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# EDUCATION IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES: OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS, RISKS

EDUKACJA W NADZWYCZAJNEJ SYTUACJI: SZANSE, OGRANICZENIA, RYZYKO

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### Abstract:

The article delves into the issue of the education system's operation within extreme circumstances, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscores the pivotal role of education in mitigating global risks such as environmental, epidemiological, geopolitical, and others. Particular emphasis is given to the realm of distance education during extreme situations, examining its prospects, constraints, and perils. Drawing on research conducted in Ukraine and abroad, notably the nationwide study "High School Student 2021: Daily Practices and Life Plans," the authors dissect the acquired data across three dimensions: the educational aspect (students' perspectives on distance learning, shifts in their learning methods due to this educational format, modifications in academic engagement, etc.), technological (availability of devices that can be used to join educational platforms) and competence (skills in using devices, experience in distance learning). The article concludes that online education's primary benefit lies in its ability to sustain the learning process during extreme circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, among the drawbacks of this educational model, the absence of direct interaction among various participants of education is prominently noted. Amid the potential risks, concerns arise about socialization risks and the potential degradation of society's intellectual capacity due to a potential decline in the quality of educational offerings available to modern youth.

### Keywords:

extreme circumstances, distance education, online learning, secondary education, education quality, youth

**Abstrakt:**

W artykule omówiono kwestię funkcjonowania systemu edukacji w skrajnych okolicznościach, szczególnie w kontekście pandemii COVID-19. Podkreśla on kluczową rolę edukacji w łagodzeniu globalnych zagrożeń, takich jak zagrożenia środowiskowe, epidemiologiczne, geopolityczne i inne. Szczególny nacisk kładzie się na obszar kształcenia na odległość w sytuacjach skrajnych, badając jego perspektywy, ograniczenia i zagrożenia.

Opierając się na badaniach przeprowadzonych w Ukrainie i za granicą, w szczególności na badaniu „Uczniowie szkół średnich 2021: codzienne praktyki i plany życia”, autorzy analizują uzyskane dane w trzech wymiarach: aspekcie edukacyjnym (perspektywy uczniów na temat kształcenia na odległość, zmiany w metodach uczenia się ze względu na ten format edukacyjny, modyfikacje w zaangażowaniu akademickim itp.), technologicznym (dostępność urządzeń, które mogą być wykorzystane do łączenia się z platformami edukacyjnymi) i kompetencyjnym (umiejętność obsługi urządzeń, doświadczenie w nauczaniu zdalnym). Artykuł stwierdza, że główną korzyścią edukacji online jest jej zdolność do utrzymania procesu uczenia się w ekstremalnych okolicznościach, takich jak pandemia COVID-19 i pełnowymiarowa rosyjska inwazja na Ukrainę. Niemniej jednak wśród wad tego modelu edukacyjnego wyróżnia się brak bezpośredniej interakcji pomiędzy różnymi uczestnikami edukacji. Wśród potencjalnych zagrożeń pojawiają się obawy co do ryzyka poziomu socjalizacji i potencjału degradacji zdolności intelektualnych społeczeństwa ze względu na potencjał spadku jakości ofert edukacyjnych dostępnych dla współczesnej młodzieży.

**Słowa kluczowe:** nadzwyczajne sytuacje, kształcenie na odległość, uczenie się online, edukacja średnia, jakość edukacji, młodzież

In today's interconnected global landscape, an array of risks has taken on an intensified urgency, with their combined impact posing a genuine threat to humanity's very existence. This rather somber projection of a planetary calamity finds resonance among politicians and scholars, encompassing sociologists, political analysts, biologists, and more. Regrettably, extreme societal situations like the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which is essentially an affront to the entire civilized world, do little to bolster optimism about our collective future. Nevertheless, in the face of these perils, humanity strives to find pathways to surmount or mitigate the adverse outcomes of these extreme conditions. Social institutions such as education and science wield substantial potential to grapple with these challenges. Their significance transcends the sphere of containing epidemiological or environmental hazards—risks inextricably linked to humanity's own shortsighted practices and the unchecked exploitation of nature—reaching into the realms of geopolitical, military, and terrorist dangers. Within this framework, education plays a critical role, tasked with imparting knowledge, nurturing moral values, and instilling norms that render prejudiced attitudes toward other cultures and ethnic groups, along with aggressive behavior, inconceivable.

The Ukrainian educational system, mirroring the broader society, currently operates within an extreme context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and the full-scale incursion of Russia into our nation. Confronting these dual challenges, Ukrainian education leverages modern scientific achievements to embrace new technologies, including the distance learning paradigm. According to the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, Oksen Lisovyi, as of September 1, 2023, 25% of students are studying in a distance learning format, 30% in a mixed format, and only 45% in a traditional face-to-face format (Lisovyi revealed how many students are starting in-person learning and whether there will be remote learning, 2023).

Educators in Ukraine, akin to scholars, grasp the post-conflict imperatives—nurturing a cadre of skilled professionals endowed with the knowledge, competencies, and aptitudes necessary for the nation's restoration and advancement. Unlike the era of education during the Second World War, where many individuals had to defer their academic pursuits for years, today's electronic advancements enable us to seamlessly sustain education through online modalities without interruption. Of course, the shift to distance learning, accentuated by the prevailing exigencies not only in Ukraine but globally, though vital for

the continuity of the international and national education systems, also harbors inherent threats and developmental limitations.

Within this exposition, we delve into the achievements and challenges of distance education, probing its potential, constraints, and risks that emerged prior to the eruption of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine against the backdrop of the pandemic-imposed quarantine. Our exploration is informed by empirical sociological inquiries, including those undertaken by the authors themselves among Ukrainian students.

It should be noted that during the Russian-Ukrainian war, there were several outbreaks of COVID-19, particularly in Kharkiv and some other cities in Ukraine. Considering this, it is unlikely that the extreme situation caused by this disease has remained in the past. Therefore, Ukrainian society is currently experiencing a dual extreme situation and must fight both against Russian aggressors and against COVID-19.

**Problem Statement:** The significance of this article, along with the aforementioned studies, lies in addressing the challenging situation arising from the disparity between the imperative of delivering quality educational services to students in domestic secondary education institutions and the actual state of these services' quality within the context of distance learning. From an epistemological standpoint, the crux of the problem rests in the contradiction between our awareness of the existence of drawbacks, deficiencies, and perils of online education and the dearth of insight into which among them pose the most profound challenges to domestic secondary education and how they can be effectively managed or minimized.

The article's objective is to discern the opportunities, constraints, and potential hazards intrinsic to distance education within the framework of modern Ukraine's extreme circumstances.

**Review of Existing Literature and Research:** The realm of education has been extensively explored within publications spanning the social sciences and humanities, encompassing sociology.

Western sociologists such as E. Durkheim, M. Weber, K. Mannheim, J. Dewey, A. Touraine, and P. Bourdieu have contributed significantly to the sociological interpretation of education (Durkheim, 1956, 2012; Weber, 2019; Mannheim, 1955; Dewey, 1974; Touraine, 2014; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). Among national sociologists delving into education-related matters, prominent figures include Vira Arbenina, Valentyna Astakhova, Kateryna Astakhova, Vil Bakirov, Svitlana Oksamytna, Valentyna Chepak, Iryna Sheremet, and Svitlana Shchudlo (Arbenina & Sokuryanska, 2012; Bakirov, 2011; Oksamytna & Khomenko, 2017; Sheremet & Borysov, 2014; Shchudlo, 2012; Sokuryanska & Shchudlo, 2017, 2022). The authors of this article have also contributed to the field of sociology of education, particularly in the context of distance education (Sokuryanska, 2021; Borysov, 2022).

Recent years have witnessed an influx of publications and studies on online education both in Ukraine and across the globe (Yaroshenko, 2020; Smirnova, 2020; Yurchenko, 2021; Agamben, 2020). It is worth highlighting the commendable contributions made by Dr. Svitlana Shchudlo, a notable figure in the national sociology of education. She was instrumental in founding the Department of Law, Sociology, and Political Science at the Ivan Franko Drohobych State Pedagogical University, a position she held for over two decades. Dr. Shchudlo played a pivotal role in establishing the Ukrainian Educational Research Association (UERA) in 2015, serving as its President until her passing. Under her leadership, several international and national research initiatives were executed to enhance the quality of secondary and higher education<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Among them are such projects as the Leadership Development Program in Higher Education in Ukraine (British Council Ukraine, Leadership Foundation), Promoting Higher Education Reforms in Ukraine (US Embassy in Ukraine, 2016), European Quality of Educational Research to Support Educators in Ukraine (European Commission, Audiovisual and

This publication is dedicated to the memory of our esteemed colleague, Svitlana Shchudlo—a remarkable individual, a prolific scholar, a seasoned educator, and an astute leader—who dedicated her brief yet remarkably vibrant life to the work she cherished.

Summary of Main Content: To fulfill the objective mentioned above in this article, let us first define the term “extreme situation.” This term is extensively employed within psychological, social psychology, sociological, and political science studies. In contemporary discourse, extremology—a multidisciplinary field—gains relevance as it integrates philosophical, psychological, and sociological discourses on extremity. Sociological perspectives on extremity as an atypical natural or societal condition trace back to classic sociologists such as E. Durkheim, M. Weber, P. Sorokin, T. Parsons, and R. Merton, among others. Building on their conceptualizations, we define “extreme circumstances” as a state of altered, unconventional existence encompassing individuals, social groups of varying sizes, social institutions, entire societies, and humanity at large. Such situations bring to the forefront tangible threats to individuals’ physical, psychological, and social well-being, directly impacting their lives.

These extreme circumstances manifest across microsocial (individual or small group), mesosocial (medium and large social group, social institution), macrosocial (specific society), and megasocial (global) levels. In the context of

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Culture Executive Agency, 2017–2020), Educational Reforms: “Quality Assurance in the International Context” (Charitable Foundation “Krok za Krok”, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2017–2018), “Promoting Intercultural Dialogue on Learning Ukrainian by Representatives of National Minorities in Chernivtsi Region” (European Union Program “Support to Civil Society in Ukraine”, International Renaissance Foundation, Project “Promoting Reforms in the Regions”, 2018), “Polish-Ukrainian Scientific and Methodological Cooperation in Promoting the Development of a System of Prevention and Training of Specialists in the Field of Counteracting Risky Behavior.

post-independence Ukrainian society, extreme circumstances are palpable across all these levels. Most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has engendered a pronounced extreme situation that spans from individual to global dimensions, alongside the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, which fuels extreme circumstances across individual, group, institutional, national, and even global spheres.

This article delves into the repercussions of the extreme circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic within macro- and mesosocial levels. Specifically, we explore the changes witnessed in the lives of Ukrainian high school students and the national secondary education landscape. To this end, we draw on empirical sociological research, forming the foundation of our study. The focal point is the all-Ukrainian sociological study “High School Student-2021: Daily Practices and Life Plans,” conducted by the Sociological Association of Ukraine through an online survey spanning late 2021 and early 2022 under the guidance of Professor Liudmyla Sokuryanska. The study included 11th-grade students from regional center schools across different Ukrainian regions: Kharkiv (N=427, Eastern Ukraine), Odesa (N=353, Southern Ukraine), Cherkasy (N=300, Central Ukraine), Ivano-Frankivsk (N=200, Western Ukraine). Schools were randomly selected in each administrative district of these cities. In order to compare educational practices and diverse facets of high school students’ perspectives on learning before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, data from the 2014 sociological study “Value Orientations and Behavioral Practices of School Youth in Kharkiv Region” were incorporated. This study was undertaken by the Department of Sociology at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, encompassing students in grades 7–11 from various Kharkiv districts (N=1909) under the guidance of Professor Liudmyla Sokuryanska.

It is important to underscore that the ability to continue education under strict quarantine

conditions arose due to pre-existing albeit limited experience in distance education, which received state support nearly two decades ago (references: [On Approval of the Regulation on Distance Learning, 2013; On approval of the Programme for Development of the Distance Learning System for 2004–2006, 2003; On the National Programme of Informatisation: Law of Ukraine as of July 10, 2002: official edition, 2002]).

In devising the High School Student 2021 research program, our focus encompassed three facets of distance learning implementation: educational (pertaining to students’ attitudes towards online learning, changes in educational practices, and shifts in academic achievement attributed to this learning modality), technological (regarding gadget accessibility for participation in educational platforms), and competency (related to gadget usage skills and experience in distance learning).

To assess students’ perspectives on distance learning, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with a range of related statements (see Table 1). Notably, the prevailing response indicates agreement with the statement that “distance education is a necessary measure during quarantine.” This emphasis on the necessity of online learning amid quarantine underscores students’ perception of it as a temporary measure that will fade once the epidemiological situation ameliorates. Consequently, high school students

appear less prepared for prolonged engagement with online education.

Another concerning signal arose from the instrumental perception of distance learning, which, from students’ perspectives, leans more towards pragmatism. A comparison of the 2014 and 2021 surveys unveiled a significant rise in the number of students achieving excellent grades in distance learning—from 10.5% to 28%. This elevation can partly be attributed to the fact that during the initial phases of transitioning to online learning, particularly amidst the lockdown, some educators were less stringent in terms of independent assignments, tests, etc. This leniency might have resulted from challenges faced by teachers in conducting synchronous distance learning. Factors like internet or electricity unavailability, teachers’ unfamiliarity with online platforms, personal reluctance to invest time in a “less effective format” of education, and the anticipation of a return to traditional learning might have contributed to this dynamic.

We have previously emphasized that the national secondary education system encountered substantial criticism at the onset of quarantine, which ushered in the prominence of distance learning. The majority of school teachers were not adequately prepared psychologically, methodologically, or technically for this mode of teaching, and some displayed an unwillingness to enhance

**Table 1**  
*The extent to which high school students agree with statements about distance learning (on average)\**

	<b>Kharkiv</b>	<b>Odesa</b>	<b>Cherkasy</b>
Distance education is a necessary measure during quarantine	4.1	4.2	4
Distance learning allowed you to improve your grades in school subjects	4	3.9	2.6
During distance learning, there was not enough live contact with classmates	3.5	3.6	3.9
Distance learning is not suitable for basic education, but is useful only for mastering skills in a narrow field	3.2	3.4	3.5
There was a lack of live contact with teachers during distance learning	3.1	3.4	3.6
After distance learning, you are worried about the results of the EIT	3	3.5	3.2

\* The indicators were constructed using a Likert scale that ranges from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 („strongly agree”)

their proficiency in this domain (Sokuryanska, 2021). Our assertion is grounded in the outcomes of numerous studies conducted between 2019 and 2021 among school educators, students, and parents, revealing a plethora of grievances regarding online learning (Education and the pandemic: what Ukrainians think about distance learning and how they evaluate EIT, 2020; Smirnova, 2020; Anipchenko et al., 2020).

The study “Kharkiv Family in the Sociological Dimension”<sup>2</sup>, co-conducted by the authors of this article and the staff of the Sociology Department at V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University in May-June 2020, spotlighted that the primary challenge for families with schoolchildren was adapting to online learning. Participants in focus group interviews underscored teachers’ lack of concern for their students’ homework progress. Parents interviewed conveyed that this indifference considerably dampened children’s motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Anipchenko et al., 2020). A survey conducted by the Razumkov Center’s sociological service in collaboration with the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation in July 2020<sup>3</sup> indicated that only around a third of respondents endorsed the implementation of distance learning, with one of the most prominent issues being teachers’ inattention

<sup>2</sup> The study was conducted in May-July 2020 using the method of focus group discussions with representatives of three types of families: regular (two focus group discussions; a total of 15 informants), large families (one focus group discussion; a total of 12 informants), and families facing challenging life circumstances (one focus group discussion; a total of 10 informants). The total number of participants interviewed through the focus group discussion method was 37 individuals

<sup>3</sup> The study was conducted from July 3 to July 9, 2020, using face-to-face interviews at the respondents’ place of residence. A total of 2,022 respondents aged 18 and above were interviewed in all regions of Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, based on a sample representing the adult population according to major socio-demographic indicators. The theoretical sampling error (excluding design effect) does not exceed 2.3% with a probability of 0.95.

to their children’s education, as stated by over one in five respondents (Education and the pandemic: what Ukrainians think about distance learning and how they evaluate EIT, 2020). The reduction in academic demands coupled with an improvement in grades creates a scenario where the evaluation of students’ education quality becomes skewed.

We executed a factor analysis to delineate the primary aspects of students’ attitudes toward distance learning. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index (KMO=0.804) and the statistical significance of Bartlett’s sphericity criterion (0.000) confirmed the aptness of the selected data for such an analysis. The resultant factor model accounts for 64% of the variance and comprises four factors (see Table 2). Let us delve into each of these factors individually.

The **critical attitude** factor encompasses statements that suggest that distance learning is perceived as a relatively effortless process, leaning more towards relaxation and/or entertainment rather than “genuine” education. This factor also incorporates the notion that online learning imparts “limited” skills rather than a comprehensive foundational education. We believe that some respondents’ negative stance toward the distance learning format may stem from students’ apprehensions regarding their preparedness for External Independent Testing (EIT), as this format does not allow them to acquire the necessary knowledge.

The factor of an **apologetic attitude** toward distance education includes the statement that shifting the secondary school educational process online is necessary. Within this factor lies the statement that distance learning facilitates a more thorough mastery of school subjects.

The third factor, which reflects the concerns of school students about distance learning, centers around the **communication aspect**—specifically, the lack of opportunities for complete interaction with both teachers and peers. Our factor analysis unveiled a correlation between this statement and

Table 2

Factor model of 11th grade students' attitude to distance learning (with the indication of correlation coefficients)\*

Statement	Criticality	Apologetics	Communication	Pragmatism
Distance learning during quarantine was more like a vacation	<b>0.813</b>	-0.017	-0.126	0.004
Distance learning is more about entertainment than learning	<b>0.761</b>	0.080	-0.011	-0.316
Distance learning is only good for extracurricular activities	<b>0.643</b>	-0.061	0.285	0.082
After distance learning, you are worried about EIT results	<b>0.569</b>	-0.247	0.265	0.037
Distance learning is not suitable for basic education, but is useful only for mastering skills in a narrow field	<b>0.536</b>	-0.301	0.486	0.201
When applying to a higher education institution, choose one that offers distance learning	0.053	<b>0.806</b>	-0.084	-0.204
Schools in the modern world should exist mainly in the format of distance learning	-0.053	<b>0.783</b>	-0.302	0.101
Distance learning has allowed you to study subjects more deeply than face-to-face learning	-0.317	<b>0.764</b>	-0.117	0.147
There was a lack of live contact with teachers during distance learning	0.096	-0.108	<b>0.864</b>	-0.077
During distance learning, there was not enough live contact with classmates	0.088	-0.260	<b>0.790</b>	0.197
Distance learning allowed you to improve your grades in school subjects	-0.017	0.189	-0.001	<b>0.855</b>

\* is measured from -1 (strong disagreement with the statement) to 1 (strong agreement with the statement). Variables with a correlation of more than 0.6 have a strong relationship

the assertion that distance learning is suitable for acquiring specialized skills (average correlation strength of 0.486). Consequently, the absence of communication during learning is not the sole determinant in shaping personal attitudes (whether positive or negative, apologetic or critical) toward distance learning: the identified factors remain disparate.

The fourth factor is founded on a **pragmatic statement** regarding a certain benefit of distance learning—a more lenient approach from teachers toward the performance level of learning tasks.

Once again, agreement or disagreement with this statement does not formulate the ultimate stance toward the distance learning format.

It is worth noting that the outcomes of the factor analysis once again underscore the ambiguity of students' perceptions of distance learning, which manifests across three primary dimensions: evaluation of the format's suitability for the ultimate goal of attaining fundamental education, the unfamiliarity of existing within a communication space that disrupts the traditional relationship dynamics between key education stakeholders

(teachers-students, students-students, teachers-teachers), and unforeseen “positive” outcomes in the form of higher grades (which, in our view, are largely formal).

Next, let us examine whether students’ educational practices have undergone changes during distance learning compared to traditional in-person learning. To address this query, we juxtaposed the findings of our 2021 and 2014 research among 11th graders in Kharkiv.

First and foremost, it is essential to acknowledge that not only the education format (in-person/online), its modality (synchronous/asynchronous), and forms of engagement in educational practices (direct attendance in online classes, viewing video recordings of lessons, or watching them on television) contribute to variations, but also the way students submit their homework, particularly in written form. This scenario (albeit to a lesser extent) existed prior to the quarantine, but it was the quarantine that significantly curtailed students’ ability to present their independent work and homework orally. This limitation had a detrimental impact on the development of their communication competencies. Additionally, as per numerous sociological studies, the majority of contemporary students source materials for independent work/homework from the internet, often without delving into the content of the received information—essentially not fully absorbing it—making it challenging to convert this information into knowledge. Given these circumstances, it is arduous to assert the high quality of education school students attain through distance learning.

Meanwhile, analyzing the data gleaned from these studies revealed substantial shifts in the amount of time students allocate to homework: whereas in 2014, the percentage of students dedicating 4 to 7 hours to homework did not surpass 11%, this figure nearly tripled to about 34% in 2021.

Of course, this may be due to purely objective reasons, primarily the lack of opportunity to join online resources or access to gadgets. However, the latter reason is irrelevant since, as the 2021

study proved, almost all of today’s students, at least those we surveyed, have access to certain gadgets, including smartphones.

The main reason for the significant increase in the time students spend preparing homework is the significant increase in the number of such tasks in online learning. This is evidenced by numerous studies, including those conducted by us (see, for example, *Education and the pandemic: What Ukrainians think about distance learning and how they evaluate EIT*, 2020; Anipchenko et al., 2020).

Undoubtedly, the mastery of knowledge and the effectiveness of educational practices used by modern students largely depend on such a subjective factor as their personal interest in learning. A comparative analysis of the data from the 2014 and 2021 surveys showed that the proportion of those who do not like to study increased from 10% to 28%, while the proportion of those who like to study and those who find it difficult to answer this question decreased.

Last but not least, students’ attitudes toward learning are influenced by the emotions they experience while attending classes. According to the 2021 survey, 25% of 11th graders reported feeling negative emotions about having to attend classes, which is twice as many as in the 2014 survey (see Table 3).

In our perspective, the negative emotions stemming from distance learning can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, this sentiment might arise from the absence of “in-person” interaction with classmates within the context of distance education. It is worth noting that the primary “inconvenience” of distance learning, as identified by our respondents, is the lack of direct contact with school peers. It is no secret that numerous students attended school not solely for the educational aspect but also for the chance to socialize with their friends.

Another factor contributing to the negative emotions among surveyed students, in our assessment, is their dissatisfaction with some



Table 3

*Students' feelings about attending secondary schools (in % of those who responded)*

<b>"How do you feel about going to school?"</b>	<b>2014, N=514</b>	<b>2021, N=472</b>
With pleasure, joy	13.9	10.8
No special feelings	62.7	53.4
The need to go to school evokes negative emotions	13.3	25.3
Other	4	3.2
Difficult to answer	6.1	7.3

teachers' neglectful approach toward students' work, as previously mentioned, and the absence of feedback from teachers. Additionally, students' distress concerning online class attendance can also be attributed to their uncertainty about the caliber of educational services they are receiving, with a fear that the knowledge acquired through distance learning might not adequately prepare them for higher education. The burden of excessive homework also compounds the unfavorable sentiments toward online learning.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate that despite the challenges, distance education offers the advantage of maintaining an uninterrupted learning process, enabling 55% of Ukrainian students (including 30% of those who are solely engaged in remote learning) to maintain connections with classmates and teachers, albeit in a virtual capacity. Furthermore, online education fosters the development of IT competencies for teachers, students, and their parents. All parties involved need to enhance their proficiency in this domain since the knowledge and skills acquired through distance education will prove beneficial in the future, considering that a return solely to offline education is unlikely. This is particularly true in an information-driven society that humanity is undeniably progressing towards.

As we have aimed to illustrate in this article, alongside its prospects and benefits, distance learning is fraught with limitations and threats. For instance, the curtailment of direct interaction between various education stakeholders poses

a risk of a socialization crisis. Socialization within the online realm, where modern teenagers dedicate a substantial amount of time, molds them into a "Networked Individual" or "Homo Ratis," internalizing norms and behavioral patterns that do not always align with the moral imperatives accepted in civilized society. Distance education further submerges teenagers into the digital space, where they now spend more than just leisure hours. In times of extreme circumstances like quarantine restrictions, studies including ours reveal that over 40% of students spend more than 4 hours daily online, and 19% of students employ smartphones "during every spare moment." Despite offering a brief respite from psychological isolation through familiarity with the virtual environment, this poses risks to physical, psychological, and social well-being. In our viewpoint, such "false socialization" (Sztompka, 2020) presents both microsocial (individual, group) and macrosocial issues, partially mediated by online education. Unfortunately, we do not have data on how much time teenagers spend online since the full-scale invasion and the transition to distance learning. However, in the context of distress and intensified military actions, we believe that the escapism trend continues to influence teenagers' leisure activities. Therefore, this trend remains relevant for students who are forced to study remotely.

To a larger extent, distance learning accentuates the peril of intellectual decline within society, extending beyond Ukraine to other Eastern European nations. Presently, the caliber of online

education, particularly at the secondary level, fails to satisfy students, parents, or the larger community, which requires proficient professionals across various fields. Without substantial changes in organizational structures, methodologies, and content of distance education, without shifts in attitudes toward learning from both students and teachers, minus robust state backing, including financial support, for the national education system, coupled with amendments to Ukrainian education legislation, etc., expecting enhancements in online education and its efficacy proves challenging. All of this assumes greater significance within the current backdrop of the war that Ukrainian society, including critical social institutions like education, particularly secondary education, is grappling with today.

Our future research and publications intend to shed light on the predicaments faced by the domestic school education system in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

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