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### **MEDIA EDUCATION IN SPAIN AND INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL TALK SHOWS ON THE FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION**

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*The article analyzes media education in Spain, which is designed to help society better adapt to the world of information, learn the language of the media, gain skills in the perception of information. The concepts "media education" and "media literacy" are disclosed in the research. It has been proved that media education is a part of an educational process aimed at forming media culture in society, which results in media literacy and allows consumers to analyze media messages critically in order to notice propaganda, censorship or one-sidedness in news and public interest*

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programs. Media literacy is aimed at making people experienced creators and producers of media messages. The task of media literacy is to transform media consumption into an active and critical process, helping them understand the potential manipulation. It has been found that in the current media system television provides a growing level of interactivity, which improves the communication of programs with their audiences where the leading role belongs to talk shows. Thus, one of the priority tasks of education today is the need to educate citizens and enable them to interact critically and intelligently with modern globalized media. The article examines the impact of Spanish political talk shows on public and shows how to expand audience participation in different ways. It was determined that the use of television evening talk shows for political information, namely evening talk shows, links all three categories of criterion variables – political efficiency, political trust and probability of choice – either directly or through interaction with the third variable. Recommendations that will increase viewers' confidence in political talk shows were proposed. The findings show that the use of evening talk shows as a source of political understanding can contribute to political inefficiency and political mistrust on the part of the public.

**Key words:** media education, media literacy, media culture, public opinion, television, political talk shows, mass media.

## МЕДІАОСВІТА В ІСПАНІЇ ТА ВПЛИВ ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ТОК-ШОУ НА ФОРМУВАННЯ ГРОМАДСЬКОЇ ДУМКИ

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У статті проаналізовано медіаосвіту в Іспанії, яка покликана допомогти суспільству краще адаптуватися в інформаційному світі, освоїти мову засобів масової інформації, отримати навички сприйняття інформації. У роботі висвітлено поняття "медіаосвіта" та "медіаграмотність". Доведено, що медіаосвіта – частина освітнього процесу, яка спрямована на формування в суспільстві медіакультури та результатом якої постає медіаграмотність, яка дозволяє споживачам критично аналізувати медіаповідомлення для того, щоб полічати там пропаганду, цензуру або однобокість в новинах і програмах суспільного інтересу. Метою медіаграмотності є зробити людей досвідченими творцями і продюсерами медіаповідомлень. Завдання медіаграмотності полягає у трансформації медіаспоживання в активний і критичний процес, допомагаючи їм краще усвідомити потенційну маніпуляцію. З'ясовано, що у поточній системі медіа телебачення забезпечує зростаючий рівень інтерактивності, який покращує зв'язки програм з їх аудиторіями, де провідна роль належить саме ток-шоу. Отже, одним із пріоритетних завдань освіти сьогодні є потреба у вихованні громадян та наданні їм можливості критично та розумно взаємодіяти із засобами масової інформації. У статті розглянуто питання впливу іспанських політичних ток-шоу на громадськість, показано, як розширити участь аудиторії різними шляхами. Висвітлено, що використання телевізійних розважальних ток-шоу для політичної інформації, а саме вечірніх ток-шоу, пов'язує всі три категорії критеріальних змінних – політична ефективність, політична довіра та вірогідність вибору – або прямо, або через взаємодію з третьою змінною. Запропоновано рекомендації, які підвищать довіру глядачів до політичних ток-шоу. Доведено, що використання вечірніх ток-шоу, як джерела політичного розуміння може сприяти політичній неефективності та політичному недовірію з боку громадськості.

**Ключові слова:** медіаосвіта, медіаграмотність, медіа культура, громадська думка, телебачення, політичні ток-шоу, ЗМІ.

**Introduction of the issue.** The 21st century is an era of a global information society characterized by the active use of media resources around the world. Media culture in its variety of forms and

methods spreads throughout the globe, helping everyone to master the world around them. In order to properly understand the importance of media texts by people, especially young ones, as

well as to navigate the information world, it is necessary to acquire *perception of achieving information skills*. Consequently, media education is able to form these skills. Thus, one of the priority tasks of education today is the need to educate citizens and enable them to interact critically and intelligently with modern globalized media. The challenge for educational institutions is to promote media competence, which is understood as the ability and skills to access, analyze and evaluate a number of messages, sounds and images that we encounter in everyday life, and which are an important part of modern culture, and as well as the ability to communicate competently through the various available media. This idea is also included in the UNESCO Paris Program (2007), which comprises recommendations for the development of media education programs at all levels: teacher training, research and international cooperation. All this requires the development of effective media literacy programs in relation to the processes of access to and retrieval of information, policy and ideology of the media industry [15]. Media competence also needs to be constantly reformatted within the interests of a society that is in constant transformation, thus encouraging citizens to acquire critical thinking, aesthetic sensitivity and aesthetic perception [14]. Undoubtedly, the updated broadcasting system is undergoing profound changes in some areas that change its functions and specifics of broadcasting, such as increasing the number of policy programs and finding different methods of influencing audience consciousness, innovations in increasingly interactive formats, in the form of dialogue with audiences as well as the renewed relationship between the media and their viewers.

**Current state of the issue.** Today, there is a number of studies on the problems of the information society, information technology, Internet

communications and related issues of education. The works of Apel, Barlow, Bell, Bergson, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Camus, and Castells are of considerable scientific interest. The leaders of media education in Spain are Jose Gomez, Alfonso Martin, Juan Ferres, Agustin Matilla, Juan Aguaded, Monica Figueres, Magda Blanes, and others.

Communication scientists McQuail [19], Wamsley and Pride [34], Fitzsimmons and Osburn [15], Robinson [30] have shown that television can influence the consciousness of the audience.

Scholars have long identified the role of youth in promoting a democratic society. Fendrich and Lonvoy [13], Renshon, [18]. Namely, recent attempts at political socialization have renewed research interest in this area McLeod [18]. Some have identified the media as a necessary factor in the political socialization of Chaffee, Ward, and Tipton, [5] Eveland, McLeod, and Horowitz [8]. Others, however, demand more responsibility from the media as reading and reviewing public affairs decreases, especially among young people, Buckingham [4]. McLeod believes that many important issues about the role of the media in this critical period, however, still need to be answered [18].

The analysis of the literature on political influence of talk shows demonstrates a complex picture. Although limited research has been conducted on this issue, researchers have studied a number of policy outcomes, including awareness Baum [1], Prior [28]; perceptions of candidates Pfau, Moy, Radler and Bridgeman [24], Young [35]; voter preferences of Pfau [24]; different political views Moy and Pfau [22], Weaver and Drew [33]; political participation MacLeod [18]; and Baum's political directions [1]. The impact of television talk shows, in general, and political talk shows on the whole is relatively small, and the information found is inconsistent in many areas which makes

it difficult to draw a reasonable conclusion about the role of political talk shows.

**Outline of the unresolved issues brought up in the article.** Thus, the theoretical analysis of scientific works allows us to state that the problem of media education in Spain, especially the influence of political talk shows on formation of public opinion is almost unresolved, which is hindered by a number of contradictions: – between the educational model and promotion of participatory culture and civic media literacy; – between the growing importance and the implementation of media literacy in Spanish school curricula which do not contain specific courses focused on media education; – between correctness, professionalism, truthfulness of political talk shows and formation of public opinion; – between the acquisition of relatively limited political knowledge, especially by those who do not receive such information from other sources and others who believe that the latest news is not of great political and informational value and reviewing of the latest news.

**Aim of the research is** to analyze the development of media education in Spain and to find out the influence of political talk shows on the formation of public opinion.

**Results and discussion.** The history of the development of media education in Spain can be traced in the context of the creation of the first media education organizations. As early as the 1930s, the Spanish Council of Trustees of Pedagogical Missions was established, headed by an art critic Bartolome Cossio. The first film library was opened in Madrid in 1953, and the first film clubs appeared in 60s [32]. It was not until 1970 that the Ley Generalde Educación was published, emphasizing the need to use media resources in schools as a means of improving the level and quality of education. In the early 1980s, research centers in Barcelona, Madrid, Valladolid, Seville, and the Canary

Islands began implementing research projects in the field of media education. The Spanish Ministry of Education and Science will soon launch ICT Modernization Programs (PNTICs) for the use of media (Atenea) and information resources (Mercurio) in schools and universities. The need to teach the media in order to increase media literacy and the level of basic media competencies is indicated in a number of laws and regulations issued by the Spanish Ministry of Education: The Education Act (2006, 2014), the Royal Decree (2007), the Basic Act on audiovisual communications "(2010) and others. In recent years, many new programs have been developed in Spanish media education, and mass events are being held to develop media culture and increase media competence.

In addition, Spain has developed its own national concept of "Learning and Communication" ("Educomunicación"). It is based on the fact that both education and communication are not just the transmission of information, messages, but dialogue, mediation, the process of active interaction of actors. Within the concept, educational communications and knowledge are considered as a product obtained through appropriate channels in the process of interaction with the outside world. The key figures are the subjects of communication who actively participate in the process of creating media messages, provide feedback using Internet content, social networks, etc.

The influence of the media on human education is the subject of interdisciplinary research (philosophy, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, computer science, culturology, anthropology, etc.) and requires a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach.

Today we have a unique level of information technology development in the world which creates a global problem of control over the media and has a huge impact on the younger generation, and

this is becoming an urgent problem, which is designed to address media education and media literacy.

The question of revealing the essence of the concepts of "media education" and "media literacy" is reasonable. The term media education was introduced relatively recently – it is a process of personal development through the media. It helps to develop creative and communicative abilities, critical thinking, skills of full perception, interpretation, analysis and evaluation of media texts to teach various forms of self-expression with the help of media educational technologies [9].

According to UNESCO, media education is part of the fundamental rights of every citizen of any country in the world to freedom of expression and the right to information and a tool for democracy support. At the same time, they recommend all countries to introduce media education in their national curricula, in the system of additional, non-formal and "lifelong" education. The idea that media education belongs to the basic human rights and that it should have a lifelong character is especially important [12: 7].

The concept of "media education" – part of the educational process aimed at forming the media culture in society, preparing individuals for safe and effective interaction with the modern media system, including both traditional (print, radio, film, television) and the latest (computer-mediated communication, Internet, mobile telephony) media, taking into account the development of information and communication technologies [21].

In turn, the result of media education is media literacy. "Media literacy" (media literacy) is a set of knowledge, skills and abilities that allow people to analyze, critically evaluate and create messages of different genres and forms for different types of media, as well as understand and analyze the complex processes of media in the society and their impact.

Media literacy is the goal of media education, which thinks about a person who is developing towards autonomy. First of all, information consumers must have basic and other life skills before being involved in the use of media. Media education focused on the concept of media literacy should take into account at what age it is better for a child to develop with reliance on the media than use alternative classes, and align his development according to studies of media effect [20].

Media literacy is based on a model that encourages people to think about what they are watching, seeing, reading. Media literacy allows consumers to critically analyze media messages in order to notice propaganda, censorship or one-sidedness in news and public interest programs (and the reasons for such actions as well), and to understand how factors such as the identity of the media owner, funding model affect information. The goal of media literacy is to make people experienced creators and producers of media messages, facilitate and understand the benefits and limitations of each type of media, and create an independent media.

The task of media literacy is to transform media consumption into an active and critical process, helping people to better understand the potential manipulation (especially in advertising and PR), and to help understand the role of the mass media and civic media in shaping public opinion. Accordingly, media literacy is the result of media education.

Considering television as an integral part of Spanish culture, it has been found that the Spanish population can tune into television at the touch of a button. It is an extremely easy way to get information, have fun and learn. Philo [25] believes that television is the main source of information about national and world events for most Spaniards. Condry argues that in terms of psychological impact, television may have little or no effect on the individual if only a few

people pay relatively little attention to it. But the researcher claims that the opposite is true: almost everyone today watches TV and it has a worldwide appeal [6]. He states that television is a powerful tool, it entertains, informs and persuades [6]. Television is the main medium of mass communication, and conversation is one of its strongest tools. Zimmerman and Boden consider conversation to be the heart of everyday life, which is all-encompassing and central to human history, in every human environment, at all levels of society, and in virtually every social context [2].

Cultural diversity is a key issue of our time, albeit with different emphases in the media context. The study of media and communication began to rely on working in television programs in retrospect on political talk shows to understand how diversity is perceived in Spanish culture. The analysis is necessary for the transnational entities of European Unity, in our case Spanish culture. This topic is gaining importance because the emotional impact of talk shows on the audience as an individual nation and region faces the problem of globalization and promotion of media content.

A talk show or television debate is a genre of television or radio program in which one person (or group of people) discusses various topics offered by the host of the show. Political talk shows address specific political issues that interest, influence, and relate to the government and its authorities, as well as to other interested parties.

When we watch, listen and have fun, TV talk shows rewrite our cultural scenarios, change our views, social attitudes and attitudes towards the natural world. Television talk shows offer us a world of blurred borders. Cultural differences between public and private, reliable and unreliable witnesses, truth and falsehood, good and evil, disease and irresponsibility, normal and abnormal, therapy and exploitation, relatives and

strangers, division and community. These boundaries are blurred in order to distract and entertain the public.

In this research, talk shows are seen as an extremely confrontational discursive genre, a widely influential media phenomenon as well as a politically and morally entertaining form. Few of the discursive practices in popular culture broadcasts are so controversial and have been studied by scholars more recently than talk shows, especially television talk shows. A way to study the genre of talk shows is to study the sources of influence on the mass audience, when the general category of talk shows is used to justify their own cultural assumptions and establish the place of the genre within existing hierarchies and power relations. Today, talk shows are popular because it is the cheapest and most direct opportunity for audience participation.

Although the traditional empirical approach to the media is mainly represented by quantitative semantic analysis, but it is still widespread in the study of mass communication [19], some observers Jensen and Jankowski [13] talk about a "qualitative turn" in the study of media. This paradigm shift is not a matter of the predominance of specific methodologies, but corresponds to conceptual and theoretical strategies different from the traditional sender-receiver model. Today, most talk shows are rated as negative and organized in an artificial environment. These talk shows have more conversations than decisions.

Undoubtedly, talk shows do not reflect public opinion and demands as well as decisions. The main reason for the increase in the number of talk shows on all TV channels recently is that it is quite difficult to attract an audience at minimal cost.

Most studies of the impact of the latest news on public opinion indicate its dependence on the venue, topic and characteristics of the audience. Such places vary in the complexity of the content and, consequently, the possible

learning effects among different types of viewers while some issues are easily described in more accessible terms than others. In addition, different types of viewers differ in their tendency to learn about politics from such sources. Scientists have only partially distinguished these differences. Therefore, conducted research in this area is characterized by inaccurate definitions of independent (latest news) and \ or dependent (public opinion) variables.

Researchers of political communication have tried to determine more precisely what political knowledge the consumers gain from the latest news and who is likely to receive it. This has created a rift between those who argue that reviewing the latest news contributes to relatively limited political knowledge, especially those who do not receive such information from other sources, and others who believe that the latest news is of little political and informational value. In the first group, some researchers argue that the latest news helps political learning directly through access to independent information in the sources of such news [1; 3; 4], or indirectly, due to the "gateway" effect when access to a small amount of information from the latest news sources motivates viewers to find the necessary additional information using traditional news sources [1; 34]. In both cases, the effects of political learning are most pronounced among those who are relatively uninterested in politics and therefore have no motivation to receive information about it. In the second group, some scientists, namely Markus Prior [26; 27; 28], argued that the perception of the latest news does not contribute to a significant accumulation of knowledge about politics. Prior [26] does not deny that the latest news programs cover political issues. Instead, the scholar questions Baum's assertion that a significant number of viewers learn about politics from such shows. He believes that the

extreme fragmentation of the media in recent years has reduced the receipt of incidental political information by viewers seeking entertainment. Baum [1], although does not deny Prior's view [27] that, as his experiments show on the basis of an online data processing model [24], factual knowledge is an insufficient measure of political awareness. These facts suggest that a small part of the audience still receives information about politics through talk shows, but the fact what these people learn, how much or how long they study remains a topic for discussion. An unresolved question is what exactly influences such training – the thoughts or behavior of the audience.

In addition, the analysis of the content of evening talk shows provided quite consistent results – that is, the tone of the content about politicians and political affairs in these shows is strongly negative. Prominent political figures such as the president and leading presidential candidates are the most frequent targets of evening television jokes, and most jokes focus not on the problems but on the personal shortcomings of these politicians. According to a content analysis conducted by Moy and Pfau, [22] evening talk shows in 1995 were considered too negative in the image of the president. Analyzing the same data set Pfau and his colleagues noted that entertaining television talk shows portrayed the presidency and Congress more negatively than traditional media sources. It is worth noting that evening entertainment talk shows or other recent news programs provide politicians with one of the best opportunities to reach a large group of potential voters in a relatively favorable place. The growing frequency of speeches by presidential candidates on daytime and evening talk shows depicts that they consider such manifestations to be politically advantageous. Also in political talk shows use techniques of manipulation of public consciousness, and manipulation is interpreted as an opportunity to obtain the necessary

without the desire of another person, a way to influence a person to benefit [31].

At the same time, the use of television entertainment talk shows for political information, namely evening talk shows, connects all three categories of criterion variables – political effectiveness, political trust and probability of choice – either directly or through interaction with the third variable.

The concept of audience participation in political talk shows is also an important issue. José Alberto García-Aviles sees it as a response given by announcers through a combination of traditional systems and the latest technology. It includes tools such as voting via SMS for a specific talk show candidate to express your opinion or to confirm a position on a specific problem, possible solutions or possible criticism. According to Nightingale and Dwyer, [23] most voting programs should be considered commercial cases where representatives behave as "sellers" who demonstrate persuasive rhetoric and seek to engage viewers, for example, by campaigning for a particular party. It includes the use of program-related sites where fans can join live chats and forums. According to José Alberto García-Aviles of the University of Miguel Hernandez in Spain, there are several participatory strategies through cross-media events that put forward different audience views. They are divided into eight roles: citizens, consumers, employees, fans, players, commentators, philanthropists and activists. The nature and involvement of these roles are discussed in his essay [14]. Some examples of social TV services include the integration of Twitter posts while watching live video and Facebook apps that allow you to comment while watching video content. The talk show "La Noche en 24 Horas", which analyzes the news on RTVE's Canal 24 Horas, introduces audience participation via Facebook: comments on news events and some viewers' opinions are taken into account and discussed on the show. The

daily selection of La 2 Noticias news also takes into account the comments of Facebook users, as a source of criticism, suggestions and ideas for stories, during the broadcast of the news. This allowed the program to gain more than a hundred thousand fans on the social network. Rte.es regularly publishes surveys, which allow them to encourage viewers to express their views on various current events. They are open to all visitors who can participate without registration. Similarly, news stories on Telecinco.com can be commented on and rated on a scale of one to five stars.

Undoubtedly, an open Internet environment promotes new ways of organizing and participating that are supported by social activists. In the public sphere, the use of the Internet by social movements opens up new channels of communication. In this context, activism founded or directed against television networks enhances civic participation with a greater vision of its goals and actions. According to Jose Alberto Garcia-Aviles, both live television and real-time information reinforce each other and thus create something new. Viewers are becoming participants, and participants are now connected, which affects how content is perceived and criticized by individuals and platforms for activists. Recognizing that the conversation surrounding an event can be as important as the event itself, television companies can use this growing trend to their advantage. Social media can affect not only users but also the fate of the program. For example, in October 2011, Francisco Javier Garcia's mother, El Cuco, a boy accused and imprisoned for participating in the hideout of the murder of a teenage girl in Seville, was invited to the Telecinco La Noria talk show, which combines gossip and political analysis. When it became known that Garcia's mother would appear on the show for 10,000 euros many people turned to social media to ask viewers to boycott the program. El Cuco was still a juvenile at the time of



the murder, and was acquitted on charges of rape and murder. As a result of the boycott campaign La Noria lost most of its advertising. Most major advertising companies such as Campofrío, Puleva, President, Bayer and Nestlé, have decided to remove their ads from the popular talk show.

It should be noted that synergies between television and the Internet have brought innovative ways of viewing the role of audiences and spreading perceptions of programs as interactive technologies that change the way television communicates with viewers and increase audience response and participation. TV series, newscasts and shows are being created more and more often keeping in mind that they are distributed online when viewers become users who can interact more intensively, sharing their experiences and participating in a large number of applications [7].

After analyzing all relevant data and information, the results of the study it is necessary to follow recommendations which will increase not only the confidence of viewers in political talk shows but also their popularity:

- It is necessary to increase the number of viewers through more talk shows, which are needed to protect the public interest and which will be able to create an effective platform for communication between government and the public.

- Talk shows should raise awareness of the masses, not just entertain them (40.3% of people watch talk shows for entertainment, and 40% of people watch them to fill their free time). They should be an authentic source of knowledge.

- Talk shows should be held in such a way that they can make people's decisions.

- Political bias should be removed from the talk show in order to increase the authenticity of the channel.

- Talk shows should not be a cause of environmental pollution and disruption of peace in the country.

- Television owners should support and organize talk shows in order to reflect the interests of the public and for the public to believe that it is a common and authentic platform for communication between the government and it.

- The explanations and arguments in the talk show should be based on accuracy, fairness and validity, so that the show could not violate existing laws and the constitution.

- Talk shows on TV channels should not be based only on political issues, should address some topics and issues that will help rural life and contribute to the development of the whole of Spain.

- Topics and issues discussed on talk shows should be organized in such a way as to promote conscious and positive social change.

**Conclusions and research perspectives.** The performed analysis provided grounds to conclude that political talk shows in Spain cover maximum audience and because of their popularity can be an effective tool in shaping public opinion. At the same time, it has been found that reviewing the latest news contributes to relatively limited political knowledge, especially for those who do not receive such information from other sources and who believe that the latest news is not of great political and informational value. It has been found that political talk shows affect political attention, knowledge and even attitudes only halfway, they can influence the political behavior of some citizens. At the same time, the use of evening talk shows as a source of political understanding can contribute to the political inefficiency and political mistrust on part of the public. Also, the impact of the latest news on public opinion indicates its dependence on the venue, topic and characteristics of the audience. Political talk shows should increase consciousness of the masses, not just entertain them. They must be an authentic source of knowledge. And in order to consciously and objectively

perceive and evaluate political talk shows by the public, so that they are not disoriented and not subjected to manipulation by the media, but consciously perceive television content it is necessary to introduce media education as the main channel of transmission and receipt of information on the person. Thus, media literacy should be taught from childhood and introduced as a separate discipline in Spanish educational institutions. Further exploration requires a detailed study and analysis of political talk shows as an effective channel of communication with the public.

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