

Analysis of Modules on Media Literacy

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Abstract. *This article discusses the concept of media literacy, its essence, and the analysis of experience modules in Western and Eastern countries. Opinions expressed in scientific literature on the subject are summarized, and suggestions and recommendations are presented regarding existing issues.*

Keywords: Media, television, mass media, information, media literacy.

INTRODUCTION

Media literacy is the ability to filter daily information transmitted and received through mass media, to make correct decisions in any situation after receiving various types of information, and to form an understanding of where the information comes from, by whom, and for what purpose it is disseminated, and whose interests it reflects [1].

The goal of media literacy is to develop the ability to filter information distributed by the media, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each medium, and to select only necessary information. Its main task is to recognize the manipulative power of any information consumed by people and to avoid being influenced by it [Hurriyat. "Mediasavodxolik va u nima uchun kerak?", N. Qosimova, April 2016].

In other words, media literacy is the ability to apply critical thinking skills to messages and symbols transmitted through mass media ["Science and Innovation" International Scientific Journal, 2022, p.292].

Today we live in the 21st century – the information age. Mass media has a significant influence on young people's lives. Are our youth getting lost in the endless flow of information? Can our citizens protect themselves from information attacks? Why are media and information literacy important?

Media and information literacy are needed to:

- Understand the essence of reforms carried out in our legal democratic society as responsible and active citizens;
- Develop the ability to filter daily information transmitted and received through mass media;
- Prevent manipulation of human consciousness through information and make correct decisions in any situation;
- Analyze changes in a person's behavior under the influence of visual images and interpret hidden messages in visual communications;
- Analyze the meaning of textual communications transmitted through the media;
- Answer questions such as where the information originates, by whom and for what purposes it is transmitted, and whose interests it reflects.

A media and information-literate person possesses the following skills:

- A deep understanding of the influence of media and information forms;
- The ability to make thoughtful and independent decisions;
- Obtaining new knowledge about the environment;
- Contributing to the formation of a sense of community;
- Supporting public discourse;
- Lifelong learning.

To ensure that consumers of mass media can critically analyze it, media literacy skills and habits should be developed from childhood. These skills include basic access to media, critical analysis based on specific concepts, evaluation based on this analysis, and eventually producing one's own media products. This process of learning media literacy is called media education.

The oldest organization studying media literacy is the National Telemedia Council located in Madison, Wisconsin, which was led for over 50 years by Marieli Rowe. The organization initially published a media literacy journal called "Telemedium". Today, media literacy is widely promoted and advocated worldwide ["Science and Innovation" International Scientific Journal, 2022, p.293].

In Eastern countries, which have their own values and traditions, the process of introducing media literacy into education differs slightly from that of Western countries. Since the 1990s, a shift toward media literacy has been observed in East Asia. In recent years, the level of media literacy in Asia has been increasing, with several programs being implemented in the Asia-Pacific region. In Uzbekistan, starting from the 2021–2022 academic year, a “Media Literacy” section was included in the “Education” textbook for 10th–11th grade students. Media literacy courses have also been introduced in journalism faculties at universities such as UzJOKU, Tashkent State University of Law, Uzbekistan National University, UzSWLU, Karshi State University, and Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages.

In our opinion, media literacy, along with the aforementioned points, also means critically evaluating all information transmitted through mass media, approaching it impartially, and consciously filtering every piece of information.

The aim of media literacy is to form the ability to select necessary information by understanding the advantages and disadvantages of each medium, while its main task is to recognize the manipulative power of consumed information and remain immune to it. It also helps people understand the role of mass media and citizen journalism.

Currently, several terms have entered our vocabulary due to media analysis —such as media literacy, media education, and media studies. Although interrelated, scholars attempt to distinguish their essence. In our view, media literacy is an integral part of media education. At the same time, its forms are increasing. Today, in addition to media literacy, terms like media education, media studies, and media culture are also used when discussing receiving, filtering, analyzing, and evaluating media information.

MEDIA EDUCATION, MEDIA STUDIES, AND MEDIA LITERACY

Media Education involves:

Integrating media into educational curricula and studying it on an interdisciplinary basis;

Analyzing “media topics” within specific academic disciplines;

Critically approaching media through practical work and analysis;

Studying its forms, technologies, and methods of information transmission;

Examining media agencies and their social, political, and cultural roles;

Teaching students how to work with mass media;

Conducting research activities;

Studying how media influences audiences through language and art.

Media Studies includes:

- Theoretical research on media;
- Comparative analysis of media;
- Understanding the conceptual structure of media;
- Analyzing media texts and their creation methods;
- Studying the interrelationship between mass communication, cinematography, and cultural studies;
- Exploring the interaction of global mass media.

Media Literacy is based on the following results of media education and aims to:

Understand the influence of media on individuals and society;

Comprehend the process of mass communication;

Understand and analyze media texts;

Understand the context of media;

Create and analyze media texts;

Evaluate and filter media texts.

Many countries have developed different modules in the field of media literacy. Some examples are as follows:

MEDIA LITERACY MODULES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

United States

The U.S. has developed a five-stage module:

1-module. Introduction to Media Literacy for Teachers of English:

Understanding the importance of teaching media literacy in English language classes;

Identifying media literacy, types of media, and related literacies in English;

Helping students identify how to consume and produce mass media.

2-module. Approaches and Strategies for Enhancing Media Literacy:

Understanding the difference between protectionist and empowerment approaches in media literacy education;

Incorporating knowledge of media literacy approaches and principles into teaching;

Studying the diversity and representation in mass media.

3-module. Managing Media Consumption and Production for Students:

Managing sensitive topics in the classroom;

Helping students analyze misinformation and identify various forms of disinformation;

Developing students' skills to identify advantages and disadvantages of different media production activities.

4-module. English Language for Media Literacy:

Identifying students' language needs in media consumption and production;

Designing media activities based on existing English lessons.

5-module. Planning a Media Literacy Unit in English:

Developing a thematic unit on media literacy;

Identifying summative assessment activities;

Teaching students to become effective communicators, inquisitive learners, and active citizens of the 21st century through the use of digital resources.

This module was developed by George Mason University as part of the Online Professional English Network (OPEN) program, approved and funded by the U.S. Department of State [<https://openenglishcommunity.org/page/english-for-media-literacy-for-educators>].

In the American module, more attention is given to promoting the English language as widely as possible, with the aim of attracting more specialists who can later evaluate and manage information flows in mass media.

United Kingdom and Finland. Media education emerged as a tool to protect against the harmful influence and trends of mass media. This paradigm was first adopted in the 1930s in the United Kingdom. In both the UK and Australia, media literacy was introduced as a separate course within the humanities.

The UK module consists of five stages:

- Understanding media texts;
- Creating media content;
- Media technologies and digital media;
- Evaluating information sources;
- Understanding the impact of media on society.

The British module was modeled after Finland's approach. In Finland, media literacy is integrated into school and university curricula, not as a separate subject but as sections within subjects like native language, history, and aesthetics. Unlike Finland, in the UK, it is introduced as a separate course within the humanities. According to the global Media Literacy Index, Finland is recognized as the country with the highest capacity to resist the negative effects of fake news and disinformation. Thus, both the UK and Finland occupy leading positions in media literacy worldwide.

The Chinese government has long maintained strict control over both traditional and new mass media to prevent potential threats to its authority. However, with China's growing global power and its becoming the world's second-largest economy in 2011 (surpassing Japan), it has become increasingly difficult to maintain political dominance solely through laws and media control.

Today, Chinese children watch more television and use the internet more than those in many other countries, making media literacy education a crucial issue.

China's media literacy module includes:

- Nature and characteristics of media;
- Information sources and their usage;
- Media text analysis;
- Electronic media and digital technologies;
- Media and human rights.

In addition, China introduced a media literacy handbook, authored by Chi-Kim Cheung and published in 2016, which serves as the country's first practical guide in this field. The Chinese module focuses primarily on educating younger generations in the information age. For example, the Chinese government limits the use of entertainment platforms like TikTok to one hour per day for its citizens, significantly reducing the risk of attention-related disorders among children.

The media literacy module approved in Uzbekistan in 2023 consists of:

- Critical evaluation of information sources;
- Media text analysis;
- Digital media and technologies;
- Media literacy and legal norms;
- The impact of media on society.

The development of media literacy in Uzbekistan is accelerating. One of the main reasons is the abolition of Soviet-era censorship, with openness and transparency being key principles of democracy. The introduction of media literacy classes in educational institutions aims to further develop these principles. By training competent professionals who approach this field professionally, Uzbekistan can protect itself from information attacks, propaganda, fake news, and manipulative content in the global information space.

Mass media is now referred to as the "fourth unofficial branch of power." If such a powerful tool were to be used for malicious purposes, the consequences could be severe. Therefore, this field requires special attention.

National legislation also provides mechanisms for protecting youth from harmful information. For instance, the Law on the Fundamentals of State Youth Policy prohibits actions aimed at promoting immorality, violence, and cruelty among young people. The Convention on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child bans the use of mass media that displays pornography, cruelty, violence, or content that harms children's development.

As Fakhreddin Soliyev, a deputy of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, noted in his article "Culture of Using the Internet," the influx of "unhealthy" information into the national information space—including websites promoting suicide, immoral content, violence, and cruelty—poses a serious threat. Therefore, creating a healthy information environment for youth and protecting their moral development is one of our main tasks.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the information age, preventing the spread of "unclean and biased" information, ensuring access to reliable information, and protecting youth from harmful content require knowledge and experience. To enhance media literacy and information usage culture among the population, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Introduce media education into all educational curricula, explaining its basics in an interactive and playful form at preschool levels. This will enable future generations to critically evaluate the intense flow of information, strengthening their civic position and ability to make objective decisions regarding global events.
2. Develop rational internet usage skills among youth to strengthen their ideological immunity. Since the majority of our youth are university students, they should serve as carriers of media literacy to educate older generations as well.
3. Protect the legal rights and interests of society in the information sphere by improving the regulatory framework for developing national internet resources, web services, and social networks aimed at ideological, educational, and moral-ethical purposes.

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