

GENDER SPECIFICITY OF THE FORMATION OF YOUTH LIFE POSITIONS IN THE GLOBAL INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

The rapid development of the global information environment has significantly transformed the worldview, social behavior, values, and life positions of young people. In the modern digital era, information technologies, social networks, virtual communication, and global media platforms have become the main factors influencing youth consciousness and socialization. At the same time, the impact of the information environment on young people differs according to gender characteristics, social roles, cultural norms, and opportunities for participation in digital space. This article analyzes the gender-specific aspects of the formation of youth life positions in the global information environment from a sociological perspective. The research examines the influence of digital media, online communication, information consumption, cyber risks, gender stereotypes, and digital inequality on young men and women. The article also explores international experiences and the socio-cultural conditions of Uzbekistan in shaping youth life positions under globalization. The study is based on sociological theories, comparative analysis, gender approaches, and contemporary empirical data. The findings demonstrate that the information environment simultaneously creates new opportunities for self-realization and new risks related to identity, values, and social adaptation. The article emphasizes the necessity of inclusive gender-sensitive approaches in developing youth policy and media literacy.

Keywords: Global information environment, youth, gender specificity, life position, digital socialization, media influence, gender stereotypes, digital inequality, social networks, youth policy.

Introduction

The XXI century is characterized by the rapid expansion of globalization and digital technologies, which have fundamentally changed the mechanisms of socialization and the formation of youth life positions. The emergence of social media platforms, online educational systems, virtual communication, and global digital networks has transformed the social environment in which young people develop their identities, values, and future aspirations [1]. In sociological research, the concept of “life position” refers to a stable system of values, attitudes, goals, and behavioral orientations that determine an individual’s interaction with society. Youth life positions are formed under the influence of family, education, peer groups, culture, religion, mass media, and socio-economic conditions. However, in the digital age, the global information environment has become one of the most influential institutions shaping youth consciousness.

The impact of the information environment is not gender-neutral. Young men and women experience digital socialization differently because of unequal social expectations, cultural



norms, access to information resources, and gender stereotypes [2]. In many societies, including transitional societies, digital platforms reproduce existing gender inequalities while simultaneously offering opportunities for empowerment and social participation [3].

According to the report of the United Nations, gender inequality in digital access remains a global issue, particularly in developing countries. Women and girls often face restrictions related to digital literacy, cybersecurity, online harassment, and limited participation in technological fields. Meanwhile, young men are more vulnerable to aggressive online ideologies, cyber addiction, and radical digital communities [4].

The relevance of this study lies in the increasing influence of the global information environment on youth consciousness and the necessity to understand gender-specific factors affecting the formation of life positions. This issue is especially important for Uzbekistan, where digital transformation and youth policy reforms are actively developing.

The study of youth life positions in the global information environment is based on several sociological theories and methodological approaches.

First, the theory of socialization explains how individuals internalize social norms, values, and behavioral models through interaction with society. According to George Herbert Mead, personality develops through symbolic interaction and communication. In the digital era, online communication has become an essential component of youth socialization [5].

Second, the structural-functional approach developed by Talcott Parsons considers society as a system of interconnected institutions. Media and digital platforms function as social institutions influencing value orientation and behavioral standards among youth [6].

Third, feminist sociological theories emphasize the role of gender in shaping social experiences. Liberal feminism highlights unequal access to opportunities, while constructivist approaches analyze how gender identities are socially constructed through media representations and cultural discourse [7].

Another important perspective is Manuel Castells' theory of the "network society." Manuel Castells argues that information technologies reshape power relations, communication systems, and social identities. In network society, youth actively construct their identities through digital interaction and participation in online communities.

Methodologically, this article uses comparative sociological analysis, gender analysis, content analysis of scientific literature, and interpretation of international statistical data. The research combines theoretical approaches with empirical observations related to youth digital behavior.

The global information environment refers to the worldwide system of information exchange created through the internet, digital technologies, social networks, online media, and communication platforms. This environment affects all spheres of social life, especially youth culture and worldview formation. Modern youth spend a considerable amount of time online. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Telegram have become major spaces for communication, entertainment, education, and self-expression [8].

The digital environment provides several positive opportunities:

- Access to educational resources and online learning;
- Development of digital skills and creativity;
- Expansion of social communication;
- Participation in civic and social activities;



Opportunities for professional self-realization.

At the same time, the information environment also creates serious social risks:

Information manipulation and fake news;

Cyberbullying and online harassment;

Internet addiction;

Radicalization and extremist propaganda;

Psychological stress and identity crises;

These risks influence young men and women differently depending on gender norms and patterns of media consumption.

For young women, digital technologies create opportunities for education, entrepreneurship, professional communication, and participation in social initiatives. Social networks allow girls and young women to express their opinions, build communities, and engage in public discourse.

However, young women are more vulnerable to several gender-specific risks:

Online harassment and cyber violence;

Objectification through media representation;

Beauty standards imposed by social networks;

Psychological pressure related to appearance and lifestyle;

Gender discrimination in digital professions. Studies conducted by UNESCO show that women are underrepresented in technological and engineering sectors globally. Gender stereotypes often discourage girls from participating in STEM education and digital innovation.

In many societies, including Central Asian countries, traditional gender norms still influence women's online behavior. Families may restrict girls' digital activity due to concerns about morality, safety, or cultural reputation. As a result, gender inequality in digital participation continues to exist[9].

At the same time, the digital environment has also become a space for women's empowerment. Female bloggers, entrepreneurs, educators, and activists increasingly use online platforms to promote education, social awareness, and economic independence.

Young men experience the digital environment differently. They are generally more involved in gaming culture, technological communities, and online political discussions. Men often demonstrate higher participation in digital production, programming, and technological innovation [10].

However, young men also face specific risks:

Exposure to aggressive ideological content;

Participation in violent online communities;

Internet gaming addiction;

Radical political propaganda;

Toxic masculinity narratives.

Research indicates that online platforms sometimes reinforce harmful models of masculinity associated with aggression, dominance, and emotional suppression. Such narratives affect young men's social behavior and interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, algorithmic systems on digital platforms may intensify ideological polarization by repeatedly exposing users to extreme content. Young men are statistically more vulnerable to radical online movements and cybercrime involvement. Therefore, gender-sensitive approaches



are necessary to address different forms of vulnerability among male and female youth. Digital inequality is one of the major problems in the global information society. It refers not only to unequal access to technologies but also differences in digital literacy, online participation, and technological opportunities. The concept of the “digital gender divide” describes unequal access to digital resources between men and women. According to international studies, millions of women worldwide still lack stable internet access and digital education opportunities.

In rural areas and economically disadvantaged regions, girls often have fewer opportunities to use computers, smartphones, and online educational platforms. This inequality affects their future employment opportunities and social mobility [11]. Uzbekistan has implemented important reforms aimed at improving digital infrastructure and youth education. State programs focused on digital literacy, women’s entrepreneurship, and youth innovation contribute to reducing gender inequality in the information sphere. Nevertheless, regional and socio-cultural disparities still remain.

Many developed countries implement gender-sensitive youth policies in response to digital transformation.

For example, Finland and Sweden actively promote digital literacy programs for girls and young women. Educational systems encourage equal participation in STEM disciplines and technological innovation.

In South Korea, government initiatives focus on cybersecurity education and prevention of online violence against women. Digital ethics and responsible internet use are integrated into educational curricula.

The experience of European Union demonstrates the importance of combating online discrimination and ensuring inclusive digital participation. European youth programs emphasize equality, media literacy, and protection of human rights in cyberspace. These international experiences show that effective youth policy must combine technological development with sociological, educational, and gender-sensitive approaches.

Uzbekistan is experiencing rapid digital transformation and modernization processes. Young people constitute a significant part of the population, making youth policy strategically important.

The expansion of internet access and social media usage among Uzbek youth has significantly influenced social behavior and value systems. Online communication increasingly shapes educational aspirations, career goals, cultural consumption, and interpersonal relationships. At the same time, Uzbek society maintains strong traditional cultural values and family norms. Therefore, the interaction between globalization and national traditions creates a unique socio-cultural environment for youth socialization [12].

Gender differences remain visible in digital participation. Urban girls generally have more opportunities for online education and professional communication compared to rural girls. Cultural expectations still influence women’s public online activity. State reforms aimed at supporting women’s education, youth entrepreneurship, and digital innovation positively contribute to reducing gender inequality. However, further efforts are needed in the fields of media literacy, cybersecurity, and digital ethics. The sociological significance of this issue lies in balancing global digital integration with the preservation of national identity and cultural stability.



Conclusion

The global information environment has become one of the most influential factors shaping youth life positions in contemporary society. Digital technologies and online communication transform socialization processes, value orientations, and behavioral patterns among young people.

The research demonstrates that the influence of the information environment has a clear gender dimension. Young women and men experience digital opportunities and risks differently due to social expectations, cultural norms, and unequal access to resources.

The information environment creates opportunities for education, creativity, civic participation, and self-realization. At the same time, it also generates risks related to cyber violence, ideological manipulation, psychological pressure, and digital inequality.

Gender-sensitive youth policy is necessary to ensure inclusive and safe participation in the digital world. Media literacy, digital ethics, cybersecurity education, and equal technological opportunities should become central priorities of modern social policy.

For Uzbekistan, the development of balanced youth policy requires integrating global digital innovations with national cultural values and social stability. Strengthening sociological research in this field will contribute to the effective formation of youth life positions in the conditions of globalization.

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