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# USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR DEVELOPING STARTUP AND BUSINESS SKILLS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The digitalization of the economy and society is significantly transforming approaches to the organization of the educational process in higher education institutions. There is a growing need for specialists who possess not only professional knowledge, but also entrepreneurial skills, innovative thinking, working with digital tools and the ability to create startups that can be integrated into the global market. Accordingly, universities are implementing new digital solutions in their educational activities that provide students with access to modern practices of business modeling, online communications, digital product development and work in project teams [3, 4].

The development of startup and business skills in students is impossible without the use of digital technologies, because they allow to simulate real business environments, conduct market analysis, test ideas, organize team work, present results and receive expert support regardless of geographical restrictions. Thus, digital technologies are becoming a key tool for innovative entrepreneurial education. However, despite the growth in the number of entrepreneurial education programs, a significant part of students face an insufficient level of practical skills in creating and running a business. Traditional teaching methods do not always provide conditions close to the real business environment. Therefore, it is important to introduce digital technologies that allow you to model business processes, analyze market trends, test business ideas and create prototypes in a safe environment, which significantly increases the quality and efficiency of studying [1, 6].

Key technologies include [1, 2, 5]:

– online platforms for entrepreneurship education (in particular, Coursera, EdX, Google Digital Garage, Udemy, etc.);

– business simulation systems (e.g. Marketplace Simulations, Capsim, Simformer, etc.);

– collaboration and project management tools (in particular, Trello, Asana, Notion, Slack, etc.);

– platforms for creating MVP (Minimum Viable Product – minimum viable product, the simplest version of the product, which has only the basic features needed to test the idea on real users) and digital products (e.g. Figma, Tilda, Canva, Bubble, Webflow, etc.);

– virtual business incubators and accelerators (e.g. Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange, international startup communities);

– analytical tools for market research (in particular, Google Trends, SimilarWeb, Statista, Data.ai, etc.).

Involved in education, they contribute to the formation of a complex of important professional competencies in students. In particular, they help develop [4, 5, 6]:

– idea generation and creative thinking – students learn to find original solutions, propose non-standard approaches to solving problems, use design thinking techniques, and participate in creative sessions and brainstorming;

– business planning – students learn the basics of developing business models, identifying target audiences, market analysis, calculating resources, and assessing risks. This allows them to create structured and realistic project development plans;

– digital communication – future professionals learn to interact effectively in a virtual environment, use professional online communication tools, correspond, participate in video conferences, and follow the rules of digital etiquette;

– financial literacy – students gain basic knowledge of financial management, budget planning, forecasting expenses and income, and are introduced to financial analysis tools, necessary for successful business operations;

– teamwork in a hybrid or online format – studying contributes to the development of interaction skills in mixed teams, organization of work in digital

environments, distribution of roles and responsibilities, as well as the ability to effectively coordinate joint activities;

– creation and presentation of product prototypes – students master the tools of design, modeling and testing of prototypes, acquire the skills to present their ideas to the audience, justify decisions and receive feedback for further product improvement.

The main advantages of using digital technologies in entrepreneurship education [2, 4, 5]:

– interactivity of learning – students actively participate, not just consume information;

– proximity to real business conditions – digital models reflect market processes;

– accessibility and flexibility – learning is possible anywhere and anytime;

– scalability – large groups of students can work simultaneously;

– practical orientation – students create real digital products and prototypes;

– development of digital literacy, which is a basic competency of a modern specialist etc.

Despite the advantages, there are certain limitations:

– insufficient level of digital skills of lecturers;

– unequal access of students to high-quality technical equipment;

– lack of integrated digital ecosystems in some universities;

– the need to adapt curricula to new technologies;

– difficulty in maintaining student motivation in a distance learning format.

Overcoming these challenges requires a strategic digital transformation of the educational process.

Therefore, digital technologies play a key role in shaping startup and business skills of higher education students. Their use ensures interactivity, practical orientation and proximity to the real business environment. Online platforms, business simulations, collaboration tools and virtual incubators create conditions for the development of innovative thinking, leadership qualities and teamwork skills.

The integration of digital technologies into the educational process is an important component of the modernization of university education and the preparation of students for active participation in the knowledge economy. The use of modern digital solutions allows universities to form an innovative ecosystem, in which students not only master the theoretical foundations of business, but also create their own startups and implement innovations in various fields.

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