

**PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF
DEVELOPING MEDIA LITERACY**

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Abstract. The article analyses the philosophical and methodological foundations of developing media literacy. Media literacy is regarded not as a technical skill but as a philosophical phenomenon that shapes a person's capacity to know, evaluate and act responsibly; its epistemological, axiological and ethical dimensions are revealed.

Keywords: media literacy, information society, critical thinking, epistemology, axiology, information ethics, media culture, philosophical and methodological analysis.

Introduction

Modern society is characterised by an unprecedented growth in the flow of information. The rapid development of the internet, digital technologies, social networks and media platforms based on artificial intelligence is fundamentally transforming the ways in which people perceive the world and receive and evaluate information. Today a person encounters thousands of informational messages every day, yet not all of them are reliable or objective. For this reason media literacy – the ability to search for, analyse, critically evaluate and create media texts – is becoming one of the most important competencies of the modern individual. Media literacy is not merely a set of technological skills; it is also a socio-cultural phenomenon that shapes a person's independent thinking, critical reasoning and civic position. An individual who can move freely within the information space, comparatively analyse different sources and resist manipulative influences becomes an active and responsible member of society. Conversely, a low level of media literacy increases vulnerability to false information, stereotypes and ideological influences [1; p. 9].

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that media literacy is often interpreted as a purely practical or pedagogical problem, while its deeper philosophical and methodological foundations remain insufficiently studied. Yet understanding the essence of media literacy is directly connected with the theory of knowledge (epistemology), the doctrine of values (axiology) and moral philosophy. As Neil Postman emphasised, each type of media technology brings with it a particular “ideology” and changes the character of public discourse [2; p. 16]. The aim of the research is to identify the philosophical and methodological foundations of developing media literacy and to provide a theoretical justification of its epistemological, axiological and ethical dimensions. Proceeding from this aim, the following tasks were set: to reveal the philosophical content of the concept of media literacy; to systematise the methodological approaches to its analysis; and to elaborate the philosophical principles of developing media literacy.

Materials and Methods

The research was based on dialectical, hermeneutic, axiological, systemic-structural and comparative-analytical methods. The dialectical approach made it possible to analyse conceptions of historical development as an interconnected and evolving process. The hermeneutic method was used to reveal the content and interpretations of various historical and



philosophical theories. The axiological approach served to evaluate the values and ideological principles embedded in the concepts. The systemic-structural method allowed the theories of historical development to be studied as an integral system, while the comparative-analytical method was applied to identify the common and distinctive features of classical and contemporary approaches. The theoretical sources of the research consisted of the philosophy of history, historiography and socio-philosophical literature.

Results

The analyses carried out show that interpreting media literacy merely as a set of skills for searching, filtering or using technological tools narrows its meaning. In reality, media literacy is a complex socio-philosophical phenomenon inseparably linked with the processes by which a person perceives, interprets and evaluates reality within modern information society. The information society is, in essence, a stage of social development in which the creation, processing, storage and dissemination of information have become the principal factor of social progress. In such a society, information and knowledge resources stand at the centre of economic, political and cultural processes [3]. According to the views of Daniel Bell [4] and Manuel Castells [5], in the information society knowledge and information become the principal resource of social development, while socio-economic and cultural processes are shaped through modern information and communication technologies and networks. From a philosophical standpoint, media literacy manifests itself as a cultural and intellectual capacity expressing a person's conscious, critical and responsible attitude towards the information environment.

The essence of media literacy is revealed in a person's transformation from a passive recipient of information into an active subject who analyses its content and is able to discern hidden aims and interests. In this respect it is closely connected with critical thinking, independent reasoning and a reflective approach. A media-literate individual does not merely consume information but is also able to evaluate its source, degree of reliability, context and social consequences. As the renowned media researcher David Buckingham emphasised, the main task of media education is not to protect young people from information but to form them as individuals capable of acting consciously and independently within the media space. This approach shifts media literacy from a "protection paradigm" to an "empowerment paradigm." Here the main emphasis is placed not on restricting a person from the influence of various information flows, but on developing in them the competencies of critical analysis and independent decision-making.

From an axiological standpoint, media literacy is also inseparably connected with a person's system of values. Through media products, particular ideas, norms and values are propagated within society. For this reason media literacy enables an individual to critically evaluate these values and to select them in accordance with national and universal human interests. This is of great importance in ensuring information security and moral stability. Accordingly, media literacy is not only a technological or communicative competence but also an important philosophical category expressing the modern person's intellectual freedom, critical thinking and social responsibility. It manifests itself as one of the cultural competencies necessary for ensuring an individual's conscious and active participation in the information society [6; p. 45].

The first philosophical dimension of media literacy is connected with the theory of knowledge (epistemology). The central question is the following: how does a person determine the truthfulness and reliability of the information obtained through the media? In the age of "post-truth," where emotions and subjective views are often placed above objective facts and where fake news and manipulative content are widespread, this issue becomes all the more pressing. A century ago Walter Lippmann had already shown that the public forms its opinions not directly on the basis of reality but on the basis of a "pseudo-environment" created by the



mass media [7; p. 18]. In today's digital environment this idea has become even more relevant, as algorithms and social networks have turned into important factors shaping a person's information field. Thus, in epistemological terms, media literacy presupposes the ability to verify sources, distinguish evidence from conclusion, recognise the purpose for which information was created, and understand the socially constructed nature of knowledge.

The second dimension of media literacy is connected with values. Any media text embodies particular ideas, norms and values and instils certain ideological or cultural orientations in the consciousness of its audience. For this reason media products can never be absolutely neutral. As Manuel Castells emphasised, in the network society power is largely exercised through control over communication flows. This gives rise to new forms of struggle for values within the media space. Consequently, media literacy requires of an individual the ability to identify the overt and hidden values in media products, to evaluate them critically, to compare them with national and universal human values, and to make conscious choices. It is precisely this aspect that determines the axiological significance of media literacy.

The third dimension of media literacy is connected with the question of ethical responsibility. In the digital environment every user becomes not only a consumer of information but also a subject who creates, comments on and disseminates it. As a result, the ethical consequences of media activity are acquiring ever-greater importance. This adds a new "ethical" dimension to media literacy – namely, the necessity of responsibility in disseminating information, respect for the dignity and rights of others, restraint from cyberbullying and hate speech, and consideration of the public interest. The concept of media and information literacy developed by UNESCO likewise places responsible civic participation at its centre [8; p. 16]. In this sense media literacy manifests itself not only as a set of knowledge and skills but also as an important philosophical phenomenon expressing a person's moral culture, civic position and social responsibility.

The research results show that approaching the development of media literacy solely from the standpoint of technological or practical skills is insufficient. Although teaching the use of information technologies is important, it cannot fully reveal the essence of media literacy. If media literacy is separated from its philosophical, axiological and ethical foundations, it becomes merely a set of technical competencies and is unable to perform the function of effective protection against the manipulation, disinformation and ideological influences encountered in the modern information space. For this reason the process of developing media literacy must be closely linked with the formation of a person's critical thinking, social responsibility and capacity for independent reasoning. According to Renee Hobbs, digital and media literacy should be regarded as an integral process uniting civic engagement, creativity and ethical reasoning [9; p. 17].

Philosophical and methodological analysis makes it possible to single out a number of important principles for developing media literacy. First, the principle of critical thinking presupposes developing the skills of not accepting information as ready-made truth and of analysing its source, purpose and reliability. This principle enables an individual to draw independent conclusions amid information flows and to be protected from manipulative influences. Second, the principle of reflexivity serves a person's awareness of their own worldview, beliefs and cognitive stereotypes, since the process of evaluating information is connected not only with external factors but also with the individual's inner views. Third, the principle of dialogue requires recognising the existence of different points of view within the media space, developing a culture of open communication, and treating the diversity of opinions with respect. This aspect is consonant with the concept of the public sphere substantiated by



Jürgen Habermas, in which rational communication and argument-based debate are interpreted as an important condition of a democratic society [10; p. 27].

The analyses also show that, in modern information society, media literacy is not only an individual competence but also one of the important factors of social stability and democratic development. Media-literate citizens participate actively in the information space, make conscious decisions regarding social problems, and gain a deeper awareness of their civic responsibility. In this sense media literacy manifests itself as an important means of developing civic culture, strengthening social trust and ensuring information security.

These principles are also of particular importance in the conditions of Uzbekistan. In the country, freedom of information is guaranteed by law, and citizens' rights to obtain, use and disseminate information are protected [11]. At the same time, the widespread adoption of digital communications and social networks is sharply expanding the volume and scope of influence of information flows. Under such conditions, citizens are required to critically analyse information, evaluate its reliability and demonstrate responsible media behaviour. For this reason the integration of media-literacy development into the education system on a philosophical and methodological basis should be regarded as one of the strategic tasks. Here it is expedient to develop media literacy not as a separate technical discipline, but as a comprehensive educational direction that shapes critical thinking, information culture and civic competencies [12; p. 23].

Conclusion

The research results have shown that, by its very essence, media literacy is a philosophical phenomenon. It unites within itself epistemological (evaluating truth and knowledge), axiological (understanding values) and ethical (acting responsibly) dimensions. Understanding media literacy merely as a technical skill diminishes its humanistic potential.

The philosophical and methodological foundations of developing media literacy rest on the principles of critical thinking, reflexivity and dialogue. It is precisely these principles that transform a person from a passive consumer within the information flow into a conscious, independent and responsible subject. In future research, applying these methodological foundations to practical educational models and studying the new dimensions of media literacy in the context of artificial intelligence will remain a promising direction.

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