E-ISSN: 2997-9439
American Journal of Education and Evaluation Studies
https://semantjournals.org/index.php/ AJEES

| Research Article

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Media Education in Uzbekistan: The Need for Early Integration into the Educational System

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Abstract: This article is based on the author's PhD dissertation research in pedagogical sciences. The study examines the institutionalization of media education within the educational system of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The current model of media literacy development, primarily focused on higher education, is analyzed, and its pedagogical limitations and potential socio-educational risks are identified. Based on an analysis of international experience and recommendations of specialized international organizations, the feasibility of a phased media education model is substantiated. This model entails the formation of basic media competencies at the level of general secondary education with their further development in higher education. The study concludes that media education serves as an essential pedagogical condition for the development of critical thinking, informational resilience of learners, and human capital.

Keywords: media education, media literacy, pedagogical sciences, information security, critical thinking.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of digitalization of the educational environment and the transformation of the information space, the issue of developing media literacy has acquired special pedagogical significance. The widespread use of digital platforms, social networks, and user-generated content leads to constant interaction of students with various types of media messages, including both reliable information and manipulative or disinformation content. In this regard, the development of the ability to critically perceive and analyze media content is a crucial condition for ensuring personal information security and effective educational outcomes.

The aim of the study is to analyze the features of media education organization in the Republic of Uzbekistan and to substantiate the pedagogical feasibility of its phased introduction, starting at the general secondary education level. The object of the study is the educational system of Uzbekistan in the context of developing media competencies among students. The subject of the study is pedagogical models and practices of media education implemented at different educational levels.

The methodological framework of the study includes the analysis of normative and conceptual documents [6–13], comparative analysis of international experience [14–18], as well as theoretical generalization of scientific approaches to media and information literacy.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the pedagogical substantiation of a phased model of media education for the education system of Uzbekistan, focused on early development of basic media competencies and their further enhancement in higher education.

Current Status of Media Education in the Educational System of Uzbekistan. At present, media education in Uzbekistan is predominantly focused on higher education institutions. Elements of media literacy are included mainly in curricula of universities offering programs in journalism, mass communications, pedagogy, and information technologies [1–3].

Within these programs, students study the basics of media theory, journalistic ethics, information analysis, and media production. At the same time, the formation of media competencies in general secondary education remains fragmented and occurs within individual subjects without a unified pedagogical concept or systematic methodological support [4,5].

The existing model has several pedagogical advantages, including the manageability of the educational process and orientation toward preparing professional personnel. However, it also has significant limitations associated with students' age characteristics and uneven coverage of different social groups.

Pedagogical Limitations of the University-Centered Model. A key limitation of the current model is the late stage of systematic pedagogical influence. By the time students enter higher education institutions, they typically already have established information habits and media consumption patterns, which reduces the effectiveness of subsequent development of critical thinking.

Moreover, a significant portion of the population is not covered by higher education, resulting in a pedagogical gap in the formation of media competencies. Adolescents, in particular, demonstrate high vulnerability due to active use of social networks and messengers with insufficient critical analysis skills.

International Pedagogical Experience in Media Education. Analysis of foreign educational practices indicates that in countries with developed education systems, media education is considered a transversal pedagogical component throughout the curriculum. Media literacy is either implemented as a separate subject or integrated into the content of humanities and social sciences courses [14–18].

International organizations, including UNESCO, emphasize the pedagogical importance of media and information literacy as a universal competence necessary for students' personal development and for sustainable functioning of society [14–18].

Phased Model of Media Education in a Pedagogical Context. Considering the socio-cultural and institutional characteristics of Uzbekistan, a phased model of media education appears most appropriate, implying sequential development of media competencies at different educational levels.

At the general secondary education level, the focus should be on developing basic media literacy skills, including distinguishing between facts and opinions, analyzing information sources, understanding the functioning of digital platforms, and recognizing manipulative practices. These tasks can be integrated into existing subjects [6–13].

At the higher education level, media education should serve as an advanced pedagogical training mechanism, aimed at developing analytical, research, and professional competencies of students [1–3].

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that limiting media education to higher education does not meet contemporary pedagogical and social challenges. In Uzbekistan, the phased model of media education is most appropriate, providing the formation of basic media competencies at the general secondary education level, followed by their further development and professionalization in higher education.

Implementation of this model will enhance educational effectiveness, develop critically thinking individuals, and strengthen students' information resilience. In the long term, systematic media education may be considered a significant factor in improving human capital quality.

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