"DIGITAL MIGRANTS" OF UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the impact of digitalization on the quality of life of the older generation in modern society of Uzbekistan from the point of view of subjective and objective approaches. Based on the analysis of domestic research data and the global trend of population aging, the main barriers to the involvement of older people in the digital space are identified. This is an objective challenge for the older generation to adapt to rapidly changing material and technical living conditions.

Keywords: older generation, services, "digital immigrants", online access, digital transformation, economic and demographic indicators, Internet resources.

Introduction

In 2001, Marc Prensky [4] first introduced the terms "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" in his article. This geographic-political metaphor captures what seems obvious at first glance: young people are adopting technological innovations faster than older generations. This seems to be more relevant now than ever, as in recent years, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have changed the way we think about the opportunities we have online. Even the older generation is now actively exploring the functions of video calls and online cinemas. However, accelerated digitalization during the pandemic has further highlighted inequalities between generations.

RESEARCH METHODS

As more and more everyday services move online, people who continue to live without the Internet risk being left without the conveniences they are accustomed to. In the UN Economic Commission for Europe region, which includes 56 countries (all of Europe, the USA and Canada, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Turkey and Israel), the aging process is the highest in the world: in 2020, people aged 65 years and over accounted for almost 17 percent of the total population. This figure is expected to increase to 24 percent in 2050 [6].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the UN, only one in four older people in the region currently have digital skills. By comparison, two out of three people in the 35 to 44 age group have the same skills; among people aged 25 to 34 years - three out of four; among young people (16-24 years old) – four out of five. Policy initiatives aimed at making digital technologies accessible to all groups of

the population, experts say, should include individual support for the most vulnerable users, and there are already successful examples of this.

Thus, in Canada this year a new code came into force, according to which banks are required to take into account the needs of older people when providing financial services. In Slovenia, pensioners are advised by mobile teams of Internet specialists who can provide assistance with payments and transactions over the phone and other communication devices. In Serbia, the Red Cross has developed step-by-step guidance for older people on how to use government e-services. The Silver Surfer project in Luxembourg uses an "older-for-elderly" approach, using older volunteers with specialized training in internet safety to teach retirees how to use digital technology safely and securely.

In the context of the digital reality, Uzbekistan began to prioritize the development of information and communication technologies and digitalization in the early 2000s. For example, the country initiated the "Comprehensive Program for the Development of the National Information and Communication System of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2013 – 2020", the National Action Strategy for five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017 – 2021, the Strategy "Digital Uzbekistan - 2030" and "Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026" [1], aimed at implementing digital transformation in the national economy, industry and society as a whole.

With all these achievements, one of the barriers to further digital transformation in Uzbekistan is the insufficient level of readiness of the older generation to engage in a new field of activity, which destroys the everyday practices familiar to this generation, formed over the years, and actualizes the need to constantly learn something new.

The older generation compares the level of their computer competencies with the level of their children and, above all, grandchildren, and define it as very superficial, based on limited memorization of the options shown. Therefore, the most significant difference between generations is seen not only in the structure of values, but in different levels of digital skills. This attitude perpetuates the stereotype that it is impossible for the generation of "digital migrants" to fully adapt to the world of digital technologies. From the point of view of owning technology and access to the Internet, the older generation uses smartphones, have tablets or a laptop, they have access to the Internet, but all technical issues related to connection are resolved by children, grandchildren or other close relatives. The pandemic situation has contributed to the purchase or receipt of new gadgets. Most often, informants are given phones, tablets, and laptops by family members, but at the same time, they indicate that this is not of great value to them. For many, on the contrary, it is a problem to switch from old models to new ones or continue to use donated technical devices, since it is more difficult to get used to them, you have to remember everything, and sometimes it causes irritation that something does not work out. This is especially true for people over 65 years of age. Thus, older people cite a lack of knowledge and skills (50%), complexity of digital procedures (23.5%), and lack of self-confidence (16.2%) as the main obstacles in mastering digital technologies. Health-related problems are noted by 13.2% of

respondents in the age group over 80 years old, and financial costs by 11.8% of respondents in the age group over 70 years old [3, pp. 151-157].

The subjective barrier associated with one's own uncertainty is more significant than external factors. Unsuccessful experiences contribute to the formation of a negative attitude toward further use in everyday practices, while successes strengthen confidence in the ability to effectively assimilate and use new technologies.

Helping older people in mastering digital technologies rests primarily with the family, represented by children, grandchildren and other relatives, as well as external social institutions and public organizations, such as the Agency for the Development of Medical and Social Services of Uzbekistan, the Mahalla Charitable Public Foundation, The Human Social Services Center, as well as the Kindness and Support Foundation, created on the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

The activities of the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan related to the creation of a specialized Internet portal for senior citizens UZNURONIY.UZ, integrated into the e-government system, deserves attention. Users of this resource can receive a fairly extensive list of interactive services, from reading the latest news to submitting electronic applications and searching for medications. Such services are created and implemented as part of programs aimed at supporting the older generation. However, work aimed at studying the characteristics of life of the older generation in Central Asia has not been sufficiently studied. Basically, the available works are based on the analysis of economic and demographic indicators (Kh.Kh. Abduramanov) [2, P.193–196], on the description of various programs to support older people (Sh.M. Sadykova)[5, P.159–160]. When analyzing the listed resources, a fairly logical question arises about the readiness of the older generation to use similar forms of searching for information and receiving services, associated with the presence of both the necessary technical means and sufficient competencies in the field of using modern information and communication technologies. Only if there are formed orientations and attitudes of Internet users of the older age group to use special Internet resources can we talk about the effectiveness and feasibility of their existence. The above facts indicate that the highest level of government is pursuing a policy on the issue of caring for older people in the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The same attitude is manifested in the cultural characteristics of the interaction of the older generation within their families. People of the older generation have a special place in the traditional Uzbek family. Representatives of this age group in their families occupy the role of sage, adviser, head. A similar attitude towards the elderly is preserved in modern families of Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, in order for the older generation in the modern society of Uzbekistan to feel natural in the digital environment, show social activity and be capable of objectively assessing the information received, not only efforts are needed to develop digital technologies, but also active digital education, increasing the level of their digital literacy, as well as changing attitudes towards the use of digital technologies in everyday life.

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