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## Media Technologies in the Development of Students' Social Competence in a Changing Environment

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**Abstract.** In the modern world, media resources are firmly embedded in the educational process of higher education. Today universities are not only the basis for higher education and personal development of students, but also a huge media space. It should be used to develop students' social competencies. The article analyzes the opportunities and problems of modern media technologies in higher education. Their role in the development of social competencies in the modern educational process of universities is revealed.

The interrelation of the components of students' social competencies is found out. Recommendations aimed at improving students' social competencies are given. Based on the analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature, generalization and systematization, empirical research methods were selected. The study was conducted on the basis of the Department of Youth Policy, Social Issues and Development of Physical Culture and Sports Education System of KFU. The participants of the experiment were 60 students of the student volunteer squad of Kazan University. The results of the study reflect average and underestimated indicators for the studied components of social competence: empathy, reflexivity, social intelligence, which confirms the hypothesis about the need for developmental work and approbation of the developed pedagogical conditions for the development of students' social competence with the help of media technologies.

**Keywords:** social competence, media technology, empathy, reflexivity, social intelligence, student.

Research area: Social Structure, Social Institutions and Processes; Pedagogy.

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## Медиатехнологии в развитии социальной компетенции студентов в изменяющейся среде

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**Аннотация.** В современном мире медиаресурсы прочно вошли в образовательный процесс высшей школы. Сегодня университеты – это не только база для получения высшего образования и развития личности студентов, но и огромное медиaprостранство. Его необходимо использовать для развития социальных компетенций студентов. В статье анализируются возможности и проблемы современных медиатехнологий в высшем образовании. Раскрывается их роль в развитии социальных компетенций в современном образовательном процессе вузов. Выявлена взаимосвязь компонентов социальных компетенций студентов. Даны рекомендации, направленные на совершенствование социальных компетенций студентов. На основе анализа психолого-педагогической литературы, обобщения и систематизации были выбраны методы эмпирического исследования. Исследование проводилось на базе Управления молодежной политики, социальных проблем и развития системы физкультурно-спортивного образования КФУ. Участниками эксперимента стали 60 студентов студенческого волонтерского отряда Казанского университета. Результаты исследования отражают средние и заниженные показатели по изучаемым компонентам социальной компетентности: эмпатии, рефлексивности, социальному интеллекту, что подтверждает гипотезу о необходимости проведения развивающей работы и апробации разработанных педагогических условий развития социальной компетентности студентов с помощью медиатехнологий.

**Ключевые слова:** социальная компетентность, медиатехнологии, эмпатия, рефлексия, социальный интеллект, студент.

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Media technologies in the modern world are an integral part of the educational space of a university. Nowadays universities are becoming a large media space. The integrated use of media products in higher education contributes to a more effective development of key competencies necessary for personal self-realization in society and subsequent professional activity.

Social competence in modern Russian science is understood as an ability of an individual to take responsibility, joint development of effective solutions and their implementation, successful joint interaction with others (Alshevskaya, Basinskaya & Radyuk, 2019; Zimnyaya, Morozova & Lapteva, 2007). Social competence is also considered as a complex systemic characteristic or key qual-

ification of a person (Wellhofer, 2004), which is based on a person's ability to carry out effective interpersonal interaction. Researchers connect social competence with the performance of social roles, with the perception of self and other, with effective communication and behaviour in social situations (Meichenbaum, Butler & Gruson, 1981). Media technologies in the 21st century are one of the most effective tools of modern influence on the process of training and education. Scholars consider media technologies as a set of systematic methods and actions of media education, aimed at the formation of a personality with the culture of using mass communication means, interaction in society on the basis of humanistic ideals and values (Matvienko & Vasilyeva 2022; Mishra et al., 2022). Thus, the role of media technologies in the development of students' social competencies in higher education is significant, and the issue of their rational and effective use in the process of teaching and education is important.

### **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The purpose of our study is to reveal the possibilities of media technologies in the development of social competencies of students in a changing environment.

In the course of our research, we study the components of students' social competence and their interrelation. After obtaining baseline data, we plan to increase the level of students' social competence with the help of a specially designed intervention program "DISPATCHER: Achieve, Perform, Improve", as well as to evaluate and analyze its effectiveness.

Based on the understanding of the problem and the purpose of the study, we set the following objectives:

1. To define the concept of social competence and its components;
2. To conduct an experimental study of the components of social competence of the students at Kazan Federal University;
3. To identify the role of media technologies in the development of students' social competence.

### **Literature review**

The analysis of a number of foreign and Russian psychological and pedagogical studies has indicated that social competence means a special personal characteristic, the specificity of which is an ability to understand oneself and others, predict interpersonal events and actively act in the social environment (Andreev, 2014; Demchuk, 2010; Johnson & Johnson, 2008; Kalinina, 2006; Raven, 2002; Samsonova, 2007; Shadrikov, 1982; Zimnyaya, 2004). The high level of social competence among students as future professionals is a formula for their successful adaptation to dynamically changing conditions of society. Moreover, it forms the basis of life and provides the prospects for effective socio-professional implementation (Alshevskaya et al., 2019; Biktagirova et al., 2022; Zimnyaya et al., 2007).

Theoretical and empirical developments of social competence formation in the process of higher education are touched upon in the works of Lyakhova (2008), Selevko (2004), Spirin (2010), Wellhofer (2004) and others. In the work of Krasnokutskaya (2006: 20) who studied social competence of future students, the following definition of social competence was given: "it is a set of specific personal qualities, abilities, social knowledge and skills that ensure the integration of a person into society through the productive performance of various social roles".

Marasanov and Rototaeva (2003) conducted a comprehensive study based on the enhanced preparation of students for further professional activities. According to their experience, extracurricular work on the development of key competences (social, communicative, in particular) was fairly fruitful: students who took part in the experiment had good indicators of further employment and adaptation in a new working team.

Dahlstrom, Walker, and Dziuban (2013) highlight that media technology, as one of the key methods, provides students with accessible interactive content that can be revised and improved by them in order to use in the future.

Kapitanova and Frolov (2017) were involved in the development of social and communicative competencies of graduate students

by alternating the use of traditional media with digital media resources. The balance of traditional and media learning allowed them to achieve high rates of adaptation and professional success.

Lyakhova (2008: 22) interprets social competence as “an integrative quality of personality, providing positive attitude to themselves and another, based on the recognition of the subjectivity of the other and their own subjectivity, and the essence of social competence of students is conscious, positive and adequate attitude, based on the implementation of the balance between cooperation (considering expectations of another person, their interests and needs) and confrontation (asserting their own interests and demands).

Kiryakova (1996: 194) believes that “it is the social competence that can provide sustainable life activity of future specialists in all spheres of life. It is obvious and the fact that it is a necessary condition for successful activity of students, including mastering of social knowledge, abilities and skills necessary to perform social functions, eliminating the feeling of internal discomfort and preventing a possibility of conflict with the social environment”.

Social and personal competences as a result of modern, including digital education are mentioned in the works of Ilyasova and Kalyk-nazarova (2017), Rashidova (2021).

Kapitanova and Frolov (2017) emphasize a major role of modern media technologies in the educational space of universities. According to them, the development of key competences of a future specialist (including social competence) is largely connected with the effective use of media resources and platforms in higher education.

The importance of media technologies in higher education was largely addressed in the work Fedorov (2015). Fedorov was the first Russian scholar who interpreted the concept of “media education in higher education” and described the importance of its use for the effective training of future specialists.

The use of media technologies in higher education is also reflected in the studies of Verbitsky (2019) and Efimov and Lapteva (2018), who mention that media technologies play a

crucial role in shaping an individual trajectory of a student's development and help him or her find themselves in the university setting. Verbitsky (2019) also notes the importance of digital transformation of the educational process of university and the importance of media technologies in the development of key competencies of students.

Based on the analysis of reviewed works, we put forward the following definition of social competence: social competence is a comprehensive integrative characteristic of student's personality, allowing them to function successfully in society and perform the social role of a student, harmoniously and effectively combining their own positions and interests with the positions and interests of other members of society.

We identified the main components of social competence, such as behavioral, cognitive (social-intellectual component), empathic and reflexive components.

We contend that social competence is a global characteristic of a person, acting as a means of social adaptation and self-realization of an individual in modern social conditions.

## Methodology

The theoretical ideas of Russian and international researchers about the importance of social competences for a student's personality comprised the theoretical and methodological basis of the study (Andreev, 2014; Beelmann Pfingsten & Lösel, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 2008; Shadrikov, 1982; Raven, 2002; Zeer & Symanyuk, 2005; Zimnyaya, 2004).

On this basis, our study was organized and conducted in 3 stages:

1. Planning an experiment to study the initial level of formation of the four main components of social competence.

2. Conducting a formative experiment, which consists in the development and implementation of the programme “DISPATCHER: Achieve. Correct. Improve” in order to increase the level of development of the studied components of students' social competence.

3. Conducting a control experiment, during which the repeated diagnostics was carried out. The results of the conducted psychological and

pedagogical tests were collected and analysed. The research was conducted on the basis of the Department of Youth Policy, Social Issues and Development of Physical Culture and Sports Education System of Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University. Sixty students took part in the research.

There were 30 students-fighters of the social volunteer squad 'Miras' of the KFU Student Squads Headquarters (EG) and 30 students-fighters of the pedagogical squads 'Fractal', 'Sapphire', 'Kaleidoscope', 'Tiger', 'Sirius' and 'Clover' of the KFU Student Squads Headquarters (KG). The participants were 18–20 years old.

For the successful solution of the set tasks the following methods were used:

- theoretical (analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the problem under study, generalization and systematization);
- empirical (testing, survey, pedagogical experiment):

1. Diagnostics of Empathic Abilities Level Questionnaire by Boyko which allows to reveal a degree of empathic abilities expression and importance of each of the six parameters in the empathy structure (Boyko, 1996);

2. Diagnostic Instrument of the Level of Reflexivity Development (Karpov's questionnaire) for studying reflexivity as a personality trait (Karpov, 2003);

3. Methodology of Social Intelligence Research, Mikhailova's Adaptation of Guilford and Sullivan's Test (Mikhailova, 1996)

4. Muddy's Test of resilience in adaptation of Leontiev, which allows one to study the indicators of individual resilience (Muddy, 2005; Leontiev & Rasskazova, 2006).

## Results

The results of the Diagnostics of Empathic Abilities Level questionnaire revealed that 8 % of the students had a very low level of empathic reactions. An undervalued level of empathy was found in 52 % of the participants, while 40 % of the students had an average level. High and very high levels of empathy were not found among the participants. Examining the empathy channels, it was found out that the scale of attitudes that hinder or promote empathy was scored high by the research subjects (28 %). This indicator confirms the likelihood of existing attitudes that impede empathic channels. The main channel for 26 % of the students was the emotional channel, which characterizes the development of an ability to emotional responsiveness.

Moreover, 26 % of the students showed a high level of identification, characterizing the ability to put oneself in the place of another and indicating the presence of mobility and flexibility of emotions, the ability to imitate.

According to the results of Karpov's questionnaire "Methods of Diagnostics of a Level of Reflexivity development", 20 % of the participants had a low level of reflexivity, 78 % of the respondents had an average level and only 2 % of the students have highly developed reflexivity.

Table 1. Diagnostics of the Level of Empathic Abilities Questionnaire by Boyko: Indicators of the level of empathy

General level of empathy	Number of participants, %
Low level	5 %
Middle level	75 %
High level	20 %

Table 2. Results of the Karpov's questionnaire: Indicators of the reflexivity level

General level	Number of participants, %
Low level	20 %
Middle level	78 %
High level	2 %

The results of the Guilford test demonstrate that 67 % of the students had an average level of social intelligence, 33 % of the respondents had a level of social intelligence below the average. The low level, the level above the average and the high level were not revealed.

It is interesting that the students have high indicators of the results and class behavior cognition factor, and also average indicators of transformations of behavior and systems of behavior. These indicators show the ability of students to predict and anticipate the actions of others, as well as an ability to correctly assess the emotions and feelings of people by their non-verbal manifestations.

The Muddy's Resilience Test demonstrated that 75 % of the students had an average level of resilience, 20 % had a high level, and 5 % of the participants had a low level of resilience.

According to the indicator of control, 70 % of the respondents had an average level, which indicates the presence of students' confidence in the effectiveness of their actions in difficult situations. According to the indicator of risk acceptance, 62 % of the students also had an average level. This can be considered as the awareness of significance of both positive and negative experiences in interaction with the outside world. As for the involvement indicator, 75 % of the students were found to have a

low level, which can be a signal of the presence of feelings of rejection.

### Discussion

Taking into account the results obtained, we believe that an effective solution would be to develop a programme incorporating various media technologies, consisting of 30 sessions. In each of the sessions, students worked on their attitudes, interacted with each other and performed interactive tasks on 20 interactive media platforms. Similar programmes using multiple media technologies have been successfully implemented in studies by Dahlstrom et al. (2013). They also succeeded in obtaining above-average social competence scores.

In the process of completing the assignments, the students were able to work on a certain characteristic (quality) not only through exercises and techniques, but also through effective use of the media space. By reflecting in their works on what was happening around them and crucial social issues that concern them, creating unique interactive products with the help of the above media platforms, students were able to increase their personal awareness, communicative and social competence.

Working with media resources and platforms, as well as being in continuous face-to-face and online interaction with each other, students were able to adapt more quickly to

Table 3. Results of Guilford Test: Indicators of the level of development of social intelligence

General level	Number of participants, %
Low level	0 %
Below average level	33 %
Middle level	67 %
Above average level	0 %
High level	0 %

Table 4. Results of Muddy Resilience Test: Resilience scores

General level	Number of participants, %
Low level	5 %
Middle level	75 %
High level	20 %

constantly changing social conditions and increased the indicators of social adaptation. The findings align with the study of Kapitanova and Frolov (2017): students who completed their programme using media technologies also significantly increased their level of social activity and adaptability.

Thus, media technologies can become a key aspect of the development of students' social competences, as they provide opportunities for practising existing skills and gaining new experience, overcoming social barriers and solving complex social situations in different ways through media resources and platforms.

## Conclusion

In the course of our study, we have come to the conclusion that an average or low level of social competence prevails in all components, and there is a correlation between them.

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- In order to increase the level of social competence of students, we offer the following recommendations:
1. to consider the specifics of students' social competence in higher education;
  2. to develop and implement a special programme using modern media technologies, namely media resources and platforms, aimed at increasing the level of social competence of students, for instance "DISPATCHER: Achieve, Perform, Improve".
  3. to use systematically and comprehensively modern media technologies in further work with students in subsequent stages of the experiment.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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