

ISCKMC 2020**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****MEDIA COMPETENCE OF YOUTH WITH REFERENCE TO
PARADIGM OF PARTICIPATION CULTURE**

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Abstract

The article covers the necessity to revise the criteria of media competence with regards to modern Russian youth in the context of a participation culture paradigm. The authors argue that modern educators should rethink the basic skills and abilities students need to acquire in the learning process. The new participation culture puts a new emphasis on familiar skills that have long been central to education. It also forces educators to pay more attention to the social and cultural skills that are emerging in the new media space. These skills and abilities are necessary for a student to become a full participant of communication processes, help to clearly formulate their understanding of how the media shape their perception of reality, how they should gain their experience as creators of media and participants of online communities. The article presents the results of studying the media competence of modern youth in the context of communication processes transformation. With this objective, a survey was developed and distributed using Google Forms. The study involved 505 students (407 girls and 98 boys) from 17 cities of Russia. 63.1 % of respondents were 18–20 years old and 36.9 % were at the age of 21–25. The sampling type was spontaneous. The sample contour was formed by registered users who showed interest in that Internet survey. Respondent selection mechanism was self-selection.

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Keywords: Media competence, artificial intelligence, media education, culture of participation, skills and abilities



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1. Introduction

The urgency of revising the criteria for the media competence of modern youth with reference to the paradigm of a participation culture is reflected in the works of many researchers (Beck & Wade, 2004; Black, 2005; Castells, 2002; Duncan, 2005; Gillmore, 2004).

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Lenhardt & Madden, 2005), more than half of all teens created media content, and about a third of teens who used the Internet shared their content. In many cases, these adolescents actively participated in what we call a participation culture. A participation culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing personal creations, and some kind of informal mentoring through which the knowledge of the most experienced people is passed on to beginners.

Forms of a participation culture include the following:

1) affiliation implying formal and informal membership in online communities, for example, Facebook, the use of messengers, metagaming (the player's use of real knowledge about a game to determine the actions of their character when the specified character does not have an appropriate knowledge or knowledge in the given circumstances), game clans (communities, groups of people playing multiplayer games in the same team) or in MySpace.

2) expression being the development of new creative forms such as digital sampling (using libraries of sound samples to create almost any type of recording), skinning (one of the stages of setting up a 3D character, when a character model is attached (skinned) to a skeleton), modding (making changes to the design of electronic devices in order to improve their appearance and technical characteristics), production of video content, writing fanfiction (essays based on popular original literary works, works of cinema (films, television series, anime, etc.), comics (including manga) as well as computer games), creation of zines (a small-circulation self-published work of original or appropriated texts and images) and mash-ups (a web application combining data from several sources into one).

3) joint problem solving implicating joint work in teams either formal or informal one aimed to complete tasks and develop new knowledge (for example, through Wikipedia, alternative game reality, spoiling (retelling of a film or book with the disclosure of the main intrigue)).

4) replication involving a media stream formation (such as podcasting, blogging).

The focus on exploring these forms of participatory culture indicates their potential benefits, including opportunities for peer learning, changing attitudes towards intellectual activity, diversifying cultural expression, developing skills valued in the modern workplace, and increasing civic engagement.

It is believed that children and young people acquire these key skills and competencies on their own due to mass culture influence.

In many ways, the autonomous development of a number of technical and verbal competencies while creating a media product is associated with the expansion of opportunities for promoting copyright content among a significant number of audience members. Despite the fact that the first Internet resources for posting "citizen journalism" products (for example, LiveJournal, liveinternet.ru, journals.ru, blog.ru, www.blogger.com) appeared 20 years ago both in the world and in Russia, they did not have special technologies for distributing publications other than within the resource itself. Significant growth of media content producers occurred first due to the emergence of social networks, while in some of them a

significant number of users concentrated simultaneously (VKontakte, Instagram, Facebook (for an English-speaking audience), etc.), and then due to the technical improvement of these sites.

The ability to add full-fledged multimedia content, simplicity and wide functionality in its design (various article designers, filters, etc.), and most importantly, the algorithms for promoting these publications enabled anyone to find their readers and viewers. While the first two indicators determine the quantitative growth of “citizen journalism” products, the introduction of recommendation systems like “Prometheus” on VKontakte or “Yandex.Zen” push users to create a better quality content. Moreover, the content of such materials is not limited to the text structure competencies and literacy. Skills and abilities related to the ideology and values of the author come to the fore while only a high level of media competence will contribute to creating content which will eventually be in demand on a regular basis. Despite a fixed number of conditions for selecting publications aimed to be recommended to an audience, the algorithms content quality criteria are not yet perfect. Thus, the initial function in the promotion is carried out by artificial intelligence. Specifically, it offers a product, which subsequently undergoes a secondary assessment in the form of audience reviews.

The inevitability of mastering a serious range of social and cultural competencies for creating a media product actualizes the need for pedagogical influence, which can be presented in the form of three most obvious problems.

The first problem is a participation gap, that is, unequal access to opportunities, experiences, skills and knowledge that will prepare young people for full participation in tomorrow's world.

Secondly, the problem of transparency is the challenges that young people face when learning to understand how the media shapes the view of life.

Third, ethical challenges imply the destruction of traditional forms of vocational training and socialization that could prepare young people for their role as media creators and active community members.

Therefore, educators should work together to instill the skills necessary to become a full participant in communication processes in every young person. They will help to articulate their understanding of how the media shape their perception of reality, should shape their experience as media creators and participants of online communities.

The modern formal education system has been slow to respond to the emergence of this new culture of participation. More attention is paid to it in the process of non-formal education. Consequently, the formal education system should pay more attention to teaching what we call new media literacy, namely, a set of cultural competencies and social skills that young people need in the new media space. A culture of participation shifts the focus of literacy from individual expression to community involvement.

These new skills include the following:

- 1) game (the ability to experiment with personal environment as a form of problem solving);
- 2) simulation (the ability to interpret and build dynamic models of real processes);
- 3) appropriation (the ability to meaningfully select and mix multimedia content);
- 4) multitasking (the ability to assess one’s surroundings and shift focus as needed to highlight details);

- 5) distributed cognition (the ability to meaningfully interact with the tools that develop intellectual abilities);
- 6) collective intelligence (the ability to combine knowledge with the objective to achieve a common goal);
- 7) judgment (the ability to assess the reliability of various information sources);
- 8) transmedia navigation (the ability to follow the flow of stories and information in different modalities);
- 9) networking (the ability to search, generalize and disseminate information);
- 10) negotiation (the ability to travel to different communities, distinguish and respect different views as well as to understand and follow alternative norms).

Thus, the development of such social and cultural skills requires a more systematic approach to media education. Everyone who prepares young people for going out into the world can do their part to help students acquire the skills they need to become full members of our society.

As far back as 2005, the Pew Internet and American Life project (Lenhardt & Madden, 2005) conducted a study that showed that more than half of all American teens (57 %) who used the Internet can be considered media creators. Within the framework of the study, a media creator was defined as someone who created a blog or a web page, posted original artwork, photographs, stories or videos on the Internet, or remixed online content in their new creations. Most of the respondents performed two or more of these actions.

After 15 years, we can say that 100 % of young people are media creators. In addition, new forms of expressing oneself through the media such as computer games, requiring the creation and performance of the role of fictional characters, sampling, podcasting, modding, machinima (from English machine and English cinema; another version: from English machine and English animation, that is, a way of displaying plot-based short sketches and videos being shot using three-dimensional graphics based on computer games as well as the technology itself for producing such films) have appeared.

Table 1. Knowledge and skills related to measuring ideology and values

Ideology and values. Areas of Analysis		
Do you understand how the media system changes our perception of reality?	Yes	86.1 %
	Not	5.6 %
	I find it difficult to answer	8.3 %
Can you assess the reliability of information sources, draw critical conclusions about what is said and what is not said?	Yes	73.2 %
	Not	8.5 %
	I find it difficult to answer	18.3 %
Can you search, compare, prioritize and synthesize information from different systems and environments?	Yes	75.5 %
	Not	9.5 %
	I find it difficult to answer	14.9 %
Can you identify the intentions and interests that underlie corporate and mass media products, their ideology and meanings, and take a critical approach to them?	Yes	55.9 %
	Not	15.9 %
	I find it difficult to answer	28.2 %

Can you analyze individual and collective virtual identities (ways of presenting yourself on social networks, for example, avatars) and identify stereotypes, especially in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, culture, disabilities, sexual orientation and etc?	Yes	72.6 %
	Not	7.8 %
	I find it difficult to answer	19.7 %
Can you critically assess the consequences of the formation of a homogeneous public opinion and culture promoted by the media?	Yes	66.2 %
	Not	11.7 %
	I find it difficult to answer	22.1 %
Do you recognize that empathy for people and their stories in the media can be used as a mechanism for manipulation?	Yes	79.9 %
	Not	8.7 %
	I find it difficult to answer	11.3 %
Can you manage your own emotional reactions while interacting with on-screen messages in accordance with the ideology and meanings which these on-screen messages evoke?	Yes	75 %
	Not	9,7 %
	I find it difficult to answer	15,3 %
Ideology and values. Expression areas Can you use new media tools for active civic participation?	Yes	46.9 %
	Not	20.1 %
	I find it difficult to answer	33 %

2. Problem Statement

The article presents the results of studying the media competence of modern youth in the context of communication processes transformation.

3. Research Questions

Knowledge and skills related to measuring ideology and values:

1. Ideology and values. Areas of Analysis.
2. Ideology and values. Expression areas.

4. Purpose of the Study

Studying the media competence of modern youth in the context of communication processes transformation.

5. Research Methods

To study the media competence of modern youth in the context of communication processes transformation, a survey was developed and disseminated using Google Forms. The study involved 505 students (407 girls and 98 boys) from 17 cities of Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Pskov, Perm, Ulan-Ude, Chelyabinsk, Yaroslavl, Kaliningrad, Simferopol, Volgograd, Belgorod, Penza, Kazan, Tyumen, Krasnodar).

63.1 % of respondents were 18–20 years old and 36.9 % were at the age of 21–25.

The sampling type was spontaneous. The sample contour was formed by registered users who showed interest in that Internet survey. Respondent selection mechanism was self-selection.

6. Findings

Measurements and indicators of media competence share the area of knowledge, skills and related relationships with six main dimensions being language, technology, interaction processes, production and distribution processes, ideology and values, aesthetics (Ferres & Piscitelli, 2012). In this case, these metrics relate to the area of receiving and interacting with a message (the area of analysis) and creating messages (the area of expression).

In view of studying the participation culture, we were interested in skills and abilities related to ideology and values.

Having analyzed the answers to a set of questions related to the field of measuring ideology and values, we can conclude that respondents are able to assess how the media system affects their perception of reality and to make critical conclusions about the incoming information. However, they have difficulties using this tool in practice.

For example, if we consider the questions of the block “Ideology and values. Areas of analysis”, then we can see that the questions: “Do you understand how the media system changes our perception of reality?”, “Do you know how to assess the reliability of information sources, to draw critical conclusions about what is said and what is not said?”, “Can you search, compare, prioritize and synthesize information from different systems and environments?”, “Can you analyze individual and collective virtual identities (ways of presenting yourself on social networks, for example, avatars) and identify stereotypes, especially in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, culture, disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.?” were given positive answers by the overwhelming majority of respondents, this indicates that students have formed critical thinking in relation to information coming from various media, which is quite due to the age characteristics of this group of respondents as well as the formation of mental processes.

Nevertheless, if we consider the issues of the block “Ideology and values. Areas of Expression.”, we can see that the question “Can you use new media tools for active civic participation?” was answered positively by 46.9 % of respondents, 20.1 % gave a negative answer to it and 33 % of respondents found it difficult to answer.

Thus, we can conclude that students have critical thinking when receiving information but do not have sufficient competence to apply it on their own.

Detailed research results for this set of questions can be seen in Table 1.

When thinking about meaningful pedagogical interventions, there are three main issues to keep in mind and they are as follows:

- 1) how we can provide each student with the opportunity to develop skills and experience necessary to become a full participant in the social, cultural, economic and political future of our society;
- 2) how we can ensure that each student has the opportunity to articulate their understanding of how the media shape their perception of the world;

3) how we can ensure that each student is socialized according to the new ethical standards that should guide their experience as media creators and contributors to online communities.

To solve these problems, we must rethink what core skills and abilities our students will acquire in the learning process. The new culture of participation puts a new emphasis on familiar skills that have long been central to education. It also forces educators to pay more attention to the social and cultural skills that are emerging in the new media space.

Thus, we are moving away from a world in which some people produce media and many people consume them, to a world in which everyone is actively involved in this process.

7. Conclusion

Thus, we examined the issue of the need to revise the criteria for the media competence of modern Russian youth with reference to the paradigm of participation culture.

Modern educators need to rethink what basic skills and abilities students acquire in the learning process. The new participation culture places a new emphasis on familiar skills that have long been central to education. It also forces educators to pay more attention to the social and cultural skills that are emerging in the new media space.

These skills and abilities are necessary for a student to become a full participant in communication processes, will help to clearly articulate their understanding of how the media shape their perception of reality, should gain experience as media creators and members of the online community.

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