

The results of the study showed the dual role of social networks in the formation of self-esteem and identity of adolescents. On the one hand, social networks amplify risks: social comparisons with idealized images reduce self-esteem and increase anxiety. The culture of «likings» creates a dependence on external approval, and cyberbullying and fear of missing have an important negative effect on the psyche of adolescents.

On the other hand, social networks provide opportunities for self-expression, support and safe experimentation with identity. These platforms help to find like-minded people, as well as access educational content and social feedback.

Thus, the key factor of the influence of social networks on adolescents is not the use of platforms itself, but the level of media literacy, critical thinking and psychological resilience of the adolescent, as well as the presence of support from the family and educational environment. These factors have the potential to transform the digital space from a source of threat into a resource for personal development and the formation of adolescents' healthy self-esteem and identity.

This study confirms the complexity and ambiguity of the impact of the digital environment on adolescents and highlights the need for an integrated approach to their education and support in the age of digitalization.

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INNOVATION AND APPLICATION OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Иновации и применение образовательных технологий в цифровую эпоху

With the rapid development of information technology, education is undergoing profound digital transformation. Modern educational technology has transformed knowledge imparting, teaching concepts, learning methods, and educational management. This research explores the types, advantages, and challenges of educational technology in the digital age, analyzing applications of AI, VR, and online platforms in higher education, and proposing related challenges and strategies.

Since the 21st century, digitalization has deeply influenced education. The traditional «teacher-centered» model has shifted to «student-centered» and «intelligent collaboration». Education, integrating multimedia, networks, and AI, is no longer classroom limited. Research shows educational technology improves teaching efficiency and learners' active participation and creative thinking [1].

Main types and characteristics of digital educational technology

Digital education technology aims for efficient resource sharing and personalized learning. Widely used technologies include:

1. Online and Blended Learning: Combining online and face-to-face teaching, it breaks time-space limitations, letting students choose learning pace/path.

2. VR/AR: In medicine, engineering, etc., it enables safe, realistic training, enhancing learning experience and skill acquisition [2].

3. AI & Learning Analytics: AI analyzes data to identify students' weaknesses and provide personalized suggestions for differentiated teaching. These technologies drive education from «knowledge transfer» to «ability development», making learning interactive, flexible, and traceable.

Advantages and Challenges of Digital Education

Digital education's advantages are resource openness and learning flexibility, boosting students' motivation and knowledge retention [3]. Yet challenges remain. In China, the urban-rural «digital divide» persists – rural Internet penetration (66.5 %) is far lower than urban (81.8 %) [4], and poor network coverage in remote west limits resource access. Also, teachers' digital literacy is regionally imbalanced – 22.3 % of central-western teachers lack basic digital literacy, especially in digital teaching design [5]. Over-reliance on technology may cause fragmented learning. Thus, technology use should stick to education's essence, emphasizing teachers' and teaching design's roles.

Digital-age educational technology enables teaching innovation. Proper integration enhances interactive teaching and student learning. But digital education needs not only tech innovation but also updated educational concepts and teachers' development. In the future, with AI-VR integration, education will become more intelligent, personalized, and inclusive.

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