed that today many researchers are trying to grasp and formulate the concept of “digital culture”. Some authors, such as, for example, C. Gere, believe that, if we proceed from the classical definition, the formal concept of “culture” is broader and therefore it includes technology (Gere, 2004). For them, the process of technological development is the implementation of certain predetermined cultural attitudes. The representatives of this trend in some way oppose analog culture to digital culture and see the latter as a threat to human nature (Prokudin & Sokolov, 2013). Obviously, both approaches may exist, although from the point of view of the cultural approach a classical interpretation is more acceptable. However, no matter what, “digital culture” is a concept that, according to Sokolova (2012) is “the recognition that digital technologies have become an organic part of modern human life” (p. 8).

It is necessary to point out one more characteristic features - digital culture largely determines not only social, but also social and professional mobility, which is reflected in the change in behavioral patterns

of modern generation. Without going into details, the authors note the most common feature of behavioral models generated by digital culture - the desire for individualization of strategies.

According to some of current socially oriented ideas, since 2000 a new generation has been forming - generation Z. The main trends of generation Z are formed by globalization, computerization and virtual services. Under the influence of digital culture, the younger generation has new behavioral strategies and approaches that largely determine their social and professional mobility.

Nowadays there are significant changes in the conditions of primary socialization, which are associated with the decrease in the influence of political conjuncture, family and other traditional relations on the formation of a person and the increase in the impact of more modern social structures, especially informal communities, organizations, interest groups, usually generated by the Internet .

In the presented study, the authors decided to trace the essence of these changes on the example of generation Z. Since the representatives of this generation are already beginning to enter both the professional and student environments, the authors turned to the reference group with a number of questions that unveil the solution of the research problems. The sample consisted of 712 representatives of young students aged from 18 to 24, the representatives of the faculties of journalism of Moscow humanitarian universities and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Republic of Kazakhstan). Table 2 shows the distribution of the frequency of answers to questions about the basic terminal values of the “generation Y”.

**Table 01.** Nowadays, people aspire to get higher education. How do you think for what purpose?<sup>1</sup>

| № | Proposed answers  | %, 2004 г. | %, 2013 г <sup>2</sup> | %, 2019 |
|---|---|------------|------------------------|---------|
| 1 | In order to be a part of cultural and educated environment          | 6,5        | 13                     | 16,5    |
| 2 | In order to get new knowledge and expand range of interest          | 16,6       | 17,0                   | 19,2    |
| 3 | In order to get special knowledge, to become a good professional    | 24,1       | 26,0                   | 21,5    |
| 4 | In order to have a diploma for getting a good job                   | 45,8       | 34,0                   | 48,0    |
| 5 | In order to make a career   | 32,4       | 34,0                   | 41,5    |
| 6 | In order to improve social status and go beyond settled environment | 9,7        | 18,0                   | 25,5    |
| 7 | In order to escape from military service                            | 15,3       | 6,0                    | 9,6     |
| 8 | Because nowadays it is a common practice                            | 8,8        | 16,0                   | 24,8    |

The increase in the significance of the educational environment is evidenced by the increase in indicators in the answers to the first question. For the analyzed period of 15 years it increased more than 2.5 times. The answers of respondents indicate the increasing significance of higher education. However to a greater extent they indicate the desire of adolescents to be “equal among equals” in a group of a certain social status. The previous conclusion is based on the responses to the second question. In reality, the

<sup>1</sup> [https://wciom.ru/database/baza\\_rezultatov\\_oprosa\\_s\\_1992\\_goda/?id=275&search=1&prevSql=KENPTkNBVChgemhfdmFyX3ZgLmBuYW11YCxgemhfcV92YC5gbmFtZWApIExJS0UgJyXT0M7Cxc3cJScpICBhbmQgIChDT05DQVQoYHpoX3Zhc192YC5gbmFtZWAsYHpoX3FfdmAuYG5hbWVgKSBMSUtFICelwtvR2MXDziUnKSAgYW5kICAoQ090Q0FUKGB6aF92YXJfdmAuYG5hbWVgLGB6aF9xX3ZgLmBuYW11YCkgTEILRSAnJc7B0MDHzsLAzcfjJScp&text=высшее+образование&logic=AND&in\\_q=on&in\\_v=on&day\\_f1=15&month\\_f1=2&year\\_f1=2006&ds=3&day\\_t3=15&month\\_t3=2&year\\_r\\_t3=2019&day\\_f2=15&month\\_f2=8&year\\_f2=1994&day\\_t2=29&month\\_t2=5&year\\_t2=2018](https://wciom.ru/database/baza_rezultatov_oprosa_s_1992_goda/?id=275&search=1&prevSql=KENPTkNBVChgemhfdmFyX3ZgLmBuYW11YCxgemhfcV92YC5gbmFtZWApIExJS0UgJyXT0M7Cxc3cJScpICBhbmQgIChDT05DQVQoYHpoX3Zhc192YC5gbmFtZWAsYHpoX3FfdmAuYG5hbWVgKSBMSUtFICelwtvR2MXDziUnKSAgYW5kICAoQ090Q0FUKGB6aF92YXJfdmAuYG5hbWVgLGB6aF9xX3ZgLmBuYW11YCkgTEILRSAnJc7B0MDHzsLAzcfjJScp&text=высшее+образование&logic=AND&in_q=on&in_v=on&day_f1=15&month_f1=2&year_f1=2006&ds=3&day_t3=15&month_t3=2&year_r_t3=2019&day_f2=15&month_f2=8&year_f2=1994&day_t2=29&month_t2=5&year_t2=2018)

<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that the answers to this questionnaire for 2004, 2013 belong to the representatives of generation Y, and the responses of 2019 are already belong to generation Z

problem of obtaining new knowledge and expanding range of interest of a person does not concern so many respondents: the final indicator remained almost unchanged.

The great desire for group solidarity, complicity, rather than individual development and expansion of horizons becomes obvious. Similar conclusions are derived from the results of the analysis of the answers to the third question: the motivation for obtaining special knowledge is at the zero mark. It can be explained by the growing image of the Internet among young people, within the boundlessness of which, one can always find the answer to any question without bothering with systematic study.

The considerations of the prestige of obtaining a diploma occupy a dominant position, here in the responses there is a slight increase. The percentage of answers to a career question, for which a diploma is needed, is also in leading positions, showing slow but steady growth. There is an obvious disproportion between the desire to obtain the knowledge, necessary for the protection of the diploma, and the diploma itself as a fact of successful graduation from university.

In respect of the respondents to higher education, it is difficult to single out general trends as an opportunity not to serve in the army. However, these studies suggest the decline in interest in this issue.

The last question in the questionnaire is correlated with the question of raising social status. The increase in almost three times of the respondents positively indicates not so much the changed internal attitudes of the respondents as the changes that occurred in the group consciousness and a clearer awareness of the belonging of a person to a particular group. Statistics clearly indicates in favor of the shift of individual consciousness towards the group. Thus, there is the increase in the value of the macrosocial level of consciousness – the awareness of oneself as an active social activist of a group, depending on its opinion. At the same time, a certain devaluation of the self-concept indicates an imbalance, mobility of self-esteem and does not reduce the expressed desire to achieve an individual achievement of a particular purpose.

The problem of the attitude of young people to education is included in the professional value field and is practically significant. It depends on social and personal factors, on the possibility and fullness of awareness of professional life prospects. The last aspects, in relation to needs and interests, acquire a value form. Value orientations themselves determine the behavior, the formation of a student as a specialist.

A priori, the system of value orientations of different generations is diverse. Thus, generation Y, which grew up during the period of the emergence of digital culture, unlike generation Z, which was already born in it, has slightly different ideas about value orientations, and, in particular, about so-called terminal values. Everywhere, the target audience contained an age limit of 18-24 years, so it is not difficult to guess that the respondents of the 2013 survey represented generation Y, and the polls from 2018–2019 already belonged to the representatives of generation Z. Table 2 shows the terminal values for the respondents.

**Table 02.** Table of terminal values

|    | Values                                      | 2013, Russian Public Opinion Research Center <sup>3</sup> | 2018, Ekaterinburg (Kokh & Alekseeva, 2019) | 2019, Kazakhstan <sup>4</sup> |
|----|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Health (physical and mental)                | 70  | 43  | 54                            |
| 2  | Good and faithful friends                   | 53  | 43  | 38                            |
| 3  | Interesting job                             | 50  | 42  | 55                            |
| 4  | Love  | 49  | 37  | 31                            |
| 5  | Material well-being                         | 46  | 59  | 74                            |
| 6  | Happy family life                           | 39  | 43  | 31                            |
| 7  | Life wisdom                                 | 16  | 27  | 21                            |
| 8  | Self-confidence                             | 15  | 33  | 38                            |
| 9  | Public esteem                               | 8   | 13  | 6                             |
| 10 | Pleasures                                   | 11  | 20  | 36                            |
| 11 | Creativity                                  | 6   | 18  | 9                             |
| 12 | Full use of their strength and capabilities | 13  | 16  | 11                            |
| 13 | Happiness of other people                   | 6   | 5   | 9                             |

The choice of meaningful life goals for generation Z is changing. IT technologies for them are natural: they were born with a computer mouse in their hands; it is easier for them to ask Google than for their parents. They do not know life without the Internet and social networks. The communication with the surrounding reality occurs through speed and set of symbols. They are attracted by ephemeral content, which may soon disappear. The research shows that Generation Z is capable of processing large amounts of information at higher speeds, but keeping their attention on one thing for a long time is a problem for them, since they tend to work in multitasking mode with multiple screens.

It is obvious that, many value orientations in this regard changed. Thus, the value of health is no longer as high as that of the previous generation; the values of friendship and friends are also devalued. If the first parameter can be explained by the relative strength of a young body and the unwillingness to spend efforts on such “trifles”, then the decrease in the second indicates the even deeper transition of generation to virtual world. The values of interesting work are increasing, and this is certainly a good factor. The question corresponds with the concept of the value of a materially secure life, the answers to which also show a positive trend. The ratings of personal emotional-intimate relationships and attitudes toward marriage as a social institution are significantly reduced. Virtual relationships win over real relationships again.

Against the background of increasing indicators of the values of the self-confidence factor, the decline in the position of public recognition is observed. This fact indirectly indicates the change in individual generation strategies. In this regard it is worth noting the increasing role of the pleasures that the young generation wants to receive from life, while the processes of creative activity are significantly

<sup>3</sup> <https://wciom.ru>

<sup>4</sup> The research of authors

reduced. The researchers often note the increasing value of environmental and humanistic aspects, which are also reflected in our empiricism<sup>5</sup>.

## 6. Findings

1. Digital culture is a popular reality, the analysis of the levels of its perception made it possible to reveal new degrees of its existence.
2. The research work has emerged that substantiates the theoretical concept of digital culture from both methodological and socio-communicative points of view.
3. Digital culture has a decisive impact on the transformation of the strategies of students.
4. The percentage of the presence of representatives of the generation Z in the professional world and the field of higher education, understanding a digital culture at the amateur level is increasing.
5. As a result of the analysis revealed significant changes in behavioral strategies of students.
6. Professional retraining, new programs and specialists are required for professional activity under the conditions of modern challenges.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the research conducted presumably indicates not so much to the erosion of the life principles and values of a generation, but the objectification and individualization of many strategies. From the analysis of the data, it is possible to draw the conclusion about the increasing value of gaining experience and impressions, the predominantly collective conduct of professional activities, the devaluation of family values, love and marriage, and the decline of spiritual demands. The generation prefers to build their world perception in accordance with the laws and principles of the virtual world, expecting the same from the real world. Generation has inside orientation. It has a low significance of needs in the search for the meaning of life, self-affirmation, positive assessment, creativity, self-education, and self-realization. As the main quality of a typical psychological type, it is possible to speak about introverted individualism with a large share of infantilism, which creates prerequisites for possible successful manipulations.

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<sup>5</sup> Theory of generations. – [http://leda29.ru/uploads/com\\_files/02\\_2018\\_teoriya\\_pokolenij.pdf](http://leda29.ru/uploads/com_files/02_2018_teoriya_pokolenij.pdf)

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