INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON SOCIAL MOBILITY: ACTUAL TRANSFORMATIONS

INFLUENCIA DE INTERNET EN LA MOVILIDAD SOCIAL: TRANSFORMACIONES REALES


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RESUMEN
El objetivo de la investigación fue estudiar la influencia de internet en la movilidad social de las personas. La base metodológica del presente estudio fueron los trabajos de Sorokin (1992); Lipset & Bendix (1959); Jackson & Crockett (1964), así como sociólogos rusos. Nuestro hallazgo muestra que la difusión intensiva de Internet, se comenzó a utilizar para la autorrealización. Las principales formas en esta dirección son la recepción de ingresos a través de la red, la realización o promoción de negocios, el desarrollo de competencias profesionales.
Palabras clave: Internet, movilidad social, crecimiento personal y profesional, freelance social.

ABSTRACT
The aim of research was to Analyze the influence of internet on social mobility of individuals. The methodological basis of the present analysis was the works of Sorokin (1992); Lipset & Bendix (1959); Jackson & Crockett (1964), as well as Russian sociologists. Our finding shows that the intensive spread of the Internet, was began to be used for self-realization. The main ways in this direction are the receipt of income through the network, conduct or promotion of business, development of professional competences.
Keywords: Internet, social mobility, personal and professional growth, Social freelancing.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7897252

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INTRODUCTION

A great contribution to the analysis of social mobility was made by classical theories. The theory of social mobility by Sorokin (1992) developed within the framework of functionalism considers the mechanisms of functioning and types of social mobility (individual, group, vertical, horizontal). Sorokin (1992) calls social institutions (army, church, marriage, and political and economic organizations) as the main channels of mobility, while noting that the effectiveness of certain institutions can change with the change of society.

Later, the sociological comprehension of mobility processes was supplemented within the framework of the social stratification and mobility theory. Foreign researchers of mobility (Lipset and Bendix 1959, Jackson and Crockett, 1964) focused on understanding the principles of mobility of capitalist society. Russian scientists developed the concept taking into account the specifics of the post-socialist countries (Shkaratan and Ilyin, 2006, Gromova, 1998, Zaslavskaya and Ryvkina ,1991).

At present, the scientific approach to the analysis of social mobility undergoes changes: in addition to economic objective criteria, scientists pay more attention to subjective criteria, turn to cultural factors that affect social mobility (Shkaratan and Ilyin, 2006)

Also significant changes are noted in the process of mobility of Russian society associated with structural changes in the economy (Kuzina and Vinokourov, 2018).

The process of spreading the Internet, which received its analysis in the theories of the information society, is presented in the works of Martin (1988), Castells (1996), Webster (2014), proceeds from the fact that the scale of the changes allowing us to talk about a fundamentally new stage of development society, is formed mainly due to the latest information and communication technologies. It is these innovations which intensively penetrated into all spheres of society's life and thereby determine its transformation.

According to the virtualization theory by Ivanov (2000), the trends of virtualization of social relations appeared somewhat earlier than the information and communication revolution, becoming its source. Thus, the authors give a slightly different point of view to the question of the social prerequisites for technological transformations of the information society.

Thus, many theoreticians stressed the changes in the economic sphere due to the transition to an information society. The use of computers and the Internet in daily professional activities brings a number of new opportunities, and changes the principle of building the labor process, what is pointed out by the famous theoretician of the information society M. Castells: "This transformation is represented by the rise of networked entrepreneurship. Such a new organizational

form of business in the context of informatization is the historical equivalent of the so-called Fordist organization of industrialism" (as cited in Deursen, JAM, and Helsper, 2017, p 26). Based on an empirical analysis of the use of the Internet, Dutch scientists come to important conclusions that economic, cultural, social and personal interactions with the Internet lead to different economic, cultural, social and personal outcomes (Friedman, 2014). Thus, it is possible to emphasize on an important consequence of internalization, which is expressed in the importance of networking skills to other areas of the individual's life.

Thus, there is a reason to believe that the mobility of the information society has undergone a significant transformation and needs scientific understanding. In this paper, the thesis that the Internet is a new channel of social mobility is subjected to an empirical analysis.

This paper titled “Influence of the Internet on Social Mobility: Actual Transformations” aims to investigate the influence of internet on social mobility of individuals.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was used as a research strategy, with a preliminary qualitative analysis of Internet processes. The current research was conducted on the basis of an online survey which was held in 2013 for the first time and then in 2017 for the second time. This survey measures a number of issues including: did you use the Internet to find job? Have any of our acquaintances succeeded in finding job on the Internet? Is anyone of your acquaintances familiar with networking and blogging? Have you ever used the Internet to expand your business? How much does your current business depend on the Internet?

The selective population was 400 people at each stage (a total of 800 people was interviewed). The sampling method was random.

RESULTS

Research findings showed that from 2013 to 2017, the percentage of those who used the internet as a job search tool has increased, in fact, the share of people who have found a job only through the Internet has escalated. It is assumed that this trend will continue in the future, because employers are now more inclined to recruit members through internet than in 2013. Hence, internet is currently a large-scale social mobility channel. Results of the research are presented in Table 1:

Table. 1. T-test to investigate internet as a social mobility factor in 2013 and 2017

	Year	n	m	SD	Difference	t	p
Using internet to find a job	2013	400	27	2.12	58	4.28	0.000
	2017	400	85	1.04			
Knowing at least one friend or acquaintance hired by the internet	2013	400	22	1.26	49	3.94	0.000
	2017	400	71	1.16			
Knowing at least one friend or acquaintance working in the field of blog and network	2013	400	15	3.42	56	4.11	0.000
	2017	400	61	2.85			
Using the internet to expand your business	2013	400	35	3.11	47	3.73	0.000
	2017	400	82	1.38			
Dependence of the amount of income on internet	2013	400	34	2.13	38	2.94	0.000
	2017	400	72	1.49			

By: Fursova and Gimadeeva (2017)

One of the barriers to social mobility that is in effect within the traditional channels is the place of residence (that is, the geographical barrier). Work at home (freelance) is the best way to lift this restriction for an individual. Given the availability of relevant professional qualities, it is not difficult to find a remote job, which is already realized by a small proportion of respondents.

In itself, the mass daily use of the Internet was expected and understandable, but the nature of this pastime is the principal argument for assigning the Internet to the number of social mobility channels of the information society. As an indicator of the respondents' degree of activity, their competence in assessing the opportunities offered by the Internet as a channel of social mobility, such kind of network activity was chosen as the conduct of an Internet blog. This choice is explained by the fact that this activity assumes a greater degree of integration into network communications, thereby increasing the competence of the respondent on the one hand, and can also be viewed as a kind of social displacements of an individual, which is undoubtedly important for the purposes of this analysis.

Judging by the data received, we can talk about increasing the proportion of Internet users who identify themselves with bloggers. This is an important step (one of the most promising in the direction of professional development, and income generation via the Internet) and it really goes to the mass level.

Strong changes in the structure of estimates were obtained in the issue of the motivation for blogging: the number of respondents who blogged for entertainment or communication decreased by more than half, correspondingly the share of Internet users who blog for professional purposes increased. Thus, there has been a shift towards an increase in respondents considering the Internet as a means of blogging and networking. Both these aspects can be regarded as the use of the Internet as a channel of social mobility.

Confirmation of these trends is the result for the question on availability of friends using the Internet for professional purposes. Data indicate a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who have not only information about the capabilities of the network, but also those familiar with such people personally. This indicates that a single trend spread among individual Internet activists, has been spread among Internet users at a mass level.

It should be noted that the question about the purposes of using the Internet received the largest number of comments (49 people) with respondents' answers in free form. Analyzing these answers, we can conclude that Internet users appreciate the role of the Internet in their lives, using regularly its functions for work (trading in the stock market, finding partners, internships, online courses) and personal life (communication, dating).

Additional options for using the Internet which are not represented in the response options were (Friedman, 2014) online shopping, as well as activities that can be described as controlling (queue at the kindergarten, school electronic diary, and feedback from government agencies providing services to the public).

The next interesting factor within the framework of research on this topic is the real demand for non-traditional forms of employment, which appeared together with the Internet became a part of our everyday lives, was obtained when answering the question about the occupation of a respondent (Kuzina, & Vinokourov, 2018).

The variant "working at home / freelancer" presented among others demonstrates the real use of the Internet and its remote technologies in the professional activities of Internet users. Our survey showed that their share among Internet users is 8%. This is a relatively low indicator, but the very fact of having such a category confirms the relevance of the Internet as a channel of social mobility already at a mass level.(Kuzina, & Vinokourov,2018).

In general, respondents highly value the role of the Internet in their lives, emphasizing the importance of network communications in various areas of life that are not directly related to online activity. The Internet as a space of social practices becomes an important factor with which Internet users connect their perspectives and opportunities for social self-realization (Kuzina and Vinokourov, 2018).

DISCUSSION

The Internet has taken a firm position in people's daily lives. This process accelerated to a large extent due to the development of technical means of network communication: the emergence and distribution of smart phones and tablet computers that combined the functions of a phone and a computer. If earlier a user needed a computer connected to the network to access the Internet and work properly, the newest technical means allowed the Internet user to be online

anytime and anywhere.

This is corroborated by the survey data: 100% of respondents answered that they go online every day.

The Internet as a channel of social mobility gives an unlimited number of opportunities in terms of its use for social advancement of an individual: for education, professional development, getting remote work, direct activities on the Internet (blogging, providing online services) and much more.

Among other things, we should not forget about the broader possibilities in the search for traditional work. Despite the seeming simplicity of this option, its effective use is extremely important for the successful professional mobility of individuals.

The use of special job search resources gives a much greater choice of vacancies, and also removes barriers that existed before (above all, territorial barriers: everyone can search for work in any city, it is not necessary to move there immediately, and also organizational ones: employers interested in attracting good candidates themselves give preference to a new way of searching for employees, thus, searches through acquaintances, the employment according to kindred and friendly ties reaches back).

SUMMARY

Thus, during the survey the following conclusions were made:

1. Internet users view the Internet as a means of enhancing social status, using mainly its opportunities for social transfers, such as job or information search for work / analysis. At the mass level, there is a shift from the quantitative growth of users' number (it can be said that their number has reached its maximum) to a qualitative one: the Internet ceases to be only a means of communication; it becomes a functionally important component of an individual self-fulfillment.

2. One can appreciate the high effectiveness of the Internet as a channel of social mobility: for example, when searching for work through the Internet, most people achieve their goal. New professions and activities (for example, bloggers), and flexible forms of employment which are made possible by the Internet, are also increasingly becoming part of the practice of ordinary Internet users.

3. The most popular type of network activity for the purpose of changing status is network communications to find the necessary professional / educational information. Other more specific forms are also being used, such as blogging or remote forms of employment.

In general, as expected, the Internet is a means of communication and

entertainment, which has become firmly established in the life of members of our society. At the mass level (that is, among competent Internet users), such Internet functions as job search, obtaining the necessary information, upgrading skills, searching for and establishing business links are in demand so far.

According to the results of quantitative empirical research, during which users of social networks were interviewed, it was revealed that the majority of respondents somehow used or use the Internet in their work. This points to the fact that the widespread use of the Internet as a means of communication has evolved into a new quality and can be regarded as a channel of social mobility.

The versatility and pervasiveness of this channel allow it to be used in various forms: from the possibility of convenient job search, information for professional growth, ending with professional activities in the network. If the first forms are predictably distributed among Russian Internet users, then more specific forms of activity (networking, professional promotion, gaining popularity in the network) are just beginning to reach the mass level. In general, the Internet as a channel of social mobility is quite widespread (especially used in one form or another for work and analysis).

CONCLUSION

Social mobility in the conditions of modern society is characterized by a number of social problems (for example, corruption, the presence of many social barriers that hamper social growth of certain social groups, unequal access to quality education, etc.). However, in the information society, the widespread use of the Internet has contributed to the fact that the Internet from a next means of communication has grown into a space of social practices, and then into a new channel of social mobility.

The wide use of information technologies has determined the reorganization of the social structure, which has manifested itself in the emergence of new professional fields of activity (programmers, SEO specialists, bloggers, etc.), which is an important factor, as it gives new opportunities for personal development and self-realization. However, the transformation of social mobility was not limited to the emergence of new professions.

The most important property of structural changes became a fundamentally new level of accessibility of the latest technologies, which led to greater openness of social institutions, making social growth or falling dependent on the desires, abilities, and activity of an individual.

Thus, it is necessary to note the emergence of new forms of employment (remote work, freelance, etc.), as well as spheres of professional activity (bloggers, administrators in social networks, etc.) which significantly influence the processes of social mobility expanding individual's opportunities for self-realization in society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is carried out according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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