# Prospects of Personal Self-development in the Digital World under the Conditions of "Self-isolation"

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**Abstract**

Education is the sphere that is primarily affected by the reforms taking place in any country. The article discusses the features of personal self-development in the digital world, in the conditions of rapid changes of the competencies demanded on the job market, and determines the qualities of an effective employee. In order to study the features of personal self-development in the digital world during lockdown, the authors analysed the research works on the issue in question and studied the opinions of specialists in training students in higher educational establishments. All this is considered with reference to the development of e-education in our country, which was significantly affected by the conditions of self-isolation due to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic infection. The purpose of the article is to identify the character and content of education while preparing a future teacher in the context of distance learning. The main question is how education should be organized in order to contribute to the formation of a self-developing personality, capable of responding to the challenges of the time against the backdrop of digitalization. The novelty of this study is that it was carried out under transition to distance education in March 2020 after imposing coronavirus lockdown. The authors conducted a survey among the college students to reveal their attitude to distance learning under the conditions of self-isolation. The study shows that the use of new technologies and Internet resources contribute to the self-development of an individual in the digital world, but there are still a lot of issues that require close attention. The research of these features determines another perspective of personal self-development in the digital world.

*Keywords*: personal self-development, digitalization, distance education, coronavirus infection COVID-19.

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## Introduction

The education system confronts new challenges in the context of the digital transformation of Russia and the Russian economy, as well as the rapid changes of the competencies demanded on the job market. This became especially

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evident on March 11, 2020 when the World Health Organization (WHO) (The Media Briefing on COVID-19, 2020) announced the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection. This is not the first time in the history of the organization created in 1948. Broadly understood, a pandemic is "the spread of a new disease on a global scale". WHO announced that coronavirus infection had snowballed into a pandemic.

It is well known that the reforms taking place in any country primarily affect education. At the current stage of the development of our country, an effective employee begins to obtain the features of an entrepreneur and a team member capable of becoming a project team member. Vocational training aimed at preparing an executor simply performing a task ceases to be sufficient for success in career unless it's combined with an understanding of the wide context of professional activity, the ability not only to adapt to changes, but to build your own projects, work in groups, and communicate. It should be borne in mind that in college, first of all, you need to educate a person as an individual, as a professional, as a citizen.

**Purpose and objectives of the study**

This task determines the research problem: what are the prospects for the personal self-development in the digital world, since experts assert that the world after the pandemic is sure to change. Hence, the questions arise: how it will change, what will happen to a person, what will the renewed world require of him? Besides, how will such changes manifest themselves?

These days, it is clear that distance learning implemented worldwide will affect the introduction and active use of new information tools, and development of educational platforms to meet the needs of different consumers with different information literacy levels. However, the main question for us, the people preparing future qualified teachers, is to define the character of the content of education to be transmitted through various platforms. Indeed, training of the future professional should be considered from the point of view of the personal paradigm; training of the student should be aimed at the formation of a creative, highly moral, intelligent - multidimensional personality. This specifies the research goal: how education should be organized in order to contribute to the formation of a self-developing personality, capable of responding to the challenges of the times in the context of digitalization.

**Methodology**

Understanding the unusual character of the current situation and its rapid development has led to the choice of the following research methods: analysis of journal articles, expert reports in various fields of public life, monitoring students' activities in the context of distance learning, and a survey of 156 students of Kazan Federal University in Elabuga, aimed at identifying their attitude to this type of training.

**Literature review**

Falkov (2020) notes that the thesis put forward in recent years by "reformers" of higher education, that education should be narrowly specialized, is quite controversial; since only in the process of obtaining fundamental education does a person truly develop in a multi-faceted way.

Andreev (2015) writes that personal development and self-development become the purpose of the pedagogical process at present. Reflecting on the most difficult problems of pedagogical prognostication, the author of the creative self-

development concept proposed several Ideal invariant models, such as "creatively self-developing personality", "competitive personality", "self-sufficient personality".

According to the Minister of Science and Higher Education Falkov (2020), training of students, specified by the transition to distance learning in Russia in March, showed that universities demonstrate different degree of readiness for such transition. It's not surprising. Regional universities differ from leading universities in their level of equipment. According to the Minister, 100 % of the universities subordinate to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia switched to the online working with students. This has produced a large number of questions. A number of issues were raised at the briefing: How many online courses do we have today? How can they be passed? How can students and teachers be helped? How can teachers, using different information technologies, organize the learning process remotely? Not in the same classroom, but using virtual media and various means of communication? However, in our opinion, these are not the only issues that have arisen under these circumstances. Both technical and content-related points have come up.

As for universities, they immediately have confronted three main tasks, the minister notes. The first and the most important one is to organize the educational process in a new, difficult time and to achieve the maximum quality of education. The second, equally important task is to support teachers who are not skilled enough to work in virtual media. Finally, the third difficult task, which is being solved by all universities collectively today, is to support students, because they have found themselves in the most vulnerable situation.

From our point of view, it is very important to understand that there cannot be a universal solution for all universities and all students due to a simple reason: students evaluate the quality of distance education in different ways, and each university has organized the educational process in its own way. It is reflected in the results of our survey. Needless to say, these data will change after some time. But today, when it is not yet clear how the situation will develop in the future, after the quarantine is over, they are as follows.

We agree with the assertions that the digital revolution in education creates prospects for the effective expansion of the educational opportunities of each teacher and each student. This is manifested in the development of a new type of literacy, which ensures effective communication, in the digital space inclusive (the so-called, digital literacy) and the understanding of the general cultural foundations of professional activity, the ability to use relevant knowledge in a real-case scenario. Hence, it becomes very important for each student to create the possibility of building individual educational trajectories, which will be supplemented by digital tools, including non-regulatory ones. The development of electronic education in Russia also contributes to the emergence of such prospects. Nowadays, the speculations of the past have become a reality: all higher educational institutions, secondary and infant schools have transited to the distance learning. However, the initial period of online learning was problematic. For instance, due to quarantine recommendations students of Kazan Federal University in Elabuga had to leave for their permanent residences (it is worthwhile mentioning that many of them live in rural areas). The students complained that the speed of Internet connection was very slow, there was not enough computer equipment, and the capacities of their cellphones were insufficient. However, in Tatarstan Republic, these issues have been solved; one of the measures being that some teachers and students were provided with the necessary IT equipment.

The development of e-education in our country is closely related to global trends, but it has a number of specific features. One of these features is a relatively low level of demand for e-learning. By e-learning we mean the organization of learning activities using the information contained in the databases and used in the implementation of

educational programs and providing information processing, technical means, as well as information and telecommunication networks that provide the transmission of specified information over communication lines, interaction of students and teaching staff, as it's stated in Federal Law On Education in the Russian Federation (2012).

The analysis of the data on the use of distance education shows a change in the situation as for the demand for remote learning. According to the statistical digest Abdrakhmanova et al. (2019), in 2018, only 4% of the Russians studied remotely, while there is a big difference in the demand for online education by individual age groups. Low demand may be the result of lack of confidence in learning on the Internet and the widespread opinion that training should take place face to face and intramurally. Another reason is that the Russians are not ready to pay for materials posted on the Internet, since the Internet is traditionally perceived by the Russian population as a "free-of-charge" zone.

Abdrakhmanova (2015) writes, that according to statistical monitoring, the demand for e-learning among young people aged 15-19 years old and adult population from 36 to 44 years old has increased. The analytical report *Information Society: 2015* shows the growing demand for information and communication technologies by the Russian population of different age groups. Therefore, in 2013, among young people 15-19 years old, there was the highest percentage of online students (40%). Apparently, this is due to the preparation of this age group for Basic State Exam (OGE) and Unified State Exam (USE). Only 19% of the age group from 20 to 34 years old studied remotely. Presumably, this proportion includes high school students. The number of online students increased in the age group from 35 to 44 years old (28%), as part of advanced and further training and professional development. Only 12% of people aged 45–54 years old studied online, which is probably due to the general tendency to reduce the use of IT and communication technologies and the Internet, as well as to the lack of digital literacy among representatives of this age group and older ones.

These data were obtained in 2013; naturally, over seven years there have been serious changes in the growing demand for e-learning, which is also explained by the increased accessibility to distance education, which allows us to predict the prospect of personal self-development as the part of cultivating students' digital literacy. This process is aimed at intensifying and increasing the efficiency of "selfhood" processes, especially in terms of self-management.

The pandemic and self-isolation regime introduced in Russia last March have boosted online education. The demand for distance learning courses has skyrocketed. Maria Podtserob writes in *Vedomosti* (2020) that according to the GetCourse platform, which offers distance learning courses for hundreds of online schools, in the second half of March, sales of courses increased by 20% compared to the first half of the month: from March 1 to March 16, they sold courses worth 1.2 billion rubles, whilst from March 17 to March 31 – worth 1.5 billion rubles already. The number of users trying to organize their own courses increased by 30%. Further, Podserob mentions that 12 of the 15 large and medium distance-learning platforms surveyed by *Vedomosti* reported a surge in demand for online courses for adults during March and early April. (The information is taken from the same article by Maria Pobserob, included into the reference list.)

According to the vice-rector of Tomsk State University Yevgeny Lukov (2020), "these are the things that we haven't thought about before, because there was no such task – a student himself chose when it was convenient for him to work at the computer. And the majority of students complain that there are three webinars running, then homework, home reading... Everything is via the Internet, and think of its bad effect on the eyesight. Thus, the point of regulation, timetable has arisen. Still, the problem can't be solved at the drop of a hat – the university is a huge system; it's not so easy to transfer it to online education. There are solutions, but they also have to be systemic. Because the people who

know how to work in a state of uncertainty, to seek solutions independently, to communicate with any person will always be in demand. These are skills that are needed in addition to certain hard skills. It's the essence of quality education, when a person can understand what to do in a situation from the Russian proverb "go I know not whither and fetch I know not what". Because almost anyone will be able to do it when you know where to go and what to fetch. So it seems to me that there will be a great demand for distance education".

Interesting results were obtained in the study of human capital assets by National Agency for Financial Studies (NAFI) (2020). Based on the result of this research, it was concluded that two-thirds of Russian schoolteachers (68%) believe that the school system is not ready for the transition to distance education, whereas only 24% believe in schools readiness for this transition. College professors are more optimistic: one third of them (35%) assume that the higher education system is ready to transfer classes to a remote format, 53% of them hold the opposite opinion.

Lyudmila Spiridonova (2020), the research executive of NAFI Human Capital Research, commented on these results: "Everyone had to face unexpected difficulties related to the introduction of self-isolation regulations. The education system was "on the first line" with a large number of people: about 1.5 million schoolteachers and college professors, as well as 16 million schoolchildren and 7 million college students. It was not easy to quickly organize the educational system and implement the curriculum distantly; all the participants of the system, including schoolchildren's parents, experienced it.

The previously cited results of the studies by NAFI (2020) afford hope for the successful teaching during distance learning. "Russian teaching staff have a significantly higher level of digital literacy compared to the average figures in Russia (88 points versus 62 points), as well as compared to students (73 points for teenagers from 14 to 17 years old and 77 points for young people from 18 to 24 years old) )".

The analysis of publications on distance education and monitoring the process of remote learning allow us to conclude that both secondary and high school teachers primarily need deeper knowledge in computer technology and software, developing skills in using modern computer technology, gadgets and application programs in the educational process.

**Results**

In order to identify attitudes towards this type of training, we interviewed third-year students of the Faculty of Philology and History of Kazan Federal University in Elabuga. They were asked only three questions, because we plan to convey a larger and deeper survey later.

Being asked if they are satisfied with the quality of the classes conducted, only 4% of the students note that the classes are conducted poorly – they either don't receive assignments, don't understand where and how to connect, or there is not enough power level of their gadgets. Such results, obtained in the second week of remote training, led to the fact that there were equipped classrooms with stable Internet connection for students in the dormitory, as most of the respondents who gave such an answer live in the dormitory.

Being asked their opinion about the possible effect of transition to distance education on their level of training, 76% of students believe that their quality of knowledge will remain unchanged, 12% say the quality of knowledge has improved, while the same number of respondents (12%) suggested decreasing in their level of training.

Most students (69% of the respondents) mention the positive impact of distance learning on their self-development.

They note that they are learning to act more effectively in the state of uncertainty, to seek solutions independently, they learn to communicate in the new digitalization environment, in the context of using different platforms and new requirements.

**Conclusion**

In our opinion, the growth of distance learning will be facilitated by the use of best practices of full-time learning in online learning, the ability to combine effective teaching methods and techniques with new digital educational technologies. In this way, distance education provides the following: significant scope of users and availability of education; personal character of the educational process and adaptability to the individual needs; the possibility of online analytics of the results and the learning process, the creation of student rating systems based on these data; a wide range of technological capabilities for the visualization of educational materials and the educational process, its visual representation. But most importantly, distance learning has allowed educational organizations to continue implementing educational programs as part of the curriculum, to continue training future specialists with qualities that will be in demand in the new conditions.As part of the work carried out, the effectiveness of the developed pedagogical conditions for the formation of readiness for family life of adolescents prone to deviant behavior was experimentally proved, namely: 1) taking into account the vitagenic experience of adolescents prone to deviant behavior; 2) the use of the original program "The Path to Adulthood", which includes various forms and methods of pedagogical interaction: disputes and discussions, case studies, practical exercises, role-playing games, brainstorming, etc.

We believe, that under current conditions, taking into account the technical and technological changes in the society, digital literacy can be considered as the most important life skill that affects all areas of life and professional activity. It includes information and communication technology skills, civic skills, self-education skills, adult participation in lifelong learning. The high value of these key skills undoubtedly requires the continuous development of digital literacy of all citizens of the country, which is possible only if the person develops himself in the digital world.

As for developing a student as a future professional, higher education should be faced with the tasks of training a successful and competitive specialist in the new conditions, determined by the digitalization of our lives. When we train a specialist, we assume training not just a specialist with a certain set of knowledge and skills. This should be a professional with high principles of thinking, and the digitalization of our life is relevant in educating such a professional. The study of these features determines another perspective of personal self-development in the digital world. The development of students' thinking is of particular importance during rapid transformations that take place in the society and in the world, and entail reinterpreting the concepts of the development of civilizations, social and personal values.

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