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The media ecosystem between anesthesia and empowerment: toward a pedagogical-didactic criteria framework for addressing youth disengagement

Francesco Paolo Romeo[1], Luana Rodriquez[2], *

[1] Pegaso University; francescopaolo.romeo@unipegaso.it
[2] Interpreter translator and media discourse analyst; luana.rodriquez@gmail.com
***** Correspondence: francescopaolo.romeo@unipegaso.it

Abstract: This theoretical and argumentative article investigates the dynamics of youth disengagement in Italy, particularly within the post-pandemic context, critically examining a media ecosystem polarized between anesthesia and empowerment. Drawing on data from ISTAT and other studies, it documents a structural vulnerability affecting not only the emotional and relational sphere but also, in a novel way, the cognitive and linguistic dimensions of millions of young people. To decode this scenario, the article introduces the critical paradigm of the "zombification" of the youth spirit, characterized by apathy, diminished agency, and semantic impoverishment. The authors challenge the mythologized and self-absolving narratives commonly associated with this phenomenon, demonstrating that contemporary isolation is not a temporary condition but rather the outcome of a profound crisis of identity-related meaning-making. In response to the risk of a persistent state of media-induced anesthesia driven by standardized digital flows, the article advances an original proposal in the form of a pedagogical-didactic criteria framework designed to counter youth disengagement. This framework seeks to govern processes of algorithmic personalization by transforming them from mechanisms of passivization into instruments of empowerment. In conclusion, the contribution demonstrates the urgency of an algorethical reconfiguration of educational technologies, arguing that only a purposeful educational intervention can transform technological alienation into an authentic process of empowerment, restoring to younger generations intellectual autonomy, social agency, and the capacity for future-oriented action.

Keywords: youth disengagement; algorithmic personalization; epistemic agency.

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1. Introduction[1]

When discussing *disengagement*, as opposed to *engagement*, a condition that contemporary post-digital (Dipace *et al.*, 2023) and increasingly complex societies identify as a vital prerequisite for collective flourishing and individual emancipation, we are in fact referring to a persistent and dysfunctional reality affecting thousands

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of adolescents and young people in Italy, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the nearly six years that have passed since the onset of the national *lockdown* and the subsequent declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organization, a substantial body of research has sought to examine the mental health of children, adolescents, and young people, as well as to identify the factors underlying a steadily increasing and pervasive condition of psychological distress. The enduring effects of this phenomenon remain evident today in the diverse forms of maladaptive behavior displayed by younger generations.

From the early exploratory *online study* conducted in Sardinia during the first months of the COVID-19 health emergency on children aged 4 to 10 years (Pisano & Cerniglia, 2020), which highlighted previously unreported regressive, oppositional, and adaptive behaviors, to the increasingly detailed and targeted reports produced by ISTAT in the post-pandemic period (2021, 2022, 2023a) to shed light on the psychological and relational distress affecting younger generations, a pattern of vulnerability has progressively come to light. This vulnerability has now assumed a structural character and extends across multiple dimensions of young people's lives.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) formally declared the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency in May 2023, and as the war in Ukraine continued to fuel widespread uncertainty and concern, the ISTAT *Annual Report* 2023 (2023b) documented significant forms of youth deprivation. The report found that nearly five million young adults aged 18 to 35 had shown signs of vulnerability during the previous year, reflected in reduced social and political participation, weakening institutional trust, and persistent difficulties in accessing and engaging with employment opportunities and educational trajectories. These findings point to a broader condition of disengagement that extends beyond individual circumstances and increasingly assumes the characteristics of a structural social phenomenon.

According to ISTAT, indicators of youth well-being in Italy are among the lowest in Europe, highlighting a persistent condition of disadvantage when compared with other European countries.

When examining *indicators of youth distress*, understood as dysfunctional manifestations affecting adolescents and young people in Italy, it is possible to observe that such symptoms have traditionally been associated with the *emotional-affective* and *socio-relational* domains. More recently, and in a largely unprecedented manner, they have also extended to the *cognitive sphere*. This is particularly evident in the progressive impoverishment of language at the syntactic, semantic, and symbolic levels (Romeo, 2026). As a result, language increasingly loses its nature as an *event* (Petrosino, 1999) and its role as a primary medium through which individuals search for meaning, construct their identities, and pursue personal growth and transformation.

Concerning the compromised emotional and affective condition of adolescents and young people, it is possible to advance an interpretative paradigm that both encompasses and epistemologically describes this phenomenon: the *zombification of the youth subjectivity* (Romeo, 2024, 2025). This condition is characterized by a generalized emotional numbing, a marked erosion of agency and social engagement, and, more alarmingly, by the increase in suicide attempts among children and adolescents observed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept is

intended to capture a progressive weakening of the capacity to invest emotionally, relate socially, and envision meaningful future possibilities, thereby reflecting a broader crisis in youth subjectivity and self-determination.

A paradigm that transcends the realm of metaphor to acquire a concrete clinical and social relevance, reflecting a condition that is no longer merely symbolic but increasingly observable in lived experience and empirical reality.

Within this paradigm of critical diagnosis, several characteristic manifestations can be observed among adolescents. These include the emergence of *abulic attitudes*, marked by a diminished capacity for volition; *anhedonic* tendencies, reflected in a loss of interest and pleasure; *apathetic* dispositions, characterized by reduced emotional investment and passion; and *asthenic* conditions associated with low levels of physical and psychological energy.

The paradigm also encompasses a tendency toward *self-devaluation and the internalization of responsibility for personal failures*, a pattern that stands in contrast to the myth-making and self-exculpatory dynamics of personal narratives highlighted by scholars of storytelling (Gottschall, 2014). Present-oriented thinking, social withdrawal, and other forms of disengagement likewise belong to this constellation of symptoms.

More specifically, the following manifestations have been identified:

a) *Alexithymia and relatively stable Callous-Unemotional personality traits*, characterized by a generalized difficulty in identifying and verbalizing one's emotional experiences throughout the different stages of the pandemic and extending into the present. These traits are accompanied by forms of emotional detachment from life events, a superficial affective orientation toward both others and oneself, diminished responsibility-taking, and a marked deficit in empathic responsiveness;

b) *Compassionate and self-compassionate responses rather than empathic ones,* that is, forms of affective participation in another person's suffering that are emotionally intense but insufficiently differentiated. Although motivated by the intention to care, such responses fail to achieve the affective distancing necessary for empathy, understood as the capacity to enter the other's experiential world while maintaining a distinct perspective from which resilient coping and personal growth may be encouraged;

c) A *tendency toward self-demythologization*, expressed through narratives of extreme vulnerability and diminished resilience. Despite having successfully endured the unprecedented challenges of recent years, often without adequate educational support, many young people appear unable to recognize their own adaptive capacities. This pattern contrasts sharply with the *self-enhancing* and *self-aggrandizing* tendencies typically documented in autobiographical narratives (ibid.);

d) An *excessive tendency toward self-blame*. Contrary to the *self-exculpatory tendency* commonly observed in personal narratives (ibid.), whereby failures are almost invariably attributed to external causes, preadolescent and adolescent students often assume full responsibility, in a society that expects them to be invulnerable and never to cry, for not having been able to fully cope with and overcome the pandemic. At the same time, they struggle to recognize and acknowledge the

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successes they have nevertheless achieved. In essence, the locus of control among young people, that is, the symbolic place where the causes of success and failure are attributed (Rotter, 1966), tends to be *internal* when reflecting on what they perceive as their imperfect management of the pandemic and other crises of our time, yet external when it comes to valuing and taking ownership of their achievements. This particular form of youth distress clearly reveals the inability of these *helpless* preadolescent and adolescent students to open themselves authentically to the sharing of their emotional and affective experiences and, consequently, to realize that suffering has affected millions of their peers, rather than themselves alone;

e) A *generalized distrust* resulting from the anthropological reversal that has characterized the dynamics of trust formation since the twentieth century. If, in the past, granting and receiving trust constituted a culturally constructive act in itself, today it appears necessary, often gradually, to ascertain whether the interlocutor is truly deserving of our trust (Romeo *et al.*, 2023). Indeed, within contemporary communities, at least since the mid-twentieth century, the anthropological triad of *trust, entrusting oneself, and confiding in others* has increasingly been replaced by the pair *distrust/challenge*;

f) *consolidamento delle chiusure narrative con conseguente sviluppo di un monologo interiore*, dunque non di una riflessività appropriata sperimentata nei termini di un dialogo con sé stessi e in relazione al mondo (Archer, 2009), ma di una vera è propria *iper-riflessività* sterile, una ruminazione se vogliamo, che ha costretto molti adolescenti a immaginare uno scenario suicidario;

g) *Lexical impoverishment* at the syntactic, semantic, and symbolic levels, which would otherwise contribute to shaping both personal and professional worlds. Adolescents and young people tend to simplify language to an extreme degree, avoid using causal constructions or references to the future in their discourse, and display difficulties in understanding and employing words in contexts different from those in which they usually interact with their peer groups. They also rarely engage in an in-depth exploration of their own life histories, for example through the construction of metaphors capable of generating meaning and subsequently shaping those histories toward a more conscious and attainable personal and professional future. Similar to J. Lacan's (1983) concept of *lalangue*, contemporary youth language has become a "language" that functions more as an organ of the body than as an apparatus for communication, signification, and self-expression, that is, as an instrument through which individuals can make their voices heard, legitimize their points of view, express their needs, and articulate plans for the future (Romeo, 2026);

h) *The blockage of life projects and the widespread perception of a closed future among adolescents and young people*, especially during developmental age, when the impulse toward exploratory action and social engagement should ordinarily reach its acme;

i) Instinctual behaviors, heightened corporeality, and the transition from group-based logics to pack-based logics;

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At the turn of the millennium, and especially at the beginning of the new one, there was, in parallel, an observed *progression of emotional-affective and socio-relational inabilities* among children and young people, such as the phenomena of bullying and cyberbullying both at school and online, which in 2017 prompted our country to legislate on the matter (Law 71/2017) and subsequently to introduce new measures for their prevention and counteraction through Legislative Decree No. 99 of 12 June 2025; adolescent antisociality, evidenced by the no longer uncommon transformation of groups into youth gangs, recalling the case of the "Orfanelli" baby gang of Manduria, which in 2019 led to the death of a disabled adult as a result of the beatings inflicted upon him, and, again in Taranto in May 2026, the case of a minor who, supported by his pack, fatally stabbed a young agricultural worker from Mali; large-scale brawls, which emerged as a phenomenon beginning with the third wave of the pandemic, namely in January 2021, when social restrictions became unbearable for many; *revenge porn* (a criminal offence established under Law 69/2019); the continuing unspeakable group sexual abuses against minors in Caivano during the summer of 2023; and, finally, the increase in urban guerrilla-like violence.

Emotional-affective and socio-relational inabilities that seem almost to switch off entirely, indeed to "mortify", those vital dimensions of the person that are indispensable to the full realization of affective and relational existence.

2. Echo chambers, scrolling, and learning: information selectivity and cognitive transformations in contemporary digital environments

Within this dramatic framework, further aggravated by the long-term effects of the pandemic and inscribed within a broader cognitive, emotional-affective, relational, and participatory crisis, the infodemic, permanent hyperconnectivity, and the growing algorithmic mediation of the experience of knowing are progressively redefining the conditions through which adolescents and young people construct meaning, interpret reality, and develop their personal and social identity (Rivoltella, 2020). The issue does not concern exclusively access to information, today apparently unlimited, but rather the ways through which it is selected, organized, hierarchized, and made available within digital ecosystems governed by increasingly pervasive computational logics. The dynamics proper to filter bubbles, echo chambers, and continuous scrolling (Romeo & Rodriquez, 2026a, 2026b; Romeo *et al.*, 2026), in fact, tend to circumscribe the cognitive horizon within informational configurations highly coherent with the subject's prior preferences, progressively reducing encounters with divergent perspectives, confrontation with otherness, and the possibility of activating processes of doubt, problematization, and critical restructuring of one's representations of reality.

As Mezirow (1991) points out, the core of transformative learning lies in the subject's capacity to subject his or her own frames of meaning to critical examination through engagement with alternative perspectives. From this perspective, the most pedagogically relevant risk does not consist so much in exposure to inaccurate or disinformative content as in the progressive erosion of the epistemic conditions that make critical reflexivity, cognitive dissent, and the transformation of one's interpretive structures possible.

The reduction of cognitive conflict, the rarefaction of dissent, the increasing delegation of the operations of knowledge selection and validation to technological systems, and the tendency toward *cognitive offloading*, that is, the transfer of cognitive activities from subjects to technological systems, may in fact produce forms of passive adaptation that limit critical participation in the processes of knowledge construction and foster a progressive contraction of epistemic agency, understood as the subject's capacity to participate consciously in the processes of inquiry, interpretation, validation, and transformation of knowledge. The weakening of this dimension, in turn, compromises the development of autonomy of judgment, hinders the construction of reflective and narrative identities, and reduces the opportunities for meaningful participation in the life of educational and social communities. The result is a form of cognitive, affective, and relational anesthesia that manifests itself not only as an impoverishment of critical competences, but also as a progressive difficulty for the person to recognize himself or herself as a subject capable of influencing his or her own learning pathway, attributing meaning to his or her own experience, and building authentic relationships with others.

However, in light of recent evidence showing that younger generations are becoming increasingly fearful that technological dependence may progressively reduce their personal autonomy (Eumetra & Foundation FAIR, 2026), the present contribution proposes a pedagogical-didactic criteriology of empowerment aimed at transforming the current media ecosystem from a possible factor of cognitive, identity-related, and relational anesthesia into a generative context for human development.

This criteriology is grounded in the principles of exposure to cognitive divergence, reflective friction, epistemic agency (the subject's capacity to seek, evaluate, interpret, and construct knowledge in an autonomous, critical, and conscious manner), the relational co-construction of knowledge, and identity and existential resonance, assumed as educational conditions necessary to counter youth disengagement and, at the same time, to promote autonomy of judgment, identity construction, and community participation. Within this perspective, learning is conceived as a high affective-intensity experience (Romeo, 2021), grounded in the plurality of viewpoints, a sense of belonging, educational rituality, and the shared construction of meaning in face-to-face, hybrid, and digital contexts.

The analysis of echo chambers and filter bubbles would, however, remain incomplete if it were not situated within the concrete practices through which information is consumed today. Informational selectivity does not, in fact, depend solely on the algorithms that organize content, but also on the cognitive modalities through which subjects engage with it. In this sense, continuous scrolling represents one of the most significant cultural practices of contemporary digital environments.

Unlike the sequential and in-depth reading that for a long time characterized access to knowledge, scrolling exposes the subject to a rapid and potentially infinite succession of heterogeneous informational stimuli. News, images, videos, comments, advertising content, and social interactions are perceived within the same perceptual flow, within which the boundaries between information, entertainment, and communication tend progressively to dissolve.

From a cognitive perspective, such a configuration produces a significant transformation in the modalities of attention. Attention no longer operates predominantly as prolonged focus on a single object, but rather as a rapid

mechanism of selection among competing stimuli. This favors processes of immediate recognition and rapid cognitive decision-making, reducing the time available for reflection, elaboration, and the construction of deep conceptual connections.

In educational terms, the issue appears particularly relevant, since meaningful learning generally requires opposite processes: remaining on task, the integration of information, the comparison of different ideas, and the progressive construction of stable conceptual structures. The logic of scrolling, by contrast, introduces a mode of consumption characterized by fragmentation, transience, and the continuous reconfiguration of attention.

It is not simply a matter of a decline in attentional capacity. More profoundly, the very relationship between the subject and knowledge appears to be changing. Information is perceived less and less as an object to be understood and more and more as an element to be passed through rapidly. Consequently, the value attributed to content tends increasingly to depend on its perceptual immediacy, its capacity to generate instant engagement, or its compatibility with interpretive schemes that are already available.

This transformation appears particularly problematic when it becomes intertwined with the mechanisms of *algorithmic personalization*. If algorithms privilege content that is consistent with the user's preferences and scrolling favors rapid and superficial modes of processing, the risk is that of a progressive reduction in opportunities for in-depth exploration and critical confrontation. Knowledge thus tends to organize itself according to informational configurations characterized by high perceptual coherence but low reflective density.

Within this perspective, echo chambers, algorithmic selectivity, and scrolling do not represent distinct phenomena, but rather interconnected dimensions of the same cognitive environment. The former delimits the field of available information, the second shapes its distribution, and the third conditions its modes of processing. The overall effect consists in the progressive construction of learning ecosystems in which speed tends to prevail over depth, continuity over discontinuity, and immediate recognition over critical problematization.

The pedagogical issue emerging from this scenario therefore concerns not only the quality of the information that is accessible, but also the cognitive conditions that make learning itself possible. Understanding how informational selectivity modifies attention, memory, meaning attribution, and the construction of knowledge appears today to be one of the most relevant challenges for educational research concerned with interpreting the effects of digital technologies on the processes of human development and formation.

3. Digital humanism: pedagogical and axiological criteria for technology in the service of the person

Contemporary digital technologies do not merely mediate access to information, but also contribute to structuring the epistemic conditions within which knowledge is constructed, validated, and rendered meaningful. Through processes of algorithmic selection, adaptive personalization, and profiling, digital ecosystems tend, in fact, to organize the informational experience according to criteria of coherence and predictability that reduce exposure to cognitive divergence

and interpretive conflict. Within this scenario, the encounter with epistemic otherness, rather than representing an ordinary component of learning, risks becoming increasingly rare and peripheral.

The dynamics characteristic of filter bubbles, echo chambers, and continuous scrolling thus produce effects that extend beyond the strictly informational dimension (Rodriquez & Romeo, 2026). The progressive rarefaction of dissent, the reiteration of content compatible with pre-existing beliefs, and the increasing delegation of the processes of information selection and validation to intelligent systems foster forms of cognitive rigidification and compression of interpretive plurality. Under such conditions, the subject is called upon less and less to compare sources, negotiate meanings, tolerate ambiguity, and critically restructure his or her own representations of reality.

Within this framework is situated the paradigm of *digital humanism*, understood as a theoretical-normative perspective that assumes the person as the fundamental criterion for evaluating technological innovation. In continuity with personalism, the ethics of responsibility, the capabilities approach, and reflections on the infosphere, it maintains that the value of technologies cannot be measured exclusively through parameters of efficiency and performance, but must be evaluated in relation to their capacity to promote human development (Stefanini, 1995).

Digital humanism is grounded in five central axiological values: *dignity*, which recognizes the irreducibility of the person to data and predictive models; *freedom*, understood as autonomy of judgment and self-determination; *plurality*, as a condition for critical confrontation and interpretive diversity; *relationality*, which highlights the intersubjective character of the construction of the self and of knowledge; and the *common good*, oriented toward the promotion of social and educational conditions conducive to the integral development of the person.

From such values derive specific regulative principles for the design and governance of technologies: *the centrality of the person*, *critical autonomy*, *epistemic openness*, *social generativity*, and *social and intergenerational responsibility*.

These principles are aimed at countering phenomena of algorithmic dependence, cognitive closure, polarization, and relational fragmentation, while fostering processes of reflection, participation, and the shared construction of meanings.

In summary, digital humanism is configured as an integrated paradigm that considers cognition, emotion, and relation as inseparable dimensions of human development. A technology can be defined as authentically humanistic only to the extent that it contributes simultaneously to the expansion of cognitive capacities, the affective maturation of the person, the strengthening of meaningful relationships, and the formation of autonomous and responsible subjects capable of participating critically in democratic and social life.

The transformations of contemporary digital ecosystems require pedagogical reflection to move beyond the mere critical analysis of the effects of algorithmic mediation and toward the identification of educational conditions capable of fostering autonomy, reflexivity, participation, and social responsibility. Within this perspective emerges the need for a *pedagogical-didactic criteriology of empowerment*, understood as an integrated framework of educational principles and formative practices designed to sustain epistemic agency, identity construction, and meaningful participation in relational and social contexts.

The first criterion consists in openness to *epistemic divergence* through processes of algorithmic depersonalization, aimed at disrupting the tendency of digital environments to deliver homogeneous and confirmatory content. Encountering different perspectives, interpretations, and systems of meaning fosters the development of critical thinking, argumentative competences, and autonomy of judgment, while promoting greater awareness of the situated and partial character of one's own convictions (Biesta, 2022; Pariser, 2011).

The second criterion concerns *reflective suspension*, conceived as a pedagogical response to the processes of cognitive acceleration and the fragmentation of the informational experience. Through practices of reflection, metacognition, and critical re-elaboration, it creates spaces of suspension necessary for transforming information into meaningful knowledge and for fostering a deeper form of epistemic awareness (Mezirow, 1991; Rosa, 2013, 2019).

The third criterion concerns the *empowerment of epistemic agency*, oriented toward counteracting the paralysis of agency itself as a symptom of the growing cognitive delegation to intelligent systems. The educational objective consists in strengthening the capacity of subjects to select, evaluate, and critically interpret information, while understanding the technical and social mechanisms that regulate its production, circulation, and legitimation. Within this perspective, education is called upon to promote subjects capable of participating actively and consciously in the processes of knowledge construction (Markauskaite & Goodyear, 2017; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2006).

The fourth criterion concerns the *cultivation of epistemic relationality*, understood as an educational response to the processes of cognitive isolation, social fragmentation, and the weakening of community ties that undermine the shared construction of knowledge. In a society characterized by increasingly individualized forms of experience and the growing algorithmic mediation of relationships, learning needs to be re-situated within dialogic and participatory contexts capable of fostering dialogue, mutual recognition, and the negotiation of meaning (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The model is completed by the *criterion of narrative self-construction*, aimed at counteracting phenomena of disengagement and loss of meaning. The educational objective consists in supporting the individual's capacity to attribute meaning to his or her own experience through the construction and reconstruction of the self as text (Smorti, 1997), integrating learning experiences, lived experiences, and life projects into a coherent and continuously evolving narrative identity.

Taken together, these five criteria delineate a pedagogical-didactic criteriology of empowerment aimed at addressing the key vulnerabilities of the contemporary media ecosystem: epistemic closure through openness to cognitive divergence, informational acceleration through reflective suspension, the paralysis of epistemic agency through its cultivation, isolation through the relational co-construction of knowledge, and the loss of meaning through narrative self-construction. What emerges is an educational perspective that regards knowledge, identity, and relationships as inseparable dimensions of human development and identifies the design of empowering learning environments as the essential condition for fostering critical, autonomous, and self-aware individuals capable of participating responsibly in contemporary social and digital life.

5. Discussion

The findings confirm that filter bubbles, echo chambers, and practices of continuous scrolling constitute socio-technical arrangements capable of influencing the epistemic, cognitive, and emotional-relational conditions of learning. Informational selectivity thus emerges as a structural dimension of digital ecosystems, capable of shaping the processes through which knowledge is accessed, processed, and constructed (Limone, 2012).

The analysis highlights a progressive narrowing of epistemic plurality driven by reduced exposure to divergent perspectives and forms of cognitive discontinuity. Such a dynamic constrains processes of socio-cognitive conflict, critical reflexivity, and the restructuring of knowledge, which educational scholarship has consistently identified as essential conditions for meaningful learning and epistemic autonomy.

At the same time, continuous scrolling practices promote rapid and reactive engagements with information that privilege consumption over deep comprehension. In line with *Cognitive Load Theory* (Sweller, 1988), such dynamics contribute to an increasing difficulty in transforming continuous streams of information into coherent, integrated, and critically reflected forms of knowledge.

The findings further suggest that echo chambers function not only as epistemic environments but also as socio-affective spaces, providing interpretive validation, symbolic recognition, and a sense of belonging. As a result, epistemic closure appears to be reinforced by emotional dynamics that diminish openness to dissent, willingness to reconsider existing beliefs, and engagement in the negotiation of meaning. These findings underscore the close interrelationship between cognition and emotion documented by research in affective neuroscience and cultural psychology.

In line with theories of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), the findings further indicate that meaningful learning is grounded in participation in shared processes of dialogue, argumentation, and the co-construction of knowledge. Algorithmic personalization, however, risks undermining these conditions by fostering forms of epistemic fragmentation and diminishing the availability of shared interpretive spaces.

Overall, the study conceptualizes information selectivity as a multidimensional phenomenon that shapes the cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions of educational experience. Although the article is theoretical and argumentative in nature and therefore requires further empirical validation, the findings suggest that the central educational challenge of the algorithmic age lies not in access to information per se, but in the conditions that enable learners to transform information into meaningful and critically grounded knowledge. These findings underscore the importance of fostering epistemic plurality, critical reflexivity, interpretive resilience, and dialogic participation as foundational conditions for the development of autonomous, reflective, and critically engaged individuals capable of navigating contemporary digital environments in informed and responsible ways.

6. Conclusions

The present contribution suggests that the educational challenge posed by digital transformation does not primarily concern the availability of information, but rather the conditions that make possible its transformation into meaningful knowledge. In a context increasingly characterized by algorithmic mediation, the

fundamental challenge is to preserve the epistemic, affective, and relational conditions that sustain the construction of meaning.

From this perspective, information selectivity emerges as a key interpretive lens for understanding contemporary transformations in learning. Its influence extends beyond the circulation of information itself, contributing to the reconfiguration of the processes through which critical judgment, social belonging, and participation in knowledge construction are developed.

The study's main theoretical contribution lies in conceptualizing these dynamics as multidimensional phenomena operating at the intersection of cognitive, affective, and relational dimensions. Such an interpretation calls for moving beyond fragmented approaches and developing pedagogical models capable of addressing knowledge construction, identity formation, and social participation as interconnected processes.

In this regard, educational research is called upon not only to examine how access to information can be enhanced, but also to explore how learning ecosystems can be designed to foster epistemic plurality, interpretive openness, critical reflexivity, and dialogic participation. Pedagogy thus assumes a strategic role in guiding technological innovation toward human development goals, helping to preserve an open relationship between knowledge, meaning, and otherness.

Ultimately, the value of educational technologies cannot be assessed solely in terms of informational efficiency, but in terms of their capacity to foster autonomous, critical, and responsible individuals capable of making sense of their experience and engaging consciously with the complexity of contemporary digital ecosystems.

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