

EDU WORLD 2022**Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****EDUCATION THROUGH MEDIA CHANNELS IN ARGES
COUNTY**

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Abstract

There is a perception that the educational phenomenon is insufficiently publicized, and when it comes to the attention of the press, the events that journalists write about are mostly negative, affecting the image and trust of citizens in the system. Because of this, a kind of resignation has been installed from the institutions, organizations operating in the field of education in terms of effective collaboration with the media. This perception seriously affects the system because it discourages any efforts to overcome the difficulties, any attempts to find a common denominator, to identify solutions to existing problems. It is time for these barriers to be overcome. After the pandemic and in the context of the changes that have occurred in recent years in the functioning of media institutions and their relationship with the social partners, the educational phenomenon can benefit from better media coverage, and this fact is beginning to take shape in Argeş society.

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1. Introduction

David Buckingham (2019) says that "we live in a world of almost total mediation" (p. 4). In this context, studying the impact of the media it is extremely necessary. Jostein Gripsrud (2017) writes that "the media's impact on society and on each and every one of us is clearly one of the main reasons for our need to know as much as possible about the media and what they communicate" (p. 56).

"The complexities of modern society demand educated, skilful, communicative, and reflective citizen in many different areas if democracy and social progress are to be maintained and developed", convey the authors of the book "The handbook of Media Education Research" (Frau-Meigs et al., 2020, p. 18). For them, certain knowledge and skills required relate to the media.

Research in the field of mass media has shown that the media fulfill a number of socio-cultural functions, the most important being the information function, the interpretation function, the liaison function, the entertainment function and the education-culturalization function. Regarding the last position, Mihai Coman (2007) remarks that "with the emergence and increase of the weight of the media, a large part of the activities of transmitting cultural values and models, forming thinking and behavior (ie education) were taken over of the messages of the press" (p. 21).

"Today's audience has many options that are just a click away, which puts them in a much more comfortable position" (Stoica, 2019, p. 7). Even when they present negative, deviant actions to their public, the mass media would play - in a particular form - the role of education: the case of bullying in a school is exposed in the press. Also in the media is the investigation started against the educator from Pitești, investigated under the accusation of abuse against the children in her care. A journalistic investigation publicly exposes the situations in which alcohol and cigarettes are sold to minors in some stores in Argeș County, although the law forbids this. And the examples can go on. "The press, radio and television present particular antisocial facts to the public, and in general this presentation leads to some public action against what, perhaps, individually, would have been tolerated" (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1972, p. 500).

Analyzing the media system, Melvin DeFleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1999) find that in the educational sphere, the dependence on the mass media is increasing. "It is instructive to imagine what would happen in social and personal life if, for some inexplicable reason, all the forms of mass communication we have today would suddenly disappear" (p. 322).

2. Problem Statement

In general - including in Argeș County - there is a perception that the educational phenomenon is insufficiently publicized, and when it comes to the attention of the press, the events that journalists write about are mostly negative, affecting the image and trust of citizens in the system. Because of this, a kind of resignation has been installed from the institutions, organizations operating in the field of education in terms of effective collaboration with the media. There is a kind of resignation, of blasphemy: "journalists do not want to help us, they do not want to take our truly valuable messages to society." This perception seriously affects the system because it discourages any efforts to overcome the difficulties, any attempts to find a common denominator, to identify solutions to existing problems.

3. Research Questions

- i. What are the media channels in Argeş County?
- ii. In what forms is the media coverage of the educational activity in the county?
- iii. What measures do educational institutions take to have effective communication with journalists?
- iv. What is the perception of journalists about the media coverage of educational activities?

4. Purpose of the Study

We consider that by carrying out this research we will be able to identify mechanisms through which the educational phenomenon will obtain a better, more correct and more responsible media coverage in Argeş journalism, so that - through the mass media - it becomes much more visible in Argeş society.

5. Research Methods

The research methods used were the bibliographic study method, the content analysis, the observation method and the mathematical method. In the first five months of 2022 (January-May) we researched - on the one hand - the ways in which institutions in the cultural-educational area of Argeş County communicated with journalists and the community, and - on the other hand - how the mass media in Argeş County (televisions, radios, online and print publications) covered the educational activity in the county.

6. Findings

During the period in which this research was carried out, the first five months of 2022, the press of Argeş County consisted of 76 media channels:

- i. 50 online publications: www.argesmedia.ro, www.politikia.ro, www.epitesti.ro, www.anchetaonline.ro, www.bitpress.ro, www.pitesti24.ro, www.ziartopdearges.ro, www.jurnaluldearges.ro, www.ziarulargesul.ro, www.criterii.ro, www.institutiilestatului.ro, www.contraatacualargesului.ro, www.argesenii.ro, www.ziarulactualitatea.com, www.stiridearges.ro, www.stiridepitesti.ro, www.ziarulargesenilor.ro, www.argespress.ro, www.judecatorul.ro, www.soaptereci.ro, www.agpress.ro, www.argesplus.ro, www.arges-stiri.ro, www.ziaruldinmuscel.ro, www.eventulmuscelean.ro, www.musceleanul.ro, www.gazetademioveni.ro, www.proarges.ro, www.arges-sport.ro, www.upitmedia.ro, www.ziarulprofit.ro, www.ziaruldearges.ro, www.ziarobiectiv.ro, www.argesulonline.ro, www.infoargesnews.ro, www.observatordearges.ro, www.argesfocus.ro, www.universulargesean.ro, www.interespublic.ro, www.financiarpress.ro, www.momentulzilei.ro, www.argesexpres.ro, www.argesghid.ro, www.viatastatului.ro, www.fotopress-24.ro, www.stiri-muntania.ro, www.argesulvorbeste.ro, www.informatiademuscel.ro, www.argesulcooltural.ro, www.atitudineinarges.ro,

- ii. two dailies: Curierul zilei and Top;
- iii. a biweekly publication: Argeşul;
- iv. six weekly publications: Atitudine în Argeş, Jurnal de Argeş, Ancheta, Gherila urbană, Impuls de Argeş, Can-can argeşean;
- v. seven television stations: Arges TV, Antena 3 Piteşti, Curier TV, Muscel TV Câmpulung, Clar TV, Super TV, Profit 24 TV;
- vi. six magazines: Arges, Cafeneaua literară, Reconstituiri, Informaţia piteştenilor, Curtea de la Argeş, Zile şi Nopti Piteşti;
- vii. four radio stations: Muscel FM, Muntenia FM, Orion FM, Arges Expres FM;

In the Argeş press, the media coverage of the educational phenomenon takes different forms. The most and most penetrating among the public remain the facts in fact diverse, the majority being of a negative nature. The most important reports in the local press that shed unfavorable light on education in Argeş, in the first five months of 2022, were the case of students from Câmpulung - find drunk at school (January 2022), organizational problems registered at the national phase of the Language Olympics English, held in Pitesti (April 2022) and the case of the educator from Pitesti, investigated for allegedly assaulting several children in her care (May 2022).

However, there were also "positive" topics, such as "An institutionalized child, the pride of Argeş". This is Sebi B. from CTF "Our House", who successfully represented Pitesti and Arges in the national competition of applied mathematics "Adolf Haimovici", the national stage (Epitesti.ro, 2022, p. 1).

The organization of the national school sports olympiad, the discipline of oina, had a favorable presentation in the local press in Mioveni. And example can continue...

Presentations of educational activities carried out by a number of other institutions also appeared in the press. The Argeş County Police Inspectorate, through the School Safety Bureau, organised, in 2021, 86 informative-preventive activities with 112 teachers as beneficiaries and 2,250 students who addressed issues such as the prevention of truancy, bullying / cyber bullying, drug use, human trafficking, violent crime, crimes against property, compliance with traffic rules and compliance with the law on criminal liability of minors . Also, "at the level of the School Safety Bureau, the campaign "Adolescent with legal documents" was launched, which aimed to increase the level of information among minors who obtain the first identity document, after reaching the age of 14" (Argeş County Police Inspectorate, 2022, p. 1).

Police activities for educational purposes continued during the period analyzed in this research. Thus, along with various factual events, the Police Inspectorate of Argeş County communicated to the journalists from the local press, on the special group created, a series of events in the field of education: prevention actions in schools to mark the International Day for Non-Violence in School (January 29, 2022), International Internet Safety Day - marked by preventive activities with children (February 10, 2022), the conduct of the "Law is COOL" campaign (March 18, 2022), responsible road behavior - learn from childhood (May 15, 2022), crime prevention week (May 22, 2022) or the International Day of the Missing and Sexually Exploited Child (May 25, 2025).

In communication with journalists, IPJ Argeş also used to promote educational messages addressed to adults. For example - in addition to announcing various factual events - such as road

accidents, there are also aspects of road safety education such as the measures that a driver must take as soon as he has been involved in a road accident (communicated by press release of 21 January 2022) or the precautionary measures that drivers must take when driving in adverse weather conditions (23 January 2022). Equally useful advice is given, through press releases, to dog owners (February 10, 2022) or to those who carry out online trading activities (April 6, 2022).

All these topics in the educational sphere were strongly promoted in the Argeş press, in all media (TV, print media, radio and online publications), in the sense that they were taken over in proportion of over 60%.

The same happened in the case of messages in the field of education, issued by other institutions in the field of "emergency", such as the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations Argeş or the Inspectorate of Gendarmes Argeş. With strong press offices, intense activity and very good channels of communication with the media - these institutions regularly transmit to journalists information of public interest, which - subsequently - are taken over by journalists and taken, almost entirely, to the public. According to our estimates, between 20 and 30% of this information can be included in the educational group.

The educational phenomenon is presented in the Argeş press and as a promotional vehicle for various entities. This is the case of the press release, issued on May 22, 2022 by Social Democratic Party Argeş (PSD Argeş), in which was presented "Caravan of Education", an approach initiated by the Social-Democratic Youth and through which a bus, equipped as a classroom, had arrived in Stefan cel Mare commune and was used as a place of additional training for students, in the perspective of the National Assessment. In this case, we are talking about the position of "promotion vehicle" because in the respective press release - taken over in the same form by the Argeş media - the emphasis was not on the children's learning experience, its necessity and usefulness, but on the on-site visit of some representatives of the PSD Argeş leadership. "Education is a priority for PSD the preparation of National Assessment being a first step to encourage students towards a higher education" (Jurnaluldearges.ro, 2022, p. 1).

Three cultural institutions from Argeş, with intense media activity - especially through local television - are the Piteşti Cultural Center, the Piteşti Philharmonic and the Argeş County Museum. This is due, on the one hand, to the fact that the three have a rich calendar of events and, on the other hand, to the fact that they have employees who specialize in promoting the activity, including filming, editing and broadcasting materials. With professionally made footage available, newsrooms can use them without restriction. Variety appears in their programs, and the cultural-educational component grows rapidly. And all this is achieved with minimal costs by the newsrooms. On this formula, in the programs of the local generalist television Argeş TV, the cultural-educational component reached a proportion of 30-35% of the total programs.

Given that the newsrooms have continuously reduced their staffing due to financial difficulties and, as a result, there are fewer and fewer teams to send to the field, the easy obtaining of such processed or semi-processed videos contributes decisively to the decision to broadcast / publishing, favoring the educational communication flow to the community.

On May 20, when the Piteşti Philharmonic celebrated its 15th anniversary, Cristian Gentea - the mayor of Piteşti - declared: "The Piteşti Philharmonic is one of the most competent ambassadors of

Pitești! It is the standard cultural institution of Argeș County and an example of artistic and cultural management” (Institutulestatului.ro, 2022, p. 1).

In addition to the direct and effective contact it has with the local press, the Pitesti Cultural Center has developed another way of extended contact with the public. All the organized events are filmed in full, then edited and posted on the Youtube channel of the institution, benefiting from a strong media coverage and on various pages on the social networks of the Center, of the collaborators, participants of the events, etc. This way of working was developed by the Pitesti Cultural Center during the coronavirus pandemic, in order to ensure a connection with the public that was not allowed to participate in the events. Due to its effectiveness, it was perpetuated even after the pandemic and its restrictions ceased. In this way, the cultural-educational event can be watched by a larger number of people, and the filming can always be a raw video material that journalists can turn into news, shows or journalistic material.

For example, between January 3 and May 25, 2022, the Pitesti Cultural Center uploaded to its own Youtube channel no less than 160 videos of its own events, having - on average 40-50 minutes each (Figure 1).

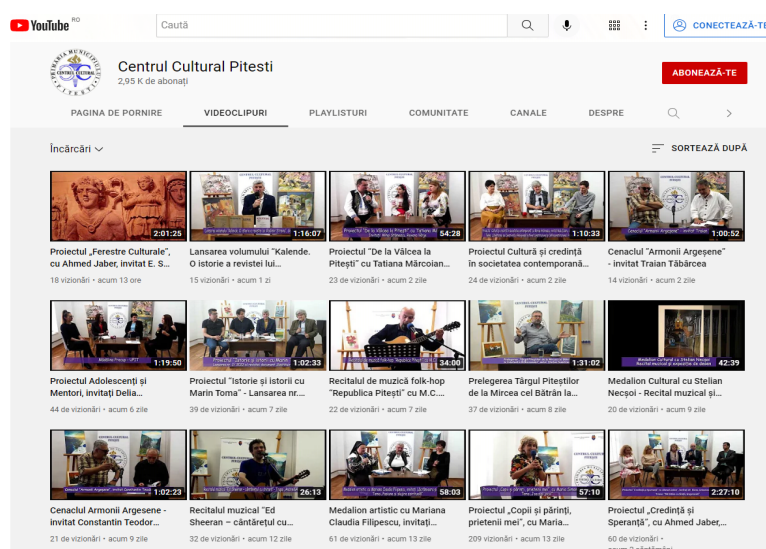


Figure 1. The latest videos uploaded on the Youtube page of the Pitesti Cultural Center

He has a media adaptation to the new realities in the society of Argeș and the University of Pitești. A modern TV studio has been set up here, in which shows and other television programs are made, with the help of which educational activities are covered in the media. Under the title UPIT MEDIA, the University of Pitești officially announced that it plans to create a real trust media, with exposure on TV, online, radio and print. ”UPIT Media - a media trust that deals with topics of interest to the academic environment, but also to civil society and the business environment” (Attitude in Argeș, 2022, p. 1).

In this effervescent context from a communication point of view, some adaptation problems seem to have a key institution in the Argeș education system. It is about the School Inspectorate of Argeș County (ISJ Argeș). Communication with the press is somewhat deficient. This is perhaps due to the fact that the institution does not have the function of spokesperson in its organizational chart. Another cause may be the frequent changes of management, in the last year no less than three people passing through the

position of general school inspector of ISJ Argeş. Even if ISJ Argeş issues press releases and organizes press conferences, the pace of these is quite low in relation to the importance of the activity managed, the existing events and the need of society to receive information from this area.

The local press in Argeş is overwhelmingly general. The cultural publications are the magazines "Arges", "Cafeneaua literară", "Restituiri" - which appear with the financial support of the Piteşti Local Council - the magazine "Curtea de la Argeş" and the online publication ArgeşulCooltural.ro - which are private initiatives. However, there are sections, pages or simply journalistic materials from the cultural-educational sphere in most of the publications from Argeş.

This is also the case with the cultural supplement "Sagittarius" of the publication "Argeşul":

Mihai Golescu, the director of "Argeşul", answered - thus - on May 25, 2022, in an interview, the question of whether such a cultural supplement in a county newspaper is still profitable: "Paradoxically, there are still people who love poetry, culture, the spiritual life. Thanks to them, we are also on the market" (Doman, 2022, p. 1).

Mihai Golescu (2022) promoted, in an editorial, the idea and the need for education, in a world where there is a "drift of models" (p. 1).

About the public's appetite to read articles involving violence to the detriment of educational ones Alex Ivan (2022) says that "hypocrisy is, unfortunately, a way of being for many of us" (p. 1) .

7. Conclusions

As everywhere, in Argeş there is a press that offers false models, but also a press that tries to ensure a balance, an accuracy in presenting the reality. The latter must try to "take advantage" of educational organizations.

The large number of media channels allowed the messages from the educational sphere to reach a greater proportion of the Argeş society. Three key elements make a decisive contribution here:

1. most media entities in Argeş are online publications, so they have unlimited publishing space. If the print media, for example, has to sort articles, as advertising space is limited, online publications do not have the same restriction. Under these conditions, articles in the cultural-educational sphere reach a larger number of the public;

2. media entities in the cultural-educational sphere, but also those in other fields but which have in common the fact that they send messages or organize educational activities have set up and improved their own channels through which journalists are provided with information, text, photos and video - to complex journalistic materials. This makes it much easier for journalists to publish / disseminate messages with educational content by processing these materials with minimal effort;

3. diversity. Educational messages have their own audience, larger or smaller, depending on their content. Given that the information, photos, video images are obtained by newsrooms with minimal effort, their processing and presentation to the public is done in the spirit of an editorial diversity. The more diversity a publication, a television, a radio station in the category of the generalists have, and therefore a cultural-educational content, the greater their chances of attracting a larger audience.

The attitude of the press should not be categorized as - from the start - hostile. The press simply conveys to the public real, impactful events that have taken place in society, regardless of their field and

nature. This is also the reason why the county press reflected the precarious conditions for organizing - in Pitesti - the national Olympics in English. However, the same press also highlighted the good organization, in Mioveni, of the national school sports olympiad, oina discipline.

Therefore, educational organizations need to resume, intensify their media relations efforts. Be able to overcome any barriers and always be confident that at the other end of the communication relationship there are one or more journalists, one or more correct and well-intentioned media channels, who want to have an advantageous collaboration for the benefit of the society they serve.

When giving the harsh verdict "I did not benefit from a favorable media coverage", educational organizations must answer, as honestly as possible, two questions: "How well did I organize that event?" and "What did I do to benefit from a good media coverage of him?" The coverage of the educational phenomenon in the media depends, to a large extent, on the way in which the institutions, the organizations in the field communicate, in their turn, with the journalists. There are entities that have understood this, they have adapted and now they have results, but there are also entities that are passive, only complain and do not act in the direction of solving problems.

It is time for these communication barriers to be overcome. Against the background of the pandemic, against the background of the changes that have appeared in recent years in the functioning of media institutions and their relationship with the social partners, the educational phenomenon can benefit from better media coverage, and this fact is beginning to take shape in Arges society.

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