

Latest Trends in Distance Education

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Summary

The process of digitalization of Education has been going on for a long time. However, a strong surge of interest occurred during the period of time restrictions on communication related to Covid - 19 and the widespread transition to a completely remote format of interaction between all participants in the educational process. Digitalization has affected all levels of education and direct the activities of students, teachers, administrators or stakeholders. The aim of the study is to analyze the latest trends in distance education and a comparative analysis of the readiness of secondary and higher education to introduce digital distance learning in practice. Methods. The research is based on systematic and comparative analysis, dialectical method, as well as methods of classification and generalization. Special attention is paid to the system-functional approach, which makes it possible to identify and characterize the interrelationships of different levels of educational activity. Results. A logical assessment of the possibilities of the distance education process implemented in digital format for secondary and higher education, as well as corporate training, allowed us to formulate and justify the significance of a number of the most relevant criteria. Conclusions. The justification of each of the presented criteria for evaluating the distance education process implemented in digital format contributed to the identification of

problems and shortcomings of online learning, which can serve as a topic for further research in this area.

Keywords:

distance education, e-learning, secondary education, higher education, digitalization.

1. Introduction

The digital education technology market today is in a very favorable ecosystem, shaped by the mass transition of users to online learning. Over the past year, EdTech has become one of the leaders in private and venture investments for startups. Such organizations as the UN, UNESCO, and the World Economic Forum showed serious interest in them. Digital technology is becoming a de facto driver of social change around the world, which makes research in this field especially important. Theoretical aspects of learning with the direct use of EdTech are widely discussed in higher education, Social and legal aspects of the use of digital technologies in secondary and higher education, pedagogical approaches to the use of electronic educational resources and health issues in the era of digital education. Of particular interest

is the formation and development of continuous digital education.

Thus, Al Lily et al. [1, p. 101317] and other foreign researchers interpret distance learning mainly as a combination of traditional formal learning tools - classroom work, studying theoretical material - and informal ones, such as e-mail correspondence or Internet conferences. Theoretical material is studied independently with the help of an e-learning course, and during classroom work, relevant skills and abilities are practiced and reinforced through game methods, active discussions, solution finding, problem-solving, etc.

Zhou et al., believe that distance learning is a system that combines different ways of presenting learning material, including web-based courses, EPSS (Educator Professional Development and Support System), and knowledge management techniques. The term also describes learning that combines different forms of learning: face-to-face learning, live e-learning, and offline learning. Ferri et al., [8] believe that distance learning combines seemingly opposing approaches: formal and informal learning, face-to-face and online communication, guided action and independent path selection, use of automated links and peer relationships to achieve individual and organizational goals Nurul Mostafa Kamal [18] insists on the integration of traditional and distance communication, forming an integrated learning environment.

Thus, distance learning can be defined as a hybrid type of learning, combining the latest technology with traditional forms of learning.

The main advantage of distance learning over full-time education is, first of all, its convenience: the student himself chooses the time and place for training, which allows him to work or study full-time in another city or even country. In addition, the replacement of lecture notes with electronic resources and the latest teaching methods, as well as constant consultation with the teacher give this form of self-education additional advantages over distance-learning [5].

Analyzing the scientific literature, we can see that researchers emphasize the convenience of distance learning and highlight its many advantages over other forms of learning, namely:

- the opportunity to study at any time. A student studying remotely can decide for himself when and how much time to spend on studying the material during the semester. He builds himself an individual training schedule;
- the opportunity to study at their own pace. Distance learners do not have to worry about falling behind their peers. You can always go back to study more difficult subjects, watch video lectures several times, reread correspondence with the teacher, and familiar topics can be skipped;

- the opportunity to study anywhere. Students can study from the comfort of their home or office anywhere in the world. To start learning all you need is a device with Internet access;

- high results of training. According to researches of American scientists, results of distance learning are not inferior or even superior to results of traditional forms of education, though a great part of educational material is studied by students independently;

- mobility. Communication with teachers and tutors is carried out in different ways: both online and offline;

- learning in a relaxed atmosphere. Intermediate certification of distance learning students is carried out in the form of online tests. Thus, there is less reason to worry before meeting with teachers on tests and exams. The possibility of subjective evaluation is excluded: the system, which checks the correctness of answers to test questions, will not affect the student's success in other subjects, his social status, and other factors;

- individual approach. With traditional teaching, it is difficult for the teacher to pay the necessary attention to all members of the group, to adjust to the pace of learning of each of them. The use of distance learning technologies is suitable for the organization of an individual approach. The student himself chooses the pace of learning, he can quickly get answers to all questions from the teacher;

- convenience for the teacher. Teachers, tutors, and teachers engaged in distance learning can pay more attention to the students and work, even if for some reason they have to be at home.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the latest trends in distance education settings and to benchmark the readiness of secondary and higher education to put digital distance learning into practice.

2. Materials and methods

The study is based on the system and comparative analysis, dialectical method, as well as methods of classification and generalization. Particular attention is paid to the system-functional approach, which allows to identify and characterize the relationship of different levels of educational activity.

At the beginning of 2020, all educational organizations without exception faced a "digital challenge". Regardless of whether educational organizations have experience in implementing educational programs digitally, the desire to implement such programs, and current technical capabilities, the transfer was made online at the end of March 2020. This forced experiment, which lasted more than three months, allowed to identify numerous features of the digitalization of education in order to get an idea of the key trends and prospects for further development. In any case, traditional education was given a powerful

motivation for change [20]. The representatives of the educational system, who before the pandemic had held patriarchal attitudes and were exclusively committed to an eye-rolling classical version of teacher-student interaction, were forced to accept digitalization and recognize if not its unconditional effectiveness, then at least its applicability and viability. The digital revolution, which began in education in the early 2000s, maximized its resources during the pandemic. Much of this was due to the unexpected ongoing emergency transition to a remote format of interaction [13].

The average annual growth of the global online education market was estimated to be 8.2 percent back in 2019, but Covid-19 has made significant adjustments to its projected growth values. Analysts estimate that the overall online education market has grown nearly 10 times in less than six months, and despite an expected slowdown after passing extremely high values, it will continue to show stronger growth than previously predicted [25].

Despite the dramatic growth of the global online education market, its projected structure has not changed. Analysts expect that by 2030, the secondary education segment of the digital education market will account for 55% of total digital education, 25% will be in higher education, 8% in preschool education, 6% in corporate education, and 8% of the market will be in lifelong learning [24].

Today, all projects related to the digitalization of education, regardless of the level of education at which they are most applicable, fall into four categories [9]: Educational services and platforms; services for the management of educational environments and content delivery; various digital tools used in learning (virtual reality, proctoring, gamification, etc.); and projects aimed at innovative development methods in pedagogy [10]. At the same time, one cannot but agree with the existing diversity of classifications of digital technologies in education: for example, the authors of the interactive registry "Global learning landscape" have identified more than 50 cluster-subsets, to which the modern project EdTech (educational technology) in the field of digitalization of education can be attributed.

The domestic market of online education in the structure of the global EdTech industry does not occupy the best position (about 1%), but, like the global market, shows steady growth (depending on the segment, by 17-23% per year). The period of temporary communication restrictions associated with self-isolation has become a driver for the Ukrainian EdTech market, the volume of which, according to the current Interfax-Academy estimates, is about 60 billion UAH in 2020. At the same time, it should be noted that the Ukrainian EdTech market demonstrates a higher growth rate compared to the global situation. This fact can be explained by the influence of the low base effect.

3. Results

Forced transition to remote interaction between teachers and students has affected three main areas: secondary education, higher education and corporate training, which have their own advantages and disadvantages affecting the success of the transition to the online format. A comparative assessment of the features of digital educational activities in Ukraine is presented in Table 1. The average assessment is quite generalized, and individual educational institutions may demonstrate both the lowest and the most successful indicators of the criteria.

Table 1: Evaluation of the distance educational process features

№	Evaluation criterion	Secondary education	Higher education	Corporate training
1.	Technical and hardware capabilities	low	average	high
2.	Software capabilities	high	average	low
3.	Teaching staff competence	low	high	average
4.	Students' competence	average	high	low
5.	Teaching staff level of responsibility	average	average	average
6.	Students' level of responsibility	average	average	high
7.	Digital etiquette of educational process participants	average	average	high
8.	Digital inequality of educational process participants	high	average	low
9.	The level of student requirements for digital content	average	high	low
10.	Use of educational gamification	average	low	high
11.	Use of synchronous communication	average	high	average
12.	Personalized training delivery	average	average	average
13.	Microteaching technology	low	average	high
14.	Use of digital resource	average	high	high
15.	Taking exams «online»	low	high	average
16.	Engaging open, ready to use contact	low	high	average
17.	Resistance to the digitalization process	high	average	average

Source: author's own development

The rationale for each of the criteria in Table 1 is presented below: Technical and hardware capabilities of digitalization consist primarily of the availability of personal computers, mobile devices, and a stable Internet connection for all participants in the educational process (both in the workplace and at home). In addition, the use of a number of platforms assumes that users have webcams, microphones, etc. such conditions are best realized in corporate training, where most students are provided with the necessary technical means by virtue of their duties and professional requirements. Secondary education is considered to be less technically developed. According to data provided by the Higher School of Economics, about 25% of high school students (from low-income families) do not have the opportunity to study online due to the lack of either a quality Internet connection or a personal computer. Higher education in comparison with secondary education is in a better position because most universities are located in large cities, where there is a stable Internet connection and most students have devices that allow the process of distance learning or can be provided by educational organizations (libraries, specially equipped rooms in dormitories for nonresidents, etc.).

Programmatic features of digital education is the lack of unified universal platforms suitable for training, even within a single educational organization. With all the variety of digital educational resources the creation and practical application of any resource, equally acceptable for all possible subjects and training courses, at the moment does not seem realistic. This issue turns out to be the easiest for corporate training: each educational organization can use one resource that corresponds to its specific goals. Higher education today can implement the scheme "one university - one online platform" or create a package of educational resources limited to 3-5 platforms that are compatible with each other and have a single access window. However, universities clearly cannot centralize platform solutions (through the narrow specifics of each individual university). For secondary education, the problem takes on a different character. As the pandemic experience showed, teachers in one school used up to 10 different resources that were incompatible with each other, which certainly had a negative impact on the educational process. However, secondary education has a more universal structure and is theoretically capable of using a single platform that meets the common requirements of all disciplines.

The competence of the teaching staff. The biggest problems related to the competence of the teaching staff arise in secondary education. Thus, 55% of teachers over the age of 60 (and a third of those between the ages of 45

and 59) have little or no knowledge of how to use the Internet, particularly specific educational platforms. University faculty members have relatively good digital competencies. The fact is that, according to state standards of higher education, faculty representatives are required to systematically participate in professional development programs on the use of electronic educational resources. Such regulatory requirements make it possible to provide employees with digital competencies at least at the basic level, which allows them to successfully interact with students. The digital competencies of teachers participating in corporate training cannot be unambiguously assessed, since they depend on specific educational organizations and the courses implemented on their basis. At the same time, it should be noted that the digital competence of employees engaged in education, in general, significantly exceeds the average Ukrainian indicator of this parameter and is 87%.

The digital competence of students can be assessed depending on their age. For example, students aged 17 to 22 years are more experienced than younger students. In contrast, there are people in the older age group (45-60 years) among students in the corporate sector who lag behind university students and high school students in their mastery of information and communication technologies or do not use digital technologies to a sufficient extent due to their professional specialization.

The level of responsibility of the teaching staff includes, first of all, the willingness of teachers to work in the online environment, which entails the quality of such criteria as the content component of the course, the promptness of checking the students' actions, the timeliness of synchronous interaction with the audience and providing the feedback process.

The level of students' digital responsibility is closely related to their digital competence but does not depend entirely on it. The presence of general motivation has a significant impact on the level of students' digital responsibility. In this case, it can certainly be argued that the most motivated group of students belongs to the corporate training sector. Students of comparable age at secondary and higher education institutions have approximately the same degree of motivation.

Digital etiquette of participants in the educational process is, first of all, the professional and moral qualities of teachers represented in the digital environment, and the ability of students to properly interact with teachers and peers, carrying out the educational process in a digital format. The main problems of digital etiquette are the psychological isolation between the digital world and the real world and the ability to respect the boundaries of personal digital space. This means that it is sometimes difficult for a user to position themselves in the same social role in online and offline environments and to observe the usual standards of behavior as in real life.

Corporate learning in this case has the advantage that it accurately matches the age groups of faculty and students, often belonging to the same generation. This same feature also helps corporate learning to successfully overcome the next point - the digital divide.

The competency-based meaning of digital inequality of educational process participants, first of all, is based on different ways of perception and thinking of people belonging to different generations. A significant role is played by the fact that users acquire previous experience of using digital technologies and digital educational resources in particular. On the other hand, the phenomenon of digital inequality can arise not only in the tandem "teacher-student", but it can also manifest itself in the teaching community, between colleagues with different levels of digital technology, or between teachers and administrators who have different views on the digitalization of the educational process.

The level of students' demand for digital content in corporate training remains the same. This is primarily due to the widespread practice of blended learning in the corporate sphere, where most classes are held in an online environment, and some interaction takes place in the traditional face-to-face way. The demands of university students for digital content are quite serious and continue to grow. They either do not perceive or refuse to receive information presented in an insufficiently interactive format, little dynamic, or visually unappealing style. Students' demands for digital content are somewhat lower than those of students.

The misconception of gamification of education is based on the belief that knowledge and skills acquired in-game form can be effective only for younger students or even for preschool education. In fact, gamification techniques in education are being actively implemented in both secondary and higher education. Moreover, for the field of corporate training gamification is the most relevant solution to a number of problems associated with the need for virtual simulation of production processes. The frequency and success of gamification in corporate training is perhaps the most significant of all. The real possibilities and cumulative potential of gamification are quite large and are currently a relevant area of research on the possibilities of digitalization of education.

Synchronized interaction between faculty and students is achieved through a variety of digital tools to communicate and share content in real-time: webinars, video lectures, collaborative work on documents, or live streaming on social networks. The importance of the synchronous format of interaction cannot be overestimated, and in a time of communication constraints, it has been used extensively in schools, universities, and corporate training. This format is most common in higher education.

Opportunities for a personalized approach in education today have the same scenario of development:

both for secondary, higher, and corporate training. There is a relatively little experience not only in building but also in successfully implementing individual educational trajectories, while the need for personalized education is quite significant.

Microlearning involves the presentation of learning material, dividing it into independent (relatively independent) small blocks, allowing the evaluation of a separate "microskill". The corporate sector is leading the way in microlearning. Higher education is at the stage of recognition of microlearning as an effective method of digitalization of education. In secondary education, this method is less actively used.

The use of mobile digital learning resources, which should be understood as an organized, controlled, purposeful process of teacher-student interaction using mobile devices, is carried out with the use of adapted educational content and ergonomics of the corresponding electronic educational resource. Students and teachers, both technically and psychologically, are ready for the active use of mobile technologies in the educational process and agree that they greatly simplify and make the process of digital interaction more flexible (in time and place of its implementation). The most common method of using mobile digital resources in higher education are LMS-adapted applications, as well as multimedia educational web resources, the wide demand for which explains the high use of mobile technology in higher education and corporate training. The tasks of secondary education are implemented using mobile technology in a fragmented way in the form of separate narrowly focused digital resources designed to solve specific problems in different subjects.

The task of conducting distance examinations for corporate training is the least relevant, because this sector most often requires the defense of a thesis, and the current certification of students is in the form of tests or monitoring activities successfully implemented with the use of digital technology. Secondary education today has proved reluctant to conduct examinations in a remote online format. Thus, the 2020 graduates did not take the main state exam but received certificates of basic general education and secondary general education based on annual assessments. The Unified State Exam was held in the traditional face-to-face format and in compliance with the relevant epidemiological standards at a later date and only for graduates who were planning to enter higher education institutions. Higher education, because of the significant number of exams in the curriculum, had to solve the problem of conducting them in the online format in different ways (depending on the form of the exam and the technical capabilities of the university). The readiness of higher education to conduct distance examinations was quite high. Conducting written exams in the online format requires proctoring, which can be implemented using

special technical and human resources but is successfully carried out by a number of universities. An alternative to proctoring is the open-book exam method. Higher education has successfully used various videoconferencing platforms for ongoing oral exams [17].

The demand for ready-made open content (mainly MOOCs) is the least relevant for the corporate sector because of the narrowly focused specifics of the courses being studied. Foreign resources with open content in higher education are the most in-demand, although their share in the total volume of academic courses is very small. In secondary education, ready-made content is not in demand, but it is actively used by teachers both for preparation for classes and for self-development.

Resistance to the digitalization of education is more common among teachers of secondary education. This is due to the lack of psychological and pedagogical theory of digital learning, which teachers could rely on in their work when using digital technology in practice. Higher education and corporate training are exposed to this problem to a lesser extent. Digitalization and the possibilities of its effective implementation are not unambiguous. Technical, methodological, and organizational difficulties arise both in secondary and higher education, as well as in corporate training. In addition, criteria such as human resources, legal and psychological readiness of educational institutions to the new reality are important.

4. Discussion

In March 2020, the Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, announced that due to the pandemic of covid-19 coronavirus, more than 1.5 billion young people in 165 countries were unable to attend secondary school classes [22].

The introduction of quarantine has changed everyone's life, but it has especially affected educational institutions, forcing people to adapt to the new conditions of educational services. However, the problem of distance learning remains as urgent as ever in the context of the coronavirus pandemic [14; 6].

Quarantine, which in the early spring of 2020 seemed to be a temporary measure, has become long-lasting and has taken on the signs of a "new reality." Education is one of the areas most affected by these new conditions of life.

All educational institutions, including universities, had to respond quickly to the challenges of the pandemic and move the educational process to remote or hybrid (mixed) modes. Teachers at Ukrainian institutions of higher education literally adapted their disciplines to the distance format in one day. Most of them had no experience in using online tools, skills of remote communication with students, or did not have the appropriate methodological and technical support for distance teaching of their courses. The distance learning practices that have developed both

in different higher education institutions (HEIs) and within the same university, faculty, and even department are very different and varied [4; 15; 16]. Teachers use different software and platforms, conduct classes with or without presentation materials, with or without interactive methods, adapt their courses to a remote format, or simply use videoconferencing instead of traditional classrooms. Some Ukrainian universities have systematically organized the process of distance learning, but in a number of universities, the learning process has become chaotic and continues to be a challenge and test for both teachers and students [7]. This, in turn, leads to growing skepticism about the quality of this learning process and rightly raises the question in society: can online learning be effective? [11].

However, in the context of this discussion, online education must be clearly separated from emergency distance learning. The term "emergency distance learning" is already widely used and discussed by foreign experts and is clearly separated from the established terminology of online education (online education, e-learning). In today's world of teacher education, there are two conceptually opposed theories of learning: online learning and distance learning.

Online learning is often a forced form, largely inheriting classroom teaching methods. It has its advantages, such as the ease of demonstrating presentations and videos, online testing, etc., but it also has some disadvantages. Moreover, there are both technical disadvantages, such as communication problems, and fundamental ones, such as the lack of contact, both visual and emotional, between instructors and students [19].

Distance learning is a fundamentally different approach to communication and a different learning structure. In distance learning, the instructor may not meet with the students at all in online broadcasts, but only follow up with them via chat as needed [23]. Remote learning offers a wide range of technological tools such as audio podcasts, video clips, various simulations, and online tests. However, the main feature of distance learning is the careful tracking of the student's progress, building his or her individual trajectory. While online learning attempts to inherit classroom teaching methods, distance learning has a computer game model whose new levels can only be unlocked after passing the previous ones [26].

Online education is a well-designed, consistent, and pre-planned process that includes appropriate methodology and the development of subjects and educational programs. In addition, emergency distance learning is used in response to crises, and the design of subjects and educational programs is developed for regular classroom instruction [12]

Emergency distance learning may be used temporarily in "emergency mode," but if this mode

becomes the new reality, it is worth thinking about the transition to online education with its laws, rules, methodology, techniques, and practices. It is not an easy and resource-intensive process.

Xie and Rice [24] distinguish two types of distance learning, which depend on the nature of the organization of educational communication between the participants in the educational process and its organizers, the way of building a communication channel of the educational environment, and the means of information transfer. form of learning, the second type—electronic distance learning, characterized by synchronous and asynchronous interaction between the participants and organizers of the educational process and the predominant and fundamental use of electronic learning systems, Internet, multimedia learning tools, and information and communication technologies.

Hodges et al., consider distance learning as a fundamentally new form of learning as a system. They define the key components of a distance learning system, including the distance learning environment (platform) with the necessary means of communication, the base of learning materials (lectures, electronic literature, video, and audio materials), monitoring and evaluation tools (practical exercises, tests, forums, web quests, scribing, etc.), participants (subjects) of distance learning and technical specialists (programmers, administrators)

According to Toquero [21], it is important to separate the concepts of the educational system and the educational process. The essence of this section is that the educational system involves the design stage, while the educational process is the implementation of the system, developed at the design stage, in the actual activities of teachers and students. Distance education is not a modernization or an analogue of distance learning but is introduced as a fundamentally new form of education. The difference between these forms lies in the factors of interactivity, the means of implementation of all components of the education system, the specifics of the use of Internet services in distance education, etc.

It should be noted that in scientific and pedagogical literature the terms distance learning and distance education are often used interchangeably. However, they are significantly different from each other, as well as the general pedagogical concepts of “training” and “education”.

When analyzing the phenomenon of distance education, we should focus on the analysis of the definition of “open education”, which is used in many scientific journals of post-Soviet countries in connection with the development of distance learning.

Alvarez [3] analyzing the state of development and the main means of open education today, emphasizes different goals and objectives of these types of education: if distance education develops in the field of improving

access to education for people who could not get it for various reasons, open education tools are largely designed to improve the quality of education.

Thus, open education, in contrast to distance education, is focused mainly on the search for new methods and techniques of teaching, updating training and organization of the educational process, and new technologies are important only in the context of their creative use in the education system.

According to Alasmari [2], e-learning primarily involves the use of Internet technologies to ensure the effectiveness of knowledge acquisition and is based on three key principles: learning is carried out over the network; Delivery of educational content to the end-user is done by computer using standard Internet technologies. E-learning is often used synonymously with web-based learning and online learning. Thus, the term can be understood as the intensive use of computers, multimedia, Internet resources, and remote communication systems in learning. During e-learning, students mostly work independently with electronic materials (textbooks, courses, educational systems), receiving remote consultations from the teacher via the Internet. Similarly, online communities are created, including those for students in the same course with a particular instructor, who conducts online consultations, receives and checks students' assignments, and monitors their performance. For example, the use of distance learning technologies in primary education has its own characteristics. Among the key aspects that are actualized precisely in distance work with the youngest audience of students we note: organizational component, which requires the teacher to develop a clear structure of the online lesson with the change of active and passive stages of the lesson; peculiarity of educational and methodological content used for the educational process, which needs to be integrated into the information cluster of online game or online development projects; communication factor, involving the use of psychological and pedagogical methods on the interest of elementary school students and the actualization of their attention.

It should be noted that some elements of the distance form of learning have not revealed effectiveness specifically for the elementary school. First of all, we are talking about the psychological features of working with elementary school students. The effectiveness of educational activities in the elementary school largely depends on the establishment of interpersonal contact between the teacher and the student, based on trust and authority. We are talking about eye contact, communication factors (communication, actualization of attention, conducting a dialogue). Of course, distance learning cannot fully provide such interaction between the teacher and the student. However, this becomes a priority in the organization of the work of the elementary school

teacher, who must expand the arsenal of his/her skills and abilities to work in the educational and digital space. Let us note the urgent need to form new soft-skills with an emphasis on digital-skills in the elementary school teaching staff, which will allow successful adaptation to the conditions of distance learning.

The proliferation of e-learning has led to a new type of learning-mixed learning. Blended learning (hybrid, blended, integrative learning, technology-based learning, web-based learning, blended learning) is a form of learning in which the student learns one part of the material through distance learning, while the other part is studied in person in the class.

Emergency distance learning is a temporary transition of the educational process to an alternative mode of learning due to crisis circumstances. In this situation, the main goal is not to replicate a sustainable educational ecosystem, but rather to provide temporary access to learning and learning support that is easy to set up and make available during an emergency or crisis.

5. Conclusion

Digital technologies in education are creating a new dynamically developing market sector, the demand for which is enormous in the context of the widespread transition to a remote format of interaction. The study of trends in the global and domestic online education market has shown that the first half of 2020 has influenced the development of the EdTech industry. However, the current market structure, as well as the projected indicators, have not changed, so secondary and higher education remain the leaders in digital technology consumption. The Ukrainian EdTech market is not a leader in the structure of the global EdTech industry, but it demonstrates positive growth rates. In addition, the period of temporary communication limitations associated with self-isolation became a driver for the Ukrainian EdTech market and allowed it to demonstrate a significantly higher growth rate in relation to the global values. A logical assessment of the possibilities of the distance learning process implemented in a digital format for secondary and higher education, as well as corporate training, allowed to formulate and justify the value of a number of the most relevant criteria. The justification of each of the presented criteria for evaluating the distance learning process implemented in a digital format contributed to the identification of problems and shortcomings of online learning, which can serve as a topic for further research in this area.

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