

Media Literacy in the Context of Globalization

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Abstract. *This article examines the role of media literacy in protecting youth consciousness in the era of globalization. It highlights how social networks and modern technologies have become tools for spreading unethical and destructive ideologies that threaten moral and cultural stability. The study emphasizes the need to strengthen young people's ability to think critically, evaluate information sources, and resist manipulative content. Drawing on the ideas of Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Fitrat, and Pirimqul Qodirov, the article shows that ideological and moral challenges have deep historical roots but have taken new forms in the digital age. The author concludes that developing media literacy and ideological resilience is essential for ensuring moral security and preserving national values in today's rapidly changing information environment.*

Key words: *globalization, computer literacy, threat, moral threat.*

Introduction

In the context of globalization, political forces and movements striving to expand their sphere of influence through ideological means are becoming increasingly intense. Ideological aggression aimed at weakening and destabilizing the political and constitutional systems, undermining the peace and stability of nations and societies, and threatening civil and public security is intensifying. Those hostile forces, in pursuit of their malicious goals, seek to exploit every possible means—appealing to people's religious and national sentiments, social and economic difficulties, and skillfully using modern technology and telecommunication tools. Today, their insidious objectives—such as capturing the minds and hearts of certain segments of the population, especially youth, by instilling destructive ideas, religious extremism, and immorality—are becoming increasingly apparent.

Methodology

In the ideological struggle to achieve these malicious goals, the ancient principle of “divide and rule” is actively applied. The first step to realizing this strategy is an attempt to create internal social disunity within a country. This manifests in various forms in political, socio-economic, and moral spheres of social life. This principle has deep historical roots.

The Chinese philosopher and military commander Sun Tzu, who lived in the 4th century BC, emphasized this idea in his famous strategy for victory:

“Corrupt everything good in the enemy's country; defame their leadership; humiliate them in the eyes of the people when possible. Cooperate with the lowest and most despicable individuals of that nation; create discord and quarrels among the people; turn the youth against the elders; hinder the government's effective functioning in every possible way; destroy traditions and break their faith in their gods” [1, p.50].

Even after 2,600 years, such destructive and aggressive ideas remain a global challenge to humanity. Recognizing the dangers of alien ideologies penetrating the country and spreading among citizens, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, in his work *“The Virtuous City”*, offered valuable reflections:

“Ignorant cities consist of people who seek fame, wealth, and pleasure. These people attempt to corrupt the just laws of the virtuous city, distort the truth, and use false reasoning and deceit to achieve their selfish aims. Such individuals should not be admitted into the community of virtuous citizens” [2, p.169].

We also observe the ideological struggle vividly depicted in Uzbek writer Pirimqul Qodirov’s novel *“Humayun and Akbar.”* During the Mughal era, under Emperor Akbar, the clash between humanistic, universal, and tolerant ideas on one side and destructive, divisive, and religious fanaticism on the other became pronounced. The Western spy Albert Pereira, pretending to teach Akbar’s son Salim foreign languages and navigation, subtly poisoned the young prince’s mind by showing him immoral images and turning him against his father. This ideological corruption led to discord between father and son and posed serious difficulties for the state’s stability and interfaith harmony. This example proves that one can subdue a person’s spirit not only through physical warfare but also through ideological manipulation.

The Uzbek intellectual Fitrat interpreted the colonial policy of European powers toward the East in this way:

“The European conquerors aimed to corrupt the morals of the East, to estrange people from their religion and homeland, to sow enmity among them, to make them lazy, poor, and dependent. The English and French opened brothels, taverns, and missionary schools in China, India, and Egypt for this purpose. The Russian Tsarist regime pursued similar strategies in our Turkestan” [3, No. 2].

At present, among the political movements seeking to expand their ideological influence, we can include aggressive nationalism and chauvinism, neo-fascism, fundamentalism, racism, religious extremism, and neo-communism.

The complex realities of the modern world—such as the expansion of information flow and the globalization of ideological processes—have made ideological threats an integral part of nearly every sphere of human life. By their very nature, ideological threats primarily target the human mind, thinking, and behavior, attempting to poison people’s consciousness and hearts with destructive ideas.

Such ideological aggression, disguised under the mask of “spirituality,” endangers the sustainable development of newly independent states. The export of American-style culture and values has produced negative consequences not only in young, developing countries but also within the United States itself.

Hence, media literacy—the ability to critically evaluate information, discern manipulation, and resist unethical or destructive influences—is essential for modern youth living in a globalized and information-saturated world.

Despite the rapid growth of modern technologies, many people still lack a comprehensive understanding of how to utilize them effectively. Most parents and teachers who grew up before the era of computers and the Internet tend to believe that when a child begins to use the Internet, it brings more harm than benefit. However, behind the attempt to keep children away from computers and the Internet lies another issue — the adults’ own lack of digital literacy.

If adults themselves approached this issue more seriously and worked to overcome their technological illiteracy, the result would be far more effective. Avoiding technology does not protect children; instead, it isolates them from modern life. Moreover, children’s attitudes toward technology are often shaped by the behavior of adults around them.

There is no doubt that the Internet offers immense opportunities for gaining knowledge and accessing useful information. Yet, not all information available online can be trusted or considered beneficial. Users must develop **critical thinking skills** to evaluate the accuracy of information. Therefore, children should be taught from an early age that anyone can create an online page, post any information, and that there are no strict filters for truth or morality on the Internet.

One of the major dangers of the Internet lies in its lack of moral and ethical boundaries. It exposes millions of people to moral corruption, violence, and unethical behavior. While such risks were minimal earlier, they have multiplied for two main reasons today.

First, the Internet has become more affordable and accessible than ever before. It is no longer a luxury or a symbol of status — it is a daily working tool available in almost every household. Mobile devices now serve as gateways to the Internet, often through free or discounted access packages. As a result, the scale and reach of the Internet are expanding at an unprecedented speed.

Second, the Internet is filled with content deliberately designed to increase user addiction. For example, online games involving money rewards often blur the line between entertainment and gambling, attracting youth into psychologically manipulative systems.

The violence, immorality, and deceit that dominate the virtual world can easily spill into real life. A child exposed to such virtual environments may internalize harmful emotions and desires that can manifest in behavior later. Therefore, it is crucial for parents to pay close attention to how their children use technology. Instead of ignoring or banning, parents should guide and communicate. Even a basic understanding of computers — as little as ten percent of literacy — can help parents properly guide their children.

The lack of parental awareness harms not only the family but also society as a whole. For instance, **BBC News (2017)** reported that German authorities suspected about **12,000 Internet users** of sharing child pornography, and 1,700 were formally charged. A year later, a global operation involving **70 countries** investigated the actions of hundreds of such offenders. This illustrates how technological misuse can lead to moral and legal crises.

In Uzbekistan, a national policy has been developed to restore moral values, strengthen cultural traditions, and raise a generation faithful to the ideals of national identity. The concept of **national independence ideology** was established to spiritually sustain the nation and ensure the moral growth of society. Educational reforms continue to emphasize moral development, civic responsibility, and digital awareness.

As a result of spiritual renewal, people's worldviews and behaviors have evolved. Values such as peace, national prosperity, and stability have become cornerstones of the collective consciousness. These values are increasingly important not only within Uzbekistan but throughout the global community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the spread of digital technology has brought both opportunities and challenges. The Internet has become an indispensable part of modern life, yet without media literacy and moral awareness, it can also be a source of moral decay. It is therefore essential to educate both parents and children about safe, ethical, and responsible use of technology. Parents must improve their own digital literacy to guide their children effectively. Schools should integrate media education into their curriculum, while society should promote responsible online behavior. The development of critical thinking, the protection of cultural and national identity, and the cultivation of ethical responsibility must go hand in hand with technological progress. Only in this way can we ensure that globalization and digitalization contribute to the moral and spiritual growth of society rather than its decline.

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