



"DEVELOPING STUDENTS' MEDIA LITERACY IN A DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT"

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the current role, advantages and current problems of digital education. With the help of modern technologies, the organization of the educational process, the effective use of digital technologies in the science of media literacy and Information Culture are analyzed and informed on the basis of their scientifically based data on the issues of optimizing the educational process, expanding educational resources and improving the effectiveness of teaching.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly advancing digital world, increasing youth media literacy is considered one of the most pressing issues to ensure a safe and secure life. The globalization of the information space, its openness, and the intensification of mass communication have resulted in a flood of information rapidly reaching human consciousness. Problems such as online fraud, human trafficking, cyberbullying, and internet addiction have emerged through digital platforms. The inability to properly analyze information disseminated through the media and the lack of independent and critical thinking lead the younger generation—who represent the future of society—toward deviant behaviors.

In the 21st century, due to the rapid development of the information society, media literacy is viewed as an essential skill within the higher education system. Developing students' ability to select, analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions from media information has become a pressing task today. From this perspective, digital technologies offer vast opportunities for enhancing media literacy. Media literacy and information culture play a crucial role in the digital learning environment, as modern technologies and the internet demand a culture of working with information across various aspects of life. These two concepts are essential for effective learning in the digital age, making informed decisions, and correctly evaluating information. [1]

In Uzbekistan, the subject of "Media Literacy and Information Culture" has been introduced in higher education institutions since 2020. Its implementation followed the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 31, 2020, titled "On Measures to Develop Information Culture and Media Literacy." According to this resolution, the subject "Information Culture and Media Literacy" has been included in the curricula of higher education institutions. The aim is to teach students to think critically in the modern information environment, use information properly, and identify fake news. Through this subject, students gain skills in analyzing information, evaluating sources, and understanding information security.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

M. McLuhan conducted research on mass communications and the phenomenon of media education. Later, this scientific direction became known as the “Toronto School of Communication Theory.” Professor M. McLuhan is considered the scholar who introduced the term “media” into the scientific community. [2]

Media plays an important role in the global information process. Indeed, any pedagogical activity has its theoretical foundations. Although more than ten concepts have been developed in the field of media education today, there is no unified theory that brings together the various types of pedagogical experience in this area. [3]

According to Sh. Pakhrutdinov, the main task of media education is “to teach the new generation in the modern information society to understand various types of information, to comprehend the psychological effects of this information, and to master non-verbal forms of communication through technical means.” [4]

A review of the literature shows that media literacy is not only a means of correctly understanding and analyzing information, but also a crucial factor influencing the decision-making processes of an information-based society. In foreign academic sources, the concept of media literacy is extensively analyzed, often in connection with critical thinking, the fight against disinformation, and the ability to filter information on social networks. In particular, programs developed by UNESCO on media literacy are regarded as key elements in the formation of an information-based society. Additionally, comprehensive analyses of media literacy and its integration into the educational process can be found in the scholarly works of researchers such as Evan Davies and Renee Hobbs.

From an early age, children are exposed to mass media, and they tend to place complete trust in it. This has both advantages—such as improving the level of education and enabling communication with different people—and disadvantages. The lack of life experience and the appeal of the virtual world can have negative effects on a child’s mental health and well-being. These may manifest not only as increased anxiety, nervousness, or vulnerability to online threats, but also as the development of addictive behaviors, which pose serious social challenges.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Although this topic has not been widely studied in local literature, in recent years media literacy has started to occupy an important place in research conducted in Uzbekistan in the fields of pedagogy and information technology. In particular, scientific publications from various universities analyze the impact of media literacy on youth thinking, its role in the education system, and ways to develop it. The following methods are widely used in the development of media and information literacy in higher education institutions:

- **Collaborative learning and analysis** – Students work in groups to analyze media content, compare their views, and develop critical thinking.
- **Case studies and real-world scenarios** – By applying the case study method, students gain the opportunity to analyze and respond to real-life media situations.
- **Constant updating of learning resources** – As the field of media and information literacy is constantly evolving, it is necessary to adapt educational programs to new technologies and research.
- **Simulation and game-based learning** – Through games and simulations, students gain real-world experience in learning skills such as media analysis, identifying fake news, and information security. These methods are considered effective in strengthening media competence.

CONCLUSION

Preliminary experimental results have shown that, while the demand for specialists capable of professionally utilizing modern information technologies and the internet is increasing in the labor market, university graduates are not sufficiently prepared to demonstrate their professional potential in the global information space. Students today are highly active in

consuming entertainment and low-quality content in the media environment; they are largely unaware of concepts such as internet addiction, ideological threats, and cyber-ludomania, and thus do not possess qualities of media literacy.

Students are not ready to construct a media environment, think critically, consume mass media content meaningfully, or create media texts and resources.

In the context of society's informatization, many traditional issues concerning human safety have undergone significant changes. The expansion and transformation of information threats, the emergence of new sources and factors of danger, and the need to protect interests and values have become evident. Computers, various online information resources, computer games, and similar elements can now be considered as new sources of risk.

It is especially important to note that under modern conditions, it is not feasible to limit the access of children and youth to information. Attempting to do so would be pedagogically ineffective. However, allowing them unrestricted access to harmful and dangerous information that may lead them toward disaster is also unacceptable. Therefore, it is appropriate to ensure that young people are exposed only to beneficial and safe information through the media.

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