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Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(2): 258-264

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.2.258
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Key Themes in Russian Media Education at the Current Stage of Development

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Abstract

The article examines the main trends in contemporary Russian media education in the 21st century. Over the past quarter century, Russian media education has undergone several transformations, including an expansion of its subject area, a broadening range of methodological developments, and an interdisciplinary nature. New opportunities in the media sphere are opening up new horizons for contemporary researchers. At the same time, the rapid development of media technologies and the expanding capabilities of artificial intelligence and neural networks are associated with risks and threats arising from the younger generation's interactions with the media world. The author analyses a number of studies on media education issues, including pedagogical, psychological, political, and sociological research from recent years. The article presents characteristics of some key areas of development in media education, identifies the most promising areas for promoting media education in Russian media practice, and defines key approaches to the inclusion of all participants in media education. The analysis demonstrates that modern Russian media education is increasingly oriented toward promoting critical thinking, media culture, and media security skills, alongside with the development of people's creative and civic competencies. The integration of media education into formal and informal educational contexts, the diversification of its methods and forms, and the active involvement of all participants in the educational process highlight its systemic and comprehensive nature.

Keywords: media text, media culture, media security, media education, media education concepts, media creativity, development of critical thinking.

1. Introduction

Media education today occupies a crucial place in the sociocultural development of modern society. Over the past years, with the rapid development of artificial intelligence, blogging, and various media technologies, it has become clear that modern society needs to be able not only to successfully search for and select media information, but also to creatively interpret it, using it in various aspects of life.

It is a well-known fact that the modern generation is well-versed in the technical capabilities of the media sphere, easily mastering the latest innovations in the media industry, quickly engaging in the process of creating media content, and easily incorporating their life stories into general media educational content. However, it should be noted that the quality of this media content is far from always consonant with moral principles, value concepts, and worldviews. Focusing on fashionable trends, many of which are devoid of meaning, often leads to blind copying of visual images that carry neither intellectual weight nor social purpose. Here, we completely agree with the opinion of V.V. Savchuk: "A book requires solitude and return, while the screen requires short-

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term uninterrupted attention to something rarely returned to. The topos is becoming a territory covered by the on-screen image, but not encompassed by it. Digital representation is born. And a person no longer sees the difference between the internal image and the external image of a thing, between the construction of a look and the construction of an image, between a representation and what is presented" (Savchuk, 2020: 86).

Hence, we consider it especially important at the current stage of Russian media education to develop new training programs aimed at educating specialists of various levels who do not only apply media education methods and technologies but also support media education for the younger generation.

The themes in contemporary Russian media education are congruent with the realities accompanying education as a whole. Objectives such as fostering students' creative potential and critical thinking, independent evaluation of media content based on the traditional values of modern society, and cultivating their thoughtful attitude toward created media content pose important challenges for media education today, related to the full utilization of the teaching, nurturing, and developmental potential of media education.

2. Materials and methods

The material underlying this study includes Russian and international scholarly works on contemporary Russian media education, including dissertations, monographs, research articles, reports, etc. The research methods include theoretical analysis and synthesis; generalization and classification, content analysis, analogy, induction and deduction, abstraction and concretization, generalization. The methodological basis of the study is the research of L. Masterman (Masterman, 1985), C. Bazalgette (Bazalgette, 2009), D. Buckingham (Buckingham, 2004), A. Silverblatt (Silverblatt, 2016), and others.

3. Discussion

The history and theory of media education in the modern world, including Russia, have been thoroughly analysed by A.V. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2021). The current state of Russian media education has recently been reflected in numerous publications. At the present stage, the processes taking place in modern Russian media education are inextricably linked to the challenges of digitalization of the educational environment: "Modern education is no longer conceivable without media, which are decisively displacing the forms generated by the Gutenberg era. Media education today is an epiphenomenon of digital technologies, and it should also be analysed from this perspective" (Savchuk, 2020: 83).

It should be noted that systemic processes related to creating media landscape of educational organizations in Russia are quite active. All educational institutions cover current events, publishing all the relevant information on their official websites and in social media groups, intended for all participants in the educational environment (students, teachers, and the parent community). This open format is due to the inclusion of an electronic (digital) educational environment in the educational system all over the country: the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation has launched the Federal Project "Digital Educational Environment", as part of the national project "Education", which "aims to create and implement a digital educational environment in educational organizations, as well as to ensure the digital transformation of the education system. The project includes equipping organizations with modern equipment and developing digital services and content for educational activities" (The Ministry..., 2019).

Similar processes are actively developing in the higher education system. In particular, in the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated July 5, 2025, No. 1805-r "On the strategic direction in the field of digital transformation of the science and higher education sector until 2030" (Order..., 2025), the following are identified as "priorities of the strategic direction:

– Implementing the digital transformation of scientific organizations and higher education organizations based on Russian software and hardware systems, including Russian end-to-end digital technologies (artificial intelligence technologies), with the aim of increasing the efficiency of scientific research and development, as well as personnel training in the interests of ensuring the technological leadership of the Russian Federation;

– Ensuring the security of information and communication processes in science and higher education;

– Forming a unified policy in the field of information and communication technologies and developing unified approaches to constructing individual components of information system architecture in science and higher education, including the formation of individual components of information system architecture based on common tools for modelling and describing information system architecture;

– Building common information models, introducing common information exchange standards, unifying the regulation of interactions between various systems and entities, and ensuring flexible and scalable process management in science and higher education;

– Creating digital services for scientific organizations and higher education institutions using artificial intelligence technologies;

– Implementing state policy in the field of digital transformation while adhering to customer-centric principles" (Order, 2025).

The essential role of media education goals related to the digitalization of higher education is emphasized by many Russian researchers. We fully agree with A.A. Gevorgyan's opinion that "currently, every higher education institution strives to create an environment favourable to the development of young people, utilize its infrastructure to implement modern approaches to education, and, of course, this infrastructure is used by the university for corporate purposes, such as implementing its image policy and attracting applicants. The university also addresses a number of issues related to civic education, developing students' creativity, and social competencies. Given the intense influence of global information flows, there is a need for teaching media culture and media literacy" (Gevorgyan, 2022).

E.R. Dikikh and N.V. Bagautdinova explore the dynamic nature of ongoing changes in the media and information environment of a modern university. The authors note that the "issues related to the development of the digital environment of a modern university have remained relevant over the past decade. While initially these were objectives related to the technological aspects of the problem, today the issues related to understanding accumulated experience, coordinating the elements of the environment, and identifying its hidden potential are becoming increasingly pressing" (Dikikh, Bagautdinova, 2023: 125). Moreover, the authors identify a number of areas that make up "the digital structure of modern universities, including the following:

– The official website of the university, which is the main form of online activity, containing comprehensive information about the university, educational programs, staff, etc., and is also a powerful tool in the marketing communications system;

– An educational portal providing informational and methodological support for the educational process, communication between all the participants, and interaction during the mastery of academic courses and extracurricular activities;

– An electronic library providing access to full-text versions of educational, methodological, and scientific literature;

– A student's electronic portfolio, which is a tool for authentic assessment that allows for recording the progress and results of each student" (Dikikh, Bagautdinova, 2023: 127).

T.V. Popova and A.A. Shtin emphasize the inextricable link between equipping a modern electronic educational environment at a university and pedagogical design. The authors state that "the application of pedagogical design in the electronic educational environment stands for continuous development and improvement of knowledge and competencies, the modernization of educational technologies, thanks to which the educational process becomes personalized, high-quality, effective, and engaging in students' assimilation of the information provided, using advances in information technology based on digital data" (Popova, Shtin, 2023: 97).

Media security and countering unreliable and destructive media information remain key media education aspects in present-day schools and universities. These themes are closely linked to the need to develop critical thinking in the younger generation. In recent years, the theme of countering fake information in the context of media education has been addressed in a number of dissertation studies. For example, the importance of media literacy in a political science context is examined in A.A. Kazakov's dissertation (Kazakov, 2020). Presenting a detailed analysis of the topic under study, the author emphasizes that "specific actions to recognize and mitigate the influence techniques used by mass media, in our opinion, are an extremely important element of media literacy in a political context" (Kazakov, 2020: 377).

The use of media education in developing individuals has also been researched in recent studies. Among these, publications focused on fostering the spiritual and moral potential of

individuals, patriotic consciousness, and civic engagement of the younger generation through media education. In this regard studies by A.A. Kondrashkina (Kondrashkina, 2012), N.P. Ryzhikh (Ryzhikh, 2011), V. Mikhaleva and I.V. Chelysheva (Mikhaleva, Chelysheva, 2025; Chelysheva, 2025), and others are particularly noteworthy. For example, media education is also explored in the research of N.P. Ryzhikh (Ryzhikh, 2011), in her work with school audiences, focusing on fostering cognitive activity, developing creativity, shaping patriotic consciousness, and motivating students to learn.

For instance, A.A. Kondrashkina examines media education in terms of its pedagogical potential. The author notes a close connection between media competence and civic consciousness of the younger generation, emphasizing that "the pedagogical potential of media education as a factor in the development of civil society acts as a dynamic, functional system of value-based, substantive, and methodological tools that enable the educational impact on individuals. At the same time, by fulfilling ideological, socially adaptive, and developmental functions, the pedagogical potential of media education manifests itself as a means of rethinking the goals and content of education at the current stage of its development, taking into account the constantly evolving requirements for the intellectual, moral, and civic development of the individual" (Kondrashkina, 2012).

The range of forms and methods of media education in schools and universities has significantly expanded recently. Alongside with traditional forms – film and media clubs, film electives, and studios – media centers and media holdings are emerging, and media projects and media creative activities for children and young people are being launched. Current promoting domestic media education is discussed at international and national conferences, roundtables, forums, and elsewhere. I.A. Kuptsova and T.N. Vladimirova rightly emphasize that "the media environment offers additional opportunities in matters of education and upbringing. The organic perception of media texts by the younger generation serves as a mechanism for transmitting the value-semantic complex of Russian culture. The most relevant forms and methods of media education for promoting value orientations and the intellectual and creative development of the individual: online events, online broadcasts with feedback, festivals and competitions in the virtual space, interesting and useful content on the official social networks of educational organizations, social networks as a creative platform for young people'' (Kuptsova, Vladimirova, 2024: 63).

The theme of media education in family upbringing has also received considerable attention. This topic has been explored by L.A. Gritsai (Gritsai, 2025), I.V. Chelysheva, G.V. Mikhaleva, Sapozhnikova, A.A. Lozovitskaya (Chelysheva et al., 2025), and others. For example, L.A. Gritsai notes that "parents' media literacy is becoming an integral part of family education, allowing them to filter and interpret content, develop critical thinking in children, and instil strong moral values, which is especially relevant in the information society. Therefore, parents, acting as media conduits, significantly influence the development of media literacy and educational values in children, simultaneously modelling media behaviour, organizing joint media consumption, and establishing rules for media use, which strengthens the family's protection from the negative impact of media'' (Gritsai, 2025).

4. Results

In recent years, Russian media education has been rapidly developing. New media technologies, the use of neural networks, and artificial intelligence are opening up new opportunities for harnessing the potential of media education in the Russian education system across a wide range of academic courses. These opportunities highlight the need for a comprehensive comparative analysis of the conceptual foundations of contemporary media education in Russia, identifying the most productive practices in formal and informal education, current trends and strategies, and analysing the development of contemporary media education models (which form the basis of numerous media education programs and media projects for schoolchildren and students). The urgency of this task stems from the urgent need to identify and implement modern, effective media education methods aimed at enhancing citizens' media and information literacy.

The scientific significance of the issues under study lies in the analysis of key theories of media education, modern methods for fostering media and digital competence among citizens, and the content of domestic models of media education for the population, modern media education programs, and their implementation practices.

Given the ever-growing interest of the younger generation in mastering the media landscape, Russian media education in the 21st century opens up new prospects for educational organizations, including schools, universities, colleges, and supplementary education for children and youth. Integrated and specialized approaches to developing media competence in the younger generation are increasingly being applied in education, integrated into extracurricular activities and educational programs, and are becoming the subject of scientific research and innovative media education practices.

The range of relevant aspects of Russian media education is currently expanding significantly. Numerous studies in pedagogy, psychology, political science, sociology, cultural studies, and philosophy in recent decades attest to a growing interest in media education.

The media education landscape has been shaping itself in the context of a rapidly growing amount of information, generating content of a wide variety of ideological, semantic, and artistic levels. The system of integrating media education into teaching different subjects at the school and university levels is actively developing, and new curricular profiles are emerging focused on mastering the media landscape in pedagogical, sociological, philological, philosophical, and psychological contexts.

Among the most pressing themes in contemporary Russian media education are protecting children from destructive media content and developing critical thinking in the younger generation through interaction with media libraries of various types and genres.

The primary objective of contemporary media education is to utilize the rich potential of media education in the fields of civic, patriotic, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and labour education. This potential is increasingly being explored in modern research: there are educational programs for schoolchildren and students, new organizational forms for integrating media education into school and university, and so on. The range of forms and methods of media education in academic and extracurricular activities, in the area of supplementary education for children and youth, is also expanding.

The theme of training media education specialists to work with the younger generation remains persistently pressing. The expanding range of media education programs demonstrates continued interest in integrating media education into the professional training of educators, psychologists, social workers, subject teachers, educational counsellors, youth workers, and others.

All participants in the educational process play a vital role in fully realizing the developmental potential of media education. Therefore, there is growing attention to promoting parents' pedagogical culture in the field of media: there are programs and online trainings for the parent community; educational work is being conducted with young families, and so on.

Media education for the younger generation is currently closely associated with teachers' media competence and the parent community. The aim of training media-literate teachers, psychologists, youth workers, and other specialists working with children and adolescents has remained relevant for many years and is being addressed at a number of Russian universities. These include media education programs successfully implemented at Moscow State Pedagogical University (Moscow), Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia (St. Petersburg), Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University (Nizhny Novgorod), A.P. Chekhov Taganrog Institute (branch) of Rostov State University of Economics (RINH), and Don State Technical University (Rostov-on-Don), among others.

Thus, media education today offers broad prospects for shaping a new educational landscape, driven both by the expanding influence of the media sphere and its technical capabilities, as well as by introducing new methodological approaches to media education in schools and universities.

5. Conclusion

The development of media education in contemporary Russia reflects both the evolution of the media landscape and the growing societal demand for critically thinking, media-literate citizens. Over the past decades, media education has transformed into an interdisciplinary field, integrating pedagogical, psychological, cultural, and technological approaches. Its expansion has been driven not only by the rapid advancement of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and networked communication, but also by the urgent sociocultural need to address the risks associated with these transformations, particularly for younger generations.

The analysis demonstrates that modern Russian media education is increasingly oriented toward promoting citizens' critical thinking, media culture, and media security skills, alongside

with their creative and civic competencies. The integration of media education into formal and informal educational contexts, the diversification of its methods and forms, and the active involvement of all participants in the educational process (teachers, students, and parents) highlight its systemic and comprehensive nature. At the same time, the growing role of digital educational environments and state-level initiatives underscores the strategic importance of media education in ensuring both educational quality and information security.

At the present stage, one of the key priorities remains the preparation of qualified specialists capable of effectively implementing media education practices and guiding young people in navigating complex media realities. At the same time equally important is the continued development of scientifically grounded models and programs that respond to contemporary media challenges, including misinformation, value disorientation, and the ethical implications of emerging technologies.

Ultimately, the future of Russian media education lies in its ability to balance technological innovation with humanistic values, fostering not only people's technical proficiency but primarily their responsible, reflective, and culturally aware engagement with media.

6. Acknowledgements

This research is funded by the grant of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, project No. 25-28-02450, https://rscf.ru/project/25-28-02450/) at the Rostov State University of Economics. Project theme: "Strategies for the Development of Contemporary Russian Media Education". Head of the project is G.V. Mikhaleva.

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