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Article:	Investigating Media Literacy level of University Students: A Comparative Survey
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Abstract

This survey looks at the level of students' media literacy. Several media experts criticized journalism graduates. Some educators questioned whether journalists were adequately prepared to evaluate the media. This survey looks at the level of students' media literacy. It compares the students of the media department with students of other faculties, such as English, psychology and business administration. The methodology of quantitative research was used in the study. Email and personal surveys are used to conduct the survey. A total of (N = 439) students from five universities were selected. The results of the statistical tests show a significant gap in media literacy between students in the media department and students from other departments. Our research shows that media school students can read and write better than students from other universities.

Keywords Media Literacy, Comparative Study, Quantitative Analysis, Survey University Students.

Introduction

The level of media literacy of university students would help to create better understandings about the quality of education is being provided to the students. This study uses a comparative analysis technique to examine media literacy level of university students. All the students are divided into two groups: 1) students of media departments, and 2) students of other departments, which includes English, Business and Psychology departments. Scholars have focused on media literacy as mass media have significant role in a society. The digital technology has not only made it easy to access media content but also to generate media content and available for public on different online media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube etc, (Yakub et al., 2020). The distance and certain features that are the basic necessity for structured media education and techniques, particularly those handling data evaluation that can help resolve new difficulties emerging in the media situation, especially defining the concept of fake news when it comes to the journalistic content. Such techniques are vital for media users as well as for teachers, despite the fact that there several types and genres of media content are available, there might be a fixed scheme for media-competence methodologies to resolve these issues. Helping media consumers understand or predict these misrepresentations will give them a more coordinated way to manage data evaluation and knowledge, potentially vaccinating consumers against media cognitive misrepresentations. Media education is a multi-faceted and interdisciplinary field which can mean various things to multiple individuals as it is often difficult to achieve a single agreed concept (Koltay, 2011; Yakub et al., 2020). Three aspects can be ascribed to this debate. Right off the bat, 'proficiency' can be interpreted differently. The term 'literacy' is usually applied to one who can peruse and read, so media skills can be viewed as critical understanding and creative skills, or 'practical education,' as often referred to. However, 'proficiency' can also be understood as 'simple schooling,' providing a broader formal knowledge of 'various communication processes' (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009; Yakub et al., 2020). One question about media assessments is whether trustworthy or not. Viciousness (particularly nongraphic or non-bloody savagery) was perceived as ubiquitous for "everybody" in video games (Scharrer et al., 2020) and the same goes for TV programs. Now the question arises how often these media companies themselves help determine appraisals on their own content, which is also a topic to explore. Experts have indicated that these errors occur in the industry due to self-imposed guidelines (Gentile et al., 2007; Scharrer et al., 2020). Opening up a conversation for questioning dominant media rehearsals will elicit a variety of reactions from understudies, including reactions that are almost tolerating long-lost media rehearsals that understudies may overlook and take for granted. Understudies can still call for narrative, storytelling and imaginative rehearsals when asked to break down and examine existing media and build their own media (Lewis & Jhally, 1998; Scharrer et al., 2020). Sekarasih, Walsh, and Scharrer (2015) found that when an early youth gathering was asked why media makers remember viciousness for content, the most common explanation was that "savagery is engaging" showing awareness of business practice of using viciousness as a narrating tool.

Media Literacy: A Review

Media literacy may be defined in several ways, one of the major concepts is to incorporate concepts of information discovery, appraisal, creation and responsible usage of information. Media literacy, over the past few decades has been reshaped and several other changes have been inculcated ranging from a variety of sources i.e., TV to newspapers to online media hence including both print and online media. Various organizations are trying their best to improve the status of media

literacy in US. These organizations include Alliance for a Media Literate America (Rogow, 2004; Thoman & Jolls, 2004), the Center for Media Literacy (Thoman & Jolls, 2004) etc. The Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the National Communication Association (Christ, 2004), the National Association for Media Literacy Education (Baylen, 2015), and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (Thoman & Jolls, 2004), all these organization are working very hard to elevate the status of media literacy and are attempting to give a precise definition along with learning capacities to get along with it. Various scholars work like Renee Hobbs and James Potter's work on the term media literacy and its development along with its application is quite commendable. In 2010, both the researchers wrote papers named "The State of Media Literacy," in which they have argued regarding the definitions covering various topics revolved around media literacy (Hobbs, 2001; Potter, 2010). Where as various other media professionals are of the notion that media production should be made a mandatory requirement (Hammer, 2011; Kellner & Share, 2007; Rogow, 2004; Thoman & Jolls, 2004) and covering basic skills without tangible goals. The most important skill required to be called as a media professional is to have command over various skills like accessing, interpreting, evaluating and communicating through the content that is being disseminated (Hobbs, 1998). Other traits of media literacy professional include expertise, issue abilities, self-skills and social skills. Among them social skills act as a sub-category of media literacy that includes using media as an interactive medium, two-way communication and by recognizing and administrating the consequences of the content. The conceptualization of the skills mentioned above offers a wider perspective that is deeply rooted in the growth of the current generation currently acquiring education on media literacy. With this notion the study aims to provide an inclusive and complete understanding of social media literacy not relying on specific mediums of media available, but also defines the interaction with different groups in contemporary media.

According to a scholar (Livingstone, 2014), the concept of internet-based life and education appears to be twofold. The specialist emphasizes the importance of traditional segments of skills, such as functional literacy and basic media knowledge, when using online networking. Social media also makes room for a broader social network, enabling immediate and backhanded interactions with others embedded in literary form. Internet-based life education involves interpreting, analyzing, and imparting, while at the same time juggling more computerized media and social affordances. Therefore, Livingstone's (Festl, 2020; Livingstone, 2014) concept specifically refers to online life stages anticipating the need for a clear capability arrangement and structured procedure. Instead of this stage or channeling together, perspectives on media education, various specialists selecting specific social skills, such as moral good skills (Festl, 2020; Müller et al., 2014) and relational communication on specialized gadgets (Festl, 2020; Zylka et al., 2015) narrowing focus on these limited and restricted sections of social link In the contemporary world, the status of media literacy has seen to be elevated in terms of intellectual mean not only in practical capacity of media professionals (i.e., reading text, writing, using a computer, etc.). The reason to that text messages aren't always easy to decode. These messages tend to involve the intellectual capacity of one's ability to perceive and tend to change ones way of thinking in the view of truth in certain ways (Fiske, 2002). Media literacy can also be evaluated in various other structures such as political, economic, social, cognitive and technical terms (J Potter, 2016). Certain notable changes in assessment, productivity and consuming the content tends to describe existing media landscape. Content creation and content consumption, collectively known as "presumption" explains the phenomena that what kind of content is produced and consumed in a

society (Islas et al., 2018). In contemporary world, current media environment is an epitome of the individuals developing and consuming the content (García-Ruiz et al., 2014), with the advancement in www technology, content promotion and content dissemination has become a lot easier than the past times (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010), where smart devices have made content access and dissemination far more convenient, hence affecting the society and the flow of information via technology.

Since the existence of empirical evidence on web-based networking media education is surprisingly uncommon, it should be the focus point. Referring to Pfaff-Rüdiger's aptitude-based conceptualization (Festl, 2020; Riesmeyer et al., 2017), this instrument recognises four content-based social competency subdimensions: participatory, nice, insightful and instructive. Objective of a procedure-oriented point of view, the method further follows traditional analysis of social skills and arranges knowledge and capacities as focal parts of online life education, just as socially capable action parallels real execution (Festl, 2020; Wood & Power, 1987). Moreover, motivation was included as another fundamental section of web-based life education, as convincing procedures are supposed to shape clients' experience and overall examples of media usage and influence their step and media awareness agenda through their actions and things they pursue (Martens, 2013).

This social weight triggers the already ongoing and programmed computerized operation, thus extending the risk of disseminating and transmitting inappropriate or aggressive material and more immediately dispersing the audience (Festl, 2020). Of course, this apparent high communication pressure among peers has recently been shown to go inseparably with more frequent mobile phone usage over top cell phone contributions. Then again, this high communication pressure and associated constant online usage can also ensure that youth communicate with their companions and better integrate them through their daily day-to-day life.

Talking about social media competence, social media practices norms can clash with guardians' preferences and rules about the computerized media usage of their children, highlighting a strong relationship between microsystems (family and friends). This perspective has been widely disregarded in various past research; however, it is especially important in the field of media ability. For example, because their social state epitomizes maladaptive communication norms, it could very well be questioned if guardians endorsing media training positively influences online activity of young people. Therefore, all social environments and their specific media-related rules, norms, curriculum, and activities should be addressed when reviewing advanced media activities of youth and media curriculum. Many media research specifically discusses race and shows a strong link between what crowds think about themselves in wider communications and individual and social convictions (Stamps, 2020).

To be precise, generalizations associated with ethnic characters evolve and fortify through media stages (e.g. news media). Most people mask the attributes and properties of their racial gathering, and as a result, this constantly influences how they interpret all the interceding messages representing the gathering of people of similar race and ethnicity (Fujioka, 2005). Individuals frequently tend to have prejudice against bunch of individuals and evaluate interceded communications (e.g. news media) that discuss or undermine discernments that may influence how individuals see themselves and what the meeting usually refers about and is part of (Stamps, 2020).

It can be agreed that the responsiveness towards one's social gathering depends on whether the gathering is cohesive or not. In any case, there is evidence that changeability among bunch of personalities of individuals (e.g., class) may also affect intragroup elements. For example, some Black people may face lower financial status and rehearses of socialization as differentiations that influence perceptions by different individuals from the bunch (Johnson & Kaiser, 2013).

When licensed, media skills encourage watchers to critically assess, analyze, and break down media of various kinds, including news media, and discuss portrayals, stories, and chronicled accounts rather than as disconnected media users (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). As media users, they prefer to watch various types of media, the role of the media is offering a substance, and the cross-examination of that material by audiences, give consumers the chance to take a shot at a more thorough analysis and understanding. The opportunity to observe media practices and portrayals of social gatherings, particularly one's gathering, also reduces the impact of adding unfriendly descriptions. While watching media, crowds may rely on near-home experiences or face-to-face interaction to contest portrayals. Furthermore, consumers who possess these skills frequently become more familiar with media production and benefit-driven models or perceive their content as enjoyable versus instructional or informative material (Fujioka, 2005; Stamps, 2020).

Cognitive Theory of Media Literacy

The current study tends to deploy cognitive media literacy theory to examine media literacy level of university students. The means and methodologies Potter (2004) explored that how individuals tend to be media literate and hence developed media literacy theory from the previous research. Cognitive media literacy theory explains the media literacy process (James Potter, 2004). Initially, Potter empathized on the notion of developing various “knowledge networks” which later will give individuals a deeper insight and a perspective how to go about the content and the impact it will lead in the media market. Theory given by Potter (2004) concluded that if the person is more active in the media market the more media literate the person is and hence the negative effects of media will be minimal. Therefore, Potter’s theory not only provides a complete framework to evaluate media literacy education but also guides the individuals that what good they can get from media literacy. Potter in his theory has identified knowledge structures as planned areas of precision, useful information and understanding. These kind of knowledge structures are different as they require effort and time to collect relevant information and then scrutinize it effectively. Potter (2004) in the model gave five supporting structures: (a) media content, (b) media sectors, (c) media effect, (d) real-world reality, and (e) self. In his model he explained, key principles may differ but the priorities to evaluate knowledge structures are the same. Potter (2004) in his theory has explicitly defined and explained that how these knowledge structures help media persons specially students. Curriculums that are properly designed based on knowledge structures can have a better learning outcome for students.

Potter’s media literacy theory tends to explain that how media literacy is developed, there are two processes for that which helps in the building up of cognitive media skills which include is the rigorous flow of information and a media literate person participating and interacting via media messages (James Potter, 2004). Potter in his theory has emphasized that media literacy skills demand an ever changing and ever developing individual capacity to evaluate media literacy skills and if not polished they may weaken over time as practice is the key to master media literacy skills.

The third point of the theory argues that there should be some dedicated resolve either to gain control over media exposure or to master the skills of one's own imagination and interpretation from the content. The end game of media literacy education is to prepare students to decode media messages specifically for their own good and understanding. Potter's (2004) provides the base for this study to examine the media literacy level of university students divided into two groups (a) students of media departments, (b) students of other departments.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no similarity of media using patterns among the students of media department and non-media departments.

H2: There is significant difference in media engagement among the students of media department students and the students of non-media departments.

H3: There is significant difference in media content creation practices among the students of media department students and the students of non-media departments.

H4: There is significant difference in critically analyzing media content among the students of media department students and the students of non-media departments

Methods

The major goal of this study is to use university survey data to assess students' media literacy. A proven way of gathering data from participants on a certain subject's information, such as media literacy, is survey research. Hobbs & Frost (2003) used self-administered pretest and post-test surveys to research media literacy correlations with reading and writing skills development. Austin, Pinkleton, and Funabiki (2007) have used survey research on the impact of media literacy training on desirability. After a basic television production course, Thayer (2006) used survey research to test media literacy skills growth in high school students. For this study, the sample was taken from the five universities in the Islamabad and Rawalpindi district. Subjects were hired in two ways. The researcher first sought authorization from university management to investigate all departments. The researcher then sent an e-mail to each subject. The initial contact e-mail was a form letter that identified the researcher, explained the study project's goal, and included a link to an online survey. This email was sent to all students in the media department as well as students in other areas such as business, psychology, and English. All subjects received a follow-up invitation e-mail after a week to remind them to complete the survey. Thereafter, an additional email petition was sent. The subjects were also recruited in the classroom to supplement the response rate. The researcher spoke about the study at eight reporting schools, providing an opportunity for each class to take the survey in class if the students had not done so online. In one example, a course instructor gave the students two extra credit points for taking the survey online. Students were told to print out the last page of the survey and take it to collect the points. The email submission sample was randomly picked from the official department list in the university course catalogue. Selected few recruitment divisions via e-mail.

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach's alpha was used to examine the survey instrument for accuracy and precision, as well as reliability and validity. Internal validity was determined by making a direct link between the questions and the tool's response objects to the variables and information systems being studied.

Results

Table 1 frequency of respondents of media department and other departments

Department	N	Percentage
Media	234	53%
Others	205	47%
Total	439	

This study received responses from 439 university students, among them, 234 students from media departments of five universities based in Islamabad & Rawalpindi region.

Table 2 comparison of daily media using patterns of students

Department	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Media	234	2.81	1.26	5.41	0.004
Others	205	1.27	0.87		
Total	439				

University students were asked five questions in the survey about their daily and weekly media using pattern. Responses about daily media usage supported the H1 as the students of media department ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.26$) spend more time in consuming media as compared to the students of other departments ($M=1.27$, $SD=.87$). ANOVA test was done to check the Mean difference and the result was significant ($t = 5.41$, $p = .004$).

Table 3 comparison of weekly media using patterns of students

Department	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Media	234	4.31	1.85	4.21	0.002
Others	205	2.58	1.19		
Total	439				

Weekly media using patterns were also examined and the results showed that the students of media departments ($M=4.31$, $SD=1.85$) consume more media than the students of other departments ($M=2.58$, $SD=1.19$). The results also showed the Mean difference is statistically significant ($t = 4.21$, $p = .002$) and the H1 is supported.

Table 4 comparison of media engagement of students

Department	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Media	234	1.21	0.71	4.19	0.003
Others	205	0.91	0.54		
Total	439				

H2 was about the media literacy level among students of media departments and other departments. They were asked 11 questions in the survey about their engagement with media professionals based on the content they produced. Results of media engagement question showed

the students of media department ($M=1.21$, $SD=.71$) were more engaged as compared to the students of other departments ($M=.91$, $SD=.54$). the Mean difference is statistically significant difference ($t=4.19$, $p=.003$) as the students of media department engaged with content producers by writing emails/letters to them, also writing blogs and class discussions about media content. The results support H2 of this study.

Table 5 comparison of media content production of students

Department	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Media	234	0.87	0.56	13.54	0.002
Others	205	0.21	0.41		
Total	439				

Media content production was examined between the two groups of media students ($M = .87$, $SD = .56$) and other departments ($M = .21$, $SD = .41$), results suggested significant mean difference ($t = 13.54$, $p = .002$). H3 is supported by the results of this study.

Table 6 Comparison of understanding content meaning of students

Department	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Media	234	1.84	0.71	6.24	0.005
Others	205	1.35	0.81		
Total	439				

Students were asked seven questions about the content produced by media professionals to examine their understanding level. Students of media department ($M = 1.84$, $SD = .71$) were aware of the meaning of content as compared to the students of other departments ($M = 1.35$, $SD = .81$). ANOVA was done to examine the Mean differences. Result was statistically significant ($t = 6.24$, $p = .005$). H4 is supported by the results of this study.

Discussion

The level of media literacy among students is investigated in this study. It provides a comparative analysis of students from the media department and other disciplines such as business, psychology, and English language at five universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi ($N=439$). Media department students were considered to be more media literates than other department students. Students were asked about their media-related behaviors such as daily and weekly media usage patterns, content creation, media interaction, and media content comprehension in a quantitative survey. According to the findings of this study, students in the media department consume more media on a daily and weekly basis than students in other departments. A statistical test revealed that the difference between the mean of the two classes is significant.

Media department students became more familiar with the media as they wrote letters to the editor, shared their news stories with reporters, participated regularly in the media coverage class discussion of such subjects, and debated media policies with teachers and peers. Students from other disciplines were less media involved, and the mean gap between the two classes is important when statistical research was performed (see table 4). Students from other departments were also behind in content creation while media department students created more media material, used to

write posts, generated videos for their YouTube channels, and wrote news reports and newspaper articles. The mean difference was statistically significant.

Students have explored their interpretation of media material definitions. Survey questions were tailored for them, and results showed that the level of media content comprehension of media department students was very high relative to other department students. Statistical test indicated the substantial difference between both groups (see table 6), so H2: 'Media department students are more media literate than non-media department students' is also confirmed by the findings of this analysis. Students 'media groups are more trained as they regularly engage in media events than other groups' students.

Conclusion

University students of media departments tend to be more media literate than the students of other departments. Media literacy includes access to media content, media using patterns, critical analysis of media content, and content creation. This study examined media literacy level of university students by comparing the students of media departments and other departments of five universities located in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. With the rise of digital media, rapid flow of information is seen around the world. We all consume media content, not only via digital media but also newspapers, radio, and television. It requires higher level of media literacy. Media students not only study media but also perform practical media activities. They assumed to be more media literate than others. This study shows they use media significantly different from the students of other departments on daily and weekly basis. Media using patterns indicate the access to media content and students' approach toward media literacy. This study also shows the results regarding media engagement, media content creation and production, and critically analyzing media content. There is statistically significant difference found among the students of media departments and other departments. Media students appeared to be more engaged with media, they create media content, and they critically analyze the content of media while on the other hand, students of other departments appeared to be less engaged with media. They consume media in one-way flow of information manner. They don't create media content and consume media content while not critically analyzing it. Such results show that media students are more active and media literate, and students of other departments are, apparently, passive and less media literate.

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