EDUCAȚIA MEDIA ȘI ROLUL EDUCATIV AL PRESEI PENTRU COPII

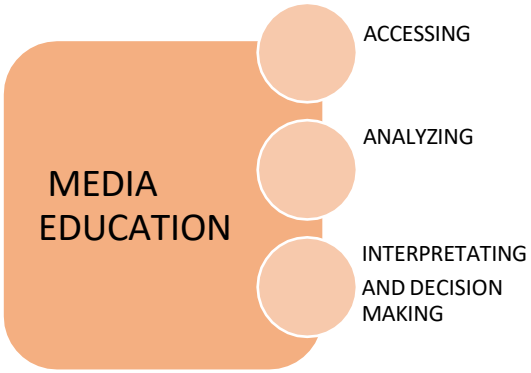
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***Summary**: This article highlights the role and functions of the media, as well as its educational mission. The media for children in the Republic of Moldova is a young one, but extremely necessary for the development and cultivation of the values of the young generation, as well as the need to promote media education and outline a critical thinking for young people to decipher the public space, to later campaign for a democratic and open society. First of all, we consider that children's media should culturalize and educate children and youth, by delivering quality, healthy, beneficial content for their harmonious development.*

***Key words**: mass media, media education, critical thinking, culturalization, educational role.*

An important role in the development of children or youth personality is represented by the media, especially the online media, because today the Internet has become a daily accessed space, where information of various types and forms can be found at a click away, and a global library of the data to which the children or youth can have immediate access. For information separation a filter is needed and this can be media education. Media education cannot be carried out if the children or youth will not have a general image of the media, from definitions to the effects it produces. Sometimes the content provided through the mass communication channels are received in a passive way, without resorting to their analysis and filtering. Silvia Șpac mentioned that "Unlike the conscious learning from the book, through reading, which directly addresses to child's intellect through the understanding and assimilation of concepts, the knowledge and experiences obtained from the audiovisual means directly touch his sensitivity without first going through the channel of rational analysis"[1]. The primary purpose of media

education is to cultivate knowledge and skills of analysis and critical thinking of the messages transmitted by the mass media, at the same time; it will contribute to increase the degree of information filtering and will encourage good practices of information from multiple truthful sources. Media education helps the child and young person to receive and thoroughly decode messages from the mass media, to penetrate their crust and analyze them multifaceted. In the study *Developing a media culture through an appropriate media education* [2], important aspects are reflected in the segment of media education and critical thinking. "Education for mass media, in a narrow sense, refers to the preparation of youth to work in the field of mass media or to understand the techniques of developing mass media products. The broad meaning is that media education refers to the process of accessing, analyzing**, evaluating and creating messages in diverse media manners, genres and forms".**



Source: developed by the author

Media education is important in the Republic of Moldova, because it forms a healthy vision and perception, on understanding the techniques of creating journalistic articles, recognizing misleading, false and truncated information, identifying the purpose of different messages, as well as evaluating them by using relevant strategies. It develops critical thinking as an extension of the general culture in order to detect fake news, ghost or clone sites, which misleads the consumer of media products.

Media education is a necessary variable in the digital age, because it refers to the process of accessing, analyzing, evaluating and interpreting messages in diverse

media forms, including those in the virtual sector, providing the individual with the necessary tools in order to carry out an analysis of media contents, cultivating specific skills and competences to identify correct information and to thwart persuasion, manipulation, misinformation, intoxication or propaganda in media materials. Media education is an element of literacy, which includes the ability to access and analyze messages, texts, materials from the mass media, and then to reflect on the meanings.

The second dimension of the title is the educational role of the media for children. The role and functions of mass media has been the object of research for a multitude of scholars, most of whom point about the function of culturalization. For example, the operational outline of the functions and dysfunctions of the mass communication system, proposed by M. DeFleur includes the media functions of: "defense of liberties, exposure of corruption, entertainment, reflection of events, stimulation of the economic system through advertising, and the function of putting people in contact with cultural assets [3, p. 311].

Several typologies of the function of the media can be identified in the specialized literature. In the "Basis of journalism" [4] signed by Professor Georgeta Stepanov, there are highlighted 5 functions:

1. Media information;
2. Media interpretation;
3. Social media;
4. Media culturalization
5. Media entertainment.

Therefore, each function highlights certain elements, for example the information function aims to inform the public about events and processes in public space. Every member of society wants to be always connected to the information circuit to know what is happening, and children and youth are also curious and want to know as much information as possible. The function of culturalization aims to cultivate aesthetic taste, cultural values, art, etc. through the media content. The mass media must also undertake the elevation of the public through various columns, texts, audio-visual contents. The mass media has the power to educate, to promote values, to configure behavior, to orient the children and youth in order to adhere to certain directions, trends, etc.

"Mass communication media have a strong personality shaping force through the variety and wealth of information, through their specificity and potential. The educational function of the mass media, which manifests in a trenchant way, does not replace the role of educational institutions" [5]. In the monograph "Art journalism in the press of the Republic of Moldova" [6], the authors mention an instructive-formative function, "contributing to the training of the population and the formation of its analytical skills. The function in question is carried out, as a rule, through the general media, namely through the various cultural content, intended for the general public". The mass media, together with other institutions, has the role of contributing to broad information, to the culturalization of the public and its education, to the transmission of valuable algorithms.

In the Republic of Moldova there are media and multimedia platforms for children and youth whose purpose is to teach media skills and tools. Pixel Media Center educational project – is the first interactive school of journalism for children and youth. It is a project under the auspices of the Republican Center for Children and Youth. The official page can be accessed here: https://www.facebook.com/pixelmediacenter. In this school children and youth learn about general concepts in TV journalism and make journalistic materials. Zuper.md is also a multimedia platform for children, under the umbrella of the Public Institution “Teleradio-Moldova" Company (TRM). More information can be found here: https://zuper.md/. A new television school for children is also the TeVezi project - https://www.facebook.com/tevezi.media, mentored by journalist Sorina Obreja. Another project is also the Academy of Television, Theater and Film. "The purpose of the Academy is to create the practical skills of exposure, psychological counseling, neuro-programming of motivation and development of individual creativity and stimulation of the public participation level of participants in social life and other activity sectors”. The Academy of Television, Theater and Film was founded by journalists Liviu Moraru and Mihai Burciu. The official website is: https://academiatv.md/about-us. Another platform where children and youth can be little journalists is the Television School, founded by Dorina Cojocaru.

The Youth Media Center (YMC) is the organization where every child and young person can be trained in journalism, media education, practice and learn media tools and techniques. "Since 2003, the Youth Media Center has promoted

the right of children and young people to free expression, information and participation. The Youth Media Center has become a resource center for children and young people passionate about media education, journalism, blogging, social media, as well as for professionals active in the field of promoting the rights of children, young people and their voice in the public space. YMC has developed knowledge and communication skills for over 10 thousand children and young people from all over the country". Headings, content and details can be found on the official website https://tineri.md/. And the Faculty of Journalism and Communication Sciences, USM generates projects for the young people of the Republic of Moldova (https://jurnalism.usm.md/), such as the "School of Diction and Public Discourse", an action that was intended for the young people of the Republic Moldova, as a result, more than 70 young people participated in the first edition, learning values for correct and coherent speech.

In conclusion, education on the media dimension aims at the development of a consumer media culture and helps children and/or youth to critically analyze the information they read, hear or see, and in the Republic of Moldova there are platforms, environments and entities where children and young people can learn what mass media means, what is the role of a journalist, what qualities they must have, what is the mission and even practice, put into practice the acquired knowledge. In addition to the formal education carried out in schools, non-formal education on media content is important and necessary for the multivalent and multidimensional development of the children or young persons.

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