






## Development of media culture of preschoolers and primary school children

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Publicação Contínua

# Development of media culture of preschoolers and primary school children


Desenvolvimento da cultura midiática em crianças do ensino pré-escolar e primário

Desarrollo de la cultura mediática de los niños de educación preescolar y primaria

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**Abstract:** In the article theoretical and practical aspects of the formation and development of media culture of preschool and primary school children are highlighted. The authors consider the technologies in the broadest sense (radio, television, satellites, mobile phones, landlines, network equipment and software, etc.), through which the child receives the most diverse information. Positive and negative factors of influence of the media environment on its social formation are singled out. Emphasis is placed on the phenomena of cyberbullying that take place in the information environment, and pedagogical cooperation of teachers, parents and the community to combat virtual child violence. The relevance of the formation of the child's media culture is emphasized and the connection of this definition with such concepts as: media literacy, media competence, media security, media awareness, media immunity, media socialization, media environment and others is determined. A conceptual model of the media's influence on the child's social competence and pedagogical recommendations for the practical solution of the outlined problem are presented. The results of an empirical study to study the level of media culture of preschool children by cognitive, emotional and behavioral criteria are presented.

**Keywords:** Junior schools, Media culture, Media environment, Media literacy, Preschoolers.

**Resumo:** O artigo destaca os aspectos teóricos da formação e desenvolvimento da competência social de crianças do ensino pré-escolar e primário por meio da mídia.

Os autores consideram as tecnologias midiáticas no sentido o mais amplo (rádio, televisão, satélites, telefones celulares, telefones fixos, equipamentos e softwares de rede, etc.), por meio das quais a criança o mais recebe as informações diversas. O artigo aponta os fatores positivos e negativos de influência do ambiente midiático em formação social da criança. Destaca-se os fenômenos de cyberbullying que ocorrem no ambiente de informação e cooperação pedagógica de professores, pais e comunidade para o combate à violência infantil virtual. Enfatiza-se a relevância da formação da cultura midiática da criança e determina-se a conexão desta definição com conceitos como: alfabetização midiática, competência midiática, segurança midiática, consciência midiática, imunidade midiática, socialização midiática, ambiente midiático, etc. Apresentamos o modelo conceitual da influência da mídia na competência social da criança e recomendações pedagógicas para a solução prática do problema delineado. Foram apresentados os resultados de um estudo empírico sobre o nível da competência social de crianças do ensino pré-escolar por critérios cognitivos, emocionais e comportamentais.

**Palavras-chave:** Alfabetização midiática, Alunos do ensino primário, Ambiente de mídia, Crianças do ensino pré-escolar, Cultura midiática.

**Resumen:** En el artículo se destacan los aspectos teóricos y prácticos de la formación y del desarrollo de la cultura mediática de los niños de educación preescolar y primaria. Los autores examinan las tecnologías mediáticas en el sentido más amplio (radio, televisión, satélites, teléfonos móviles, teléfonos fijos, equipos de red y software, etc.), a través de las cuales el niño recibe la información más diversa. Se señalan los factores positivos y negativos de la influencia del entorno mediático en su formación social. Se hace hincapié en los fenómenos de ciberacoso que tienen lugar en el entorno de la información, y en la cooperación pedagógica de los profesores, los padres y la comunidad para combatir la violencia infantil virtual. Se destaca la relevancia de la formación de la cultura mediática del niño y se determina la conexión de esta definición con conceptos como: alfabetización mediática, competencia mediática, seguridad mediática, conciencia mediática, inmunidad mediática, socialización mediática, entorno mediático y otros. Se presenta un modelo conceptual de la influencia de los medios de comunicación en la competencia social del niño y recomendaciones pedagógicas para la solución práctica del problema planteado. Se presentan los resultados de un estudio empírico para estudiar el nivel de cultura mediática de los niños de preescolar según criterios cognitivos, emocionales y conductuales.

**Palabras clave:** Alfabetización mediática, Cultura mediática, Entorno mediático, Los alumnos de educación primaria, Preescolares.

## INTRODUCTION

In modern conditions of rapid development of information and communication and media technologies the problem of purposeful preparation of the person for skillful and safe use of them is actualized (Tsependa & Budnyk, 2021). The future society will increasingly rely on web-technologies, cloud computing and big data, gadgets and the Internet. Man is an active consumer of media products: television, radio, electronic publications on the Internet, which form a certain worldview, attitude to a particular problem. Therefore, media, including channels, tools for using, storing, transmitting, information or data (Abello-Romero et al., 2019), have become an important part of our lives. This is especially true for preschool and primary school children, who spend a lot of time with a variety of media (books, television, radio, movies, the Internet). Media products significantly influence the processes of adaptation and socialization of the child in society, preschool, primary or out-of-school education, spontaneous learning (education), promotes the development of social competence and more.

At the same time, there are risks due in part to the negative impact of the media on the child's mind. Numerous scientific and normative sources refer to the imperfect protection of the child from media content, which can harm his health and development, the lack of mechanisms for effective self-regulation of the information market, which would prevent substandard media products, low moral ideologies and values, and other socially harmful information influences. The aggravation of the need to intensify the development of media education is due to the need to resist external information aggression and propaganda (The Concept of introducing Media Education in Ukraine, 2016).

The urgency of the problem of information security also applies to cyberbullying, which is increasingly faced by children of preschool and primary school age. Often, when spending time on the Internet, they deal with anonymous harassment and violation of their rights. Therefore, media education, which today has become a major component of information security of the child, the development of its social competence, will be the subject of research in this article.

In this article, media technologies will be considered in the broadest sense, as the use of ICT: radio, television, satellites, mobile phones, fixed communications, network equipment and software, and so on. After all, it is through such means of communication that a child receives the most various information, which can sometimes have a detrimental effect on his social development.

## METHODOLOGY

To solve this problem, the following were used: methods of comparative analysis for analysis of the scientific literature and substantiation of the research thesaurus; comparative and descriptive

methods of component-cognitive analysis – to identify the structural components of the child's social competence in interaction with media resources; methods of system analysis – to summarize the work of scientists in the context of the development of social competence of children and the impact of different types of media on their formation; methods of intersectoral synthesis – for the development of a conceptual model of the formation of media culture of preschool and primary school children, as well as methods of mathematical statistics – for qualitative and quantitative presentation of the results of empirical research.

## RESULTS

Scientists in many countries emphasize the need to develop media literacy in preschool. Thus, R. Kubey in the 1990s in the United States notes that television consumes a lot of free time, as well as other media – newspapers and magazines, radio, computers, internet and others. Therefore, it is important that children know how to communicate with the media and use them for learning and development (Kubey, 1998).

T. Huk (2016) emphasizes that spare time spent by 10-12 year-olds is often uncontrolled. Children are attracted to social networks, as it is their natural need to establish social contacts, interact with peers, find necessary information about them, etc. The research results of T. Huk presented are the benchmark for educational activities that should be undertaken in order to regulate the use of Facebook by children under the age of 13 (Huk, 2016: 26). At the same time, it can be dangerous for students (for example, the appearance of games in the so-called “death groups” in the post-Soviet countries: “Blue Whale”, “Quiet House”, “Fairy Winx”, “Disappearing in 24 hours”, etc.).

The term “cyberbullying” is defined as the harassment of a child on the Internet, it means that we use it to describe bullying, which occurs mainly through mobile phones and social media (Cyberbullying among young people, 2016). “Cyberbullying is an important new kind of bullying, with some different characteristics from traditional bullying” (Smith et al., 2008). Much happens outside of an educational institution in order to harm or humiliate a person.

Cyberbullying is defined as as “virtual abuse,” “intentionally aggressive behavior” (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004), which is carried out in cyberspace through digital communication (via text messages in the messenger, e-mail, etc.) (Smith et al., 2008). Among the manifestations of cyberbullying, which should alert primarily adults, are: the receipt of threatening or offensive content of text messages by a child; demonstrative removal of it from communities on social networks or from online games; creating groups of hatred for a particular child; asking to vote “for” or “against” one of the users in an abusive poll; offer to distribute (spam) videos or photos of a pornographic nature; provoking a child to self-mutilation or even suicide, etc.

Therefore, the question arises about the need for the formation and development of children's media culture, starting from preschool age. After all, the media greatly help to socialize, find social contacts, express themselves. "In a very real sense, by becoming active media creators, children learn the practice of propaganda, which, essentially is a matter of creating highly attention-getting, effective communication that leads people to some form of action" (Hobbs & McGee, 2014).

The ability to present yourself, to find the necessary information on the Internet will be useful in the future. In this context, we consider the content of media culture of the individual, which allows his safe behavior in the information environment and effective interaction with the media. The main components of media culture are: media literacy, media competence, media education, etc. (Figure 1).

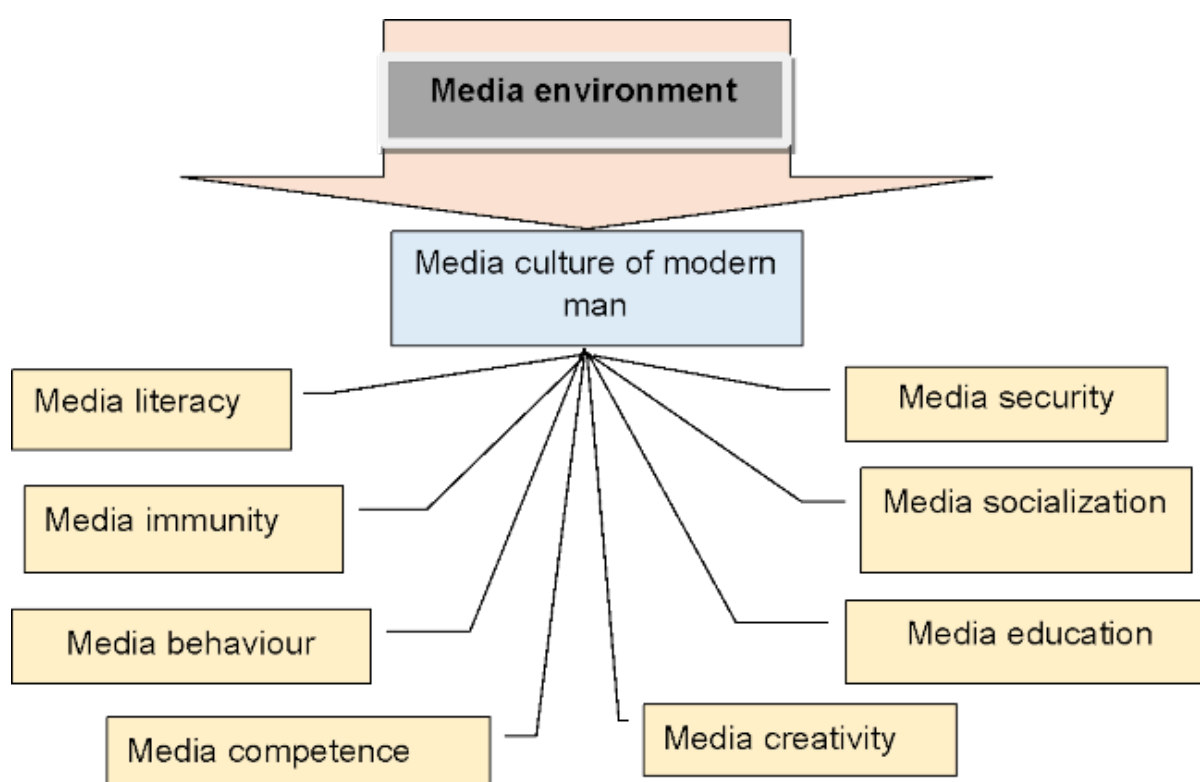


Figure 1

The ratio of the main components of media culture of the individual

Media awareness – a component of media culture, which involves the assimilation of personal knowledge about the media, their history and features of functioning, benefits and harms for humans, the ability to protect themselves from destructive media influences and navigate freely in the world of information (The Concept of introducing Media Education in Ukraine, 2016).

*Media literacy* is interpreted as a "skill set that promotes critical engagement with messages produced by the media" (Bulger & Davison, 2018). "Reflective and metacognitive thinking is a key dimension of media literacy and that this practice continues to be essential today. But reflective thinking is not purely personal.

Reflective thinking is fundamentally social” (Hobbs & S. McGee, 2014).

Media literacy is based on a deep awareness of the impact of the media on the individual (child) and society; understanding the process of mass communication and its consequences; ability to analyze, reason and discuss available media texts; understanding the context of the media itself; ability to create own media texts; literacy skills; gaining spiritual satisfaction from understanding and ultimately evaluating media content.

Media literacy mostly concerns the ability to use information and communication techniques, express themselves and communicate through the media, successfully obtain the necessary information, consciously perceive and critically interpret information obtained from different media, separate reality from its virtual simulation, it means to understand reality, comprehend power relations, myths and types of control that they cultivate (The Concept of introducing Media Education., 2016). This definition combines a set of practical knowledge and skills that a child needs in the modern information society: how to find the right information and make sure it is reliable, how to separate propaganda from facts and filter information in conflict situations; what is information security and how it differs from censorship, how to recognize manipulation, etc. “It is crucial to examine the promises and limits of media literacy before embracing it as a counter to disinformation and media manipulation” (Bulger & Davison, 2018).

“Media literacy research typically focuses on individual responsibility for discerning the truth or accuracy of messages. As platforms such as Facebook, Google, and Twitter increasingly personalize information access, individual responsibility becomes more challenging, especially when methods for serving information are not transparent. One challenge for research moving forward is determining expectations for how an individual can assess the reliability of information when the breadth of the corpus, eg, what is included and excluded and why, (and how it differs from information served to others) is neither visible nor accessible. It is necessary to re-think media literacy in the age of platforms.” (Bulger & Davison, 2018).

The influence of the media environment on preschool children is revealed by a series of experiments conducted by J. Flavell. They illustrate the perception of preschool children of the differences between real objects and their images shown in the video. For example, children aged 3 and 4 were shown a glass of popcorn on a television screen and asked if popcorn could fall out of the bowl if the TV was turned upside down. Four-year-olds argued that the video image was not real, while three-year-olds claimed that popcorn would fall out of the bowl if the TV was turned over. The experiment confirmed that it is at this age that a child's ability to distinguish media from reality is formed (Flavell, 1976).

It is no coincidence S. Semchuk considers *media socialization of a child preschool* age as a system “society – personality”, which under the influence of the media has changed its structure and took the form of “society – mass media – personality”. The media



development environment of a preschool or primary education institution is a space of modern child's life, where the mass media are an important factor in its socialization (Semchuck, 2010).

Studies M. McLuhan & J. H. Flavell on the ability to distinguish media content showed that children under the age of five perceive commercials as part of the content of the program, without separating them. In addition, a critical attitude to advertising begins to form in a child only after 7-8 years. Studies of children's perception of media products have shown that television partially replaces the parental role, reduces the time of active interaction of adults with children (Kozlitsin & Matiushchenko, 2017). At the same time, most preschoolers already have their own gadget, and when they come to primary school, they are already experienced users of media products.

If we take into account the general decline in reading activity among children (Budnyk et al, 2021), then the most information from all media they perceive from television and the Internet. At the same time, an aggressive media environment is an objective reality that directly or indirectly affects the social personality. Therefore, it is necessary to organize the activities of students in such a way as to promote communication, discussion of certain processes, to ensure pedagogical requirements for the safe use of media resources for the formation of their social competence.

One of the important recommendations for preventing the negative impact of the media on the child is "integrate digital and media literacy as critical elements for education at all levels through collaboration among federal, state and local education officials." (Hobbs, 2010).

The conceptual model of the influence of the media on the social competence of the child is presented in figure 2.



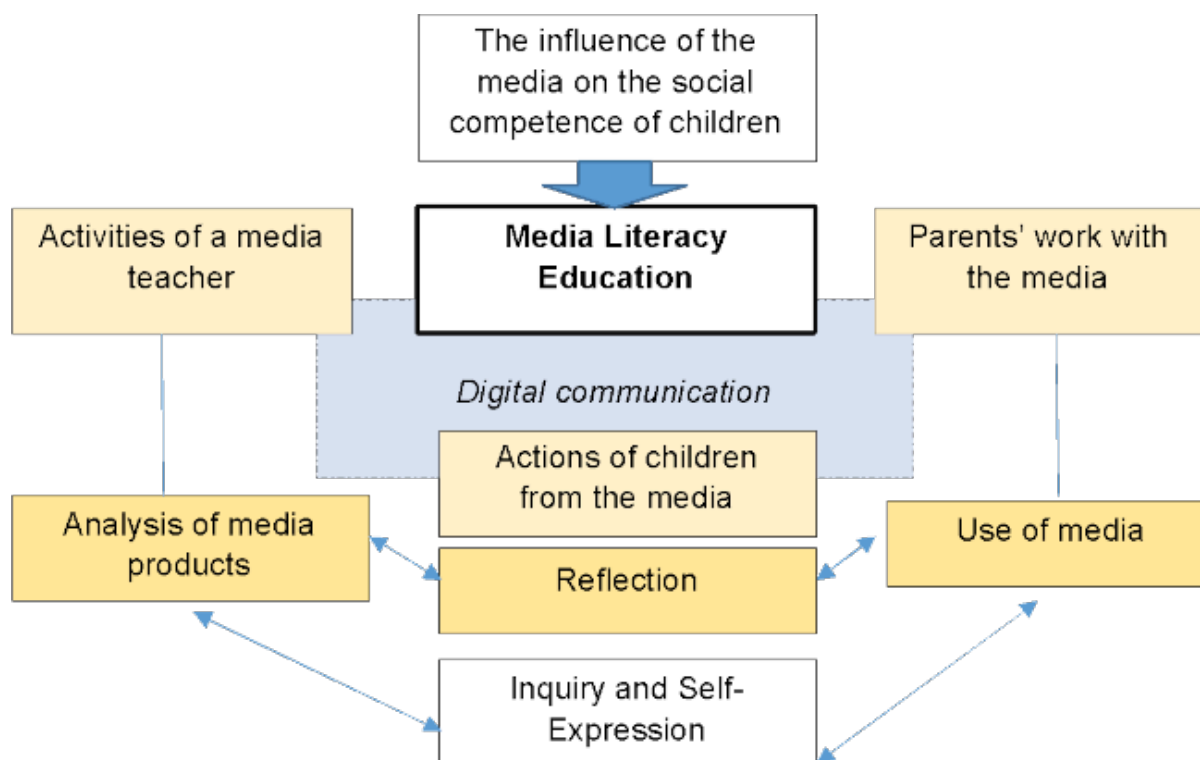


Figure 2

The influence of media on the social competence of the child a conceptual model

A preschooler with a developed sociality can be qualified as *socially competent personality*, who is characterized by the ability to: accept social rules and norms, find the right guidelines for building their social behavior; to show flexibility in the perception of new impressions and their evaluation, to adapt to the requirements of the social group and at the same time to keep one's own face (Tarabasova, 2021).

Indicators of social competence of a child of preschool or primary school age are the optimal "model of leading activity, it means the ability to consciously motivate their actions, the ability to use the means to achieve the goal, characteristic of the chosen activity, the ability to achieve positive results, the ability to realistically assess their results", the ability to identify developed basic moral qualities, etc. The child's competence in various spheres of life ("Nature", "Culture", "People", "Media space") is provided by a multidisciplinary systemic approach to the formation of basic competencies, including self-education, personal, civic and more. The accumulation of the child independently and under the guidance of adults the necessary social experience contributes to the disclosure of age potential, successful socialization in an educational establishment, and later – to adult life.

Thus, *media competence* as an integrative quality of the child includes a system of knowledge, skills, values, activities and behavior, the requirements for which are set by the family, society, state. In the personal context, media competence synthesizes the following components: *motivational, cognitive, behavioral* and so on. At the

same time, this definition is closely related to such key competencies as: civic, communicative, linguistic, household, etc. Purposeful formation and development of media competence of children of preschool and primary school age is carried out in a preschool institution or primary school. In the family, yard, peer group, media environment, this process is often spontaneous, sometimes acquires negative symptoms.

An approximate model of the formation of media culture of the child is presented in figure 3.

We offer the following ways to implement the author's methodology:

- conducting educational classes using specific types of work, methods and techniques, filled with purposeful motivated activities of children to analyze the impact of the media on their development, safe behavior in the Internet environment, combating cyberbullying;

- work with parents to form in them media culture and media literacy in raising a child;

- increasing media literacy in the formation of social competence of teachers of educational establishments.

A prominent place in solving this problem belongs to the child's family. Therefore, our author's method provided for the use of a series of classes for parents to develop their media literacy and the use of this knowledge in the upbringing of the child (parent meetings). The main tasks of these meetings were to develop parents' readiness to form in themselves: media culture, media immunity, to distinguish fakes and virtual fraudsters, to be psychologically protected in the virtual world, to manage their behavior in the media environment, the culture of interaction on the Internet, etc. These are the following forms of work:

1. Solving pedagogical situations, the purpose of which is to encourage parents to move from logical reasoning to practical actions in the education of social competence of the preschooler.

2. Role-playing (business) games, the purpose of which is to adjust the relationship between parents and children, parents and educators. Lesson content: definition of the topic and purpose; instruction, acquaintance with the plot, distribution of roles; direct conduct of the game; game analysis; summing up. Approximate topics: "Fake news", "Children's cyberbullying", "Interview", "Parents and children", "Virtual swindlers", "Weekend", etc.

3. Exchange of experience, which aims to encourage parents to exchange views, doubts about their behavior and the child, exchange experiences of family upbringing, communication with the child. Tentative questions for discussion: how to raise children in the family kind and sensitive; how to control the time and content of the child's work with the computer; application of folk wisdom in raising a child; how to instill in a child the rules of humane behavior in the family; what media resources can be useful for the child's development; how to properly organize joint activities with a son or daughter, etc.

4. Club of pedagogical cooperation. Purpose: to stimulate parents to actively interact with teachers in the social education of children, in particular the formation of their social competence under the influence of the media.

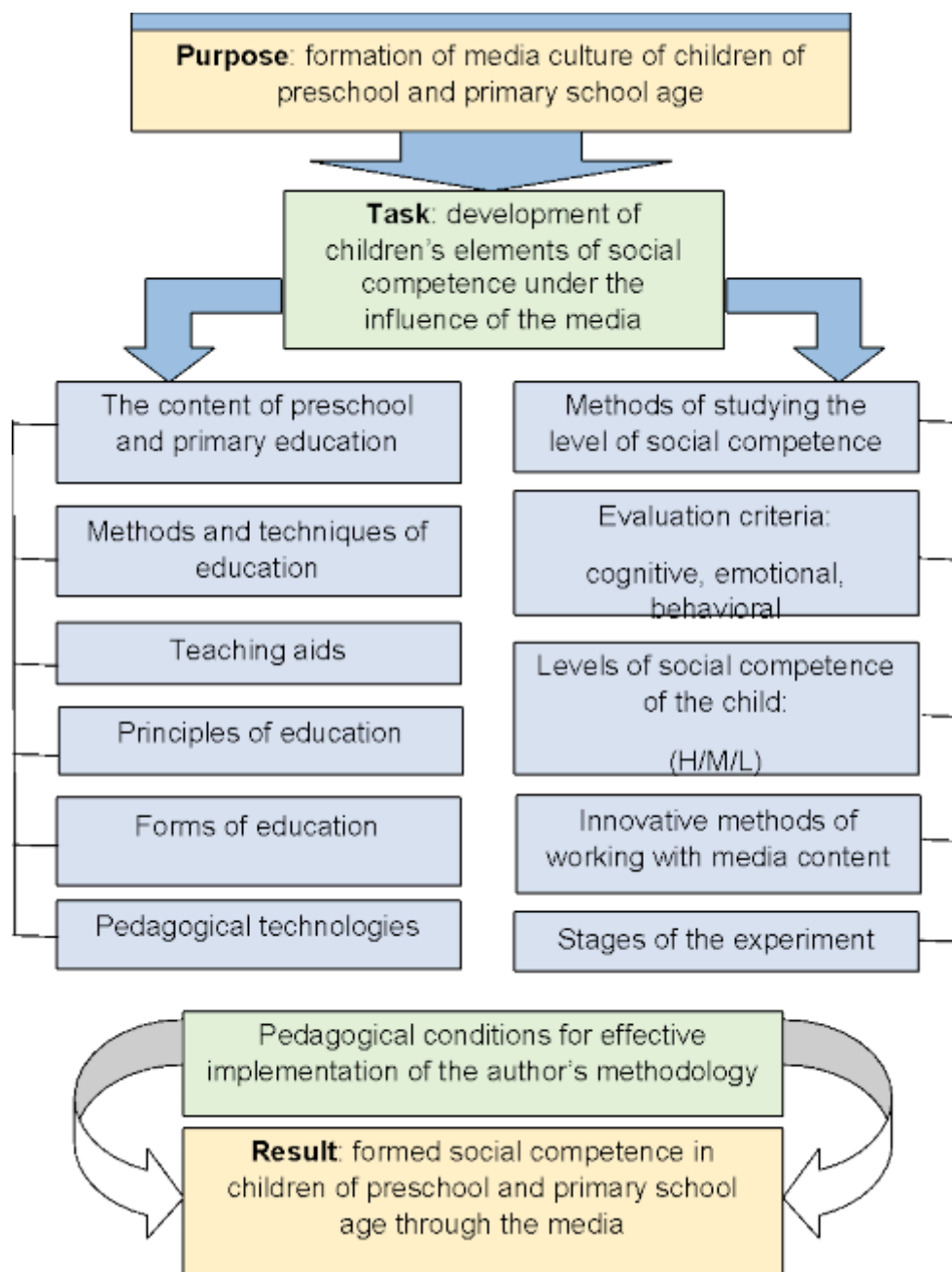


Figure 3

Model of formation of social competence of preschool and primary education seekers under the influence of media.

“Curriculum-driven media literacy education is a promising strategy to use in integrating media literacy” (Domingo & N. Mashiko, 2013). At the same time, we paid a lot of attention to work with teachers at trainings, webinars to improve professional skills in working with children in this area. “A teacher’s positive attitude towards media literacy education can open up possibilities for their students to critically use, analyze, and create media in the school

setting. An important step in achieving this vision of education is the professional development that supports educators in their role of facilitators of learning” (Domingo & Mashiko, 2013). We acquainted them with specific methods and techniques of working with children of preschool or primary school age, as well as working with parents to develop skills of media literacy, security of behavior on the Internet, combating cyberbullying and others.

Modern scientists offer a number of recommendations for expanding teachers’ understanding of information literacy, understanding the ethics of working with information, the development of practical skills in the use of electronic learning tools in working with children.

“Our recommendations reflect this complexity, calling for cooperation across multiple sectors (policy, media, technology, education) and multiple disciplines (e.g., behavioral scientists, communication scholars, education researchers, and political scientists), but also acknowledge the asymmetric proposition of a media literacy response to fake news” (Bulger & Davison, 2018).

In order to find out the level of development of social competence in children, we conducted a mini-study in a preschool establishment of Ukraine, which involved 2 groups of children 5-6 years. Observations of preschoolers’ play activities, activity in the media environment (watching cartoons), individual group conversations with children and their parents, methods of image diagnostics of children’s adaptation to school (I. Barkan) and analysis of their creative works were observed. The study was carried out according to cognitive, emotional and behavioral criteria that together characterize the media culture of the individual.

Comparative analysis of the data obtained in the experimental and control groups shows some positive dynamics in the development of social communication skills (Budnyk et al, 2020), priorities for choosing a partner in the game, cognitive activity, communication, role behavior in the group where the above method was used (Table 1, Figure 4).

**Table 1**

Levels of formation of media culture of children.

Levels of formation	Number of Child, %			
	Before the experiment	After the experiment		
	CG	EG	CG2	EG2
High level	14.4	17.0	24.0	37.0
Average	33.2	30.7	29.6	45.6
Low level	52.0	51.9	42.8	17.4

\*CG – control group, EG – experimental group (before the experiment); CG2 – control group, EG2 – experimental group (after the experiment).

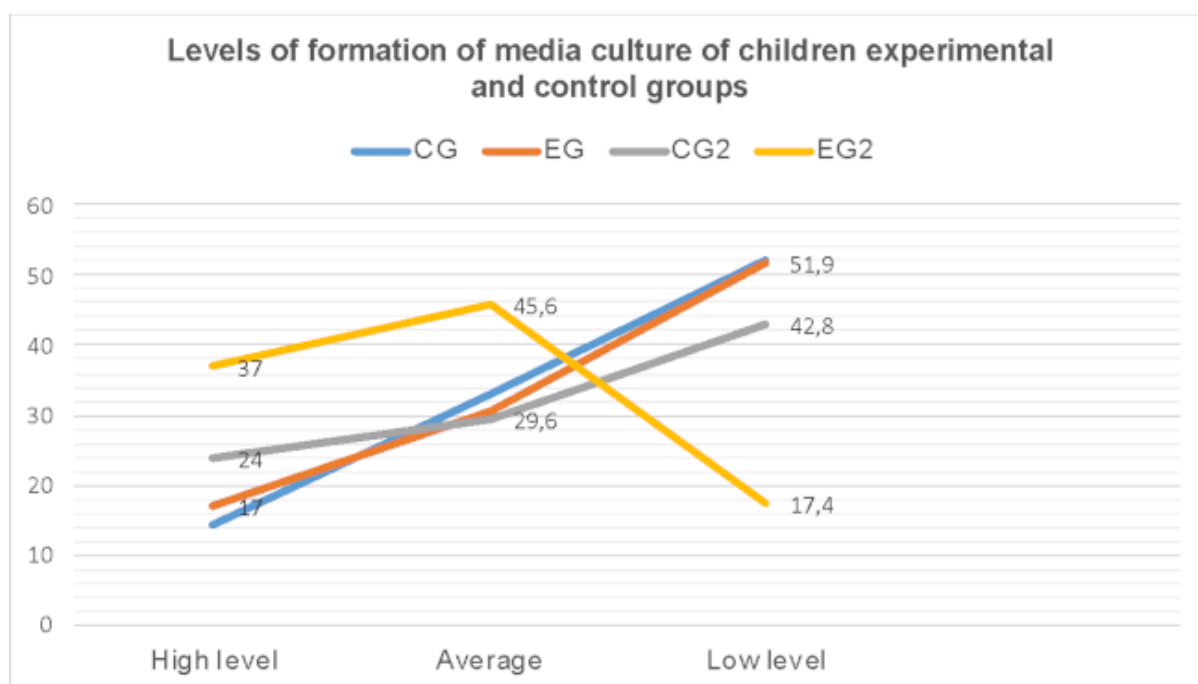


Figure 4

Levels of formation of media culture of children before and after the experiment.

## CONCLUSION

Different types of media (print, audio, visual, graphic) significantly affect the media culture of preschool and primary school children. In this study, we substantiated the relationship of media culture with such concepts as: media literacy, media immunity, media competence, media environment, etc. Examples from researches of foreign scientists about the influence of the media environment on the consciousness and behavior of children are given.

Based on the analysis of scientific sources, it was found that *social competence of the child* is characterized, on the one hand by developed self-awareness, individual personality, self-esteem, positive self-attitude, and on the other – openness to society, willingness to communicate, ability to establish constructive interaction, activity, joint activities, including in the media environment. We consider the development of a child's social self-consciousness to be the basis of his social competence, because already at preschool age he begins to realize himself as a part of the human community, to feel a certain connection with society.

In today's world it is impossible to avoid the influence of the media, so it is necessary to establish cooperation between teachers and parents in forming the foundations of the media culture of the child in order to actively socialize. After all, the child's psyche is particularly sensual, capable of suggesting under the influence of the media, so there is often a sense of fear, danger after watching the scenes with violence, war, even cases of cyberbullying in the network environment. Under the influence of the media can be the so-called "passive" intellectual, physical and emotional development of the

child, because the information is presented in a ready-made form, often not subject to critical analysis. Therefore, for the development of communication skills, speech in the sensitive period, it is important to intensify work with parents, because it is at home that children's excessive use of the media is often uncontrolled.

The article is based on the collective research theme of the Center for Innovative Educational Technology "PNU-EcoSystem" Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University "Teacher training: sociopedagogical context" (2017-2027).

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