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Young adults in the age of digitization

challenges of the present time

Young adults are people who were born and grew up in a unique time when new technologies entered everyone's lives and slowly strengthened their dominant position in everyday routine (people aged 18-35, belonging to the Y and Z generations). The world they live in is characterized by significant variability and uncertainty. In many cases, as they grew up, they were released into the world without adequate preparation because there were no role models. There were also no prepared safeguards to protect them against the adverse effects of technology. They were, therefore, brought up in a new environment using old methods and patterns. The consequence of the actions of (over)protective parents (helicopter parenting), although with good intentions, was the low preparation of their children for the numerous adversities that await them after the age of 18 (so-called snowflakes). They feel the effects of this intensely as they enter adulthood and face the expectations placed on them. Digitalization, as a distinctive element of their environment, is what they encounter on a daily basis and creates their reality. They live mainly in a mixed environment. This work draws attention to the problems that young adults have to face, the environment in which they live, and how they perceive themselves in relation to digitalization, their surroundings, and other generations. The considerations include various beliefs and stereotypes about young adults, the reality of the idea of digital natives, new habits, and social desires. The issue of adulthood and its markers, the importance of social media and their role in shaping the opinions of their users, the spread of fake news, and the general information flood are discussed. The work also outlines the image of the modern world, its general characteristics - globality, uncertainty, variability - and the problems associated with them, which concern, among others, the labor market and the future of paid work, as well as what education should look like and what it should focus on. Which skills should be seen as key in media education? Much attention was paid to technology and digitalization itself, as well as the changes, problems, and opportunities that lie behind them. The great possibilities of today's artificial intelligence and advanced algorithms have a direct impact on human's position in relation to the world and their expectations. Living in the virtual world or the world of augmented reality is the goal of many companies, and they are developing in this direction; the ability to creatively use this new space may turn out to be crucial for the quality of existence, including young adults. What is most important to young adults and what views they have on the modern world have been demonstrated by two studies. The first one included the analysis of Internet memes, while the second one was based on the statements of the authors of informal essays. The whole dissertation allowed us to create an original view of young adults and the world in which they live.