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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN A DIGITAL AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENT: BASED ON STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING AND READINESS TO LEARN

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Abstract. In the context of digitalization of all spheres of human life, the education system acquires special significance. As a result of the rapid development of modern information and communication technologies, the educational process is increasingly being organized remotely. Despite the fact that distance learning has long-standing historical traditions, it is currently acquiring new content and features under the influence of information technologies. It has a number of advantages over the traditional form of education, which determines the degree of adaptation of students to the distance learning format. At the same time, distance learning is not free from certain limitations and shortcomings that should be taken into account in the process of implementing this form. In this regard, the study of students' readiness to assimilate knowledge in the context of distance learning is a pressing scientific issue in the period of mass transition of the education system to this form.

Keywords: informatization of education, distance learning, information technologies, educational.

In the context of modern socio-economic and technological transformations, the need for individuals with developed critical thinking, high adaptability to a changing environment, and the competences to make quick and effective decisions in a dynamically developing reality is steadily increasing. In particular, specialists who have the ability to form new types of relationships, multifaceted analysis of complex systemic processes, and make scientifically based independent decisions in conditions of uncertainty are in high demand in the modern labor market.

Personnel with this set of competencies are, as the English writer and statesman Charles Percy Snow put it, “in the blood of the future”, that is, individuals who have an internal readiness for innovative changes, are cognitively and socially open systems, and have the potential to actively participate in shaping the processes of future socio-economic development.

The information society is a qualitatively new stage in the development of civilization, characterized by the intensification of informatization processes covering all spheres of human activity. This process means that the strategic and system-forming importance of information

resources is sharply increasing. In modern economic systems, information is not only a factor along with traditional factors of production - labor, capital and natural resources, but also, in some cases, a leading factor, becoming the main determinant of production efficiency.

At the same time, in the conditions of an information society, the dynamics of knowledge and information renewal are proceeding at a high pace, and their substantive and quantitative parameters are constantly transforming. This requires a person to be metacognitively active, that is, to systematically revise, update and restructure knowledge, as well as to actively participate within the framework of a continuous learning paradigm. The theoretical and conceptual foundations of this problem were also deeply analyzed by the American futurist Alvin Toffler. According to him, new conceptual constructs emerging in the fields of education, political and economic theories, medicine and international relations affect the traditional cognitive models formed in the human mind, leading to their transformation. As a result of such "figurative pressure", there is a rapid obsolescence of old knowledge paradigms, activation of intellectual reorientation processes, and a deeper understanding of the unstable nature of knowledge [8, p. 123].

From this point of view, in the conditions of modern society, the task of improving technologies, the rapid development of science and effective adaptation to the constantly changing parameters of knowledge acquisition processes is gaining strategic importance. Successful adaptation in such a complex and dynamic environment can be ensured only on the basis of the principle of continuous education, that is, through the systematic updating, deepening and systematic acquisition of knowledge.

Indeed, the concept of lifelong learning is gaining increasing importance, including on an international scale [5]. The need to maintain a person's competitiveness and form him as a highly qualified and sought-after specialist in the labor market encourages him to constantly acquire new competencies, effectively master advanced information and communication technologies. In this regard, the education sector is emerging as a priority social institution aimed at the development of human capital in the near future.

The formation of an information society and the rapid development of the digital economy make the need for a radical revision of the education system from the point of view of informatization even more urgent. Informatization of education is interpreted in scientific literature as a set of socio-pedagogical transformations aimed at enriching education systems with information products, digital tools and innovative technologies [3].

The priority of information and communication technologies in the organization of educational processes in the conditions of an information society leads to the widespread introduction of new formats of education, in particular, distance education. The form of distance education has its own specific historical roots, and its formation process dates back to the middle of the 19th century. The Distance Education Association, founded in the USA in the late 1980s, defines this form of education as an integrative educational system aimed at acquiring knowledge and skills through information and communication tools and covering various technologies and educational formats [11].

Nowadays, researchers emphasize, first of all, the high information potential of distance education and its potential for transforming educational processes [7], [9]. Distance education has a set of unique didactic and technological features, one of the most important of which is the ability to organize educational services without strict dependence on space and time parameters. This allows us to characterize this form of education as "a process of purposeful interactive interaction that is invariant from the location of teachers and students, as well as educational facilities in space and time" [2, p. 14]. The active use of modern information and communication and computer

technologies in ensuring educational communication, on the one hand, serves to optimize the educational process, and on the other hand, creates the basis for expanding educational opportunities for people with disabilities. At the same time, in conditions of distance education, the level of independence of students increases, and the opportunities for forming and implementing an individual educational trajectory expand.

In this educational format, the functional role of the teacher is also transformed: he appears more as a guide, consultant and tutor of the educational process than as a traditional educator, helping students effectively navigate in the conditions of information diversity and achieve the set educational outcomes.

At the same time, the distance education system is also characterized by a number of problems and limitations. In particular, it requires a high level of internal motivation and self-management skills from the learner [4, p. 281]. In addition, this form of education requires a sufficiently high level of technical training, competence in working with information and communication tools. Also, limited interpersonal communication and relatively weak manifestation of emotional reactions can have a certain negative impact on the effectiveness of learning educational materials.

Thus, distance education is an important and relevant component of the modern education system, and its mass implementation requires in-depth scientific analysis and comprehensive research. Especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, distance education has acquired a global character. In particular, according to the international organization UNESCO, more than 1.5 billion students worldwide have experienced significant disruptions in their education due to the closure of educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic [10]. This situation further strengthens the need for a comprehensive, systematic and in-depth study of distance learning [1].

In order to determine the readiness of students for distance learning after the COVID-19 pandemic, a sociological study was conducted among students at the Termez branch of Tashkent State Technical University. It was concluded that distance learning is not an advantage for students over traditional forms of education. 56 people participated in the study. In the questionnaire, the issues that students directly face in the distance education environment were brought up to date. First of all, the majority of the respondents - 65% of the respondents - emphasized the usefulness of the form of distance education. The fact is that more than 80 percent of the respondents are representatives of technical education. Bynday students are initially oriented to communication on the Internet and acquire skills for working with electronic content. As for the motivation to study under conditions of information mihiti, y did not change in almost half of the respondents (47%), and the motivation to study even increased in 19.5% of the respondents. Despite the shame, 30.2% of respondents found that motivation decreased. This can be explained in many ways: 43 percent of respondents noted that the workload in distance learning is increasing. In addition, the decline in motivation can also be explained by the decrease in the impact of the team. The study highlighted the positive and negative aspects of distance learning. Among the positive aspects, the following were noted: the availability of digital content (76.5%), the possibility of studying according to an individual schedule (75.8%), and, therefore, the ability to combine work with studying (59.1%). 20.5% of respondents did not identify any advantages of distance learning. As for the weaknesses of the form of distance education, 48% of the respondents noted that the number of assignments has increased, while 55.5% of the respondents have experienced technical difficulties in distance classes. 40.5% of the respondents highlighted the important aspect of insufficient implementation of the practical aspect of education. As for the perspective of distance education, 25.6% of respondents supported the bytynlay yshby form, 34.4% of the respondents believe that it is necessary to implement a mixed form with elements of traditional and distance education, and only

40% of respondents want to study only in the form of kindergarten education. Thus, the hypothesis that distance learning is better for students than traditional education has not been confirmed. Conclusion Despite some shortcomings, distance learning during the pandemic has proven its potential as an effective means of learning for a wide range of students. In modern conditions, the task before the educational community is to realize the first mass experience of the form of distance education, to realize all the advantages of this technology and to try to minimize its weaknesses.

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