

The Role Of Spiritual Security In Protecting Youth From Internet Threats

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Abstract. This article analyzes the increasing information threats in the Internet space, their impact on the consciousness of young people, and the role of spiritual security in overcoming them. It is noted that the rapid growth of digital information flows directly affects the worldview, values, and social behavior of youth. The study examines risk factors such as harmful content, manipulative information, and virtual addiction, and highlights the theoretical and practical foundations of strengthening spiritual immunity against them. In addition, the importance of the education system, the educational role of the family environment, mass media, and state policy in ensuring spiritual security is substantiated.

Keywords: Threat, internet threat, cyber threats, virtual, manipulation, algorithms, cyber relations, cyberbullying, spiritual security.

Introduction. In the modern digital era, the Internet has become an integral part of young people's lives. It creates great opportunities for education, communication, and development. At the same time, risks such as false information, cyber threats, harmful content, and virtual pressure are also increasing.

Today, humanity lives in an era of the Internet, mobile globalization, and digital technologies. The rapidly changing lifestyle is undoubtedly closely connected with modern technologies. At present, social networks, which have become a "companion" and sometimes a "virtual friend" for all humanity, attract millions of people's attention. [1]

Before addressing spiritual threats, it is necessary to define the concept of threat. A threat is any condition, action, or situation that poses danger to something and may cause physical, spiritual, or psychological harm. It can originate from external or internal sources, such as terrorism, extremism (religious or political), fanaticism, betrayal, indifference to national values, and cosmopolitanism.

Internet Threat. In recent years, Internet technologies have become an integral part of our lives. Digital solutions are widely used in areas such as public administration, education, healthcare, banking systems, and daily communication. At the same time, operating in the Internet environment has given rise to numerous risks and threats. Internet security today is viewed not only as a technical issue but also as a social and legal problem. [2]

Today, Internet technologies are an inseparable part of everyday life. Banking operations are conducted, public services are provided, and digital solutions are implemented in education and healthcare systems through the Internet. However, alongside these conveniences, threats such as cybercrime, theft of personal data, malicious software, and information manipulation are increasing. Under such conditions, ensuring information security and protecting citizens' rights in the digital space has become urgent tasks.

Information Threat. It is difficult to imagine the modern world without the technologies we use today. Every company and organization uses various technical devices; many processes are automated, and many systems operate according to written software. With the help of modern programs and computer technologies, people have achieved significant progress and changes in almost all spheres of society.

On November 29 of this year, a seminar titled "Information Security Threats and Methods of Combating Them" was held for employees of the Inspection for Control over the Agro-Industrial Complex under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, aimed at improving their knowledge and skills in ensuring information security. Responsible employees for information security and other staff members participated in the seminar. [3]

During the seminar, Farkod Alimjanovich Abdusalyamov, an employee of the “Technical Assistance Center,” delivered a presentation emphasizing the high demand for information and communication technologies in the information age and the urgent importance of ensuring information security and preventing various threats and incidents in an era of rapid information exchange is of critical importance.

The Role of Spiritual Security

Spiritual security plays a vital role in protecting young people from such threats. Spiritual security means strengthening young people's consciousness to a level where they are mentally healthy, able to distinguish information, and capable of self-protection. [4] Youth with strong spiritual foundations do not succumb to negative Internet influences; they make conscious choices and protect themselves from harmful consequences.

The principles of the national idea are based on the spiritual values of our people, such as the prosperity of the Motherland, peace and stability of the country, public welfare, interethnic harmony, religious tolerance, social solidarity, and the formation of a harmonious individual. These principles reflect the connection and unity of national ideology with various spheres of social life, the spiritual foundations of the Uzbek people, their national-cultural heritage, traditions, customs, values, language, culture, history, and philosophy.

Intellectual violence is an ongoing global information war aimed directly at influencing worldviews, especially targeting adolescents and young people whose worldviews are still forming.

This war, carried out through mass media, prevents individuals from correctly perceiving events, objectifies reality in a specific way, and exerts a destructive influence on the spiritual sphere of modern society. It fosters consumerist attitudes toward others and the state, creates conditions for conflicts and military-political crises, and manipulates public consciousness. Such processes blur value orientations, generate fear, devalue universally accepted values and state institutions, and intensify conflicts, making spiritual security increasingly urgent in modern society.

Spiritual security must focus on identifying specific sources of threats and determining the essential elements of a socio-cultural system capable of self-preservation and progressive development in changing social relations.

Internet Threats and Youth Vulnerability As the digital space expands, the Internet not only provides convenience for information access, education, and creativity but also intensifies various forms of threats. Since young people's consciousness is still developing, they are more sensitive to harmful content, fake information, cyber relations, and virtual pressure. Therefore, understanding Internet threats and strengthening protection mechanisms is one of society's urgent tasks.

One of the main forms of Internet threats is information attacks. False or misleading information negatively affects young people's worldview, confuses them, and disrupts their thinking processes. Online harassment—ridicule, intimidation, or pressure through social networks—poses a serious risk to young people's mental health. Harmful content that is inappropriate for youth psychology can lead to depression, fear, or inappropriate behavior. Theft of personal data increases when young people lack sufficient Internet culture. Virtual addiction, caused by excessive engagement with endless content and games, negatively affects education, health, and social relations.

Spiritual Security as Protection. Spiritual security is the process of shaping young people's consciousness to rely on accurate information, think independently, and approach social phenomena consciously.

The following aspects are essential:

- Critical information literacy: The ability to verify sources, intentions, and reliability protects youth from manipulative content.
- National and universal values: Youth who know their culture, history, and social norms are less likely to be influenced by destructive ideas online.
- Psychological resilience: Spiritually strong adolescents are more resistant to cyberbullying and negative opinions.
- Responsible Internet culture: Adhering to online ethics and understanding the consequences of actions protects both oneself and others.

Family, Education, and State Responsibility. Parents and teachers must educate youth on Internet usage culture, major risks, and personal safety rules. Supervision and support from adults help prevent deviation.

In Uzbekistan, the number of Internet users exceeds 12 million, most of whom are students and young people. Observations of Uzbek-language social networks show that over 90% of content promotes low-quality and indecent material. Alarmingly, these platforms attract the largest audiences. [5]

In 2017, Uzbekistan declared the “Year of Dialogue with the People and Human Interests,” significantly expanding the information space and introducing People’s Reception Offices for the first time. [6] Citizens could submit appeals directly through virtual platforms, accelerating problem-solving. In 2022, the year was declared the “Year of Honoring Human Dignity and Active Mahalla.” [7]

From January 1, 2022, assistants to local governors were appointed in every neighborhood to promote entrepreneurship, employment, and poverty reduction.

These measures increased public awareness and trust in justice. When mechanisms for direct dialogue with the people function effectively, information threats lose their significance. People become more vigilant and discerning in information consumption.

Presidential Statements and Initiatives

The President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, raised issues of youth cybersecurity and combating ideological threats during a meeting on February 14, 2025, emphasizing the importance of protecting youth from alien ideas and instilling spiritual values. [8]

Understanding Internet algorithms, fake accounts, fraudulent links, privacy settings, fact-checking, and verification methods helps youth protect themselves.

At the expanded Security Council meeting on January 12, 2024, the President highlighted the importance of national content creation and protecting youth from Internet threats. [9]

Psychological support systems for youth facing cyberbullying are effective tools. Creating an environment where feelings can be freely expressed is crucial.

Engaging in reading, creativity, physical activity, and social projects directs youth toward positive activities and prevents excessive Internet dependence. [10]

Legislation, training programs, awareness campaigns, and special platforms aimed at protecting youth from information threats contribute to strengthening spiritual security.

Institutional Framework. State and non-state organizations, public associations, and institutions such as the Republican Center for Spirituality and Enlightenment, local authorities, mahalla citizens’ assemblies, the “family–mahalla–education institution” cooperation model, and public organizations play an essential role in ensuring spiritual security. [11]

Raising morally upright, disciplined, educated, and patriotic youth is recognized as a key factor in Uzbekistan’s development. Cultivating civic responsibility among youth is fundamental to social stability and national progress.

Conclusion. In the era of widespread digital technologies, the Internet has become not only a tool for information exchange and education but also a global environment directly influencing the spirituality of youth. Unlimited information flows, uncontrolled content, manipulative information, extremist ideas, virtual addiction, and moral-ethical threats are causing significant changes in young people’s worldview, decision-making abilities, values, and social activity. Therefore, protecting youth from Internet threats should be viewed not only as a technical security issue but as a strategic direction of spiritual security.

As emphasized by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, protecting young people from “foreign ideas, harmful information, and ideological viruses” is a priority of state policy. This approach demonstrates the need to integrate Internet security with systematic spiritual education involving families, educational institutions, society, mass media, and state institutions. Creating a national information environment and fostering media literacy and critical thinking skills among youth serve as the foundation of spiritual immunity.

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