MEDIA EDUCATION AND ITS PLACE IN UZBEKISTAN
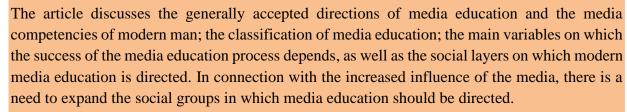
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Abstract
The article discusses the generally accepted directions of media education and the media competencies of modern man; the classification of media education; the main variables on which the success of the media education process depends, as well as the social layers on which modern media education is directed. In connection with the increased influence of the media, there is a need to expand the social groups in which media education should be directed.

Keywords: Media education, media and information literacy, media environment, media space, media competence.

Web of Humanities: Journal of Social Science and Humanitarian Research

Introduction

According to many researchers who consider all forms of integrating mass media and information literacy into an individual's media environment, information culture has already begun to serve as a criterion for personal development. Media education is a specialized pedagogical field that has been evolving in both domestic and foreign pedagogy for several decades. However, due to changes in the external world – and consequently in the media sphere – media education as a curricular module is continuously transforming and embracing increasingly diverse directions.

The following streams of media education are generally recognized:

1. **Media training for future specialists in the press, radio, television, cinema, video and the Internet** – journalists, editors, directors, producers, actors, camera operators, etc.

2. **Media education within university and pedagogical institutes**, offered both as courses on media culture for future teachers and as professional development for university and school instructors.

3. **Mass media literacy as part of general education** for schoolchildren and students in ordinary schools, secondary specialized institutions, and higher education institutions – this may be combined with traditional or autonomous (elective, club-based, etc.) subjects.

4. **Media education in extracurricular settings and leisure centers** – cultural centers, after-school programs, aesthetic and arts education centers, community clubs, and similar venues.

5. **Distance media education for schoolchildren, students, and adults using print, television, radio, video, DVD and the Internet**, where critical analysis of mass media plays a major role.

6. **Independent/continuous media education**, which in theory can take place throughout an individual's entire life.

These streams, of course, fit within the broader context of general education in the mass media field. However, this classification lacks a clear structure and does not regard social groups other than pedagogical (students, pupils, teachers) or professional journalistic communities as recipients of media education. It is undeniable that the importance of mass media is steadily increasing – it is a powerful force in modern society. A consistent and systematic form of media

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education has become a necessity and should be regarded as one of the most important components of education. In fact, being media-literate is arguably an indispensable requirement of contemporary civil society.

As the influence of mass media grows stronger, the range of target social groups for media education must also expand. But which new social strata should be incorporated into the media-education process, and how can we establish a bidirectional relationship between them?

Whereas in the past only schoolchildren and students were considered "media-education recipients," today any member of society can be one. We may rightly describe the trend of expanding social groups as a positive development. UNESCO's recommendations repeatedly emphasize the universality of media education, affirming that it should serve democracy and be recognized as the right of every citizen in each country.

What determines the effectiveness of the media-education process, and how important is it to broaden the targeted social groups?

As noted above, the modern individual is, first and foremost, a media-literate person. Media literacy must be both the primary objective and the outcome of media education. It is assumed that the media-literate person of the twenty-first century should possess the following competencies:

1. **Critical understanding of mass-media influence:** the ability to independently regulate and contextualize the effects of mass media on individuals and society as a whole.

2. **Comprehension of media mechanisms:** an understanding of how mass-media systems operate and of the methods they employ.

3. **Media-analysis skills:** the ability to competently analyze various types of media messages, especially hidden or subliminal content.

4. **Critical evaluation of mass media:** the capacity to apply critical standards when assessing media effectiveness.

5. **Pedagogical application of media:** the ability to teach using different mass-media formats.

6. **New capacities for creative self-expression.**

7. **High-quality media monitoring.**

8. **Practice of media ethics:** a media-literate individual should hold, at a semi-professional level, the ethical principles of journalism.

However, the overall landscape of media-education development is far from uniform. The goals and methods of instruction, the categories of participants in the media-education process, and the practical conditions for its implementation already vary widely. Yet we cannot deny the growth of international media discourse – and thus the fact that not everyone always speaks about the same thing with equal clarity.

Therefore, the media-education process can be carried out in both "formal" and "informal" settings; it may be delivered by state or private-sector bodies (or a combination of both). It must be acknowledged that focusing solely on the media-upbringing of school-age children is entirely misplaced, since today not only schoolchildren or students, but all strata of society require this process. Accordingly, the range of individuals and institutions to which media education should be directed must include at least the following social groups:

• Teachers in schools and other formal educational institutions;

- Educators operating in "informal" settings;
- Scholars and researchers;
- Youth groups and organizations under regional leadership;
- Parent groups;
- Churches and other religious communities;
- Various media companies (both commercial and non-profit organizations);
- Regulatory bodies overseeing mass media.

It is worth noting that some researchers regard media education primarily as a matter of protecting children from harmful content, whereas others view it as preparing younger and older students to use mass media responsibly in their later lives.

Among the principal variables on which the effectiveness of the media-education process depends, the following categories can be distinguished:

Structure of the educational system. Here, the key factor is the degree of centralization of a country's education system. Interestingly, centralization can sometimes act as a brake on media-education development, while in decentralized systems media education may evolve in an unfocused or misguided direction.

Characteristics of the media systems. In countries with a strong state media sector, it is easier to support media-education initiatives; conversely, where commercial media systems dominate, support may prove more difficult. However, in nations where commercial media enjoy greater autonomy than the government, the need for media education may be even more pressing. The nature of the relationship and power balance between educators and the media industry can significantly influence the quality of media education.

Thus, rather than simply condemning or endorsing the undeniable power of mass media, we must recognize its profound impact and penetration into all spheres of human activity and assess its importance as a cultural element in the modern world as impartially as possible. Political and educational systems should also acknowledge their obligation to help deliver media-education services to their citizens and to meet their media needs through various communicative channels. Unfortunately, most formal and informal education systems fail to equip information consumers adequately for engaging with mass media. At times, the gap between the educational experience provided and the real media environment encountered by users can be very wide. Nevertheless, with the growing daily debates in favor of media education and the continuing advancement of communication technologies in the near future, we can hope that the process of teaching media literacy will proceed more swiftly and effectively.

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