The use of digital technologies for positive economic benefit in the preparation of students

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Abstract: The article deals with the interdisciplinary approach of interested social sciences (in particular, economics, social work, sociology, pedagogy, etc.) when introducing digital technologies into the educational process of students going on a practical internship. At the same time, the investment process of human capital appreciation in the preparation of students is looked at here.In the empirical part of the contribution, the need to introduce digital technologies into teaching is presented not only in connection with the process of human capital appreciation, but also from the point of view of the country's social issues.

Keywords: implementation of digital technologies, evaluation of human capital, foreign internship students

JEL Classification: A13; F01; I23

1. Introduction

Digital transformation, as an integral part of the emerging era of Industry 4.0, has changed society and the economy, its impact on everyday life continues to deepen. It demonstrated the need for higher levels of digital capacity in education and training systems and institutions. The covid-19 pandemic only further accelerated the already established trend towards online and hybrid education. This shift has revealed new and innovative ways for students and educators to organize their teaching and learning activities and to communicate more personally and flexibly over the Internet. In addition, the implementation of digital technologies for education has revealed challenges and inequalities between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not (e.g. individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds), and issues related to the digital capacities of education and training institutions, teacher education and the overall level of digital skills and competences. These changes required a strong and coordinated effort at European Union level to support education and training systems to deal with the challenges that the covid-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated. At the same time, we cannot do without a long-term vision for the further development of European digital education.

The emerging era of Industry 4.0 technologies from the start of the second decade of the 21st century also brings fundamental challenges within all forms of educational programs, including student mobility. At the same time, the calls for economic and social stabilization of regions of interest within development programs to support sustainable development are a clear example for the implementation of digital technologies for the preparation of students. A specific example is online tutorials. The Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice specifically participates in a pilot project to introduce digital technologies into the teaching of students who, as part of their studies at the Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, will do a practical internship in Zambia.

2. Processing methods and approaches

Student mobility, especially its Erasmus program part, has also become an important research topic. It is characterized by a focus on socio-economic characteristics as variables that play a primary role in participation or non-participation in mobility. This is probably also because they can be influenced relatively easily with specific public policy instruments such as quotas, scholarships and other supporting funding. The results of studies of this type also result in public policy

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recommendations. In this context, it is possible to draw attention to the importance of the usefulness of student mobility from the theoretical concept of human, cultural and social capital.

For these reasons, the use of analysis, comparison, synthesis and generalization methods prevails in the process of understanding the reality of observed phenomena and processes within the framework of the paradigm. The interdisciplinary approach of social sciences and humanities (especially economics, economic policy, sociology, social work, pedagogy, andragogy...) is also applied to the current development trend of implementing online technologies within Education 4.0.

3. Research results

3.1 Initial philosophy of the issue

Managing one's own development belongs to the basic natural aspects of the existence of human society. If these activities are to stand on a rational basis, appropriate forecasts representing realistic, scientifically based ideas of future development cannot be dispensed with. Within these ideas, all sectors of the economy cannot be neglected, including the field of education. This, especially with the onset of the era of Industry 4.0 technologies, is gaining importance, and with it also questions of global importance about sustainable development or a "sustainable way of life". In the foreground is a concept that represents a synthesis of economic, social and environmental goals clearly oriented towards the qualitative aspect of the growth of human life. By its very nature, this development meets the needs of the present without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At the same time, digital technologies play a significant role, as they are a key element of "green growth" in all sectors of the economy. Increasingly, one can meet initiatives referred to as "Green information and communication technologies", etc.. It can therefore be stated that the implementation of digital technologies reaches a global dimension, which also concerns investments in human capital. As a result of these investments, from a global point of view, it is possible to contribute to the appropriate reduction of significant social and environmental differences, poverty and other undesirable phenomena in regions of interest in the world, of which Africa is a priority.

Rapid adaptation to changes within interest systems and their surroundings, preparation for personal development, response to external stimuli and innovation trends that are constantly coming, all of this is accompanied by the implementation of Industry 4.0 technologies. All of this is connected to globalization tendencies in the current world. At the same time, as a result of globalization, every individual is forced to constantly improve, not only within the social system, but globally. For some it is a "punishment", for others a certain form of motivation. Globalization, however, is not the only thing that pushes for continuous development, information and communication technologies play a role in this as well. Individual approaches of people to what surrounds them and what they are a part of are also a non-negligible fact. Many have already understood that the way to maintain their own competitiveness on the labor market, how to be an active citizen, how to develop further, how to prosper economically or how to find a way to other people and new areas is through a lifelong learning process.

Precisely because there is a large range of non-formal education options, when its participants mainly reach for various courses, seminars, workshops, webinars, e-learning courses, this work deals with what goes into adult learning. Today's digital age is characterized by the availability of a number of modern technologies that not only bring many possibilities and interests, but also make the life of every member of society easier. The digital era is an upheaval that has significantly affected human society, as few people today in the postmodern type of consumer and information society can imagine life without a mobile phone, laptop or the Internet. They become an integral part of the life of all age groups. Digital technologies thus make it possible to always be within reach, to handle things from the comfort of home, and last but not least, they are a source of information. Crisis events since the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century clearly prove the validity of the mentioned statement. These are specifically the effects of the covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine (Tarkar, 2020; Opanasenko & Novikova, 2022; Tadesse & Muluye, 2020; Tarkar, 2020).

3.2 Technological transformation of the information society into Industry 4.0

Since the 1970s, Western society has been accompanied by transformations of opinion and value systems of social consciousness. An indication of the mentioned transformation can be seen already in 1962, when the Canadian philosopher and sociologist Herbert Marshall McLuhan defined the postmodern type of society in the book Gutenberg's Galaxy as a society characterized by the development of audiovisual media (McLuhan, 1995). In 1973, the American sociologist Daniel Bell presented a vision of the future orientation of post-industrial society primarily on knowledge and knowing, where access to information will play a fundamental role (Steinbicker & Steinbicker, 2011). This post-industrial society has been clearly formulated since the 1980s with the adjective "informational" (Beniger, 2009). By its very nature,

this is a society in which working with information is more efficient than classical work with matter. An integral part of this society is the information economy, which consists of a global market, where almost every producer is characterized by one of these characteristics - its owners are abroad or from there they at least fully or partially use technologies, ideas and other intellectual capital of other entities that are locally completely different. Through this process, a global marketplace of innovative development ideas is created in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, growing in breadth and depth. Its cycle can be characterized in macroeconomic and microeconomic dimensions. In the macroeconomic case, we are talking about the period of coal and steam, railways and electricity - that is, with the achievements of the 1st industrial revolution from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, in contrast to that the onset of Industry 4.0 technologies (of the second decade of the 21st century) means the shortening of innovation cycles and the lawful acceleration of scientific and technical development, there is talk of the era of microprocessors and the information stage of the economy. In the microeconomic dimension, the concept of cycles occurs especially in the ability to rapidly innovate. In this context, the era of Industry 4.0 technologies is characterized by the massive expansion of the Internet and its penetration into almost every industry. The environment is digitized as a result of interconnection through the "internet of things", which connects the physical with the digital, and thus enables qualitatively better access, manipulation and understanding of the environment of interest.

The above-mentioned facts are duly reflected in the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of human capital. Its theoretical concept has also been formulated within economic theory since the second half of the 20th century. Which essentially represents the knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristics of an individual that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being and become increasingly important for the prosperity of the entire post-industrial society. It is therefore logical that all technological changes within the company are a reflection of investments in human resources on the one hand. At the same time, these technological changes can significantly contribute to investing in human resources in regions of interest in the world. From a regional and global point of view, they clearly contribute to sustainable development (Lutz & Kc, 2011).

3.3 Adaptation of students to the dynamics of social and technological trends

The decision to complete the entire university study or a certain part of it abroad is influenced by many factors, and not only socio-economic ones. It can be internal factors, such as educational aspirations, values, different types of capital, self-confidence, or external factors in the form of mobility conditions, university climate, etc. (Salisbury et al., 2009). The decision to participate in mobility or the motivation for it or against it can be directly related to the personality of the students and also to what stage of life or socialization they are in (Orr, 2012). In this sense, important circumstances are age, family background, whether students are already employed, etc. Monitoring the psychological-social dimension of student mobility has become increasingly important in recent years and is the focus of this study (Orr, 2011).

On the basis of the conducted research, it follows that students who rate their standard of living better and whose families have a higher socio-economic status are more likely to participate in mobility (Otro, 2008; Messer & Wolter, 2005). Although there are other, rather partial, studies conducted among students of a single field of study that do not show this connection, this is, for example, a comparative Norwegian-American study among marketing students (Payan et al., 2012). Research also focuses on the question of the relationship between mobility towards prestigious universities and high socio-economic status.

The mobility of scientists, scholars and students regardless of national borders is one of the oldest ways of spreading knowledge. At the same time, the motivations to move from one country to another change greatly over time. Only in the 20th century, the migration of knowledge, or its mediators, was forced by the dangerous political situation in the countries of origin (e.g. the departure of scientists but also artists from Hitler's Germany, or the exodus from Russia a year after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, etc.). Or it was and still is led by the efforts of some countries to attract promising scientists to their territory for good working and living conditions. We are witnessing such a "brain drain" especially at present (Burke, 2013).

Based on these cited facts, student mobility is far from being a new phenomenon within the European continent, on the contrary, it has a long history that reflects broader socio-political changes. Long before the emergence of nation-states, there was something that could be understood as a kind of European university space in which students, information, knowledge and culture were exchanged. A clear proof of this is the period of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and partly the Enlightenment can be considered the golden age of student mobility, when there is talk of a "republic of scholars" existing regardless of the borders of the state entities of the time (Burke, 2013). But the emergence and development of nation-states was, on the contrary, accompanied by an emphasis on domestic, i.e. national, education, which in some countries took the form of an official ban on studying abroad. However, for a large part of the 20th century, an interest in

international cooperation is already characteristic. But this was often motivated or directed ideologically and politically, which led to the fact that student mobility was supported only within some countries (De Wit, 2009).

In the Czech case, for four decades (1948-1989), as a result of the monopoly position of the ideology of the then communist party, belonging to the socialist bloc meant that students could study only in friendly countries and only for politically verified people or from the other side, the mobility of students coming from selected, socialist oriented, developing countries (Urbášek, 2012). In Czechoslovakia, with the opening of the borders after 1989, the question of studying abroad acquired a new "free" dimension, which was characterized by great "mobility optimism". However, it was not until the beginning of the 21st century and the accession to the Bologna Declaration that there was a real increase in mobility, especially through European and other programs or school programs. The Czech Republic joined the Bologna Process in 1999 and within its framework accepted internationalization and thus student mobility as its priority. In addition to student mobility, there is also the mobility of academics and internationalization in the field of cooperation with companies and business.

In addition to program mobility, individual mobility has also increased significantly since the beginning of the 21st century. This can be understood as the result of a general trend in which higher education obtained abroad is considered a competitive advantage in the labor market (Brooks, Waters, & Wilson, 2012). It is not only such education that leads to the expansion of knowledge, skills (i.e. increase of cultural capital) and to the expansion of social relations to the international level (increase of social capital), but mainly it is perceived as more prestigious and increases the so-called symbolic capital. This is especially true for studying in countries such as the United States of America or Great Britain (Kurzmann, 2014). For example, efforts to increase cultural capital through studying at foreign, especially prestigious, universities are most characteristic for students coming from families with already high cultural capital and with sufficient financial resources (Espeland & Sauder 2007).

3.4 Justification of the required mobility

Study mobility is often a significant life experience for students. It helps them grow professionally and academically, expands their social ties and develops intercultural and language skills. All this has a positive effect on their future employability. Student mobility also affects educational systems and individual educational institutions, where it stimulates the acquisition of an international perspective, the expansion of the scope of their activities and the overall improvement of quality. The way to the free movement of students, researchers and other learners in Europe is still limited by some obstacles, such as problems related to the portability of grants and loans, the recognition of qualifications and credits, the availability and relevance of information and advice or language skills. All this calls for a systematic reform that would facilitate participation in mobility and its accessibility.

Internationalization of higher education is mostly understood in close connection with globalization: *"Internationalisation is changing the world of higher education, and globalization is changing the world of internationalisation"* (Knight, 2008). But the problem of the relationship between globalization and internationalization is more complex. While globalization is a complex process in which universities are only one of a number of actors, internationalization is a specific reaction of universities to this process, which at the same time further strengthens globalization as such. Internationalization and globalization lead to the fact that not only their organizations are changing, but also the self-concept of universities. In a globalized environment, universities are mutual competitors on the "education market", managerial management is applied in them, they try to make money from each other as companies, etc. (Mitchell & Nielsen, 2012). Internationalization is currently also one of the success criteria in various rankings and evaluations of universities, and this also increases the motivation of schools to support it (Knight, 2011). Student mobility as an important part of internationalization is primarily connected at the European level with the existence of the Bologna Process, the aim of which was to create such a space that would allow the free movement of students and academic staff in Europe. Among other things, the original and very ambitious target state was that every university student would spend at least one semester abroad and this study would be recognized as part of his home study program. The study abroad experience has become a part of university studies for a large number of young people, despite the problematic realization of the planned goals. This does not only apply to mobility programs (the most famous of which is Erasmus), but also to extra-curricular mobility, when students go abroad to study with the aim of completing either the entire study program here or some specific part of it (completion of a bachelor's or diploma thesis, a language course or summer schools, etc.). This study deals with both mentioned forms. The purpose of the study is to find out what obstacles and expectations students have associated with foreign mobility. Focusing the study on students' opinions can also lead to an answer to a more general question regarding the contradiction between public-policy goals and the real situation in the field of higher education.

In today's global environment with intensive cross-border activities, it is possible to find an adequate solution only through international cooperation, which, on the one hand, confronts different perspectives at the professional collegial level and, on the other hand, allows different approaches to converge. Current economic models do not reflect dynamic changes in real economic life, in which the importance of some economic factors decreases, or grows. The stated fact becomes even more urgent, as new determining factors are emerging in the current turbulent times, with which Industry 4.0, for example, is already working.

For the reasons mentioned above, the initial philosophy of the cooperation project is also determined. Its purpose is based on the reality that any entity oriented towards achieving maximum performance can never be completely satisfied with the setting of its internal processes and the way they are implemented. The entity must constantly look for ways and implement rationalization measures in order to better fulfill its mission and create higher utility value for its customers. In today's view, the term "better" expresses the effective and purposeful use of all assets (resources, potential) of the organization and the reduction of costs for all performed activities. In the process of strategic management, we can talk about the need for permanent adaptation of the subject to challenges coming both from the external environment and internal functioning.

The entire project system would work in a sliding manner; therefore, it would not be a jump (firmly stage-fixed way). The input and output variables of the system would include the appropriate data by means of which the system communicates through input and output links with its surroundings. The overall success of the system will depend on the implementation, especially in terms of the need to update input documents from the economic sphere and its links. The credit mobility program within the area of interest will thus lead to a synergistic effect in the output, which will take into account the unique and unique conditions that determine the behavior of each economy and its sub-subjects.

3.5 Online technology in education

"Online technologies can be defined as a wide range of tools, applications, systems and services that were designed, developed and are operated primarily in the environment of digital networks, i.e. the Internet" (Zounek, Sudický, 2012). The involvement of technology in education must not reduce its quality . Technology should serve us for a better transfer of information, simplify cooperation, help with the demonstration of transmitted information, etc. Technology in education expands the possibilities of self-education beyond classical education. The beginning of the Internet is considered a turning point for the use of technology, not only in education. Nowadays, we can say that the development of the involvement of technologies and their wider use occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which moved education and learning to homes. Projection equipment, audio recording equipment, video, all of these have already been used in education and are still being used. The list of the use of information and communication technologies (is expanding along with technological development and the current era of digitization. The biggest task of the present time is the correct integration of digital technologies into education. A number of studies and researches are dedicated to monitoring the influence and possible benefits for the educated. One of the important factors, why the use of digital technologies is important in education is the fact that only in the ideal case, after completing initial education, an individual is equipped with the key competences and professional knowledge that he will need for his future profession. However, the journey does not end with integration into the work process. there is constant development and self-education. Here, the motivation for further development is primarily based on work results and the environment of the organization. An equally frequent phenomenon is a change in the area in which the individual works. The ability to respond flexibly to changes related not only to work performance, but also to changes in the global scale, is facilitated precisely by information and communication technologies.

Not all organizations offer the possibility of education and self-education of their employees or do not have sufficient support or their education does not allow the development of talented employees. (Kursch 2022). Also in the Czech Republic, there was an effort to set standards for the inclusion of technology in the education system, the development of perspective future professions and help employees better respond to changes in the labor market.

3.6 Online educational technology in practice

Practically proven online teaching methods in support of student mobility educational programs are also applicable in lifelong learning. For these reasons, the main educational trends of today include emphasizing the practical effectiveness of education and its use in life, especially in the professional life. The second approach is the subordination of theory to practice. Both approaches are interconnected. Education is a tool for acquiring practice - education subordinated to practice. At the same time, the individual is expected to be independent in education - his personal involvement - to demonstrate the willingness to succeed in individual competitiveness. (Kursch, & Veteška, 2018) In education, more and more attention is paid to the concept of quality. By including the concept of quality in connection with education, the

other (non-working) parts of life were summed up, the whole area was perceived from a holistic perspective. The least modern and frequently used term is "work-life balance". Most of the concepts froze on the time distribution of professional and personal life, only some focused on the essence of the quality of both components. In most situations, work-life balance strives for a balance between work and personal life, so that the content of both parts leads to a balance of possible negative influences that await the individual in both parts. By doing so, they try to minimize the risk of burnout. It is important to realize that an individual can achieve a certain balance between work and personal life, but this does not mean that he has a happy and satisfied life.

Considering the above, students of the Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, who completed a practical internship in a developing country, Zambia, were asked questions about their opinion regarding the application of virtual reality in preparation for the internship.

Results and interpretation of research investigation

Research objective:

The aim of the research was to find out the students' opinion on the benefit of using virtual reality or videos in their preparation for a practical internship in Zambia.

Research question:

The following research questions were used to fulfill the research objective:

Do you think it would be beneficial to get into the Zambian environment as part of the preparation?

Research method:

The question regarding the contribution of the introduction of digital technologies to teaching is part of the ongoing research with students who completed a practical internship in Zambia as part of their studies at the Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. The research technique is semi-structured interviews lasting about 30 minutes.

As part of the entire interview, their experiences with the internship and possible improvements in their preparation are discussed with the students. An open coding technique is used to analyze the interviews.

Research sample:

The research sample consisted of 4 female students of the Faculty of Theology who completed a practical internship in Zambia.

For the purposes of the research, female respondents are referred to as follows:

R1: Student 1

R2: Student 2

R3: Student 3

R4: Student 4

Research site

The research was carried out in the premises of the Faculty of Theology in České Budějovice.

Results:

The benefit of digital technologies in the preparation of a practical internship

Respondents R1, R2 and R3 agreed that the introduction of digital technologies (videos, virtual reality) is "very interesting, but hard to imagine for them". At the same time, they say that the "Intecity bus station in Lusaka" environment would be seen before departure, where there is a high turnover of local people. Furthermore, the students mentioned that it would be good to have a documented environment of the local market in Mongu (the city where the students do their practical internship) and at the same time to prepare the students for "beggar children", as students during the internship are often exposed to the ethical dilemma of whether to give them money or not.

Only one respondent, R4, answered that "it is not beneficial to introduce digital technologies into the preparation, and at the same time she pointed out that there is a need to send students who are balanced and resilient".

Discussion

From the results of the research, it is evident that the majority of female students who participated in the practical internship in Zambia evaluate the introduction of virtual reality, or other digital technologies as beneficial. This can be a consequence of the great "culture shock" that the country brings with it and at the same time a lot of attention from the local population. The authors of the article see a big advantage in the clearer preparation of students, who will have a better idea of what awaits them thanks to digital technologies. Another big advantage can be preparation for ethical challenges that are connected with a practical internship. It is no less important to mention that digital technologies (virtual reality and videos) can bring Zambia closer to disabled people or seniors who do not have the opportunity to visit this country.

Another pro - economics - it's sustainable and not expensive

Risks – Dehumanization

Sustainable development, or "sustainable way of life" is no chimera from the reality of detached intellectuals. It is a way of thinking, the basic principle of which is not to impoverish the current inhabitants of the planet in their quality of life, while preserving the possibility that the life of future generations can be of the same quality. It does not only mean environmental protection, but is an effort to combine economic and social development with environmental aspects. He's not even a scarecrow that "normal people" should be afraid of, he's not a step back. On the contrary, it strives for modernization, the use of new effective technologies and techniques that save time, energy, fuel and the environment. But even that is not enough, only a responsible life, not a wasteful one, a considerate life, not a selfish one, is sustainable.

4. Conclusion

The Faculty of Theology of the University of South Bohemia thus supports strategies leading to the practical deepening of its activities in real practice within the aforementioned project. In accordance with the goals of the United Nations, the concept of "sustainable development" is understood in its complexity, where, in addition to the environment, it also includes areas such as quality education, equal opportunities, health and quality of life, innovation and others. Fulfillment of these goals require special attention in some African states, such as the aforementioned Zambia. For this reason, the Faculty of Theology has much to offer. At the same time, thanks to the education of the next generations and research, it also bears its responsibility for further development, both at the national and international level. For this reason, it is necessary to respect the principles and principles of compatibility of interoperability with other participating domestic and foreign institutions within the framework of specialized training programs corresponding to Education 4.0 standards. Here, the implementation of online technologies is one of the strategic pillars.

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