

# THE MEDIA CULTURE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

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**Abstract:** *The subject of this paper's research is the media culture of the young. Practical aim of the research is that, based on the results obtained, we can suggest adequate solutions to the issue of the media influence on communication culture and culture in general amongst the young and theoretically to determine how much do the media influence on the communication culture and development of awareness of the young on the media influence and the level of the media culture of the young. In this paper there has come to a conclusion that the tested group of teenagers, 300 of them from Novi Sad Gymnasiums, to a greatest percentage watches TV, at that the concomitant and entertainment program, that the media in Serbia promote violence and hate speech, so that the majority of them enriches their vocabulary and culture of expression using electronic media and not books. The results we have come upon confirm that the media such as are today, very negatively influence on the language culture and the culture of behaviour of the young in general.*

**Keywords:** *media culture, the young, media, the Internet*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

As Henry Giroux puts it: "With the rise of new media technologies and the global reach of the highly concentrated culture industries, the scope and impact of the educational force of culture in shaping and refiguring all aspects of daily life appear unprecedented. Yet the current debates have generally ignored the powerful pedagogical influence of popular culture, along with the implications it has for shaping curricula, questioning notions of high-status knowledge, and redefining the relationship between the culture of schooling and the cultures of everyday life." (H. Giroux, 2000, p. 32.)

In a mediated culture, it can be difficult for young people to discern whose representations are closest to the truth, which representations to believe, and which images matter. This is partly because the emergence of digitalized communication and the commoditiza-

tion of culture have significantly altered the conditions under which life and culture are experienced. (World YOUTH Report, 2003.) Many are still attached to the romantic image of organic communities in which people converse with one another face-to-face and live in a close-knit local environment. Digital communication is gradually undermining this traditional approach:

“Most of the ways in which we make meanings, most of our communications to other people, are not directly human and expressive, but interactions in one way or another worked through commodities and commodity relations: TV, radio, film, magazines, music, commercial dance, style, fashion, commercial leisure venues. These are major realignments.” (P. Willis, 2000, p. 48.)

In the world of young people, the media culture may be characterized primarily in terms of three distinct considerations. First, it is produced and reproduced by diverse ICT sources. It is

therefore imperative to replace the teaching of knowledge and skills central to agrarian and industrial societies with education in digital literacy. (World YOUTH Report, 2003.)

A similar point is made by Douglas Kellner, who contends that in the media culture it is important to learn multiple ways of interacting with social reality. Children and young people must be provided with opportunities to acquire skills in multiple literacies to enable them to develop their identities, social relationships and communities, whether material, virtual, or a combination of the two. (Kellner, 1998, p. 122.)

From a great spectrum that should be included in the researches, we have decided on researching the media culture of the young in Novi Sad, as one of the most developed cities in Serbia and Vojvodina.

## 2. RETROSPECTIVE VIEW ON EARLIER RESEARCHES

Many researchers both in the world and in Serbia have been dealing with research of the media influence on the young and other population, as well as with the media culture of the young and others. At HomeNet study (Human Computer Interaction Institute), by measuring demographic characteristics, social extroversion and social inclusion of the examinees, as well as the psychological condition (well-being), the researchers have come to the conclusions that the increased usage of the Internet leads to a statistically significant decrease of communication among family members of the users, decrease of the net of close social relations and occurrence of the feeling of loneliness. (Kraut R, Patterson M, Lundmark V. *American Psychologist* Vol.53, 1998.)

Janet Morahan-Martin and Phyllis Schumaker have tested 283 students who attended the courses for which the use of computer and the Internet was necessary. (Morahan-Martin J, Schumaker P. 1997.)

Beforehand, they have grouped possible psychological symptoms into three groups: personal problems, mood changes and abstinence crisis symptoms. The results have shown that the examinees can also be classified into three groups: pathological users, those with particular symptoms, those without any symptoms. In their study from 2002, criticizing the Kraut and his associates model, the researchers Hamburger & Ben-Artzi (Hamburger Y.A, Ben-Artzi E. 2003; 19, 71-80.) deservedly emphasize that in the future the issue of typology and personality dynamics of the Internet user also has to be taken into account because what

is good, desirable or at least non-harmful for one individual does not necessarily have to be for the other. (Hamburger Y.A, Ben-Artzi E. 16; 2000.) The matrix of variables in the study "The Internet use and well-being in adolescence" among other, has been comprised also by the following variable complexes: a specific online and offline activity on one and social anxiety and loneliness on the other side. (Gross E.F, Juvonen J, Gable S.L. 2002; 58(1), 75-90.) Although at certain number of the examinees a high measure of the Internet activity intensity has been determined, almost all the examinees have continued to regularly and normally spend their extra-curricular time in activities from which majority has also been implying interpersonal interaction with the family, friends, acquaintances. The study conclusion was that there is no unique effect of the Internet on everyday activities of an average adolescent and that the Internet serves to a completely different purpose at socially anxious and lonely individuals. (La Greca A.M, Lopez N. 1998; 26(2), 83- 94.) In the study of McKenna & Bargh, 68 % of the examinees, previously having problems with melancholy, loneliness and depression, after a certain period of the Internet usage have asserted that they had a feeling that the Internet had helped them in broadening their personal social circle, only 3% have asserted that their circle of friends has decreased, whereas 28 % of them have not noticed any change. The results, which, according to the author's opinion, suggest that the Internet can be a good deal useful means for building new relations and social relations at those individuals that, are lonely and socially anxious. (McKenna K.Y.A, Bargh J.A. 1999.)

The National study of Katz & Aspden (1997) is another of those dealing with comparative analysis of social participation of the Internet users and non-users. (Katz J, Aspden P, A December 97/vol. 40, No.12, 1997.)

The main finding of the study "Internet & Society" from 2000, is that the Internet "is stealing" time mainly from TV (more than 50% of the tested have stated that since they had started using the Internet, they had been watching TV less). The other forms of mass media have not passed better either. Thus radio, newspaper, other press and books record downfall at about 30% of the examinees. (Nie, N. Erbring, L. 2000.)

"UCLA Internet Report: Surveying the Digital Future": „The Internet represents "the most important technological development of our generation." In this regard, it is similar to the advent of television. The objective of this report is to capitalize on the opportunity that was missed as television evolved. The goal of the report was to explore how the Internet influences social, political, cultural, and economic behavior and ideas". It has been established that, even though almost the same percentage of the Internet users and non-users states that it is watching TV, there is a great difference in the length of time spent watching TV program (during 2001 and 2002), therewith the difference is still showing the growth tendency. During 2001, the Internet users have spent 12.3 hours watching TV, whereas during 2002 the percentage has dropped to 11.2 hours a week. (The UCLA Internet report) Sujin Lee in his study examines the relationships between the online life-styles of South Korean students as the Internet users and Internet use, their tendency toward the Internet addiction, and the level of cyber ethics. (Sujin, Lee, Volume 13, Number 6, 2010, p. 701-704)

According to the researches of the experts on the way the young in Serbia spend their spare time, we have come to the following results regarding our subject: most of the young daily uses computer at home (85%). At school, computers are available only on Informatics classes. Passionate usage of computers is not present; a small percentage of the young is sitting in front of computer many hours (6%). Computer is most commonly used for listening

to the music, playing games, downloading music and films from the Internet and chatting. The data show that computer is primarily a means of amusement. Using computer for educational purposes is very rare: 80% of the young almost never use the educational software, 70% do not use computer for writing, drawing nor graphical presentation; nearly 70% never uses e-mail. When the ratio of the young to the printed media is analyzed, it shows that in daily newspapers the young mostly follow the columns related to entertainment, celebrities, chronicle of dead and sport. They are not interested in politics and daily events.

On TV, the young mostly watch films, sport, TV series and TV reality show «Big Brother». The most popular TV station is TV PINK, and then follows B92 and then RTS.

In the research of the Internet usage conducted at the area of city Kragujevac during 2003, the examinees have been asked to estimate whether and how much has there been a change in the amount of time they dedicated to the mentioned activities since they started using the Internet (the offered answers have spanned from +3 -increased largely to -3, decreased completely). The results show that television has suffered the strongest defeat with the average of -1.33, and it is followed by the press and radio, respectively -0.71, -0.56. It is indicative that all of these are forms of mass media. Other activities, such as the time spent with the family or doing housework, having nothing to do with the use of some media, have been in the background. (Hinić, D. (1) [www.bos.rs/cepit/evolocija/html/7/novimediji.htm](http://www.bos.rs/cepit/evolocija/html/7/novimediji.htm), Hinić, D. Mihajlović, G. Đukić Dejanović, S, Jovanović, M. (2) vol. 29, January-June 2007. No. 3-4, p. 47-63)

During 2003 CePIT has conducted a research on 1000 of citizens in Serbia, called "Global Citizen", dealing with descriptions and defining the population of the Internet users in Serbia nowadays. The study has shown that the least Internet struck, at least according to the subjective estimates of our examinees, is telephone, then reading books, and the most struck is press, radio and in the first place television. (Golčevski, N, Milanović, G, "Global citizens- Empirical study of the Internet users in Serbia 2003", CePIT, BOŠ, 2003. (Golčevski, N, Milanović, G, 2003.)

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this paper the quantitative and qualitative approach have been combined- the method of triangulation. The techniques and instruments have been chosen within the descriptive research method compatible to the subject and purpose of the research.

From the techniques, we have applied: interviewing, surveying and scaling.

The instrument is a questionnaire with 16 questions and it is compatible to the subject and purpose of the research. Using it, we have examined the attitudes of the young on the media influence on language culture and culture in general, and indirectly the media culture of the young.

The subject of the research is the media culture of the young.

Practical aim of the research is that, based on the results obtained, we can suggest adequate solutions to the issue of the media influence on communication culture and culture in general amongst the young.

The theoretical aim of the research is to determine how much do the media influence on the communication culture and development of awareness of the young on the media influence and the level of the media culture of the young.

The hypotheses: H0- the media influence badly on the language culture and culture of behaviour of the young.

The auxiliary hypotheses: H1- most of the examinees watch television, H2- most of the examinees follow entertainment program, H3- the media have a significant role in education, H4- the media promote violence and hate speech , H5- most of the examinees enriches their language by using electronic media

The variable sample: The dependent- the answers of the examinees have been directed to examining the relations and the attitudes of the young towards the influence of the media on culture of communication and culture in general. The independent- gender, age

Sample of the examinees: The questionnaire has been filled by 300 examinees, out of which 175 is of feminine gender and 125 of masculine. The participants of the age structure in question are from 15 to 19 years old.

#### 4. THE RESULTS' REVIEW

The research has been performed with participants of Novi Sad Gymnasiums "Isidora Sekulic", "Svetozar Markovic", "Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj" and "Laza Kostic", "Karlovacka gimnazija" in January 2015. The filling out of the questionnaire lasted 30 minutes.

**Table 1.** Following types of media

From media I follow	Sometimes %	Mainly %	Rarely	Never %
Press	32	28	22	18
Radio	33	37	22	8
Television	20	63	17	0
Internet	37	41	17	5

The greatest number of the examinees watches television, then follows the Internet-H1: confirmed

**Table 2.** Following of media on the Internet

Name of the newspapers, radios, television followed on the Internet	Sometimes %	Mainly %	Rarely %	Never %
Daily papers: 'Blic', 'Kurir'	15	18	32	35
Weekly prints: 'Svet' and 'Skandal'	33	25	37	5
Magazines: Glorija and Lepota i zdravlje	20	63	17	0
Radio: AS, Jesenjin, Delta	37	41	17	5
Television: B92, Pink, Prva	10	40	25	15
Social networks: Facebook	10	85	5	0

**Table 3.** On the television I watch

On TV I watch	Sometimes %	Mainly %	Rarely	Never %
Informative program	8	15	40	37
Entertainment program	24	56	15	5
Film and series program	35	45	20	0
Educational and documentary program	3	7	15	75

These results confirm H2 that most of the examinees follow the entertainment program.

**Table 4.** The function of media in education

	Very significant %	Significant %	I do not know %	None %
In my education, the media have the function which is	18	22	48	12

By these results we have neither refuted nor confirmed H3 that the media have a significant function in education. This result is of a great significance for further analysis of the issue in which we presume that the young are not aware of the great influence the media have on them.

**Table 5.** The media promotion of language culture

	Yes %	Mostly yes %	Mostly no %	Not at all %
The media promote language culture and language standard	10	20	58	12
From the media I have learned to express properly	5	15	47	33
The media promote swearing, hate speech and violence	30	25	23	22

By this result we have confirmed H4 that the media promote hate speech and violence.

**Table 6.** The media promotion of personality

The media promote personality from the world of	Yes %	Mostly yes %	Mostly no %	Not at all %
entertainment	38	4	0	0
sport	18	5	3	0
politics	4	6	0	0
science	0	0	0	0

**Table 7.** Why do they follow the media?

I follow the media because	Yes %	Mostly yes %	Mostly no %	Not at all %
of entertainment	45	9	0	0
of being informed	15	13	0	0
of education	13	5	0	0

**Table 8.** Educational program quality

Educational program is	Yes %	Mostly yes %	Mostly no %	Not at all %
boring	25	9	0	0
useful	12	11	0	0
entertaining	2	13	0	0
provocative, inspiring	0	7	0	0
current	0	3	0	0

**Table 9.** Educational subjects

	Geography and nature %	culture, society and history %	foreign languages %
In educational program I am interested the most in	32	57	11

**Table 10.** Reasons of not-watching

	Not interested %	The time of broadcasting does not suit me %
I do not watch the educational program	84	16

**Table 11.** Enrichment of language culture

	Internet %	TV %	Books and brochures %	Radio %
To enrich language and culture of expression I use	35	32	18	15

H5 is confirmed.

**Table 12.** Site-read persual and films instead from books

	Yes %	No %
I know that there is a site read.persual.com	73	27
I use this site	78	22
I rather watch the film than read the book	82	18

## 5. DISCUSSION WITH CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

The results of our research confirm that watching television is one of the main activities of adolescents and it has a great influence on them. They watch television three to four hours a day. With this pace, till the completion of the high school, children spend more time watching television than they spend in the classrooms. Whereas television can provide amusement, inform and keep the children company, on the other hand it can influence on them also in an undesirable manner. The time spent watching television distracts from important activities such as reading, doing homework, playing, practicing, going in for some sport and socializing. Besides, by watching television, children find out information that could be inappropriate and inaccurate. They often cannot differ between the fantasy shown on television and reality. They are under the influence of over a thousand advertisements they watch every year, many of which are related to alcohol, fast food and toys. And our research also confirms that most of the examinees follow the entertainment program. (H2)

By the analysis we have confirmed that the examinees are after all aware of the great influence the media have on them, so that they know that the media promote violence and hate speech. (H4)

What was to be expected is that the research results will show that young mostly follow through the media the contents of entertainment character.

However, the negative side, pointed by the research, is the type and quality of precisely that content being followed. The weekly prints such as "Svet" and "Skandal" are redolent of bad taste, trash (of work of art) and deranged system of values. The weekly prints are not read, but looked at, and even if someone dares to read them, he/she can encounter colloquial speech, overfull of jargon, intolerance and hate speech. It can be concluded that most of the young follow domestic pop-folk scene setting them as the models estrade stars, which is important to the media (but also to the readers) because they sell a great number of printing.

Thereby, we can conclude that the subject of interest of the young is focused on the themes in which the level of informative and educational importance is very low.

The fact that domestic media dispose of rather poor educational program is confirmed both by the answers of our examinees and the analysis of particular program schemes of the leading in popularity television stations. The domineering broadcasts are of informative and entertainment character, out of which mostly set apart are the news, musical broadcasts as well as TV series and reality show. What we have found out during interview on the subject with the examinees, is that even though they do follow educational media contents, they do it through channels such as „National Geographic“, „Discovery“ or „Animal Planet“. A very important question arises: why enough attention is not being paid to the young as the target group and whether they are expected to take the initiative themselves and search for the answers to many questions through the Internet, disposing of abundance of inaccurate and non-censured information. The answer could be hiding in theory that as great as possible number of commercial shows is made, attracting a huge audience and making greater profit.

According to the data obtained in the research, in order to enrich their vocabulary and style of expression, the young use most Internet, and then follow television, whereas only 18 percent of the examinees use books. Likewise discouraging data that a great majority of the young would rather choose watching a film than reading a book, by which we have confirmed H5, that most of the examinees enrich their vocabulary using electronic media. In this way, by using the Internet, TV and mobile phones, they are mainly directed to foreign languages (English) so that they almost do not develop their native language: "Thanks to computer and mobile phone, young people are directed to English language, so that in that way they suppress our language. The situation is alarming because a fifteen-year-old in everyday communication uses on average 100 words and, according to the development standards, a pre-school child should have in its vocabulary about 2.000 words". (20)

"There is a huge problem in our society because certain research have shown that even the half of the tested pupils from Serbia do not have an ability for reading, because they do not have almost any possibility for understanding written texts. For such situation I can only blame a poor principle of work in schools which insists on learning by heart and by simple reproduction of the written texts", explains Ivan Ivic. According to his speech, modern technologies have a lot of positive effects such as fast transfer of information and better amusement, but they are intellectually lazy media offering "chewed out" information. "The new media influence on creation of a new type of people thinking a little and having a small

possibility of their own choice. Also, owing to the selected information being served to them in modern media, the young are subject to being manipulated. In the library we can choose a book by ourselves from the period from which we want, and we do not need anyone to recommend it to us“, thinks Ivan Ivic.<sup>[1]</sup>

The negative influence of the media on language culture and culture of behaviour of the young (H0) can be avoided by introducing media literacy into educational system and including it into all levels.

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