



THE ROLE OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL THINKING IN STUDENTS

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Annotation. The article provides a scientific basis for the development of ecological thinking among student youth within the educational process, as well as highlights the role and significance of media education. It emphasizes the importance of integrating modern media tools into teaching practices to enhance students' ecological awareness and environmental culture. The study also analyzes how mass media and media education contribute to shaping ecological knowledge, environmental responsibility, and critical thinking skills in the context of contemporary educational systems.

Keywords. Education, ecology, environmental thinking, youth, media universe, media education, media environment, mass media, radio, television, internet, social networks, pedagogical technology.

Intoduction. There is a position that education and upbringing comprise two interrelated yet relatively independent spheres of activity. The essence of the learning process is quite clear — the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competencies, and methods. Essentially, this is an informational process closely connected with information transmission tools, namely media education. Therefore, in pedagogical practice and the educational process, media tools and information play an important role both practically and theoretically. For this purpose, it is essential to provide young people with necessary knowledge and skills about the media world and environment within the educational process. Mass media plays a significant role in every individual's life. The content of mass media covers all aspects of an individual's relations with society and its subsystems, as well as all spheres of social relations in which a person is involved.

Mass media refers to the media environment that explains its essence. It is intended for a large and usually geographically dispersed audience and is characterized by speed and regularity of dissemination, almost simultaneous consumption, mediation, and to some extent stereotypical nature. Therefore, the use of the concept of the "media world" has become a common practice today. Accordingly, it is important for learners to acquire knowledge, understanding, and thinking skills about this phenomenon in all fields of education and science. In particular, in developing ecological knowledge and thinking, media education contributes to both practical and theoretical improvement of students' ecological awareness.

Ecological thinking can be briefly defined as the possession of knowledge, understanding, and perceptions about the natural world and the environment surrounding human beings. Such competencies and thinking can be developed not only through traditional sources of knowledge but also through mass media and modern media education tools, leading to ecological worldview formation.

Today, the scientific picture of the world cannot be imagined without ecological problems. The interaction between society and nature has led to the emergence of new fields in science,

technology, and production, and the scale of human impact on the environment has significantly expanded. This, in turn, has caused a sharp deterioration of the ecological situation on Earth. If human attitudes toward the environment are not regulated in the near future, humanity may face an ecological catastrophe that poses a threat even greater than nuclear war to its existence. Therefore, traditional educational methods alone are no longer sufficient for developing ecological thinking in young people today. In the era of the information revolution and rapid changes in value systems, as the socio-cultural role of mass media in education increases, the development of ecological knowledge requires the use of modern media education tools.

Existing stereotypes in the organization of education and upbringing in family, school, and higher education, as well as the orientation and content of modern mass media, allow for a comprehensive assessment and forecasting of their potential in addressing urgent issues of preparing the younger generation for the demands of modern society. Today, the interaction between education and mass media is an interdisciplinary field of research conducted by philosophers, psychologists, educators, journalists, and sociologists. The mechanisms through which modern mass media influence the formation of information culture, socialization, and social adaptation of young learners — including the development of ecological culture and environmentally related skills — are of great importance.

In order to prevent possible negative consequences of human interference in nature, a number of scientific, technical, socio-political, and other issues must be addressed. Among them, educational issues are of primary importance. From school age, the younger generation should be prepared for a scientifically grounded and careful attitude toward the natural environment. Modern media tools such as colorful ecological images, engaging visual materials for teenagers, videos, projectors, and similar resources can be effectively used in education. These tools help students easily understand and form scientific perceptions about ecology and the environment.

Therefore, the use of convenient media education tools in the formation of ecological thinking and culture in schools and higher education institutions is one of the most urgent issues of today.

The analysis of changes in the attitudes of participants in the educational process (parents, teachers, and students) toward mass media, as well as the assessment of the role of mass media in education, is of significant practical importance in addressing this issue.

In recent years, special attention has been paid to environmental issues in our republic. In particular, the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 434 dated May 27, 2019, adopted the “Concept for the Development of Environmental Education in the Republic of Uzbekistan” [1], which defines the following as priority directions: determining the main principles for the development of environmental education within the continuous education system in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, ensuring their consistent and gradual implementation in the educational process, and thereby raising the effectiveness of environmental education to a new level; directing learners’ attention to global environmental problems; and strengthening their responsibility for preserving and rationally using non-renewable natural resources.

Similarly, Article 55 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan [2] states that “land, subsoil resources, water, flora, fauna, and other natural resources are national wealth and are

under state protection.” However, it is equally important how these governmental decisions and legal provisions are conveyed to students in the educational process in a clear and understandable manner. If the essence and priorities of such documents are not effectively delivered through modern media education tools, students may fail to fully understand their meaning and practical significance, and these documents may remain abstract and unclear.

Modern mass media — including radio, television, the internet system, websites, educational broadcasts, films, video clips, and advertisements related to ecology — can significantly contribute to enhancing ecological thinking if used effectively in education.

On December 31, 2021, the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to organize the activities of state bodies in the field of environmental protection and environmental control” [3] was adopted, which also placed special emphasis on environmental education in developing ecological thinking. For example, regardless of the subject being taught, it is important to draw students’ attention to its ecological aspects. In teaching physics, for instance, ecological education should be aimed at forming students’ understanding of the integrity of nature, the interconnection of natural phenomena, and the interaction between humans and nature. This enables learners to develop a deeper and more accurate understanding of the increasingly complex relationship between society and nature, as well as to acquire knowledge on environmental protection and rational use of natural resources.

However, this process does not occur automatically. It is necessary to equip students with knowledge about modern media education methods and tools used in delivering ecological knowledge. Students should also understand what media education is and what modern mass media consist of. In addition to receiving knowledge from educators, learners must also independently acquire technical skills for using media education tools effectively through self-study and modern pedagogical technologies.

The availability of a large amount of educational information in mass media, combined with the insufficient development of pedagogical methods for working with such information, also causes inefficiencies in delivering ecological knowledge. The relevance of research in this field is associated with the development of the media system formed at the end of the 20th century, the dynamics of interaction between traditional communication channels (print media, television, radio) and new media tools (primarily electronic ones), as well as new forms of producing and disseminating mass information.

An analysis of the social nature of modern mass media reveals the lack of comprehensive, integrated, and well-grounded research in this field. This has led to the emergence of a so-called “parallel school” phenomenon, which attracts the occasional attention of both academic researchers and pedagogical practitioners, indicating the incompleteness of attempts to analyze it systematically. “If an innovative approach is introduced into the system of environmental education, humanity may achieve an objectively necessary level of interaction with nature, the environment, and the cosmos, forming mutual harmony.” [4]

It should be noted that, as a result of consistent reforms implemented by the state, the role and significance of mass media in society are being strengthened, and measures aimed at enhancing their activity within the media system are being implemented. Special attention is being paid to strengthening the role and development of mass media. Reforms aimed at ensuring freedom of speech and information, as well as improving the functioning of media



institutions, clearly demonstrate this approach. Why is this important? Because the effective implementation of media education requires the freedom and responsibility of the media environment itself. For instance, in objectively and transparently conveying the real environmental situation and ecological conditions to the public, a democratic approach in media activity is essential. The objective functioning of mass media and internet networks plays a crucial role in this process.

To date, more than ten laws and regulatory legal acts governing the activities of mass media have been adopted, including the Laws “On Mass Media,” “On Protection of Professional Activities of Journalists,” “On Telecommunications,” “On Publishing Activity,” “On Guarantees and Freedom of Access to Information,” “On Advertising,” “On Communications,” and others. At the same time, it is of great importance that independent mass media have broad opportunities to take an independent position while critically evaluating the activities of state bodies, as well as representatives of all other sectors of society, such as political parties and other public organizations. In this regard, the proportion of mass media founded by state and non-governmental organizations is noteworthy. In particular, non-governmental organizations account for 53% of print media, 60% of electronic media, and 97% of online media.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the use of media education in developing ecological thinking in the country operates within a multidirectional information flow involving state and non-state media, social networks, and public opinion. This interaction serves as an important factor in enabling young people to acquire ecological knowledge and culture, as well as in forming an understanding of the real environmental situation and the impact of environmental conditions on society to varying degrees.

References:

1. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 434 dated May 27, 2019.
2. Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2018, pp. 16–17, 19.
3. Presidential Decree of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to organize the activities of state bodies in the field of environmental protection and environmental control,” December 31, 2021.
4. “Modern Trends of Innovative Development in Science and Education in the Global World,” December 15, 2022..

