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# DISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATIVE PROPAGANDA IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF ENSURING SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS SECURITY IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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**Abstract**
This scientific article explores the negative impact of disinformation and manipulative propaganda technologies, rapidly escalating in the context of the digital society, on the security of social consciousness, alongside the socio-philosophical foundations of overcoming this through the educational system. In the era of globalization, "post-truth," and the unprecedented development of information and communication technologies, the mechanisms of artificially polarizing society–and particularly the minds of the youth–through information attacks in the cognitive space, fake news networks, and "echo chambers" are scientifically analyzed. The study reveals the epistemological and socio-psychological essence of manipulative propaganda and scientifically substantiates the strategic role of the educational system in ensuring the stability of social consciousness and spiritual security. Furthermore, conceptual philosophical and pedagogical models for developing critical thinking, enhancing media literacy, and strengthening socio-cultural immunity among student youth are elaborated. The article concludes with practical proposals and recommendations aimed at implementing preventive and rational defense mechanisms against digital information attacks within the educational system.

**Keywords**: digital society, disinformation, manipulative propaganda, social consciousness, social consciousness security, educational system, social philosophy, critical thinking, media literacy, cognitive security, post-truth, ideological immunity, epistemology.

## Introduction

In the 21st century, the unprecedented advancement of information and communication technologies and digitalization processes has ushered human civilization into a new era–the digital society. Today, information functions not merely as a driver of socio-economic development, but as the most potent instrument of cognitive influence capable of advancing geopolitical, ideological, and political interests while managing mass psychology [5, p. 34; 9, p. 73]. In this complex era, conceptualized in philosophical and political literature as "post-truth," manipulative information appealing to personal beliefs, prejudices, and emotions exerts a decisive force in shaping public opinion rather than objective facts [7, p. 45]. Consequently, this dynamic precipitates a profound epistemological crisis in society, severely restricting

individuals' capacity to distinguish accurate information from falsehood and truth from illusion.

The challenge of governing social consciousness through disinformation and manipulative propaganda technologies has transcended the narrow confines of technical cybersecurity, rising directly to the level of national and spiritual security of states [1, p. 215]. Targeted cognitive attacks directed at youth consciousness via social networks, artificial intelligence, and various digital platforms–alongside clashes of values and artificial social polarization–pose an immediate threat to societal stability. In particular, students and young people, whose independent worldview and life experience are still maturing, have become the primary and most vulnerable targets of these digital manipulations [10, p. 41].

Under such conditions, cultivating ideological immunity against digital information attacks among the rising generation constitutes one of the most critical priorities of socio-political development. The most reliable and strategic institution for safeguarding the security of social consciousness is the education system. Contemporary education can no longer remain confined to the traditional function of transmitting academic knowledge. Its core mission must encompass developing critical thinking, information hygiene, media literacy, and the capacity for philosophical and logical analysis of reality among students.

The purpose of this study is to uncover the socio-philosophical and epistemological essence of disinformation and manipulative propaganda in the digital society, as well as to formulate conceptual, pedagogical-philosophical foundations for ensuring the cognitive security and ideological immunity of young learners through the education system.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Problems related to the digital society, information manipulation, and the security of social consciousness have been extensively explored in global socio-philosophical thought. The conception of the modern information society received profound analytical treatment in Manuel Castells's theory of the "Network Society" [6, p. 112]. His research substantiates how information technologies fundamentally restructure the socio-economic fabric of society, shifting social interactions onto digital platforms.

The epistemological roots of post-truth and disinformation trace back to the ideas advanced by French philosopher Jean Baudrillard in Simulacra and Simulation. According to Baudrillard, the contemporary media space is saturated with copies lacking an original reality–"simulacra"–and modern fake news and visual disinformation represent vivid manifestations of this phenomenon [3, p. 56]. Furthermore, scholarly works by researchers such as Georgii Pocheptsov [5, p. 88] and Lee McIntyre [7, p. 120] on cognitive warfare, information-psychological manipulation, and the "post-truth" phenomenon serve as vital methodological foundations.

Within the socio-philosophical and pedagogical school of Uzbekistan, issues of protecting public consciousness from informational and ideological attacks and preserving national identity are examined at the level of state policy [1, p. 230]. Specifically, the concept of ideological immunity, the synthesis of national and universal values in youth upbringing, and spiritual security within the education system have been comprehensively elucidated by

domestic philosophers, including Q. Nazarov and others [8, p. 145]. In addition, contemporary studies on psychological strategies of influencing consciousness [9, p. 75] and socio-philosophical factors shaping social consciousness [10, p. 40] highlight the urgency of defensive mechanisms. Nevertheless, a holistic investigation of disinformation and propaganda directly within the framework of digital epistemology and the cognitive security mission of education remains an imperative scientific task today.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In examining the digital factors influencing social consciousness, this study relies on the dialectical unity of socio-philosophical and epistemological approaches. To objectively evaluate manipulative processes in the digital space, the following scientific methods were employed:

Systemic-Structural Approach: Society, the education system, and the information space were examined as an integrated system, enabling an analysis of how disinformation affects structural components of society.

Epistemological Analysis: The cognitive processes through which an information-receiving subject perceives digital content as truth or falsehood, as well as how consciousness falls into manipulative traps, were investigated from the standpoint of the philosophy of knowledge.

Comparative-Pedagogical Method: Differences between the traditional educational paradigm and the digital-era educational paradigm (focused on critical evaluation of information) were compared to construct new pedagogical-philosophical models.

Sociocultural Analysis: The protective function ("shield role") of historical memory and national values in fostering ideological immunity among young learners was explored.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A socio-philosophical analysis of manipulating human consciousness in the digital society demonstrates that contemporary information attacks target the emotional and instinctive layers of the psyche rather than rational thinking [5, p. 112]. Digital platforms and artificial intelligence algorithms enclose individuals within "echo chambers" and "filter bubbles" composed of like-minded groups. As a result, the subject begins to inhabit an artificial reality–hyperreality–that feels comfortable yet remains detached from objective truth [3, p. 89].

This process induces an acute cognitive crisis, particularly within the consciousness of students. Because the value system of the younger generation has not yet fully crystallized, young people frequently fall victim to what philosopher Erich Fromm termed "automaton conformity" [4, p. 134]. Instead of engaging in independent analysis, youth often choose to blindly follow trending narratives on social media. Architects of disinformation exploit this conformity to generate social polarization and institutional distrust within society.

Countering such cognitive attacks cannot be achieved solely through administrative measures like banning or blocking information. The only sustainable and effective path is to construct an internal defense mechanism–ideological immunity–within the minds and thinking patterns of young learners via the education system. Within the scope of this research, the following

conceptual pedagogical-philosophical models for ensuring the security of social consciousness in education were developed:

Rational Analysis and the Socratic Method: The educational process must transition toward a Socratic dialogue system that questions incoming information and uncovers truth through logical inquiry [8, p. 177]. Students must evolve from passive objects absorbing ready-made dogmas into active subjects capable of critically evaluating information.

Epistemological Vigilance (Media Literacy): Information hygiene has become a fundamental necessity. The education system must explain to youth, from sociological and psychological perspectives, the psychological architecture of fake news and how manipulative triggers operate.

Sociocultural Shield: The lofty moral criteria and ideals of spiritual perfection articulated by Eastern thinkers–particularly Abu Nasr al-Farabi's conception of The Virtuous City–must be conveyed to youth in a modern format [2, p. 67]. Maintaining a balance between national and universal values serves as the most resilient immunity ensuring cognitive stability.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The irreversible nature of the digital society and globalization demonstrates that safeguarding the security of social consciousness for future generations is the foremost strategic task facing socio-philosophical thought and pedagogical science in Uzbekistan. Disinformation and manipulative propaganda represent not merely the dissemination of falsehoods, but a deliberate process aimed at altering a nation's cognitive map and eroding its identity.

Based on the foregoing analysis, the following recommendations are proposed for the education system to cultivate ideological immunity among youth:

Introduce specialized courses titled "Practical Media Literacy and Critical Thinking" grounded in philosophy, logic, and sociology into the upper grades of general secondary schools and across all academic disciplines in higher education institutions.

Transform the role of educators in the learning process from mere transmitters of information (lecturers) into cognitive navigators (facilitators) who guide youth toward reliable orientation in the digital space.

Widely implement creative-analytical methods–such as hermeneutic text analysis and logical evaluation–in the teaching of humanities subjects (history, literature, and philosophy).

Adapt the intellectual heritage of our classical thinkers to the language of the digital generation, promoting it as a conceptual system of spiritual values capable of resisting modern information attacks.

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