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Management Strategies to Enhance Media and Information Literacy and Critical Thinking in Modern Society

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ABSTRACT
Introduction: The topic's relevance stems from the fact that media literacy needs to be raised among the general public in the contemporary information society, and critical thinking skills must be developed in light of the rapid advancement of digital technologies and social media. Finding innovative strategies to raise the level of media literacy among Ukrainians is necessary due to the increasing amount of misinformation and media manipulation in the media.
Objectives: The study's goals are to determine practical methods for fostering media literacy and critical thinking in the contemporary environment.
Methodologies: To find patterns in the development of media literacy, the study technique employs both inductive and deductive methodologies as well as the analysis and synthesis of scientific approaches to media literacy.
Results and conclusions: The study is practically significant for adapting European media education methodologies to Ukrainian conditions and implementing them in the educational system to foster students' critical thinking. The study's emphasis on how much media education may contribute to the curriculum of various courses at various educational levels is another significant finding. This emphasizes how important educational institutions and legislators are to creating a society that is knowledgeable and capable of critical thought. Furthermore, including media literacy into regular education may greatly lessen the influence of misleading information on public opinion.
Keywords: Media Literacy, Critical Thinking, Digital Technologies, Social Media, Misinformation, Educational Programs, Information Society, Educational Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Because of the vast quantity of information available in today's environment, media literacy and critical thinking abilities are essential. This is because social networks and digital media are always emerging as new tools for seeing, understanding, and disseminating media material. Different modes of information distribution have drastically altered with the emergence of social media, blogs, and other digital media communication. As a result, communication theories now face significant challenges for critical examination of media content. Fake news, misinformation, and mental manipulation have become the main threats to public space as a consequence of this shift [1]. The ability to evaluate and interact with media is referred to as media literacy [2]. Even while media literacy instruction is recognized, the practice is still in its infancy, particularly in nations like Ukraine where social media shapes people's beliefs [3]. Education often fails to teach students about the essential assessment frameworks that will allow them to distinguish between false and misleading information, which is much more important in today's world. Additionally, even if other nations like Finland and Sweden have

Ukraine has a number of challenges when it comes to adopting international techniques, despite successfully piloting media literacy initiatives [4]. The lack of comprehensive and cohesive methods for integrating media literacy with digital media and social networks into the Ukrainian educational system further highlights the need for further research. This study will help close this gap, examine in further depth how to enhance media literacy and critical thinking in Ukrainian education, and provide a practical answer for creating a society that is critically informed.

The purpose of this article is to describe the responsibilities of education and media in this regard, as well as to highlight and defend important strategies for promoting media literacy and critical thinking in today's society while taking digitalization into consideration.

Goals:

1. To evaluate the impact of digital media and social networks on the development of critical thinking in society and analyze theoretical approaches to the definition of terms like media literacy and critical thinking in the context of contemporary information technologies.
2. Describe the fundamentals of the educational system in relation to the growth of media literacy across various age groups.
3. Examine current media literacy initiatives in other nations and modify them for the Ukrainian setting.
4. To provide methodological recommendations for improving the content of media literacy and critical thinking courses at all educational levels.
5. Identify notable trends in raising the public's media literacy via public events and popular science education initiatives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The components of instructional activities include media literacy and critical thinking. The purpose of this part is to demonstrate how media literacy and critical thinking serve as the foundation for the development of students' competences throughout the educational process. For example, research on the relationship between media literacy and critical thinking is presented by Tomita et al. [5] and should be included into education. However, İçen [6] demonstrates how to increase media literacy via assignments. Giselsson [7] examines how critical literacy and critical thinking interact throughout the learning process. Stanley & Lawson [4] describe experimental investigations of the effects of educational interventions on young pupils' critical thinking. According to Baltezarević [1], media literacy may be seen from a broader cultural perspective in terms of how it affects critical thinking. Furthermore, Yasdin et al.'s paper [8] emphasizes critical thinking in connection to students' occupational learning process. Unlike the article of Niza et al. [9], this one focuses on how social media users utilize critical thinking to identify bogus news. Thus, it can be inferred from the study results that media literacy and critical thinking are components of the whole educational process that develop professional and personal capabilities.
2. Critical thinking in relation to the existence and application of information society and digital culture. The use of critical thinking in the context of the new media environment is the focus of this section. In particular, Lacković [10] highlights how digital pictures contribute to the development of critical media literacy in post-truth. Zarić [11] examines critical thinking and digital immunity within the framework of digital media cultures. In their work, Bulger and Davison examine the perspectives and problems related to media literacy in the contemporary period of technological progress. According to Singh and Ramaiah [12], media and information literacy includes having a set of tools in today's society. Shieh et al. [13] explain how students' media literacy and critical thinking are impacted by their incentive to utilize social networks. Students' critical thinking on political news on Instagram was investigated by Dikarsa et al. [14]. Murzina [15] examines what media competency and media literacy entail in relation to the educational process. Because the information environment is always changing, the works in this area show critical thinking as the decision-maker's tool.
3. Developing critical analytical abilities with a focus on societal crises and military situations. The final segment discusses media literacy and critical thinking, how to become competent during societal crises, and disputes. One aspect of critical thinking is media literacy, which was taught to senior citizens throughout the conflict [16]. Bohdanova [17] examines the critical thinking that cadets engage in while they are studying; the particulars of a military curriculum are covered here. A novel mobile interactive media design was proposed by Ninghardjanti and Dirgatama [18] to help students strengthen their critical thinking skills. In order to increase understanding in the complex social situations that are being discussed in 2022, Chittoranjan Mishra studies the topic of critical media education. Bulger and Davison [2] claim that media literacy offers strategies for combating misinformation, particularly in light of global dangers. Romero et al. [19] state that the present research looks at the functions of CML and how it affects learners' skills in regard to the emerging societal issues. From a critical literacy perspective, Efendi et al. [20] identify and describe how students apply critical thinking in their writing. They change the focus to media literacy and constructive critical thinking in the context of societal crises and/or conflicts, emphasizing their importance for maintaining social stability.
4. How information technologies are used in college and how critical thinking is implemented. The interplay of contemporary technologies for promoting media literacy and critical thinking in higher education is covered in the fourth part. With an emphasis on technologies that improve competency, this study examines MOOCs that are used inside the e-learning system as a teaching method for master's students in electrical engineering. Batsurovska et al.'s research [21] examines the variables that affect students' competency development in higher education institutions using digital media communication environments. Babenko et al. [22] concentrate on the monitoring of the educational environment and information in the engineering education system while teaching critical thinking. Twiningsih and Elisanti [23] assert that developing new STEAM media is crucial for maximizing

scientific literacy and/or critical thinking. Take a look at Park et al. [24], where the writers talk about information and digital literacy as aspects of technological growth. Gilmour's work [25] identifies media literacy and critical thinking in the contemporary information world, particularly when it comes to false information. Andersson emphasizes the need of critical thinking and information literacy in the digital environment [26]. These studies highlight the need of using contemporary technology to critically stimulate students' critical thinking and media literacy while also helping to develop the experts needed for the current world.

METHODS

In order to give a thorough analysis of media literacy and critique in modern culture, this study primarily used a theoretical research technique.

1. In the framework of the article, analysis and synthesis were used to examine scientific definitions of media literacy and critical thinking. While synthesis put the information back together to create the body of knowledge, analysis allowed me to break down the material I encountered for the main ideas and concepts.
2. Induction and deduction: Using particular facts and occurrences, the induction approach was utilized to generalize the trends and patterns of media literacy development. These tendencies might be examined in relation to actual educational systems because to subtraction.
3. Abstraction and generalization: These techniques were used to draw abstract theoretical conclusions about how media literacy affects the development of reason. The most important and pertinent parts of the issue were eliminated via abstraction, and a COCS conceptual model was created through generalization.
4. The scientific data and the global experience of using media literacy in educational activities were categorized using technology and systemization. While systematization gave the study a logical flow, classification made it possible to highlight the primary forms of media literacy model integration.
5. The forecasting approach was used to anticipate potential future developments for the advancement of media literacy and critical thinking within the framework of the information society.

By using these theoretical techniques, it was possible to examine and contrast the current media literacy initiatives and create fresh ways to foster critical thinking in Ukraine.

RESULTS

The review of various interpretations of the notions of media literacy and critical thinking in the framework of the current information and communication technologies was an analysis of the theoretical approaches to defining these notions.

Media literacy means the ability to read and write the printed, spoken, advertised, televised, radioed, and now, the networked messages in newspapers, airwaves, screens, websites, etc. It means critical approach towards the content of the message, the ability to distinguish truth from the lie, meaningful message from the fake one, and to use the information received in active social life. Among the fundamental theoretical directions of media literacy there are cognitive, studying the formation of analytical skills, and socio-cultural-because in this perspective, media literacy is seen as a means of socialization and manipulation of society.

Decision making means the skill of fact appraisal, summation, probabilistic judgments, and rationale of judgments grounded on logistic associativity as well as reappraisal of beliefs coordinated new data. The historical supply related to information technology crucial today due to connections of thought procedures with other labor-demanding propensities in digital information from assorted digital sources. There are several outlined approaches that include, the logical-analytical, which emphasize the problem solving ability of analysts in data and information recourses processing. The other approach as a problem-solvers approach that emphasizes the aptitude to apply knowledge to solve problems and come up with decisions.

In the context of the present Information Technologies, the media literacy and critical thinking co-develop. IT changes availability and speed of information delivery and, first of all, it demands from a person fast assessment of information reliability. The basic theoretical approaches are:

technological appreciation – acquisition of technical skills that help in the proper utilization of the available technologies in attaining the goals of information access.

as for the teaching/learning approach, one that is applied in all measures of education is that media literacy and

critical thinking shall be taught in all stages of education. In this case, it refers to education attained in school going system as well as in tertiary institutions.

To become active members of information society, interact with information flow and protect oneself against the actions connected with disinformation and manipulation it is necessary to possess media literacy and critical thinking as the part of information culture.

Digital media as well as the social networks that are in existence are substantially involved in the thinking pattern of the society albeit with a number of implications.

The role of the education system in developing media literacy across various age groups is crucial, as educational institutions provide systematic and consistent training in critical skills for working with information. Education, tailored to the needs and capabilities of each age group, has the potential to help citizens navigate the modern information environment more effectively. The stages of development of media literacy in the education system are presented in Figure 1.

In the stage, the educational system act to influence elementary notions regarding the media. They develop capacity to differentiate between the various media (television, books, internet) and also their main purpose. Media literacy is taught by designing multimedia lessons and games whereby children learn how to discern media content and not to believe everything that they are told.

At Secondary level of education student learns different types of media and the features associated with them in details. Students learn to critically evaluate news information and learn about disinformation at the beginning of the lesson. Media literacy during this phase is associated with problem solving, comprehension of the text and argumentative discourse in general.

At this level the component of educational system also develops media literacy among students and prepares them for active citizenships in the information society. Greater conceptual demands are placed on students, they accomplish tasks in terms of using a variety of analysis techniques, manage a great volume of information and become capable to generating own media messages. Media literacy is then seen by higher education as a part of the citizens' competence.

The adult education system helps to increase media literacy of citizens who are already employed, or participate in public activities. It is possible to make educational programs targeted directly at strengthening critical thinking abilities and identification of the information threats, especially such threats as disinformation, and propaganda.

The use of media literacy is useful for individuals of older age to assimilate into the contemporary society and also ensure one does not fall victim to various tricks that may be availed through the media such as fraud or anything of that nature. Organizations serving the educational programs should make their programs to fit their needs and technology.

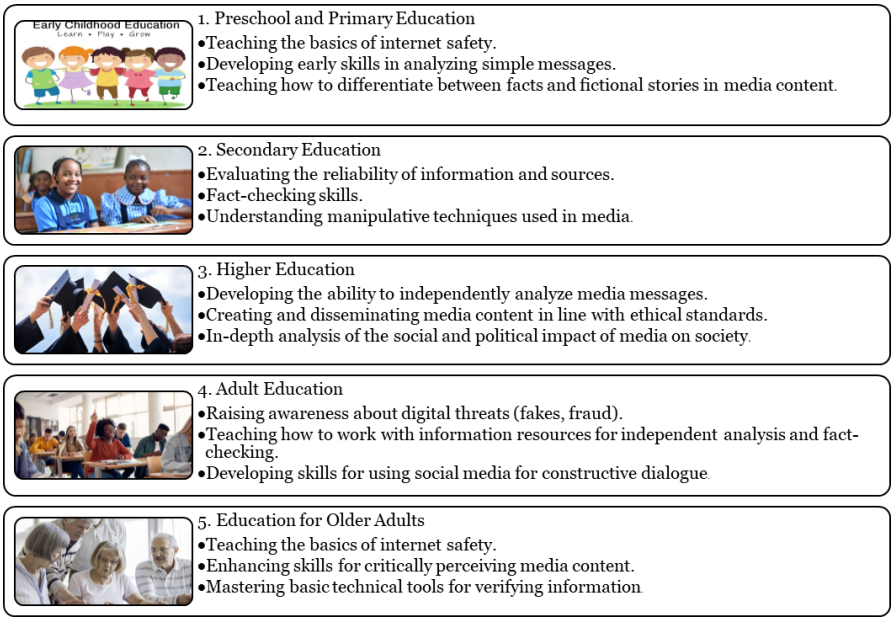


Figure 1: Stages of Media Literacy Development in the Educational System

The education plays the crucial role in acquiring media literacy throughout different ages of people. Besides, yielding the access to the knowledge base it helps in building the thinking skills for active participation in the modern informational society. Every age group needs a different strategy that would

take into consideration the age, interest, and understanding of the concept of the internet of the targeted age group.

The analysis of such promotion techniques in other countries together with the subsequent application of the acquired data allows enhancing the national educational programs in Ukraine. The following involves an analysis of successful practices of implementing media literacy in practice across the levels of learning. This will enable the citizens to be prepared for constructive participation in the contemporary information society as well as enhancing the development of critical thinking. The below table provides examples of the ML strategies visible in various countries and their possible applicability for Ukraine. Strategies for promoting media literacy in different countries and their adaptability for Ukraine are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategies for promoting media literacy across different countries and their adaptability for Ukraine

Country	Media Literacy Promotion Strategy	Strategy Features	Copy and paste adaptability potential in Ukraine
Finland	Implementing media literacy at all levels of education: from the period of the primary school going up to the tertiary level of education. The emphasis is made upon critical thinking and on the capacity to interpret media messages.	Education on Media Literacy to be offered as a compulsory course in all the levels of education. Lack of participation of the course instructor in face to face teaching and learning process.	In the same manner, more obligatory subjects can be taught in Ukrainian schools and universities that are necessary, relevant and feasible to the local context. Creation of multimedia applications in Media Education.
Sweden	Development of programs for the formation of media culture among youth and adults through the relevant ministries of different countries, insisting on the necessity of media education in conditions	Targeting young people through posts in social networks and in-depth temporary targeted campaigns on the formation of critical thinking against the	In Ukraine educational campaigns and national programs for various age groups can be conducted corresponding to media literacy needs, using
	of democratic transformation and fight against fake news.	background of fake news and media manipulation.	social networks and other digital resources.
USA	With regard to the current issue, the support of the initiatives carried out by the communities and non-profit organizations focused on media literacies strengthening among citizens should be backed by free online courses and training.	Control and support of educational processes of the mass CBLU, training and practice, MOOCs, training sessions, seminars, and informal education and communities support.	In Ukraine, the approaches and programmes may be created and funds may be provided, which could offer the free media literacy to the population and if necessary, especially during the war, proposing the various types of disinformation.
Canada	The formal adoption process of media literacy across School Courses and credit bearing courses in English, Social Studies and Technology Departments/Division. In case with Media and Society the curriculum in a nutshell is about analyzing the content of media and the effect it yields.	An important element of media literacy included into the curriculum of the schools where media comprehension would be taught as a cross-curricular activity based on the academic comprehension and focus on the content analysis.	The concept could be implemented Ukrainian educational institutions to teach media literacy as a separate course in addition to as a part of Ukrainian language, history, IT classes if needed.
Germany	Media literacy as part of digital literacy: to include it in the technical disciplines classes and the development of IT working abilities while handling information in the electronic landscape.	The importance of SafeMedia lessons for schools and adults courses and media literacy programs used in schools aimed at safe media use and manipulation recognition.	In Ukraine, programs and projects for media literacy that can be launched and implemented especially in the sphere of IT and digital technologies in schools and universities.

Australia	Twenty-three educational projects targeting the development of teacher competencies in the area of media literacy, as well as the attempts to implement the given knowledge in the learning process. Generation of resource materials for the teachers.	Organization of media literacy training for teachers, production of teaching and learning materials, seminars and hands on workshops for the educators.	It is, therefore, crucial to develop ways of continuing teachers' practiced professional development in Ukraine through focusing on the area of media literacy, and the construction of supportive tools and material for these professionals.

It's suggested that the process of adaptation of media literacy strategies in Ukraine should include the following steps: further provision of systematic courses delivery across all levels of education, creation of new community-based initiatives aimed at supporting media literacy practices, and assistance in building up the strategies for critical thinking among teachers. One of the options is participation in the active use of digital platforms and public availability to the free online courses, the use of accounts in the social networks.

The incorporation of media literacy into the teaching learning processes of education systems at different levels is essential in nurturing the abilities of critical thinking of students. Suddenly, media literacy when introduced to subjects like the Ukrainian language, literature, history, and computer studies allows the students to use the critical evaluation in many areas in different subjects. Furthermore, the development of the project-based activities to produce the media content by students contributes to enhancing the knowledge on the contemporary media tools. The following figure also shows the important steps for the implementation of the media literacy in the educational process (Figure 2).

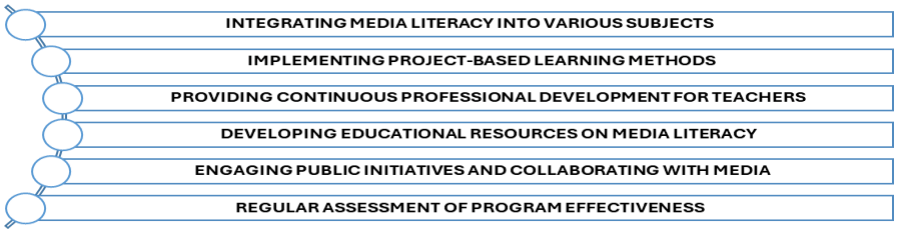


Figure 2: Recommendations for improving educational programs on media literacy and critical thinking for different levels of education: integration of media literacy into curricula of various subjects

Primary School.

Teachers' competencies. Employ multimedia techniques, to teach children about criteria of media literacy for distinguishing between advertisements and informative communications. Skills for critical perception of media content are best taught when delivered in an engaging manner, used as forms or games and tasks.

Performance indicators. Job as indication of students learning and achieve jobs I Where students will have to do a distinction between ad and news. Recommendation of children's activity in the discussions of content of media and their capacity in explaining the conclusion.

Secondary School

Teachers' competency. Include into the learning curriculum methods and ways of telling a counterfeit in news, articles and other source of media contents. Organize debates, brainstorming sessions, problem and case solving, discussion and all the other forms of analytical thinking.

Performance Indicators. Give occasional small tests on how the students are capable of analyzing different information sources. Evaluate the balance and depth of analysis in the discussion of the issues associated with media outlining the extent of criticality shown by the students.

High School

Teaching skills. Explain to the student the general approach to seek for information on the internet and how to deal with the reliability of the sources obtained. Media can also be incorporated into history, Ukrainian language, and social studies through the following way; by containing the students on how to dissect the media content of the specified time periods.

Performance indicators. The students' work should be evaluated from the position of source analysis and also of the content produced, with consideration of whether the student would be able to discover cases of media control. Furthermore, in the case of media literacy, certain to conferences and publications, knowledge of how many instances involved students should be kept.

Media literacy has to be included into the curricula of various subjects (Ukrainian language, Literature, History, Computers Studies etc.) in order to offer a broad approach in its cultivation. This will enable the students to use critical analysis skills in evaluation of content in media as found in different situations.

The table below presents information on the media literacy courses and the integration of effective practices to improve media literacy within classroom and other learner contexts. These examples allow for the illustration of how various endeavours such as MOOCs and gamified learning help build critical thinking and media literacy. Each of these categories consist of one or more particular courses or projects with real life case studies as examples. Table 2 presents examples of media literacy courses and best practices for increasing media literacy.

Table 2: Examples of media literacy courses and best practices for enhancing media literacy

Category	Course/Project Name	Description / Case Examples
1. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)	Coursera: "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking"	A course that is conducted online with the main aim of building media literacy mainly in analyzing news with particular emphasis on 'fake news'. It is relevant for content analysis and it contains case of social media analysis.
	Prometheus: "Медіаграмотність для громадян" (Media Literacy for Citizens)	Ukrainian course on which the basics of media literacy are explained. Comprehensively it encompasses projects intended to detect false information and manipulations in media.
2. Educational Campaigns through Social Media	IREX: "Learn to Discern"	A campaign aimed at youths and adults in order to improve their ability to critically approach media especially social media. Facebook's platform seems to be used in the case examples for fake news detection.
	National Anti-Fake Campaign during COVID-19	engaging educational videos and articles that decode myths and disinformation regarding the COVID-19 and the war targeting millions of social media users in Ukraine.
3. Workshops and Seminars for the Public	StopFake: "Workshop on Media Manipulation Detection"	Several training seminars for journalists and students organised at least once a year. Such examples include solving cases base on the manipulated news and also explaining different real life scenarios of fake news.
	IREX: Critical Thinking Workshop	Setting up of creative thinking and media analysis for adults and youths' workshops. Participants are provided with selected practical examples of media manipulations in the practice of journalists.
4. Fact-Checking Initiatives and Platforms	StopFake	A fact-checking service that exposes all the fakes in Ukraine. It is possible to submit news to be reviewed. Some of agendas involve the recognition of propaganda and disinformation in important news.
	FactCheck Ukraine	A news and media verification service that received considerable engagement at the time of war and pandemic. It employs users in filtering falsehoods as they happen in real-time.
5. Partnerships with Media to Create Educational Programs	Television Project: "Media Literacy for Everyday Life"	A nationally viewed educational television program that awards more than two million viewers each year. A part of the programs have been based on real life examples of the media analysis, including cases.
	Podcast: "Media Literacy and Critical Thinking"	Podcast mostly consisting of media literacy lessons that can well be found in such services as YouTube, or Spotify. Explains what media literacy is and how it addresses modern problem and provides examples of fake news.
6. Gamification of Media Literacy Learning	Bad News Game	News is a game where the participants act together with generating fake news and learning about manipulations. It is noteworthy that the app was downloaded more than 1 million times all around the world. Examples of ordinary users who became more media literate while playing.

	Gamified Media Literacy Learning in Ukraine	At school, learners are taught in specific gamification courses within the Ukrainian educational system to develop their media literacy and have fun while doing so. Real life examples include students recognizing that content displayed in media is fake.

These cases illustrate how different educational and informational activities that prepare an educational product incorporate media literacy as a subject in their programs to prepare students and citizens to be critical thinkers that can analyze media.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study support the claims of some academics that media literacy fosters critical thinking, however there is disagreement on how this should be accomplished in educational institutions. For instance, Baltezarević [1] notes that media literacy has a broad societal relevance since it fosters the growth of people's critical thinking skills because media information is readily available. However, Gilmour [25] cautions about the negative effects of social media, highlighting how algorithms and filter bubbles discourage logical thought about the content accessible. However, the objectives of media literacy advocates, which center on the development of critical thinking, assert that the efficacy of media literacy varies and mostly relies on how it is integrated into the curriculum.

Our findings support İçen's [6] claim that media literacy improves critical thinking abilities, especially when it comes to social media platforms. However, the process of importing so from the global context to the Ukrainian environment also highlights a number of relevant difficulties. According to Stanley and Lawson's previously mentioned findings [4], media literacy interventions have been shown to be beneficial for younger students. However, given the complexity of media consumption in Ukraine and the influence of propaganda and fake news, this research finding might not be sufficient.

When the results were compared to those of comparable studies conducted in other nations, it was possible to conclude that sometimes the data were contradictory and other times the results were identical. There are examples of extremely effective programs that have been completed in Finland and Sweden, where full-fledged media literacy programs are included into curricula at all educational levels [4]. However, the experience in Ukraine demonstrates the need for detailed advice based on the sociopolitical circumstances and the increasing trend of social network popularity. This is in accordance with Bulger and Davison's [2] work, which strongly emphasizes media literacy in preventing the spread of false information while simultaneously highlighting the situation in Ukraine, which is greatly impacted by outside influences and conflictual communication.

According to the study's conclusion, there are still a lot of obstacles that prevent media literacy from being implemented, despite the fact that it has a lot of potential to enhance critical thinking abilities and to specifically address the issues raised in the Ukrainian context. More focused studies should be carried out to go into more depth about these tactics and provide an overview of how they are used at various educational levels. More research should be done in the future to determine how digital media may be used to supplement the shortcomings of traditional media literacy training and how ongoing education can be addressed in this dynamic industry.

CONCLUSIONS

First, media literacy and critical thinking have been included into curriculum at all levels via experiential techniques. These tactics center on the use of media literacy in many contexts, such as social studies, history, and the Ukrainian language. This method promotes the critical assessment of media material since it is essential for students to be engaged and responsible citizens in the information society. As a result, the finest international techniques are successfully adapted to the Ukrainian setting. Second, high-level campaigns and, less formally, educational initiatives have increased awareness. Campaigns that use social media and media platforms to teach media literacy and critical thinking have had a good impact on both adults and young people. As a result, a large number of participants have received education both domestically and abroad.

Third, instruments for assessing media literacy initiatives have been developed. The creation of a set of measures for the efficacy of media literacy program activities is a significant milestone. These include, for example, evaluating actual projects, examining conversations and student work, and monitoring participation in regional initiatives. These technologies make it possible to assess program participants' development of key abilities, such media literacy and critical thinking, and enhance the quality of educational initiatives.

As a result, the research has effectively addressed the objective of developing appropriate and effective methods and strategies for raising media literacy and critical thinking skills among the Ukrainian people at various educational levels and via community practice.
The development of efficient methods for their implementation at various educational levels and the empirical validation of the proposed techniques should be the focus of future study.

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