



THE ROLE AND NECESSITY OF MEDIA LITERACY IN THE PROCESS OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. This article analyzes the impact of media literacy on personal development in Uzbekistan and globally. The opportunities and dangers of media, problems of attention management, cultural awareness, mental well-being and the connection with the discipline of thought are covered in a scientific approach. Based on practical observations, literary quotations and statistical evidence, it is proven that media literacy is a decisive factor in personal development.

"A society that cannot manage technology is a society that has abandoned its own thinking." — Neil Postman¹

In today's globalization and techno-rational age, human thinking is undergoing significant and complex changes in the flow of information. Not only information consumption, but also purity of thought, mental alertness, and internal discipline have become the problems of today. Information media, in particular social networks, have become a new testing ground for human mental and psychological resources. In such conditions, media literacy is not just a technical skill, but also a cultural and moral competence. In terms of personal development, many thinkers, psychologists, and social educators emphasize the importance of conscious media consumption. For example, Cal Newport in his work "Deep Work" emphasizes: "Deep thinking is the intellectual advantage of the modern world. It means concentration, lack of distraction, and true efficiency"². Similarly, American writer James Clear, in his book Atomic Habits, comments: "Attention is the most valuable currency in your life. Leaving it to





chance is like giving your life to someone else”³. At the same time, a responsible attitude towards technology and conscious management of attention are extremely relevant for any person striving for personal development. Excessive and uncontrolled consumption of media reduces a person to the status of a passive consumer, not an active creative subject. The inability to maintain attention for a long time is one of the main obstacles to human development.

World statistics clearly prove this: according to a 2023 report by the Pew Research Center, users aged 18–30 in the United States spend an average of 7.3 hours a day in front of a screen⁴. Also, according to a 2024 statistical analysis, each user around the world spends an average of 2.5 hours on social networks, and this figure is increasing every year⁵. These figures are not without reason - they show what serious consequences the lack of conscious media consumption can lead to. Most experts emphasize that if a person cannot manage his time and attention, he cannot manage his life. And it is important to raise awareness of this issue among world societies, especially among the Uzbek people. Every young person has a smartphone in their hands, and many consider it a source of convenience. In fact, this tool is a double-edged sword: if controlled, it can be a blessing, if not controlled, it can become a disaster. Psychologically, the first 30 minutes of a person's activity before going to bed and after waking up determine the quality of the day. That is why Robin Sharma suggests in his works to stay away from the phone and meet the morning with "gratitude and contemplation"⁶.

Recently, I conducted personal observation on public transport — buses and metro — for several days. What caught my attention was that about 80% of passengers were using their mobile phones during the trip. Among them, the majority were those spending time on social networks, watching videos, and listening to music. Some were also observed listening to online lessons or reading text resources through headphones. Statistical data also confirms this situation. According to the State Statistics Committee, as of 2024, 99.2% of the population aged 10 and older in Uzbekistan use mobile phones⁷. According to Beeline Uzbekistan, passengers in the Tashkent metro alone consume more than 60 terabytes of internet per month. ⁸. On this basis, I can say that technology, especially mobile communication devices, has become an integral part of our





lives. The issue is not only in their existence, but also in the purpose and consciousness with which they are used. Every person who wants to develop mentally should perceive technology not as a distraction, but as a tool for personal growth.

Let's listen to another enlightened observation: "Putting down the phone and staring at it without looking at it at all is a criterion for measuring the true level of spiritual will." This idea reminds us that we should pay attention not to the media, but to the attitude towards it. If a person does not control his own psychic climate, the digital environment will take over him. Therefore, the most basic principle in media literacy is dominance, that is, a person should control technology, not technology, and a person should control technology.

In particular, the following strategies are important for the development of media literacy: information filtration, that is, choosing reliable sources and avoiding excessive information. In international practice, the "digital minimalism" approach proposed by Cal Newport is widespread, which recommends using only the most essential applications and platforms.⁹ In Uzbekistan, this approach can be implemented through "Digital Culture" courses at universities.

Time management, i.e. setting clear time limits for media use. For example, the "digital detox" method – giving up smartphones and social networks for a certain period of time – can help restore focus¹⁰. The «Smartphone-Free Day» campaign, which was piloted at Samarkand State University in 2023, was observed to increase student productivity by 20 percent ¹¹.

Information hygiene, i.e. not using your smartphone before bed and after waking up, and limiting screen time, can help strengthen psychological health. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi says in his book "Flow": "The happiest moments are those when attention is fully focused on a single goal"¹².

International experience has recognized media literacy as an important factor in personal development. In the Finnish education system, media literacy is taught from primary school. Finnish students receive special lessons on evaluating information sources, identifying fake news and staying safe in the digital environment. As a result, Finnish youth have the highest literacy rates in the digital environment. In Turkey, the "Media Literacy" program is integrated into school curricula and teaches students to critically analyze information¹³.





Uzbekistan can learn from these experiences and adapt them to its education system. For example, the “Digital Literacy” course, which was piloted in Bukhara region in 2024, taught 2,000 students’ skills in information verification and identifying fake news. As a result, students’ trust in fake news on social media decreased by 15%. The future development of media literacy is closely linked to artificial intelligence (AI) and big data technologies. AI-based platforms can automatically analyze the reliability of information and help identify fake news. To implement such technologies in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to expand cooperation with the Ministry of Innovative Development and the private sector. For example, the AI-based “Fake News Detector” program, which was piloted at the Tashkent University of Information Technologies in 2024, correctly analyzed 85 percent of messages on social media¹⁴.

In addition, media literacy needs to be more widely integrated into the education system. By introducing the subject of “Digital Culture” in schools and universities, young people can be taught the skills of critical analysis of information, digital safety and ethical consumption. There are successful examples in Uzbekistan in this direction: for example, in 2023, a pilot program of the subject “Digital Literacy” was introduced in 5 schools in the Namangan region, as a result of which students’ information verification skills increased by 30%. Media literacy has become an integral part of personal development in modern conditions. Although technologies make human life easier, their uncontrolled consumption undermines attention, time and mental health. To develop media literacy in Uzbekistan, it is necessary to expand educational programs, use international experience and introduce practical strategies. Projects implemented by AOKA, UNICEF and local universities are an important step in this direction, but greater success can be achieved by covering rural areas and introducing new technologies such as AI. By managing their attention, each person not only achieves personal growth, but also contributes to increasing the intellectual potential of society. Media literacy is not only the art of analyzing information, but also the art of consciously managing one’s own life. The choice lies with each of us: to use technology as a tool or to turn ourselves into a tool?

