

**MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY – THE MAIN REQUIREMENT
OF THE DIGITAL ERA AND DIGITAL HYGIENE AND ETIQUETTE**

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Abstract. In the 21st century, media and information literacy (MIL) has become a fundamental competency for participating in the digital society. The rapid development of communication technologies, the growth of social networks, and the expansion of digital content production have created a new media environment that requires individuals to critically assess, analyze, and ethically use information. This paper examines the importance of MIL as a key requirement of the digital era, emphasizing its connection to digital hygiene and digital etiquette. The study highlights the need for educational systems to integrate MIL into curricula to ensure responsible, informed, and respectful digital citizenship.

Keywords: Media literacy, information literacy, digital hygiene, digital etiquette, digital citizenship, critical thinking.

Annotatsiya. 21-asrda media va axborot savodxonligi (MAS) raqamli jamiyatda ishtirok etish uchun zarur bo'lgan asosiy kompetensiyaga aylandi. Aloqa texnologiyalarining tez sur'atlar bilan rivojlanishi, ijtimoiy tarmoqlarning kengayishi va raqamli kontent ishlab chiqarish hajmining ortishi yangi media muhitini yaratdi. Ushbu muhitda insonlardan axborotni tanqidiy baholash, tahlil qilish va uni axloqiy jihatdan to'g'ri foydalanish ko'nikmalari talab etiladi. Mazkur maqolada raqamli davrning asosiy talabi sifatida media va axborot savodxonligining ahamiyati, uning raqamli gigiyena va raqamli etiket bilan o'zaro bog'liqligi yoritilgan. Tadqiqotda ta'lim tizimlarida MASni o'quv dasturlariga kiritish zarurligi,

bu orqali mas'uliyatli, ongli va hurmatli raqamli fuqarolikni shakllantirishga e'tibor qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Media savodxonlik, axborot savodxonligi, raqamli gigiyena, raqamli etiket, raqamli fuqarolik, tanqidiy tafakkur.

INTRODUCTION. The digital revolution has transformed how people access, create, and share information, giving rise to both opportunities and challenges for communication and learning [5,45]. Media and information literacy (MIL) has emerged as a critical framework enabling individuals to understand media content, evaluate credibility, and engage ethically in digital environments [10,12]. In this context, digital hygiene—safe and responsible use of technology—and digital etiquette—ethical and respectful online behavior—are essential elements that complement MIL in fostering a sustainable digital culture [8,33].

LITERATURE REVIEW. Scholars define MIL as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages across different forms of media [1,4]. According to UNESCO, MIL empowers citizens to participate meaningfully in knowledge societies and to recognize manipulation, misinformation, and propaganda [9,20].

Recent studies highlight the correlation between MIL and critical thinking skills, noting that media-literate individuals are less likely to fall victim to fake news or cyberbullying [4,41]. Digital hygiene extends this notion by focusing on responsible behavior such as protecting personal data, using strong passwords, and avoiding harmful digital habits [3,52].

Meanwhile, digital etiquette pertains to maintaining respectful communication, avoiding hate speech, and promoting empathy in online interactions [7,17]. Together, these components contribute to “digital well-being,” which the OECD defines as maintaining a healthy relationship with digital technology [6,9].

DISCUSSION. The intersection between MIL, digital hygiene, and etiquette is crucial for modern education. Without proper media literacy, users may spread

misinformation or experience digital fatigue due to excessive exposure to unverified content [2,63]. Likewise, poor digital hygiene can lead to cyber threats, identity theft, and addiction [3,55].

Integrating MIL into school and university curricula can develop students' analytical and ethical competencies [4,48]. Educators must encourage learners to evaluate sources, verify facts, and understand the social impact of digital communication [5,50]. Furthermore, digital etiquette must be taught as a form of civic responsibility, ensuring that online communication aligns with universal ethical standards [8,40].

CONCLUSION. In the digital era, media and information literacy represents not only an academic skill but a social necessity. It is the foundation for digital hygiene and etiquette, guiding individuals to engage safely, respectfully, and critically in online environments. Societies that promote MIL-oriented education will cultivate informed citizens who can discern truth from manipulation and contribute positively to the digital public sphere. Therefore, governments, educators, and media institutions must collaborate to embed MIL, digital hygiene, and etiquette into lifelong learning systems to build a responsible and resilient digital culture.

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