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Marketing of Media Education for Youth and Its Influence on Modern Trends

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Abstract

In an age of digital media dominance, modern media education is becoming a critical tool for preparing young people for life in the information society. Effectively communicating its values requires adapting to new generations' media consumption and communication practices. This research paper explores the integration of marketing strategies in the promotion of media education projects for youth audiences. The aim of this work is to analyze the influence of modern digital trends on the formation of marketing approaches in this field.

The study focuses on the specificity of the youth audience, whose identity is closely related to the virtual environment, analyzes relevant marketing tools. The article justifies the thesis: successful promotion today requires using strategies that have proven effective in attracting young people. Such approaches include a focus on video content in short formats, personalization of communication. It must integrate a partnership with micro-influencers, actively use social networks as distribution channels, platforms for creating communities, implement artificial intelligence technologies to analyze data and create personalized trajectories.

In conclusion, the author concludes: marketing media education should aim at creating an immersive and socially oriented experience. This approach allows for the simulation of a media literacy environment itself, involving young people in critical thinking and content production.

Keywords: media education, marketing in education, youth audience, digital trends, video marketing, social networks, micro-influencers, personalization, media literacy.

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid digital transformation of all spheres of public life, media education has established itself as a critical element of modern pedagogy and social practice. Its role has evolved into a complex process of developing critical thinking, digital literacy, and individual social responsibility in a hyperexcessive media environment. The relevance of this direction is dictated by fundamental changes in how information is produced, distributed, and consumed. Traditional institutions have lost their monopoly, and platform algorithms and user content have become key agents in shaping agenda and worldviews. These processes are most relevant in the context of working with a youth audience – the Z and Alpha generations – whose identity, communication, and socialization is largely carried out in a hybrid online-offline space. It blurs the lines between education, entertainment, communication, and consumption.

Despite the recognition by the scientific community of the need to develop media literacy among young people, there is a noticeable gap between the stated importance of this task and the real level of involvement of young people in systemic media education projects. Traditional pedagogical and educational approaches, implemented through formal education institutions, often fail to adapt to the

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speed of digital trends and the language of communication of new generations. As a consequence, the proposed formats may be perceived by target audiences as irrelevant, instructive, or archaic, not being reflected in their everyday digital experience. The paradox between an objective need for media education and a subjective low interest in its traditional forms raises the question of finding new, effective mechanisms to promote relevant values and competencies. Thus, the central problem of the study is the contradiction between high social demand for media-educated youth and the insufficient development of marketing strategies to promote it. Adequate to the digital culture and psychological characteristics of a modern youth audience.

2. Materials and methods

The methodological basis of this study is a comprehensive approach, integrating theoretical analysis and empirical synthesis. The key methodological principle is systemic, which allows to consider the object of research (marketing promotion of media education) as a multi-component dynamic system in interaction with social, technological and cultural factors. The study is interdisciplinary, at the crossroads of media pedagogy, communication theory, digital marketing and youth sociology, which has allowed to form a holistic view of the issue. The research method is a critical analysis and synthesis of existing scientific concepts, theoretical models and practical results presented in domestic and foreign publications. To work with theoretical material, a method of categorical analysis was applied, aimed at identifying and systematizing key concepts: "digital literacy", "media educational content", "involvement of the youth audience", in their modern interpretation.

The empirical basis of research is formed from a wide range of current sources, including scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, materials from specialized conferences, analytical reports of authoritative research agencies, public strategies and cases of educational and educational organizations. In the study of youth audience behavior, secondary analysis of data from global and national reports on digital and social media (Digital report DataReportal and We Are Social) was used. To assess the effectiveness of different marketing tools and formats, a comparative analysis of successful EdTech practices and campaigns and social education was used.

The classification became a methodological tool, which allowed to structure the diversity of modern digital platforms, content formats and marketing technologies according to their effectiveness and relevance for solving media education problems. The study used a predictive approach based on the identification of stable trends. The fundamental methodological requirement for all stages of work was verifiability and reliability: each theoretical thesis or analytical summary is supported by a reference to a specific source available for verification. The ethical aspect of the methodology was to be critical of data and to recognize the constraints associated with the dynamics of the digital environment.

3. Discussion

Modern media education is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the shift from the paradigm of "defense against media," which focused on critical analysis and countering manipulation, to the paradigm of "development through media" (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015). The new paradigm views the digital environment as a space for socialization, self-realization, civic engagement, and creative content production. Evolution directly dictates the need to revise approaches to its promotion: marketing becomes a complex activity for constructing meanings, forming communities and integrating educational values into digital practices of youth. The key context is changing the media system itself. In it, the monopoly of traditional media has given way to a hybrid ecosystem in which technology platforms, opinion leaders, and user content play no less significant roles in shaping agendas and worldviews (Garcia et al., 2023; Gálik, 2020; Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2020). The promotion of media education thus takes place in a highly competitive environment for attention. Educational narratives must compete with entertainment, commercial, and polarized content.

Effective promotion of media education is impossible without a deep understanding of its target audience – generations Z and Alpha, deeply immersed in the digital environment. Their media consumption is characterized by hyper-fragmentation, mobility, climactic thinking, and the dominance of visual and video formats. Research shows that over 60 % of this audience uses social media as a primary source of news, knowledge and skills (DataReportal, 2024). For them, authenticity and value matching are crucial: they feel keenly disingenuous and prefer brands and

initiatives whose ethical principles align with their own beliefs about sustainability, inclusion, and social justice (Smith, Kist, 2023). The motivation to learn is largely pragmatic and modular – young people value the opportunity to acquire specific, practical skills. The emotional background of the Z generation is often characterized by heightened anxiety about global challenges and information overload. The external environment shapes the audience's demand for content that promotes digital wellbeing and reduces stress (Kongskunsky et al., 2022). Therefore, communication should appeal to positive agency, demonstrating how media literacy enhances opportunities for creativity, community building, and personal goals.

The dynamic landscape of digital platforms requires strategies to promote media education, continuous adaptation and informed channel choices. Visually oriented platforms such as TikTok, Reels and YouTube (Shorts) are points of attraction for young people. Successful communication involves deep immersion into 2-3 key, most relevant audiences of a particular project. For example, the Russian platform "VKontakte", while remaining a universal ecosystem, demonstrates high efficiency in building thematic educational communities (parishes) through live-broadcast tools, discussions and flexible publication formats. Telegram, having evolved into a powerful platform for content distribution, has become a significant channel for peer-reviewed content, tutorials, and mini-courses, especially for niche and motivated audiences. The promising direction is the use of gaming platforms (e.g. Roblox, Minecraft) and metaphysical as new educational environments. They can be used to create immersive simulations for digital security and networking skills (Livingstone, Pothong, 2024).

Table 1. Comparative analysis of digital platforms to promote media education among young people

Platform/ Type	Key formats and features	Potential for media education	Key limitations
TikTok, Reels	Ultra-short vertical videos (up to 90 seconds), algorithmic feed, trends and shilling.	High viral capacity, ideal for the format of "Lifhaks", case dissections and quick fact checks.	Depth of feed, clivage, high competition for attention.
YouTube	Long videos (Longrids), screencasts, documentary formats, system of recommendations.	Possibility of deep immersion into the topic, building a loyal audience of subscribers, monetization.	High resource intensity of production, long period of channel development.
VKontakte	Universal ecosystem: communities, streams, articles, discussions, clips.	Best opportunities to build a sustainable educational community by interacting with an audience in the Russian-speaking segment.	The need for constant moderation and embedding in diverse content.
Telegram	Channels (one-way communication), chats (dialogue), bots, long text convenience.	Distribution of expert materials, creation of closed groups for in-depth training, high loyalty of subscribers.	The audience can be narrow, requiring quality text content.

Source: prepared by the author

Modern trends require a shift to dialogue and the creation of an immersive educational experience. Video content remains key. Its effectiveness is determined by its ability to provoke interaction. Social media algorithms are increasingly ranking content by engagement depth (likes, comments, reposts, viewing time), so educational videos should be designed to launch a discussion: with provocative headlines, by direct questions to the audience and use of interactive features (Chodak et al., 2019). A series of mystery videos can be a successful format. In them, viewers are

encouraged to find signs of mediatherapy. There is great potential for podcasts and audio content to be integrated into daily youth rituals. Artificial-intelligence technologies are opening the way to hyper-personalization: chat bots can act as personal trainers for media literacy. Generative AI tools allow students to practice the principles of content creation and verification (Luckin, Cukurova, 2023). Gamification, going beyond simple badges, involves developing educational quests or mobile apps.

Progress in promoting media education requires taking into account the cognitive characteristics of information processing by young people in a digital environment. Modern research in digital cognition points to the formation of "cliplal thinking" as an adaptive mechanism for information oversupply. The phenomenon is characterized by a special mode of attention – rapid switching between heterogeneous flows of information and focus on visual patterns and emotional triggers (Frumkin, 2010; Soldatova, Rasskazova, 2014). Therefore, effective educational content must be short, cognitive-optimized: use strong visual metaphors, narrative structures close to the format of storytelling in social media, emphasize key ideas in the first seconds of interaction. The approach contrasts haphazard perception by offering structured and meaningful "information patterns" that integrate with existing user mental patterns and promote deeper understanding of complex media literacy concepts.

Strategically, the advancement of media education today must be viewed through the lens of the concept of educational guerrilla marketing and natively integration. This implies the abandonment of direct didactics in favor of a hidden introduction of educational messages into those formats and contexts that are already an organic part of youth digital being. An example is a collaboration with a popular blogger-gamer, who as part of his stream analyzes the reliability of information about new game assembly, demonstrating in practice methods of source verification. Or integrate a fake-recognition mini-lesson into a popular web series script. Such an approach, based on the theory of inclusive learning, allows overcoming the psychological barrier of resistance to "learning" by turning it into a byproduct of entertainment or social experience (Greenhow et al., 2023). The context of its submission becomes key, trustworthy and perceived as relevant to the audience's current interests and activities.

With free educational content competing with professionally created entertainment, the ability to build long-term loyalty and turn a one-time consumer into a community member is a key asset. Modern social-network theories emphasize the role of "algorithmic public sphere". In it, the visibility of content is determined by the mechanics of engagement (Van Dijck et al., 2023). Therefore, the strategy of advancement must include the creation of a single viral content and the design of a digital educational ecosystem. This implies the creation of interconnected presence points (e.g. TikTok for attraction, Telegram channel for in-depth study, Discord server for communication and collaboration). So each channel performs its function in the involvement funnel. User-generated content (UGC) and co-creation mechanics are becoming a critical element of such an ecosystem. Holding a contest to create memes on digital hygiene, contests for the best news story or hackathons to develop educational mini-games transforms a passive audience into active co-authors and ambassadors of the project.

It is necessary to consider cross-cultural and regional characteristics as a factor modifying universal marketing strategies. The digital culture of youth, though globalized, is deeply rooted in local contexts - linguistic, social, and political. Thus, the study of digital behavior of Russian youth indicates the high importance of local platforms (such as "VKontakte" and "Yandex.Zen"), specific trust in certain types of influencers, whose narratives resonate with the national-cultural context. Direct copying of successful Western cases (such as TikTok formats) without deep cultural adaptation and working with local trends can be inefficient. Promotion of media education should include the digital ethnography phase – the study of specific practices, languages and communities of a target audience in a particular region. Such an approach allows to identify relevant topics for a given group (e.g. critical thinking of domestic media), use relevant humor and cultural codes, choose promotion channels that have maximum penetration and trust in the specific environment. Thus, global trends of personalization and gamification gain the necessary local meaning.

4. Results

The study has identified a number of specific patterns and effective practices in marketing media education for young people. The most relevant and effective channels of communication are the visually oriented platforms (TikTok, InstagramReels, and YouTube Shorts), which dominate

the media consumption of generations Z and Alpha. The comparative analysis of platforms presented in [Table 1](#) confirmed that each has unique potential and limitations. Thus, the ultra-short video content on TikTok Reels demonstrates the highest viral potential for the distribution of educational "lifhaks" and the dissection of cases. Its effectiveness is limited by the depth of feed. At the same time, YouTube and universal ecosystems like "VKontakte" provide opportunities for building sustainable educational communities and deep immersion into topics. On the other hand, it requires considerable resources to create and moderate diverse content. Telegram (social network banned in Russia) has established itself as a key channel for sharing expertise and reaching out to niche, high-profile audiences.

The effectiveness of educational content depends directly on its ability to spark interaction and engagement. Social media algorithms that rank content by engagement rates make it crucial to design materials that are initially aimed at triggering a discussion - using provocative headlines, direct questions to the audience, and interactive features. Experiments such as those described in the work by Chodak and colleagues ([Chodak et al., 2019](#)) show that video content, especially in the form of detective clippings or clips, leads to a significant increase in engagement and memorization of key principles of media literacy.

An important result of the study is confirmation of the hypothesis about the high effectiveness of strategies of guerrilla marketing and the integration of native educational messages. Collaboration with micro-influencers, whose image and values are authentic to the target audience, is significantly more effective than direct didactics or advertising through formal institutions. Young people exhibit a greater sensitivity to information submitted in the context of entertainment content, whether it is a popular gamer's stream analyzing source credibility or a mini-lesson integrated into the webseries' storyline. Such an approach allows the psychological barrier to be overcome and transforms the educational process into a byproduct of social or entertainment experience.

The personalization provided by artificial intelligence technologies has shown its high potential effectiveness. Chat bot opportunities as personal media literacy coaches and generative AI tools for hands-on learning about content creation open the way to shaping individual educational trajectories that meet young people's demand for pragmatic and applicable skills. At the same time, cross-cultural analysis has revealed the need for a deep localization of global trends. Universal strategies, such as gamification or working with influencers, require the inclusion of local insights, cultural codes, and platforms that are most trusted in a particular region. Thus, the successful promotion of media education today is a synthesis of deep understanding of cognitive characteristics and digital habits of young people, strategic choice and combination of digital channels, creation of immersive, a socially oriented and personalized educational experience, organically woven into the digital everyday life of new generations.

Evidence from the study on the need to use modern digital channels for youth engagement is reflected in the work of other authors. Survey results showing the dominance of YouTube, TikTok and "VKontakte" as the main platforms for sports club advertising are correlated with broader data on media consumption. "The online environment today has become for the young generation a basic space for communication and consumption of different content" ([VtSIOM, 2023](#)). This confirms the strategic importance of digital channels as a primary, rather than an auxiliary, marketing tool.

The paradigm shift in media education identified in the paper is being discussed in the scientific community. We believe that media literacy should not be limited to information analysis. These methods should be reinforced by a systemic approach that highlights the design of social media platforms and their psychological impact ([Huguet et al., 2024](#)). The thesis directly supports the conclusion of the study on the need to move to create an immersive educational environment that takes into account the algorithmic nature of digital platforms.

The effectiveness of interactive and gaming content, highlighted in the study as a key factor for engagement, is confirmed by practice. An example is the goal of the interactive game "Moshemoyka" to encourage young people to critically evaluate information in media.

Thus, the discussion around the results shows: effective promotion of services and educational values must be based on a deep understanding of the digital environment. Researchers are providing increasing evidence that social media and digital platforms play a crucial role in the information diet of young people ([Hobbs, 2024](#)). Hence, strategic integration into digital practices and algorithmic logic of platforms where the target audience functions is key.

5. Conclusion

This study allows for a number of fundamental conclusions about the role and mechanisms of media marketing in the context of interaction with youth audiences in two important areas - promotion and media education initiatives. Empirical evidence from the analysis consistently confirms that the digital environment, especially social networks, has become a media environment. It shapes the interests, values, and behaviors of a new generation. The dominance of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and "VKontakte" in youth media consumption requires a fundamental revision of traditional marketing and pedagogical approaches. Impact effectiveness is determined by the ability to organically integrate into their algorithmic logic and cultural codes, creating relevant and engaging content.

Comprehensive analysis has shown – successful media marketing targeting young people, whether for commercial or educational purposes, is based on a synthesis of several strategic principles. First, it is a transition from monologue to dialogue and interactive interaction. In it, content is designed to provoke engagement, discussion and creation. Second, the personalization of communication, achieved through targeted technologies, data analysis, and, in the long run, artificial intelligence tools that allow for individual trajectories of interaction, is critically important. Third, there is proven effectiveness in natively integrating and guerrilla marketing strategies when key messages are broadcast through authoritative influencers and in formats that are organic to entertainment content.

The important conclusion is to recognize the need for deep cultural and regional adaptation of global trends. Universal techniques, such as gamification, working with microcalculators, or using short videos, should be filled with local insights, based on platforms that are highly trusted, and tailored to the specific digital behaviors of a particular audience. This makes the digital ethnography phase important in strategy development. Media marketing is being transformed into a complex practice of designing digital environments and communities.

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