Advantages and Disadvantages of Distance Learning

Olga Begicheva
A.N. Kosygin Russian State
University (of Design and
Technology)
Moscow, Russia
e-mail: olgalvb@mail.ru

Olga Kolosova
State University of
Management
Moscow, Russia
e-mail: olga-
kolosova@mail.ru

Irina Zavelskaya
A.N. Kosygin Russian State
University (of Design and
Technology), Moscow,
Russia
e-mail: ira.atp@gmail.com

Elena Karpova
A.N. Kosygin Russian
State University (of
Design and Technology)
Moscow, Russia
e-mail:
pedagogikanet@yandex.ru

Abstract—**The mass digitalization of society has led to changes in many spheres of life, including education. The relationship between distance learning, the media and education is quite complex.**

Distance learning is a form of higher education that is gaining popularity. It implies remote interaction between the student and the university.

The biggest advantage of distance education is its accessibility. You can be anywhere and study online at the best universities in the world and with the most brilliant teachers. All you need is a stable Internet connection, a smartphone or a laptop and motivation.

Keywords—**distance learning, mass culture, digital society, respondents, Internet, ICT, mass media.**

I. Introduction

In the modern world, such a phenomenon as online learning is becoming very widespread. Until recently, it was not just a convenience, but a necessity. This was due to the fact that because of the COVID-19 pandemic, being in enclosed spaces with large groups of people has become a serious problem due to the spread of the infection, which has led to the need for social distancing and quarantine around the world. For this reason, distance learning has become the most relevant, at that time it met all the needs of modern society. Today, in Russian realities, the urgent need to comply with quarantine and other security measures has disappeared, in connection with which schoolchildren and students are again studying full-time. However, some classes are still held remotely due to the undeniable convenience of this format.

It is impossible to ignore the fact that this phenomenon, of course, has significant drawbacks. In the context of the constant growth of the importance of education, it is necessary to optimize various formats of the educational process. Therefore, the author of the article considers it extremely important to study in detail the features of the distance learning format and search for effective solutions to eliminate possible problems.

II. Methodology

In connection with the importance of the topic, a survey was conducted, the purpose of which was to identify the key features of the distance learning format and the consequences of its influence on the quality of knowledge.

As a part of the study, an online survey was conducted based on the GoogleForms platform. The social networks VKontakte and Facebook were used to form a representative sample. The total number of the spontaneous sample (N=100) is represented by the students of 1-4 courses of the Russian State University named after A.N. Kosygin, RGUNIG named after I.M. Gubkin (142 people). An analytical study of the obtained data was carried out by the methods of statistical, structural-dynamic and comparative analysis. Some of the conclusions were formed by methods of analysis and synthesis, as well as analogy and comparison.

The results of the study allow us to determine the degree of convenience of distance learning, its positive and negative sides, the attitude of students to this format, factors affecting the change in the quality of knowledge and student performance in the process of distance learning, as well as to track the progress of electronic educational resources in the eyes of students.

III. Results

To study this issue, a survey was conducted. The gender of respondents was as follows :
- 48% men;
- 52% women.

The results of the survey revealed:
- 49% of respondents believe that the distance format is the format of the future and all the educational process can be completely switched to this format;
-43% of respondents believe that distance learning was only a measure of temporary necessity;
- 8% of respondents noted that there was no need for distance learning at all.

When asked what resources students used in distance learning, the following data were obtained:
- 93% of respondents received assignments and various information using the portal of their educational organization. Consequently, the main load in distance learning falls on this resource, which means that it should be the most convenient for use. For this it is necessary to develop it and increase the range of its functions.

When asked if students feel connected to other Internet users during their online studies:

- 70% of the respondents answered "Yes";
- 30% of the respondents answered "No".
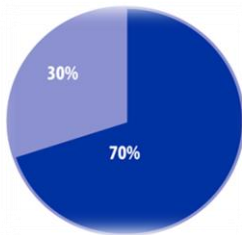The answers to the question are shown in Figure 1.

Fig.1. The results of the answers to the question: "Do you feel a social connection with other Internet users during training? »
Respondents' answers to the question "Do they think that modern technologies equate communication on the Internet with communication in real life?" are shown in Figure 2.
The data presented in the figure clearly demonstrates that the majority of respondents (80%) believe that online communication is equal to communication in real life.
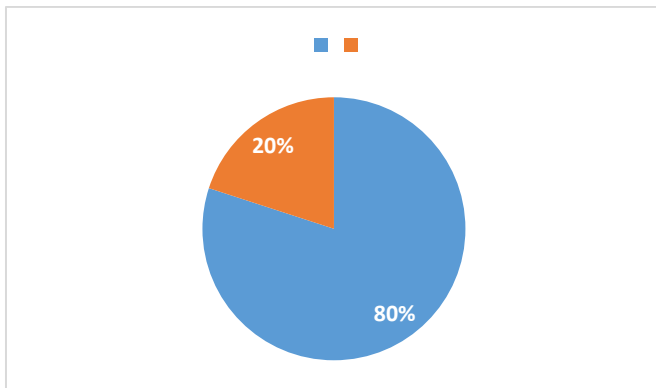

Fig.2. The results of answers to the question: "Do you think that modern technologies equate communication in the Internet with communication in real life?"
The results obtained when answering the question about improving the quality of knowledge showed that:
- 37% of respondents said the quality of knowledge has improved;
- 46% claimed it has not changed;
- 17% of students believe that it has worsened altogether. This is not the most positive statistic.
It should also be noted that in distance learning:
- 6% of respondents believe that their academic performance has deteriorated;
- 25% of respondents believe that their academic performance has improved;
- 69% of respondents believe that their performance has not changed.
Among the advantages of distance learning, which were identified as a result of the survey, the following stands out (in the questionnaire it was possible to select several answers):
- 82% of respondents chose the opportunity to re-watch online classes;
- 65% of the interviewed respondents chose the possibility of self-learning;
- 63% of respondents chose the opportunity to study in a comfortable environment;

- 63% of respondents chose the possibility of downloading lectures and practical materials;
- 55% of respondents chose the convenience of modern technologies for distance learning;
- 55% of respondents chose the opportunity to opt for an individual pace of learning and thereby increase the amount of free time;
- 38% of respondents chose the opportunity to combine work with study.
The main disadvantages of distance learning were: a lack of personal communication; the absence of distinction between work and free time and a larger number of tasks compared to the face-to-face format. When asked about the lack of personal experience during distance learning, the results of the survey were as follows:
- 45% of respondents believe that they still lack personal communication during distance learning;
- 55% believe that they have enough personal communication during distance learning.
Respondents' opinions about the absence of boundaries between work and free time are divided as follows:
- 40% of respondents say that they lose the boundaries between work and free time;
- 60% of respondents did not note such a feeling.
The answers to the question about increasing the number of tasks in distance learning are shown as follows:
- 35% of respondents believe that there are more tasks in distance learning compared to the full-time format;
- 65% of respondents did not feel this difference.
Also, the main technical problems that students encountered during online learning were identified which should be solved for a more comfortable further learning distance format experience:
- 34% of respondents noted poor Internet connection;
- 28% noted difficulties in communication with teachers;
- 19% outlined problems with the online platform of the educational organization. These statistics show that technical problems are the most important issue that needs to be eliminated for successful distance learning.
Also, the disadvantages of distance learning include an increase in the time spent by students in front of the screens.
When asked how often respondents log in to the Internet:
- 48% answered every hour;
- 39% said that they log in several times per day;
- 13% answered that they use the Internet once every few days.
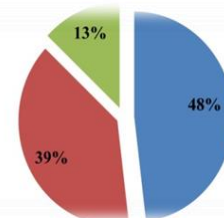The distribution of answers to the question is shown in Figure 3.

Fig.3. Distribution of answers to the question: "How often do you use the Internet?"
It can be concluded that the level of Internet addiction increases among students. The results of the answers to the question - "Has the distance learning regime affected your

usual interaction with the digital environment?" distributed as follows:

- 42% of respondents began to spend more time on the Internet and are more than satisfied with everything;
- 20% also began to spend more time on the Internet, but for them, this is a necessary measure and they would prefer an offline environment;
- 34% of respondents do not care about this issue;
- 4% of respondents found it difficult to answer.

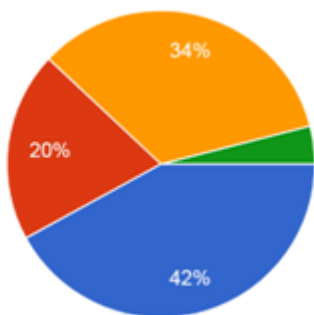The distribution of answers to the question is shown in Figure 4.

Fig. 4. Distribution of the results of answers to the question: "Has the distance learning regime affected your usual interaction with the digital environment?"

IV. DISCUSSION

The relevance of the study of distance learning and communication is connected with its exceptional importance in the development of human civilization. As a social phenomenon, it is characterized by many qualities and dynamism.

Another huge advantage of distance learning is the possibility of intercultural communication between students. The study of the development of intercultural communication is reflected in the works of Baimurzayeva[1], Belyakova [2], Vinokurova [3], Drach [4], Tarasyuk [5], Vorontsova [6] and others. The conducted studies show that scientists have made a significant contribution to the formation and development of intercultural communication. However, the implementation of distance learning in the context of digitalization requires further meaningful study.

The study showed that thanks to online learning, students' skills in electronic technology and working with a PC improved, and they actively use them in other areas of their lives - this is another positive aspect of distance learning that was identified in this study. In addition, the quality of many e-learning resources has improved: their work has been optimized and new features have been added.

The following reasons for the deterioration in the quality of knowledge among students in distance learning were identified: 41% of respondents identified the lack of teamwork and the lack of social contacts in the learning process; 28% noted the lack of sufficient time to complete the entire scope of tasks, and the main reason was relaxation and reduced sense of responsibility caused by the peculiarities of the distance learning format. These indicators suggest that the transition to a full-fledged online learning format should be avoided, otherwise, the above problems may reappear and cause irreversible consequences.

In addition, the study identified the reasons for the aforementioned slackness and reduced sense of responsibility. They are: too comfortable home environment, understanding that there is much more time to study than in a full-time format, and the reduction of control over student learning to the minimum level due to the lack of live interaction. This once again proves that the distance learning format will be optimal only when combined with the full-time format, otherwise, the performance of students will decrease.

Summarizing the results of the study, it could be confirmed that under the condition of complete distance format learning, the quality of knowledge among some students is deteriorating, and this is due to various reasons. Based on this, it is necessary to find a comprehensive solution to this problem, which would affect the learning of students in various aspects.

Thus, if the deterioration in the quality of knowledge is caused by problems that are directly related to working with electronic technologies and resources for online learning, then the following recommendations can be distinguished:

1) Providing each student with a minimum set of equipment necessary for training;
2) Developing special multifunctional online platforms designed specifically for distance learning in all disciplines;
3) Conducting the short course of immersion in the functionality of the resources used in the training of both students and teachers;
4) If necessary, a short course of training in basic PC skills.

Another block of reasons that can be identified are social reasons, such as the lack of teamwork and social contacts; lack of proper communication with the teacher leading to misunderstanding of the material, etc. The following recommendations have been made:

1) Organization of teamwork activities for students (discussions, debates, collective projects) both online and in person (if possible);
2) Ensuring proper communication of the teacher with each study group, organization and regulation of the information flow on the part of the teacher, organization of handling of individual requests from students.

The third block of reasons are personal reasons. They include: relaxation and reduced sense of responsibility, lack of motivation, inability to study productively due to the lack of necessary home conditions, high workload. The following recommendations can be made:

1) Ensuring proper conditions, in case of impossibility to provide them - the creation of new ones, outside the home;
2) The introduction of various rewards not only for academic excellence, but also for attendance and active work in the classroom;
3) Development of a new (interactive, innovative, interesting, dynamic, with visual content) format for conducting classes to enhance the interest of students;
4) Teaching students time management.

According to the respondents, the remote format is a modern solution to the problems that arise in society and means of meeting the urgent needs of society. It is convenient, but at the same time carries certain risks for the development of society. Therefore, it is necessary to correctly plan and organize training, which includes the use of distance technologies. At the same time, it should be noted that the answers of the respondents were often very contradictory. This suggests that

this problem has not yet been sufficiently studied and is not always deeply understood and mastered by both students and teachers.

Thus, in the course of this study, the main disadvantages and advantages of the distance learning format were identified. In addition, the fact of deterioration in the quality of knowledge during the transition of training to an online format was revealed. This phenomenon can lead to irreversible consequences for society, so it is necessary to prevent its occurrence. It is important to carefully approach distance learning, taking into account all the peculiarities in order to minimize the risks of deterioration in the quality of knowledge.

REFERENCES

[1] N.Z. Baymurzayeva. *Cross-cultural communications: Issues of mainstreaming and development in the contemporary world. Transactions of the Kuban State.* "Technical University", no.2, pp. 391-404, 2019.

[2] I.G. Belyakova. *Components of global cross cultural competence in the context of modern cross-cultural communication.* "Culture and Civilization", no. 9(4-1), pp. 138-147, 2019.

[3] M.A. Vinokurova, N.P. Vasilyeva. *The role of cross -cultural communication in higher education.* "World of Science: Sociology, Philology, Cultural Studies" no.10(4), pp. 41, 2019.

[4] G.V. Drach, G.V. Semina. *Transformations of ethnic cultures in the globalized world: Main aspects of the problem.* "Bulletin of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University. Series: Humanities and Social Sciences", no. 1, pp. 92-101, 2019.

[5] N.A. Tarasyuk, O.V. Razdorskaya. *Specifics of the contemporary language functioning in the context of globalization.* "Bulletin of the Southwest State University. Series: Linguistics and Pedagogy", no. 9(1(30)), pp. 117-121, 2019.

[6] M.A. Gil Martinez, Yu. V. Vorontsova. [2020] *Influence of cross - cultural communications on increasing business profitability in the context of using digital technologies.* "E-Management", no. 3(1), pp. 27-35, 2020.