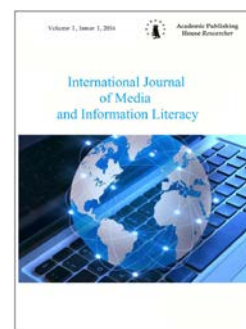


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Comparative Analysis of the Indicators' Levels of Students' Media Competence Development in the Control and Experimental Groups

Alexander Fedorov^{a, *}, Anastasia Levitskaya^b

^a Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

^b Taganrog Institute of Management and Economics, Russian Federation

Abstract

Based on media education activities' techniques, the authors taught a media education course during the full academic year. The research objective was to trace the changes between the levels of students' media competence in a control and in an experimental group. The determination of the media competence's levels was based on the classification of the indicators of the development of an individual's media competence developed by our research team. Media competence implies the accumulation of motives, knowledge, abilities, and skills (indicators: motivational, contact, information, perceptual, interpretative / evaluative, practice-operational / activity, creative), facilitating the use, critical analysis, evaluation and communication of media texts in various forms and genres, the analysis of complex processes of media functioning. In line with this interpretation of the media competence, the students were asked to answer 5 units of questions and do the assignments.

90 students (average age of students: 20–21 years old) participated in the experiment: 45 students (14 male and 31 female) of the control group, who did not attend the media education course, and 45 students (14 male and 31 female) of the experimental group, who attended media educational classes. Our research showed that at the beginning of an academic year there was no significant difference in the levels of media competence development between the students of the control and experimental groups. The ratio of young men and women in the control and experimental groups, in our opinion, is typical for Russian pedagogical universities, where for many decades male students have consistently been a minority (from 10 % to 30 % of a class).

The classification of the media competence's development indicators developed by us turned out to be an effective tool for comparative analysis between the control and experimental groups. This analysis has proved the effectiveness of the model developed by us and the methodology for fostering students' media literacy (the level of media competence of the students who took and passed a one-year course in media education was four times higher than the level of similar indicators in the control group).

Keywords: media literacy, media education, media competence, students, survey, university.

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: mediashkola@rambler.ru (A. Fedorov), tina5@rambler.ru (A. Levitskaya)

1. Introduction

We understand media literacy as the result of media education. In general, predominant among media educational concepts are the cognitive, educational, and creative approaches to the use of mass media potential. However, at the implementation level most media educational approaches integrate the three components. These are:

- acquiring knowledge about media history, structure, language, and theory —the cognitive component;
- development of the ability to perceive media texts, to “read” their language; activation of imagination and visual memory; development of particular kinds of thinking (including critical, logical, creative, visual, and intuitive); informed interpretation of ideas (ethical or philosophical problems and democratic principles), and images — the educational component;
- acquiring practical creative skills of working with media materials — creative component.

In each particular model these basic components are realized differently, depending on the conceptual preferences of the media educator.

The learning activities used in media education are also different: *descriptive* (re-create the media text, reconstruct the personages and events); *personal* (describe the attitudes, recollections, and emotions caused by the media text); *analytical* (analyze the media text structure, language characteristics, and viewpoints); *classificatory* (define the place of the text within the historical context); *explanatory* (commenting about the media text or its parts); or *evaluative* (judging about the merits of the text basing upon personal, ethical or formal criteria). As a result, the learners not only are exposed to the pleasurable effects of media culture, but they also acquire experience in media text interpretation (analyzing the author’s objectives, discussing — either orally or in writing — the particulars of plot and characters, ethical positions of personages or the author, etc.) and learn to connect it with personal experience of their own or others (e.g. putting themselves in the place of this or that personage, evaluating facts and opinions, finding out causes and effects, motives and consequences of particular actions, or the reality of events).

Moreover, while working with media texts young people have many opportunities to develop their own creative habits and skills. For example, they may write reviews or mini-scripts; they are exposed to representations of their cultural heritage — and through these to the personal, historical, national, planetary and other perspectives on those events. While studying the main media cultural genres and forms, scanning the development of a particular theme within different genres or historical epochs, becoming familiar with the styles, techniques, and creative activities of the great masters, etc., they acquire much relevant knowledge and learn methods and criteria of media text evaluation. All of that contributes to the development of the student’s aesthetic awareness, artistic taste, and creative individuality and influences the formation of civic consciousness.

As for “media illiteracy,” we see its main danger in the possibility of a person becoming an easy object for all sorts of manipulation on the part of the media... or becoming a media addict, consuming all media products without discrimination

2. Materials and methods

Based on media education activities’ techniques developed by us earlier (see [Fedorov, 2004: 43-51](#)), we taught a media education course in the Department of Education (Anton Chekhov Taganrog Institute) during the full academic year. The research objective was to trace the changes between the levels of students’ media competence in a control and in an experimental group.

The determination of the media competence’s levels was based on the classification of the indicators of the development of an individual’s media competence developed by our research team. Media competence implies the accumulation of motives, knowledge, abilities, and skills (indicators: motivational, contact, information, perceptual, interpretative / evaluative, practice-operational/activity, creative), facilitating the use, critical analysis, evaluation and communication of media texts in various forms and genres, the analysis of complex processes of media functioning. In line with this interpretation of the media competence, the students were asked to answer 5 units of questions and do the assignments.

Unit 1. A closed-ended questionnaire to identify the levels of the motivational indicator of the media competence’s development (genre, thematic, psychological, therapeutic, emotional,

epistemological, moral, intellectual, creative and aesthetic motives of audience's contacts with media texts);

Unit 2. A closed-ended questionnaire to identify the levels of the contact indicator (the frequency of contacts with different types of media);

Unit 3. A closed-type test to detect levels of information index (knowledge of terminology, history and theory of media culture) of the audience's media competence;

Unit 4. A pool of assignments to assess the levels of interpretive / evaluation index;

Unit 5. A group of creative tasks to reveal the levels of the creative indicator of the media competence's development.

90 students of the Department of Social Pedagogy of the Anton Chekhov Taganrog Institute (average age of students: 20–21 years old) participated in the experiment: 45 students (14 male and 31 female) of the control group, who did not attend the media education course, and 45 students (14 male and 31 female) of the experimental group, who attended media educational classes. Our research showed that at the beginning of an academic year there was no significant difference in the levels of media competence development between the students of the control and experimental groups. The ratio of young men and women in the control and experimental groups, in our opinion, is typical for Russian pedagogical universities, where for many decades male students have consistently been a minority (from 10% to 30% of a class).

3. Discussion

There is a number of widespread terms often used as synonyms both in Russia and other countries: "information literacy", "information culture", "information knowledge" "information competency", "media literacy", "multimedia literacy", "computer literacy", "media culture", "media awareness", "media competence", etc. (Bazalgette, Buckingham, 2013; Kubey, 1997; Potter, 2001; Silverblatt, 2001; Yildiz, Keengwe, 2016 and others).

For example, N. Gendina, having analyzed various definitions related to information culture, points to the following terminological inconsistency: in the modern world, "nonunified terms such as 'computer literacy', 'information literacy' or 'information culture', often without clear definitions, increasingly replace such semantically close notions denoting human information knowledge and abilities as 'library and bibliography culture', 'reading culture', 'library and bibliography knowledge', and 'library and bibliography literacy' " (Gendina, 2005: 21).

Regarding media literacy as a major component of information literacy, it would be worth referring to a survey conducted among international experts in this field (Fedorov, 2005). Many of them agree that media literacy is a result of media education. Yet there are certain discrepancies and confusion between such terms as "media education", "media literacy", and "media studies".

S. Ozhegov defines **culture** as (1) the sum total of economic, social, and spiritual achievements of human beings; (2) the state or quality of being **cultured**, i.e., being at a high level of cultural development or corresponding to it; (3) the raising of plants or animals; (4) a high level of something, the development or improvement of an ability (Ozhegov, 1989: 314). Hence it follows that **media culture** (e.g., **audiovisual culture**) is the sum total of material and intellectual values in the sphere of media and a historically defined system of their reproduction and functioning in society. In relation to the audience, it may be a system of personality development levels of a person capable of media text perception, analysis, and appraisal, media creativity, and integration of new media knowledge.

According to N. Konovalova, **personality media culture** is the dialogue way of interaction with the information society, including the evaluation, technology, and creativity components, and resulting in the development of interaction subjects (Konovalova, 2004: 9).

Information culture may also be regarded as a system of personality development levels, a "component of human culture and the sum total of sustained skills and ongoing application of information technologies (IT) in one's professional activity and everyday practice" (Inyakin, Gorsky, 2000: 8).

N. Gendina believes that "**personality information culture** is part of human culture, the sum total of information world outlook and system of knowledge and skills ensuring independent purposeful activity to meet individual information needs by using both traditional and new information technologies. This component is a major factor of successful professional and nonprofessional work and social protection of an individual in the information society" (Gendina,

2005: 21). Y. Inyakin and V. Gorsky point out that the model of shaping information culture includes personality culture components (knowledge, values and goal system, experience of cognitive and creative activity and communication) in relation to IT components (databases, Internet, TV, applications, e-mail, PowerPoint, etc.) (Inyakin, Gorsky, 2000: 10).

In our opinion, the notion of **information culture** is broader than **media culture**, because the former pertains to complex relationships between personality and any information, including media and the latter relates to contacts between the individual and media.

Comparison of traditional dictionary definitions of the terms “literacy” and “competence” also reveals their similarity and proximity. For example, S. Ozhegov defines the term “**competent**” as (1) knowledgeable and authoritative in a certain area; and (2) possessing competence, and the term “**competence**” as (1) the matters one is knowledgeable of; and (2) one’s powers or authorities (Ozhegov, 1989: 289). The same dictionary defines a **literate** person as (1) able to read and write, also able to write correctly, without mistakes; and (2) possessing necessary knowledge or information in a certain area (Ozhegov, 1989: 147).

Encyclopedic dictionaries define **literacy** as (1) in a broad sense - the possession of speaking and writing skills in accordance with standard language requirements; (2) in a narrow sense – the ability to read only or to read and write simple texts; and (3) the possession of knowledge in a certain area (Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1984: 335). The term **competence** (*compete(re)* (to) achieve, meet, be fitting) is defined as (1) the powers given by a law, statute or another enactment to a concrete office or an official; and (2) knowledge or experience in a certain area (Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1984: 613). There are many other definitions of literacy and competence (competency), but in general, they only differ stylistically.

Regardless of the similarity of definitions of “competence” and “literacy”, we are inclined to agree with N. Gendina that in popular understanding, “the word ‘literacy’ has a connotation of simplicity and primitiveness, reflecting the lowest, elementary, level of education” (Gendina, 2005: 21). At the same time, the term “**competence**” seems to be more pinpoint and specific in relation to human knowledge and abilities than the broad and polysemantic word “**culture**”.

Such terms as “information literacy”, “media literacy”, “information culture of personality” or “media culture” have been frequently used in publications of the past years (Fedorov, 2001; 2005, etc.), but the above terminological analysis leads us to the conclusion that the terms “**information competence**” and “**media competence**” are more accurate in denoting the individual’s abilities to use, critically analyze, evaluate, and communicate media messages of various types, forms, and categories and to analyze complex information processes and media functioning in society. Thus, **media competence** can be regarded as a component of the more general term **information competence**.

Naturally, it is assumed that human information competence can and should be improved in the process of life-long learning. This is true for school and university students, economically active population and retired citizens (e.g., the information literacy development program for retired citizens at the Media Education Center of the South Urals University in Chelyabinsk).

We have developed a classification of information literacy/competence indicators inspired by the approaches of R. Kubey, J. Potter, and W. Weber and based on the six basic dimensions of media education, outlined by leading British media educators (Bowker, 1991; Hart, 1997: 202; Buckingham and Sefton-Green, 1997: 285, etc.): **media agency** (studying media agencies’ work, functions, and goals), **media categories** (studying media/media text typology – forms and genres), **media technologies** (media text creation methods and technologies), **media languages** (i.e., verbal, audiovisual, and editing aspects of media texts), **media representations** (ways of presenting and rethinking reality in media texts, authors’ concepts, etc.), and **media audiences** (audience and media perception typologies).

Besides, we outlined the high, medium, and low levels of development for each information literacy/competence indicator. Undoubtedly, this kind of typology is rather tentative. Yet it gives an idea of a differentiated approach to information literacy/competence development when the high level of the communication or creativity indicators may be accompanied by the low level of the appreciation indicator. As for the perception, some people may have one articulated indicator (e.g., “initial identification”) while other strands may be undeveloped, “dormant”. One thing is clear: high-level information literacy/competence is impossible without the developed media perception and ability to analyze and evaluate media texts. Neither the high frequency of communication with

media nor developed media text creation skills in itself can make an individual information competent.

4. Results

Table 1 shows that 11 % of students in the control group only exhibit a high level of the motivational indicator, that is, a wide range of genre, thematic, emotional, epistemological, hedonistic, intellectual, psychological, creative, aesthetic motives (including: the choice of a diverse genre and thematic range of media texts including not entertaining genres; aspiration for a philosophical/intellectual, aesthetic dispute/dialogue with a media text's authors, criticism, identification, compassion; aspiration for aesthetic impressions, the acquisition of new information, to confirm their own competence in various spheres of life and media culture, to search for materials for educational, scientific, research purposes, etc.). This indicator in the experimental group of students (who took the media education course) is twice as high. As well as the number of students who are on the average level of development of the motivational indicator of media literacy (13 %). Herewith, both in the control and in the experimental groups, the gender difference was clearly manifested - the number of girls with a high level of motivational index of the media literacy development significantly exceeds the number of young men. And, on the contrary, among the young men, there were significantly more respondents who revealed a low level of the motivational indicator (that is, the choice of only entertaining genres and themes of media texts; strive for compensation, psychological relaxation, thrill, the desire for recreation, entertainment and the lack of aesthetic, intellectual, creative motives for contacts with media texts).

Table 1. Classification of the identified levels of the motivational descriptor of the students' media competence

№	Levels of motivational descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	0.0	16.1	11.1	14.3	29.0	24.4
2	average	21.4	35.5	31.1	35.7	48.4	44.4
3	below average	78.6	48.4	57.8	50.0	22.6	31.2

Thus, the results of comparing the media motivation of the students of the control and experimental groups to some extent testify to the effectiveness of the media education course, which the students of an experimental group attended during the school year.

Analysis of Table 2 shows that there is not much difference between the students of the control and experimental groups in relation to reading the press on the whole. About half of both groups displayed the average level of the contact indicator (reading the press several times a week). At the same time, there are no significant gender differences in this regard either. However, from the very beginning, we have not considered the contact indicator as the reference one, the basic one for the overall balance of the media competence's indicators. Undoubtedly, a person who does not deal with the media at all cannot become media competent. But the highest level of television viewing, listening to radio, surfing the Internet or reading the press obviously cannot be equaled to a high level of media competence.

Table 2. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (media: press)

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.4	3.3	6.7
2	average	50.0	54.8	53.3	42.8	58.0	53.3
3	below average	50.0	45.2	46.7	42.8	38.7	40.0

Table 3 data shows that there are certain differences in relation to listening to radio broadcasts between students of the control and experimental groups. Thus, in the experimental group, a high (daily) level of listening to the radio was presented by 64 % of respondents, and in the control group – only 44 %. Compared to the control group, there are almost twice as few respondents with a low (several times a month and less frequently) level of contacts with the radio in the experimental group.

On the one hand, these indicators can probably be regarded as one of the results of the media education course, but on the other hand, we should take into account a small sample of respondents factor.

Table 3. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (media: radio)

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	42.8	45.2	44.4	42.8	74.2	64.4
2	average	21.5	25.8	24.4	35.7	9.6	17.9
3	below average	35.7	29.0	31.2	21.5	16.2	17.7

The consequence of a small sample is also probably the fact that there is no gender difference in "radio contacts" in the control group, whereas in the experimental group, among the students with the daily habit of listening to the radio programs, there are 20 % more young women than men.

Analysis of Table 4 gives an idea that, basically, there are no differences towards television viewing between students of the control and experimental groups. More than 66 % of both groups view TV every day, from 13 % to 20 % – several times a week. And only 13 % of the interviewed control and experimental groups watch TV several times a month and less often. There is no symptomatic gender difference.

We believe that the lack of progress in increasing the frequency of watching TV in the experimental group is not an experiment's drawback, since our initial aim was not to increase the contact indicator of the student's media literacy. As a further analysis of the results of the experiment showed, a somewhat higher level of "telewatching" in the control group did not in any way contribute to an increase in level of the media competence's analytical indicator.

Table 4. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (media: television)

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	71.4	74.2	73.3	71.4	64.5	66.7
2	average	14.3	12.9	13.3	28.6	16.1	20.0
3	below average	14.3	12.9	13.4	0.0	19.4	13.3

NB: The following table shows frequency of students' contacts with the Internet apart from social networks/messengers/chatrooms. Thus, we were interested in their Internet use as a source of information, entertainment, research, etc. but not as a tool for communication. Table 5 proves that the level of contacts of Russian students with the Internet websites still comes short of satisfactory: only 4 % to 9 % of students in the control and experimental groups go on the Internet daily, from 15 % to 23 % – weekly. But more than half of the students of the control and experimental groups visit Internet sites several times a month and less, and from 9 % to 24 % of students do not surf the Internet at all.

Table 5. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (media: Internet (NB: apart from social networks/messengers/chatrooms))

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	00.0	6.4	4.4	14.3	6.4	12.1
2	average	42.7	38.8	40.1	28.4	32.4	28.0
3	below average	57.3	54.8	55.5	57.3	61.2	59.9

The difference in the indicators in the control and experimental groups is small, but the analysis of the table showed that there are gender differences in contacts with the Internet. Young people with their traditional craving for technical innovations are somewhat more active in Internet surfing than girls. This fact is consistent with the results of similar sociological studies conducted earlier by various organizations (for example, see: [Education and information culture, 2000](#)).

Table 6. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (media: video/computer games)

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	14.3	6.5	8.9	7.1	3.2	4.4
2	average	42.8	6.5	17.8	35.7	19.3	24.4
3	below average	35.7	58.0	51.1	49.9	41.9	44.4

22.2 % of students of the control group (7.1 % of boys, 29.0 % of girls) and 26.7 % of students of the experimental group (7.1 % of boys, 35.5 % of girls) never play video/computer games.

Certainly, the frequency of student contacts with video/computer games cannot be a valid proof of their media competence. In our opinion, on the contrary: too frequent computer gaming takes away a person's time to contact other types of media. However, the analysis of Table 5 shows that the level of contacts between the students of the control and experimental groups is quite comparable, and only 4–9 % of respondents have a high level. But more than half of students play computer games less than a few times a month, and 22–26 % do not play them at all.

The gender difference in relation to computer games is very clear, since the number of young men who are fans of this type of entertainment is at least twice the number of girls, that again correlates with the findings of international sociological studies. Most of the popular computer games are based on the theme of violence (new edition of "Doom", "Uncharted-4" etc.), initially not appealing to female audience. Hence the dominant number of computer players are male.

Table 7. Classification of the identified levels of the contact descriptor of the students' media competence (on average for all of the above media)

No	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	25.7	26.5	26.2	14.3	0.0	4.4
2	average	36.7	33.3	34.3	64.3	93.5	84.4
3	below average	38.6	40.2	39.5	21.4	6.5	11.2

So, only about 26 % of the students in the control group and 4 % of the experimental group showed a high level of the contact indicator of media competence's development for several types of media in general. However, one should not forget that this result is due to a low level of contacts of the audience with the Internet and computer games (where more than half of the respondents in both groups demonstrated a weak level of contacts). But nearly 73 % of the interviewed students (71 % of the boys and 74 % of the girls) in the control group and 66 % of the interviewed students in the experimental group (71 % of the boys and 64 % of the girls) said that they watch television every day. That is, they have a high level of the contact indicator for this type of media. Quite high was the students' contact level in relation to listening to the radio programs (from 44 % to 64 % of the respondents have a high level of contact with this type of media). Thus, it can be concluded that from 50 % to 89 % of the students surveyed, showed an average or high level of the media

competence's contact indicator, the fact which by itself, as we have already noted, cannot be considered as the basic indicator for determining the media competence level of the respondents.

The detection of the levels of the information indicator of the media competence's development in the control and experimental groups was held through the assessment of the test results. Students were asked 30 questions, which were divided into blocks of 10 questions (see Appendix 1). One block consisted of questions related to the terminology of media/media culture, the second – to the history of media/media culture, the third – to the theory of media/media culture. Points equal to the number of correct answers. Thus, the maximum number of points that a student could score was 30.

We agreed to the following grade percentage range: 80-100 % correct answers (24–30 points) – high level; 50 % to 80 % (15–23 points) – average; less than 50 % of correct answers (below 14 points) – below average/low level.

We should admit that the testing had its flaws. On the one hand, the format of a test lends itself to “gaming” – ways to improve the score by guessing (intuitive or logical – by excluding the most dubious variants). On the other hand, testing is open to cheating attempts. Still, the results of the testing were compared with the results of interviews, that helped to make sure that they, on the whole, correctly reflected the exit stage knowledge of the students in both the control and the experimental groups.

Table 8. Classification of the identified levels of the information descriptor of the students' media competence

№	Levels of contact descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	7.1	16.1	13.3	92.9	96.8	95.6
2	average	28.6	58.0	48.9	7.1	3.2	4.4
3	below average	64.3	25.9	37.8	0.0	0.0	0.0

The table's data clearly demonstrates the progress of the experimental group over the academic year. 95 % of the students in the experimental group proved a high level of the media literacy's information indicator (from 80 % to 100 % of correct answers to questions related to terminology, stories and theory of media / media culture), while in the control group this level is only 13 %. There are no results below average (less than 50 % of correct answers) in the experimental group, whereas in the control group 37 % of the students' results were graded as poor.

Gender differences in the students' answers were manifested by the fact that girls on the whole showed more knowledge about the terminology, theory and history of media / media culture. As for those 13 % of students from the control group who showed a high level of media competence's information indicator, it can be assumed that this level is reached due to self-education and / or upbringing in the family.

The data in Table 9 show the way correct / incorrect answers of the students of the control and experimental groups were distributed for various types of information knowledge testing in the field of media / media culture.

It shows that the students experienced the greatest difficulty in answering the test questions concerning the history of the media / media culture (although in the control group the number of incorrect answers was on the whole about 50 %, while in the experimental group this number was slightly higher than 12 %).

Table 9. Test results of students in the control and experimental groups in the field "Information indicator of media competence"

<i>Knowledge in the fields</i>	<i>Number of</i>	<i>Control group (in %)</i>			<i>Experimental group (in %)</i>		
		<i>Male participants</i>	<i>Female participants</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Male participants</i>	<i>Female participants</i>	<i>Total number</i>
Media/media culture key terms	Correct answers	55.9	74.2	68.1	97.1	97.4	97.3
	Incorrect answers	45.1	25.8	31.9	2.9	2.6	2.7
History of media	Correct answers	32.6	38.3	36.7	83.6	78.4	80.0
	Incorrect answers	67.4	61.7	63.3	16.4	21.6	20.0
Media theories	Correct answers	37.8	56.5	50.6	83.6	86.8	85.8
	Incorrect answers	62.2	43.5	49.4	16.4	13.2	14.2
Total	Correct answers	42.1	56.3	49.2	88.1	84.2	87.7
	Incorrect answers	57.9	43.7	50.8	11.9	15.8	12.3

Further, it seemed important to analyze the combination of the levels of the motivational and informational indicators of the development of the media competence in the control and experimental groups (see [Table 10](#)).

Table 10. The combination of the revealed levels of the motivational and informational indicators of the development of the media competence in the control and experimental groups

№	Combination of the motivational and informational indicators levels	<i>Control group (in %)</i>			<i>Experimental group (in %)</i>		
		<i>Male participants</i>	<i>Female participants</i>	<i>Total number</i>	<i>Male participants</i>	<i>Female participants</i>	<i>Total number</i>
1	Combination of levels below average	57,1	19,3	31,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
2	Combination of average levels	14,3	19,4	17,8	0,0	3,3	2,2
3	Combination of high levels	0,0	6,5	4,4	14,3	29,0	25,1
4	Discrepancy of levels	28,6	54,8	46,7	85,7	67,7	72,7

Analysis of the data in [Table 10](#) proves that the discrepancy between the levels of the motivational and informational indicators of the media competence's development is a common phenomenon, affecting approximately 50–70 % of the respondents. Thus, with more or less diverse motives for contacts with media texts, a student may not have a particular awareness of the media/media culture and vice versa. Meanwhile there is an often encountered case when the level of the information indicator is higher than the motivational one (especially in the experimental group that received a considerable amount of information about the media theories and history during the course).

Our study has also showed that there is no strong correlation between the frequency of students' contacts with the media and their motivational and/or information indicators of the media competence's development. The majority of respondents (73 % in the control group and 66 % in the experimental group) revealed, for example, a high level of the contact indicator of media competence in relation to TV, but only 4,44 % of the control group and 25 % in the experimental group indicated the combination of high levels of motivational and informational components of the development of media competence.

However there is a clear connection between the high level of the informational media competence development of the students and the fact whether they have attended a media literacy course. Only 13 % of the students in the control group revealed a high level of information indicators, as compared to about 95 % in the experimental group.

Table 11 shows that the students of the control group generally exhibit a low level of the interpretation / evaluation indicator of media competence's development (or unawareness of the media language, confusion in judgments, openness to external influences, disability to interpret the viewpoint of heroes' and authors' of a media text).

The low level of the interpretation/evaluation indicator in the experimental group is detected 3.5 times less often (20 %). When asked to analyze a media texts respondents from this group can only retell the plot of a story/film.

The average level of the interpretation/evaluation indicator is characterized by the ability to provide insight into the behaviour and psychological state of a media text's characters, the ability to explain the logic of the sequence of events, the ability to talk about individual components of the media image, however the interpretation of the author's position is missing (or it's rudimentary). Such level was revealed by about 26 % of the students in the control group (also without significant gender differences). In the students of the experimental group, the average level of the interpretation / evaluation indicator of the media competence development was twice as high (53 %).

Table 11. Classification of the revealed levels of the interpretation / evaluation indicator of the media competence's development in the control and experimental groups

№	Levels of interpretation / evaluation descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	7.2	3.2	4.4	7.2	35.5	26.7
2	average	21.4	29.1	24.2	42.8	58.1	53.3
3	below average	71.4	67.7	71.4	50.0	6.4	20.0

High level of interpretation/evaluation of media competence presumes that a media text analysis is based on the ability to mediate perception, close to "complex identification", ability to analyze and synthesize the space and time form of a media text; understanding, interpretation and evaluation of the author's concept in the context of the work's structure (thereat a reasoned consent or disagreement with the author's position is argued); evaluation of the social significance of a media text; the ability to correlate emotional perception with conceptual judgment, transfer this judgment to other genres and types of media culture, link media texts to their own experiences and other people's experiences. Thus, media text analysis based on high levels of "informational", "motivational" and "perceptual" indicators was manifested by only 4% of the students in the control group and 26% of the experimental group, with a significant gender dominance of female respondents.

Such a noticeable difference in the levels between the students of the control and experimental groups appeared in spite of the fact that many students in the control group had fairly high contact levels with media. Thus, the analysis of the data in Table 11 once again approves that the high frequency of contacts with the media does not in its own right results in a high level of ability to fully appreciate / analyze media texts. But the levels of information and motivational indicators are visibly reflected upon the levels of the interpretation / evaluation indicators of students' media competence.

On the contrary, a comparative analysis of the tables given above shows that low levels of motivational, information and evaluation indicators quite correlate with each other. Moreover, the same is true for motivational, information and evaluation indicators.

Thus, the low level of the evaluation indicator of the media competence's development in most cases is linked to the similar levels of the motivational and informational indicators and vice versa.

If we turn to a comparative analysis of the data in the experimental group, the following tendency is clearly visible: a high level of media competence's information indicator (95%) does not ensure the same high level of the evaluation indicator. Generally only 26.7% of the students in the experimental group were able to assert their high level of media competence's development at the evaluation indicator. About a half of the students (53.3 %) showed the average level. This fact convinces us that awareness in the field of terminology, theory and history of media / media culture does not by default translate to an increase in analytical abilities in relation to media texts. This is also indicated by the low level figures of the evaluation indicator. It is 20 % in the experimental group, whereas the low level of knowledge in the field of media in this group has not been elicited.

A significant correlation is demonstrated in motivational and evaluation indicators of the experimental group's media competence (31 % of students with below average level of motivational indicator relate to 20 % of students with a low evaluation indicator, for the average level the ratio is 44 % to 53 %, for the high one – it is 21 % to 26 %).

Since operational descriptor (high level – practical skills of independent creation of a variety of media texts; average level – practical skills to create a media text with the help of experts/teachers; below average level – lack of hands-on skills or reluctance to engage in media work) is an essential component of the media competence's creative indicator, we have not analyzed it separately. It should be noted that our observations of the students' creative activities showed that the operational indicator quite correlates to the creative indicator. Students who do not have practical skills in media work are unable to create media texts. Although hands-on skill by itself does not result in high level of a creative descriptor. In the same way as, for example, knowledge and practical skills of hundreds of film and acting schools' graduates may correlate to only half a dozen of people whose talent is truly acknowledged.

Table 12. Classification of the revealed levels of the creative indicator of the media competence's development in the control and experimental groups

№	Levels of creative descriptor	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	14.3	22.6	20.0	7.2	74.2	53.3
2	average	14.3	19.4	17.8	71.4	19.4	35.6
3	below average	71.4	58.0	62.2	21.4	6.4	11.1

Analysis of the data in Table 12 shows that there is a clear correlation between the levels of operational and creative indicators of media competence's development. Having acquired the skills

of independent creation of media texts (which are critical for the operational indicator) the students of the experimental group exceeded the control group students by more than two times – both at high and average levels of the creative indicator. At the same time, 53 % of the students in the experimental group showed a high level of the creative indicator, that is, vivid creativity in various activities (perceptual, game, artistic, etc.) related to the media. In the control group, this percentage was only 20 %. In both cases, the number of girls with high creativity was more than the number of young men. Conversely, the number of young men with a low creative indicator of the development of media competence significantly outnumbered the similar level for girls.

Analysis of the data in [Table 13](#) shows that the discrepancy between the levels of creative and interpretive/evaluative indicators is demonstrated by almost half of the respondents. At the same time, there is often a case when the level of the creative indicator of the media competence development is higher than the evaluation level (this is especially noticeable in the experimental group, which had the opportunity to develop its operational and creative abilities on the media during the training course).

Table 13. The combination of the revealed levels of creative and interpretive / evaluation indicators of the media competence's development

№	The combination of the revealed levels of creative and interpretive / evaluation indicators	<i>Control group (in %)</i>			<i>Experimental group (in %)</i>		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	Combination of low levels	64.3	41.9	48.9	14.3	6.5	8.9
2	Combination of average levels	7.1	0.0	2.2	35.7	16.1	22.2
3	Combination of high levels	7.2	3.2	4.4	7.2	32.2	24.4
4	Discrepancy of levels	21.4	54.8	44.5	42.8	45.2	44.5

But in the control group we encounter the combination of low levels of creative and interpretive/evaluative indicators (64 % of young men and 48 % of young women). Gender differences were manifested primarily in the fact that coincidence of low levels of creative and interpretive/evaluative indicators was more common for young men from the control group, while in the experimental group, a greater number of coincidences of high levels of the above indicators were shown by female students. A limited sample of respondents does not allow us to draw far-reaching conclusions, but it is safe to say that female students in general were more likely to attend classes, so they had more operational skills developed. Having analyzed all the data, we compiled a summary table for the classification of the levels of the complex indicator of the media competence's development of students in the control and experimental groups.

In doing so, we agreed to consider that the students with a high complex level of media competence's development are those who showed a high level in three to four main indicators except a contact one. There are 12 people (26.7 %) in the experimental group, 11 of them are female. In the control group there are only two people, both female (4.4 %).

Table 14. Classification of the revealed levels of the complex indicator of the media competence's development in the control and experimental groups

No	Level of complex indicator	Control group (in %)			Experimental group (in %)		
		Male participants	Female participants	Total	Male participants	Female participants	Total
1	high	0,0	6,5	4,5	7,1	35,5	26,7
2	average	21,4	12,9	15,5	35,7	58,1	51,1
3	below average	78,6	80,6	80,0	57,2	6,4	22,2

A group with an average complex level of media competence's development encompassed those students who did not have a single low level of the indicator in the three most important positions (information, evaluation and creative indicators). These were approximately half of the experimental group (51 %: 35 % male respondents and 58 % female ones). In the control group, there were 15 % of such students.

Finally, to students with a below average complex level of media competence, we attributed those who had more than one low level indicators. In the control group, these were four times more such respondents than in the experimental group. Meanwhile, in the control group the low results of male and female respondents are quite comparable, but in the experimental one, young men with a low level of media competence predominate: 9 times more than female students (which, in our opinion, was due to a quantitatively small sample of respondents).

In general, the data in Table 14 prove the viability of our experimental media education course, and the effectiveness of its methodology and techniques.

Comparative analysis of the data reflected in this article shows that in the experimental group there is a clear overlap, and in the control group, the proximity of the evaluation and complex indicators' levels. In our opinion, it indicates that the evaluation indicator is the most significant indicator of the media competence's development as a whole.

Case Study 1. Classification of the revealed levels of different indicators of the media competence's development in the experimental and control groups

The drawback of many sociological studies, in our opinion, consists in the fact that, skillfully using the results of mass surveys, their authors do not always try to compare and contrast the knowledge / skills of a particular person which, in some areas, can be of a very high level, but in others – average or low.

That is why the main feature of our summative experiment was that in addition to the traditional study and analysis of *anonymous* preferences and knowledge of respondents, we have attempted a case study of the media competence levels of *specific* students / individuals. We have selected a few representatives from each group of respondents (with high, average and low levels of media competence indicators), whose creative and practical work was analyzed in order to reveal the relationships and dependencies between the levels of motivational, contact, information, analytical, creative (and partly operational) indicators of a particular person. First, tables 15 and 16 were compiled, giving a general idea of the classification of levels of different indicators in the experimental and control groups.

Table 15. Classification of the revealed levels of various media literacy indicators in the experimental group

№	Students	Media literacy indicators				
		Level of motivational indicator	Level of contact indicator	Level of information indicator	Level of analytical indicator	Level of creative indicator
1	Alexandra A.	a	a	h	h	a
2	Anna D.	a	a	h	a	a
3	Anna K.	l	a	h	a	h
4	Anna M.	h	a	h	a	a
5	Anna U.	l	a	h	a	h
6	Anna P.	a	a	h	h	h
7	Ekaterina V.	a	a	h	a	h
8	Elena V.	h	a	h	h	h
9	Elena G.	h	a	h	h	h
10	Elena E.	h	a	h	a	h
11	Elena Ch.	a	a	h	a	a
12	Inna V.	l	a	h	h	h
13	Inna L.	a	a	h	h	h
14	Irina K.	a	a	a	a	h
15	Irina Kr.	a	a	h	a	h
16	Irina M.	h	a	h	l	l
17	Irina N.	a	l	h	a	h
18	Irina Sh.	h	a	h	a	a
19	Karina I.	a	l	h	a	h
20	Karina Yu.	l	a	h	h	h
21	Lyubov A.	a	a	h	a	a
22	Maria B.	h	a	h	h	h
23	Maria G.	l	a	h	h	h
24	Maria K.	h	a	h	h	h
25	Natalya K.	h	a	h	h	h
26	Oksana M.	a	a	h	a	h
27	Olga G.	a	a	h	a	h
28	Tatyana B.	l	a	h	a	h
29	Tatyana L.	l	a	h	a	h
30	Tatyana P.	a	a	h	a	h
31	Tatyana T.	a	a	h	l	l
32	Alexander B.	l	a	a	l	l
33	Alexey D.	a	l	h	a	a
34	Alexey X.	l	l	h	l	a
35	Andrey O.	a	a	h	l	a
36	Valery G.	l	a	h	a	a
37	Valey K.	a	a	h	l	a
38	Vasily P.	a	a	h	a	a
39	Vyacheslav K.	l	h	h	l	a
40	Dmitry S.	h	a	h	a	a
41	Evgeny K.	a	a	h	h	h
42	Igor P.	h	l	h	a	a
43	Roman A.	l	a	h	a	l
44	Sergei D.	l	a	h	l	a
45	Sergei S.	l	h	h	l	l

Convention: h – high level of the media competency's indicator
a – average level of the media competency's indicator
l – low level of the media competency's indicator

Table 16. Classification of the revealed levels of various media literacy indicators in the control group

№	Students	Media literacy indicators				
		Level of motivational indicator	Level of contact indicator	Level of information indicator	Level of analytical indicator	Level of creative indicator
1	Alexandra P.	a	a	h	a	l
2	Anna K.	a	a	a	a	l
3	Anna O.	l	a	a	l	a
4	Valeriya K.	l	a	a	a	h
5	Victoria B.	h	a	a	l	l
6	Victoria U.	l	a	a	l	a
7	Ekaterina D.	a	a	a	a	h
8	Ekaterina K.	h	a	h	h	h
9	Elena B.	h	a	h	a	h
10	Elena L.	l	a	l	l	l
11	Elena N.	a	l	l	l	l
12	Elena S.	a	a	a	a	l
13	Elena Sh.	l	a	a	l	l
14	Elena T.	a	a	h	a	l
15	Irina M.	l	a	l	l	l
16	Irina S.	h	a	a	l	a
17	Lybov Ch.	l	a	l	l	l
18	Marina B.	a	a	h	a	h
19	Natalya P.	a	l	l	l	l
20	Natalya R.	l	l	l	l	l
21	Oksana R.	l	a	a	l	c
22	Oksana S.	a	a	a	a	l
23	Olga L.	l	a	l	l	l
24	Olga K.	l	a	a	l	a
25	Olga V.	l	a	a	l	l
26	Svetlana K.	l	a	a	l	l
27	Svetlana S.	h	a	a	a	h
28	Tatyana S.	a	a	a	l	l
29	Yuliana S.	l	a	l	l	l
30	Yulia S.	l	a	a	l	a
31	Yulia Z.	a	l	a	l	h
32	Alexander B.	l	a	l	l	l
33	Alexey B.	l	a	h	a	h
34	Alexey K.	a	l	l	l	l
35	Alexey P.	a	a	a	a	a
36	Andrey G.	l	h	a	a	l
37	Andrey S.	a	a	a	h	h
38	Anton N.	l	a	l	l	l
39	Bladislav X.	l	a	l	l	l
40	Dmitry K.	l	a	l	l	l
41	Kirill G.	l	l	l	l	l
42	Nikolay G.	l	a	a	l	l
43	Oleg P.	l	a	l	l	a
44	Pavel G.	l	a	l	l	l
45	Sergei N.	l	a	l	l	l

Convention: h – high level of the media competency's indicator
a – average level of the media competency's indicator
l – low level of the media competency's indicator

We have analyzed the responses of students from each level group. Group "h" – students with a high level of the indicator of media competence's development. For example, a student Maria K., who has only one indicator at an average level – the contact one. All the rest are high. In fact, Maria K. has a diverse range of media motivation, she has accumulated a solid baggage of knowledge in the field of terminology, theory and history of media education. But the main thing is that she is a creative person with a high level of perception and analytical thinking in relation to media texts. This applies to any kind of creative work during the media education course, for instance, her reviews, discussions, etc. A similar level (with a somewhat narrower spectrum of motivation) was demonstrated by the end of the year's training by Evgeny K. and Elena G. It should be noted that there were 4 % of such respondents in the control group, and six times more – 26 % in the experimental group.

Group "a" indicates the average level of the indicator of the media competence's development. For example, we can distinguish Irina K., who has only one high-level indicator – creative. All the rest are average. This diligent student does not have a particular inclination to study media culture. However, she is used to "learn" all the subjects from the curriculum, so she achieves some "average" level of knowledge due to perseverance. Nevertheless, the creative production has revealed her latent potential for non-standard solutions (for example, in collages). There were 15 % of "a" level responses in the control group, and 51 % in the experimental group.

Group "l" is a low level of the media competence's indicator.

Typical representatives are Dmitry K., Kirill G., and Sergei N. from the control group. The motivation of their media contacts is rather monotonous and is limited by entertainment. They are not interested in the theory and history of the media/media culture. Perceptive and analytical abilities in relation to media texts are undeveloped. Creative abilities are not manifested. As a rule, they often skip classes. They are not interested in the study program they're enrolled into. Studying for them is something like serving a four-year labor service with the ultimate goal (probably more important than their parents, than by themselves) in the form of a Bachelor degree. The real motives for their studies (most likely, determined by their parents) are reduced mainly to the three "not to" (for boys: "not to join the army", "not to hang out in the streets", "not to fall under bad influence", and for girls: "not to be worse than others", "not to idle around"). Sadly, there majority of the students in the control group (80 %), and four times less (22 %) in the experimental group demonstrated the "l" level.

Case Study 2: Analysis of students' creative assignments

In order to further elucidate media preferences of students and to analyze the results of students' creative tasks on media texts' content analysis, we used the media education technology developed by A. Silverblatt (Silverblatt, 2001: 62-64). 38 students (31 female and 7 male students aged 20-21) participated in the experiment in Taganrog Institute. Each of them was to choose three of their favorite media texts for analysis, that is, totally, the students analyzed 114 media texts. In each of the media texts, the students had to identify and analyze the main characters (incl. gender, age, race, level of education, type of work / study, marital status, number of children, appearance, character traits, role and influence of these characters). The results obtained were summarized in Table 17.

Its data led us to the following conclusions:

1. Of all the variety of media texts, students prefer to choose as their favorite: 1) films and television series (55.3 %, while the number of male students who chose this option (85.7 %) significantly exceeds the female participants (48.4 %); 2) television programs (39.5 % with female respondents' dominance). Print and online press, computer games, and Internet websites have not accumulated more than 8 % of respondents altogether.

Table 17. Character analysis of media texts by students

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Female respondents' choice (%)</i>	<i>Male respondents' choice (%)</i>	<i>Total number of respondents (%)</i>
1.	<i>Media text type:</i>		
1.1.	48.4	85.7	55.3
1.2.	41.9	28.6	39.5
1.3.	6.4	0.0	5.3
1.4.	3.2	0.0	2.6
1.5.	0.0	0.0	0.0
2.	<i>Media text genre:</i>		
2.1.	25.8	28.6	26.3
2.2.	29.1	0.0	23.7
2.3.	12.9	0.0	10.5
2.4.	9.7	14.3	10.5
2.5.	6.4	28.6	10.5
2.6.	6.4	0.0	5.3
2.7.	6.4	0.0	5.3
2.8.	6.4	0.0	5.3
2.9.	0.0	28.6	5.3
2.10.	6.4	14.3	7.9
3.	<i>Character gender:</i>		
3.1.	58.1	85.7	63.2
3.2.	41.9	14.3	36.8
4.	<i>Age of the character:</i>		
4.1.	3.2	0.0	2.6
4.2.	3.2	0.0	2.6
4.3.	3.2	14.3	5.3
4.4.	32.3	42.8	34.2
4.5.	45.2	28.6	42.1
4.6.	9.7	14.3	10.5
4.7.	6.4	14.3	7.9
4.8.	0.0	0.0	0.0
5.	<i>Race and/or ethnicity of the character:</i>		
5.1.	83.8	85.7	84.2
5.2.	6.4	14.3	7.9
5.3.	3.2	0.0	2.6
5.4.	3.2	0.0	2.6
5.5.	0.0	0.0	0.0
5.6.	6.4	0.0	5.3
6.	<i>Education level of the character:</i>		
6.1.	64.5	57.2	63.2
6.2.	22.6	28.6	23.7
6.3.	3.2	14.3	5.4
6.4.	9.7	0.0	7.8
7.	<i>Type of job:</i>		
7.1.	67.7	57.1	65.8
7.2.	9.6	14.3	10.5
7.3.	6.4	28.5	10.5
7.4.	9.6	14.2	10.5
7.5.	3.2	0.0	2.6
7.6.	6.4	14.2	7.9

8.	<i>Marital status of the character:</i>			
8.1.	bachelor/bachelorette	51.6	71.4	55.2
8.2.	married	38.7	28.5	36.8
8.3.	divorced	6.4	0.0	5.2
8.4.	civil marriage	3.2	0.0	2.6
8.5.	widower/widow	3.2	0.0	2.6
8.6.	other	0.0	0.0	0.0
9.	<i>Number of children:</i>			
9.1.	0	67.7	85.7	71.1
9.2.	1	25.8	14.2	23.6
9.3.	2	6.4	0.0	5.2
9.4.	3 and more	3.2	0.0	2.6
10.	<i>Character's appearance:</i>			
10.1	conventional attractiveness	58.1	57.1	57.8
10.2	undistinguished appearance	29.1	42.8	31.5
10.3.	charming/glamorous	9.6	0.0	7.8
10.4.	non attractive by traditional standards	6.4	14.2	7.8
10.5	other	3.2	0.0	2.6
11.	<i>Body type/constitution of the character:</i>			
11.1.	average	41.9	42.8	42.1
11.2.	slim	38.7	14.2	34.2
11.3.	athletic	16.1	14.2	15.7
11.4.	corpulent	0.0	28.5	5.2
11.5.	overweight	6.4	0.0	5.2
11.6.	other	3.2	0.0	2.6
12	<i>Character traits:</i>			
12.1.	independence	70.9	57.1	68.4
12.2.	dependence	3.2	0.0	2.6
12.3.	intellect	51.6	42.8	50.0
12.4.	ineptitude	3.2	0.0	2.6
12.5.	directness	41.9	57.1	36.8
12.6.	resourcefulness	9.6	14.2	10.7
12.7.	ambition	35.4	57.1	42.1
12.8.	inaction	3.2	0.0	2.6
12.9.	wittiness	35.4	28.5	34.2
12.10.	irony. sarcasm	9.6	0.0	7.8
12.11	object of irony/jokes	6.4	14.2	7.8
12.12.	care	35.4	14.2	31.5
12.13.	nonchalance	12.9	0.0	10.5
12.14.	loyalty	35.4	14.2	31.5
12.15.	treason	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.16.	optimism	67.7	71.4	68.4
12.17.	pessimism	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.18.	truthfulness	32.2	28.5	31.5
12.19.	deceitfulness	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.20.	naivety	9.1	0.0	7.8
12.21.	cynicism	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.22.	kindness	35.4	14.2	31.5
12.23.	cruelty	3.2	14.2	5.2
12.24.	vigour	16.1	28.5	18.4
12.25.	weakness	6.4	14.2	7.8
12.26.	courage	16.1	28.5	18.4

12.27.	cowardice	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.28.	hardworking	32.2	14.2	29.8
12.29.	laziness	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.30.	pragmatism	6.4	14.2	7.8
12.31.	inconsistency	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.32.	principled stance	6.4	14.2	7.8
12.33.	expedience	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.34.	determination	12.9	14.2	13.1
12.35.	lack of purpose	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.36.	sensibility	41.9	28.5	40.5
12.37.	coldness	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.38.	tenderness	19.3	28.5	21.5
12.39.	rudeness	3.2	14.2	5.2
12.40.	coquetry	19.3	14.2	18.4
12.41.	intimidation	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.42.	sensuality	16.1	28.5	18.4
12.43.	frigidness	0.0	0.0	0.0
12.44.	other	9.6	0.0	7.8
13.	<i>Role of the character in the plot:</i>			
13.1.	positive	51.6	57.1	52.6
13.2.	romantic	22.5	14.2	21.0
13.3.	comic	9.6	14.2	10.5
13.4.	negative	3.2	14.2	5.2
13.5.	other (for example. a TV show host)	26.1	14.2	24.3
14.	Character's influence on the development of the plot:			
14.1.	positive influence	74.1	71.4	73.6
14.2.	no/weak impact	16.1	14.2	15.7
14.3.	both positive and negative	6.4	14.2	7.8
14.4.	negative impact	3.2	28.5	7.8

5. Conclusions

The classification of the media competence's development indicators developed by us turned out to be an effective tool for comparative analysis between the control and experimental groups. This analysis has proved the effectiveness of the model developed by us and the methodology for fostering students' media literacy (the level of media competence of the students who took and passed a one-year course in media education was four times higher than the level of similar indicators in the control group).

The most preferred genres of media texts were: 1) comedy (26.3 %); 2) melodrama (23.7 %, and this is purely female preference); 3) reality shows and talk shows (10.5 % each); 4) science fiction (with the majority of male respondents). None of the other media genres could collect more than 6 % of the total vote. As expected, entertainment genres are dominating among the favorites. Genres that are considered "challenging" by mass audience (drama, tragedy, parable, analytical television program, etc.) did not exceed 6 % of the vote. 3. The vast majority of favorite media characters, according to the sample made by students, turned out to be male (about 63 %). While female respondents' preferences are distributed more evenly (58 % chose male characters for analysis, and 42 % – female), over 85 % of the male respondents selected to examine a male media character.

As one would expect, characters under the age of 18 and older than 35 years were not very popular with students in their 20s. Maximum attention was given to their peers – the age group between 19 and 35.

As for the ethnic characteristics, the students were unanimous – 84 % of respondents chose media heroes with white skin. About 14% of male respondents chose African American characters,

while nearly 6,5 % of female students analyzed a character with an indefinite ethnicity (animated character Shrek).

The respondents' current level of education (university) significantly influenced the choice of favorite media characters with higher education (63.2 %). However, 23.7 % of respondents like characters with secondary education, too.

Similar situation is with the type of study/occupation of popular media characters. The majority preferred qualified employees (65.8 %). Some male respondents also chose unemployed characters (14.3 %). Paradoxically, media characters with low qualification (10.5 % of votes) are three times more popular than heroes holding a higher rank (2.6 %).

As expected, the most popular media characters are bachelors (55.3 %). The second place is occupied by married characters (36.8 % with female voices prevailing).

The sympathies of twenty-something respondents, as a rule, go to childless characters (71 %). However, a quarter of the students surveyed named among their favorite characters fathers / mothers of a child. The popularity of characters with two or more children is minimal (from 3 % to 6 % of the vote).

As one might expect, students prefer physically attractive characters (57.9 %), or at least – conventionally good-looking (31.6 %). Media characters, unattractive by traditional standards, are appealing to only 7.9 % of respondents.

Curiously, the characters with athletic bodies have not become the leaders of student preferences (about 15 % of the votes without a noticeable gender difference among the respondents). Apparently, it's easier to relate with characters with "closer to real life" body (42.1 % of votes). In fact, slim heroes of media texts are also quite popular (34.2 %) Male respondents (28.6 %) demonstrated tolerance in relation to overweight characters.

The most popular features of media characters are such qualities as optimism (68.4 %), independence (68.4 %), intelligence (50 %), activeness (42.1 %), sensitivity (40.5 %), directness (36.8 %), wit (34.2 %). Such traits of media character as kindness, truthfulness, diligence, faithfulness got about one third of the poll. Meanwhile, such strands as kindness, care, and loyalty were more popular with female respondents; straightforwardness, activity – with male. In general, the choice of students tends to positive media characters. Such negative character traits as deceit, cowardice, passivity, pessimism, etc. left the respondents indifferent. At the same time, 5.3 % of the poll distinguished cruelty and rudeness in their favourite media characters.

About half of the respondents (without significant gender differences) have identified the positive role of the character from their favorite media text. 21 % of respondents (with the predominance of female respondents) marked romantic function as an important. Each tenth of the questioned singled out the character's comic function. A quarter of respondents noted that their favorite characters (usually TV presenter) do not have a pronounced positive / negative function in the media text, maintaining a kind of neutrality.

The majority of respondents (73.7 %) noted that the characters from their favorite media texts have a positive impact on the development of the plot. And only 7.9 % pointed to the negative impact (or both positive and negative impact together).

Thus, the analysis of the results of our survey confirmed the general trend of media contacts in the students' audience – its focus on the entertaining genres of audiovisual media; preference of characters who are physically attractive, positive, active, single, childless, educated, highly skilled males aged 19 to 35 years. These heroes are characterized by optimism, independence, intelligence, sensitivity, and wit. They are connoisseurs of life and have a positive impact on the development of the plot in a media text.

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