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**TRANSFORMATION OF MEDIA DESIGN AND DIGITAL LITERACY IN
UAE EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

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The article analyses the transformation of media design and digital literacy in UAE educational policy in the context of the transition from traditional media to digital learning. The methodology is based on an analytical review of sources on digital educational environments, media literacy, adaptive learning and educational technologies. The results show that UAE educational policy is focused on the development of smart educational ecosystems, AI-based platforms, educational content visualization and digital competencies. The article concludes that international cooperation between Russia and the UAE is promising in the fields of educational technologies, digital media communications and academic mobility.

Keywords: digital literacy; media design; educational policy; UAE; educational technologies; international cooperation.

Introduction. In recent decades, the United Arab Emirates has moved from a resource-based economy towards an innovation-oriented development model. Technological transformation has become one of the key factors shaping this process. Within this framework, national policy increasingly places emphasis on technology-

mediated instruction, content design and competencies required for participation in a digital economy [15].

As of 2024, internet access reached 99 percent of the population, social media usage amounted to 112 percent of the total population, and mobile connectivity surpassed 219 percent [6]. In addition, the country scored 97.5 out of 100 on the ICT Development Index [9]. The UAE technology market continues to expand due to investment in infrastructure and education-oriented platforms [12]. The development of metaverse education reflects increasing interest in immersive formats [14], while the improvement of the Digital Quality of Life Index between 2021 and 2025 provides further evidence of the country's broader advancement [13].

Against this background, media design and digital literacy acquire particular significance in the transformation of academic communication. They support visual content creation, interaction with platform-based environments and the development of competencies required for technology-mediated education.

The aim of the article is to identify the main directions in the transformation of media design and digital literacy in the UAE. The article draws on academic, statistical and policy sources. Academic publications were selected from a corpus of 840 English-language open access publications indexed in Scopus. The search was limited to sources with "UAE" in the title and to the subject areas of arts and humanities, business, management and accounting, and social sciences. The statistical and analytical basis includes materials by Statista and the World Bank. Strategic documents like UAE Vision 2021 were used to analyse the educational agenda of the UAE.

Digital Educational Environment of the UAE

The digital educational environment of the UAE has developed as part of a national strategy aimed at strengthening innovation capacity. UAE Vision 2021 and Centennial 2071 define education, technological modernization and human capital development as important components of long-term national growth [16]. Digital education is understood as a smart learning ecosystem based on adaptive platforms, cloud services and personalized learning pathways.

Universities play a pivotal role in this transformation. Khalifa University and the United Arab Emirates University integrate data science, artificial intelligence and digital pedagogy into educational programs [11]. Virtual and augmented learning are increasingly discussed as tools for training and student engagement in engineering, medical and creative education [14].

One of the significant examples of adaptive digital education in the UAE is the Adaptive Learning Framework Alef, implemented in public schools. The platform uses learning analytics to support students' progress [4]. Existing studies indicate that such systems may contribute to learner autonomy, although their effectiveness also depends on interface quality and teacher support.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transition to large-scale distance learning [1]. However, the experience of remote education also showed that successful digital learning requires more than access to platforms. Studies of electronic learning in UAE universities confirm that academic achievement is associated with structured interaction between students, teachers and learning content [3]. Therefore, digital education should be understood as a communicative and pedagogical system in which visual interfaces and interactive content directly influence the educational experience.

Media Design and Digital Communication in Education

In the digital educational environment, media design functions as a means of organizing visual, interactive and multimodal communication. It includes educational interfaces, content visualization, multimedia materials and digital storytelling. In the UAE, the growing role of educational platforms increases the importance of media design.

Visual communication and user-oriented interface design are crucial for online and blended learning. Educational institutions increasingly use multimedia formats to make complex information more accessible [8]. Visual tools structure information, guide attention and support comprehension rather than merely decorate. Accordingly, media design becomes part of digital pedagogy.

Social media platforms and storytelling also influence educational practice. They allow students to create media products and develop communication skills through digital content production. Research on the Arab digital generation shows that UAE students confidently use digital technologies for communication and information search, but may experience difficulties with advanced academic content creation and critical evaluation of information [5].

University media laboratories and creative studios serve as spaces where educational technologies, design practice and professional communication intersect [7]. In such environments, students can work on digital campaigns, multimedia projects and interface prototypes. Artificial intelligence tools add another layer to this process, changing the way educational and professional content is produced [2]. Therefore, media design in education should be considered as a field shaped by artificial intelligence and digital communication ethics.

Digital and Media Literacy as Professional Competencies

Digital and media literacy in the UAE educational context are becoming professional competencies required for learning and communication. National educational reforms support the integration of digital citizenship into educational programs [17]. Digital literacy includes technical skills, critical thinking, ethical responsibility and the ability to work with complex information flows.

Media literacy is vital in the context of social media and generated materials. Educational initiatives in this area focus on source verification, responsible online behaviour, critical analysis of media texts and recognition of misinformation. This competency area is directly connected with media design, since digital content creation requires an understanding of audience, context, credibility and visual persuasion.

Empirical studies indicate that students often possess strong operational skills, such as accessing and sharing information, but may face difficulties in critical and creative work with sources [5]. This suggests that students need to develop the ability to design ethical and accessible content.

Artificial intelligence further complicates the structure of literacy. Automated verification systems are becoming part of journalism, education and professional communication [2]. As a result, students need to understand how generated content is produced, how it may distort information and how it should be critically evaluated. In this regard, competence may be viewed as technical, critical and ethical readiness [3].

International Cooperation between Russia and the UAE

The development of the UAE learning ecosystem creates potential opportunities for international cooperation between Russia and the UAE in education and academic exchange. Both countries demonstrate interest in technological transformation and

professional training, which provides a basis for joint research and teaching initiatives [10].

Promising areas of cooperation include joint platforms and research programs in media design and digital education. It may be especially relevant where education and creative industries intersect. Joint studios and university-based innovation centres could support student projects in media design and intercultural interaction [18].

Academic mobility and joint programs may also strengthen cooperation between Russian and UAE universities [1]. In addition, the UAE may be considered as a potential platform for testing Russian-language educational products for multilingual audiences in the Middle East and North Africa.

Cooperation between Russia and the UAE in this field should be understood as the development of shared academic practices. Media design and digital literacy may become applied areas where academic interaction contributes to new formats of professional training.

Conclusion. The transformation of media design and digital literacy in UAE educational policy reflects the transition from traditional academic communication to technology-mediated ecosystems. This shift is associated with intelligent platforms, immersive technologies and new approaches to instructional content.

The significance of media design lies in its role in creating clear visual communication and user-centred environments. Digital literacy contributes to this process by developing students' critical evaluation, ethical communication and AI-related skills.

The UAE learning ecosystem creates opportunities for international cooperation between Russia and the UAE in education, media communication and academic exchange. Further research may compare media design and digital literacy programs and assess opportunities for cooperation with UAE higher education institutions in joint courses, academic mobility and project-based learning.

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ МЕДИА-ДИЗАЙНА И ЦИФРОВОЙ ГРАМОТНОСТИ В ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ ОАЭ

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В статье анализируется трансформация медиа-дизайна и цифровой грамотности в образовательной политике ОАЭ в контексте перехода от традиционных медиа к цифровому обучению. Методологическую основу составил аналитический обзор источников по цифровой образовательной среде, медиаграмотности, адаптивному обучению и образовательным технологиям. В результате установлено, что образовательная политика ОАЭ ориентирована на развитие интеллектуальных образовательных экосистем, платформ на основе искусственного интеллекта, визуализации учебного контента и цифровых компетенций. Сделан вывод о перспективности международного сотрудничества России и ОАЭ в области образовательных технологий, цифровых медиакоммуникаций и академической мобильности.

Ключевые слова: цифровая грамотность; медиа-дизайн; образовательная политика; ОАЭ; образовательные технологии; международное сотрудничество.