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Socialisation of student youth in social networks

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Abstract. Social networks have become a part of the daily life of students, they influence the development of views, values and identity, which can have an impact on students' social connections, so research is an urgent task that contributes to understanding this influence. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of social networks on various spheres of life of modern students. In order to investigate the issues of socialisation of young people in social networks, the study used generalisation and analytical method. As a result, the importance of developing strategies aimed at strengthening the positive impact of social networks on students was highlighted. It was revealed that changing social norms and creating an atmosphere of open and decent communication in an online environment can help improve students' socialisation in the virtual world. It was noted that the protection of privacy and the development of critical thinking are important for ensuring the security and information competence of social network users. The importance of developing media literacy and skills in verifying the truthfulness of information in the process of socialisation of students was noted. Strategies that promote the development of virtual space and improve interaction in social networks were outlined. The paper analysed aspects of positive socialisation of students in the digital age that help them solve problems and cope with the challenges of the online environment. The results of scientific research can contribute to a better understanding of how social networks affect young people, and help researchers develop programmes and strategies aimed at supporting the positive aspects of this impact and reducing possible negative consequences

Keywords: Facebook; Instagram; relationships; virtual educational environment; communication

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INTRODUCTION

Social networks play an important role in students' daily lives, influencing the socialisation of young people. Social media can affect young people because of the challenges they face online, such as the amount of information they consume and how they perceive it. Understanding this impact can help develop strategies to improve student

socialisation in the digital world. This aspect may include promoting healthy and constructive online communication, developing critical thinking skills for a more informed perception of information, and support in dealing with specific situations that arise on social media, such as cyberbullying or the spread of fake news.



O. Maltseva (2020) noted that in the last decades of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century, information technologies began to actively influence various aspects of human life. According to her findings, the Internet plays a key role in this process, turning into “virtual reality”. According to the researcher, its impact on personal development is so significant that many scientists consider the new information environment to be an important factor in socialisation, along with space, nature, and society. The researcher defines socialisation as a complex process of assimilation of social experience, including knowledge about the surrounding world, interpersonal relationships, society values, models of social behaviour, etc. The result of this process is the adaptation of the individual to the social environment, which should be studied in more detail in the framework of students’ socialisation in social networks.

Researchers of changes in the process of socialisation in modern society, J. Guhin *et al.* (2021), note that socialisation, i.e., the process of transferring values, norms, traditions, and social roles from one generation to another, occurs in the context of various influences and transformations. Researchers point out that traditional means of socialisation, such as family, religion, and education, have undergone changes due to new social, technological, and cultural influences. In particular, researchers note the influence of media, the Internet, and public networks on the socialisation of modern generations. The researchers also note the importance of the question of the place of school education in the socialisation process and the challenges associated with changes in it. It is necessary to investigate in more detail the aspects of this issue to identify the features of student socialisation conditions in the new realities.

E. Bidegain *et al.* (2023) note that youth actively use social media to interact and build their identity. Researchers suggest that students create and discuss their own identity based on common interests, beliefs, and values that they collectively recognise on the Internet. In modern society, according to researchers, social networks play a leading role in the ability to promote cultural integration, mutual understanding, and establishing social ties among young people. It is worth carefully studying the aspects of this issue and the impact of social networks on the socialisation of modern students.

N. Umanets (2020) points out that the Internet, social networks, and other aspects of information and digital development of humanity influence the development of the worldview and values of the younger generation. The researcher notes that along with the opportunities offered by informatisation, there are risks for the socialisation of young people. Among them, the researcher notes the abuse of personal information, cyberbullying, the influence of disinformation and fake news. These aspects can lead to negative consequences for the psychological state and social development of young people, so the role of parents, teachers, and other adults in accompanying young people in the digital environment is important. The researcher is convinced that the education of digital literacy and active

dialogue can help young people reduce the risks of information socialisation and preserve life guidelines. It is necessary to investigate in more detail the impact of informatisation on the socialisation of modern youth, in particular students. O. Stelmakh (2022) focused on how social media can affect the social, psychological, and academic spheres of students’ lives. It is important, according to the researcher, that social networks can be both a useful tool for students and a factor that introduces certain challenges and risks. The researcher draws attention to the importance of students’ conscious and informed use of social networks.

Despite a number of publications on this issue, it is still necessary to investigate in more detail the features of student socialisation, including through social networks. The actual problem is how to ensure a balance between the positive and negative consequences of using social networks by students. Positive aspects may include increasing the availability of information for training and community support, while negative aspects may include the risks of loss of privacy and network dependency. The purpose of the study was to investigate how social media affects the development of social connections, beliefs, and values in students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used the analytical method and the method of generalisation to investigate the process of socialisation of student youth in the context of modern digital development and active use of social networks in more depth and detail. These methods helped to consider the information received, analyse the positive and negative aspects of the impact of social networks on students, and develop specific strategies to improve this impact.

During the study, the tabular method was used to create tables. The paper also used a comparative method to contrast the opinions of various researchers about the socialisation of young people, and to compare their own research results with those of other scientists. The systematisation method was used, which highlighted the positive and negative aspects of the impact of social networks on the student community. Due to the method of analysis that was used in the study, key aspects of the research topic were highlighted; in particular, important trends and dependencies that previously could have gone unnoticed were identified. The use of the analysis method in research work established certain patterns in the field under study. The analytical method allowed considering both positive and negative aspects of the use of social networks in the interaction and development of social relations among modern students. Based on the analytical method, the influence of these networks on the educational process and academic activities of students, and their self-determination and reflection on the Internet, was studied. The analytical method examined how students use social networks to receive social support and ensure psychological well-being, disseminate information, and actively participate in various initiatives. An important aspect that was identified based on the analysis was the identification of situations of dependence

on the Internet and distraction from the educational process that may arise as a result of the use of modern social networks among young people.

Using the method of synthesis, key aspects and an overview of the impact of these networks on various aspects of students' lives and development were provided. The generalisation presented these results in a more organised and structured form, which contributed to a better understanding of information and ensured the consistency of research. Based on the generalisation method, strategies for improving the impact of social networks on students were highlighted, in particular:

- changes in social norms, which is stimulated by communication with young people, the spread of positive examples in social networks;
- privacy, which is ensured by the provision of security tools; dependence and lack of communication links proper, which is corrected by stimulating physical activity and offline initiatives;
- expanding students' horizons; supporting the skills of differentiating the real and virtual world; promoting the assimilation of information.

The use of the generalisation method contributed to the disclosure of important aspects of students' adaptation to the digital environment and identified the main areas of further actions in the field of social interaction in social networks to ensure a positive impact on their socialisation and personal development.

RESULTS

Contemporary young people, in particular students, not only acquire education and academic knowledge, but also interact, exchange information, discuss current issues, and support each other through social media. This aspect expands the possibilities of their self-realisation and creates additional spaces for the development of a young person's own identity. However, it should be borne in mind that this virtual socialisation can lead to negative consequences, so students need to understand how to balance their social media activities and academic responsibilities to ensure the harmonious development of identity and social skills.

Students are the most active social group in the information society and are most exposed to uncontrolled social influences and negative spontaneous socialisation. In the context of their education and social development, an important aspect is observed: the role of the family, cultural institutions and higher education institutions in the process of socialisation decreases, while the influence of modern mass communication media, especially the Internet, increases. Self-education, self-control, and self-realisation of students are becoming increasingly important. This context requires a review of approaches to social support and student education. It also highlights the relevance of research on the impact of media, in particular the Internet, on the process of student socialisation and notes the need to adapt the content, forms, and methods of social work in the cyber environment (Saiapina & Mukhina, 2022).

The essence of student identity arises and improves through active interaction with various socio-cultural and academic influences that accompany students throughout their studies in higher education institutions. This process involves perception and adaptation to the learning environment, interaction with the community of students and teachers, understanding personal values and learning goals. Thus, student identity is the result of a complex social construct that affects students' perception and self-determination in the context of higher education (Weidman *et al.*, 2014). Just as student identity is formed through higher education, students' socialisation and development of their social skills now also take place in a different, virtual world – in social networks. Modern students use a variety of online platforms to communicate, share information, and in the process they build their virtual identity and socialise with their peers.

Socialisation is a complex and lengthy process that involves accepting and understanding the social norms, values, roles, and skills necessary for successful integration of the individual into society. This process, according to current research, is not completed at a certain stage, but continues throughout a person's life. It is important to consider that socialisation is influenced by various factors, including cultural, social, and contextual aspects. This process involves interacting with various social agents, such as family, school, peers, media, and other institutions (Gauvain & Parke, 2010). Each of these agents has an important influence on the development of personality and determining its place in society. Due to rapid changes in the modern world, including the role of the Internet and social networks, socialisation has become more diverse and complex.

Among the main motives that lead students to use social networks are entertainment, fighting loneliness, communicating with friends and acquaintances, receiving news and accessing various information materials, such as articles and books. In particular, the most important motivations for students are entertainment and communication. It is important to note that this choice is conditioned by their confidence in the security and privacy of these networks, and a high level of social activity (Fathi *et al.*, 2020). Many students use social media to communicate and interact with others, and this can affect various aspects of their social life. This can be a distraction from academic responsibilities, a routine of learning, and it can also occur due to a lack of daily communication with people of the opposite sex, which is an important part of student life. However, some students also support the idea of using social media in their studies and consider creating online groups to discuss materials, share information, and interact with fellow students as a useful learning tool. This approach is perceived by students as successful and useful (Malik, 2023).

Modern social networks, including Facebook, are key components of the process of socialisation of students in the modern information society. They not only facilitate communication between young people, but also influence

their perception of the world and the development of their own identity. Students actively use Facebook to share information, establish new connections, and build social networks. However, it is important to note that this process is also accompanied by a number of problems. One of them is the issue of privacy and security of information, since the information that students share on social networks can fall into dishonest hands or be misused. There may also be questions about the impact of social media on students' mental health, in particular, in the form of stress or negative effects on well-being. Facebook and modern social networks play a significant role in students' socialisation, helping them build social relationships and shape their identity, but it is important to constantly study and understand the impact of these networks on the younger generation and develop strategies to ensure their safety and mental comfort in this digital environment (Barkhuus & Tashiro, 2010).

Students, especially those representing Generation Z, may be vulnerable to the influence of age-related stereotypes that are present in the online environment. This can affect their behaviour and interactions with other social media users. Such stereotypes can influence their decisions, other users' perceptions, and even influence their judgments about their own competence (Wijenayake *et al.*, 2021). This highlights the importance of students' education and awareness of the impact of stereotypes and the need to develop critical thinking about the information they receive on social networks. Based on the data obtained from the study, it became clear that virtual social networks have an important impact on the student community and their social behaviour (Table 1). This influence manifests itself in the context of students' socialisation, i.e. in the formation of their social skills, communication with peers, and the development of stereotypes and values.

Table 1. Impact of social media on the student community

Impact aspects	Positive impact	Negative impact
Communication and social relations	Social networks help maintain and expand students' social contacts. They can make new friendships, maintain old acquaintances, and connect with peers from different parts of the world.	Increasing the time spent in online communication to the detriment of offline social relationships.
Training and academic activities	Students can use social networks to learn, share educational materials, collaborate on projects, etc.	Distraction from learning, especially if students spend a lot of time watching news or visiting entertainment pages.
Impact of image and self-identification	Social media can influence how students create and maintain their image. They can share photos, statuses, interests, etc., which affects their self-esteem and perception of themselves and others.	Students may become too dependent on evaluating their image and self-esteem based on the reactions and preferences of other social media users. This can lead to unstable self-esteem and self-doubt.
Social support and psychological well-being	Social networks can be a place where students seek support in difficult moments, share their thoughts and feelings.	Negative comments or criticism can affect the psychological state of students.
Access to information	The Internet provides students with the opportunity to access a large number of resources, which helps them deepen their knowledge and develop skills.	Significant time spent on social media can cause Internet addiction and distraction from your studies and academic activities.
Dissemination of information and activity	Social networks can be a platform for spreading information about current events and promoting activism among students.	Social media activism can contribute to the spread of cyberbullying and online attacks. Students may be the target of this negative phenomenon, which can affect their mental and emotional state.

Source: compiled by the authors

The overall impact of social media on students and their social behaviour depends on individual characteristics, attitudes to network use, and the ability to self-regulate. This impact can be both positive and negative, so it is important to find a balance between using social media and other aspects of student life. With the help of social networks, modern students can discuss academic issues, share educational resources, receive support from peers, and even establish professional contacts. However, such virtual socialisation can also have its own problems, such as the risk of losing privacy, Internet addiction, and the impact of image on students. Social networks, as part of the digital environment, can be not only a means of communication and entertainment, but also a source of information and can carry certain risks, such as access to negative content (violence, pornography, etc.) and the risk of becoming

dependent on social networks and the Internet in general. Excessive use of social networks can contribute to social maladaptation and desocialisation of young people, and dependence on virtual communication. Therefore, it is important to teach young people and children how to use the network safely. This can be achieved through actions both on the part of parents and with the support of the state. In addition, the media can contribute to this process by displaying social advertising that highlights the dangers of excessive Internet use (Lisovych, 2022).

Virtual space can become an important means for socialisation of young people, especially in war conditions. Social networks and other online resources provide access to information, communicate with peers and others, and find support and resources to adapt to difficult conditions. The use of virtual space can also have negative aspects, such

as the risks of online addiction and the negative impact of information on the network. Therefore, it is important to balance the use of these resources to support socialisation and protect against possible threats (Boichuk *et al.*, 2023). The modern information landscape, in particular, the information war in Ukraine, has a significant impact on the socialisation of young people. In this context, there is a threat of loss of life guidelines and one's own ideals, since the information space is full of various messages and views. Young people who face a clash of different information sources and discussions may feel lost in this flow of information. This impact can cause psychological stress and frustration, as young people try to understand and assess the situation in the country and the world, but often face disagreements and misinformation. This is especially true for the military conflict in Ukraine, where many young people are experiencing uncertainty and a threat that af-

fects their psychological state. A change in the worldview among young people may be a consequence of this process. They move from a carefree life to experiencing a threatening present and an uncertain future. This can lead to changes in their values, beliefs, and life priorities (Yurchenko, 2019). The information war in Ukraine affects the socialisation of young people, creating complex challenges and opportunities. Understanding this impact is important for further research and development of strategies to support young people in the context of information conflict. Understanding the dynamics and impact of information aspects on the socialisation process can help develop effective methods and tools to support students and young people in adapting to new conditions. Strategies to increase the positive impact of social media communication on students are essential to ensure the sustainability and positive development of youth in the digital age (Table 2).

Table 2. Strategies to increase the positive impact of social media communications on students

Aspect	Strategies
Changing social norms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Open and decent communication with students about social norms and standards. 2. Popularisation of positive examples in social networks. 3. Education of students about cultural and ethical behaviour in social networks.
Privacy and security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouragement of students to properly manage their privacy. 2. Support for online security and privacy campaigns. 3. Provision of access to privacy protection tools.
Addiction and lack of communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouragement of physical activity and offline communication. 2. Use of networks to organise real events and meetings. 3. Development of initiatives to involve students in various offline activities.
Problems related to limited information flow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stimulation of the expansion of the range of information. 2. Introduction of critical thinking and information evaluation skills. 3. Development of multicultural communities in social networks.
Virtual reality and the real world	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for virtual and real-life separation skills. 2. Encouragement of participation in offline events and communication. 3. Use of networks to learn and improve skills in real life.
Assimilation of information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of media literacy and information verification skills. 2. Popularisation of sources that confirm the truthfulness of information. 3. Conduct training on critical research and analysis of information. 4. Create more diverse sources of information for students.

Source: compiled by the authors

The above strategies can promote the positive impact of social media on students and at the same time reduce the risk of negative consequences. Despite the fact that social networks have their own characteristics, correctly chosen strategies can help students implement a more conscious and effective approach to their use, which will contribute to their social development and personal growth.

DISCUSSION

Modern student socialisation covers two important components: classroom learning and interaction in the virtual space of social networks. This dual nature of student socialisation expands opportunities for the development of students' identity and social skills. It is important to analyse the views of researchers on the issues of social relationships in the digital environment of students and compare them with the results of this study. This will help to identify common and distinctive aspects in understanding the impact of social

networks on students, and identify the possibility of applying these studies in the practice of improving the effectiveness of the educational process and socialisation of students.

C.B. Cazden (2017) examined socialisation and its role in parenting and education. The researcher emphasised the importance of communication and interaction in the process of socialisation of children and students. The researcher suggests that interaction with other people, especially in the context of learning, affects the development of communication skills and social competence of young people. There is a need to develop communicative competence as a key element of socialisation, and the role of teachers in contributing to this process. According to the researcher, socialisation plays a significant role in education and upbringing, and it is necessary for the development of personality and achieving academic and social success of young people. Comparing the results of this study, it is worth noting that the process of socialisation in the student

environment is now largely transferred to the digital environment to social networks, which is the result of digital progress of humanity and provides students with new and wider opportunities for social activity.

E. Gallardo-Echenique *et al.* (2020) point out that despite the widespread use of digital technologies among young people, certain social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, remain central to student audiences. Researchers note that social networking on these platforms can have a significant impact on students' socialisation, relationships, and perception of the world. Comparing with the results of this study, it is worth noting that modern students use these social networks for socialisation and perceive their academic and social environment through the prism of the digital space.

R. O'Carroll & T. Rooney (2020) emphasise the importance of understanding the impact of social networks, in particular Facebook, on the younger generation. They argue that this social platform is becoming a significant aspect of Generation Z socialisation and influencing their social skills and behaviour. Young people, according to the researchers, use Facebook for a variety of purposes, including connecting with friends and family, expressing their own personality, finding information, and interacting with communities. However, the researchers emphasise that there are both positive and negative aspects to this process. Among the positive aspects are the possibility of increasing social interaction and joint activities, while the negative consequences can be privacy violations and the development of dependence on social networks (O'carroll & Rooney, 2020). In comparison with the results of the study, it is important to note that the impact of social networks such as Facebook on young people, in particular students, is significant in modern society. However, it is important to understand that socialisation through the Internet is an integral part of the development of digital technologies and society as a whole.

The impact of Facebook use on students' socialisation and academic performance was investigated by S. Ainin *et al.* (2015). According to the researchers, there was a positive link between the academic performance of students in Malaysia and their use of Facebook. Researchers suggest that students who use Facebook more tend to perceive their academic work as more successful. Comparing with the results of this study, it is worth noting that the use of social networks, including Facebook, carries both positive and negative manifestations of influence on the socialisation of students. T. Balamurugan & M. Aravinthan (2023) note that social networks are becoming increasingly popular among students, even in rural areas, as young people have the opportunity to use these networks to access educational resources, connect with peers, and entertainment. Researchers point to the positive impact of social media on the academic and social aspects of student life, but there are also risks associated with the use of social media, such as loss of concentration during training and the possibility of conflicts. It is noted that social networks affect student

life and they can have both a positive and negative impact on students' learning and social adaptation, which is worth agreeing with when comparing the results of this study.

G.M. Talaue *et al.* (2018) argue that social media has become an essential part of students' lives and takes up most of their free time. The researchers also argue that social media can have both a positive and negative impact on student performance, with the positive aspects being the ability to find useful information and communicate with peers, which promotes socialisation and friendship. However, the researchers emphasise that students should be personally responsible for their time on social media, as excessive use of them can distract from their studies and other important tasks. Comparing the results of this study with the data obtained as a result of investigating this issue, it is worth noting that social networks are indeed one of the leading communication tools for modern youth, including students, so young people need critical thinking skills on self-awareness to control the negative aspects of the impact of social networks and digital media.

S. Thanuskodi (2023) explored the use of social media among undergraduate students. The researcher argued that undergraduate students actively use social media for various purposes, including sharing information, communicating with peers, supporting learning, and socialising. Students use social networks to gain access to up-to-date information and resources, and to interact with their classmates and teachers. The researcher points out the importance of effective use of social media in the educational process and the possibility of using them as a tool to improve the quality of education and promote the academic growth of students, which will contribute to the overall socialisation of young people. Comparing with the results of this study, the use of social networks among students contributes not only to the goals of socialisation, but also to the educational process of students.

The influence of social networks on the socialisation of students is the subject of study by many scientists in the modern world. An analysis of various studies and opinions of researchers shows that this influence has both positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects of using social media include the possibility of increasing the accessibility of educational resources and learning tools, facilitating communication and community between students and teachers, and developing digital literacy skills. Social media can promote the exchange of ideas and collaborative learning. However, there are also negative aspects. These include a tendency to break away from school and poor academic performance due to too much time spent on social media. There is also a risk of negative content and online bullying affecting the mental health of students.

CONCLUSIONS

The impact of social networks on students' socialisation is multifaceted. It is important to understand that effective use of these platforms in the educational process can improve information perception, develop social skills, and promote

academic growth. However, students should be aware of possible negative consequences and take measures to avoid them. To achieve a balance between the benefits and negative aspects of using social media in the educational process, it is important to develop digital literacy and develop critical thinking in students. As a result of the study, the impact of social networks on the student community was considered, in particular, the positive and negative aspects of communication and social relations through social networks, the impact of the use of networks on the learning and academic activities of students, the impact of image and self-identification, obtaining social support and psychological well-being through social networks, and the dissemination of information and activity. The study also highlighted aspects of Internet addiction and distraction from the educational process due to the use of social media among young people.

The use of strategies to enhance the positive impact of social media communication on the student community contributes to increasing the level of socialisation of young people in the virtual world. These strategies aim to improve the quality of social media interactions and have the po-

tential to improve both students' psychosocial status and their overall learning and communication performance. Changing social norms can contribute to a more open environment supported on social media. Privacy protection and security allow students to feel safe and confident in an online environment. Developing critical thinking skills and digital literacy can make them more educated consumers of online information. Such strategies help students to better master the virtual space and interact effectively with other social media participants. They open up opportunities for establishing positive relationships, expanding social ties, and improving the quality of socialisation of students in the digital age. Future researchers should pay attention to how students build their public image on social media and how this affects their self-identification, which can reveal the depth and diversity of this phenomenon.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Соціалізація студентської молоді в соціальних мережах

Анотація. Соціальні мережі стали частиною повсякденного життя студентської молоді, вони впливають на формування поглядів, цінностей та ідентичності, що може містити вплив на соціальні зв'язки студентів, тому дослідження є актуальним завданням, яке сприяє розумінню цього впливу. Метою дослідження було вивчення впливу соціальних мереж на різні сфери життя сучасної студентської молоді. Для того, щоб вивчити питання соціалізації молодих людей у соціальних мережах, у науковій роботі застосовано узагальнення та аналітичний метод. У результаті проведеного дослідження висвітлено важливість розробки стратегій, спрямованих на підсилення позитивного впливу соціальних мереж на студентську молодь. Виявлено, що зміна соціальних норм і створення атмосфери відкритого та гідного спілкування в онлайн-середовищі можуть сприяти поліпшенню соціалізації студентів у віртуальному світі. Звернено увагу на те, що захист приватності та розвиток критичного мислення важливі для гарантування безпеки та інформаційної компетентності користувачів соціальних мереж. Наголошено на важливості в процесі соціалізації студентської молоді розвивати медійну грамотність та навички перевірки правдивості інформації. Окреслено стратегії, що сприяють освоєнню віртуального простору та покращенню взаємодії в соціальних мережах. Проаналізовано аспекти позитивної соціалізації студентської молоді в цифрову епоху, які допомагають вирішувати завдання та справлятися з викликами онлайн-середовища. Отримані результати наукового дослідження можуть сприяти кращому розумінню того, як соціальні мережі впливають на молодь, а також допоможуть науковцям у розробці програм та стратегій, спрямованих на підтримку позитивних сторін цього впливу та зменшення можливих негативних наслідків

Ключові слова: Facebook; Instagram; відносини; віртуальне освітнє середовище; спілкування



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