

Media Behaviour of Students as the Challenge to Contemporary Higher Education

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Abstract – The article considers the problem of the search of the response of the contemporary educational process in the higher school to the challenges of student media behavior, revealed through the growing role of social networks and messengers in social reality. The inclusiveness in social networks leads to the change of educational and learning processes, changes the landscape of higher education. The purpose of the article is to discuss the opportunities for changes of the contemporary educational process in a university: the use of social networks and appliance of open educational resources as the response to the challenges of student media behavior. The results of the research show that a contemporary student spends the significant time on watching the content in social networks. The problem of higher education is in low appliance of social networks and online-resources by teachers while students are ready to receive information through such a way. The authors draw the conclusion that the appliance of social networks in educational process is the response to the challenges of student media behavior, characterizing the contemporary social reality, and it allows solving the task of individualization of study space, which is one of the main tendencies of the education of 21st century.

Keywords – higher education, educational process, media behaviour, online-education, social networks.

I. INTRODUCTION

The influence of social networks on the modern life can hardly be ignored. The hundreds of millions of people visit social networks daily. Actually, social media rapidly became one of the most popular kinds of Internet-activity [1]. While people of all ages use social networks, university students are the most active users. Any professor, delivering a lecture to the audience, sees that many students are in their social networks. The digital media changed the educational environment and student behaviour in higher educational establishments [2]. The report of NMC Horizon [3] shows that quick and all-round diffusion of digital media in the higher education leads to the

changes in the academic student environment, and it also influences the study of their behaviour. In order to cope with the changing environment of education, the academic establishments must understand and analyze media behaviour of students [4]. Our research is devoted to the habits of use of social networks and messengers by students. The results of the research allow building the forecast on the tendencies of use of social networks in the higher education.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The 21st century universities face the difficulties of bringing the academic education in accord with the demands of contemporary students, digital aborigines who live in social networks, not in class rooms. The first step to solve the problem, in our opinion, is the substantial review of what we know about the students of Y generation and their behavior in new media.

According to the survey of Pew Center, the use of social networks grows within the whole social demography [5]. Many age groups are covered with social networks, students keep on being the largest separate group of social network users. According to the research data [6], 90% of students use social networks.

The use of smart-phones produced a boom in the use of social networks by students of higher education. According to the research, many students would like to use mobile devices for formal and informal education [7].

There were suppositions made about the potential of this technological shift in the student education and real advantages of these technologies for education [3]. The significant research was undertaken to demonstrate the expenses and profits of use of social, mobile and digital technologies to improve teaching and learning [8]. The research of media behavior of students on Facebook was held [9].

The Y generation students are well-educated, sophisticated and interested in learning [10, 11], but also shallow, skeptical, cynic, critical, narcissist, hardly surprised and impatient towards their predecessors [12, 13]. They are multi-functional, filters and consumes acute and interesting information with a high speed, have great expectations and longs towards quick achievements, are socially responsible, loyal and tolerant [14, 15], but on the other hand, they do not want to grow, they stay at home longer than their parents or grandparents, «want everything here and now», especially concerning the wages and privileges, career promotion, professional/personal balance [16].

III. RESEARCH METHODS

In order to better understand the media behavior of students the authors conducted a survey. 741 students (463 girls and 278 boys) out of 8 Russian universities (Moscow State University, Moscow, Higher School of Economics, Saint Petersburg, Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Altai State University, Barnaul, South Ural State Medical University, Chelyabinsk, South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University, Chelyabinsk, Chelyabinsk State University, Chelyabinsk, Ural State University of Physical Culture, Chelyabinsk) answered the questions, spread in Google Forms, they were 19.73+-0.09 years old. The statistical analysis of the received data was made with the program Microsoft Office Excel.

The selection type was spontaneous; the selection frame was built by registered users, showing interest to the given Internet-survey. The mechanism of selection of respondents was self-selection.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The question «how much time a day do you spend on television and computer games» had the results shown on the Table I and II.

TABLE I. SPREAD OF STUDENTS UNDER THE QUESTION “HOW MUCH TIME A WEEK DAY DO YOU SPEND ON TELEVISION AND COMPUTER GAMES”, %

	n	Week days		
		Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours
All	741	54.12 % (401)	28.07 % (208)	17.81 % (132)
Girls	463	60.90 % (282)	26.78 % (124)	12.32 % (57)
Boys	278	42.81 % (119)	30.22 % (84)	26.97 % (75)

TABLE II. SPREAD OF STUDENTS UNDER THE QUESTION “HOW MUCH TIME AT THE WEEKEND DO YOU SPEND ON TELEVISION AND COMPUTER GAMES”, %

	n	Weekend		
		Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours
All	741	48.04 % (356)	27.80 % (206)	24.16 % (179)
Girls	463	54.86 % (254)	26.57 % (123)	18.57 % (86)
Boys	278	36.69 % (102)	29.86 % (83)	33.45 % (93)

TABLE III. SPREAD OF STUDENTS UNDER THE QUESTIONS “HOW MUCH A DAY DO YOU USE SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MESSENGERS?”, %

n	Less than 1 hour	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	Over 6 hours	Other time
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All	741	6.21 % (46)	38.73 % (287)	33.20 % (246)	20.65 % (153)	1.21 % (9)
Girls	463	3.46 % (16)	31.75 % (147)	37.80 % (175)	26.14 % (121)	0.85 % (4)
Boys	278	10.79 % (30)	50.36 % (140)	25.54 % (71)	11.51 % (32)	2.16 % (5)

TABLE IV. SPREAD OF STUDENTS IN USING SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MESSENGERS, %

	All (n=741)	Girls (n=463)	Boys (n=278)
Do you watch the news line in social networks?	86.23 % (639)	86.39 % (400)	85.97 % (239)
Do you feel the need to use social networks and messengers?	76.38 % (566)	81.20 % (376)	68.34 % (190)
Do you use social networks and messengers while studying?	71.79 % (532)	78.19 % (362)	61.15 % (170)
Do you use social networks and messengers while walking?	55.06 % (408)	59.83 % (277)	47.12 % (131)
Do you watch social networks and messengers before going to bed?	86.77 % (643)	89.2 % (413)	82.73 % (230)
Do you watch social networks and messengers after waking up?	55.74 % (413)	60.48 % (280)	47.84 % (133)

TABLE V. SPREAD OF STUDENTS UPON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MESSENGERS ON THEIR EMOTIONAL STATE, %

	All (n=741)	Girls (n=463)	Boys (n=278)
Can you forget or leave something for a while receiving a message in social networks or messengers?	55.74 % (413)	61.56 % (285)	46.04 % (128)
Can you forget about an important thing or leave it undone while using social networks and messengers?	27.13 % (201)	29.37 % (136)	23.38 % (65)
Do you feel discomfort or worry if you did not use social networks and messengers?	22.27 % (165)	27.43 % (127)	13.67 % (38)
Does your mood change from the information received in social networks and messengers?	46.83 % (347)	52.69 % (244)	37.05 % (103)

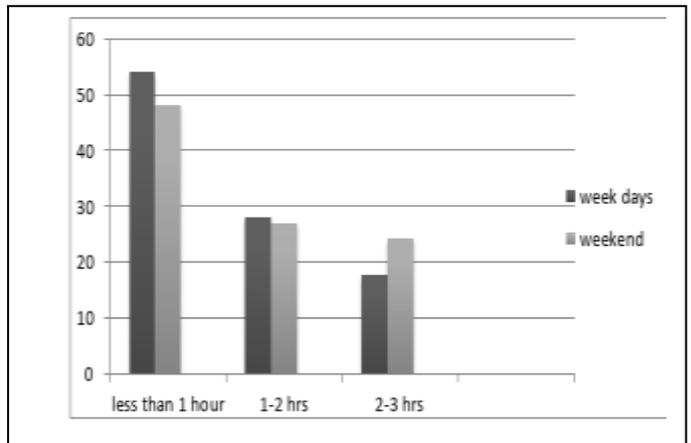


Fig. 1. Comparative data of spread of students under the question «how much time a week day and at the weekend do you spend on television and computer games», %



Fig. 2. Comparative data on the question «how much time a day do you use social networks and messengers?», %

Supported with these answers it is possible to draw the following conclusions: 54.12% of students (60.90% of girls and 42.81% of boys) stated that they spend less than 1 hour on television and computer games in week days. Nevertheless, 26.97% of boys on the same days spend 2-3 hours on that activity in week days, differing from girls, whose result was 12.32%.

Also the authors revealed the group of students with intermediate results, mostly spending 1-2 hours a day to watch television and on games. It is possible to notice that in the given group the range between boys and girls is 3.44%, while in the first group it is 18.09%, and in the third group it is 14.65%.

48.04% of students (54.86% of girls and 36.69% of boys) stated that at the weekend they spend less than 1 hour on television and computer games.

27.80% of students (26.57% of girls and 29.86% of boys) spend 1-2 hours, and 24.16% (18.57% of girls and 33.45% of boys) spend 2-3 hours of their time on these activities.

The analysis of the received results in week days and at the weekend showed that the time students spend on these kinds of activity increases, for example, in week days the number for boys is 26.97%, and at the weekend – 33.45%, the girls also show the tendency to time increase, 12.32% spend 2-3 hours in week days, and at the weekend – 18.57%.

Comparative data are demonstrated in Fig. 1.

Media consumption presupposes also inclusiveness in social networks and messengers, so the authors asked the question “How much time a day do you use social networks and messengers?” the received results are shown in Table III.

The analysis of the results showed that the largest number of students (38.73%) spends 2-3 hours a day on social networks and messengers, 31.75% of them are girls and 50.36% are boys; nevertheless, the detailed research revealed that 37.80% of girls, compared with 25.54% of boys, spend 4-5 hours a day on this kind of activity. The minimal number of students 6.21% showed that they use social networks and messengers less than 1 hour a day.

Comparative data on the general number of students are represented in Fig. 2.

A part of questions covers various aspects of use of social networks and messengers in the life of students. The received results are shown in Table IV.

It was revealed that boys (85.97%) and girls (86.39%) equally watch the news line, but girls (81.20%) in a greater degree feel the need to use social networks and messengers, differing from boys (68.34%). 78.19% of girls confess that they use social networks and messengers while the positive response came from 61.15% of boys. Before going to bed students watch social networks more often than upon waking up (86.77% and 55.74% correspondingly), and girls do it more frequently than boys.

The special worry is caused by the answers to the following questions, which are shown in the Table V.

The analysis of the data showed that the information from social networks is more acute for them than the current affairs; over half of the interviewed (55.74%) answered this question positively. And 27.13% (29.37% of girls and 23.38% of boys) may forget about an important thing.

Besides, the authors revealed a category of students with a strong emotional dependence on social networks and messengers, boys (13.67%) and girls (27.43%), positively responding to this question, feel discomfort and worry if not being able to use these kinds of media. 46.83% of students change their mood from the information received in social networks and messengers, girls in a greater degree (52.69%) than boys (37.05%) which is explained with the psychological peculiarities of women.

The use of push-calls plays an important role in the understanding of student media behavior. They directly influence on the frequency of social networks and messengers attendance. The students were asked a question «Do you receive push-calls?». The results were the following: 93.79% (695) receive push-calls. It was also interesting to analyze the frequency of push-calls turn off: 21.86% of students turn off push-calls during the day, 24.02% turn them off during the night, 42.24% turn off the unimportant ones, and 11.88% do not turn them off at all. The analysis of the results showed that the general number of students turn of the unimportant messages.

According to the results of the research, it is possible to suggest the following ways to increase the inclusiveness of students in educational process: the creation of communities in social networks on each discipline with some broad study material (hand-outs, tests with multiple choice, supplementary and thematic researches, videos, applications, contests and games on the studied subject).

Visual turn is an acute trend of contemporary science which is revealed through the growth of the role of imagery in every day human life and through the increase in theoretical interest to the visual component of social reality.

The contemporary researches stress the positive connection of student usage of informational technologies for academic purposes and their involvement in learning and interaction with a teacher.

The appliance of visual technologies in education becomes one of the prior directions in media education. Media

educational system may be presented as media education of professionals and media education of teachers; as a part of general education (independent or integrated) and as a special activity of supplementary educational institutions and leisure centers; finally, as continuous media self-education. In university educational process media education is directed to solve the following tasks: 1) teachers and students must use technological tools in the process of education as well as personalize the study space for knowledge extension; 2) students must understand the details of education in the digital world and follow only safe and legal ways; 3) students must think critically while studying new material.

It is necessary to focus on the appliance of such a method as pre-vodcasting in university educational process. It works especially well with the principle of flipped learning.

The core of the principle lies within the following: students fulfill home assignments in universities with teacher assistance, but theoretical part of the program is studied at home with the help of video lectures. Professors record their lectures on video and upload into the Internet, so students can watch them on smart phones, pads or personal computers. Being in the class, students fulfill practical tasks, exercises and laboratory sessions. It is common for flipped learning to use vodcasts, podcasts and pre-vodcasting.

A podcast is a sound file (an audio lecture) sent by its maker through the Internet to subscribers. The recipients can download podcasts on their devices (immovable or mobile) or listen to the lectures online.

A vodcast is a video file (a video lecture). Pre-vodcasting is a method of education when a professor creates a vodcast with his lecture before the lesson with this lecture so that students get the idea beforehand. The method of pre-vodcasting is the primary name of the method of flipped class.

There are technologies of vodcast appliance in the educational process with the help of special software: CMS (Content Management System) is used to create and manage the content of study materials; LMS (Learning Management System) provides the access to study materials, the organization of back and horizontal connections etc.

In the academic group on "Journalism" within the course of public relations we used our vodcast "Trends of European PR-consulting" recorded in media laboratory and uploaded to the "Cloud". The vodcast was a lecture accompanied by a presentation and videos. The students had to think over the questions asked by the professor during the lecture and to analyze the video. The students answered the questions and discussed the videos of the vodcast with the professor in the class.

At the end of each class students participated in the survey to evaluate the efficiency of the educational technologies applied.

The respondents named such main advantages of online-education as availability of information everywhere, flexibility, mobility, wide choice, opportunity of receiving the information at home, opportunity of watching video infinitely, convenience of work and study simultaneously, possibility of creating the

personal schedule of education, the choice of the most convenient time for watching, the ability to stop and continue watching at any time, interesting study format, variety of activity in the process of education, a better adoption of information, the ability to stop the lecture and think.

The survey showed that 85% of respondents consider the switch from traditional courses to online-courses as possible and only 15% do not agree with the statement.

Thus, the results of our research show the readiness of students to use the digital content in the educational process and the efficiency of its appliance for solving the academic tasks.

The major problem is seen within the lack of appliance of visual means and digital content by teachers, with only a small amount of courses being taught with the help of such means. The solution of the problem is seen in teaching the faculty staff to create and apply the digital content in the educational process. This may be aided with master classes, seminars, open lectures, workshops on the problem.

Another way to solve the problem is to stimulate and co-apply the innovations: introduction of stimulations for appliance of visual means in the educational process, webinar usage in the distant education, joint lectures and seminars of related courses within the competence approach.

Thus, pre-vodcasting allows solving the problem of study space individualization which is one of the main tendencies of the XXI century education.

Another way to solve the problem is to include the open educational resources in the academic process. Lately the development of MOOC follows the direction of a more detailed organization of the study activity and significant increase in number of suggested courses. To differentiate types of MOOC special signs are used: cMOOC – for courses with the idea of connectiveness, and xMOOC – for single courses for a larger audience. Thus, we may consider MOOC as one of the possible modern forms of online-education, focused on gaining certain particular competences.

V. CONCLUSION

In our opinion, the results of the research presented in the article may cause the interest of both teachers and university and faculty administration – especially in the world, where the margin between physical and virtual life becomes more and more subtle. The mass digital presence of students in social media is worth using, so there is a task for contemporary universities to use these media channels to become closer to their beneficiaries. The methods of teaching/learning must be adapted to the pragmatic generation which has great expectations and wants immediate results. It is necessary to encourage the participation of students, to change the existing methods of education. The feed-back must be required and offered on the regular, constant basis. The informal character of social networks must be the source for spreading the communication between teachers and students, with positive results on the level of satisfaction of both categories and on the university reputation.

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