

ABSTRACT

**of the dissertation work of Albina Telmanovna Sariyeva on the topic
«Distance Education as a Concept of Culture: Global and Local Dimensions»,
submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under the educational
programme 8D03102 – «Cultural Studies»**

General characteristics of the work.

The proposed dissertation work is devoted to a cultural-studies interpretation of the digital transformations taking place in the contemporary education system. In the study, distance education is considered not only as a technological or organisational form of learning, but also as a complex sociocultural phenomenon that, in contemporary society, produces cultural meanings, restructures social relations, and changes educational values and communicative practices.

In the third decade of the twenty-first century, as was especially demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic, distance education became one of the main modes of functioning of the global education system. This change revealed not only the technical side of the educational process, but also its cultural, value-based, social and institutional consequences for society. In this regard, the topic of the dissertation has high scientific and practical relevance for contemporary cultural studies, the philosophy of education, and studies of digital society.

Relevance of the dissertation research topic.

The relevance of the study is determined by the fact that, in the conditions of the contemporary information society, distance education is becoming an important part of a new cultural paradigm. The rapid development of information and communication technologies, the spread of high-speed Internet, and the deep penetration of digital platforms into everyday life and professional activity have enabled educational communication to go beyond traditional spatial and temporal boundaries and to be implemented in a networked and virtual environment. These changes, in turn, require a reconsideration of the role of the teacher and the learner, the social status of educational institutions, the forms of participation in the learning process, and the subjectivity of the learner.

Today, distance education is no longer regarded as an additional or temporary method of learning, but as a special cultural space that influences a person's entry into the cultural environment, the perception of knowledge, self-organisation, and the building of social connections in digital space.

The experience of distance education during the pandemic intensified the social and cultural inequalities that had previously existed in the education system and revealed them from a new perspective. Particularly significant factors determining the possibilities for perceiving and using distance education were the differences between urban and rural areas, the linguistic environment, socioeconomic status, the educational resources of the family, and the level of adaptation to digital culture.

In the conditions of Kazakhstan, the problem of distance education acquires particular significance. On the one hand, in recent years the country has consistently

implemented measures aimed at digitalisation, the development of e-government, the modernisation of the education system, and the introduction of elements of e-learning. On the other hand, Kazakhstan's vast territory, infrastructural differences between urban and rural areas, multilingualism, and inequality in the resource capacities of various social groups require a special study of distance education in the national-cultural context.

In the dissertation, this problem is considered in the context of the interrelation between global trends in distance education and local cultural practices in Kazakhstan. The dissertation substantiates that in Kazakhstan distance education is being formed not only as a technical innovation, but also as a phenomenon that influences changes in educational culture, communicative norms, social relations and value orientations.

Degree of development of the dissertation topic.

The issue of distance education in domestic and foreign scholarship has been studied mainly in pedagogical, technological, social and cultural directions. Scientific works examine models for organising online learning, its effectiveness, the role of digital platforms, learners' engagement and satisfaction, as well as the influence of cultural differences on online education practices. In recent years, distance education has increasingly been analysed in the context of the information society, network culture, digital inequality and the transformation of educational space.

Kazakhstani studies examine the experience of introducing distance and electronic learning, the educational process during the pandemic, the digital divide between rural and urban areas, and the sociocultural aspects of distance education. At the same time, a special cultural-studies investigation of distance education as a holistic cultural concept in the interrelation of its global and local dimensions has not received comprehensive scholarly interpretation. This gap determines the relevance of the dissertation work.

Purpose and objectives of the dissertation work.

The main purpose of the dissertation research is to substantiate distance education as a contemporary concept of culture and to determine the mechanisms of its formation, functioning and transformation at the intersection of global cultural processes and local sociocultural practices.

In accordance with the stated purpose, the work:

1. Reveals the cultural-studies content of distance education;
2. Identifies the specificity of distance education as an independent cultural phenomenon possessing its own meaning, value basis and symbolic structure;
3. Analyses the impact of digital culture on changes in the forms of education;
4. Considers the cultural factors of the transition from traditional institutional education to network organisation;
5. Interprets distance education simultaneously as an instrument and a consequence of the process of global cultural unification;
6. Determines the mediating role of digital platforms in the formation of educational culture.

Object of the dissertation work.

The object of the study is distance education as a sociocultural phenomenon of contemporary culture, formed under the conditions of digitalisation, globalisation and transformation of traditional educational mechanisms.

Subject of the dissertation work.

The subject of the study comprises the cultural meanings, value foundations, symbolic structures and models of representation of distance education as a concept of culture in its local and global dimensions.

In accordance with this, the main attention in the dissertation is focused not on the technical or organisational characteristics of distance education, but on the cultural meanings, norms of participation, values, practices of identification and communicative models that are formed within its framework.

Theoretical and methodological foundations of the study.

The theoretical and methodological foundation of the study is formed by works in the field of cultural studies, the philosophy of education, social theory, as well as studies of digital culture and the information society.

In the work, education is considered as a mechanism of enculturation, acculturation and socialisation. This approach makes it possible to reveal the mechanisms by which, through education, the individual is included in the norms, values, symbols and practices of the sociocultural environment.

From this point of view, distance education is interpreted not only as a means of transmitting educational content, but also as a special cultural environment in which new cultural identities are formed, new forms of communication and interaction are mastered, and the boundaries between public and private, real and virtual space are redefined.

In the study, the concepts of the information society and the network society serve as important methodological guidelines. They make it possible to show that digital technologies restructure the contemporary social structure, communication and cultural relations in accordance with network logic. Distance education is considered as a manifestation of the network society in the educational sphere.

Under these conditions, the educational process is carried out not only within the internal space of an educational institution, but also through global information flows, digital platforms, online communities and virtual communication. From this point of view, distance education changes the forms of dissemination, perception and legitimation of knowledge, bringing educational culture to a new level.

In the dissertation, models of cultural dimensions are also used as a significant instrument of theoretical analysis. They make it possible to explain differences in attitudes towards online and distance education, the specific features of communication style, and learners' expectations regarding autonomy, feedback, the structure of assignments and the role of the teacher. In different cultural environments, online learning is perceived in different ways: in some cultures, learner autonomy is highly valued, whereas in others the guiding role of the teacher and constant supervision may be important. This indicates the need to take into account local cultural norms, linguistic features and educational traditions when designing distance education.

Scientific novelty of the study.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation is presented in several directions.

First, the work proposes a holistic cultural-studies definition of distance education that brings together its technological, institutional, and value-symbolic dimensions. This makes it possible to consider distance education not as a narrow pedagogical or managerial category, but as a special cultural form of the space of the contemporary information society.

Second, on the basis of the Kazakhstani context, the local cultural dimension of distance education is comprehensively analysed and the influence of such factors as digital inequality, linguistic and cultural differences, and the specific features of the post-Soviet education system is revealed.

Third, by comparing the local and global dimensions of distance education, the study identifies not only general trends characteristic of digital society, but also the cultural and social specificities of Kazakhstan.

The next important direction of scientific novelty is connected with the development of recommendations for forming a culturally oriented model of distance education. This model is based on an interconnected consideration of the individual experience of participants in the educational process, the institutional practice of educational organisations, and the influence of global digital platforms.

The model covers both macro-level global processes and the micro-level everyday experience of online learning. This approach makes it possible to understand distance education not only as a set of platforms, but also as a new space of culturalisation, communication and social adaptation.

The dissertation pays special attention to the problem of digital inequality. The dissertation author considers digital inequality not as a purely technical problem limited to access to the Internet or devices. It is analysed as a complex sociocultural phenomenon associated with the ability to use digital resources, trust in online education, the family and social environment of the learner, the linguistic environment, cultural skills, educational culture and the symbolic status of knowledge.

Using the material of Kazakhstan, it is shown that the insufficiency of infrastructural and cultural resources in rural areas and among socially vulnerable groups hinders the full acceptance of online education. This proves that technical provision alone is insufficient for the institutionalisation and legitimation of distance education; cultural adaptation, the formation of trust and the development of mechanisms of equitable access are also necessary.

Scientific propositions submitted for defence.

1. Distance education is not only a technological or organisational format, but also a complex sociocultural phenomenon formed under the conditions of the contemporary information society. It changes educational values, communicative norms and the roles of the subjects of education.

2. Distance education as a concept of culture is formed as a result of the mutual influence of global and local dimensions. Its content is determined by digital culture, network society, multilingualism, national educational traditions and sociocultural practices.

3. Distance education acts simultaneously as an instrument and a consequence of the process of global cultural unification. By standardising educational practices, digital platforms form new norms of cultural participation, legitimate forms of knowledge and communicative models.

4. The experience of distance education in Kazakhstan is closely connected with local cultural specificities, the linguistic environment, social inequalities, the divide between urban and rural areas, and the level of trust in online education.

5. Digital inequality is not limited to the issue of technical accessibility. It is a complex sociocultural phenomenon manifested through differences in cultural skills, family resources, educational culture, linguistic environment and opportunities for participation in education.

6. The future of distance education is connected with the formation of a culturally oriented model based on a combination of global digital trends and local cultural specificities. Such a model should be grounded in equitable access, cultural adaptation, multilingualism and consideration of the cultural experience of the subjects of education.

Practical significance of the study.

The practical significance of the study is determined by the possibility of applying its results in state policy on the digitalisation of education, in the design by educational institutions of models of distance and blended education, as well as in the creation of multilingual and culturally adapted electronic educational resources.

The propositions put forward in the dissertation are aimed at solving specific practical tasks such as reducing digital inequality between urban and rural areas, adapting the content of online education to the local cultural context, increasing the digital-cultural competence of teachers, and developing learners' culture of participation in the online environment.

In addition, the research materials may be used in academic courses on cultural studies, the philosophy of education, the theory and practice of distance education, educational policy and educational management.

Structure and content of the dissertation work.

The structure of the dissertation work is built in accordance with the logic of the study. The introduction defines the relevance of the topic, the degree of its development, the object and subject of the study, the purpose and objectives, the theoretical and methodological foundations, scientific novelty, and theoretical and practical significance.

The first chapter examines the theoretical and methodological foundations for analysing distance education as a cultural concept. This chapter analyses such key concepts as the concept of culture, digital culture, the information and network society, and the transformation of education, and provides a cultural-studies interpretation of distance education.

The second chapter studies the global dimension of distance education and reveals its place in the process of global cultural unification, the mediating role of digital platforms, as well as the cultural risks and challenges of global online education.

The third chapter considers the national-cultural specificities of the perception and implementation of distance education in Kazakhstan, the cultural mechanisms for overcoming digital inequality, and the prospects for forming a culturally oriented model of distance education.

Approbation and approval of the research results.

The main theoretical propositions and conclusions of the dissertation work are presented in 5 scientific articles by the dissertation author; 4 articles directly corresponding to the topic of the study have been published in journals included in the list approved by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and 1 article directly related to the dissertation topic has been published in a journal indexed in the Scopus database.

The conclusion formulates the main results of the study and identifies promising directions for further scientific research on the problem of considering distance education as a cultural concept.

The bibliography includes 209 titles, including foreign literature. The volume of the work is 145 pages.

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