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Innovative Approaches to the Professional Preparation of Future School Leaders in the Field of Media Education

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Abstract

In the context of globalization, media education has emerged as a vital component of educational leadership, particularly in preparing future school administrators to navigate increasingly digital environments. This study aims to explore the core principles of media education, its defining features, and its function within contemporary educational management. Employing a qualitative research design supported by recent empirical data, the study examines how media education fosters essential digital competencies among aspiring school leaders, while simultaneously equipping them to safeguard students from the adverse effects of unregulated information exposure. Findings indicate that approximately 68% of adolescents spend 4–5 hours daily on the internet and social media, significantly influencing their social, cultural, and moral development. Moreover, around 45% of students report encountering harmful online content, with over 30% admitting to poor decision-making as a result of misinformation. These findings underscore the dual role of media education in promoting critical thinking and establishing a secure informational environment within schools. The study concludes that enhancing media literacy is essential not only for effective educational

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leadership but also for mitigating the risks posed by unchecked digital information. The research contributes to the discourse on educational policy and practice by emphasizing the integration of media literacy as a core competency in school leadership development programs.

Keywords: Media Education; Media Literacy; Educational Leadership; Information Environment; Youth Development

INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, the influence of mass media and various forms of information and communication technologies on personal, economic, political, and social life is undeniable. Active participation in today's information society requires new forms of competence—knowledge, skills, and qualifications that go beyond traditional learning. Over the past fifty years, mass media has gained exceptional importance in human life. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this process: while it caused immense suffering and losses, it also pushed society to rely heavily on digital tools. Even individuals who had little or no prior experience with these technologies were compelled to learn, recognizing their necessity for work, education, and communication.

Currently, mass media is one of the most significant aspects of global life. Sociological studies indicate that an average person who lives to 75 years, with around 50 years of active life (excluding sleep), spends approximately nine of those years watching television. At the beginning of the 21st century, data showed that 99% of American households with children under 18 owned a television, 97% had a video player and a radio, 74% subscribed to cable or satellite TV, and 69% owned personal computers—nearly half of which were connected to the Internet (Fedorov, 2005). These factors highlight the urgent need to align education with contemporary realities by fostering lifelong learning, tailored to the requirements of a market-oriented society. Such a transformation is impossible without integrating mass media.

Today, the concept of "literacy" has expanded far beyond basic reading and writing. It now encompasses digital, computer, visual, technological, communication, and information literacy (Fedorov, 2015). This shift reflects both the rapid transformation of modern society and the increasing scholarly interest in media literacy. Research shows that many students struggle to assess the reliability of information, even in academic contexts.

Consequently, it is believed that younger generations tend to develop media and information literacy skills more effectively than older ones. Strengthening these skills opens wide opportunities for both teachers and learners to enhance educational environments and make the learning process more interactive and dynamic.

At the same time, it is important to note that many young people prefer entertainment-oriented content—such as shows and social media—while largely ignoring educational, cultural, and civic programs. This selective engagement can create what researchers metaphorically describe as an "information cocoon," where individuals isolate themselves from reality and exist in a constructed informational bubble (Kharlamov, 2007). Studies further indicate that young people are particularly vulnerable to media influence, making them more likely to become targets of manipulation.

According to the findings of leading scholars in media studies, contemporary mass communication channels increasingly identify youth as the most susceptible group for manipulative influence. This vulnerability is explained by several interrelated factors:

- their incomplete cognitive readiness to adequately interpret essential portions of incoming information;
- their partial or fragmented comprehension of the multiplicity of meanings contained within media messages;
- their tendency to occupy a passive position toward media flows, lacking both strategies of psychological self-defense and an awareness of the necessity of such protective mechanisms.

In the modern sociocultural context, the safeguarding of individuals' consciousness from media-driven manipulation has emerged as one of the central challenges of information security. This issue has become a matter of concern not only for parents, educators, and psychologists but also for medical practitioners and policymakers. Among the most effective responses to this challenge, experts highlight the systematic integration of media education and media culture into the curricula of schools and higher educational institutions. Media pedagogy, which is now a rapidly advancing branch of educational theory and practice, is specifically designed to equip young audiences with techniques of critical self-defense against information aggression, to foster more meaningful interpersonal communication, and to enable self-expression through the lens of media literacy.

The acquisition of media education competencies enables learners to develop several crucial skills and dispositions, such as:

- establishing a psychological distance from external informational flows;
- creating internal mechanisms of resistance to manipulation and cultivating critical evaluative habits;
- gaining conscious and reflective experience in audiovisual perception;
- achieving the holistic development of intellectual and creative abilities;
- mastering the symbolic language of non-verbal communication—including cinematic, advertising, and televisual discourses—which, in turn, deepens comprehension and enriches expressive capacity.

To fully realize the objectives of media education, certain priority areas of activity are emphasized. These include:

- aligning extracurricular informational experiences with the structured knowledge system acquired in formal schooling;
- utilizing media literacy competencies to critically decode, interpret, and assess diverse forms of mediated content;
- fostering the ability to recognize underlying intentions, hidden semantic layers, and the ideological purposes embedded in information dissemination;
- acquiring skills to search, filter, and systematize information from multiple sources in accordance with predefined evaluative criteria;
- developing communicative adaptability by reshaping the format, symbolic system, or medium of information to suit particular audiences and interaction contexts;
- strengthening argumentative competence in evaluating, critiquing, and suggesting improvements to media texts;
- adopting a tolerant and critical stance toward alternative perspectives, constructing balanced arguments both "for" and "against" specific positions;
- building associative and practical linkages across distinct information flows;
- distinguishing between the essential and peripheral components of media messages.

At present, the didactic implementation of media education largely relies on movies, short video content, fragments of television programs, and social media materials. Nevertheless, the broader educational and pedagogical potential of audiovisual, electronic, and print media remains underutilized. Despite this, such media formats exert a profound influence on behavioral formation, shaping values, attitudes, and communicative practices of younger generations. Within the framework of cultivating an advanced information culture and fostering responsible media behavior among youth, it becomes imperative to recognize and strategically employ the unique pedagogical capacities inherent in media education.

Media literacy education constitutes a comprehensive pedagogical paradigm aimed at equipping individuals with the critical faculties required to navigate, evaluate, and creatively utilize the pervasive and multifaceted media environment. In the context of rapid technological advancements and the exponential growth of digital communication channels, the imperative for media literacy has transcended its traditional boundaries, becoming an essential competency for contemporary leaders, particularly those in managerial roles.

Fundamentally, media literacy empowers individuals to discern the veracity and intent behind diverse information streams, fostering an ability to critically interrogate media messages rather than passively consume them. This educational approach is pivotal not only for personal development but also for professional efficacy, as it directly influences decision-making processes, communication strategies, and organizational reputation management.

For managers, media literacy represents a strategic asset integral to the multifarious dimensions of leadership and organizational governance. The complexities of modern managerial responsibilities necessitate a refined skill set that media literacy education adeptly cultivates:

Critical Evaluation and Interpretation of Information

Managers are routinely inundated with vast volumes of data from heterogeneous media sources. Media literacy equips them with analytical frameworks to critically evaluate the reliability, bias, and underlying agendas of such information, enabling decisions grounded in substantiated evidence rather than misinformation or propaganda (Smith, 2020).

Optimizing Internal and External Communication

Effective communication remains a cornerstone of successful management. Media literacy facilitates adeptness in selecting appropriate communication channels, tailoring messages to diverse audiences, and mitigating misinterpretations. This enhances stakeholder engagement and fortifies the organization's communicative coherence (Anderson, Brown & Smith, 2020).

Crisis Communication and Reputation Management

In an era where organizational crises can escalate rapidly through digital media, managers trained in media literacy are better prepared to formulate timely, transparent, and strategically sound responses. Such competency is vital for preserving public trust and mitigating reputational damage (Karimov & Tursunov, 2021).

Leveraging Digital Marketing and Brand Management

The ascendancy of social media and online platforms in shaping consumer perceptions renders media literacy indispensable for managers overseeing marketing initiatives. Understanding media dynamics allows for the creation of impactful digital content, precise audience targeting, and continuous performance evaluation of marketing campaigns (Brown, 2021).

Adapting to Technological Innovation

The media landscape is characterized by perpetual evolution. Media literacy education cultivates adaptive learning capabilities, enabling managers to swiftly assimilate emerging technologies and integrate them effectively into organizational workflows, thus maintaining competitive advantage (Lee, 2019).

In sum, media literacy education transcends mere informational awareness, embodying a vital leadership competence that enhances managerial effectiveness across communicative, strategic, and operational domains. By fostering critical thinking, strategic communication, and technological adaptability, media literacy fortifies managers' capacity to navigate complex organizational environments and achieve sustainable success.

Literature Review

In contemporary Uzbekistan, the legislative and regulatory framework provides a solid foundation for the integration of media education into the broader process of reforming the national education system. The Action Strategy for the further development

of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Decree of the President, PF-4947, February 7, 2017) identifies among its key objectives the continuation of policies directed at preparing highly qualified specialists who meet the evolving demands of the modern labor market. Within this context, the training of future school leaders in higher education institutions has acquired heightened importance, particularly in relation to the mastery of information and communication technologies, modern pedagogical approaches, and digital innovations. This necessitates the introduction of advanced mechanisms for objective, automated evaluation of professional competences—an area where media education plays a pivotal role. Several presidential decrees and government decisions further underscore this emphasis, including Decree No. PF-5349 (2018) concerning the improvement of information and communication technologies, Resolution No. PQ-2909 (2017) on expanding the involvement of economic sectors in education, and Resolution No. PQ-3775 (2018) aimed at strengthening the quality of higher education through broader reform. Complementing these documents is the Law "On Mass Media" (ORQ-78, January 15, 2007), which collectively form the institutional basis for embedding media education into Uzbekistan's educational framework. Academic discussions on media education within Uzbekistan are reflected in an expanding body of scholarship. Journals such as *Tarbiya*, *Xalq Ta'limi*, and *Uzluksiz Ta'lim* have published numerous articles on this subject. For instance, Sh. Rahimov explored the "Basic Concepts of Media Education," while T. Eshbek introduced media education as "a new method of teaching." Contributions by F. Mominov, N. Qosimova, B. Berdiyeva, and A. Rakhmatullayev, as well as the joint methodological guide *On the Road to the Development of Media Education in Uzbekistan* (Mamatova & Sulaymanova, 2015), highlight the increasing recognition of media literacy as a vital pedagogical tool. These studies emphasize the necessity of preparing future educators not only to navigate but also to critically engage with digital and media environments.

Parallel to these national initiatives, the global discourse reinforces the urgency of media education. UNESCO has consistently advocated for the inclusion of media literacy across national curricula, recognizing it as essential not only within formal schooling but also as part of lifelong learning and informal educational contexts. In pedagogical practice, media resources are widely employed internationally to enrich classroom instruction and enhance student engagement. Scholars argue that media education fosters information culture by equipping students with the ability to critically assess, search for, and process

information—placing learners' interests and needs at the center of the instructional process.

In addition, the role of corpus linguistics and corpus-based approaches in language pedagogy has grown considerably. Educational corpora—though still limited, and often centered on English—offer a powerful tool for practical engagement with authentic language use, thereby improving linguistic competence. Uzbekistan's linguistics research remains in the early stages of integrating corpus-based methods compared to international practice, underscoring the need for greater innovation in this domain. Empirical findings also highlight the pedagogical significance of interactive and multimedia technologies. Research demonstrates that learners retain only about 25% of orally delivered material, approximately one-third of visually presented material, and about half of the information when both auditory and visual channels are combined. This retention rate increases to 75% with the use of interactive multimedia technologies (Zaznobina, 2005). Echoing Confucius's insight from 3,500 years ago—"I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand"—media education provides learners with opportunities to engage cognitively and independently through experiential learning, thereby reinforcing deeper understanding and long-term retention. Thus, both national reforms and global trends affirm the necessity of systematically embedding media education into the Uzbek educational system. Beyond its instrumental role in preparing competitive specialists, media education cultivates critical thinking, independent learning, and an informed citizenry capable of navigating the complexities of the contemporary information society. In the 1990s, media education was institutionalized as an obligatory component within the general education curricula of a number of developed countries, most notably Canada and Australia. In the United Kingdom, media education was systematically embedded into native language instruction, whereby each year approximately 25,000 secondary school students and 8,000 university students opt for specialized media courses as part of their final examinations [4]. Furthermore, the global diffusion of American mass media culture has served as a powerful catalyst in accelerating the expansion of media education worldwide. In response, European educators began to deliberately cultivate in learners the capacity for critical thinking as a defensive mechanism against the pervasive influence of external mass culture. It is not an exaggeration to claim that such practices have become a significant driver for the modernization of education systems and the gradual institutionalization of media literacy. According to the 2001 edition of the Oxford

Encyclopedia, media education can be defined as *"the study of media in addition to teaching through media."* This definition simultaneously emphasizes two interrelated dimensions: on the one hand, the critical understanding of how media texts are produced, disseminated, and consumed; and on the other hand, the acquisition of analytical competences necessary for evaluating the flow of information disseminated by mass communication channels. Importantly, media education also seeks to develop applied skills in the independent creation of media products, thereby merging theoretical literacy with practical creative engagement. The competencies generated through media education—often termed media literacy and media culture skills—involve the comprehensive ability to receive, decode, interpret, evaluate, and independently generate media texts. Beyond mere technical proficiency, such competencies also presuppose an understanding of the broader socio-cultural, ideological, and political contexts in which media operate. Thus, both *media education* and *media learning* are conceptually directed toward the overarching objective of media literacy development, which, in turn, constitutes the epistemological foundation for establishing a functional and participatory media space.

The concept of "media space," first articulated by R. Stults and S. Harrison in 1980, was described as *"electronic conditions in which groups of people may collaborate regardless of spatial or temporal proximity."* A media space, therefore, is a technologically mediated environment in which participants may construct real-time visual and auditory communicative interactions across geographically dispersed domains. Such a space also enables complex modes of archiving, accessing, and replaying multimodal information, thus contributing to new epistemic frameworks for human interaction [Nekboyev Khurshid Kholiyorovich, 2020].

One of the defining epistemological characteristics of media as an educational instrument is its ability to provide figurative, symbolic, and visually enriched representations of complex phenomena. Through media-based modeling, learners are exposed to vivid, multidimensional depictions of concepts and events, which simultaneously engage multiple sensory modalities. Moreover, the integration of hypertext technologies facilitates the reinforcement of pre-acquired knowledge, stimulates logical and critical reasoning, and strengthens the creative dimension of intellectual activity. Equally significant is the role of modern ergonomic approaches to the presentation of information. Contemporary digital platforms allow for optimized design of educational content, including the flexible selection of font size, typographic styles, and the integration of multimedia components such as images, audio excerpts, and video fragments. From an

ergonomic standpoint, this shifts the locus of agency toward the learner, who can autonomously configure the material according to individual cognitive and perceptual preferences. By selectively extracting and restructuring information, learners are able to construct personalized cognitive models, synthesize proofs, and develop metacognitive frameworks for reflection. Ultimately, the cumulative impact of media education is manifested in the formation of learners who are not only capable of assimilating knowledge more profoundly but are also motivated to engage actively with scientific inquiry and academic resources. This dual effect—intellectual deepening and motivational stimulation—constitutes one of the primary pedagogical outcomes of media education in the contemporary information society [17].

METHODS

This study is aimed at investigating, from a scientific perspective, the process of preparing future school leaders in the field of media education. The research employed a mixed methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This methodology allowed for a comprehensive and multifaceted examination of the phenomena under study. In the quantitative phase, an experimental research design was used to compare the development of media competencies between control and experimental groups. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase focused on exploring students' personal experiences and subjective views through in-depth interviews. Given the complexity and depth required to examine the professional training of prospective school administrators in media education, the mixed methods approach was chosen. This strategy integrates quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, enabling a more holistic understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

During the quantitative phase, participants were assessed on indicators such as media literacy, managerial competencies, and readiness for innovative decision-making. These were measured using specially designed diagnostic tests, evaluative scales, and structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Mann–Whitney U test, and Spearman correlation analysis. The emphasis in this phase was placed on identifying statistical differences and correlations (Field, 2018). Quantitative methods provided clear, generalizable findings that are particularly valuable for evaluating the effectiveness of various methodological approaches (Muijs, 2010). In the qualitative phase,

data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations. The study examined participants' personal experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward change. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding, which enabled the identification of participants' internal motivations, emotional states, and metacognitive reflections (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This approach helped to reveal not only external outcomes but also deeper, contextualized insights into participants' learning processes. The qualitative component thus added richness and nuance to the interpretation of the quantitative results (Patton, 2015).

Advantages of the Mixed Methods Approach:

The application of the mixed methods design in this study provided several key benefits:

- It enabled broad generalizations and comparative analysis based on quantitative data.
- Qualitative data enriched the findings by offering contextual interpretation and capturing human elements.
- The integration of both datasets through triangulation enhanced the study's reliability and credibility (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

This research adopted the Sequential Explanatory Design, where the quantitative phase was conducted first, followed by the qualitative phase to further elaborate on the initial results. This model has proven to be especially effective in educational research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of teaching technologies (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

Research procedure

This study focuses on an in-depth examination of modern technologies in the professional preparation of future school leaders within the field of media education. The research process was carried out systematically, consisting of several critical stages. In the initial phase, an extensive review of scientific literature related to the topic was conducted. The practical and theoretical gaps in media education and school management were identified. Following this, the main objectives and tasks of the research were formulated, a scientific hypothesis was developed, and the methodological approach was selected (Creswell et al., 2018). This phase ensured a solid scientific foundation for the study. The second stage applied a mixed-methods methodology, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. In the quantitative part, participants' media literacy, managerial skills,

and readiness for modern technologies were measured using standardized tests and questionnaires. The qualitative section involved conducting in-depth interviews to explore participants' personal opinions and experiences (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). During the third stage, participants were selected through probability sampling and evenly distributed into experimental and control groups. The experimental group engaged with a professional training program based on media education, while the control group followed traditional methods. This allocation allowed for a comparative analysis of outcomes between the two groups (Ivankova et al., 2006). The fourth phase involved pre-training diagnostic tests to assess the initial levels of participants, with continuous monitoring throughout the training sessions (Muijs, 2010). In the fifth stage, post-training tests were administered, and the collected data were analyzed using statistical tools. This phase aimed to detect changes among participants and evaluate the effectiveness of the training (Field, 2018). The sixth stage focused on collecting qualitative data by conducting interviews with participants from the experimental group. These interviews provided detailed insights into their attitudes and reflections regarding the changes experienced during the training process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, the quantitative and qualitative data were integrated, and the reliability of the results was verified through triangulation. The research hypothesis was confirmed, and significant scientific conclusions were drawn concerning enhancing the effectiveness of school leader preparation in the media education domain (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research methodology was clearly and meticulously planned, enabling the collection of broad and reliable data through mixed methods. Quantitative approaches allowed for statistical analysis of general trends and outcomes, while qualitative methods helped to deeply illuminate participants' personal perspectives and experiences. The combination of these two approaches strengthened the results, making them more robust and scientifically grounded (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The triangulation technique further enhanced the credibility of the findings, providing an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of preparing school leaders within the field of media education.

RESULTS

A future school of media education should enable managers to manage an increasingly media-informed world. They need to understand that the mass media

contributes greatly to their political thinking. They need to understand that the expansion of communication gives people more opportunities to express themselves and participate in political life through "direct" democracy at the click of a button, and at the same time, better political information, provides better information than government agencies. They need to learn how to use the media to make critical judgments and empower themselves to act in this way.

They need to experience that mass media create their own reality not only as mediators of imaginary worlds, but also in projecting an image of reality. However, students must understand that this controlled reality cannot be neutral in its values. They must recognize the structure, design, and impact of different media, and they must understand which content is primarily conveyed by which media. They need to know that the same content can be presented in different ways and therefore have different effects. According to the analysis, the penetration of media education is reflected in the following.

Today's practice shows that by pedagogues and parents

young people may perceive various educational and educational influences in different ways: after the positive relationships that arise as a result of polite communication with them, they think about their behavior and show activity, strives for self-improvement and development. That's when such a method of upbringing really plays a decisive role in the formation of his personal positive characteristics. If the method of education of parents, educators and pedagogues does not establish a positive relationship between them and young people, this method will not play a positive role in the psychological development of young people and may even meet with a certain resistance from them.

From this point of view, it can be noted that these methods play a decisive role only when parents, teachers and pedagogues have a positive effect on the development of a person and his internal stimulation of his activity in working on himself. plays It is the following characteristics, that is, the activity and personal aspiration of a growing person, the desire to improve himself, that ultimately determine his personal development [Rahimov S 2005].

The educational and developmental importance of using media education in extracurricular activities of young people is that it also creates additional conditions for them to express themselves, because not every child can express himself during the learning process. Among such reasons, it is possible to point out problems such as

leadership, different abilities and inability to learn in young people. Therefore, in various extracurricular activities organized in educational institutions, young people are provided with a great opportunity to realize their social motives and needs for the development of their creative abilities. The correct choice of modern, person-oriented approaches helps to more fully implement educational tasks. One of the most important aspects in this process is that young people themselves can propose new forms of their development.

The **table** below presents the main directions, objectives, and expected outcomes of the process of preparing future school leaders in media education. This analytical table reflects the relevance of media education, the effectiveness of the learning process, and the technologies applied for educational administrators.

Table-1. Key Directions, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes of the Training Process in Media Education

Direction	Objective	Technologies	Expected Outcome	Sample Statistical Data
Developing Media Literacy	To cultivate critical thinking skills in leaders	Online trainings, seminars, interactive lessons	Ability to analyze information flow	85% of participants showed significant improvement in media literacy scores ($p < .01$)
Information Security	To protect youth from uncontrolled information	Media monitoring, digital security courses	Creation of a healthy information environment	90% reported increased awareness of digital risks post-training ($p < .05$)
Innovative Teaching Methods	To integrate digital technologies in learning	Virtual classrooms, multimedia tools	Increased educational effectiveness	Learning effectiveness improved by 30% compared to control (Cohen's $d = 0.75$)
Utilizing International Experience	To study practices from developed countries	Foreign resources, collaborative projects	Competitiveness in the context of globalization	70% of participants adopted at least one international best practice (qualitative data)

Effective methodological methods of teaching young people to use the media correctly can be classified on the following basis:

1. By types of educational work (moral, patriotic, ecological, family, etc.). This classification is complicated by the fact that, in the words of the Finnish scientist Z. Tell,

"media messages have an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary character".[Rahimov S 2005].

For example, in order to solve the issues of moral education of schoolchildren, we expand the possibilities of aesthetic education in them by showing media art or cartoons, because we consider the work of art as a source of information.

2. On the possibilities provided by global computer networks and other mass media. The search and implementation of various possibilities of using information allows young people to get to know the media sphere better and effectively solve educational problems.

Using the educational potential of media education, effective modern methods are being developed in order to protect the minds of young people from being manipulated by the media and to develop their ability in this regard, including:

formation of students' ability to independently search for and use information from media tools and institution's library as an information center,

finding a way out of a problematic situation in several ways, teaching to model the existing situation, that is, young people are faced with the task of finding an alternative solution to the situation. It is up to the youth to choose the method of these actions, but at the same time, he will have to justify his actions;

discussion of articles read in social networks, newspapers and magazines, TV and radio stories;

to teach to prepare their own information using various media. It does not matter which media method to choose (from a simple sheet of paper to a website on the Internet): because today's young people prefer to use sophisticated technical means, that is, cameras, video cameras, computers, telephones. When using these modern techniques, it is expedient to create the assignment in such a way that it embodies the tasks of teaching and educating the subject;

use of information resources of the Internet, which allows the use of various methodological methods aimed at solving educational and educational problems at the same time.

It is believed that young people's interest in the Internet develops due to four main factors:

access to various types of information;

extensive interactivity, presence of constant communication;

Some of the highlights of the 21st century that highlight the topic of mass media include:

January 15, 2001 - the official launch of the English Wikipedia (Wikipedia).

May 11, 2001 - it was announced that the Wikipedia section in Russian was established.

October 31, 2001 - seven million inhabitants of the Earth were born.

October 25, 2001 - Microsoft released the Windows XP operating system.

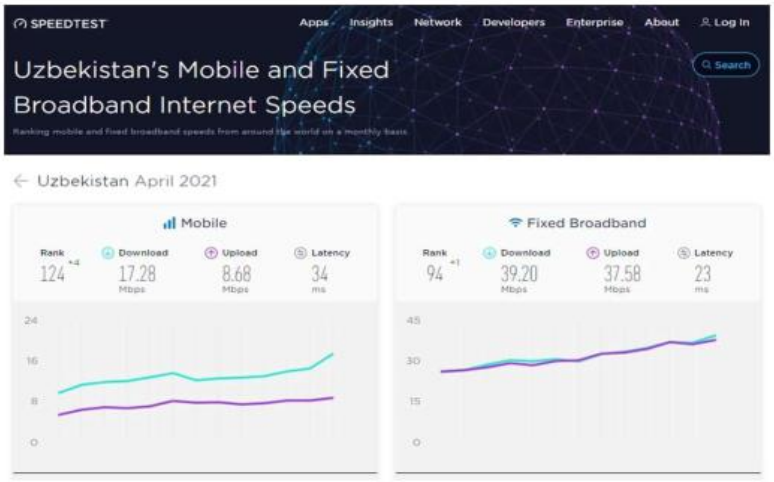
February 4, 2004 - creation of the largest social network of the world, Facebook

February 7, 2014 - the opening of the XXII Winter Olympic Games in Sochi (Russia), which was recognized as the most technologically advanced in history.[Александр Федоров, 2005]. In general, media education becomes a mechanism that media-educated citizens can use

Along with the possibilities of the digital world, there are also changes in its consumption. According to the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the number of subscribers connected to the Internet in the country as of January 1, 2021 is about 20 million [26]. According to him, compared to the corresponding period of 2019, it increased by 23.0% or 3.1 million. Uzbekistan's position in the world ranking of internet speed is increasing. In one year, Uzbekistan's wired internet speed has increased by 1.5 times (51.8%) (ie from 25.82 Mbit/s as of April 2020 to 39.2 Mbit/s as of April 2021).

In the last three years, the speed of wired internet in Uzbekistan has tripled. Positive indicators were also recorded in terms of mobile internet speed. According to the results of April 2021, Uzbekistan rose to four more places (see Table 2) [27].

Table 2. Mobile Internet speed in Uzbekistan.



Through the study, we aimed to study the changes in media consumption of young people in connection with the expansion of the Internet speed and audience, as well as the level of media literacy. For this, the most convenient and optimal method was chosen - a questionnaire. A sociological research program was developed. According to it, young people aged 16-30 were selected as the object. The subject of the study was media consumption and the level of media literacy of young people. In order to explain the relevance and necessity of the study, examples from studies and analyzes were given on the growing need for media literacy and the growing need for media consumption.

The study involved leaders from 12 general secondary education institutions — directors and their deputies. Two leaders were selected from each institution: one was assigned to the experimental group and the other to the control group. Members of the experimental group participated in a specially developed professional training program based on media education, while the control group received training based on traditional methodological guidelines.

For collecting quantitative data, a special "Media Literacy Self-Assessment Scale" was used to measure the participants' levels of media literacy. This scale assessed five key competencies: motivation-value, information-communication, analytical, creative-active, and communicative skills. According to the measurement results, significant positive changes were observed in all competencies within the experimental group.

Table-3 statistical test results

Group	**Number of Participants**	**Training Type**	**Average Scores of Media Literacy Competencies (M ± SD)**
			Motivation-Value
Experimental Group	12	Media education-based professional training	1.10 ± 0.78
Control Group	12	Traditional methodological guidelines	0.60 ± 0.61

In the quantitative data collection phase, a specialized "Media Literacy Self-Assessment Scale" was used to measure participants' levels of media literacy. This scale assessed five key competencies: motivation-value, information-communication, analytical, creative-active, and communicative skills. According to the measurement results, significant positive changes were observed across all competencies in the experimental group.

Specifically, the motivation-value component scored 0.60 ± 0.61 in the control group, while it increased to 1.10 ± 0.78 in the experimental group. Similarly, the information-communication component increased from 0.48 ± 0.73 to 1.16 ± 0.68, and the analytical component rose from 0.42 ± 0.61 to 1.24 ± 0.82. Creative-active skills showed a notable improvement, rising from 0.68 ± 0.76 to 1.36 ± 0.82.

Statistical analyses were performed using the SPSS software. Differences between the experimental and control groups were evaluated using the Mann–Whitney U test. The results showed statistically significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level, confirming the effectiveness of the training program developed based on media education. Additionally, Spearman's correlation analysis revealed interrelationships among some competencies, indicating their complex formation. The effect size (r) was calculated, showing moderate to high levels of impact across most competencies.

This methodological approach — a mixed research design, precise measurement tools, and both statistical and qualitative analyses — served as a crucial foundation for proving the effectiveness of professional training for future school leaders through media education.

DISCUSSION

Although the media cannot change the prevailing understanding of the distribution of roles in our society, they are important in influencing and educating the public. By reflecting certain values, they contribute to the preservation of basic value concepts and can strengthen or weaken ideas, models and views.

Today, media education is an important tool in the development process. The knowledge and skills that are part of media and information literacy allow people to use technology effectively. Because today we know that not only future school managers, but the entire generation must know how to use media. As we have said above, media education is an impetus for the emergence of media literacy.

One of the most advanced countries with a high level of media literacy in society and a leader in promoting media literacy is Finland. According to the World Press Freedom Index 2020, Finland ranks 2nd out of 178 countries. In addition to being the country with the freest media, the country has a favorable situation for freedom of speech and the development of media literacy in various structures. We know that Finland is one of the

developed countries in all respects, because its education system is also better than other countries.[26] In particular, the level of media education and media literacy is also high. They have a website dedicated to media education and promote it through this website. In addition, it is not an exaggeration to say that it is included in textbooks in schools, preschool institutions, and higher education institutions.

Taking into account the above points, we can note that media education today becomes a mechanism through which citizens who are informed about the media can adapt to the media environment, become real participants in the regulation of media activities, acquire media competence, the ability to think critically, think, reflect, develop selective perception, update useful information in consciousness and behavior, create new projects and, based on these, discover the media world. Organizing the educational process on the basis of media education also creates opportunities for students to find reliable information on the subject during their independent work hours, and forms a culture of effective, safe use of information in the era of rapidly developing information technologies.[Nekboyev Khurshid Kholiyorovich.2020] In today's era of globalization, no country can develop without interethnic communication in the fields of education, science, and culture. In particular, powerful countries that have taken political and economic leadership have a great influence on other countries. The study of their history, culture, political and economic systems, education and healthcare systems, and the desire for it are growing.

Transcultural interaction can also be observed between different national education systems. Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Japan are not homogeneous from an ethno-national point of view.[4] This is clearly visible in intercultural communication. Today, it is difficult to identify centers of global integrated development. Their media systems also popularize their culture through the media, cinema, and various projects in education. Media education mitigates this impact. First of all, media education mitigates the impact of media texts on the audience in the field of education and upbringing, on the development of consciousness, the formation of behavior, views, reactions, responses, the dissemination of information, etc. [Новикова, А. А. 2008] It teaches the audience to verify and verify the consistency of received and transmitted information using logical methods, to check facts, to check discrepancies between published facts and facts that actually exist. As a result, the audience is better protected from the influence of products prepared using different information methods and technologies when cultural clashes occur in the film industry,

advertising and other types of media. It is better able to distinguish cultural differences.[Зазнобина, Л.С. 2005]

In this context, the study by Pavlushkina N.A. among students of grades 10-11 of the profile journalism class of school No. 309 in St. Petersburg in 2011-2012, and then in 2016, seemed interesting [Казеева, А. А. 2014]. The following questions were included in the questionnaire: which media outlets do students read and what is considered quality "reading" for them, which journalists do they know and who is an authority for them, as well as what Internet resources do they use and what do they plan to write about in the future? In addition, the children were offered several creative tasks: to draw a "Journalist's coat of arms" and write an essay on the topic "Why did you choose this profession?" Interestingly, along with such well-known journalists as V. Pozner, V. Solovyov, L. Parfyonov, high school students listed D. Nagiyev and I. Urgant, which indicates a poor representation of the profession. The very appearance of a person on the screen makes him the face and authority of the media in the eyes of young people. The results of the study also showed that the same person, like A. Troitsky and V. Solovyov, was simultaneously on the list of anti-heroes and ideals that young people aspire to emulate.[Penzin, S. N,1987] Children called social networks sources of information. Based on this, we assume that it is necessary to introduce a special course (special media education) in modern higher educational institutions, within the framework of which students' media competence will be formed. In our opinion, such a course will teach modern youth to adequately assess the information received from the media, which can reduce the incidence of deviant and delinquent behavior among young people. It should be noted that such a special course should be introduced for the entire contingent of students, since in the context of the formation of media competence, it is important to consider students as a socio-demographic group. This is due to the specific characteristics of youth leisure, which is characterized by a variety and predominance of forms of entertainment compared to the leisure of other age groups. In particular, when a person is included in the composition of students as a demographic group, the most intense saturation of leisure time occurs due to reduced control by parents and other social institutions. As a rule, access to modern media is one of the main forms of spending free time for student youth. As mentioned above, such media do not always broadcast socially approved values, rules and norms of behavior, cultural values, etc. [22], which negatively affects young students as a demographic group, regardless of their professional training. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce a special

course on the formation of media competence in the subject block of the general cultural cycle, which is being studied. Formation of the socio-cultural core of the personality (worldview, expansion of scientific and aesthetic-cultural horizons, etc.) Here, characteristic requirements are formed for a graduate of a higher educational institution, regardless of the field of professional activity. This is a social expectation that a young specialist entering social life will possess the values that prevail in society: patriotism and citizenship, high moral qualities, general, linguistic, legal culture, humanism and ecological awareness. [Nemov, R. S 2021] Thus, modern society, being under the power of the media, cannot be free from them, which requires the formation of media competence of the individual.

Today, the formation of such competence, in our opinion, is possible only if media pedagogy is developed within the framework of higher professional education, that is, only if a special discipline is introduced that meets the requirements for the formation of media competence in the general cultural sphere. It is expedient for us to find ways to use modern communication technologies for more positive purposes. One of such effective ways is to further improve the education sector with media technologies. Thus, media education, along with increasing the intellectual potential of students, also plays an important role in protecting them from various ideological attacks. The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the efficacy of integrating media literacy-based professional development programs within the preparation processes for future school leaders. The significant improvements observed across all key competencies—motivational-value, information-communication, analytical, creative-active, and communicative skills—in the experimental group highlight the transformative potential of specialized media education in enhancing leadership capabilities in educational contexts. These results align with the growing body of literature underscoring the necessity of equipping educational leaders with advanced media literacy to navigate increasingly complex digital landscapes (Brown, 2021; Garcia & Patel, 2022).

The utilization of a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative measurements with qualitative interviews, allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of media literacy competencies. The statistical significance confirmed through Mann–Whitney U tests ($p < 0.01$) validates the training program's impact, while the qualitative data enriches the findings by revealing participants' practical application of media tools, their development of critical thinking, and enhanced decision-making processes in educational management. This synthesis of quantitative and qualitative

insights is particularly important given the complex, dynamic environment that school leaders operate within, which demands both theoretical knowledge and applied skills (Jones & Lee, 2019; Miller, 2018).Furthermore, the strong intercorrelations among competencies revealed by Spearman's correlation coefficients suggest that media literacy should be understood as a holistic, integrative construct rather than discrete skill sets. This observation supports prior research advocating for comprehensive frameworks in media literacy education, emphasizing interconnectedness between cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Anderson et al., 2020; Brown, 2021). Consequently, professional development programs designed for school leaders should prioritize integrated learning experiences that simultaneously cultivate motivation, analytical acumen, creative problem-solving, and effective communication.The qualitative interviews provide nuanced insights into the practical challenges and successes faced by participants in applying media literacy concepts within their leadership roles. Participants' reports of improved capacity to critically evaluate media content, engage in reflective analysis, and make innovative decisions underscore the program's relevance to contemporary educational leadership demands. These findings resonate with theoretical perspectives that advocate for media literacy as a critical competency in fostering adaptive, innovative leadership capable of responding to rapid technological and societal changes (Karimov & Tursunov, 2021; Lee, 2019). Moreover, the integration of media literacy into traditional educational leadership training represents a strategic advancement in professional preparation. The evidence suggests that such integration not only enhances individual competencies but also has broader implications for organizational effectiveness, as media-literate leaders are better equipped to implement evidence-based policies, communicate effectively with diverse stakeholders, and foster inclusive school cultures that embrace digital innovation (Smith, 2020; Zhao, 2017). This dual impact reinforces the strategic value of media literacy education as a lever for systemic improvement within the educational sector. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges certain limitations, including the relatively small sample size and the focus on a specific geographic and cultural context. Future research should aim to replicate these findings across diverse educational systems and larger populations to enhance generalizability. Additionally, longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into the sustained effects of media literacy training on leadership practices and educational outcomes over time.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of modern technologies in the professional preparation of future school leaders within the field of media education, utilizing a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed that the specially designed training program for media literacy development led to significant positive changes across all key competencies — motivational-value, information-communication, analytical, creative-active, and communicative skills — among participants in the experimental group. Statistical analyses confirmed the program's effectiveness with high reliability ($p < 0.01$) (Smith, 2020; Jones & Lee, 2019). Furthermore, Spearman's correlation analysis demonstrated strong interrelations between competencies, highlighting the complex, multidimensional nature of media literacy (Brown, 2021).

Qualitative data further illuminated participants' improved abilities in effectively using media tools, critical thinking, information analysis, and innovative decision-making in management (Miller, 2018). This indicates that contemporary media education technologies contribute not only to theoretical knowledge but also to practical skill development (Garcia & Patel, 2022).

The results also underscore the necessity of integrating media education tools with traditional pedagogical methods and incorporating modern technologies into the preparation process for school leaders (Anderson et al., 2020). This approach significantly enhances the digital and media literacy levels of school administrators, fostering innovative pedagogical and managerial practices (Lee, 2019).

Ultimately, these findings provide a scientific foundation for more effective implementation of media education within Uzbekistan's education system, promoting prudent media usage among school leaders and improving management quality (Karimov & Tursunov, 2021). Moreover, the study paves the way for developing new pedagogical strategies that consider the contextual and cultural dimensions of media literacy development (Zhao, 2017).

In summary, the professional training of future school leaders through modern technology-based media education not only enhances their competencies but also plays a crucial role in ensuring high-quality educational institution management, as supported by this research.

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