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The problem of social responsibility in information society during digital integration

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the urgent problem of social responsibility formation in the context of digital technology integration in the modern information society. As digital social responsibility the author understands the objective need to be responsible for the violation of social norms in the digitalization context of all public spheres. From this point, digital social responsibility expresses the nature of the individual relationship with society, the state, the collective, other social groups and entities. The article presents the results of an empirical study conducted by the author in six provinces in China. The materials of the research were questionnaires of a sociological survey conducted among Chinese respondents. The general sample consisted of 150 people, of which a representative sample of 75 people was formed. The research methodology is based on a systematic approach and includes the methods of the general scientific group (analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction); as well as a number of special methods: content analysis of scientific literature on the research topic; sociological survey (in-depth interview method); processing of the obtained data in the statistical analysis program Neural Designer. The author came to the following conclusion: for the formation of digital responsibility in modern Chinese society, a detailed study of the possibilities of state policy and support for the analogue sector is necessary in order to prevent the growth of conflict potential in the strategic future.

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Keywords

Digitalization, labor market, information society, social responsibility, China.

Introduction

The topic relevance is due to the fact that in the conditions of digital integration and the information society formation, as in any other process, there are not only positive, but also negative consequences. To level the risks and prevent the negative consequences of digitalization in a new type of society, a high level of social responsibility is required [Wu Ling, Wei Zi, 2020].

In the history of civilization development, there have been several information revolutions – transformations of social relations due to cardinal changes in the field of information processing. The consequence of such transformations was the acquisition by human society of a new quality – knowledge as a tool for creating added value.

As the researchers believe, the first revolution is associated with the invention of writing, which led to a giant qualitative and quantitative growth [Strelets, 2021, 79]. Now it is possible to transfer knowledge from generation to generation.

The second revolution (mid-16th century) was caused by the invention of printing, which radically changed industrial society, culture, and the organization of activities.

The third revolution (the end of the 19th century) was caused by the invention of electricity, thanks to which the telegraph, telephone, radio appeared, which made it possible to quickly transmit and accumulate information in any volume.

The fourth revolution (70s of the XX century) is associated with the invention of microprocessor technology and the emergence of the personal computer. Computers, computer networks, data transmission systems (information communications) are created on microprocessors and integrated circuits.

To create a more holistic view of this period, it is advisable to get acquainted with the change of generations of electronic computers and compare this information with the stages in the field of information processing and transmission.

1. First generation (early 1950s). Element base – electronic tubes. Computers were distinguished by their large dimensions, high energy consumption, low speed, low reliability, and programming in codes.

2. Second generation (from the end of the 1950s). Element base – semiconductor elements. All technical characteristics have improved in comparison with the computers of the previous generation. Algorithmic languages are used for programming.

3. Third generation (early 1960s). Element base – integrated circuits, multilayer printed wiring. A sharp decrease in the size of computers, an increase in their reliability, an increase in productivity. Access from remote terminals.

4. Fourth generation (from mid-1970s). Element base – microprocessors, large integrated circuits. The technical characteristics have improved. Mass production of personal computers. Directions of development: powerful multiprocessor computing systems with high performance, creation of cheap micro-computers.

5. Fifth generation (from mid-1980s). The development of intelligent computers began, which has not yet been crowned with success. Implementation in all areas of computer networks and their integration, the use of distributed data processing, the widespread use of computer information technology.

The latest information revolution brings to the fore a new industry «Industry 4.0» – the information

industry associated with the production of technical means, methods, technologies for the production of new knowledge. All types of information technologies, especially telecommunications, are becoming the most important components of the information industry. Modern information technology is based on advances in computer technology and communications.

The increasing complexity of industrial production, social, economic and political life, changes in the dynamics of processes in all spheres of human activity have led, on the one hand, to an increase in the need for knowledge, and on the other, to the creation of new means and ways to satisfy these needs.

Thus, the rapid development of computer technology and information technology served as an impetus for the development of a society built on the use of various information and called the information society.

China not only has not become an exception to this process, but has become one of the leaders in global digitalization in terms of the innovations number and digital technologies.

In 1996, private users connected to the Internet for the first time in China [Lee Wong, Laverett, 2021, 40]. Their number is steadily growing every year according to the China Internet Network Information Center (CINIC) [ibid, 39]. According to the data for 2021, at the moment the number of Internet users has reached 668 million people [Lee Wong, Laverett, 2021, 40]. China reached the first place in the world in terms of the number of online audiences and overtook the United States. According to data for November 2021, China still ranks first in the number of Internet users [Wilson, 2021, 109]. The degree of Internet penetration in China from 2009 to 2020 increased by 25% and amounted to 64.1% in 2021 [ibid, 114].

At the same time, there is a large gap in the incomes of the urban and rural population in the country [Wu Ling, Wei Zi, 2020, 16]; not all parts of the country are currently connected to the Internet (Urumqi; Xichang; Zhaotong; Lanzhou; Yinchuan); there are also problems in the adaptation of society to the digital transformation of the country's economy [Pipiya L., Dorogokupets, 2021, 14].

Moreover, the problem of social responsibility in the new information society has not yet been sufficiently studied. As digital social responsibility we understand the objective need to be responsible for the violation of social norms in the context of digitalization of all spheres of public life. From this point, digital social responsibility expresses the nature of the individual relationship with society, the state, the collective. The purpose of our study is to identify the level of development of digital social responsibility in Chinese society using the example of the opinions of representatives of the media; opinions of the business community, as well as the opinions of employees in state institutions of local administrations.

Materials and methods

To achieve the research goal, we conducted an empirical study in Chinese cities: Lanzhou, Changchun, Guangzhou. The materials of the research were questionnaires of a sociological survey conducted among Chinese respondents. The general sample consisted of 150 people, of which a representative sample of 75 people was formed. The respondents were divided into three groups according to the criterion of the activity: entrepreneurs (25 people), employees of state institutions and local administrations (25 people); representatives of digital media (25 people). The questionnaire was compiled according to three criteria of social responsibility:

– social support: support for those specialists whose work is analogous and not in demand on the digital labor market);

– occupational safety and health: ensuring working conditions for workers in digital specialties);
 – ensuring digital security (protection of personal data, protection against cyber-attacks, protection against failure of digital infrastructure systems, etc.).

The material was collected in several stages, conditioned by the research logic and objectives. The empirical study was carried out in three stages (table 1).

Table 1 - Stages and timing of empirical research

Empirical research stages	Survey schedule
Research of methodological background	1-17. 10. 2021
Survey (in-depth interview)	18-20. 10. 2021
Collecting and analysis of the material	21-30. 10. 2021

The research methodology is based on a systematic approach and includes the methods of the general scientific group (analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction); as well as a number of special methods: content analysis of scientific literature on the research topic; sociological survey (in-depth interview method); processing of the obtained data in the statistical analysis program Neural Designer (table 2).

Table 2 - Methods and objectives of the study

Method group	Research objectives
General scientific methods	Analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction
Special methods	Content analysis of scientific literature Sociological survey Statistical analysis program Neural Designer

During the survey, all obtained data were analyzed using the Neural Designer program and converted into a graphical format of diagrams for perception clarity. Each criterion of social responsibility was assessed by an average score, which made it possible to bring all the answers into a 10-point scale and thereby translate qualitative data into quantitative ones (table 3).

Table 3 - Methods for assessing respondents' answers

Criterion	Rating scale
Social support	1-3 low level 4-6 average level 7-10 high level
Labour safety and health	1-3 low level 4-6 average level 7-10 high level
Digital security	1-3 low level 4-6 average level 7-10 high level

Each criterion, thus, was assessed according to the general level of assessment (average for each respondents' group): 1-3 points low, 4-6 average and 7-10 high level of qualitative assessment of the criterion of digital social responsibility for a specific country (in our case – China). This analysis technique made it possible to summarize the assessments of 75 questionnaires for each of the analysis criteria.

Results

The research carried out in the first respondents' group (entrepreneurs) gave the following results (figure 1).

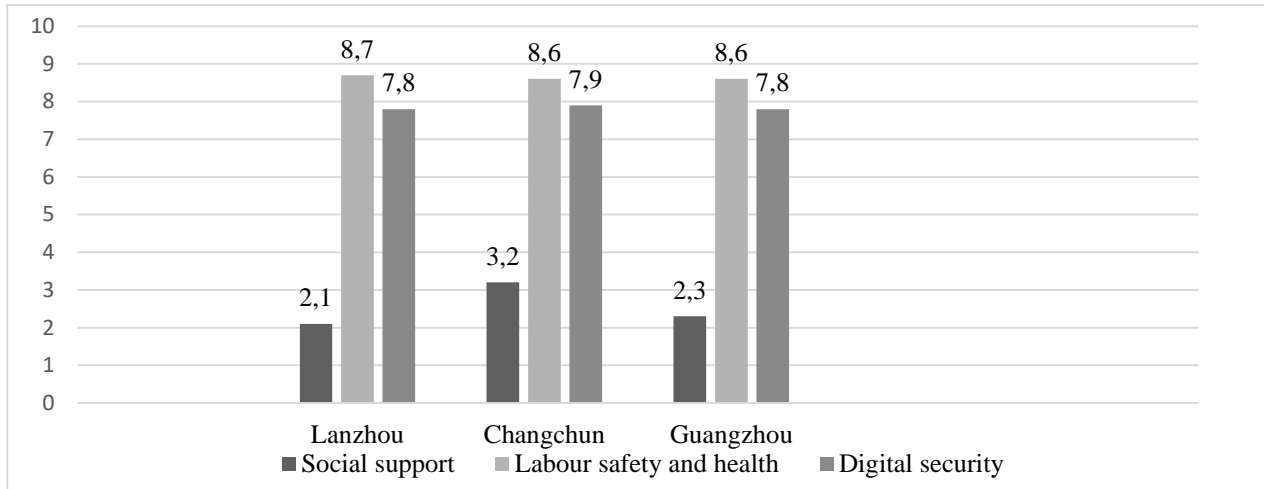


Figure 1 - First respondents' group evaluation of the digital social responsibility criteria (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data shown in figure 1, the respondents of entrepreneurs believe that the protection of working conditions plays the main role for the business community in the information society. Another criterion that is significant for this group of respondents is cyber security in the field of personal data protection and other risks.

Similar results were obtained in the second group of respondents (state institutions and local administrations staff) (figure 2).

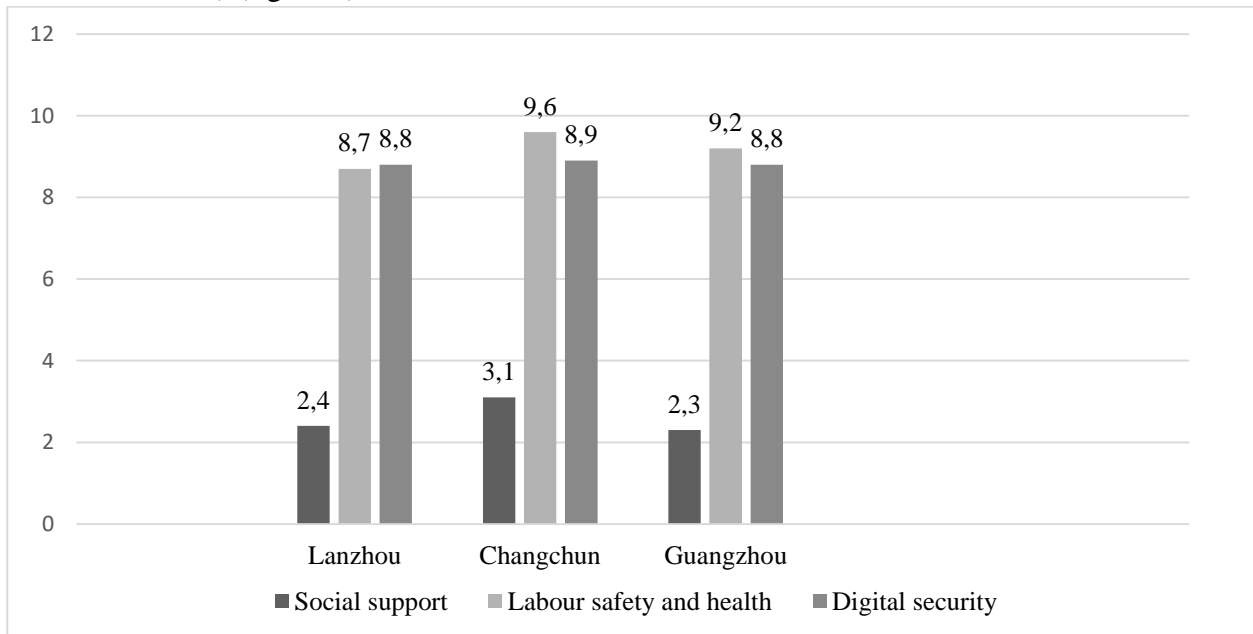


Figure 2 - Second respondents' group evaluation of the digital social responsibility criteria (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data in figure 2, state institutions and local administrations staff rated the most significant criterion for digital social responsibility as the protection of labour conditions and health. The second place was again taken by the criterion of digital security.

At the same time, the criterion of social support for analog professions was at the lowest level (average score 2,5). This suggests that labour conditions and social protection are the most important for civil servants, and not social humane values for a strategic perspective. At the same time, in the questionnaires, the respondents of this group confirmed that it is more important for them to receive social benefits for themselves than caring for those who failed to get a digital profession.

Interestingly, for the collectivist ideology of China, this issue in digital social responsibility is a destructive factor. In the third group of respondents (media representatives), we received similar results with minor deviations across the provinces (figure 3).

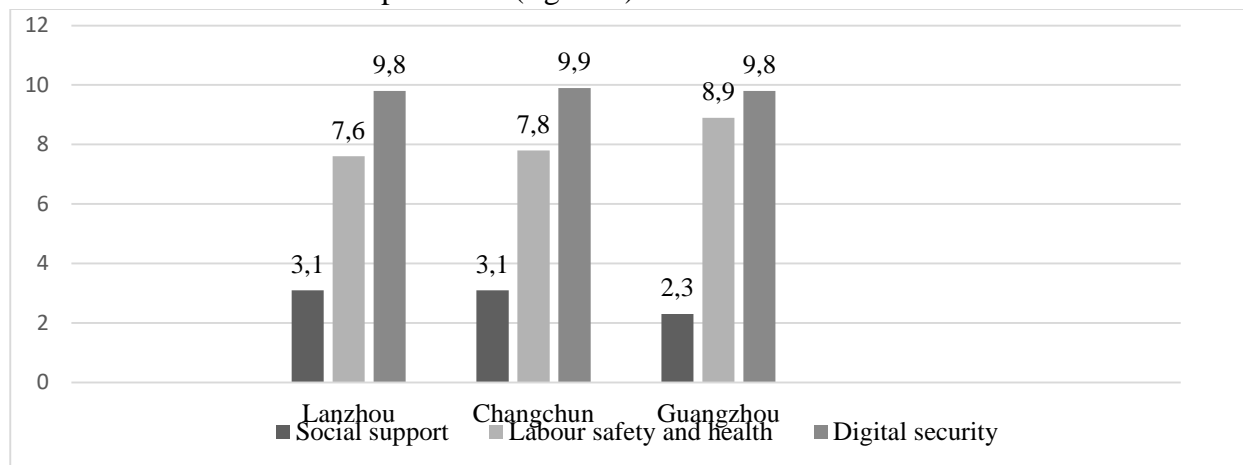


Figure 3 - Third respondents' group evaluation of the digital social responsibility criteria (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data presented in figure 3, media representatives assessed digital security as the main criterion for digital social responsibility, which is obviously related to the specifics of the professional activities by this respondents' group. At the same time, the criterion of protection of labour conditions and health faded into the background, and the criterion of social protection of representatives of analogous professions remained at a low level.

At the same time, the majority of respondents (95%) in the entire representative sample of 75 people said that social support for representatives of analog professions should not be expressed in higher unemployment benefits or any additional tax benefits. Such compensations for analog professions, according to the respondents, would be social injustice in relation to all other participants in the labor market.

Thus, we have identified the main problem: the criterion of social responsibility towards analog specialties in the digital economy integration context is not yet perceived by the Chinese information society at the proper level.

Discussion

The results of our study are confirmed in the works by E.V. Brodovskaya [Brodovskaya, 2019], E. Davidson [Davidson, 2019], L.Yu. Garvell [Garvell, 2021], N.V. Gorodnikova, G.G. Kovaleva, G.I. Abdrakhmanova, I.A. Kuznetsova [Gorodnikova N.V., Kovaleva G.G., Abdrakhmanova G.I.,

Kuznetsova, 2016], V. Green [Green, 2021], O.V. Khabibulina, A.V. Prokopchuk [Khabibulina O.V., Prokopchuk, 2020], Lee Wong and J. Laverett [Lee Wong, Laverett, 2021]. These authors analyze the problem of social responsibility in a modern digital society from the standpoint of the criteria that we used to collect and analyze the materials for our research.

The issues of digital transformation in the context of social responsibility of corporations, the media and the state are considered in studies by L.V. Tomaichuk [Tomaichuk, 2019], A.V. Vladimirov, T.V. Koshel, L.N. Shklyar [Vladimir, Koshel, Shklyar, 2019], J.R. Wilson [Wilson, 2021], Wu Ling, Wei Zi [Wu Ling, Wei Zi, 2020], Xing Qin [Xing Qin, 2021], A.N. Yasinsky [Yasinsky, 2021], I.Yu. Zhilina [Zhilina, 2019].

Also, the issues of social compensation for analog professions in a digital society, as a criterion of digital social responsibility in different countries of the world, are considered in the studies by such authors as V. Maracha [Maracha, 2020], N.N. Moiseev [Moiseev, 2021], V.I. Panov, E.N. Patrakov [Panov, Patrakov, 2020], L. Pipiya, V. Dorogokupets [Pipiya, Dorogokupets, 2019]. The analysis of the digital society specifics in China was carried out in the work by L. Pipiya, V. Dorogokupets [Pipiya, Dorogokupets, 2021]. These works confirm our thesis that for the formation of a social responsibility system in countries with a digital economy, it is necessary, first of all, a new culture of «digital humanism» in societies with different cultural, political and economic traditions.

The issues of international interaction within the framework of digital integration (including in the Asia-Pacific region) are considered in the researches by O.N. Pryazhnikova [Pryazhnikova, 2021], M.S. Reshetnikova [Reshetnikova, 2020], M.V. Smolenskiy [Smolenskiy, 2017], D.V. Sokolov [Sokolov, 2019], A.R. Solomatina [Solomatina, 2021], I.A. Strelets [Strelets, 2021], I.Yu. Tkachenko [Tkachenko, 2018]. These works are important for our research from the methodology point.

Conclusion

Summing up the conducted research, we came to the following conclusions:

- 1) For modern Chinese society, in groups of reference persons, the perception of digital social responsibility dominates mainly in the field of cyber security, in particular (in the point of reducing the risks or personal data leakage, malicious content and other risks for the sustainable development of Chinese society).
- 2) At the same time, the criterion of social support for analog professions, which are not in sufficient demand in modern digital China, was assessed at an average level by all three groups of respondents. Consequently, this criterion is not perceived as highly significant either in the business community, in the media or in government agencies.
- 3) The criterion for the protection of labour conditions and health was assessed at the highest possible level by all three categories of respondents: for digital media employees, the business community, and government officials.
- 4) The study results show that digital social responsibility is not sufficiently formed in modern Chinese society, particularly in the criterion of social support for unclaimed analog professions that becomes the main issue for developed countries (EU, USA, Russia, Japan, etc.).
- 5) It is the problem of the gap in employment as an inevitable digitalization consequence that requires special attention from the state, since this problem generates social inequality, an imbalance in access to socio-economic opportunities, inequality in the human rights implementation - in particular, the right to work. This is a problem that the Chinese society needs to tackle first.

In general, our empirical work leads to a general conclusion that for the formation of digital responsibility in modern Chinese society, a detailed study of the possibilities of state policy and support for the analogue sector is necessary in order to prevent the growth of conflict potential in the strategic future.

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Проблема социальной ответственности в информационном обществе в условиях цифровой интеграции

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Аннотация

Статья посвящена актуальной проблеме формирования социальной ответственности в условиях интеграции цифровых технологий в современное информационное общество. Под цифровой социальной ответственностью автор понимает объективную необходимость нести ответственность за нарушение социальных норм в условиях цифровизации всех общественных сфер. Цифровая социальная ответственность выражает характер отношений личности с обществом, государством, коллективом, другими социальными группами и образованиями. В статье представлены результаты эмпирического исследования, проведенного автором в шести провинциях Китая. Материалами исследования послужили анкеты социологического опроса, проведенного среди китайских респондентов. Общая выборка составила 150 человек, из них была сформирована репрезентативная выборка в количестве 75 человек. Методология исследования основана на системном подходе и включает методы общенаучной группы (анализ, синтез, дедукция, индукция); а также ряд специальных методов: контент-анализ научной литературы по теме исследования; социологический опрос (метод глубинного интервью); обработку полученных данных в программе статистического анализа Neural Designer. Автор пришел к следующему выводу: для формирования цифровой ответственности в современном китайском обществе необходимо детальное изучение возможностей государственной политики и поддержка аналогового сектора, чтобы не допустить нарастания конфликтного потенциала в стратегическом будущем.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

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Ключевые слова

Цифровизация, рынок труда, информационное общество, социальная ответственность, Китай.

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