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EDTECH COMPANIES IN RUSSIA AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE LIFELONG LEARNING TREND

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Abstract

The following study has as its main research object EDtech companies in Russia and their impact on the lifelong learning trend. The development of technologies and the shortening of the life cycle of professions have led to the obsolescence of the classical model of education "school-university". It was replaced by the concept of lifelong learning. The pandemic has affected all areas of life, and especially the need for new digital products for education has increased. In quarantine, people have more free time to engage in self-education. The popularization of online courses is helped by the fact that many projects at the time of the pandemic opened free access to their resources. This work studies the concept of lifelong learning, its role and place in modern Russian Federation and various formats of its introduction in the Russian EDtech system. Digital technologies and the inevitably following global transformations present new requirements for the basic skills that a modern person needs for successful socialization. The article is devoted to the development of digital education in Russia and its impact on the desire to educate the population as part of social integration. The main content of the study is the analysis of data from the Russian EdTech market, trends in education that have emerged with the development of technology, considering the opinions of recognized experts in the field of digital education.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the structure of education is changing at a rapid rate, knowledge is becoming outdated and no longer relevant. In digital professions as a PR specialist or a marketer, the relevance of knowledge is no more than a year. That is why lifelong learning has become a reality and a necessity for all spheres of activity. With the rapid development of technologies, the concept of continuous learning has received an even greater push forward, as innovations transform the basics of the most unchangeable professions. Global changes are taking place in almost every field of knowledge, which change it almost completely. In this regard, any specialist should make a choice: to learn new things and be qualified on the labor market, or to ignore and remain unclaimed. Continuous training is becoming more accessible due to EdTech companies.

2. Problem Statement

The emergence of the concept of lifelong learning is a consequence of the gradual transformation of education as an important element of the social structure. In the world of modern technologies, there is a trend: you can change your profession and acquire skills that are not initially associated with it. There are two main reasons for the development of continuing education: the availability of online education and the rapid development of technology. Now, to start training in almost any field, it is enough to turn on the Internet and go to the website. During the pandemic, large EdTech companies demonstrated rapid growth. The global EdTech market in 2020 amounted to $227 billion.

3. Research Questions

This article is based on current literature about the concept of lifelong learning, Russian EdTech market and the analytical data of certain institutes, such as HoloniQ, HSE and others. Thus, the research question is: "Why the concept of lifelong learning is an indispensable part of today and the future Russian market?"

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this article is to explain the importance of lifelong learning in modern society and the influence of EdTech on its development. The aim is also to study the position of EdTech on the market in the modern world and identify the main trends of its subsequent development.

5. Research Methods

In the process of research, the following methods were used: logic analysis, inductive and deductive methods, which means working from the most specific to the most generalizations and broader theories and vice versa, analysis of scientific literature and other research methods. Works of Russian and American scientists lighting the problems of the lifelong learning trend. For example, the work of Borovskaya et al. (2020) allows us to identify the role of digital transformation in modern society, and the

articles of Bombardelli (2011), Kirillova et al. (2020), Tomyuk et al. (2019) give an opportunity to consider the main trends of education. Combined methodological approach allowed the author to structure the process of study and to identify its basic stages.

6. Findings

6.1. The current state of EDtech market

The EdTech sector in the conditions of lockdown received many opportunities and stimulated it to develop in all directions. Over the past few years, the EdTech market in Russia has developed mainly due to adult education, but the pandemic has also become a powerful driver in the segment of the younger generation. The HolonIQ study says that the demand for digital educational solutions will increase due to the growing number of schoolchildren and students. The main emphasis in online education has shifted towards technologies that involve in the learning process – microlearning, gamification, AR/VR (Zabruskov, 2020, p. 158).

HolonIQ, a company specializing in educational market analytics (Williamson, 2021), expects that spending on educational technologies will reach $ 404 billion by 2025. Investors see the prospect of using modern technologies and invest in their development. It is expected that spending on AR/VR technologies will exceed $ 12 billion by 2025. A slightly smaller growth is projected for artificial intelligence: more than $ 6 billion by 2025 (HolonIQ, 2021).

There are some prevailing trends in 2021:

1.Distance learning

Schools, universities and tutors are adapting to modern realities that require effective tools for online learning (Georgieva-Hristozova, 2020). Teachers conduct classes in real-time format, and students learn from pre-prepared lectures and perform tasks on them. Currently, platforms for online learning are being developed, and streams are being conducted (Tomyuk et al., 2019).

Another factor in the development of digital learning is the concept of lifelong learning (Bombardelli, 2011). Training becomes fractional, but it lasts for a lifetime. Online educational platforms will offer flexible and interactive learning formats for every taste.

2.Personalization

This trend consists in studying the needs of a particular student and then developing an individual training program depending on the goals, level of knowledge and convenient format. As an example, we can consider Belgian schools that use the Century Tech platform. It allows you to analyze the preferences of students, the level of training, and on their basis, a personalized training program is developed. There is also an educational platform "UCHI.Ru" in Russia, which takes into account the individual results of completing tasks in order to choose a personal learning trajectory (Kirillova et al., 2020).

3.Virtual and augmented reality

Education is expected to become one of the main sectors investing in VR. Immersive technologies help to attract and retain the attention of students, make the learning process more exciting and

productive. For example, the Google Expeditions application provides an opportunity to virtually transfer to anywhere in the world. Students studying anatomy can better understand the structure of the body and the relationship of body systems with the help of the 3D4Medical educational platform (Martín-Gutiérrez et al., 2017).

6.2. Actual aspects of the EdTech market in Russia

Nowadays, Russia lags far behind the leading countries in all indicators that characterize the introduction and development of digitalization and the knowledge economy (Borovskaya et al., (2020). The share of the Russian market in the global EdTech industry is only 1%. However, the market growth dynamics is good – 20-25% annually (Ostrovsky & Kudina, 2020, p. 235). Russian EdTech is mainly developing at the expense of corporate and additional education for adults – these sectors together account for 50% of the market volume (Interfax, n.d.).

According to a study by the HSE, only 64% of teachers used online platforms before the introduction of mass distance learning. After the first wave of coronavirus, 85% of teachers reported working with online platforms (Saprykina & Volokhovich, 2020, p. 7).

If digital platforms for school education have become more in demand due to forced distance learning, then centralized integrated services for additional education have significantly increased revenue in the second half of 2020. According to Smart Ranking and TalentTech, it increased by 349% for Skillbox compared to the same period in 2019, for GetCourse – by almost 200%, for Yandex.Practicum – by 625% (RBC Trendy, 2021).

The largest EdTech companies in Russia include (Yershov & Salatova, 2020):

1. Skyeng: an online English language school.

2. "Netology-group" (the educational center "Netology" and the online school "Foxford"). "Netology" – training in digital professions; "Foxford" - training of schoolchildren from the 5th to the 11th grade.

3. iSpring: software development for corporate training.

4. MAXIMUM Education: online education in the field of additional education of schoolchildren.

5. "Umney.ru": website for distance learning in Russia and abroad.

6. SkillBox: training in digital professions.

7. "UCHi.RU": an online platform for school education.

Such major market players as Yandex, which launches a global IT project related to the digitalization of education almost every year (Safuanov et al., 2019), and Mail.ru Group intend to make its video conferencing services by 2022 and provide them to schools. Thus, the growth of the EdTech market is proceeding at an accelerated pace and it is unlikely that the dynamics will slow down with the end of the pandemic.

According to forecasts, the EdTech market will grow rapidly (by 16% annually), but unevenly, since many "poor" countries are developing very slowly in this direction, and in developed countries, on the contrary, growth is too sharp. The Russian online education market will grow even faster-about 1.5-2 times every year. At the end of 2019, its share of the total EdTech market was 2%, and now it has grown

1.5 times and has begun to occupy up to 3%. Despite such high rates, our market has remained just as attractive for investors, since there is still a huge unmet demand (Rambler, 2020).

6.3. Lifelong learning a part of the process of socialization

Lifelong learning allows creating and maintaining a positive attitude to learning both for personal and professional development. This became a part of the process of socialization, because to be more successful at work, it is necessary to learn continuously. Also, regular study provides us better opportunities and improves our quality of life. Humans should learn throughout their life, because personal development can improve employment opportunities and professional development can enable personal growth. Learning for its own sake boosts our confidence, makes us more adaptable to change when it happens, and helps us achieve a more satisfying personal life. Learning for professional development even while you are employed, affords you to become better at what you do and more indispensable to your current or future employer (Mohammed & Kinyo, 2020).

7. Conclusion

During the period of self-isolation, most people had to experience online learning for themselves. The EdTech market has grown strongly with new users, who have now become an integral part of it. Before the pandemic, the main problem was attracting people from offline to online. The main task for today is to retain and monetize new "quarantine" users. Digitalization and automation of enterprises will also have an impact on the growth of the EdTech market. In particular, the issue of a shortage of specialists with IT skills and the need for retraining has become acute (Sharma, 2020). According to the RANEPA study, in 10 years, the competencies of almost half of the current employees in Russia (45.5%) will become irrelevant. In this context, EdTech tools will be in demand in the corporate segment. According to the NAFI analytical center, at the beginning of 2020, only 26% of Russians had a high level of digital literacy. In this regard, one of the important tasks in the next few years will be the formation of digital skills and competencies. The most attractive areas for investment in Russian EdTech include school (27%) and additional professional education (20%), as well as language (20%) and corporate training (11%) (Rambler, 2020).

Today, there are several trends in the education industry: The first is the universal standardization of the educational process and the growing role of technologies in preparing for standardized exams in this regard. This is due to the growth in the number of startups in the field of preparation for tests in foreign languages, the Unified State Exam, OGE, VPR, university and professional exams.

The second trend is the growing interest in liberal arts in developed markets. More and more attention in Western countries is paid to soft skills training and the inclusion of related cultural disciplines in the learning process, the development of people's potential (Rudich, 2021). The accelerating pace of life and the eternal pursuit of self-realization and maximum efficiency encourage people to pay more and more attention to self-knowledge and self-expression through various types of art. It is becoming fashionable to learn things that are not directly related to professional activity; a trend for lifelong

learning is being formed. The popularity of edutainment is also growing – according to forecasts, the edutainment market will grow by up to 8.5% per year from 2020 to 2027 (Rambler, 2020).

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