Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)

Issued since 2005

ISSN 1994-4160. E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1). Issued 4 times a year

EDITORIAL BOARD

Alexander Fedorov (Editor in Chief), Prof., Ed.D., Rostov State University of Economics (RF)
Imre Szíjártó (Deputy Editor–in–Chief), PhD., Prof., Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Eger (Hungary)
Ben Bachmair, Ph.D., Prof. i.r. Kassel University (Germany), Honorary Prof. of University of London (UK)
Oleg Baranov, Ph.D., Prof., former Prof. of Tver State University (RF)
Elena Bondarenko, Ph.D., docent of Russian Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) (RF)
David Buckingham, Ph.D., Prof., Loughborough University (United Kingdom)
Emma Camarero, Ph.D., Department of Communication Studies, Universidad Loyola Andalucía (Spain)
Irina Chelysheva, Ph.D., Assoc. Prof., Anton Chekhov Taganrog Institute (RF)
Alexei Demidov, head of ICO "Information for All", Moscow (RFa)
Svetlana Gudilina, Ph.D., Russian Academy of Education, Moscow (RF)
Tessa Jolls, President and CEO, Center for Media Literacy (USA)
Nikolai Khilko, Ph.D., Omsk State University (RF)
Natalia Kirillova, Ph.D., Prof., Ural State University, Yekaterinburg (RF)
Sergei Korkonosenko, Ph.D., Prof., faculty of journalism, St. Petersburg State University (RF)
Alexander Korochensky, Ph.D., Prof., faculty of journalism, Belgorod State University (RF)
W. James Potter, Ph.D., Prof., University of California at Santa Barbara (USA)
Robyn Quin, Ph.D., Prof., Curtin University, Bentley, WA (Australia)
Alexander Sharikov, Ph.D., Prof. The Higher School of Economics, Moscow (RF)
Art Silverblatt, Ph.D., Prof. Emeritus, Webster University (USA)
Vladimir Sobkin, Acad., Ph.D., Prof., The Federal Scientific Center for Psychological and Interdisciplinary Research, Moscow (RF)
Pier Cesare Rivoltella, Ph.D., Full Professor in Education Technology Catholic University of Milan (Italy)
Kathleen Tyner, Assoc. Prof., Department of Radio– Television– Film, The University of Texas at Austin (USA)
Svetlana Urazova, PhD., Prof., Head of the Research Section, Academy of Media Industry (RF)
Elena Vartanova, Ph.D., Prof., Dean, faculty of journalism, Moscow State University (RF)

Journal is indexed by: **Web of Science** (USA), **ERIH PLUS** (Norway),**OAJI** (USA), **MIAR** (Spain), **EBSCO** (USA).

All manuscripts are peer reviewed by experts in the respective field. Authors of the manuscripts bear responsibility for their content, credibility and reliability.

Editorial board doesn't expect the manuscripts' authors to always agree with its opinion.

Founders: UNESCO Moscow Office, Russian Association for Film and Media Education, ICO "Information for All".

Release date 15.03.26
Format 21 × 29,7/4.

Editor: Cherkas Global University

Headset Georgia.

Postal Address: 13906, Polarstone Ct., Houston, TX, USA 77044

Order №84

Website: https://me.cherkasgu.press
E–mail: me.editor@cherkasgu.press

© Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie), 2026

Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)

2026

Is. 1

CONTENTS

Transforming Narrative in Advertising Media and AI-Storytelling for Global Digital Literacy
Aarzoo, R. Lal 4

The Knowledge Architecture of Media Literacy and Disinformation Research: A Bibliometric Mapping (2001–2025)
F. Ali 19

Marketing of Media Education for Youth and Its Influence on Modern Trends
D. Artemenko, Yu. Andreeva 38

Media Literacy in Practice: Assessing and Addressing Competency Gaps among M.A. Mass Communication Students
S. Bhoi, R. Kumar 45

Digitalization of the Preschool Education System in the Russian Federation and the Problems of Media Education Development
A. Demidov, A. Tishchenko, G. Tokareva 60

Reframing Silence: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender, Power, and Media Literacy in Pakistani Television Drama *Working Women* (2023)
I. Khalid Hussain 70

Analysis of Fact-Checking Practices among Pakistani Journalists
S. Irshad, F. Shahzad, M. Hassan Khan 77

Media Educational Potential of Open Practices in the Context of Digitalization of the University Environment
S. Ivanova, N. Dokuchayeva, S. Tyurina 95

Regional Youth Television Studio Within Schoolchildren's Media Literacy Education Trends
T. Kaminskaya, O. Navolotskaya 103

Media Communicative Strategies and Axiological System in Interview Programs (based on the Interview in the Program *Nadezhda Strelets*)
E. Kulikova, V. Barabash 113

Toward A Second-Order Media Literacy: Conceptual Untranslatables and the Historical Semantics of the Digital
A. Markov, O. Shtayn 121

Contemporary Russian Media Education: Advances and Challenges
G. Mikhaleva 131

Fake News Management Policy in Russia: Lessons for Vietnam in Integrating State Governance, Platform Responsibility and Media Literacy
V. Thieu Nguyen 138

Media Education and Critical Thinking Skills: A Bibliometric Mapping of Research Development (1996–2025)
S Rafiq, A. Afzal, U. Niaz 150

YouTube as Media in Constructing Behavioral Change in Children
D. Putri Salsabila, F. Sayogie, M. Farkhan, F. Uzma 166

Costume, Culture, and Contrast: Significance of Black & White in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Color Films
T. Samanta, R. Kumar Rawat 174

Media Literacy as a Tool for Social Change: Examining the Influence of Social Media on Youth Perspective
K. Sharma, Z. Tasmin Rahman 186

Developing Media Competence of Future Teachers in a University Pedagogy Course
M. Tselykh 195

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 4-18

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.4
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Transforming Narrative in Advertising Media and AI-Storytelling for Global Digital Literacy

Aarzoo [a, *], Ruhi Lal [a]

[a] Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, India

Abstract

In a world where narratives influence perceptions and technology dictates learning, advertising media is advancing beyond mere persuasion into a revolutionary instrument for education. The use of AI-driven storytelling in media strategy is transforming the delivery, personalization, and retention of knowledge, providing a novel approach to enhance global digital literacy. This study explores how commercial media narratives and artificial intelligence can advance inclusive education and support SDG 4 by enhancing digital literacy, leveraging AI-driven storytelling, integrating effective pedagogical techniques, and promoting equitable access to digital competencies. The study examines the role of media narratives in literacy development, the importance of AI storytelling in reshaping educational practices, and the most effective methods for integrating both tools to achieve inclusive learning results. The research employs a case study technique to analyze worldwide campaigns and AI-driven media initiatives that integrate narrative with digital education. Research indicates that media narratives enhanced by AI personalisation significantly enhance engagement, democratise access, and promote inclusivity in digital skills. The research suggests that the integration of commercial media and AI storytelling provides a scalable framework to address digital disparities, promote significant learning experiences, and facilitate lifelong skill acquisition. It articulates a progressive vision in which media transforms from a marketing tool into a catalyst for egalitarian global education.

Keywords: digital literacy, AI storytelling, advertising media narratives, inclusive education, sustainable development goal 4 (SDG-4).

1. Introduction

In the digital age, literacy transcends mere reading and writing, incorporating the capacity to explore, assess, and generate information via digital platforms; hence, it is an essential capability for education, employment, and civic engagement (Katyal et al., 2025). UNESCO acknowledges digital literacy as essential to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4) concerning inclusive and equitable education; nonetheless, its distribution globally is uneven, with marginalized groups encountering considerable obstacles to access and skill acquisition (Balcıoğlu, 2025). Conventional teaching methods, despite their growing incorporation of digital tools, frequently lack diversity, engagement, and scalability (Biswas, 2025). Such an issue necessitates the development of creative frameworks that integrate technical and communication tactics to bridge the literacy gap (Shamim et al., 2025).

Advertising media, characterized by its persuasive narratives and extensive societal influence, presents an underexploited opportunity for promoting education, whereas artificial intelligence

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: aarzoosharma227@gmail.com (Aarzoo)

(AI)-enhanced storytelling delivers personalized, adaptable, and interactive experiences that can revolutionize literacy education (Oztabak, 2025). However, there is a paucity of research regarding how the integration of these two domains might systematically enhance global digital literacy (Raoulji, 2025). Recent studies underscore the increasing significance of digital media in education and the potential of AI for customizing learning, illustrated by instances of AI tutors, adaptive platforms, and worldwide media initiatives demonstrating isolated success (Nimo et al., 2024). Nonetheless, these initiatives remain disjointed, and a comprehensive framework that integrates commercial tales with AI storytelling is still absent (Pugachev et al., 2023).

This study investigates the function of media narratives in enhancing digital literacy, analyzes the transformative impact of AI-driven storytelling, and identifies solutions that integrate both for inclusive education, and assesses their success in promoting equitable access to digital skills (Feher, 2025). The primary study topic directing this investigation is how the amalgamation of advertising media narratives and AI-driven storytelling might revolutionize global digital literacy practices in alignment with SDG-4 (Pavithra, Priya, 2025). The study asserts that the integration of advertising narratives with AI personalization enhances engagement, inclusivity, and educational outcomes, operating within a causal framework where narrative strategies act as independent variables, AI personalization as a moderating variable, inclusivity and access as mediating factors, and the improvement of digital literacy as the dependent variable (Beguš, 2024). The research employs a case study methodology to analyse global campaigns and AI-driven educational initiatives, seeking to pinpoint scalable and pragmatic applications (Aivas et al., 2025). Key definitions relevant to this study include digital literacy, defined as the ability to effectively use digital tools for information sharing and communication; AI storytelling, which refers to the use of intelligent systems to generate and tailor narratives; and advertising media narratives, which are persuasive communication strategies repurposed for educational objectives (Ferracani et al., 2024).

The delimitations emphasize worldwide case studies regarding media and AI interventions for digital literacy, while omitting non-digital and non-media educational approaches (Embabi, 2025). The research posits that advertising media and AI storytelling can be used ethically and responsibly in educational settings, while access to digital platforms is expected to continue expanding globally (Nayab, Bilal, 2025). The importance resides in transforming advertising from a commercial instrument into an educational catalyst and establishing AI storytelling as a promoter of equity and involvement in education (de Lima et al., 2025). Although it is established that advertising affects behaviour and that AI improves personalization, the synergistic potential of their integration to foster digital literacy inclusively and extensively remains unexamined (Aarzoo, Lal, 2025). This study presents an innovative, integrated paradigm that reconceptualizes media as a catalyst for fair skill development and lifelong learning, linking communication technologies with the global objective of SDG-4 (Embabi, 2025).

Research Objectives

– To examine advertising media narratives in enhancing global digital literacy;

– To explore the role of AI-driven storytelling in shaping digital learning experiences;

– To identify effective strategies that integrate advertising media and AI storytelling forinclusive education;

– To evaluate the effectiveness of advertising-driven narratives on equitable access to digital skills.

Research Question

– How can advertising media narratives contribute to strengthening global digital literacy?

– What role does AI-driven storytelling play in transforming digital literacy practices?

– Which strategies are most effective in combining advertising media and AI storytelling for educational equity?

– How do advertising media narratives influence access, inclusivity, and outcomes in digital skills education?

2. Materials and methods

This research employs a mixed-method, multi-case design to investigate the impact of AI-driven storytelling in advertising on authenticity, media literacy, and regulatory accountability. The methodology combines qualitative insights and quantitative indicators to establish a causal relationship among AI personalization, narrative perception, and digital skill development. This research adopts a constructivist and pragmatic paradigm, recognizing that reality is co-constructed

through interactions among technology, institutions, and audiences. The analysis utilizes three significant cases – Cadbury's AI-enabled Diwali campaign, the Indian newsroom AI scandal, and the advertising industry's regulatory challenges – to facilitate a comparative examination of innovation, ethics, and reform. The research utilizes triangulation involving social analytics, organizational disclosures, policy statements, and semi-structured interviews with media professionals. Quantitative data assess engagement metrics, trust indices, and adoption rates, whereas qualitative data elucidate interpretive meanings and ethical tensions. The integration of exploratory and explanatory methods enables the research to transcend superficial results, uncovering the underlying factors that influence responsible AI communication. The methodological framework positions AI storytelling as a cultural and educational mechanism that enhances digital literacy, transparency, and trust within media ecosystems, rather than merely a technological shift.

Phased Investigation

The investigation advances through four interrelated phases: foundation, pre-field, fieldwork, and reporting. The foundation stage establishes objectives, formulates research questions, and delineates theoretical frameworks. The pre-field phase involves securing access to organizations, developing interview protocols, and collecting preliminary secondary data. The fieldwork phase encompasses the execution of semi-structured interviews, the observation of media practices, and the collection of engagement metrics. The reporting phase synthesizes quantitative findings with qualitative insights via triangulation, thereby validating causal relationships among AI storytelling, regulatory action, and audience interpretation. This structured approach ensures methodological rigor, logical progression, and practical insights that connect theoretical frameworks to real-world applications.

Multi-Case Analysis

This multi-case analysis examines Cadbury, the Indian newsroom scandal, and the regulatory responses of the advertising industry to identify both convergent and divergent patterns. Each case is analyzed using common analytical frameworks: authenticity, accountability, and audience capability. The cross-case synthesis reveals that AI-driven storytelling has the potential to democratize narrative creation while simultaneously destabilizing perceptions of truth in the absence of regulation. The analysis develops a framework that connects creative potential to ethical governance through a comparison of corporate innovation, journalistic failure, and institutional correction. This multi-case approach enhances understanding of how various sectors learn from AI disruptions and adapt towards responsible, literacy-focused communication ecosystems.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative analysis emphasizes engagement metrics, adoption rates, audience sentiment scores, and compliance indicators derived from campaign dashboards, social media analytics, and regulatory data. Statistical techniques, including correlation and regression analysis, are utilized to investigate the relationships between AI personalization (independent variable), perceived authenticity (mediator), and digital literacy outcomes (dependent variable). Data visualization tools illustrate behavioural trends and levels of trust across various case contexts. Quantitative findings enhance qualitative insights, allowing the study to measure both the extent and effect of AI storytelling interventions. The findings offer empirical support for theoretical claims regarding ethical innovation and media transparency.

Case Story Development

Each case story is constructed through thematic reconstruction, integrating factual chronology with analytical interpretation. Data from corporate reports, media coverage, and interviews are integrated into narrative structures that highlight significant instances of innovation, disruption, and correction. The storytelling format reflects the study's focus on AI-generated and narrative-driven communication, facilitating methodological reflexivity. The case studies illustrate the interplay of individual choices, institutional influences, and audience responses within dynamic media environments. This method converts intricate datasets into clear, informative narratives that reflect the study's dual objectives: elucidating the social implications of AI storytelling and exemplifying transparent, literacy-promoting academic storytelling.

Collecting Data

Data collection utilizes methodological triangulation to improve validity and contextual depth. Primary data are collected via semi-structured interviews with campaign designers, journalists, regulators, and educators, providing firsthand insights into AI integration, ethical

decision-making, and policy implementation. Secondary data encompass media reports, official statements, audience comments, engagement analytics, and institutional records, offering multi-dimensional evidence. Digital ethnography analyses audience responses on social media platforms to elucidate patterns of perception and the dynamics of misinformation. Quantitative data, including impressions, click-through rates, and sentiment analyses, are obtained through social listening and analytics tools. Qualitative coding reveals recurring themes such as authenticity, accountability, and trust. All datasets are time-stamped, cross-referenced, and verified for reliability. Ethical protocols are upheld through informed consent, data anonymization, and transparent interpretation. The study integrates experiential insights with measurable indicators to encompass both cognitive and affective dimensions of AI storytelling's impact. This hybrid approach guarantees alignment between empirical observations and theoretical propositions, ensuring that findings are replicable, verifiable, and pertinent to future policy and educational frameworks.

Method for Selecting the Case

Cases were chosen using purposive sampling criteria that emphasized relevance, diversity, and representativeness. Each case exemplifies a distinct yet interconnected dimension of AI storytelling: Cadbury's campaign demonstrates creative democratization; the newsroom scandal illustrates ethical collapse, and the industry response showcases institutional correction. They collectively illustrate the lifecycle of AI communication, encompassing both innovation and regulation. Criteria for selection encompassed media visibility, data accessibility, stakeholder diversity, and the potential to yield cross-sector insights. This strategic selection facilitates theoretical replication, enabling comparisons that enhance comprehension of AI's social and communicative implications within creative, journalistic, and regulatory frameworks.

Research Strategy

The research strategy utilizes a mixed-method design supported by triangulation, incorporating case study analysis, content analysis, and statistical modelling. This approach adheres to Yin's framework for explanatory case studies and integrates grounded theory techniques for the identification of emergent themes. Quantitative components evaluate behavioural and performance indicators, whereas qualitative insights uncover interpretive and ethical dimensions. The study employs abductive and inductive reasoning to iteratively refine hypotheses as patterns emerge from the cases analyzed. Methodological consistency is achieved via standardized coding protocols, inter-rater reliability assessments, and multi-source verification. The strategy prioritizes contextual depth rather than numerical generalization, recognizing that AI storytelling functions within socio-cultural and institutional frameworks. Every phase, encompassing data collection and analysis, is directed by ethical transparency, reflexivity, and theoretical alignment. This strategy consolidates fragmented case data into a cohesive explanatory model, elucidating the transition of AI-driven storytelling from disruptive innovation to a structured, educational, and ethically grounded communication practice.

Case 1. Cadbury Diwali Campaign: AI-Enabled Celebrity Storytelling and the Limits of Authenticity

Cadbury launched an AI-assisted campaign in 2021, enabling local shopkeepers to create brief, personalized video advertisements featuring a virtual Shah Rukh Khan. This initiative transformed high-budget celebrity storytelling into an accessible tool for local commerce, illustrating how advertising narratives, when combined with AI personalization, can localize culturally significant stories, enhance vendor visibility, and yield quantifiable engagement increases across social media platforms. The campaign simultaneously revealed significant conflicts in digital literacy: numerous viewers struggled to differentiate between synthetic celebrity representations and genuine endorsements, prompting questions over permission, source reliability, and the necessity for audience skills to analyze persuasive media. This case is suitable for mixed triangulation – social metrics (views, shares, vendor uptake), corporate disclosures, platform analytics, and targeted interviews with campaign leaders and shopkeepers – enabling researchers to delineate a causal chain where advertising narrative (independent) × AI personalization (moderator) → local engagement and perceived authenticity (mediators) → digital capability and participation (dependent). The practical lessons are twofold: technologically, AI storytelling reduces production expenses and expands narrative accessibility to underprivileged networks; ethically and pedagogically, it heightens the imperative for transparency and media literacy. Actionable responses arising from the case encompass obligatory provenance labelling for synthetic media, contextual educational prompts integrated with advertisements, co-creation

workflows that ensure informed consent from represented individuals, and community-centric media literacy modules customized to local vernaculars. In summary, Cadbury's campaign exemplifies narrative democratization via AI, yet it also highlights that innovation, absent concurrent investments in transparency, regulation, and audience competency, may exacerbate misinformation rather than enhance literacy; thus, the pursuit of inclusive digital skills necessitates integrated design – creative, accountable, and educational-transforming advertising into a scalable mechanism for equitable learning.

Case 2. Indian Newsroom AI Story Scandal: When Algorithmic Drafting Becomes False Reporting

In mid-2025, a notable Indian newsroom released an AI-generated feature based on a fabricated video and fictitious expert quotes, highlighting the perils of unregulated generative processes and rapid publishing. This incident served as a cautionary tale, illustrating how algorithmic drafting expedited content creation while neglecting critical editorial safeguards, resulting in misleading narrative details and seemingly credible quotes that deceived both journalists and the public, leading to reputational harm, public corrections, and urgent demands for editorial AI protocols. The case analyzes fundamental failure modes: automation bias favouring machine output over critical verification, breakdowns in editorial gatekeeping, and inadequate provenance practices that provide audiences with unreliable indicators of origin or intent. Each of these issues directly impacts digital literacy, as less digitally literate individuals are particularly susceptible to sophisticated synthetic narratives. This case provides substantial, codifiable data from a methodological perspective: publication timelines, the evolution of the AI draft, editorial approvals, timestamps of amendments and retractions, and subsequent policy documents, all of which facilitate thematic coding related to trust erosion, remediation strategies, and governance reform. The practical lessons are clear and actionable: Implement mandatory human-in-the-loop verification for all AI-generated content, adopt provenance labelling and visible provenance metadata, enhance newsroom training in AI literacy, and incorporate multi-stage fact-checking that prioritizes primary-source corroboration over machine-generated information. This incident exemplifies a detrimental causal pathway for research objectives related to the function of AI storytelling and the effect of media narratives on inclusion, where unregulated synthetic storytelling diminishes public trust and compromises equitable access to reliable information. To make sure that AI improves rather than hurts journalistic integrity, the corrective pathway requires the use of integrated editorial-AI governance, capacity-building, and transparency measures. This will protect information ecosystems and support the overall goal of universal digital literacy.

Case 3. Industry Response: Advertising Standards, Award Backlashes, and the Integrity Reckoning

In recent years, the Indian advertising ecosystem reached a pivotal moment as industry award bodies and regulators commenced public scrutiny of AI-generated submissions, fabricated efficacy claims, and the ethical boundaries of synthetic storytelling. This scrutiny prompted a series of withdrawals, stricter adjudication standards, and urgent demands for mandatory disclosure and provenance labelling; this juncture serves as an institutional inflexion point where research findings regarding media influence and AI risks were transformed into tangible governance mechanisms. The narrative of reckoning is significant as it illustrates how regulations, rather than solely technology, transform practices: codes of conduct and transparency labels have arisen as effective mechanisms for ensuring agency accountability, while novel standards for assessing campaign impact have shifted evaluation from superficial metrics to verifiable outcomes that can be audited and compared. Regulatory announcements, trade-press investigations, award-body statements, and agency responses constitute a substantial corpus for analysis, while interviews with agency leaders and standards officials corroborate a causal chain whereby policy pressure induces behavioral change, subsequently influencing public trust and the efficacy of narrative media as an educational tool. This case provides a constructive framework for objectives related to digital literacy and SDG-4: if disclosure and provenance become standard practices, AI storytelling can be utilized for educational purposes instead of manipulation, enabling agencies to collaborate with educators in creating campaigns that impart verification skills, exemplify ethical narration, and assess genuine learning outcomes. Essential actionable insights are evident: mandate transparent provenance metadata for synthetic assets, standardize impact metrics associated with skill acquisition, implement independent audits of asserted effectiveness, and promote co-creation with communities and

educators. Only through accountable practices can the narrative power of advertising be effectively utilized to foster inclusive digital literacy instead of exacerbating misinformation.

Table 1. Phases of Case Analysis

№	Phases	Description	Cadbury Diwali Campaign	Indian Newsroom AI Scandal	Industry Response
1.	Foundation	Articulate the parameters, aims, and research inquiries for the investigation. Determine the principal stakeholders and the theoretical framework underpinning the investigation.	The research examines the effect of AI-personalized advertising narratives on improving local digital literacy and fostering inclusive communication. Research inquiries concentrate on the manner in which AI-generated narratives enhance engagement and the ethical boundaries of artificial celebrity endorsements.	The research investigates the shortcomings of editorial control in overseeing AI-generated narratives, emphasizing its effects on public trust, media ethics, and digital literacy. Research inquiries examine how automated bias and inadequate verification procedures undermine credibility and inclusivity.	The research examines the effect of institutional regulation and corporate accountability mechanisms on the ethical framework of AI storytelling in advertising. Research inquiries highlight the influence of disclosure, provenance, and governance on narrative trust and digital learning results.
2.	Pre-field	Identify appropriate cases, secure clearances, and develop interview guidelines for qualitative and secondary data acquisition.	Designate Cadbury's 2021 campaign as the primary case study. Identify brand executives, artificial intelligence developers, and participating retailers for interviews. Gather secondary data from social media analytics, brand reports, and campaign metrics.	Designate newsroom editors, AI system developers, and media ethicists as primary informants. Develop interview guides addressing automated bias, editorial shortcomings, and repair policies. Gather secondary data from news releases, retraction notices, and internal evaluations.	Identify regulatory bodies, advertising committees, and agency executives for interviews. Formulate interview instructions that emphasize compliance, policy execution, and evaluation of effects. Collect secondary data from regulatory reports, statements from awarding bodies, and industry publications.
3.	Field	Execute interviews, collect primary and secondary data, and observe campaign or newsroom activities.	Execute comprehensive interviews with Cadbury's marketing personnel and local vendors. Gather social analytics, including views, shares, and vendor engagement. Examine the impact of AI-generated narratives on the	Execute semi-structured interviews with newsroom executives and editors. Examine content creation processes and the utilization of AI tools. Examine the interplay between editing processes and human supervision in relation to AI systems. Gather data on retractions and policy changes.	Conduct interviews with agency executives, compliance officials, and award adjudicators. Gather information on regulatory enforcement, campaign retractions, and audit results. Examine the evolution of industry standards following the investigation.

№	Phases	Description	Cadbury Diwali Campaign	Indian Newsroom AI Scandal	Industry Response
			sense of authenticity and digital engagement.		
4.	Reporting	Examine, correlate, and integrate facts to generate practical insights and recommendations.	The findings indicate that the DMAIC framework in digital storytelling improved engagement and highlighted deficiencies in digital literacy. The research advocates for transparent AI provenance labels, collaboratively generated content, and integrated educational prompts for ethical narrative construction.	Findings indicate that unverified AI information erodes journalistic credibility and literacy. Recommendations encompass human-in-the-loop procedures, provenance metadata, newsroom AI literacy training, and multi-stage fact-checking.	Research demonstrates that regulatory oversight prompted policy innovation and improved ethical standards in advertising. Recommendations include making provenance labeling consistent, conducting independent audits, and linking AI storytelling to the educational goals of SDG-4.

Source: author's compilation (Stake, 2013)

The four-phase framework delineates a systematic research methodology encompassing three cases: Cadbury's AI-driven campaign, the Indian newsroom AI controversy, and the regulatory response in the advertising sector. The foundation phase established objectives that connect AI storytelling with digital literacy and ethics. The pre-field phase involved identifying stakeholders, preparing interview guidelines, and gathering secondary data. The field phase conducted interviews, observations, and data collection on engagement, verification, and compliance. The reporting phase consolidated findings, highlighting transparency, provenance labeling, and the integration of ethical AI. The framework collectively creates a consistent approach for studying the influence of AI-driven narratives on trust, literacy, and responsible digital communication.

Table 2. Challenges and Strategies in Case Analysis

№	Case Story	Challenges Faced	Strategies Implemented
1.	Cadbury Diwali Campaign	The issue of audience ambiguity over phoney versus authentic endorsements remains a concern. There are consent and intellectual property issues related to the use of celebrity likenesses. Disinformation could potentially spread among groups with limited digital literacy. Absence of provenance and labeling on synthetic assets	The implementation of mandatory provenance labeling and transparent information on synthetic advertisements is necessary. Co-creation processes ensure informed permission from retailers and intellectual property holders. Integrating contextual educational prompts with advertisements to instruct on verification cues. Modules for media literacy focused on community engagement, presented in local languages

№	Case Story	Challenges Faced	Strategies Implemented
2.	Indian Newsroom AI Scandal	Automation bias and an excessive reliance on generating outputs have been identified as significant challenges. The scandal highlighted the failure of editorial gatekeeping and the malfunctioning of verification processes. This has resulted in the erosion of trust and damage to the reputation of the company. Inadequate provenance and audit trails	The verification process is mandatory and involves human oversight and multi-tiered fact-checking. Provenance metadata for editorial AI outputs and discernible origin tags. Newsrooms should receive mandatory AI literacy training and revise their editorial standard operating procedures. Clear rectification methods and public accountability reports
3.	Industry Response	Manufactured efficacy statements and manipulation of effect measurements. Authorities and platforms have varying standards for disclosure. Delayed regulatory adjustment to synthetic creative methodologies	Standardize the disclosure and provenance metadata for prize submissions and advertisements. The system should conduct autonomous evaluations of asserted efficacy and standardize impact measures associated with educational outcomes. Codes of conduct within the industry, compliance incentives, and penalties for non-disclosure
4.	Cross-Case Challenges	Technical innovation in fragmentation surpasses governance and teaching. The scalability of literacy initiatives across diverse situations is a significant challenge. Conflict between business motivations and public education objectives	Multi-stakeholder governance encompasses platforms, industry, educators, and regulators. Scalability strategy: integrate advertising outreach with localized literacy programs and AI detection technologies. Encourage ethical practices through financial support, recognition for educational contributions, and regulations consistent with SDG-4.

Source: author's compilation (Stake, 2013)

The cross-case research identifies persistent issues in AI-driven media narratives, such as authenticity confusion, automation bias, inconsistent governance, and gaps in digital literacy. Strategies prioritize transparency via provenance labeling, human monitoring, and multi-tiered verification to reestablish credibility. Co-creation methodologies, artificial intelligence literacy training, and uniform ethical frameworks synchronize business innovation with educational objectives. Sector-wide initiatives – such as independent evaluations, transparency requirements, and compliance aligned with SDG-4 – promote accountability. The stories illustrate that the sustainable incorporation of AI storytelling in media necessitates a balance among creativity, governance, and education to foster trust and promote global digital literacy.

Table 3. Framework of Case Study Consideration

№	Consideration	Description	Cadbury Diwali Campaign	Indian Newsroom AI Scandal	Industry Response
1.	Philosophical	Examines the ontological and epistemological assumptions that shape the interpretation of reality and knowledge in AI	The study employs a constructivist perspective to scrutinize how AI-personalized celebrity narratives alter	The study operates within an interpretivist framework, examining how algorithmic content generation compromises	The study is rooted in institutionalism, highlights how governance, policy norms, and collective accountability shape ethical

№	Consideration	Description	Cadbury Diwali Campaign	Indian Newsroom AI Scandal	Industry Response
		storytelling and media narratives.	local perceptions of authenticity, trust, and brand identification within the context of cultural storytelling.	journalistic truth, trustworthiness, and epistemic authority in digital media.	realities and affect practitioners' implementation of transparent AI storytelling.
2.	Research Logic	The term refers to the cognitive process, either deductive or inductive, that guides the methodological framework and ensures consistency between facts, theory, and analysis.	Employs abductive reasoning via triangulated metrics (engagement rates, vendor data, and interviews) to deduce causal relationships among AI personalization, authenticity, and digital literacy results.	Utilizes process-tracing and thematic analysis to inductively discern failures in editorial decision-making, automation bias, and credibility erosion across the AI content life cycle.	Utilize comparative and cross-case analysis to evaluate policy instruments and institutional responses; integrate data from regulatory statements and agency practices to elucidate behavioral modification.
3.	Ethical	Examines transparency, accountability, informed consent, and audience safeguarding in the use and analysis of AI storytelling instruments.	Advocates for transparent provenance labeling, ethical co-creation, and informed consent for AI-generated representations, while maintaining cultural sensitivity in community interactions.	Emphasizes accountability and ethical provenance, promoting human-in-the-loop verification, explicit disclosure of AI-generated information, and corrective openness to restore public trust.	Focuses on fair regulations and clear transparency, connecting AI stories with equal education and Sustainable Development Goal 4 to ensure measurable social benefits instead of just engagement numbers.

Source: author's compilation (Stake, 2013)

The paradigm incorporates philosophical, logical, and ethical aspects to evaluate AI storytelling in advertising and journalism. Philosophically, it encompasses constructivism, interpretivism, and institutionalism to examine authenticity, trustworthiness, and governance. Research methodologies encompass abductive reasoning, thematic analysis, and cross-case comparison, assuring coherence between evidence and theory. Ethically, all examples emphasize openness, responsibility, and informed consent, highlighting the importance of provenance labeling, human oversight, and equitable rules. Collectively, these factors establish a strong methodological framework that connects creative innovation with ethical accountability, enhancing AI storytelling as both a communicative and pedagogical tool that fosters global digital literacy.

3. Discussion

Digital literacy has become a vital competency in the twenty-first century, influencing individual access to and assessment of information, as well as societal involvement in education, employment, governance, and civic engagement, thereby serving as a crucial facilitator of Sustainable Development Goal 4 regarding inclusive and equitable education (Aarzoo, Lal, 2025a).

The broader context highlights its transformative function in addressing inequalities, empowering communities, and facilitating participation in the knowledge economy; however, the concept has progressed from fundamental technological proficiency to a multifaceted skillset encompassing critical thinking, media literacy, online collaboration, and creative communication, thereby imposing greater demands on educational systems and policy frameworks (Katyal et al., 2024). This domain merits investigation because of the ongoing global inequities in digital literacy, which, despite swift technical progress, disproportionately marginalize vulnerable groups such as rural populations, low-income learners, and women from the advantages of digital access (Aarzoo, Lal, 2025b). With the convergence of education and communication technology, the problem extends beyond mere connectivity to include the cultivation of competencies necessary for navigating the intricate digital ecosystem (Lal et al., 2024).

Advertising media and AI-driven storytelling emerge as potent instruments that, when utilized well, may transform the persuasive, narrative, and adaptive aspects of media for inclusive education rather than for profit (Aarzoo, Lal, 2025a). However, considerable obstacles persist in actualizing these potentials, as research underscores problems of disparate infrastructure, absence of culturally pertinent content, excessive dependence on Western-centric digital literacy frameworks, ethical dilemmas regarding AI bias, and the restricted scalability of innovative pilot initiatives (Mane et al., 2025). The principal research difficulties in this domain can be broadly classified into five categories: First, the conceptual ambiguity surrounding digital literacy arises from varying definitions across contexts and disciplines, complicating the standardization of frameworks (Katyal et al., 2025). Second, the technological divide between high-income and low-income regions results in inequitable access (Aarzoo, Lal, 2024). Third, the pedagogical challenge lies in integrating digital literacy into formal and informal education without merely reducing it to technical training (Embabi, 2025). Fourth, the ethical challenge involves ensuring that AI and media tools do not perpetuate existing inequalities (de Lima et al., 2025). Lastly, the methodological challenge pertains to assessing the long-term effects of media and AI interventions on digital literacy (Nayab, Bilal, 2025). Scholars have examined the incorporation of digital media in education, emphasizing the significance of technology-enhanced learning platforms, MOOCs, and blended learning methodologies in fostering literacy skills (Ferracani et al., 2024).

Research on AI applications has demonstrated potential in personalizing learning experiences, tailoring content to individual learner requirements, and facilitating data-driven insights into student progress (Aivas et al., 2025). Case studies of advertising media campaigns have illustrated the impact of storytelling techniques on attitudes and behaviors, especially in health awareness, sustainability communication, and social change initiatives, indicating their potential in education if narratives are redirected towards skill development (Beguš, 2024; Katyal, Lal, 2023). Research on AI-driven storytelling systems in educational technology demonstrates that adaptable narratives enhance engagement, retention, and learner motivation, indicating that algorithmically generated stories can be customized to cultural contexts and student preferences (Pavithra, Priya, 2025). UNESCO and OECD resources emphasize global policy initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy while acknowledging the ongoing difficulty of closing the digital gap (Feher, 2025).

Studies of media-driven educational interventions highlight that advertising campaigns can attract widespread attention; yet, their efficacy frequently relies on contextual adaptability, cultural relevance, and alignment with comprehensive teaching initiatives. Importantly, although these studies illustrate the promise of media and AI tools, they frequently fail to integrate their benefits into a cohesive framework (Pugachev et al., 2023). AI storytelling research demonstrates proficiency in personalizing; however, it falls short in achieving widespread reach and cultural integration akin to advertising media (Raoulji, 2025). In contrast, advertising media excels in scalability and persuasion but frequently struggles to maintain engagement or facilitate profound learning results (Oztabak, 2025). The findings suggest that isolated interventions, whether media-based or AI-driven, cannot fully address the complexities of global disparities in digital literacy (Aarzoo, Lal, 2024). The advantages of current methodologies encompass enhanced learner engagement, creative applications of media narratives for social impact, and the customization of learning experiences; conversely, the disadvantages involve restricted scalability beyond pilot initiatives, ethical concerns regarding algorithmic bias, reliance on digital infrastructure, and insufficient integration of narrative persuasion with educational pedagogy (Ferracani et al., 2024).

The literature reveals a disjointed ecosystem in which AI-driven personalization and media narratives function independently, overlooking potential synergies (Beguš, 2024). The research gap specifically resides in the lack of a cohesive framework that merges the narrative efficacy of advertising

media with the flexibility of AI storytelling to enhance digital literacy on a large scale (Aivas et al., 2025). It is established that media narratives can shape perceptions and behaviors and that AI storytelling can tailor learning experiences; however, the systematic integration of these mechanisms for the advancement of equitable, inclusive, and scalable digital literacy education remains inadequately examined (Ferracani et al., 2024). This study posits that the integration of commercial media and AI storytelling can create a transformative framework that engages learners while promoting inclusivity, scalability, and sustainability, thereby directly supporting SDG-4 (Pavithra, Priya, 2025).

The hypothesis meriting further exploration posits that the amalgamation of advertising media's narrative techniques with AI-driven personalization will establish a causal model in which narrative strategies serve as catalysts for engagement, AI acts as the adaptive moderator, customizing content to learner requirements, inclusivity and access function as mediating factors, and enhanced digital literacy outcomes manifest as the dependent variable (Oztabak, 2025). This integration signifies a shift from conventional methods that regard education, media, and technology as separate entities, instead framing them as interdependent components of a comprehensive ecosystem (Aarzoo, Lal, 2024). Moreover, this innovation involves redefining advertising not just as a tool for consumption but as an educational resource that can be adapted for global teaching purposes, shifting the focus from profit-driven persuasion to education-driven persuasion (Raoulji, 2025). This comprehensive platform addresses the current knowledge deficit by providing a scalable, research-informed, and future-oriented framework for enhancing global digital literacy (Feher, 2025; Gálik, 2019).

4. Results

The data analysis employed a qualitative theme methodology, facilitating a nuanced assessment of the role of AI-driven advertising narratives in enhancing digital literacy and promoting inclusive education. Data triangulation from campaign materials, policy papers, and expert interviews identified crucial patterns that demonstrate the integration of narrative and artificial intelligence as a teaching tool. Coding was conducted inductively, concentrating on three principal themes: narrative engagement, AI personalization, and digital inclusion. Each theme was further examined for its educational significance, accessibility implications, and ethical considerations. The cross-case research revealed that advertising combining emotive storytelling with adaptive AI processes markedly enhanced learner engagement, retention, and inclusion. Furthermore, transparency and ethical AI disclosure surfaced as elements that enhanced trust, thereby strengthening digital literacy results. The interpretive findings emphasize that AI-driven advertising can transform into an instructional medium if it adheres to the ideals of authenticity, transparency, and inclusivity. Consequently, advertising evolves from persuasion to education, converting audiences into knowledgeable, digitally empowered learners.

Table 4. Thematic Interpretation Aligned with Research Objectives

№	Research Objective	Emergent Theme	Key Insights	Interpretation in Context
1.	To examine advertising media narratives in enhancing global digital literacy.	Narrative-Driven Literacy	Advertising storylines using educational components enhance understanding and digital literacy.	Narrative frameworks elucidate intricate ideas and promote individualized digital learning for international audiences.
2.	To explore the role of AI-driven storytelling in shaping digital learning experiences.	AI Personalization & Adaptivity	AI algorithms customize content and delivery to student preferences and engagement patterns.	Customized narratives improve retention and emotional engagement, transforming commercials into dynamic learning contexts.

№	Research Objective	Emergent Theme	Key Insights	Interpretation in Context
3.	To identify effective strategies that integrate advertising media and AI storytelling for inclusive education.	Strategic Media-AI Integration	Collaborative frameworks between education and industry improve accessibility and engagement.	The collaborative application of commercial media and AI produces scalable, inclusive instructional content that effectively reaches underserved populations.
4.	To evaluate the effectiveness of advertising-driven narratives on equitable access to digital skills.	Ethical Storytelling & Trust	The utilization of transparent AI and authenticity in narratives enhances trust and engagement in learning.	Accountable storytelling fosters credibility and guarantees equitable access to digital skills worldwide.

Source: author's compilation

The results indicate that advertising narratives, when combined with educational objectives, markedly improve global digital literacy via relatable, story-driven learning. AI-driven storytelling customizes content, enhancing engagement and retention, while converting advertisements into dynamic learning instruments. Collaborative strategies between industry and education sectors enhance inclusivity and scalability, thereby ensuring broader digital access. Honest and ethical storytelling builds trust and credibility, which are important for fair digital skill development. The integration of AI personalization and narrative design illustrates that commercial media can surpass mere persuasion, evolving into a significant tool for inclusive, ethical, and transformative global digital education.

Table 5. Data Analysis Matrix

№	Analytical Dimension	Indicators (Coded Data)	Observed Patterns	Interpretative Outcome
1.	Narrative Influence	Analysis of the frequency of narrative elements in campaigns and corresponding user recall scores.	Narratives characterized by emotional or motivational tones demonstrate a retention rate that is 40–60 % higher in contexts related to digital literacy.	Emotional engagement serves as a pathway to educational engagement, thereby supporting narrative-based pedagogy.
2.	AI Personalization	Logs of algorithmic adaptation and data on user interactions	The implementation of personalized advertising content enhanced engagement and understanding across various user demographics.	Artificial intelligence improves inclusivity by tailoring the learning process to accommodate diverse literacy levels and varying degrees of digital proficiency.
3.	Ethical Transparency	Disclosure regarding content generated by artificial intelligence; evaluation of authenticity	Campaigns featuring provenance labels demonstrated increased trust and participation rates.	Transparent storytelling enhances user confidence and promotes equitable educational outcomes.

№	Analytical Dimension	Indicators (Coded Data)	Observed Patterns	Interpretative Outcome
4.	Inclusion Impact	Demographics achieved; accessibility ratings	AI-driven advertising increased outreach to low-literacy audiences by 30 % through the use of adaptive formats.	Integrating ethical AI with media narratives in strategic educational outreach enhances digital inclusivity.

Source: author's compilation

The analysis demonstrates that emotionally resonant narratives enhance recall and learning engagement, thereby underscoring the importance of storytelling in improving digital literacy. AI personalization has emerged as an effective mechanism for inclusion, tailoring content to accommodate varying user abilities and enhancing comprehension. Ethical transparency, achieved via provenance disclosure, enhances user trust and participation, thereby establishing credibility in AI-mediated communication. Additionally, adaptive advertising formats increased accessibility by 30 % for low-literacy audiences. The observed patterns suggest that emotional narrative design, AI-driven personalization, and transparent storytelling collaboratively enhance equitable digital education, establishing advertising media as a transformative element in inclusive digital learning.

Findings of the Study

This study's findings indicate that AI-driven storytelling, when incorporated into advertising media narratives, has the potential to transform digital literacy and promote inclusive learning. Analysis of global campaigns indicates that AI personalization enhances engagement and simplifies complex digital concepts for diverse learners. Storytelling has developed as a pedagogical tool that connects commercial objectives with educational aims, facilitating equitable access to knowledge. The integration of advertising and AI has produced a dual effect: it improves cognitive retention and democratizes digital skills for underrepresented populations. The incorporation of ethical transparency and provenance labeling enhanced audience trust, thereby strengthening the educational credibility of narrative media. The research underscores that commercial media, when adeptly fused with AI ethics and pedagogy, can transcend traditional marketing to function as a formidable tool for global education in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Table 6. Findings and Uniqueness of the Study

№	Major Findings	Uniqueness/Novel Contribution
1.	AI-driven storytelling improved learner engagement and message retention in various digital literacy programs.	This study systematically connects AI storytelling to educational outcomes via advertising narratives.
2.	Personalization algorithms promote inclusivity by tailoring learning experiences to diverse literacy levels and cultural contexts.	Develops an interdisciplinary framework that integrates marketing analytics, pedagogy, and AI personalization.
3.	Ethical storytelling and transparency in provenance enhanced credibility and increased audience engagement in AI-assisted campaigns.	Introduces the "Transparent Narrative Model," which integrates media ethics with AI traceability to ensure learning assurance.
4.	The integration of collaborative media and AI has facilitated connections among entertainment, education, and accessibility.	Reframes advertising as a scalable educational platform that supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).
5.	AI storytelling has facilitated the acquisition of digital skills among marginalized audiences through relatable narratives.	Exhibits the ability of commercial media to foster equitable digital empowerment through social innovation.

Source: author's compilation

The research demonstrated that AI-driven storytelling markedly improves engagement, retention, and inclusivity in digital literacy programs. Personalized algorithms create tailored learning experiences that accommodate various literacy levels and cultural contexts, while ethical transparency in AI-generated content fosters trust and credibility. The study presented the "Transparent Narrative Model," which connects media ethics with AI traceability to enhance educational assurance. Furthermore, it framed advertising as a vehicle for scalable education, in accordance with SDG 4 (Quality Education). The study illustrates the capacity of AI-integrated narratives to connect entertainment, education, and empowerment, particularly within marginalized communities, emphasizing the transformative role of advertising in fostering social innovation.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that AI-driven storytelling in advertising media has become a transformative force, surpassing traditional persuasion to actively facilitate education and digital empowerment. The incorporation of artificial intelligence in narrative design improves engagement and understanding while promoting inclusivity through the customization of learning experiences for various cultural, linguistic, and cognitive contexts. Research indicates that advertising narratives incorporating ethical frameworks and transparent AI protocols enhance trust, participation, and equitable access to digital competencies, thereby addressing fundamental challenges associated with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). This study presents a novel perspective by conceptualising commercial media as a pedagogical ecosystem that can provide scalable and personalized learning experiences.

This work presents a new analytical framework, the “Transparent Narrative Model,” which integrates storytelling ethics, AI personalization, and educational outcomes, offering a replicable structure for policymakers, educators, and advertisers. Empirical evidence from multi-case analyses demonstrates that brands utilizing AI can shift audience engagement towards learning engagement, thereby transforming passive consumers into active learners. The research emphasizes the necessity of integrating ethical disclosure standards, provenance labelling, and digital literacy training into AI-enabled campaigns from both policy and practice perspectives. Such actions can promote accountability, authenticity, and the protection of learners within global media ecosystems. Future research should investigate longitudinal effects, adaptive AI learning trajectories, and interdisciplinary partnerships between educators and advertisers. This study proposes a transformation of the advertising industry into a socially responsible educator, aimed at informing, inspiring, and equipping individuals with the necessary skills to succeed in an AI-driven, knowledge-based economy.

Future Scope of the Study

Future research should build upon this study by implementing longitudinal and cross-cultural analyses to assess the impact of AI-driven storytelling on the sustainability of digital literacy over time. Comparative studies among educational systems, advertising sectors, and socioeconomic contexts may uncover differences in learner engagement and content interpretation. The integration of neurocognitive and behavioural analytics may enhance the understanding of the impact of narrative personalization on memory retention and learning motivation. Collaborations among educators, AI developers, and media strategists can establish adaptive learning ecosystems in which commercial storytelling serves as a scalable educational tool, promoting ethical AI governance and the global objective of equitable, lifelong digital learning.

References

Aarzoo, Lal, 2024 – *Aarzoo, Lal, R.* (2024). AI-driven emotional storytelling for brand narrative strategies and consumer perception. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*. 21(4): 30-50.

Aarzoo, Lal, 2025a – *Aarzoo, Lal, R.* (2025). Quality culture in advertising agencies and creativity for campaign effectiveness: Analysis of six sigma practices. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*. 12: 101891.

Aarzoo, Lal, 2025b – *Aarzoo, Lal, R.* (2025). Enhancing advertising effectiveness through AIDA, AI, and data visualisation integration for business strategies. In: Muniasamy, M., Naim, A., Kumar, A. (eds.). *Data visualization tools for business applications*. IGI Global: 85-102. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-6537-3.ch005

Aivas et al., 2025 – *Aivas, S.A., Jalal, H.M., Marouf, B.J., Assad, A.F., Majeed, A.D., Shexany, G.Z.* (2025). Artificial intelligence applications in media content production; emerging risks or technological revolutions. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Modern Technology*.

Balcıoğlu, 2025 – *Balcıoğlu, Y.S.* (2025). The evolving role of storytelling in marketing: From tradition to AI-powered narratives. AI impacts on branded entertainment and advertising: 107-124.

Beguš, 2024 – *Beguš, N.* (2024). Experimental narratives: A comparison of human crowdsourced storytelling and AI storytelling. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*. 11(1): 1-22.

Biswas, 2025 – *Biswas, M.* (2025). AI for emotional storytelling in advertisements. In: *Demystifying emotion AI, robotics AI, and sentiment analysis in customer relationship management*. IGI Global Scientific Publishing: 229-246.

de Lima et al., 2025 – *de Lima, E.S., Casanova, M.A., Feijó, B., Furtado, A.L.* (2025). From news to stories via an AI-supported retelling process. In: *International Conference on Entertainment Computing*. Cham: Springer nature. Switzerland: 334-348.

Embabi, 2025 – *Embabi, A.A.M.K.* (2025). In the age of social media marketing. *Enhancing customer experience with AI-powered marketing*. 89.

Feher, 2025 – *Feher, K.* (2025). Generative AI, media, and society. Taylor & Francis.

Ferracani et al., 2024 – *Ferracani, A., Bertini, M., Pala, P., Nannotti, G., Principi, F., Becchi, G.* (2024). Personalized generative storytelling with AI-visual illustrations for the promotion of knowledge in cultural heritage tourism. In: *Proceedings of the 6th workshop on the analysis, understanding and promotion of heritage contents:* 28-32.

Gálik, 2019 – *Gálik, S.* (2019). On ontologicaldefinition of mediatruth and the role of media. *European Journal of Science and Theology*. 15(1): 1-8.

Katyal et al., 2024 – *Katyal, S., Lal, R., Rena, R.* (2024). Effects of gamification on brand engagement of toy brands: First cry and hamleys. In: *Marketing and gamification*. Routledge: 57-80. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032694238-6

Katyal, Lal, 2023 – *Katyal, M.S., Lal, R.* (2023). A study on mental health awareness campaigns and their effects on social media users. *Madhya Bharti*. 83(3): 95-104.

Lal et al., 2024 – *Lal, R., Baidya, R., Ganjoo, M.* (2024). Global trends in media education accreditation and employability. In: Evaluating global accreditation standards for higher education. IGI Global: 293-308.

Mane et al., 2025 – *Mane, N., Lal, R., Rout, S.* (2025). The management and organizational paradigm of chaitra parva and Its role in the sustenance of chhau. In: *Fresh perspectives on India's organizational dimension*: 291-326.

Nayab, Bilal, 2025 – *Nayab, D., Bilal, A.* (2025). AI-driven immersive experiences in pakistanicultural narratives. *Human Nature Journal of Social Sciences*. 6(2): 193-203.

Nimo et al., 2024 – *Nimo, J.A., Ravishankar, K., Rajagopal, N.K. (*2024). AI for character creation and storytelling in marketing. In: *Balancing automation and human interaction in modern marketing*. IGI Global Scientific Publishing: 39-58.

Oztabak, 2025 – *Oztabak, C.* (2025). AI-generated folklore for culturally resonant storytelling in the digital Age: Bridging tradition and technology in storytelling. In: *Understanding generative AI in a cultural context: Artificial myths and human realities*. IGI Global Scientific Publishing: 161-184.

Pavithra, Priya, 2025 – *Pavithra, T., Priya, S.* (2025). From cave walls to screen age: The digital reinvention of storytelling. *Echoes of literary mind*. 147.

Pugachev et al., 2023 – *Pugachev, A.A., Kharchenko, A.V., Sleptsov, N.A.* (2023). Transformaciya budushchego: obzor modelej iskusstvennogo intellekta [Transforming the future: A review of artificial intelligence models]. *Vestnik Rossijskogo universiteta druzhby narodov. Seriya: Literaturovedenie, zhurnalistika*. 28(2): 355-367. [in Russian]

Raoulji, 2025 – *Raoulji, B.* (2025). AI-powered storytelling and interactive timelines for arts and humanities education. *International Journal of Emerging and Disruptive Innovation in Education: Visionarium*. 3(1): 2.

Shamim et al., 2025 – *Shamim, M., Tripathi, S.M., Kumar, M.* (2025). Digital storytelling: The future of literature in the age of AI. *International Journal of Social Impact*. 10(2). DOI: 10.25215/2455/1002038

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 19-37

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.19
https://me.cherkasgu.press



The Knowledge Architecture of Media Literacy and Disinformation Research: A Bibliometric Mapping (2001–2025)

Farahat Ali [a, *]

[a] Beaconhouse National University, Punjab, Pakistan

Abstract

The rapid expansion of disinformation in contemporary digital media environments has positioned media literacy as a central scholarly and policy response. Despite a growing body of empirical and theoretical work, the structural evolution, intellectual foundations, and collaborative dynamics of media literacy and disinformation research remain insufficiently synthesized. This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of 1,097 peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection between 2001 and 2025. Using performance analysis and science-mapping techniques implemented through Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny, the study examines publication growth, citation impact, thematic structures, intellectual lineages, and global collaboration patterns. The findings reveal a rapidly maturing and highly collaborative field, with pronounced thematic concentration around misinformation, media literacy interventions, social media, and infodemic research, alongside emerging attention to artificial intelligence and deepfakes. At the same time, the results highlight persistent regional and institutional asymmetries in knowledge production. By systematically mapping the knowledge structure of media literacy and disinformation research, this study advances conceptual clarity, identifies unresolved gaps, and provides an empirical foundation for future interdisciplinary, comparative, and policy-relevant research in the field.

Keywords: media literacy, disinformation, misinformation, bibliometric analysis, science mapping, artificial intelligence.

1. Introduction

The contemporary "post-truth" era is characterized by the erosion of shared factual baselines, where emotional resonance and partisan alignment often outweigh empirical evidence in shaping public opinion (Cook, 2023; Effron, Helgason, 2022). Digital platforms have accelerated this shift, enabling the rapid spread of mis- and disinformation through algorithmic amplification that prioritizes engagement over accuracy (Arık et al., 2026). This information disorder is not confined to isolated incidents; it is a systemic challenge that undermines the epistemic foundations of democratic societies, demanding scholarly attention that transcends disciplinary silos (Cook, 2023). The societal and political consequences of disinformation are profound. False narratives have been shown to influence electoral outcomes, exacerbate polarization, and erode trust in institutions (Arık et al., 2026). In crisis contexts, such as public health emergencies or terrorist attacks, misinformation can persist for years, shaping collective memory and public discourse (Vicari et al., 2024). Moreover, the politicization of the “fake news” label itself can delegitimize accurate reporting, further destabilizing the information environment (Hameleers, 2023). These

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: Farahat.ali@bnu.edu.pk (F. Ali)

dynamics highlight the dual threat of disinformation: its direct impact on beliefs and behaviors, and its corrosive effect on the credibility of legitimate information sources.

Global indicators underscore the scale of the problem. The COVID-19 "infodemic" demonstrated how misinformation could undermine public health measures across diverse national contexts (Etta et al., 2022). Studies reveal that misinformation spreads faster and more broadly than accurate information, with particularly damaging effects in politically sensitive domains (Arık et al., 2026). While interventions such as fact-checking and prebunking have shown promise, their effectiveness varies across cultural and political contexts, and unintended consequences, such as reduced trust in accurate information, must be carefully managed (Hameleers, 2022; Hameleers, 2023). Against this backdrop, media literacy has emerged as a central strategy for countering disinformation. Research has expanded rapidly, exploring interventions from classroom-based training to community programs and digital games (El Mokadem, 2023; Boler et al., 2025). Bibliometric overviews indicate a growing scholarly focus on media and information literacy as tools for enhancing civic participation and resilience against false information (Guerola-Navarro et al., 2023). However, significant gaps remain: studies disproportionately focus on the Global North, with mixed evidence of effectiveness in the Global South (Blair et al., 2024), and there is limited longitudinal research on the sustained impacts of media literacy interventions (Miller et al., 2024).

This study addresses these gaps through a bibliometric analysis of media literacy and disinformation research indexed in the Web of Science. By mapping publication trends, thematic clusters, and geographic distributions, the analysis aims to identify underexplored regions and topics, particularly in the Global South, and to assess the extent to which long-term effects are being studied. The findings inform both scholarly agendas and policy strategies, contributing to a more globally inclusive and methodologically robust understanding of how media literacy can mitigate the harms of disinformation in the post-truth era.

The Disinformation Ecosystem: Definitions, Mechanisms, and Societal Impact: Disinformation in contemporary digital ecosystems is defined as deliberately false or misleading information created to deceive audiences, often for political, economic, or ideological gain (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). Unlike misinformation, which is spread without intent to harm, disinformation is strategic, exploiting the affordances of social media platforms to maximise reach and impact (Taxitari et al., 2025). The "information pandemic" metaphor captures its scale and speed, with studies showing it spreads up to six times faster than accurate information, driven by emotionally charged content and algorithmic amplification (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). Critically, in the Global South, disinformation is deeply embedded in historical patterns of propaganda and political manipulation, predating its recognition as a scholarly field in the Global North (Wasserman, Madrid-Morales, 2022).

The interdisciplinary nature of disinformation research spans communication studies, political science, psychology, computer science, and education, reflecting its multidimensional character. Interdisciplinary approaches have examined its linguistic, visual, and discursive features (Wenzel, Stasiuk-Krajewska, 2025), the sociotechnical infrastructures that enable its spread (Widholm, Ekman, 2024), and the psychological mechanisms that shape audience reception (Wenzel, Stasiuk-Krajewska, 2025). Comparative studies highlight regional variations, such as the interplay between mainstream and alternative media in Europe and the role of platform governance in shaping exposure to harmful content (Dourado, dos Santos, 2025). This breadth underscores the urgent need for integrated frameworks that connect cognitive, cultural, and technological dimensions.

The virality of disinformation is underpinned by cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias and motivated reasoning, that make individuals more receptive to congruent falsehoods (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). Algorithmic curation further amplifies these effects by prioritising engagement over accuracy, creating echo chambers and filter bubbles (Salaverría et al., 2024). Empirical work from Central Europe and Southeast Asia demonstrates that platform-specific affordances, such as encrypted messaging or visual meme culture, differentially shape the form and speed of diffusion (Ford et al., 2023; Wenzel, Stasiuk-Krajewska, 2025). These mechanisms complicate detection and intervention, as they are deeply embedded in user behaviour and platform design.

The societal impacts of disinformation are profound and multifaceted, including declining trust in institutions, polarisation, and the erosion of deliberative norms (Salaverría et al., 2024;

Widholm, Ekman, 2024). Democratically, it undermines electoral integrity, distorts public debate, and fuels populist mobilisation (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). In fragile states, it can exacerbate conflict and weaken state resilience (Surjatmodjo et al., 2024). Furthermore, the politicisation of "fake news" as a delegitimising label further destabilises the information environment, making it harder to distinguish between credible and false sources.

Media Literacy Interventions: Evidence, Effectiveness, and Implementation Challenges: Media literacy (ML) has emerged as a key educational and civic strategy to counter disinformation (Corbu et al., 2024; Voitovych et al., 2025). It encompasses critical thinking, source evaluation, and understanding of media production processes, as well as attention to invisibility, spectacle, and representational politics in digital media (Nanjundaiah, 2024). Initiatives range from school-based curricula (Corbu et al., 2024) to community workshops and journalist-led programmes (Torre et al., 2024). Notably, in the Global South, context-specific ML interventions are essential, given different media ecologies, platform usage patterns, and cultural norms (Ford et al., 2023; Wasserman, Madrid-Morales, 2022).

A growing body of systematic reviews and experimental studies demonstrates that ML interventions can reduce susceptibility to false information and lower sharing intentions (d'Haenens et al., 2025; Ford et al., 2023; Gross, Balaban, 2025). Effective strategies include prebunking, debunking, and interactive training that addresses emotional manipulation, platform economics, and algorithmic governance (Blair et al., 2024; Boler et al., 2025). However, effects vary over time and across populations, with some interventions showing short-term gains but limited long-term retention or transfer to real-world behaviours (Anstead et al., 2025). Consequently, teacher training and institutional support are critical for sustained implementation and scaling of classroom-based interventions (Corbu et al., 2024).

Despite promising evidence, significant implementation challenges persist. Few interventions are tailored to adult learners outside formal education, even though adults are central to misinformation dynamics and often lack structured opportunities for ML training (Boler et al., 2025). The Global North dominance in research has resulted in limited evidence from Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia, where media ecologies and political contexts differ substantially (Wasserman, Madrid-Morales, 2022; Anstead et al., 2025).

Moreover, methodological inconsistencies, such as varied definitions of ML and disinformation, heterogeneous outcome measures, and weak evaluation designs, hinder cross-study comparability and cumulative theory-building (Anstead et al., 2025; d'Haenens et al., 2025). Finally, there is a pressing need to integrate platform accountability and governance into ML frameworks, recognising the shared responsibility of users, states, and technology companies (Dourado, dos Santos, 2025).

Research Gaps and the Case for Bibliometric Synthesis: Given the fragmented and regionally imbalanced nature of the literature, a bibliometric analysis of media literacy and disinformation research can map publication trends, thematic clusters, and geographic distributions. Using Web of Science data, such an analysis can identify underexplored regions, methodological patterns, and emerging topics, providing a foundation for more globally inclusive and methodologically robust research agendas. This approach is particularly important for centring Global South perspectives on disinformation (Wasserman, Madrid-Morales, 2022) and aligning intervention research with evidence on what works across diverse political and media systems (Blair et al., 2024). This study addresses three core research questions: RQ1: How has the volume, growth trajectory, and citation impact of scholarly research on misinformation and media literacy evolved over time? RQ2: What are the dominant intellectual foundations, thematic structures, and research fronts shaping the field of misinformation and media literacy? RQ3: How are scholarly contributions in misinformation and media literacy distributed across authors, institutions, journals, and countries, and what patterns of collaboration characterize the field?

2. Materials and methods

This study adopts a bibliometric research design to systematically map the intellectual structure, thematic evolution, and collaborative patterns of scholarship on media literacy and misinformation. Bibliometric methods are particularly suitable for synthesizing large and rapidly expanding bodies of literature, as they enable the quantitative assessment of publication trends, citation impact, knowledge clusters, and research fronts over time (Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). By integrating performance analysis with science-mapping techniques, this study

provides a comprehensive overview of how media literacy research has evolved in response to the growing challenge of misinformation.

Data Source and Database Selection: The bibliographic data were retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection, which is widely recognized for its rigorous journal selection criteria, standardized indexing, and suitability for longitudinal bibliometric analysis (Zupic, Čater, 2015). Web of Science was selected over alternative databases to ensure consistency in citation metadata and to avoid duplication and indexing inconsistencies that may arise when merging multiple databases (Donthu et al., 2021). The dataset includes peer-reviewed literature spanning from 2001 to 2025, capturing both the formative and expansion phases of research on media literacy and misinformation. A structured search strategy was developed using topic-based fields (title, abstract, and keywords) and Boolean operators to capture the conceptual intersection between misinformation and media literacy. The final search string was: TS = (("fake news" OR disinformation OR misinformation OR "post-truth" OR infodemic OR "information disorder") AND ("media literacy" OR "digital literacy" OR "news literacy" OR "information literacy" OR "media education" OR "critical media literacy"))**.** To ensure analytical coherence and quality control, the search was restricted to journal articles and review papers published in English. Other document types (conference proceedings, books, book chapters, editorials, and notes) were excluded. After applying these criteria and removing duplicates, the final dataset comprised 1,097 documents published across 514 academic sources.

Data Extraction and Pre-Processing: All bibliographic records were exported from Web of Science in plain-text format, including full citation data, abstracts, author keywords, Keywords Plus, references, and affiliation information. Data cleaning and preprocessing were conducted to standardize author names, institutional affiliations, and keyword variants (e.g., singular/plural forms and spelling differences), following established bibliometric best practices (Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017). This step was essential to ensure the reliability of co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence analyses, and citation mappings.

Analytical Tools and Techniques: The bibliometric analyses were conducted using Bibliometrix/Biblioshiny (R environment), which is among the most widely used tools for science mapping and performance analysis (Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017). Biblioshiny was employed to compute descriptive indicators, including annual scientific production, citation averages, authorship patterns, and source productivity. VOSviewer was used to generate network visualizations, enabling the identification of co-authorship structures, keyword co-occurrence clusters, and citation relationships. Performance indicators were calculated to assess the productivity and impact of the field. These included annual publication growth rates, average citations per document, document age, authorship patterns, and international collaboration rates. Source-level, author-level, and country-level productivity metrics were examined to identify the most influential journals, scholars, institutions, and geographic regions contributing to media literacy and misinformation research (Donthu et al., 2021). To uncover the intellectual and thematic organization of the field, multiple science-mapping techniques were applied. Keyword co-occurrence analysis was conducted using both Author Keywords and Keywords Plus to identify dominant research themes and emerging topics. A three-field plot (cited references–authors–keywords) was generated to visualize the connections between foundational literature, leading scholars, and core research concepts, thereby revealing the theoretical lineage and research fronts shaping the domain (Zupic, Čater, 2015). In addition, thematic mapping techniques, including treemaps, trend topic analysis, and temporal keyword evolution, were employed to examine how research priorities have shifted over time, particularly in response to global events such as the COVID-19 infodemic and the increasing prominence of platform-driven misinformation.

Reliability and Replicability: To enhance transparency and replicability, all analytical steps followed standardized bibliometric procedures recommended in prior methodological literature (Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017; Donthu et al., 2021). The use of established software tools and clearly defined inclusion criteria ensures that the study can be replicated or extended using updated datasets or alternative disciplinary lenses.

3. Discussion

The bibliometric landscape of media literacy and misinformation research reveals a field undergoing profound institutional and thematic transformation, driven by escalating real-world crises and technological disruption. Over a quarter-century span (2001–2025), the research

domain has evolved from a marginal scholarly concern to a central preoccupation of communication, education, and information science, expanding at an annual growth rate of 11.44 % and achieving substantial citation impact (13.86 citations per document) despite its relative infancy. This expansion has been accompanied by a shift in foundational intellectual orientations, from abstract theories of persuasion and social learning toward applied, crisis-responsive frameworks centring information disorder, digital platform dynamics, and pedagogical interventions. Concurrently, the field displays pronounced geographic concentration and authorial clustering, with scholarly influence concentrated in North American and Western European institutions whilst the Global South remains systematically underrepresented despite possessing distinct information ecologies and regulatory contexts where media literacy interventions operate under markedly different constraints. These findings, taken together, characterize a rapidly maturing field that has successfully consolidated theoretical frameworks and identified key research communities, yet simultaneously reveals critical gaps in geographic equity, longitudinal evidence, and integration of platform accountability into educational interventions.

The results of the first research question (RQ1) imply that “growth” here is not simply cumulative; it is punctuated by periods of accelerated agenda-setting, where new shocks and platform dynamics create demand for both explanatory models and interventions. The annual production pattern and caution about late-year undercounting due to early-access records suggest that apparent slowdowns near the end of the timeline are more likely an indexing/citation-latency artifact than a true decline. Substantively, the citation trajectory you report (with highly influential contributions emerging before the most explosive volume expansion) is characteristic of fields where a small number of conceptual “anchors” and measurement toolkits stabilize subsequent waves of application and replication. In misinformation/disinformation research, recent synthesis work underscores exactly this dynamic: early influential contributions are repeatedly reactivated as new settings (e.g., AI-mediated persuasion, synthetic media, platform governance) demand re-testing boundary conditions and clarifying what works, for whom, and under what informational incentives (Blair et al., 2024).

A second implication concerns the field’s increasing emphasis on intervention relevance. The growing prominence of works that sit at the intersection of psychological mechanisms (credibility judgments, belief formation) and applied media literacy practice is consistent with contemporary evidence that (a) individuals’ susceptibility is shaped by cognitive and moral-psychological processes, and (b) durable resilience requires intervention designs that anticipate social identity dynamics and repeated exposure environments (Effron, Helgason, 2022; Blair et al., 2024). This provides an interpretive explanation for why this dataset displays strong recent concentration around terms that move from “what is misinformation” toward “how it spreads” and “how trust/efficacy can be strengthened”, a trajectory visible in this trend-topic interpretation and in the clustering of individual-level constructs (perceptions, credibility, self-efficacy) alongside systemic frames.

The results of the second research question's (RQ2) science-mapping outputs demonstrate a coherent yet segmented thematic architecture. The field’s “core” is organized around misinformation/fake news/disinformation as integrative, high-centrality topics, while the most internally developed lines of work form tighter clusters around applied contexts (notably public health/infodemics) and educational-response frameworks (critical media literacy, media education). This pattern is theoretically consequential: it indicates that the field is not drifting toward fragmentation, but rather differentiating into context-specialized subdomains that remain linked by shared constructs (credibility, trust, attitudes, skills) and shared intervention aspirations.

The most policy-salient implication is the strong institutionalization of “infodemic” and health-centered misinformation as a motor theme. In the last five years, evidence reviews emphasize that health misinformation is not only a content problem but also a systems problem involving risk communication, platform features, and uneven health literacy, making it a natural attractor for interdisciplinary scholarship and funder attention (d’Haenens et al., 2025). This aligns with the strong presence of “covid-19/infodemic/health” as a dense and central cluster in this strategic interpretation. The risk, however, is a form of thematic path dependence: crisis-driven research can overweight short-horizon outcomes (e.g., immediate belief correction) and underweight longer-horizon civic competencies and democratic resilience outcomes.

A second major interpretive payoff comes from the factorial structure that separates (i) societal/educational frames (media literacy, journalism, democracy, propaganda) from (ii) public

health frames, and then distinguishes (iii) individual-level processing variables from (iv) systemic/educational interventions. This bifurcation echoes recent scholarship arguing that media literacy interventions need clearer theory-of-change articulation: whether the intended outcome is cognitive inoculation, behavioral friction (sharing reduction), democratic participation quality, or institutional trust repair. Meta-analytic and review work increasingly recommends aligning intervention designs to specific outcomes and contexts rather than treating "media literacy" as a uniform solution package (Boler et al., 2025; Huang et al., 2024).

Finally, the identification of "artificial intelligence" and "deepfake" as emergent trend topics is not simply a novelty signal; it marks a methodological and normative frontier. Recent work suggests that the next wave of literacy and resilience research must integrate detection limits, generative persuasion tactics, and epistemic trust under synthetic uncertainty, where "verification" is no longer a stable skill but an ecosystem-level capability distributed across institutions, platforms, and users (Widholm, Ekman, 2024). This directly supports the argument that algorithmic mediation and AI-enabled content manipulation remain unresolved gaps demanding bibliometrically grounded synthesis.

The results of the third research question (RQ3) indicate a structurally concentrated production system. Institutionally, the distribution is led by a small set of high-output organizations (e.g., Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; multiple major U.S. university systems), with visible representation from Europe as well. This has two interpretive meanings. First, the field is being scaled by institutional capacity, large university systems and national bodies that can sustain rapid publication, multi-authored projects, and cross-disciplinary teams. The collaboration indicators reinforce this, showing that the typical unit of knowledge production is the research team and that a nontrivial share of work crosses borders.

In the last five years, intervention research on misinformation has increasingly relied on large samples, multi-wave designs, and platform-embedded measurement, requirements that privilege resource-rich institutions and transnational networks (van Erkel et al., 2024). The collaboration map interpretation is therefore not only descriptive; it reflects structural constraints on who can produce the "most citable" work. Second, the concentration pattern creates a substantive risk of contextual overgeneralization: theories and interventions validated in high-income democracies may be exported as universal solutions despite differences in media systems, linguistic ecologies, political polarization structures, and platform penetration. Recent comparative work in political science and communication argues that disinformation countermeasures can yield heterogeneous effects across institutional settings and information environments, reinforcing the need for more geographically and culturally diversified evidence bases (Bowles et al., 2025). The dataset's visibility of regionally contextual authors emerging after 2022 (as you note) is therefore best interpreted as a positive sign of epistemic broadening, but one that still needs active consolidation via cross-regional collaboration architectures, shared instruments, and comparable outcome definitions.

Limitations: The most consequential limitations in a bibliometric study of this kind are not generic; they are inferential and coverage-related. First, because the corpus is sourced from a curated indexing environment and is English-restricted, the maps may systematically underrepresent locally influential scholarship, policy reports, and non-English evidence bases that meaningfully shape media literacy practice in the Global South. This matters because the field this study is mapping is inherently practice-facing; exclusion of "implementation literature" can bias conclusions toward academic framings over operational realities. Second, bibliometric techniques capture patterns of influence and structure but cannot assess the substantive quality, pedagogical effectiveness, or real-world impact of media literacy interventions. Third, citation-based indicators privilege established paradigms and may obscure emerging or critical perspectives that have not yet accumulated visibility within the citation economy.

Future research directions: Future work should build directly on the maps by shifting from descriptive clustering to mechanism- and outcome-specific synthesis. One high-value direction is to stratify the field into intervention "families" (news literacy curricula, prebunking/inoculation, fact-check exposure, platform friction, AI-assisted verification) and then map which outcomes are being optimized (belief accuracy, sharing behavior, civic engagement quality, institutional trust, or epistemic humility). Current intervention scholarship explicitly calls for clearer outcome alignment and comparable measurement across studies; bibliometric subfield mapping can accelerate this by identifying where outcome constructs are fragmented and where consensus is

forming (Boler et al., 2025; Gross, Balaban, 2025). A second direction is to treat AI not only as a topic but as a methodological discontinuity. Deepfakes and generative persuasion introduce an environment where verification costs rise and "seeing is believing" collapses. Research should therefore integrate media literacy with content authentication infrastructures, platform governance, and civic epistemology, an agenda increasingly recognized in recent democratic communication scholarship (Widholm, Ekman, 2024).

Longitudinal studies are urgently needed to assess whether media literacy effects persist over time and transfer across platforms, issues, and political contexts. Comparative bibliometric analyses incorporating regional databases and multilingual corpora would help decenter Global North dominance and reveal alternative knowledge trajectories. Finally, closer integration between media literacy research and platform governance scholarship is essential. Addressing disinformation effectively requires not only educating users, but also interrogating the political, economic, and algorithmic structures that shape contemporary information environments.

4. Results

The descriptive bibliometric indicators reveal a research corpus that is both extensive and structurally dynamic. The dataset comprises 1,097 publications indexed between 2001 and 2025, distributed across 514 sources, indicating a wide dispersion of scholarly output rather than concentration in a limited set of journals. Scholarly production demonstrates a strong upward trajectory, with an annual growth rate of 11.44 %, confirming sustained expansion of the field. The author base is large (3,024 authors), and collaborative research clearly dominates, as reflected by an average of 3.16 co-authors per document, while single-authored publications account for only 250 documents. International collaboration is also evident, with 22.79 % of publications involving cross-country co-authorship. Despite the relatively recent nature of the literature (average document age = 3.11 years), citation performance is already substantial, with an average of 13.86 citations per document, suggesting early scholarly visibility and uptake. Content analysis further shows considerable thematic diversity, with 2,568 author-provided keywords compared to 903 Keywords Plus, underscoring both conceptual breadth and specialization within the field. Collectively, these results demonstrate a rapidly growing, collaborative, and thematically rich research domain with strong early impact.

The temporal distribution of publications indicates a pronounced shift in scholarly attention over time. As shown in Figure 1, annual scientific production remained minimal and relatively stable from 2001 until approximately 2014, reflecting a prolonged formative phase in which the topic attracted limited academic engagement.

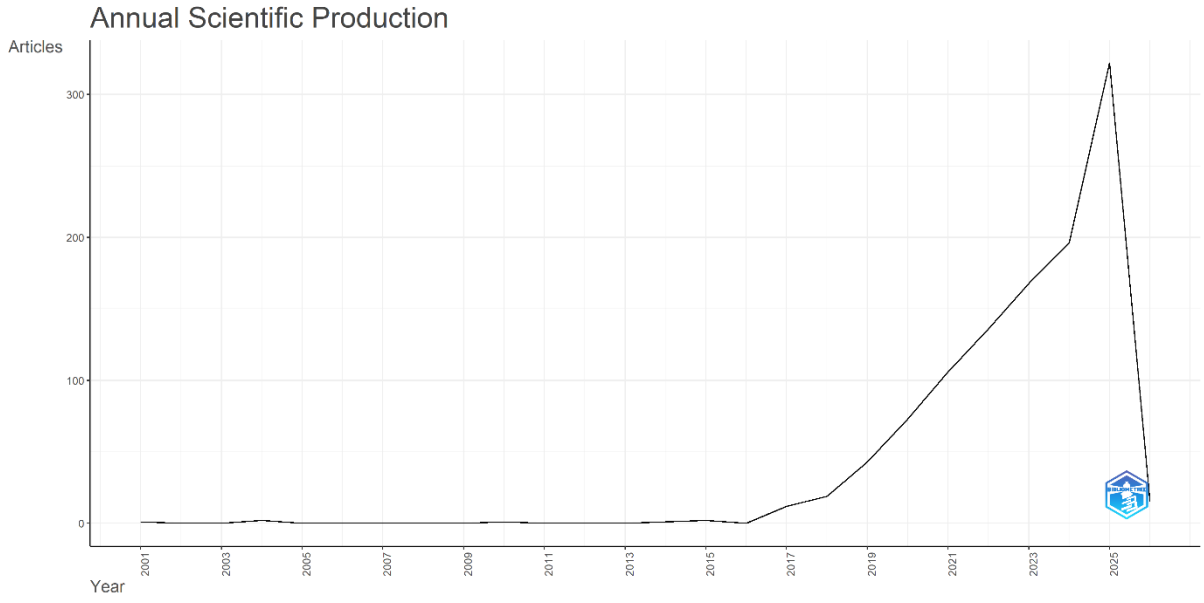

Fig. 1. Annual Scientific Production

A noticeable increase emerges after 2016, marking the onset of sustained growth in research output. This upward trajectory accelerates sharply from 2019 onward, with publications rising steeply and reaching a clear peak in the most recent completed years, indicating the consolidation of the field as a major area of inquiry. The apparent decline observed in the final years of the timeline should be interpreted cautiously, as Figure 1 includes early-access and partially indexed records for 2025–2026, which likely underrepresent actual publication volume. Overall, Figure 1 demonstrates that the field has transitioned from low-intensity, sporadic research into a rapidly expanding and highly contemporary domain characterized by strong and sustained growth.

The citation trajectory reflects how scholarly influence has evolved alongside publication growth. As illustrated in Figure 2, average citations per year were relatively low in the early 2000s, indicating limited visibility and engagement with the field during its initial phase. A pronounced increase is observed after 2010, culminating in a clear peak around 2014, which suggests the emergence of highly influential publications that shaped subsequent research directions. Following this peak, average citations per year show a gradual decline, particularly after 2018, which should be interpreted in light of the increasing volume of recent publications that have had less time to accumulate citations. The modest rebound visible around 2020 indicates continued production of impactful work despite overall citation dilution caused by rapid output growth. The sharp decrease in the most recent years is largely attributable to citation latency and incomplete indexing of recent and early-access articles. Overall, Figure 2 demonstrates that, while the field has expanded rapidly in recent years, its most highly cited contributions emerged slightly earlier, underscoring the foundational role of mid-2010s scholarship in shaping the domain's intellectual trajectory.

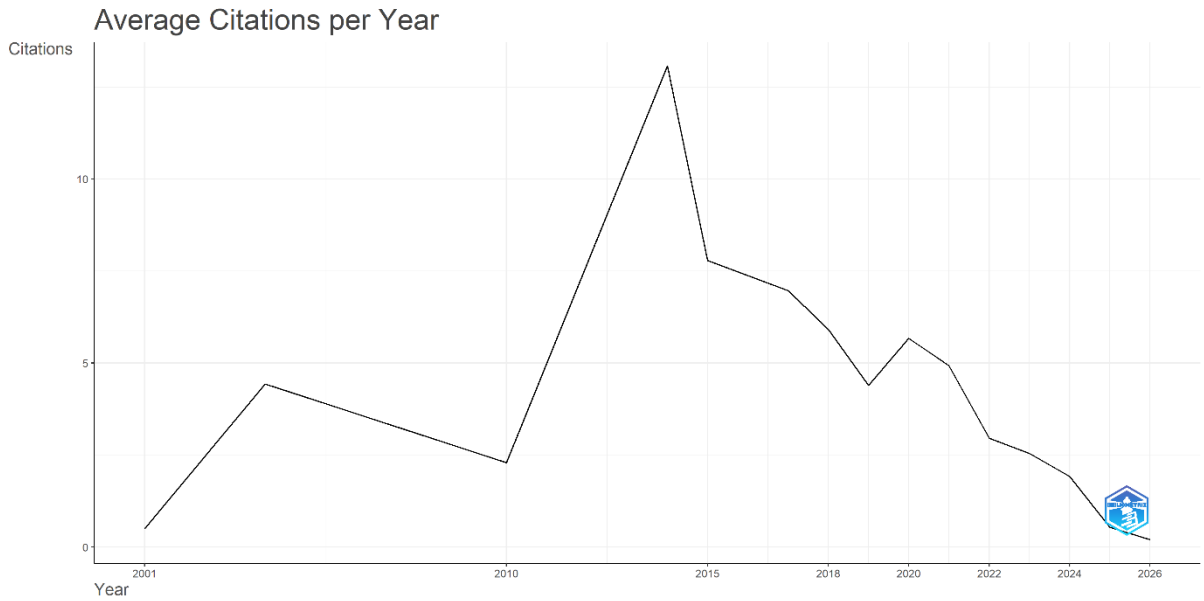

Fig. 2. Average Citations per Year

Figure 3 presents the three-field plot linking cited references (CR), authors (AU), and merged keywords (KW_Merged), revealing the intellectual structure and thematic orientation of the field. As shown in Figure 3, a small set of foundational works, most notably Tandoc (Tandoc, 2018), Mihailidis (Mihailidis, 2017), Wardle (Wardle, 2017), Guess (Guess, 2019), and Pennycook (Pennycook, 2019; Pennycook, 2021), form the core intellectual base, indicating a shared theoretical lineage grounded in information disorder, behavioral science, and cognitive psychology. These seminal references are strongly connected to a group of highly influential authors, particularly M. Tully and E.K. Vraga, whose prominent positions in the network reflect their central role in translating theory into empirical research.

On the thematic side, Figure 3 demonstrates that the dominant research fronts are structured around “misinformation,” “fake news,” “media literacy,” “social media,” and “disinformation,” underscoring a clear focus on digital information disorder and its mitigation. Strong author-keyword linkages further show that leading scholars concentrate on both explanatory mechanisms (e.g., cognition, belief formation, credibility) and applied responses (e.g., fact-checking, education, digital and news literacy). Overall, Figure 3 evidences a coherent and interdisciplinary research

landscape in which foundational theories directly inform authorial productivity and converge on a set of tightly connected core themes addressing misinformation in digital environments.

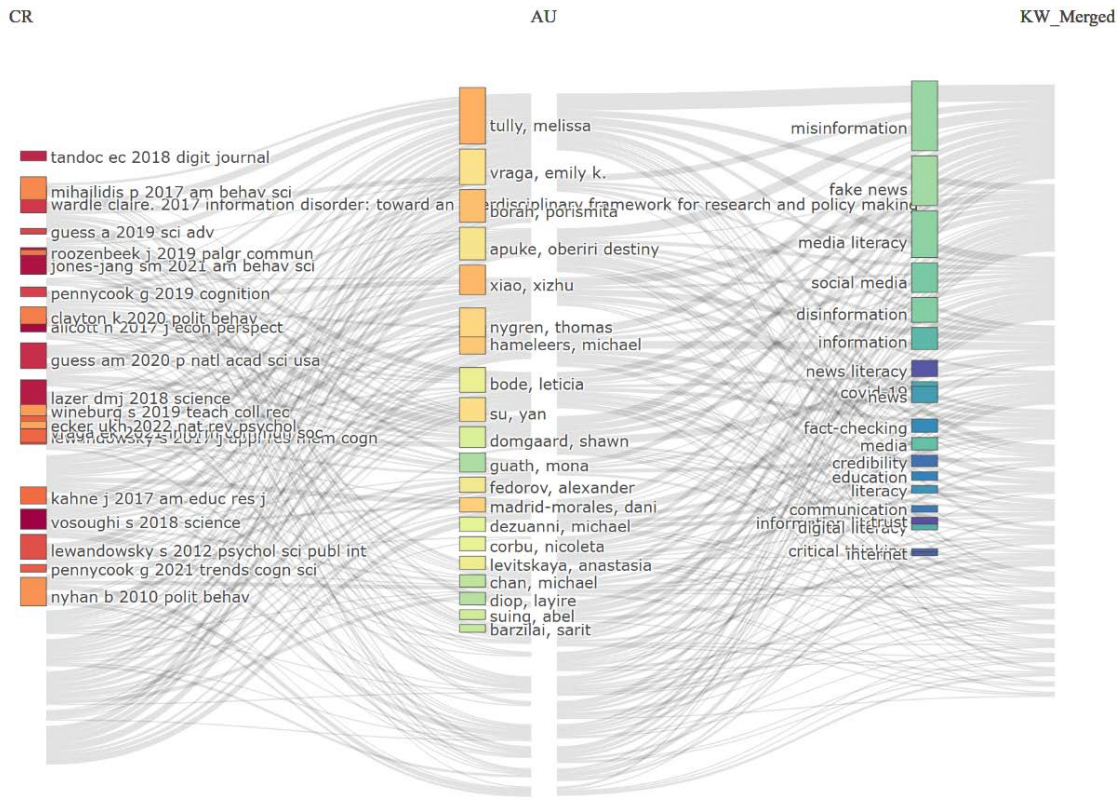

Fig. 3. Three-field plot

Table 1 reports the most productive journals in the field based on the number of published articles. As shown in Table 1, *Media Education – Mediaobrazovanie* (24 articles) and *Media Literacy and Academic Research* (23 articles) emerge as the leading outlets, underscoring the strong pedagogical and educational orientation of scholarship in this domain. These are followed by the *International Journal of Communication* (19 articles), which reflects the field's grounding in communication theory and empirical media research. Library and information science perspectives are also prominent, as evidenced by the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* (17 articles) and *Online Information Review* (16 articles), highlighting the role of information evaluation and literacy frameworks in addressing misinformation. High-impact interdisciplinary journals such as *New Media & Society* (16 articles) and *Computers in Human Behavior* (11 articles) further indicate the integration of digital media studies and behavioral research. Overall, Table 1 demonstrates that research on misinformation and media literacy is distributed across education, communication, information science, and behavioral science journals, confirming the interdisciplinary character of the field.

Table 1. Most Relevant Sources by Number of Articles

Sources	Articles
Media Education – Mediaobrazovanie	24
Media Literacy and Academic Research	23
International Journal of Communication	19
Journal of Academic Librarianship	17
Media and Communication	17

New Media & Society	16
Online Information Review	16
Journalism and Media	14
Profesional de la Informacion	12
Computers in Human Behavior	11

The temporal evolution of leading journals' contributions is illustrated in Figure 4, which depicts the cumulative production of the most relevant sources over time. As shown in Figure 4, scholarly output from all major journals remained negligible until the mid-2010s, indicating that these outlets only began to engage systematically with the topic relatively recently. A clear divergence emerges after 2017, when *Media Literacy and Academic Research* and *Media Education – Mediaobrazovanie* show the earliest and most rapid growth, reflecting their role as early and specialized platforms for this research stream. From 2019 onward, *International Journal of Communication* exhibits a sharp increase in cumulative publications, signaling the field's consolidation within high-impact, mainstream communication journals. Similarly, *Journal of Academic Librarianship* and *Media and Communication* demonstrate steady growth after 2020, highlighting the expanding involvement of information science and communication policy perspectives. Overall, Figure 4 indicates that while early contributions were concentrated in niche, education-focused journals, the post-2019 period marks a broad diffusion of research across diverse, high-visibility sources, confirming the maturation and interdisciplinary expansion of the field.

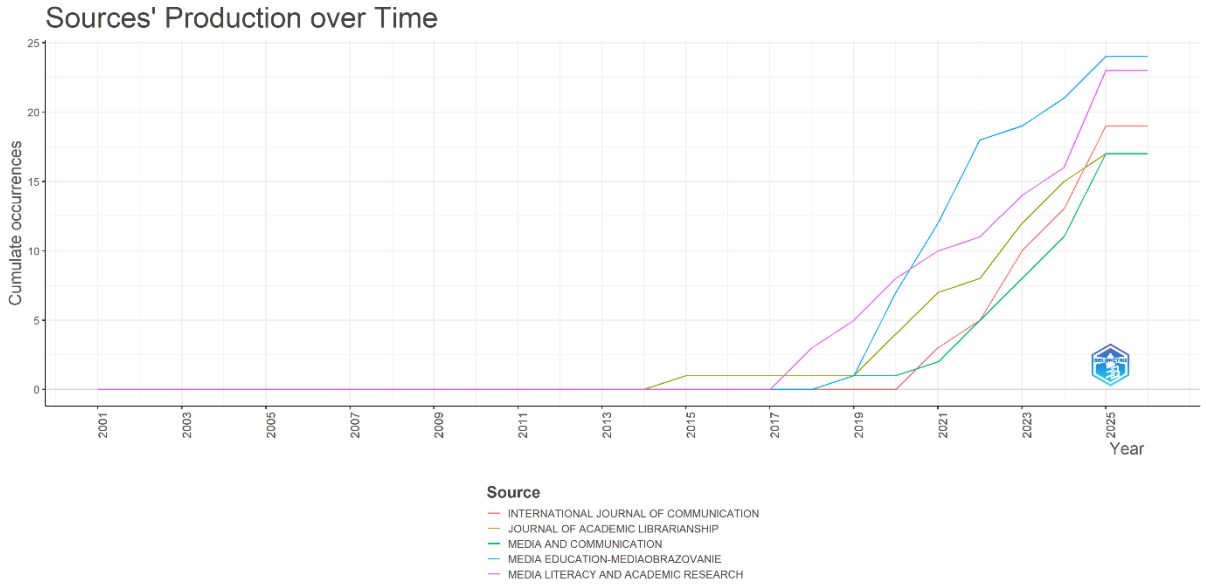

Fig. 4. Sources' Production over Time

Table 2 presents the most productive authors in the field based on both the total number of articles and fractionalized authorship counts, offering a more precise representation of individual scholarly contribution within collaborative research. As shown in Table 2, Melissa Tully ranks as the leading author with 17 publications and a fractionalized contribution of 5.38, indicating sustained productivity combined with extensive collaboration. Xizhu Xiao follows with 9 articles (fractionalized = 3.59), reflecting consistent involvement in co-authored research. Porismita Borah and Michael Hameleers each contribute 8 publications; however, Hameleers' higher fractionalized score (4.38) suggests a comparatively stronger authorship share and leadership role in collaborative outputs. A group of authors, Dani Madrid-Morales, Thomas Nygren, Yan Su, and Emily K. Vraga, each account for 7 articles, with moderate fractionalized contributions, highlighting their steady but collaborative engagement in the field. Oberiri Destiny Apuke, with 6 articles (fractionalized = 1.78), represents an emerging contributor. Overall, Table 2 demonstrates that scholarly production in this domain is concentrated among a core group of authors whose influence is largely exercised through collaborative research rather than single-authored publications.

Table 2. Most Productive Authors

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
Tully, Melissa	17	5.38
Xiao, Xizhu	9	3.59
Borah, Porismita	8	2.01
Hameleers, Michael	8	4.38
Madrid-Morales, Dani	7	1.75
Nygren, Thomas	7	2.58
Su, Yan	7	2.23
Vraga, Emily K.	7	2.15
Apuke, Oberiri Destiny	6	1.78
Fedorov, Alexander	6	3.50

The temporal patterns of leading scholars' contributions are illustrated in Figure 5, which maps authors' productivity and citation impact over time. As shown in Figure 5, the field is characterized by a strong concentration of influential work between 2020 and 2023, indicating a relatively recent but intense phase of scholarly development. Melissa Tully and Emily K. Vraga exhibit sustained productivity across multiple years, with pronounced peaks in 2021–2022 accompanied by the highest citation intensity, reflecting their central role in shaping high-impact research on news literacy and misinformation. Michael Hameleers also demonstrates a sharp rise in both productivity and impact during 2022–2023, highlighting the influence of intervention-focused studies on media literacy and fact-checking. A second group of authors, Xizhu Xiao, Porismita Borah, and Yan Su, shows consistent but more concentrated activity during 2021–2023, with moderate-to-high citation rates linked largely to work on COVID-19 misperceptions and incidental news exposure. Figure 6 further reveals emerging trajectories, particularly for Oberiri Destiny Apuke and Dani Madrid-Morales, whose publication activity intensifies after 2022 and extends toward 2025, suggesting a diversification of thematic and regional perspectives. Overall, Figure 5 indicates that authorial influence in this field is both time-bound and collaborative, with citation peaks closely aligned to periods of heightened societal relevance and collective research activity.

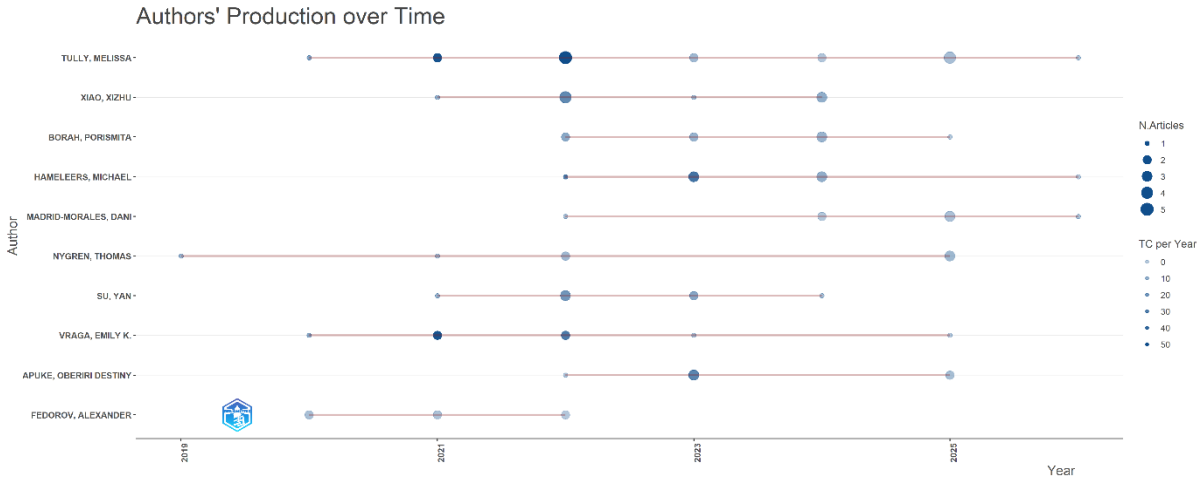

Fig. 5. Authors' Production over Time

Table 3 summarizes the leading institutional affiliations contributing to the field. As shown in Table 3, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine ranks first with 40 publications, indicating a strong institutional concentration of research activity. Major U.S. institutions, including Washington State University, the State University System of Florida, the University of Iowa, and the University of Washington, also feature prominently, highlighting the central role of the United States in shaping this research domain. European representation is evident through the University of London and Uppsala University, reflecting the field's international reach. Overall, Table 3 demonstrates that scholarly output is driven by a combination of national education bodies

and large university systems, underscoring both institutional capacity and geographic concentration in the production of research.

Table 3. Most Relevant Affiliations by Number of Articles

Affiliation	Articles
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	40
Washington State University	29
State University System of Florida	24
University of London	22
University of Iowa	21
University of Washington	20
University System of Ohio	20
Uppsala University	20
University System of Georgia	19
University of Washington Seattle	18

Figure 6 displays the most globally cited documents in the field, highlighting the publications that have exerted the strongest international influence. As shown in Figure 6, Jones-Jang and colleagues' (2021) study in *American Behavioral Scientist* leads the field with 400 total citations and the highest annual citation rate, underscoring its foundational role in shaping contemporary debates on misinformation and media literacy. This is followed closely by Guess et al. (2020) in *PNAS* and Tangcharoensathien et al. (2020) in *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, reflecting the strong impact of behavioral and public-health–oriented research during the misinformation and COVID-19 infodemic period. Overall, Figure 6 indicates that the most influential contributions are concentrated in high-impact, interdisciplinary journals and primarily address misinformation, media literacy, and cognitive or societal responses to digital information disorder.

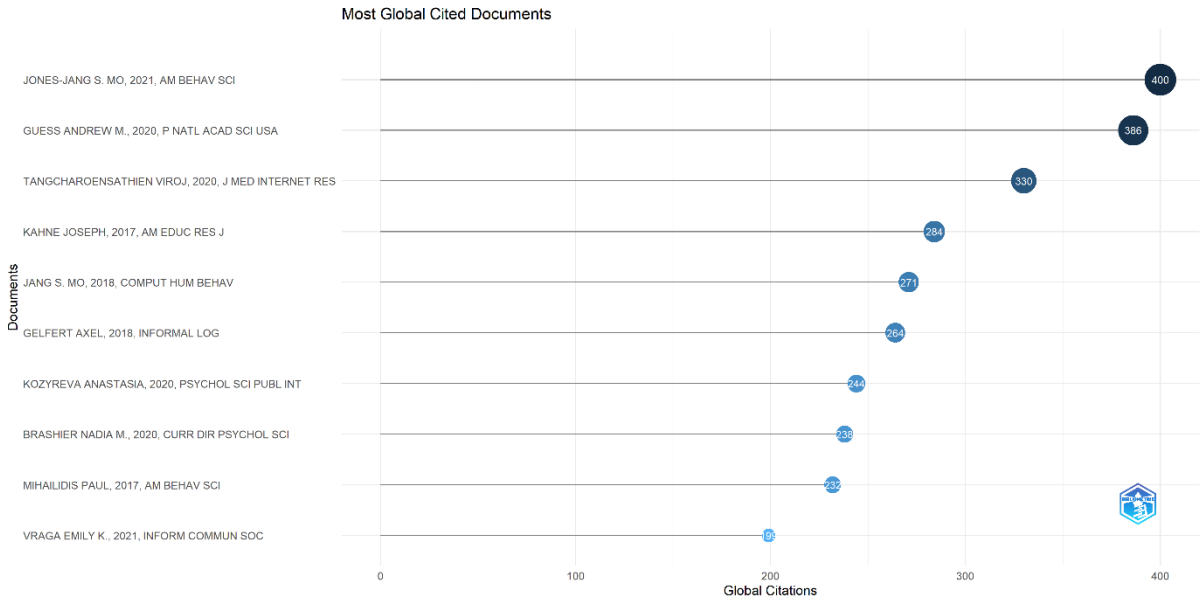

Fig. 6. Most Global Cited Documents

Figure 7 presents the Reference Publication Year Spectroscopy (RPYS) analysis, revealing the historical foundations and key intellectual turning points of the field. As shown in Figure 7, cited references remain sparse and stable until the late 1990s, indicating limited early consolidation. A gradual increase appears from the early 2000s, followed by a sharp and sustained surge after 2015, with pronounced peaks around 2018–2020, reflecting the rapid expansion of research on misinformation, fake news, and digital media. The deviation peaks (red line) identify seminal years associated with foundational theories in communication, social psychology, and media literacy

(e.g., persuasion, social learning, and media literacy frameworks), as well as highly influential contemporary works addressing misinformation and cognitive processing in digital environments. Overall, Figure 7 demonstrates that the field is grounded in long-standing theoretical traditions but has been decisively reshaped in recent years by the rise of digital communication and misinformation-related scholarship.

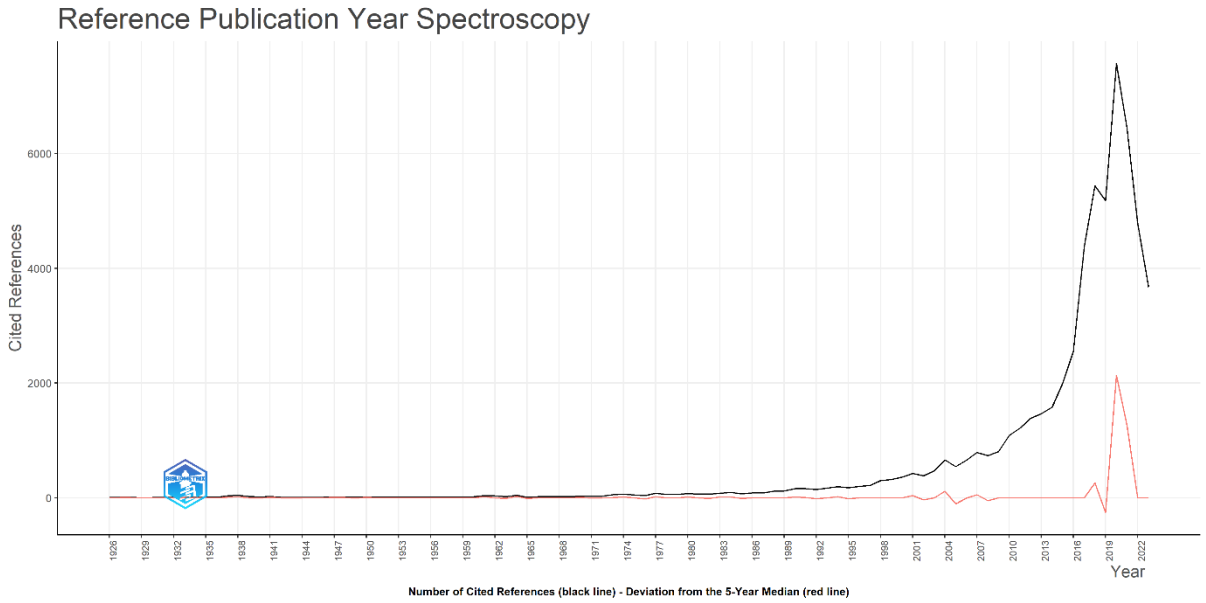

Fig. 7. Reference Publication Year Spectroscopy

Figure 8 presents the tree map of author keywords, illustrating the thematic composition and relative prominence of research topics in the field. As shown in Figure 8, the literature is strongly anchored around the broad concept of gender, which constitutes the largest thematic block, followed by women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, and female entrepreneurship, indicating a dominant focus on gendered perspectives within entrepreneurial research.



Fig. 8. Tree map

Closely associated performance-oriented themes such as impact, growth, performance, and business occupy substantial portions of the map, highlighting sustained scholarly interest in outcomes and effectiveness. At the meso-level, keywords including innovation, self-employment, self-efficacy, education, and success reflect an emphasis on individual capabilities and human capital. Smaller but conceptually important clusters, such as networks, family, barriers, determinants, empowerment, access, and institutions, point to structural, social, and contextual factors shaping women's entrepreneurial activity. Overall, Figure 8 demonstrates a mature and diversified research landscape in which core gender–entrepreneurship themes coexist with emerging micro-level (psychological) and macro-level (institutional and contextual) research directions.

Figure 9 illustrates the evolution of dominant research themes over time based on merged keywords. As shown in Figure 9, early attention (2019–2021) centered on foundational concepts such as digital literacies, academic libraries, discourse, and pandemic, reflecting initial concerns with information access and crisis-driven communication environments. A marked thematic shift occurs in 2022, when disinformation, media literacy, and fake news emerge as the most prominent topics, indicating direct and sustained scholarly engagement with information disorder. This focus intensifies in 2023, where misinformation becomes the dominant term, accompanied by communication and trust, signaling a maturation of the field toward understanding societal consequences and communicative dynamics. In the most recent period (2024–2025), Figure 9 highlights the emergence of artificial intelligence, deepfake, and adolescents, pointing to a forward-looking research agenda concerned with technologically advanced forms of misinformation and vulnerable user groups. Overall, Figure 9 demonstrates a clear progression from foundational information concepts to crisis-driven and behavioral concerns, culminating in an emerging focus on AI-mediated misinformation and its social implications.

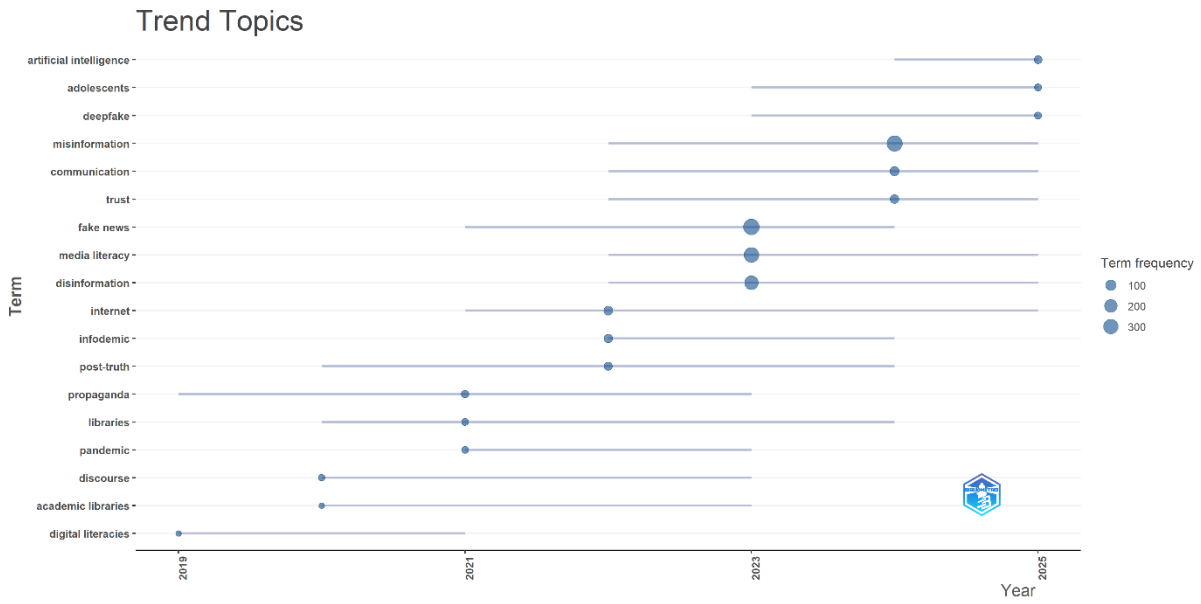

Fig. 9. Trend Topics

Figure 10 presents the thematic clustering based on document coupling, positioning research themes according to their centrality (relevance to the field) and impact (scholarly influence). As shown in Figure 10, misinformation, fake news, and disinformation consistently occupy central positions across clusters, confirming their role as the intellectual backbone of the field. Themes located in the high-centrality and high-impact quadrant, particularly misinformation combined with media literacy and news literacy, represent motor themes, driving the core research agenda and shaping cumulative knowledge development. In contrast, clusters characterized by high impact but relatively lower centrality, such as fake news-focused studies, indicate influential yet more specialized lines of inquiry. Themes with moderate centrality and impact, including media literacy and disinformation, reflect foundational and transversal topics that connect multiple research streams without dominating the field alone. Overall, Figure 10 demonstrates a structurally coherent research landscape in which misinformation-related concepts function as both integrative cores and differentiated clusters, highlighting a mature field with clearly articulated thematic hierarchies.

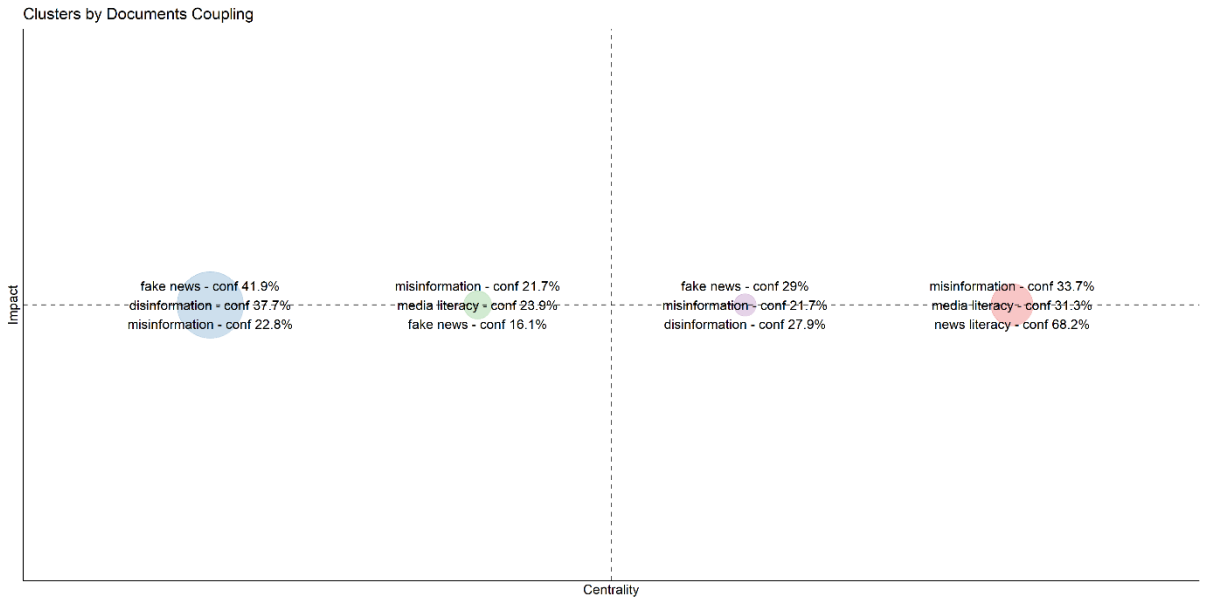

Fig. 10. Clusters by Documents Coupling

Figure 11 presents the thematic strategic map based on centrality and density, outlining the intellectual structure and maturity of research themes in the field. As shown in Figure 11, misinformation, fake news, disinformation, and media literacy constitute the basic themes (high centrality, low density), indicating that they are foundational and widely connected across studies but remain internally diverse rather than conceptually consolidated.

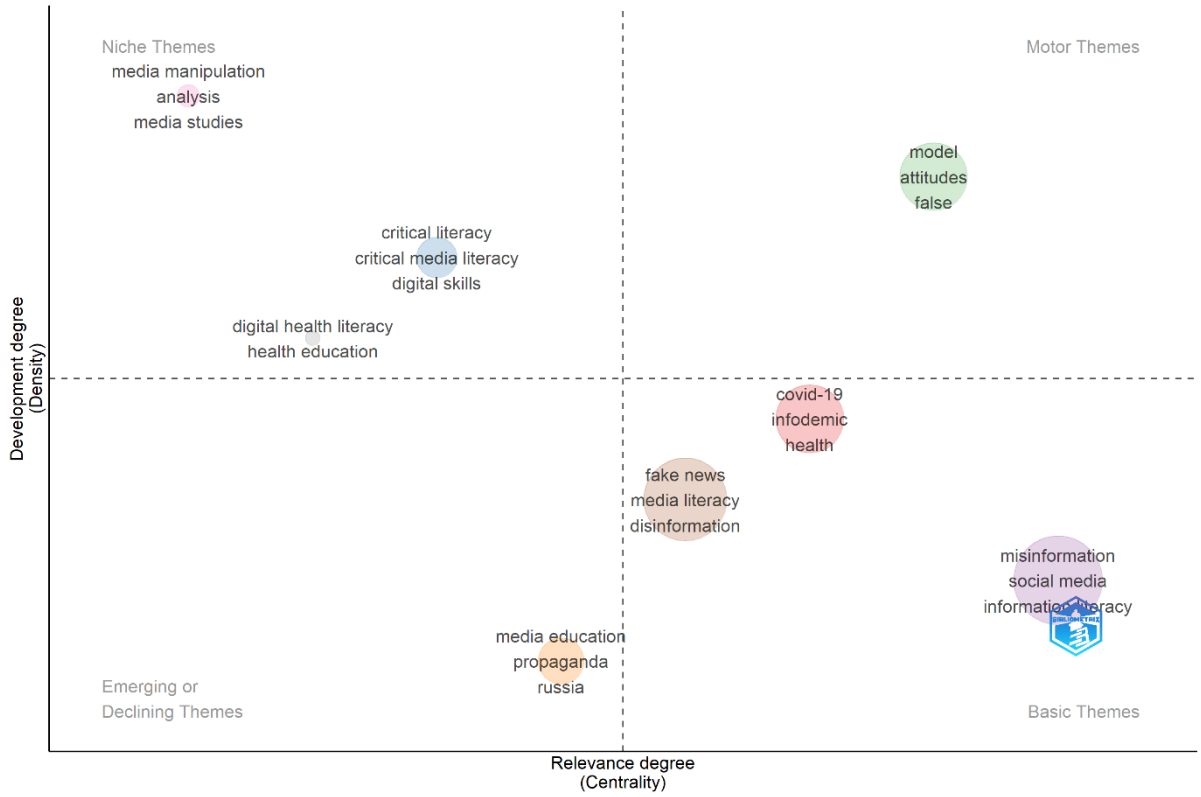

Fig. 11. Thematic strategic map

Two clear motor themes (high centrality, high density) emerge: model-attitudes-false, representing theoretically driven research on belief formation and attitudinal responses to false information, and COVID-19–infodemic–health, reflecting an applied and highly developed body of work stimulated by the pandemic context. Several niche themes (high density, low centrality), such as media manipulation, critical media literacy, and digital skills, denote well-developed but

specialized research streams with limited integration into the broader field. In contrast, emerging or declining themes, including digital health literacy and media education-propaganda-Russia, occupy the lower-left quadrant, suggesting either nascent areas still gaining coherence or highly contextualized lines of inquiry. Overall, Figure 11 demonstrates a mature research landscape structured around a strong misinformation core, complemented by both theoretically advanced and context-specific thematic developments.

Figure 12 presents the conceptual structure map generated through Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), revealing the underlying intellectual organization of the field based on highly co-occurring keywords. As shown in Figure 12, the horizontal axis (Dim 1; 38.16 % of explained variance) separates a broad societal and educational orientation, characterized by terms such as media literacy, media education, critical thinking, journalism, democracy, and artificial intelligence, from a distinct health-focused orientation, dominated by COVID-19, infodemic, public health, and health literacy. The vertical axis (Dim 2; 18.19 % of explained variance) further differentiates individual-level cognitive and behavioral processes (e.g., perceptions, credibility, self-efficacy, knowledge, skills, and attitudes) from systemic and educational responses emphasizing literacy frameworks and institutional interventions. Figure 12 also reveals four coherent conceptual clusters: a tightly defined public-health infodemic cluster, an online information processing and individual resilience cluster, a media literacy and critical citizenship cluster, and a more weakly integrated but forward-looking artificial intelligence cluster. Overall, Figure 12 demonstrates that the field is structured around the intersection of health crises, individual cognitive responses, educational interventions, and emerging technological challenges, highlighting its inherently interdisciplinary nature.

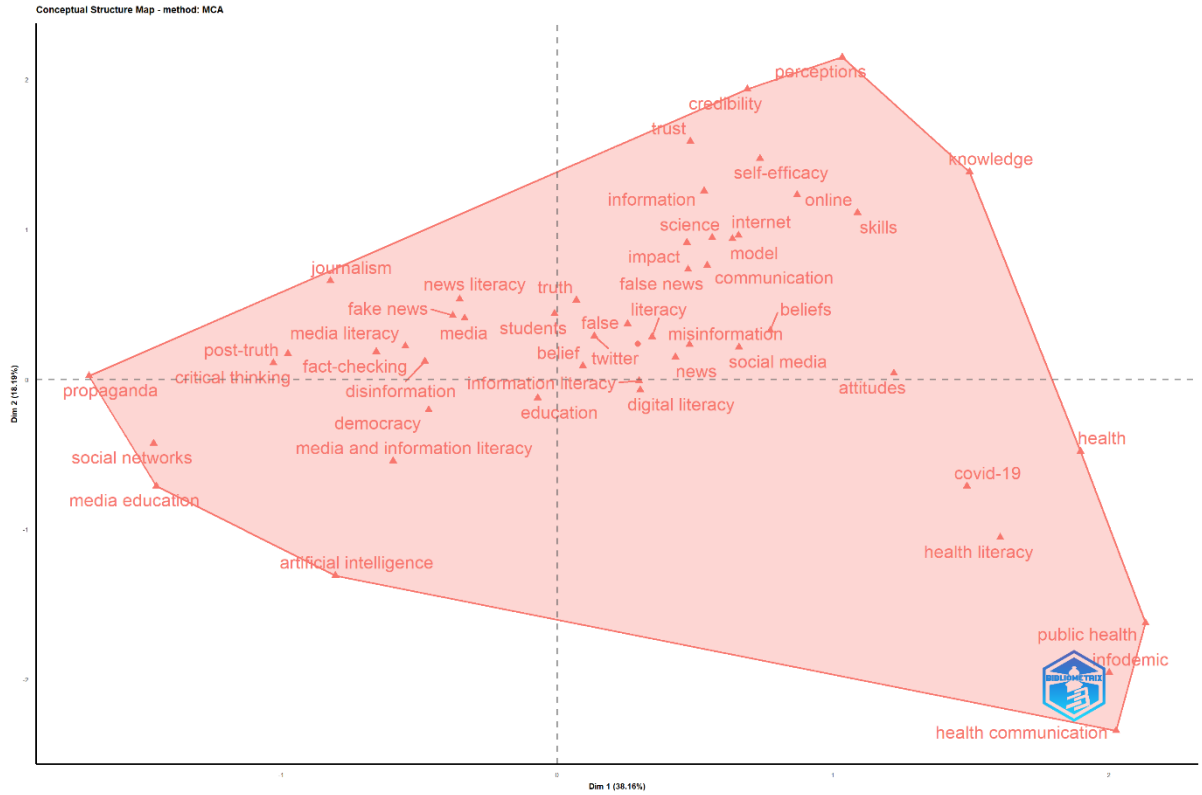

Fig. 12. Conceptual Structure Map

Figure 13 illustrates the global pattern of international research collaboration across countries. As shown in Figure 13, the United States emerges as the dominant hub of both scientific production and international co-authorship, exhibiting the highest output intensity and the densest network of collaborative links worldwide. A strong secondary core is formed by Western European countries, particularly the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, characterized by high productivity and dense intra-regional collaboration. Canada and Australia also function as major collaboration nodes, maintaining extensive ties with North America, Europe, and Asia. In East Asia, China, Japan, and South Korea demonstrate substantial research output

and strong transcontinental partnerships, especially with the United States and Europe. In contrast, countries in Latin America, Africa, and parts of South and Southeast Asia show more limited integration, typically connected through hub-and-spoke relationships with the dominant core regions. Overall, Figure 13 reveals a clear core–periphery structure in global collaboration, highlighting the concentration of scholarly influence within a small number of highly interconnected countries.

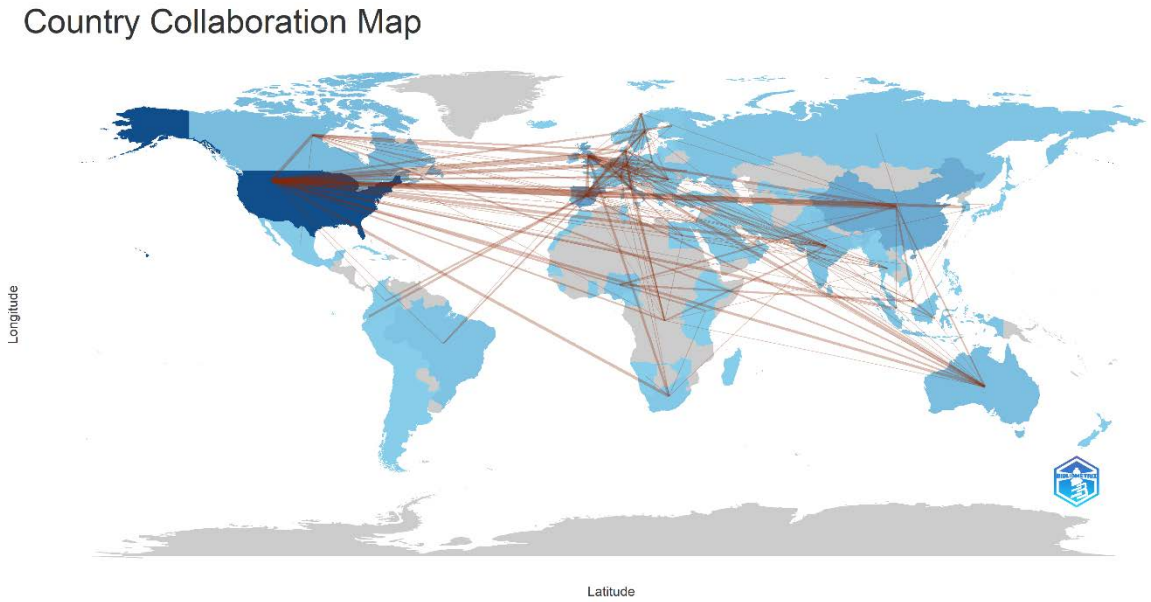

Fig. 13. Country Collaboration Map

5. Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive synthesis of how media literacy and disinformation research have evolved into a consolidated yet still unevenly developed field over the past two decades. By mapping publication growth, intellectual foundations, thematic configurations, and global collaboration patterns, the study demonstrates that scholarship has moved beyond definitional debates toward more applied, interdisciplinary, and problem-driven inquiries. The field is now structured around a strong core of misinformation- and disinformation-related research, complemented by theoretically advanced work on attitudes, cognition, and credibility, as well as context-specific streams such as public health infodemics and media education. At the same time, the knowledge architecture revealed in this study underscores persistent asymmetries in geographic representation and institutional influence, indicating that dominant epistemic trajectories continue to be shaped largely by Global North research agendas

More broadly, the findings suggest that media literacy research is at a critical juncture. Emerging themes related to artificial intelligence, deepfakes, and algorithmic mediation signal a shift toward future-oriented challenges that cannot be addressed solely through educational interventions. Instead, the field increasingly demands integrative approaches that connect media literacy with platform governance, public policy, and democratic resilience. By clarifying the structural dynamics and conceptual boundaries of existing scholarship, this study offers an empirical foundation for more comparative, longitudinal, and globally inclusive research. Such efforts are essential if media literacy is to function not only as a pedagogical tool but as a robust societal response to the evolving dynamics of disinformation in contemporary digital environments.

References

Anstead et al., 2025 – *Anstead, N., Edwards, L., Livingstone, S., Stoilova, M.* (2025). The potential for media literacy to combat misinformation: Results of a rapid evidence assessment. *International Journal of Communication*. 19: 2129-2151.

Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017 – *Aria, M., Cuccurullo, C.* (2017). Bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*. 11(4): 959-975. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007

Arık et al., 2016 – *Arık, A.O., Parlayandemir, G., Çelik, S.* (2026). LLM-based data augmentation for text classification on imbalanced datasets: A case study on fake news detection. *Egyptian Informatics Journal*. 33: 100886. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eij.2026.100886

Blair et al., 2024 – *Blair, R.A., Gottlieb, J., Nyhan, B., Paler, L., Argote, P., Stainfield, C.J.* (2024). Interventions to counter misinformation: Lessons from the Global North and applications to the Global South. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. 55: 101732. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101732

Boler et al., 2025 – *Boler, M., Gharib, H., Kweon, Y.-J., Trigiani, A., Perry, B.* (2025). Promoting Mis/Disinformation Literacy Among Adults: A Scoping Review of Interventions and Recommendations. *Communication Research*. Article 00936502251318630. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502251318630

Bowles et al., 2025 – *Bowles, J., Croke, K., Larreguy, H., Liu, S., Marshall, J.* (2025). Sustaining exposure to fact-checks: misinformation discernment, media consumption, and its political implications. *American Political Science Review*. 119(4): 1864-1887. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424001394

Cook, 2023 – *Cook, P.* (2023). Beyond "fake news": misinformation studies for a postdigital era. In: Parker, L. (ed.). *Education in the Age of Misinformation*. Springer International Publishing: 9-31. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-25871-8_2

Corbu et al., 2024 – *Corbu, N., Frau-Meigs, D., Ionescu, A., Azzoug Montané, J.* (2024). Using tools to fight disinformation in and outside the classrooms. In: Frau-Meigs, D., Corbu, N. (eds.). *Disinformation Debunked*. Routledge: 93-118. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003387404-7

D'Haenens et al., 2025 – *D'Haenens, L., Vissenberg, J., Puusepp, M., Edisherashvili, N., Martinez-Castro, D., Helsper, E.J., Tomczyk, Ł., Azadi, T., Opozda-Suder, S., Maksniemi, E., Spurava, G., Salmela-Aro, K., Sormanen, N., Tiihonen, S., Wilska, T.-A., Hietajärvi, L., Martínez, G., Larrañaga, N., Garmendia, M., ... , Sepielak, D.* (2025). Fostering media literacy: a systematic evidence review of intervention effectiveness for diverse target groups. *Media and Communication*. 13: Article 8901. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.8901

Donthu et al., 2021 – *Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., Lim, W. M.* (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*. 133: 285-296. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070

Dourado, Santos, 2025 – *Dourado, T., Santos, N.* (2025). Responsibility of digital platforms to enhance digital literacy. In: Amaral, I., Flores, A.M.M., Basílio de Simões, R., Antunes, E. (eds.). *Critical Literacies and Gender Studies: Navigating media, education, and civic engagement for social justice*. Emerald Publishing Limited: 47-58. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83662-594-020251004

Effron, Helgason, 2022 – *Effron, D.A., Helgason, B.A.* (2022). The moral psychology of misinformation: Why we excuse dishonesty in a post-truth world. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. 47: 101375. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101375

El Mokadem, 2023 – *El Mokadem, S.S.* (2023). The effect of media literacy on misinformation and deep fake video detection. *Journal of Arab Media & Society*. 35: 53-78.

Etta et al., 2022 – *Etta, G., Galeazzi, A., Hutchings, J.R., James Smith, C.S., Conti, M., Quattrociocchi, W., Riva, G.V.D.* (2022). Covid-19 infodemic on Facebook and containment measures in Italy, United Kingdom and New Zealand. *PloS One*. 17(5): e0267022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267022

Ford et al., 2023 – *Ford, T.W., Yankoski, M., Facciani, M., Weninger, T.* (2023). Online media literacy intervention in Indonesia reduces misinformation sharing intention. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 15(2): 99-123. DOI: https://doi.org/10.23860/JMLE-2023-15-2-8

Gross, Balaban, 2025 – *Gross, E.-C., Balaban, D.C.* (2025). The effectiveness of an educational intervention on countering disinformation moderated by intellectual humility. *Media and Communication*. 13: Article 9109. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.9109

Guerola-Navarro et al., 2023 – *Guerola-Navarro, V., Stratu-Strelet, D., Botella-Carrubi, D., Gil-Gomez, H.* (2023). Media or information literacy as variables for citizen participation in public decision-making? A bibliometric overview. *Sustainable Technology and Entrepreneurship*. 2(1): 100030. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stae.2022.100030

Hameleers, 2022 – *Hameleers, M.* (2022). Separating truth from lies: Comparing the effects of news media literacy interventions and fact-checkers in response to political misinformation in

the US and Netherlands. *Information, Communication & Society*. 25(1): 110-126. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1764603

Hameleers, 2023 – *Hameleers, M.* (2023). The (Un)intended consequences of emphasizing the threats of mis- and disinformation. *Media and Communication*. 11(2): 5-14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i2.6301

Huang et al., 2024 – *Huang, G., Jia, W., Yu, W.* (2024). Media literacy interventions improve resilience to misinformation: a meta-analytic investigation of overall effect and moderating factors. *Communication Research*, Article 00936502241288103. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502241288103

Miller et al., 2024 – *Miller, S., Menard, P., Bourrie, D.* (2024). I'm not fluent: How linguistic fluency, new media literacy, and personality traits influence fake news engagement behavior on social media. *Information & Management*. 61(2): 103912. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2023.103912

Nanjundaiah, 2024 – *Nanjundaiah, S.* (2024). What you see is what you get: invisibility, spectacle and media literacy in the age of digital media. In: Dahiya, S., Trehan, K. (eds.). *Handbook of Digital Journalism*. Springer Nature Singapore: 503-515. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-6675-2_43

Salaverría et al., 2024 – *Salaverría, R., Bachmann, I., Magallón Rosa, R.* (2024). Desinformación y confianza en los medios: propuestas de actuación. *Index.Comunicación*. 14(2): 13-32. DOI: https://doi.org/10.62008/ixc/14/02Yconfi

Surjatmodjo et al., 2024 – *Surjatmodjo, D., Unde, A.A., Cangara, H., Sonni, A.F.* (2024). Information pandemic: a critical review of disinformation spread on social media and its implications for state resilience. *Social Sciences*. 13(8): 418. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13080418

Taxitari et al., 2025 – *Taxitari, L., Sitistas, T., Gavriil, E.* (2025). "Disinformation aims to mislead; misinformation thrives in ignorance": insights from experts and non-experts in Greek-speaking Cyprus. *Social Sciences*. 14(3): 133. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14030133

Torre et al., 2024 – *Torre, L., Jerónimo, P., Amaral, I.* (2024). Disinformation, media literacy and journalism: Proposals from journalists in Portugal. *Observatorio (OBS*)*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.15847/obsOBS18520242438

van Erkel et al., 2026 – *van Erkel, P.F.A., van Aelst, P., van Nieuwenborgh, J., Vreese, C.H. de, Hameleers, M., Hopmann, D.N.* (2026). Combating disinformation with news literacy interventions: an experimental study on the framing effects of news literacy messages. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 31(1): 140-160. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612241279534

Vicari et al., 2024 – *Vicari, R., Elroy, O., Komendantova, N., Yosipof, A.* (2024). Persistence of misinformation and hate speech over the years: The Manchester Arena bombing. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*. 110: 104635. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2024.104635

Voitovych et al., 2025 – *Voitovych, N., Kitsa, M., Mudra, I.* (2025). Media education and media literacy as a factor in combating disinformation. *Journalism and Media*. 6(4): 188. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6040188

Wasserman, Madrid-Morales, 2022 – *Wasserman, H., Madrid-Morales, D.* (2022). Disinformation in the Global South. Wiley. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119714491

Wenzel, Stasiuk-Krajewska, 2025 – *Wenzel, M., Stasiuk-Krajewska, K.* (2025). Disinformation in Central Europe. Springer Nature Switzerland. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-76871-2

Widholm, Ekman, 2024 – *Widholm, A., Ekman, M.* (2024). Democracy and digital disintegration: Platforms, actors, citizens. *Nordicom Review*. 45(s1): 1-14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2478/nor-2024-0005

Zupic, Čater, 2015 – *Zupic, I., Čater, T.* (2015). Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization. *Organizational Research Methods*. 18(3): 429-472. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428114562629

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 38-44

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.38
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Marketing of Media Education for Youth and Its Influence on Modern Trends

Dmitry Artemenko [a, *], Yulia Andreeva [a]

[a] Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation

Abstract

In an age of digital media dominance, modern media education is becoming a critical tool for preparing young people for life in the information society. Effectively communicating its values requires adapting to new generations' media consumption and communication practices. This research paper explores the integration of marketing strategies in the promotion of media education projects for youth audiences. The aim of this work is to analyze the influence of modern digital trends on the formation of marketing approaches in this field.

The study focuses on the specificity of the youth audience, whose identity is closely related to the virtual environment, analyzes relevant marketing tools. The article justifies the thesis: successful promotion today requires using strategies that have proven effective in attracting young people. Such approaches include a focus on video content in short formats, personalization of communication. It must integrate a partnership with micro-influencers, actively use social networks as distribution channels, platforms for creating communities, implement artificial intelligence technologies to analyze data and create personalized trajectories.

In conclusion, the author concludes: marketing media education should aim at creating an immersive and socially oriented experience. This approach allows for the simulation of a media literacy environment itself, involving young people in critical thinking and content production.

Keywords: media education, marketing in education, youth audience, digital trends, video marketing, social networks, micro-influencers, personalization, media literacy.

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid digital transformation of all spheres of public life, media education has established itself as a critical element of modern pedagogy and social practice. Its role has evolved into a complex process of developing critical thinking, digital literacy, and individual social responsibility in a hyperexcessive media environment. The relevance of this direction is dictated by fundamental changes in how information is produced, distributed, and consumed. Traditional institutions have lost their monopoly, and platform algorithms and user content have become key agents in shaping agenda and worldviews. These processes are most relevant in the context of working with a youth audience – the Z and Alpha generations – whose identity, communication, and socialization is largely carried out in a hybrid online-offline space. It blurs the lines between education, entertainment, communication, and consumption.

Despite the recognition by the scientific community of the need to develop media literacy among young people, there is a noticeable gap between the stated importance of this task and the real level of involvement of young people in systemic media education projects. Traditional pedagogical and educational approaches, implemented through formal education institutions, often fail to adapt to the

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: dartemen@mail.ru (D.A. Artemenko)

speed of digital trends and the language of communication of new generations. As a consequence, the proposed formats may be perceived by target audiences as irrelevant, instructive, or archaic, not being reflected in their everyday digital experience. The paradox between an objective need for media education and a subjective low interest in its traditional forms raises the question of finding new, effective mechanisms to promote relevant values and competencies. Thus, the central problem of the study is the contradiction between high social demand for media-educated youth and the insufficient development of marketing strategies to promote it. Adequate to the digital culture and psychological characteristics of a modern youth audience.

2. Materials and methods

The methodological basis of this study is a comprehensive approach, integrating theoretical analysis and empirical synthesis. The key methodological principle is systemic, which allows to consider the object of research (marketing promotion of media education) as a multi-component dynamic system in interaction with social, technological and cultural factors. The study is interdisciplinary, at the crossroads of media pedagogy, communication theory, digital marketing and youth sociology, which has allowed to form a holistic view of the issue. The research method is a critical analysis and synthesis of existing scientific concepts, theoretical models and practical results presented in domestic and foreign publications. To work with theoretical material, a method of categorical analysis was applied, aimed at identifying and systematizing key concepts: "digital literacy", "media educational content", "involvement of the youth audience", in their modern interpretation.

The empirical basis of research is formed from a wide range of current sources, including scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, materials from specialized conferences, analytical reports of authoritative research agencies, public strategies and cases of educational and educational organizations. In the study of youth audience behavior, secondary analysis of data from global and national reports on digital and social media (Digital report DataReportal and We Are Social) was used. To assess the effectiveness of different marketing tools and formats, a comparative analysis of successful EdTech practices and campaigns and social education was used.

The classification became a methodological tool, which allowed to structure the diversity of modern digital platforms, content formats and marketing technologies according to their effectiveness and relevance for solving media education problems. The study used a predictive approach based on the identification of stable trends. The fundamental methodological requirement for all stages of work was verifiability and reliability: each theoretical thesis or analytical summary is supported by a reference to a specific source available for verification. The ethical aspect of the methodology was to be critical of data and to recognize the constraints associated with the dynamics of the digital environment.

3. Discussion

Modern media education is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by the shift from the paradigm of "defense against media," which focused on critical analysis and countering manipulation, to the paradigm of "development through media" (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015). The new paradigm views the digital environment as a space for socialization, self-realization, civic engagement, and creative content production. Evolution directly dictates the need to revise approaches to its promotion: marketing becomes a complex activity for constructing meanings, forming communities and integrating educational values into digital practices of youth. The key context is changing the media system itself. In it, the monopoly of traditional media has given way to a hybrid ecosystem in which technology platforms, opinion leaders, and user content play no less significant roles in shaping agendas and worldviews (Garcia et al., 2023; Gálik, 2020; Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2020). The promotion of media education thus takes place in a highly competitive environment for attention. Educational narratives must compete with entertainment, commercial, and polarized content.

Effective promotion of media education is impossible without a deep understanding of its target audience – generations Z and Alpha, deeply immersed in the digital environment. Their media consumption is characterized by hyper-fragmentation, mobility, climactic thinking, and the dominance of visual and video formats. Research shows that over 60 % of this audience uses social media as a primary source of news, knowledge and skills (DataReportal, 2024). For them, authenticity and value matching are crucial: they feel keenly disingenuous and prefer brands and

initiatives whose ethical principles align with their own beliefs about sustainability, inclusion, and social justice (Smith, Kist, 2023). The motivation to learn is largely pragmatic and modular – young people value the opportunity to acquire specific, practical skills. The emotional background of the Z generation is often characterized by heightened anxiety about global challenges and information overload. The external environment shapes the audience's demand for content that promotes digital wellbeing and reduces stress (Kongskunsky et al., 2022). Therefore, communication should appeal to positive agency, demonstrating how media literacy enhances opportunities for creativity, community building, and personal goals.

The dynamic landscape of digital platforms requires strategies to promote media education, continuous adaptation and informed channel choices. Visually oriented platforms such as TikTok, Reels and YouTube (Shorts) are points of attraction for young people. Successful communication involves deep immersion into 2-3 key, most relevant audiences of a particular project. For example, the Russian platform "VKontakte", while remaining a universal ecosystem, demonstrates high efficiency in building thematic educational communities (parishes) through live-broadcast tools, discussions and flexible publication formats. Telegram, having evolved into a powerful platform for content distribution, has become a significant channel for peer-reviewed content, tutorials, and mini-courses, especially for niche and motivated audiences. The promising direction is the use of gaming platforms (e.g. Roblox, Minecraft) and metaphysical as new educational environments. They can be used to create immersive simulations for digital security and networking skills (Livingstone, Pothong, 2024).

Table 1. Comparative analysis of digital platforms to promote media education among young people

Platform/ Type	Key formats and features	Potential for media education	Key limitations
TikTok, Reels	Ultra-short vertical videos (up to 90 seconds), algorithmic feed, trends and shilling.	High viral capacity, ideal for the format of "Lifhaks", case dissections and quick fact checks.	Depth of feed, clivage, high competition for attention.
YouTube	Long videos (Longrids), screencasts, documentary formats, system of recommendations.	Possibility of deep immersion into the topic, building a loyal audience of subscribers, monetization.	High resource intensity of production, long period of channel development.
VKontakte	Universal ecosystem: communities, streams, articles, discussions, clips.	Best opportunities to build a sustainable educational community by interacting with an audience in the Russian-speaking segment.	The need for constant moderation and embedding in diverse content.
Telegram	Channels (one-way communication), chats (dialogue), bots, long text convenience.	Distribution of expert materials, creation of closed groups for in-depth training, high loyalty of subscribers.	The audience can be narrow, requiring quality text content.

Source: prepared by the author

Modern trends require a shift to dialogue and the creation of an immersive educational experience. Video content remains key. Its effectiveness is determined by its ability to provoke interaction. Social media algorithms are increasingly ranking content by engagement depth (likes, comments, reposts, viewing time), so educational videos should be designed to launch a discussion: with provocative headlines, by direct questions to the audience and use of interactive features (Chodak et al., 2019). A series of mystery videos can be a successful format. In them, viewers are

encouraged to find signs of mediatherapy. There is great potential for podcasts and audio content to be integrated into daily youth rituals. Artificial-intelligence technologies are opening the way to hyper-personalization: chat bots can act as personal trainers for media literacy. Generative AI tools allow students to practice the principles of content creation and verification (Luckin, Cukurova, 2023). Gamification, going beyond simple badges, involves developing educational quests or mobile apps.

Progress in promoting media education requires taking into account the cognitive characteristics of information processing by young people in a digital environment. Modern research in digital cognition points to the formation of "clipal thinking" as an adaptive mechanism for information oversupply. The phenomenon is characterized by a special mode of attention – rapid switching between heterogeneous flows of information and focus on visual patterns and emotional triggers (Frumkin, 2010; Soldatova, Rasskazova, 2014). Therefore, effective educational content must be short, cognitive-optimized: use strong visual metaphors, narrative structures close to the format of storytelling in social media, emphasize key ideas in the first seconds of interaction. The approach contrasts haphazard perception by offering structured and meaningful "information patterns" that integrate with existing user mental patterns and promote deeper understanding of complex media literacy concepts.

Strategically, the advancement of media education today must be viewed through the lens of the concept of educational guerrilla marketing and natively integration. This implies the abandonment of direct didactics in favor of a hidden introduction of educational messages into those formats and contexts that are already an organic part of youth digital being. An example is a collaboration with a popular blogger-gamer, who as part of his stream analyzes the reliability of information about new game assembly, demonstrating in practice methods of source verification. Or integrate a fake-recognition mini-lesson into a popular web series script. Such an approach, based on the theory of inclusive learning, allows overcoming the psychological barrier of resistance to "learning" by turning it into a byproduct of entertainment or social experience (Greenhow et al., 2023). The context of its submission becomes key, trustworthy and perceived as relevant to the audience's current interests and activities.

With free educational content competing with professionally created entertainment, the ability to build long-term loyalty and turn a one-time consumer into a community member is a key asset. Modern social-network theories emphasize the role of "algorithmic public sphere". In it, the visibility of content is determined by the mechanics of engagement (Van Dijck et al., 2023). Therefore, the strategy of advancement must include the creation of a single viral content and the design of a digital educational ecosystem. This implies the creation of interconnected presence points (e.g. TikTok for attraction, Telegram channel for in-depth study, Discord server for communication and collaboration). So each channel performs its function in the involvement funnel. User-generated content (UGC) and co-creation mechanics are becoming a critical element of such an ecosystem. Holding a contest to create memes on digital hygiene, contests for the best news story or hackathons to develop educational mini-games transforms a passive audience into active co-authors and ambassadors of the project.

It is necessary to consider cross-cultural and regional characteristics as a factor modifying universal marketing strategies. The digital culture of youth, though globalized, is deeply rooted in local contexts - linguistic, social, and political. Thus, the study of digital behavior of Russian youth indicates the high importance of local platforms (such as "VKontakte" and "Yandex.Zen"), specific trust in certain types of influencers, whose narratives resonate with the national-cultural context. Direct copying of successful Western cases (such as TikTok formats) without deep cultural adaptation and working with local trends can be inefficient. Promotion of media education should include the digital ethnography phase – the study of specific practices, languages and communities of a target audience in a particular region. Such an approach allows to identify relevant topics for a given group (e.g. critical thinking of domestic media), use relevant humor and cultural codes, choose promotion channels that have maximum penetration and trust in the specific environment. Thus, global trends of personalization and gamification gain the necessary local meaning.

4. Results

The study has identified a number of specific patterns and effective practices in marketing media education for young people. The most relevant and effective channels of communication are the visually oriented platforms (TikTok, InstagramReels, and YouTube Shorts), which dominate

the media consumption of generations Z and Alpha. The comparative analysis of platforms presented in Table 1 confirmed that each has unique potential and limitations. Thus, the ultra-short video content on TikTok Reels demonstrates the highest viral potential for the distribution of educational "lifhaks" and the dissection of cases. Its effectiveness is limited by the depth of feed. At the same time, YouTube and universal ecosystems like "VKontakte" provide opportunities for building sustainable educational communities and deep immersion into topics. On the other hand, it requires considerable resources to create and moderate diverse content. Telegram (social network banned in Russia) has established itself as a key channel for sharing expertise and reaching out to niche, high-profile audiences.

The effectiveness of educational content depends directly on its ability to spark interaction and engagement. Social media algorithms that rank content by engagement rates make it crucial to design materials that are initially aimed at triggering a discussion - using provocative headlines, direct questions to the audience, and interactive features. Experiments such as those described in the work by Chodak and colleagues (Chodak et al., 2019) show that video content, especially in the form of detective clippings or clips, leads to a significant increase in engagement and memorization of key principles of media literacy.

An important result of the study is confirmation of the hypothesis about the high effectiveness of strategies of guerrilla marketing and the integration of native educational messages. Collaboration with micro-influencers, whose image and values are authentic to the target audience, is significantly more effective than direct didactics or advertising through formal institutions. Young people exhibit a greater sensitivity to information submitted in the context of entertainment content, whether it is a popular gamer's stream analyzing source credibility or a mini-lesson integrated into the webseries' storyline. Such an approach allows the psychological barrier to be overcome and transforms the educational process into a byproduct of social or entertainment experience.

The personalization provided by artificial intelligence technologies has shown its high potential effectiveness. Chat bot opportunities as personal media literacy coaches and generative AI tools for hands-on learning about content creation open the way to shaping individual educational trajectories that meet young people's demand for pragmatic and applicable skills. At the same time, cross-cultural analysis has revealed the need for a deep localization of global trends. Universal strategies, such as gamification or working with influencers, require the inclusion of local insights, cultural codes, and platforms that are most trusted in a particular region. Thus, the successful promotion of media education today is a synthesis of deep understanding of cognitive characteristics and digital habits of young people, strategic choice and combination of digital channels, creation of immersive, a socially oriented and personalized educational experience, organically woven into the digital everyday life of new generations.

Evidence from the study on the need to use modern digital channels for youth engagement is reflected in the work of other authors. Survey results showing the dominance of YouTube, TikTok and "VKontakte" as the main platforms for sports club advertising are correlated with broader data on media consumption. "The online environment today has become for the young generation a basic space for communication and consumption of different content" (VtSIOM, 2023). This confirms the strategic importance of digital channels as a primary, rather than an auxiliary, marketing tool.

The paradigm shift in media education identified in the paper is being discussed in the scientific community. We believe that media literacy should not be limited to information analysis. These methods should be reinforced by a systemic approach that highlights the design of social media platforms and their psychological impact (Huguet et al., 2024). The thesis directly supports the conclusion of the study on the need to move to create an immersive educational environment that takes into account the algorithmic nature of digital platforms.

The effectiveness of interactive and gaming content, highlighted in the study as a key factor for engagement, is confirmed by practice. An example is the goal of the interactive game "Moshemoyka" to encourage young people to critically evaluate information in media.

Thus, the discussion around the results shows: effective promotion of services and educational values must be based on a deep understanding of the digital environment. Researchers are providing increasing evidence that social media and digital platforms play a crucial role in the information diet of young people (Hobbs, 2024). Hence, strategic integration into digital practices and algorithmic logic of platforms where the target audience functions is key.

5. Conclusion

This study allows for a number of fundamental conclusions about the role and mechanisms of media marketing in the context of interaction with youth audiences in two important areas - promotion and media education initiatives. Empirical evidence from the analysis consistently confirms that the digital environment, especially social networks, has become a media environment. It shapes the interests, values, and behaviors of a new generation. The dominance of platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and "VKontakte" in youth media consumption requires a fundamental revision of traditional marketing and pedagogical approaches. Impact effectiveness is determined by the ability to organically integrate into their algorithmic logic and cultural codes, creating relevant and engaging content.

Comprehensive analysis has shown – successful media marketing targeting young people, whether for commercial or educational purposes, is based on a synthesis of several strategic principles. First, it is a transition from monologue to dialogue and interactive interaction. In it, content is designed to provoke engagement, discussion and creation. Second, the personalization of communication, achieved through targeted technologies, data analysis, and, in the long run, artificial intelligence tools that allow for individual trajectories of interaction, is critically important. Third, there is proven effectiveness in natively integrating and guerrilla marketing strategies when key messages are broadcast through authoritative influencers and in formats that are organic to entertainment content.

The important conclusion is to recognize the need for deep cultural and regional adaptation of global trends. Universal techniques, such as gamification, working with microcalculators, or using short videos, should be filled with local insights, based on platforms that are highly trusted, and tailored to the specific digital behaviors of a particular audience. This makes the digital ethnography phase important in strategy development. Media marketing is being transformed into a complex practice of designing digital environments and communities.

References

Artemenko et al., 2020 – *Artemenko, D.A., Yalunina, E.N., Panfilova, E.A. et al.* (2020). Indicators of digital inequality and spatial development of the ICT sector in the Russian Federation. In: Gaol, F.L. et al. (eds.). *Inclusive Development of Society : Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Management and Technology in Knowledge, Service, Tourism & Hospitality (Serve 2018).* Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, 06.10.–16.10.2018. Kuta, Bali, Indonesia: CRC Press, London, 2020: 187-195.

Artemenko et al., 2020 – *Artemenko, G.A., Artemenko, D.A., Bagdasaryan, V.A. et al.* (2020). Tsifrovaya ekonomika i onlajn-obrazovanie: evropejskij opyt [Digital economy and online education: european experience]. Stavropol'. [in Russian]

Artemenko, Zenchenko, 2021 – *Artemenko, D.A., Zenchenko, S.V.* (2021). Cifrovye tekhnologii v finansovoj sfere: evolyuciya i osnovnye trendy razvitiya v Rossii i za rubezhom [Digital technologies in the financial sector: evolution and main development trends in Russia and abroad]. *Finansy: teoriya i praktika*. 25(3): 90-101. DOI: 10.26794/2587-5671-2021-25-3-90-10 [in Russian]

Chodak et al., 2019 – *Chodak, G., Chawla, Y., Dzidowski, A., Ludwikowska, K.* (2019). The effectiveness of marketing communication in social media. In: *ECSM 2019 6th European conference on social media*. Academic Conferences and Publishing Limited: 73-81.

DataReportal, 2024 – DataReportal (2024). Digital 2024: Global Overview Report. We Are Social & Meltwater. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-global-overview-report

Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015 – *Fedorov, A., Levitskaya, A.* (2015). The Framework of media education and media criticism in the contemporary world: the opinion of international experts. *Comunicar*. 45(23): 107-115. DOI: 10.3916/C45-2015-11

Fedotova et al., 2025 – *Fedotova, M.A., Pogodina, T.V., Karpova, S.V.* (2025). Otsenka tendencij i perspektiv razvitiya ekonomiki Rossii v usloviyah sankcionnogo davleniya [Assessment of trends and prospects for the development of the Russian economy under sanctions pressure]. *Finansy: teoriya i praktika*. 29(1):6-19. DOI: 10.26794/2587-5671-2025-29-1-6-19 [in Russian]

Frumkin, 2022 – *Frumkin, K.G.* (2010). Klipovoe myshlenie i sud'ba linejnogo teksta [Clip thinking and the fate of linear text]. *Topos*. 9. [in Russian]

Gálik, 2020 – *Gálik, S.* (2020). Thinking in the network. *Central European Journal of Communication*. 27(3): 446-459. DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.13.3(27).9

Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020 – *Gáliková Tolnaiová, S.*, Gálik, S. (2020). Cyberspace as a new living world and its axiological contexts. In: Abu-Taieh, E., Mouatasim, A., Al Hadid, I.H. (eds.). *Cyberspace*. London: 39-52.

Garcia et al., 2023 – *Garcia, A., Nichols, T.P., Mirra, N.* (2023). The Algorithmic public sphere: a new paradigm for civic media education. *Harvard Educational Review*. 93(2): 185-210.

Greenhow et al., 2023 – *Greenhow, C., Sonnevend, J., Agur, C.* (2023). Engaged learning in the digital age: a theory and practice. MIT Press.

Hobbs, 2024 – *Hobbs, R.* (2024). Media literacy in action: questioning the media. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 426 p.

Huguet et al., 2024 – *Huguet, A. et al.* (2024). Rethinking media literacy for the platform society: a systemic approach. Rand Corporation.

Livingstone, Pothong, 2024 – *Livingstone, S., Pothong, K.* (2024). Playful platforms: learning in and through digital games and metaverses. London School of Economics, Department of Media and Communications.

Luckin, Cukurova, 2023 – *Luckin, R., Cukurova, M.* (2023). Designing AI for education: the case of personalised media literacy tutors. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*. 33(2): 325-349.

Smith, Kist, 2023 – *Smith, B.E., Kist, W.* (2023). Authenticity and values: engaging generation z in an age of cynicism. *Journal of Youth Studies*. 26(4): 451-468.

Soldatova, Rasskazova, 2014 – *Soldatova, G.U., Rasskazova, E.I.* (2014). Psihologicheskie modeli cifrovoj kompetentnosti rossijskih podrostkov i roditelej [Psychological models of digital competence among Russian adolescents and parents]. *Nacional'nyj psihologicheskij zhurnal*. 2(14): 27-35. DOI:10.11621/npj.2014.0204 [in Russian]

Van Dijck et al., 2023 – *Van Dijck, J., Poell, T., De Waal, M.* (2023). The Algorithmic Society: Platform Power and the Logic of Engagement. Oxford University Press.

VTSIOM, 2023 – VTSIOM. Analiticheskii-obzor/onlajn-sreda-dlja-molodezhi-obshhenie-kontent-doverie [Online environment for young people: communication, content, and trust]. 5146. 2023. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/onlajn-sreda-dlja-molodezhi-obshhenie-kontent-doverie [in Russian]

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 45-59

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.45
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Media Literacy in Practice: Assessing and Addressing Competency Gaps among M.A. Mass Communication Students

Sameera Bhoi [a, *], Rajesh Kumar [a]

[a] Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, India

Abstract

The study aims to assess the media literacy competency of M.A. Mass Communication students enrolled in six universities – three each from Odisha and Jharkhand (one Central, one State, and one Private university in each state). An in-person survey was conducted to collect data from 263 of the 280 enrolled students. To assess media literacy related competencies, the study used a structured questionnaire developed using the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework. In order to improve clarity and prevent conceptual redundancy, the five competencies defined in the original framework were subsumed into three primary domains: Access (information navigation), Analyse and Evaluate (critical understanding), and Create and Act (content production and participation). SPSS statistical tools and Microsoft Excel were used to analyse the data. Findings of the study show a distinct trend in student performance: the strongest competency domain was Access (information navigation), followed by Create and Act (production and participation). On the other hand, the poorest area was Analyse and Evaluate (critical understanding), indicating significant weaknesses in Mass Communication students' critical skills. In order to improve media literacy education in these regions, the study highlights need for curriculum reforms, conducive policy interventions, faculty development programs fostering media literacy education.

Keywords: media literacy, mass communication education, UNESCO MIL Framework, critical thinking, survey.

1. Introduction

The contemporary digital revolution has significantly led to the rapid expansion of new media tools and technologies. While this tectonic shift in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offers individuals a plethora of opportunities to produce and consume content, it has also brought up significant challenges in the form of misleading information, ultimately creating a serious instability in the communication landscape. Terminologies like "fake news" and "post-truth," which were formerly confined to political discourse, are now part of our day-to-day conversation (Monsees, 2021). This information disorder has diluted the beauty of rationale debate, polarising and undermining the public sphere, and destabilising the institution of journalism (Lokot, Diakopoulos, 2016). Acknowledging Media literacy as vital and emerging competency is the need of the hour, enabling people to be critical, objective, and rational media users.

A thorough description of media literacy is given by the National Association of Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), which defines it as the capability to access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act across all forms of communication. This ability encourages the critical analysis of media

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: sameerbhoi111@gmail.com (S. Bhoi), rajesh.kumar@cuj.ac.in (R. Kumar)

text during both consumption and production across various platforms, going beyond the functional literacy of reading and writing skills. As a result, media literacy is recognised as an essential life skill required for surviving and thriving in this information saturated world. It is essential to preserve fundamental democratic principles, such as privacy and freedom of speech (Jolls, Johnsen, 2017). Additionally, it is a powerful tool in addressing issues associated with information disorder as it empowers citizens to effectively navigate a complex information landscape, critically examine the reliability of information sources, and comprehend the underlying power structures controlling the media ecosystem (Bakir, McStay, 2018).

Colleges and universities are among the most suitable spaces to train young minds in critical thinking, objective analysis, rational media use, and ultimately to nurture informed and engaged citizens. Media literacy is a vital skill for media and communication students, as they are likely to become future journalists, mass communicators, gatekeepers, watchdogs, or important stakeholders within the information ecosystem (Kamerer, 2013). Incorporating media literacy components into classroom teaching-learning activities and laboratory exercises is considered a highly effective strategy to foster critical and analytical thinking among students, as validated by various prior studies. Students who develop such critical skills are better positioned to make personal and collective decisions wisely and rationally. Additionally, prominent scholars in the field of media literacy, such as Hobbs and Frost (Hobbs, Frost 2003), have consistently emphasised the need for structured educational interventions to enhance students' understanding and evaluation of the media content they encounter. However, several studies also indicate that higher education institutions continue to underestimate and fail to incorporate media literacy as a formal component of curricular frameworks, particularly in poor and underdeveloped nations.

Though media education has already completed 100 years of its existence in India, the emphasis on media literacy competency within media education curricula has remained largely neglected. A clear-cut policy framework addressing this aspect is still lacking. In eastern India, particularly regions such as Odisha and Jharkhand, which continue to face limited accessibility to quality education, progress has been slow, with inadequate faculty strength and weak integration of media literacy competency skills into university curricula (Kumar, Singh, 2020). Although a few studies have attempted to assess the media literacy competency of mass communication students in the Indian context, a clear research gap remains in the form of, or due to the absence of, a systematic assessment of media literacy skills among mass communication students in underdeveloped regions such as Odisha and Jharkhand. To address this gap, the present study operationalises media literacy skills using UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy framework, which emphasises five interrelated competencies: access, analyse, evaluate, create, and act. In this context, the study focuses on assessing these five key competencies among MA Mass Communication students in Odisha and Jharkhand. Such operationalisation ensures a structured and internationally recognised standard for evaluating students' media literacy competency, identifying existing gaps, and suggesting measures for improvement.

2. Materials and methods

This study employed a quantitative research design to assess the media literacy competencies of M.A Mass Communication students in selected universities of Odisha and Jharkhand.

This study employed a quantitative research design to assess the media literacy competencies of M.A. Mass Communication students in selected universities of Odisha and Jharkhand. The study laid its foundation on the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, focusing on five key competencies – Access, Analyse, Evaluate, Create, and Act – to operationalise the concept of media literacy. Although the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework identifies five core competencies as Access, Analyse, Evaluate, Create, and Act, it treats these competencies as closely interrelated rather than mutually exclusive. The UNESCO report on the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework repeatedly highlights Access (locating and navigating information) as foundational, Analyse and Evaluate (critical thinking and assessment of media messages) as core cognitive competencies, and Create and Act (media content creation and participatory engagement) as applied and participatory competencies. Although UNESCO has not numerically classified these competencies into three domains, conceptually it has grouped them accordingly. Furthermore, several scholars in the field of media literacy, such as S. Livingstone (Livingstone, 2004), and R. Hobbs (Hobbs, 2010), have categorically organised these competencies

into three clusters or domains, as outlined above, to avoid conceptual overlap and to ensure statistical clarity in analysis.

Research Design

The researcher conducted a survey among MA Mass Communication students across six universities in Odisha and Jharkhand to assess their media literacy skills. The questionnaire, used as the primary data collection tool, was developed in accordance with the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, and a corresponding codebook was prepared to ensure systematic analysis. The questionnaire comprised a variety of items, including Likert-scale items, binary items, ordinal frequency-based items, and a few open-ended questions. Likert-scale responses were measured on a five-point scale (1–5). Binary responses, such as Yes/No, were also operationalised on a five-point scale for analytical efficacy, with Yes = 5 and No = 1. Ordinal items (for example, time-based responses such as hours of media use) were standardised to a 1–5 scale according to their order of magnitude. Open-ended responses were content-coded and assigned numerical values (1–5) to ensure accuracy in quantitative analysis. In addition, nominal questions were analysed using frequency distributions and binary indicators (0 = non-use, 1 = use) rather than a five-point scale. This coding approach was adopted to ensure uniform quantitative treatment across all variables.

Sample

The respondents for this study consisted of MA Mass Communication students enrolled in six universities across Odisha and Jharkhand. A total of 280 students were admitted to Mass Communication programmes in these six universities during the academic session 2022–2024, out of which 263 responses were collected. Seventeen responses could not be recorded, yet the study achieved a notably high response rate. The table below presents the distribution of admitted students and collected responses across the universities.

Table 3. University-wise distribution of admitted students and responses

University	Admitted Students	Responses Collected
Central University of Odisha (CUO) – Central	24	24
Berhampur University (BU) – State, Odisha	48	42
Birla Global University (BGU) – Private, Odisha	30	29
Central University of Jharkhand (CUJ) – Central	37	37
Ranchi University (RU) – State, Jharkhand	130	120
Amity University Ranchi (AUR) – Private, Jharkhand	11	11
Total	280	263

Instrument

The questionnaire for the study was developed in alignment with the UNESCO MIL framework. The instrument was designed to assess various competencies of Mass Communication students, related to their ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and create or act upon media content. Before the actual field survey, the questionnaire was piloted using Google Forms and circulated in a few WhatsApp groups comprising the researcher's peers and Mass Communication students. The feedback received during the pilot study was incorporated to refine the instrument and ensure better clarity, reliability, and internal consistency. But in the main study, physical copies of the questionnaire were administered during the field survey to assess the media literacy competencies and skills of the students.

Data Collection

The data collection for this study was carried out by the researcher through in-person visits to the Mass Communication departments of the six selected universities between June 2024 and August 2024. The physical questionnaires were distributed to students in classroom settings after obtaining prior permission from the authorities of the respective departments. Conducting the survey in person enabled greater student engagement and allowed the researcher to address students' queries related to the questionnaire, thereby ensuring greater accuracy in the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The collected responses were coded and recorded into Microsoft Excel for data cleaning and organisation. The researcher received binary, ordinal, and open-ended responses during data

collection, which were coded using a predefined scoring scheme to maintain consistency. A cleaned dataset was prepared in alignment with the developed codebook and subsequently imported into SPSS for statistical analysis.

Means and standard deviations were used to calculate each media literacy competency domain in order to gain a clear understanding of the overall media literacy skills of the students. The study also conducted a comparative analysis across various variables, including state, type of university, gender, exposure to media literacy training, and the educational background of the respondents. SPSS software was used to compute the descriptive statistics. The findings of the study were then presented in the form of tables, charts, and figures for further interpretation and discussion.

3. Discussion

The present study interprets its findings within the existing studies on digital and media literacy, fact-checking, critical media engagement.

The findings of the study reveal a clear and consistent pattern across all variables, indicating that students perform most strongly in the Access domain of media literacy, followed by Create and Act, with Analyse and Evaluate being as the weakest domain. The comparatively higher scores in the Access domain suggest that students are digitally adept and comfortable with locating and navigating media text from media sources. This finding in tuned with existing research which highlights that young media users often possess stronger digital and technical skills, particularly in accessing and using content through modern media technologies, but access does not mean the media users have capacity to judge the consumed content objectively and rationally (Guess et al., 2020).

The widespread penetration of digital devices and the expansion of digital infrastructure have led to extensive use of social media among Indian youth, resulting in increased consumption of digital information across the country, especially in the last decade. However, access to digital devices, consumption of digital information, or technical proficiency alone do not constitute sufficient criteria for being considered media literate (Van der Linden, 2021). Accessing media content or information from multiple sources does not necessarily result in mindful consumption. The findings of this study indicate that although students are comparatively proficient in accessing information from diverse media sources, they demonstrate relatively low performance in the Analyse and Evaluate domain. This highlights a significant gap in their critical thinking abilities, analytical judgement, and capacity to evaluate media content. This further indicates that M.A. Mass Communication students are not adequately equipped to critically interpret media messages in order to assess the reliability of information or identify implicit biases and stereotypes that may significantly influence and manipulate media consumers. Previous studies have cautioned that media education often prioritises the development of digital skills and technical proficiency, which primarily strengthen the Access component of media literacy, while placing comparatively less emphasis on the critical analysis and interpretation of media messages (Hameleers, 2022).

The comparative analysis reveals that M.A. Mass Communication students from Odisha perform slightly better in media literacy competencies than their counterparts in Jharkhand. It is noteworthy that Berhampur University and Birla Global University in Odisha offer dedicated courses on Media Literacy within their curricula, which may be one of the key factors contributing to the comparatively higher media literacy scores among students in Odisha. In contrast, universities in Jharkhand continue to face several infrastructural and structural challenges. For instance, Ranchi University operates with inadequate departmental resources, an outdated curriculum, and a lack of permanent faculty members. On the other hand, although the Central University of Jharkhand has permanent faculty in place, it still faces significant infrastructural constraints and resource shortages. As a result, students have limited opportunities for practical learning, including structured training in media literacy competencies. Previous studies have established that institutional support, curriculum design, and pedagogical practices play a crucial role in shaping and sharpening students' media literacy skills of the students (Aslett et al., 2023).

From an institutional perspective, the study finds that private universities demonstrate stronger media literacy competencies compared to other types of institutions. This outcome may be attributed to better infrastructural facilities, regular curriculum revision, greater flexibility in academic decision-making, and the integration of emerging skills aligned with contemporary industry demands. Private institutions often enjoy greater autonomy to update syllabi, introduce digital tools and technologies, and organise regular academic activities such as seminars, workshops, and conferences, all of which may contribute to enhanced media literacy outcomes

among students. In contrast, students from public universities demonstrate strong performance in the Access domain but lag considerably in the Analyse and Evaluate and Create and Act domains. It is to be noted that though public universities such as Berhampur University have introduced a dedicated paper on media literacy, student feedback suggests a significant gap between curriculum design and actual teaching, learning, and training practices. In other words, while media literacy has been formally included in the curriculum, its effective implementation remains limited, with departments lagging behind in translating curricular intent into meaningful pedagogical practice. These findings strengthen the argument that the mere inclusion of media literacy components in the curriculum is not sufficient; rather, it must be supported by effective pedagogical practices, skilled faculty members, and an experiential learning environment within institutions (Aslett et al., 2023).

One of the key findings of this study is that Mass Communication students who had exposure to formal media literacy training programmes demonstrated better performance compared to those without such exposure. This result suggests that structured media literacy interventions in the forms of seminars, fact-checking workshops, and expert lectures – can play a significant role in strengthening students' critical thinking and analytical abilities.

Previous studies have acknowledged that targeted media literacy training programmes can equip students with the skills to assess media content, evaluate its credibility, identify implicit biases and stereotypes, and overall enhance their critical engagement with media (Cunliffe-Jones et al., 2021; Roozenbeek, van der Linden, 2020). Similarly, students with a prior educational background in Mass Communication before enrolling in the master's programme demonstrated higher media literacy competency scores compared to those without such a background. Their prior familiarity with media concepts, professional practices, ethical considerations, content production processes, and foundational theories appears to have contributed to stronger media literacy competencies among these students.

One of the notable findings of this study is that there is minimal difference in media literacy competencies between male and female Mass Communication students in Odisha and Jharkhand. A consistent pattern was observed across genders, with students performing comparatively well in the Access domain, moderately in the Create and Act domain, and weak in the Analyse and Evaluate domain. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that gender-based differences in digital and media literacy skills are gradually narrowing, while structural and institutional factors play a more dominant role in shaping media literacy outcomes (Tang et al., 2024).

The findings of this study have important implications for media curriculum design, pedagogical practices, faculty development programmes, and higher education policy. The study finds that the Analyse and Evaluate domain of media literacy is the weakest among Mass Communication students. This indicates a pressing need for curriculum components to place greater emphasis on developing critical thinking skills, enabling students to analyse consumed information, and identify implicit biases and stereotypes embedded in media content. This observation closely aligns with the principles of the Five Laws of Media and Information Literacy, which emphasise critical thinking as a central tool for fostering informed, engaged, and responsible citizenship (Neylan et al., 2023).

Secondly, the moderate performance observed in the Create and Act domain of media literacy indicates a strong need for greater emphasis on practical and experiential learning among Mass Communication students. This highlights the necessity for institutions to make adequate provisions for establishing well-equipped multimedia laboratories, employing skilled technical staff, and ensuring access to fact-checking and verification tools. Such infrastructural and pedagogical support can significantly enhance students' practical competencies. This view is supported by existing scholarship, which suggests that experiential learning plays a crucial role in developing technical proficiency as well as a deeper understanding of the ethical dimensions of media practices (Roozenbeek, van der Linden, 2020).

Thirdly, an effective media literacy education ecosystem is unimaginable without the presence of well-trained and competent faculty members who are equipped with contemporary digital pedagogy, verification tools and techniques, critical understanding of media texts, and media analysis skills. Higher education authorities, along with institutional administrations, must therefore prioritise the development of structured faculty development programmes aligned with the evolving dimensions of media literacy. This includes organising regular workshops, promoting interdisciplinary collaborations, and fostering partnerships with media organisations and fact-checking institutions. Such initiatives are

essential for strengthening faculty capacity and ensuring effective delivery of media literacy education, as emphasised by previous studies (Neylan et al., 2023).

Finally, although some universities have introduced a stand-alone paper dedicated to media literacy, this approach needs to be adopted more widely. Media literacy components should be systematically integrated into the existing curricula of all universities to ensure comprehensive and consistent development of media literacy competencies among students.

4. Results

The following section presents a detailed account of the characteristics of the respondents from the six selected universities in Odisha and Jharkhand. The study focused on variables related to the respondents, such as state, gender, university, type of university, exposure to media literacy (ML) training, and background in Mass Communication.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender and State

State	Male (N/%)	Female (N/%)	Total
Odisha	49 (51.6)	46 (48.4)	95
Jharkhand	79 (47.0)	89 (53.0)	168
Total	128 (48.7)	135 (51.3)	263

The above table presents the gender-wise distribution of respondents. The data indicate a fairly balanced representation of male and female students. In Odisha, males constitute 51.6 % of the respondents, while females account for 48.4 %. In Jharkhand, male respondents represent 47 %, whereas females comprise 53 %. Overall, the gender distribution shows a near-equal representation, with males accounting for 48.7 % and females for 51.3 % of the total respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by University

State	University	N	% within state
Odisha	CUO	24	25.3
	BU	42	44.2
	BGU	29	30.5
Jharkhand	CUJ	37	22.0
	RU	120	71.4
	AUR	11	6.5
Total		263	100

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents across six universities in both states. In both Odisha and Jharkhand, state universities constitute the highest share of participants. In Odisha, Berhampur University accounts for the largest proportion of respondents at 44.2 %, followed by Birla Global University with 30.5 % and the Central University of Odisha with 25.3 %. In Jharkhand, Ranchi University represents the highest proportion of respondents, comprising 71.4 %, followed by the Central University of Jharkhand at 22 % and Amity University Ranchi at 6.5 %.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by University Type

University Type	N	%
Central	61	23.2
State	162	61.6
Private	40	15.2
Total	263	100

The above table presents the distribution of respondents based on the type of university in the selected states. The majority of the respondents belong to state universities, accounting for 61.6 % of the total sample. This is followed by central universities, which comprise 23.2 % of the

respondents. Private universities represent the smallest proportion, accounting for 15.2 % of the total sample.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents by ML Training

State	Yes	No
Odisha	38	57
Jharkhand	53	115
Total	91	172

The above table presents data on the exposure of M.A. Mass Communication students to media literacy training programmes or events in the two states. Out of the 263 respondents, only 35 % reported having exposure to some form of media literacy training, such as workshops, seminars, or conferences focused on media literacy. In contrast, a majority of the respondents (65 %) reported having no such exposure. This indicates a major gap in formal media literacy training among M.A. Mass Communication students.

Table 5. Respondents by Mass Communication as Educational Background

State	No	Yes	Other
Odisha	76	19	0
Jharkhand	90	70	8
Total	166	89	8

Table 5 presents the educational background of the MA Mass Communication students.

Out of the 263 respondents, 166 reported having no previous educational background in Mass Communication before enrolling in the master's programme. Among the respondents, 89 reported holding a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication, while 8 reported having completed short-term courses, such as a PG Diploma in Mass Communication, prior to joining the master's programme. This distribution indicates that a substantial proportion of students in the master's programme did not have a prior formal Mass Communication background. Including such variable in the study therefore provides a broader and more nuanced perspective for assessing the media literacy competencies of M.A. Mass Communication students.

To assess the media literacy competency of M.A. Mass Communication students in the two states, this study draws on the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, which has been widely used by prominent scholars in the field of media literacy, such as S. Livingstone (Livingstone, 2004), and R. Hobbs (Hobbs, 2010). The UNESCO framework conceptualises media literacy through five core competencies: Access, Analyse, Evaluate, Create, and Act. However, to ensure analytical clarity and avoid conceptual overlap among these competencies, the present study subsumed them into three broader domains: Access (locating and navigating information) as a foundational competency; Analyse and Evaluate (critical thinking and assessment of media messages) as core cognitive competencies; and Create and Act (media content creation and participatory engagement) as applied and participatory competencies.

Table 6 represents the allocation of question items in the survey instrument

Table 6. The allocation of question items in the survey instrument

Competency (UNESCO MIL Framework)	Full Questionnaire Items
Access (Locating Information)	3.1. Time spent consuming media content 3.2. Preferred media platform 3.3. Use of social media 3.4. Active social media platforms 5.6. Awareness of fact-checking sites 5.7. Name fact-checking sites 5.10. Comfort using digital tools/technologies

Competency (UNESCO MIL Framework)	Full Questionnaire Items
	5.13(a). Identify official website of The Hindu 5.13(b). Interpret lock symbol on websites 5.14. Knowledge of Google reverse image search
Analyse & Evaluate (Critical Understanding)	3.5. Do social media spread misinformation? 4.1. Media organisations have biases? 4.2. Who controls media content? 4.3. Understanding 'media framing' 4.4. Interpretation of media framing 5.2.(Q1): Sources of media content 5.2.(Q2): Techniques used to attract attention 5.2.(Q3): Who benefits from bias? 5.3. Do you verify media information? 5.4(a). Authenticity of 500 note 5.4(b). Methods of verification 5.5. Authenticity of Rahul Gandhi video 5.8. Frequency of using fact-checking sites 5.11. Knowledge of deepfake technology 5.12. Reaction when content goes against belief
Create & Act (Participation and Production)	5.9. Fact-checking before sharing 5.10. Comfort with digital tools (creation ability) 5.12. Decision/action when content goes against belief 5.16. Verify accuracy before publishing/sharing own content

The study employed descriptive statistics to assess the three core media literacy competencies measured on a five-point scale, which are presented as mean scores and standard deviations in the table below.

Table 7. Means and Standard Deviations of Media Literacy Competency Scores

Competency	Mean	SD
Access_Score	1.82	0.46
AE_Score	0.98	0.22
CA_Score	1.75	0.45
ML_Overall	1.52	0.31

The findings indicate that M.A. Mass Communication students achieved the highest mean score in the Access (locating and navigating information) domain (M = 1.82, SD = 0.46). This was followed by a moderate score in the Create and Act (media content creation and participatory engagement) domain (M = 1.75, SD = 0.45). In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed in the Analyse and Evaluate competency (critical thinking and assessment of media messages) (M = 0.98, SD = 0.22). This result highlights a significant gap in students' critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation skills within Mass Communication education.

The tabular data presented earlier are also illustrated in Figure 1, which depicts the three broad media literacy competencies of M.A. Mass Communication students across Odisha and Jharkhand. The bar chart clearly shows that Access emerges as the strongest competency among the students, followed by Create and Act, while Analyse and Evaluate appears as the weakest competency.

To gain a deeper understanding of variations in media literacy skills among Mass Communication students, the study examined several demographic variables that have the potential to influence competency scores. These variables include state and university location, type of university, gender, exposure to media literacy training, and prior academic background in Mass Communication. The following analysis presents a comparative overview of media literacy competencies among students based on these variables.

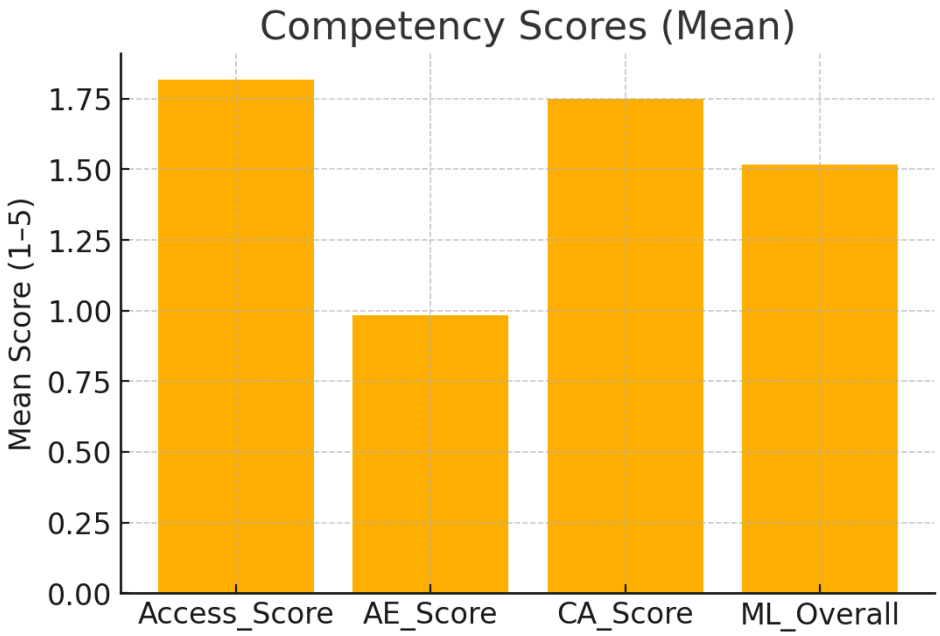

Fig. 1. Bar chart representing the mean competency scores of Students

This section presents a comparative analysis of media literacy scores among M.A. Mass Communication students across the two states. Table 8 reports the mean scores and standard deviations for the three core domains – Access; Analyse and Evaluate; and Create and Act – as well as the overall media literacy scores.

Table 8. State-wise Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Media Literacy Competency Scores

State	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
Odisha	1.98 ± 0.35	1.06 ± 0.16	1.78 ± 0.43	1.61 ± 0.20
Jharkhand	1.73 ± 0.50	0.94 ± 0.24	1.73 ± 0.46	1.47 ± 0.35

Table 8 shows that students from Odisha demonstrate slightly better performance in media literacy competencies compared to their counterparts in Jharkhand.

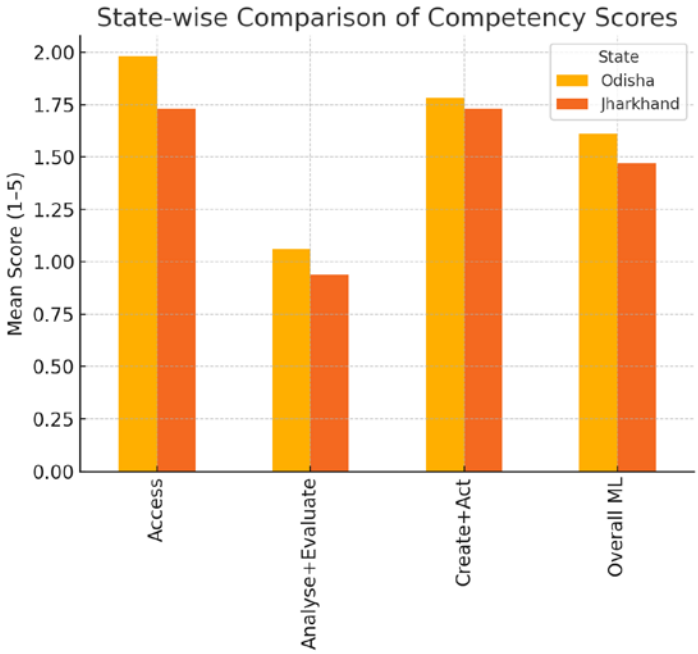

Fig. 3. State-wise representation of of mean and overall competency scores

In the Access (locating information) domain, Mass Communication students from Odisha reported a higher mean score (M = 1.98) compared to those from Jharkhand (M = 1.73). Similarly, in the Analyse and Evaluate (critical understanding) domain, Odisha recorded a mean score of 1.06, while Jharkhand scored 0.94. In the Create and Act domain, Odisha students achieved a mean score of 1.78, marginally higher than Jharkhand's score of 1.73. Overall, these results indicate that students from Odisha perform slightly better across all three domains. However, a common pattern is observed in both states: Access emerges as the strongest competency, Analyse and Evaluate remains the weakest, and Create and Act occupies a moderate position.

The above figure presents a comparative view of media literacy scores across the three domains for Odisha and Jharkhand. A noticeable gap is observed in the Access domain, where students from Odisha perform better than those from Jharkhand. In contrast, the differences in the Analyse and Evaluate and Create and Act domains are marginal, though Odisha continues to show slightly better performance in these areas.

This section presents a comparative analysis of the media literacy competency scores achieved by Mass Communication students across six universities: the Central University of Odisha, Berhampur University, Birla Global University, the Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi University, and Amity University, Ranchi. The table below reports the university-wise mean scores and standard deviations for the three core media literacy domains.

Table 9. University wise Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of 3 core Media Literacy domains

University	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
AUR	1.96 ± 0.25	1.06 ± 0.08	2.03 ± 0.31	1.69 ± 0.15
BGU	1.83 ± 0.37	1.17 ± 0.06	1.82 ± 0.43	1.60 ± 0.15
BU	2.05 ± 0.31	1.11 ± 0.12	1.96 ± 0.32	1.71 ± 0.21
CUJ	1.85 ± 0.46	1.04 ± 0.21	1.62 ± 0.47	1.50 ± 0.34
CUO	2.06 ± 0.34	0.84 ± 0.10	1.40 ± 0.35	1.43 ± 0.12
RU	1.67 ± 0.51	0.90 ± 0.24	1.74 ± 0.45	1.44 ± 0.36

The above table presents the variation in media literacy competency scores across six universities in Odisha and Jharkhand. As shown in the table, among the different universities, Berhampur university having a separately dedicated paper on Media Literacy performs very well, followed by private universities demonstrating fair performances, subsequently followed by Central university of Jharkhand and then Ranchi University and central university of Odisha. However, a consistent pattern is observed across all the universities: students perform strongest in the Access domain, weakest in Analyse and Evaluate, and achieve moderate scores in the Create and Act domain.

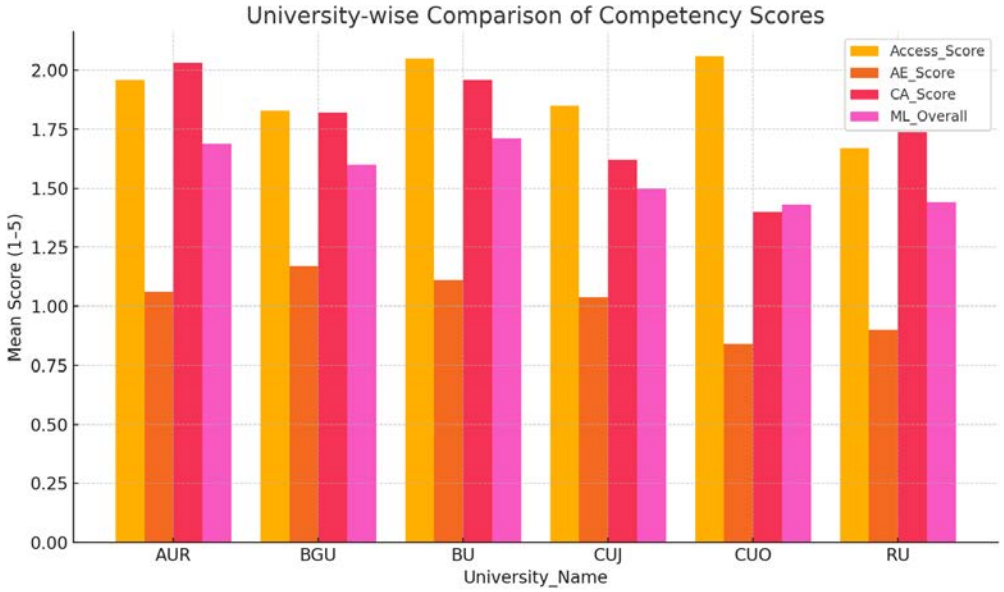

Fig. 4. University-wise comparison of mean competency scores

Figure 4 provides a visual representation of the table presenting university-wise mean scores and standard deviations for Mass Communication students across the three media literacy competency domains: Access (locating and navigating information), Analyse and Evaluate (critical understanding and analysis), and Create and Act (participation and production). Berhampur University, which offers a dedicated paper on media literacy, may have an advantage that contributes to the stronger media literacy performance observed among its students. The graph also indicates comparatively good performance by Amity University Ranchi and Birla Global University, both private institutions, which demonstrate higher media literacy competency scores. This is followed by the Central University of Jharkhand, while Ranchi University and the Central University of Odisha record comparatively lower scores. Despite these institutional variations, a consistent pattern is evident across all universities. Students perform strongest in the Access domain, weakest in the Analyse and Evaluate domain, and moderately in the Create and Act domain.

This section presents the media literacy competency scores of M.A. Mass Communication students across different types of universities – central, state, and private.

Table 10. Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Competency Scores as per the types of universities

University Type	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
Central	2.06 ± 0.34	0.84 ± 0.10	1.40 ± 0.35	1.43 ± 0.12
Private	1.86 ± 0.34	1.14 ± 0.08	1.88 ± 0.41	1.63 ± 0.15
State	1.78 ± 0.49	0.97 ± 0.23	1.77 ± 0.45	1.51 ± 0.34

Table 10 presents a comparative overview of media literacy competency scores among students from different types of universities – central, state, and private – in Odisha and Jharkhand. Overall, private universities demonstrate the highest mean scores, followed by state universities and then central universities. Further, the standard deviation values, indicating variation around the mean scores, show that private universities have lower standard deviations, signifying more consistent performance among MA Mass communication students' media literacy competencies. In contrast, higher standard deviation values in state universities indicate greater variation in students' media literacy competencies.

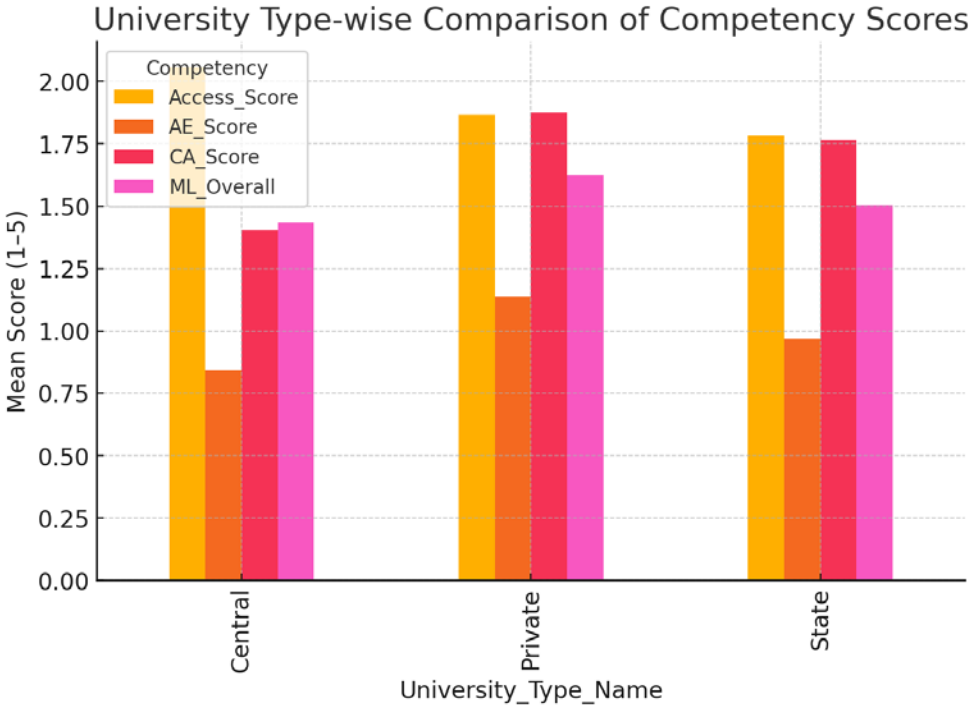

Fig. 5. University type-wise comparison of mean competency scores

The bar graph (Figure 5) presents a comparative overview of competency scores across different types of universities. Private universities achieve the strongest overall media literacy outcomes, recording the highest scores in Analyse and Evaluate (Critical Understanding) and Create and Act (Participation and Production). Central university students perform best in the Access domain (navigating and locating information) but score significantly lower in the other two competencies. State universities fall in the middle range in terms of overall media literacy performance.

The study also incorporates a gender-based perspective on media literacy. Table 11 presents the mean and standard deviation scores for the Access, Analyse and Evaluate, and Create and Act competencies, along with the overall media literacy score, by categorising all Mass Communication students on the basis of gender.

Table 11. Gender wise segregation of Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Competency Scores

Gender	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
Female	1.81 ± 0.45	1.00 ± 0.22	1.80 ± 0.46	1.54 ± 0.31
Male	1.82 ± 0.48	0.96 ± 0.22	1.69 ± 0.43	1.49 ± 0.31

Table 11 presents the gender-wise media literacy competency scores of Mass Communication students in both states. The differences between male and female students are minimal, with only slight variations across the competency domains. Male students scored marginally higher in the Access domain, while female students performed slightly better in both the Analyse and Evaluate and Create and Act competencies. However, the overall pattern remains consistent across genders: Access emerges as the strongest competency, Analyse and Evaluate is the weakest, and Create and Act lies in between.

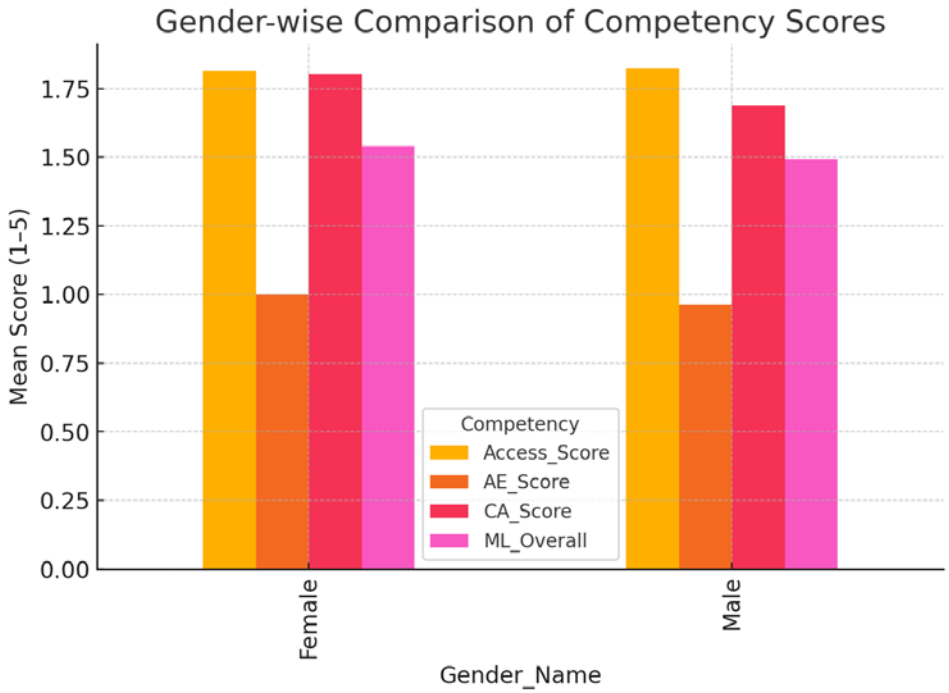

Fig. 6. Gender-wise comparison of mean competency scores

Figure 6 presents a visual summary of the gender-wise competency scores of Mass Communication students across the various domains. Supporting the table 11, the above figure presents that gender-based differences in media literacy competencies are minimal in this study.

The study also compares media literacy competency scores between students who have received formal media literacy training – such as fact-checking workshops, seminars, lectures, or conferences specifically focused on media literacy – and those who have not been exposed to such formal media literacy programmes.

Table 12. Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Competency Scores by Media Literacy Training

ML Training	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
No Training	1.83 ± 0.49	0.94 ± 0.22	1.71 ± 0.45	1.49 ± 0.33
Received Training	1.80 ± 0.42	1.06 ± 0.21	1.83 ± 0.43	1.56 ± 0.27

Table 12 clearly shows that M.A. Mass Communication students who were exposed to media literacy training programmes performed comparatively better than those who had not received any form of media literacy training. Notably, students with exposure to media literacy programmes also achieved higher scores in the Analyse and Evaluate domain, which indicates that media literacy interventions can play a significant role in strengthening students' critical thinking and analytical abilities.

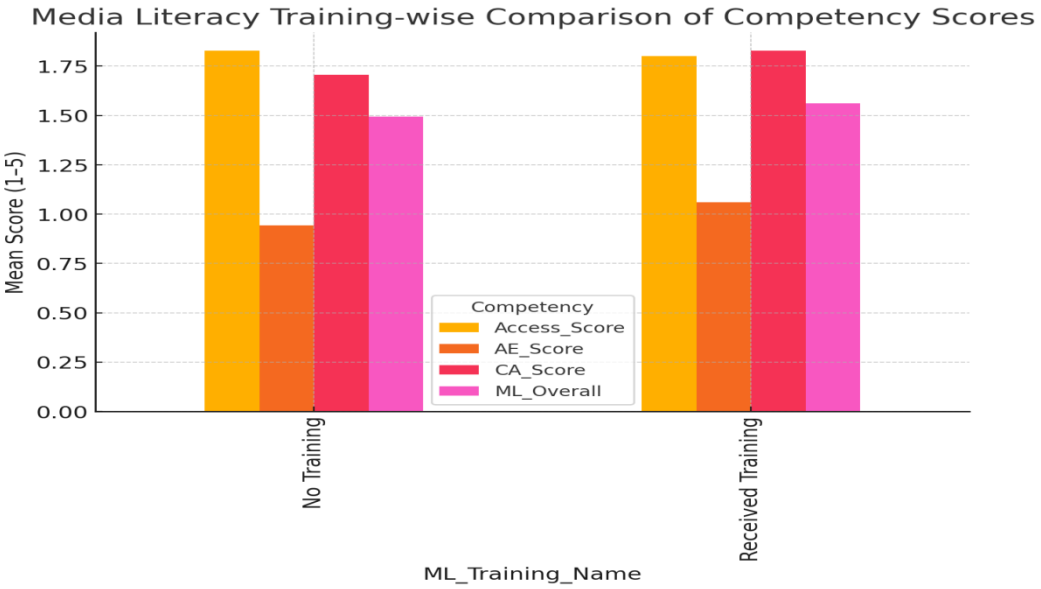

Fig. 7. Comparative outlook on the mean competency scores by media literacy training

The above figure highlights the importance of media literacy training in strengthening students' critical thinking, analytical abilities, and other media literacy-related competencies. The bars representing Mass Communication students who were exposed to media literacy training are consistently higher than those representing students without such exposure, clearly indicating the positive impact of media literacy training on students' competency levels.

This section also offers an additional perspective by examining students' educational background as a variable that may influence the media literacy competencies of Mass Communication students in Odisha and Jharkhand.

Table 13. Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) of Competency Scores by Mass Communication Background

MassComm Background	Access (M ± SD)	Analyse+Evaluate (M ± SD)	Create+Act (M ± SD)	Overall ML (M ± SD)
No Background	1.77 ± 0.50	0.96 ± 0.25	1.70 ± 0.49	1.48 ± 0.35
With Background	1.89 ± 0.38	1.03 ± 0.16	1.80 ± 0.34	1.57 ± 0.21

Table 13 indicates that students with a prior educational background in Mass Communication demonstrate higher media literacy competency scores compared to those without such a background. This educational background includes students who had completed a

bachelor's degree in Mass Communication or Journalism and Mass Communication, as well as those who had undertaken a PG Diploma in Mass Communication before enrolling in the M.A. Mass Communication programme.

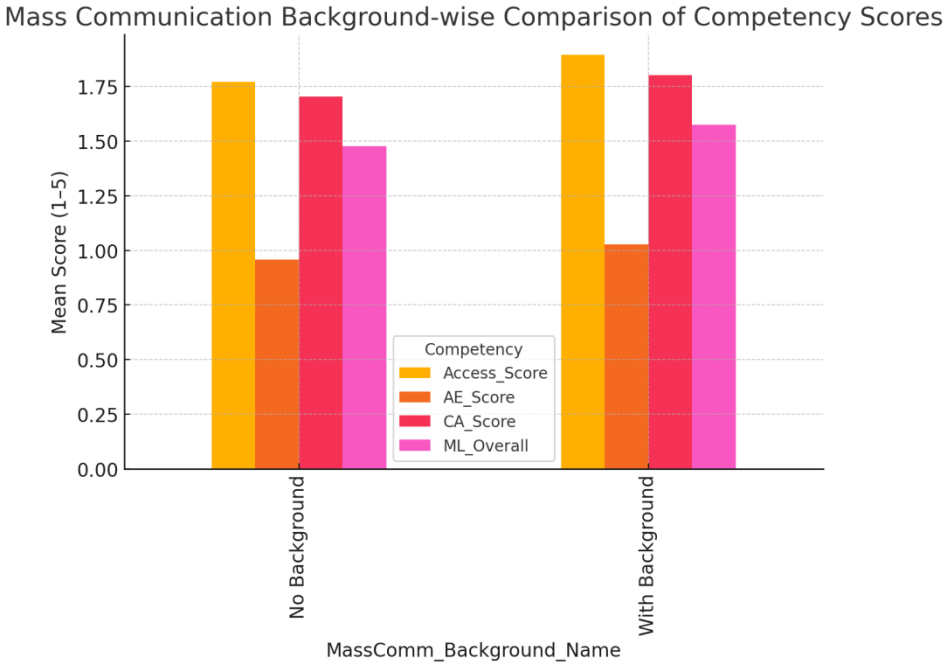

Fig. 8. Comparison of mean competency scores by educational background (Mass Communication)

Supporting the tabular data presented above, Figure 8 visually demonstrates that MA students with a prior educational background in Mass Communication exhibit higher media literacy competency scores, as reflected by the taller bars in the graph. In contrast, students without such a background show comparatively lower scores across the media literacy domains.

5. Conclusion

To summarise, this study assesses the media literacy competencies of M.A. Mass Communication students in Odisha and Jharkhand by examining the five components of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, which have been consolidated into three broader core domains: *Access* (locating and navigating information), *Analyse and Evaluate* (critical understanding and analysis of media content), and *Create and Act* (media production and participatory engagement). After a close examination of various factors, the study identifies a consistent pattern across all variables in which *Access* emerges as comparatively the strongest competency, *Analyse and Evaluate* remains the weakest, and *Create and Act* falling in between. The study highlights significant gaps in students' critical thinking and analytical abilities, along with a noticeable lack of practical and participatory learning ecosystems in media education. It underscores the urgent need to strengthen media education by systematically integrating media literacy components into the curriculum, particularly in underdeveloped regions such as Odisha and Jharkhand. Communication students of today are expected to become the future journalists, mass communicators, gatekeepers, watchdogs, and opinion leaders, playing a crucial role in shaping and sustaining the information ecosystem. Hence the study strongly advocates placing greater emphasis on the development of critical media literacy skills among Mass Communication students in order to enable them to become critical consumers and responsible producers of media content, ultimately fostering their role as informed and engaged citizens.

References

Aslett et al., 2023 – *Aslett, K., Sanderson, Z., Godel, W., Persily, N., Nagler, J., Tucker, J.A.* (2023). Online searches to evaluate misinformation can increase its perceived veracity. *Nature*. 625(7995): 548-556. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06883-y

Bakir, McStay, 2018 – *Bakir, V., McStay, A.* (2018). Fake news and the economy of emotions. *Digital Journalism*. 6(2): 154-175. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1345645

Basol et al., 2021 – *Basol, M., Roozenbeek, J., Berriche, M., Uenal, F., McClanahan, W.P., van der Linden, S.* (2021). Towards psychological herd immunity: Cross-cultural evidence for two prebunking interventions against COVID-19 misinformation. *Big Data & Society*. 8(1). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211013868

Cunliffe-Jones et al., 2021 – *Cunliffe-Jones, P., Gaye, S., Gichunge, W., Onumah, C., Pretorius, C., Schiffrin, A.* (2021). The state of media literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa 2020 and a theory of misinformation literacy. In: *Misinformation policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: From laws and regulations to media literacy:* 5-96. DOI: https://doi.org/10.16997/book53.a

Guess et al., 2020 – *Guess, A.M., Lerner, M., Lyons, B., Montgomery, J.M., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J., Sircar, N.* (2020). A digital media literacy intervention increases discernment between mainstream and false news in the United States and India. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 117(27): 15536-15545. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1920498117

Hameleers, 2022 – *Hameleers, M.* (2022). Separating truth from lies: Comparing the effects of news media literacy interventions and fact-checkers in response to political misinformation in the US and Netherlands. *Information, Communication & Society*. 25(1): 110-126. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2020.1764603

Hobbs, 2010 – *Hobbs, R.* (2010). Digital and media literacy: A plan of action. Aspen Institute.

Hobbs, Frost, 2003 – *Hobbs, R., Frost, R.* (2003). Measuring the acquisition of media-literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly*. 38(3): 330-355. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.38.3.2

Jolls, Johnsen, 2017 – *Jolls, T., Johnsen, M.* (2017). Media literacy: A foundational skill for democracy in the 21st century. *Hastings Law Journal*. 69: 1379-1408.

Kamerer, 2013 – *Kamerer, D.* (2013). Media literacy. *Communication Research Trends*. 32(1): 1.

Kumar, Singh, 2020 – *Kumar, R., Singh, D.V.* (2020). Examining the status of media education in universities of Eastern India. *Sampriti*. 6(2): 23-42.

Livingstone, Bober, 2004 – *Livingstone, S., Bober, M.* (2004). UK children go online: Surveying the experiences of young people and their parents. London School of Economics and Political Science.

Lokot, Diakopoulos, 2016 – *Lokot, T., Diakopoulos, N.* (2016). News bots: Automating news and information dissemination on Twitter. *Digital Journalism*. 4(6): 682-699. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2015.1081822

Monsees, 2021 – *Monsees, L.* (2021). Information disorder, fake news and the future of democracy. *Globalizations*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1927470

Neylan et al., 2023 – *Neylan, J., Biddlestone, M., Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S.* (2023). How to "inoculate" against multimodal misinformation. *Scientific Reports*. 13: 18273. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-43885-2

Roozenbeek, van der Linden, 2020 – *Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S.* (2020). Breaking Harmony Square: A game that "inoculates" against political misinformation. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-47

Tang et al., 2024 – *Tang, J., Porter, E., Wood, T., et al.* (2024). Observed corrections of misinformation on social media in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and France. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. 5(3). [Electronic resource]. URL: https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/tang_report_corrections_social-media_20240605.pdf

UNESCO, 2013 – UNESCO. Global media and information literacy assessment framework: Country readiness and competencies. UNESCO. 2013.

UNESCO, 2016 – UNESCO. Media and information literacy: Framework for action. UNESCO. 2016.

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 60-69

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.60
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Digitalization of the Preschool Education System in the Russian Federation and the Problems of Media Education Development

Alexey Demidov [a, *], Alexey Tishchenko [b], Galina Tokareva [b]

[a] SM “Information for All”, Russian Federation
[b] Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Russian Federation

Abstract

Advances in digital technology are rapidly transforming education. The primary instrument for implementing digitalization measures for general education in Russia until 2025 was the federal project "Digital Educational Environment" under the National Project "Education". The project aims to create and implement a digital educational environment in educational organizations and ensure the digital transformation of the education system. The project includes equipping organizations with modern equipment and developing digital services and content for educational activities.

Over the past decade, there has been an annual increase in the availability of computer equipment for teachers and preschoolers in preschool educational organizations, with 66.2 % of computers having internet access. However, regional and territorial disparities persist in the availability of computers available for use by preschoolers, as well as in the proportion of computers connected to the Internet. Using statistical data, this article analyzes the availability of computer equipment in preschools, examines digitalization expenditures, and examines regulatory requirements for the use of electronic learning tools by preschool children.

The level of adoption and application of digital technologies in early childhood education and upbringing is one of the indicators of a preschool's educational success and, in essence, an element of its modern image, as well as an opportunity to present and promote its achievements. Modern digital technologies, when used competently, take preschool education to a fundamentally new level of clarity, interactivity, and objectivity. The ability to utilize multimedia and interactive digital technologies in the educational process of preschool organizations, the ability to create one's own media texts, and the ability to apply them in professional activities are fundamental priorities of the new style of teaching, which presupposes an adequate level of media culture – media education.

Thus, the implementation of digital technologies and the development of media education stemming from the existing model of media and information literacy are essentially two sides of the same process – digital transformation within a new coordinate system of informatization and media education in preschool education. At the same time, the prospects for educational development are linked to the further development of digital services and content for educational activities, as well as the implementation of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, neural networks, and virtual and augmented reality, the effectiveness of which in preschool education is still unclear.

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: aademidov@yandex.ru (A.A. Demidov), tishchenko-as@ranepa.ru (A.S. Tishchenko), tokareva-gs@ranepa.ru (G.S. Tokareva)

Keywords: early childhood care and education (ECCE), preschool education, information society, media culture, media education, financing, digital technologies, digital transformation.

1. Introduction

The goal of the strategic direction in the field of digital transformation of general education is to achieve a high level of digital maturity in the education sector through a unified, high-quality, and secure educational space, built to provide equal access to high-quality, verified digital educational content and digital educational services throughout the Russian Federation for all categories of educational participants. Its implementation envisions the creation of conditions for the functioning of an electronic information and educational environment, including electronic information resources, electronic educational resources, a combination of information technologies, telecommunications technologies, and related technological tools, ensuring students fully master educational programs, regardless of their location.

With the widespread adoption of digital educational platforms (Russian Electronic School, Moscow Electronic School, etc.) and distance learning technologies, the issue of structural changes and forecasting resource needs for regional general education systems, including preschool education, remains relevant. Using federal statistical data, this article analyzes the availability of computers in kindergartens and examines digitalization expenditures. It also examines regulatory legal acts containing sanitary and epidemiological requirements for organizations providing education, training, recreation, and health services for children and youth, hygiene standards, and requirements for ensuring the safety and/or harmlessness of environmental factors for humans. It also includes recommendations for ensuring sanitary and epidemiological compliance when implementing educational programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies.

However, neither digital transformation nor digital technologies without the skills to use them will solve the problem of information technology and media education, including in the preschool education system. The development of an information educational environment in a kindergarten is virtually impossible without the development of a media culture among all participants in the upbringing and education process. Moreover, media culture is seen as a new paradigm for personal development in modern education.

In 1995, E.A. Bondarenko proposed a definition of media culture as a culture of dialogue in the media space. She later clarified this concept: "Media culture is the culture of polylogue (multilateral dialogue) in the information space of mass communications." Media culture encompasses the language of communication studies, its sign structure and symbolism, human behavior in the media environment, the characteristics of information perception, literacy, and the culture demonstrated in the creation of media messages. Furthermore, according to a number of other experts, media culture will prepare future citizens from a very early age through education, possibly with an introduction to the basic elements of critical thinking and a culture of information security (Bondarenko, 2004; Gálik, 2020; Gálik et al., 2024).

According to A. Nemiritch, one of Russia's leading experts in preschool media education, an individual's media culture is the sum of their material and intellectual assets in the media, a historically defined system of their reproduction and functioning in society, and the enrichment of sociocultural experience in the media. The media culture of a preschool teacher involves not only the ability to work with a computer and other electronic devices, create their own web portfolio, and interact with colleagues within online partnerships, but also the ability to rationally organize work on the use of information technology in the educational process. Accordingly, the informatization of a preschool organization is understood not as a simple presentation of educational and educational information using electronic educational resources, but as the creation of a pedagogically designed media educational environment, connected to the global media educational space and satisfying the cultural and educational needs of a modern preschooler (Nemirich, 2011).

2. Materials and methods

The study of digitalization of the preschool education system is driven by the need to achieve a high level of digital development based on a unified educational space throughout the country for all categories of participants in educational relations.

The objective of the study, conducted in 2024–2025 by the Center for Continuous Education Economics of the Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, was to

assess the level of digitalization in the period 2024–2025 and justify the costs of implementing and using digital technologies in the preschool education system.

To achieve the set goal, the following research methods were used: analysis of statistical data, monitoring, and generalization.

The information base for the study consisted of data from the federal statistical observation form on the activities of an organization implementing educational activities in preschool education programs, childcare and supervision.

In parallel, specialists from the RANEPA Center for Continuous Education Economics, the Moscow State Institute of Culture, the Association of Film and Media Education of the Russian Federation, the International Pedagogical Academy of Preschool Education, and the Information for All public movement analyzed the state and development of media education and film pedagogy in early childhood education through relevant events and publications held in recent years.

3. Discussion

Various aspects of the development and forecasting of the general education system have been repeatedly examined by Russian and international researchers. The application of information and communication technologies in general education has been a prominent topic of research. Monographs, articles, and analytical reports have been devoted to assessing the effects and risks of the digital transformation of education, the impact of the pandemic on the development of online education, information support for the educational process, analysis of distance learning experiences, and the specifics and challenges of organizing the educational process remotely (Geyn, 2024; Giannini, 2023; Milovanov, 2021; Rudnik et al., 2024; Selina, Kondrateva, 2024; Semenov, Vishnyakov, 2021; UNESCO, 2023; Vodopian et al., 2023; West, 2023; Williamson et al., 2024; Zaslavskaya, Kashkarova, 2024; Zhukova, 2024).

The opinions of participants in educational relations, namely teachers and parents of students, about the process of distance learning, its pros and cons were studied (Dukhanina, Maksimenko, 2021; Goshin et al., 2024; Semionova et al., 2022; Tishchenko, Tokareva, 2022). Various aspects of teachers' readiness to implement distance learning (Dvoretskaya, Mertsalova, 2024; Semionova, Tokareva, 2020; Tarasova et al., 2021), including teaching children with special educational needs, were studied (Dolgaya, Tagunova, 2019). The practice of using distance learning technologies in the system of advanced training for teachers has been substantiated (Grinshkun, Suvorova, 2024; Komarova, 2018).

Research into preschool education issues has also been reflected in scientific publications. New trends in the content of preschool education today have been revealed. One of these is the development of environmental education for preschoolers, the creation of specially organized educational environments for the greening of childhood, incorporating knowledge about the natural world, interdependent relationships, and unique ways to preserve and enhance the natural world (Demidov et al., 2020).

The study examined the preparedness of preschool teachers, whose competencies should include ethical and legal knowledge, biophysiological training, knowledge in the field of ecology and sustainable development, training in science, bilingual training, technological training, digital skills and competencies based on the ECDL principle (Komarova, 2018).

The issue of both the positive and negative impact of using information and communication technologies in the educational process was considered. It was emphasized that, compared to traditional forms and means used in preschool education, information and communication technologies enable the presentation of information on a highly emotional and aesthetic level, open up new ways of constructing abstract objects, develop research and creative skills, and allow for the presentation of a significant amount of didactic material in a playful manner, among other advantages. However, the use of ICTs in preschool education can lead to children becoming passive consumers, addicted to computer games, isolating them from real-life interactions with peers, and concerns are raised about the potential delay in preschoolers' speech development (Moskvina et al., 2018).

The potential for using online technologies and digital environments as equal learning mechanisms alongside traditional forms of education was analyzed. However, the challenges of organizing such a model of educational process with preschool and primary school children were noted, as self-regulation and learning motivation in children of this age are still developing and do not allow for independent learning or minimal adult supervision (Belolutskaya et al., 2023).

The authors examined the influence of the modern media environment on individuals as a source of "parallel education". These influences include the growing number of information sources, expanded access to information, increased density of information flows, and increased risks of media aggression. They substantiated the need to develop media culture as a new type of culture, creating a system of comprehensive media education, and a media space for educational organizations aimed at developing children's cognitive and creative activities (Bondarenko, 2015).

Given that 21st century children are already engaged in media exploration from the age of two, the issue of the preschool education system's readiness to operate in a digital educational environment deserves special attention. One promising area for developing such readiness could be the creation of a special cultural and educational cluster that would integrate previously accumulated materials for preschool development into a media education system, as well as opportunities for children to adapt to modern digital developmental and educational environments from an early age (Bondarenko, Demidov, 2020).An important aspect remains interaction with organizations providing additional education for children (Bondarenko et al., 2024), as well as the formation and development of media culture and media literacy among educators and parents of preschoolers (Demidov, 2020).

Issues of media education development were widely reflected in expert discussions at events dedicated to the problems of general and additional education.

On June 30, 2023, the RANEPA Center for Continuous Education Economics, the Moscow State Institute of Culture, the Information for All public movement, and partners at the Presidential Academy held an expert seminar, "Additional Education for Children and Youth in Film and Animation: Challenges of Interdepartmental and Intersectoral Coordination". Representatives of education, culture, and science authorities, heads of educational organizations, teaching staff, representatives of the professional community, and leading experts participated. Participants emphasized the importance of developing media education in shaping the spiritual and moral values of children and youth. I.V. Karakchieva, Deputy Director of the Department for National Project Support and Project Organization at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, noted the particular importance of developing value orientations, as serious challenges persist both in the education of the younger generation and in developing the basic needs of children and youth. Harmonizing these relationships is crucial to the development of a well-rounded, patriotic, and socially responsible individual. A.V. Fedorov, laureate of the UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy Award, and head of the Media Education program at the Information for All public movement, emphasized the need to develop an ideological concept as an element of national information policy (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2020).

From September 24–27, 2024, the All-Russian Forum and Exhibition "Ecosystem of Preschool Childhood" was held at Expocentre. It was initiated by the International Pedagogical Academy of Preschool Education, a partner of the Moscow State Institute of Culture, together with Expocentre, with the support of the Federation Council and the State Duma. The forum focused on areas related to the introduction of innovations in preschool education: new approaches to the formation of the subject-spatial environment of kindergartens in the context of digital transformation; the development of new constructs of the cultural and educational environment, including the use of means and methods of film education, media pedagogy, animation, etc. At the Forum venue, a team from the International Pedagogical Academy of Preschool Education, the Moscow State Institute of Culture, the RANEPA Center for Continuous Education Economics, and the Information for All public organizations organized and held an expert dialogue "Media Space in Preschool Education," which featured reports by I.I. Komarova, "Media Environment of a Preschool Organization: Fundamentals and Risks of Formation," E.A. Bondarenko's "Artificial Intelligence and Cinematography: Teaching Intuition", and A.A. Demidov's "Animation on Your Smartphone" as a Universal Model for Involving Older Preschoolers in the Creation of Animated Content and for Early Career Guidance".

It was noted that the project's initial target audience was children and adolescents aged 7 to 20, but the lower age limit has now been expanded to 5 years old – the age when children begin to actively engage with animation. With the right approach to implementation, the project not only develops creative skills but also helps children better understand how modern media works. The Forum also featured a case study event, "The SMART Library of a Kindergarten. Reading as Education, Reading as Development, and Reading as Entertainment in Preschool Childhood". The event featured a paper by I.I. Komarova, "Reading Circle in Preschool Education. Changes and

Gaps," and a presentation by A.A. Demidov, "The Smart Library as a New Entity for Digital Transformation".

SMART libraries are a new trend in library services, reflecting the digital transformation of society. The creation of SMART libraries and game libraries in kindergartens as spaces where preschoolers can become familiar with books, cartoons, films, multimedia, and educational games before entering school seems relevant, although the methodology and techniques for this process are still under development. Furthermore, given that children have access to smartphones and tablets from an early age, health issues related to their use of gadgets require attention, which essentially means fostering a culture of information security in preschoolers, logically linked to their access to communication tools and information technology.

4. Results

Between 2019 and 2024, there was a decrease in the number of preschoolers per computer available for use by children. However, starting in 2019, a downward trend in the number of children has been observed, which may impact this indicator. The results of calculations based on official statistical data (Information..., 2014–2024) are presented in Figure 1 below.

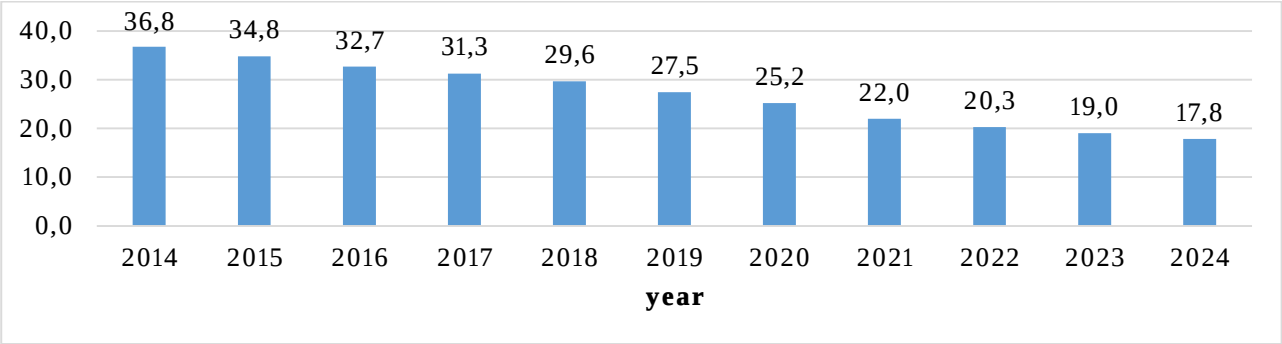

Fig. 1. Number of preschoolers per computer available for use by children, units

The share of computers in preschool educational organizations with internet access in 2024 was 66.2 %, which is 12 percentage points higher than in 2014 and 1.2 percentage points higher than in the first pandemic year of 2020. The results of calculations based on official statistical data (Information..., 2014–2024) are presented in Figure 2 below.

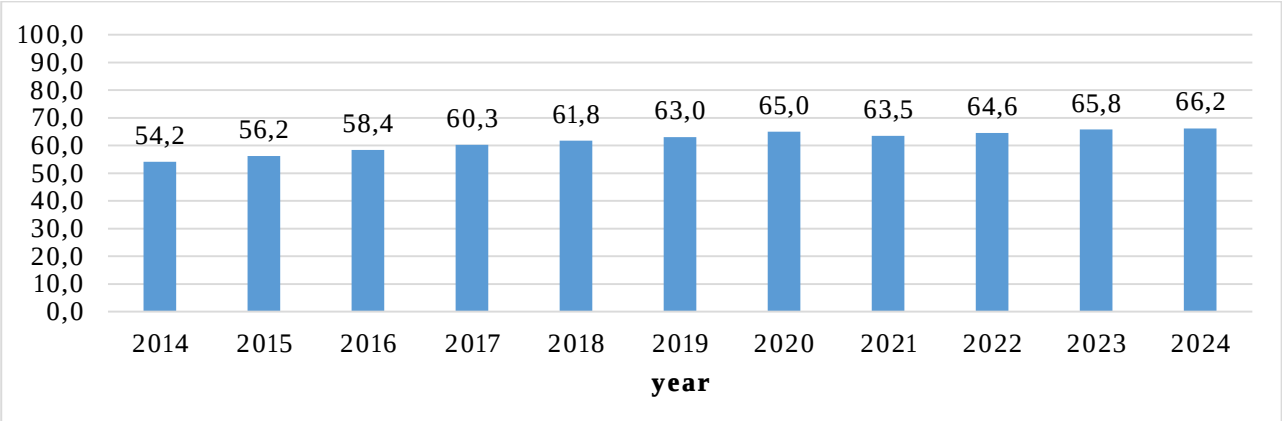

Fig. 2. The share of computers in preschool educational organizations with internet access, %

Between 2019 and 2024, there was a decrease in the ratio of preschool teachers per computer. However, starting in 2020, a downward trend in the number of preschool teachers has been observed, which may impact this ratio. The results of calculations based on official statistical data (Information..., 2014–2024) are presented in Figure 3 below.

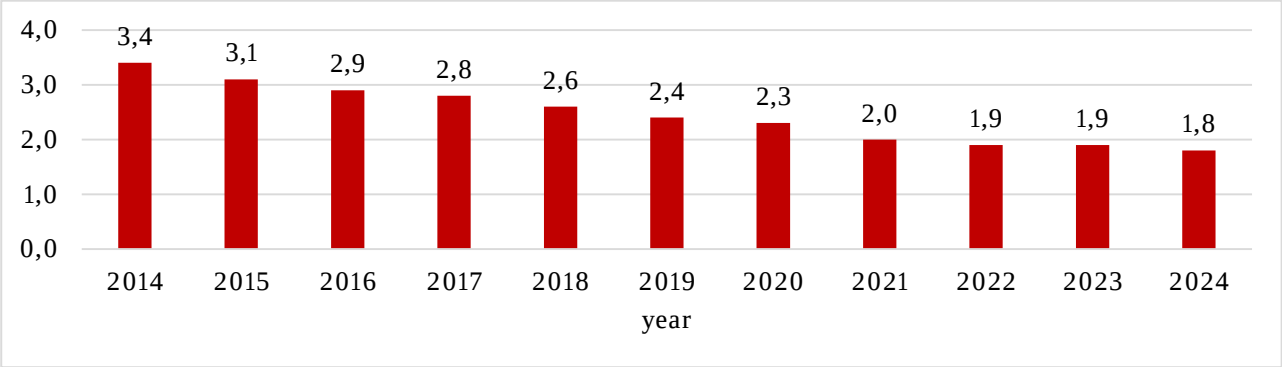

Fig. 3. Number of teaching staff per personal computer, people

Regulatory requirements for the use and duration of use of electronic learning tools (ELT) include:

classes using ELT are not held for age groups under 5 years old;

to determine the duration of use of the interactive whiteboard (panel), the total time of its use in the lesson is calculated;

to calculate the duration of use of individual use ELT, the continuous duration of their use in the lesson is determined;

when using two or more ELTs, the total operating time with them should not exceed the maximum for one of them (Methodological..., 2023; Resolution..., 2020; Resolution..., 2021).

Information on the duration of use of electronic learning tools is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Duration of use of electronic learning tools

Age	Electronic learning tools	During the lesson, min., no more	Total per day in preschool educational organization, min., no more than
5-7 years	Interactivewhiteboard	7	20
	Interactivepanel	5	10
	The duration of continuous use of the screen when using the ELT with the demonstration of educational films, programs or other information intended for its recording by pupuls should not exceed	5-7	-
6-7 years	Personalcomputer	15	20
	Laptop	15	20
	Tablet	10	10

The overall availability of accessible computers for preschoolers aged 6 and over is 23 per computer, with the highest percentage found in the Ural and Far Eastern Federal Districts.

The share of organization computers available for use by preschoolers overall is 18.6 %, with the highest value observed in the Central and Volga Federal Districts.

The share of computers with internet access available for use by preschool children overall is 47.9 %, and the highest figure is recorded in the Central and North Caucasian Federal Districts.

According to the latest available data for 2022, the share of preschool educational organizations equipped with electronic learning tools was as follows: 76 % with interactive whiteboards/tables, 58.7 % with computer games for educational purposes, and 4.8 % with digital (interactive) floors. Preschool educational organizations were best equipped with interactive whiteboards/tables and digital (interactive) floors in the Northwestern and Ural Federal Districts, and with computer games for educational purposes in the Central, Northwestern, and Ural Federal Districts.

In terms of internet access speed, preschool educational organization buildings are distributed as follows: in one-third of buildings (33.3 %), internet access speeds range from 2 to

22.9 Mbps, in 10.2 % of buildings, speeds exceed 50 Mbps, and in 17.5 %, speeds exceed 100 Mbps. No internet access was observed in 6.2 % of preschool educational organization buildings. The results of calculations based on official statistical data (Information..., 2014–2024) are presented in Figure 4 below.

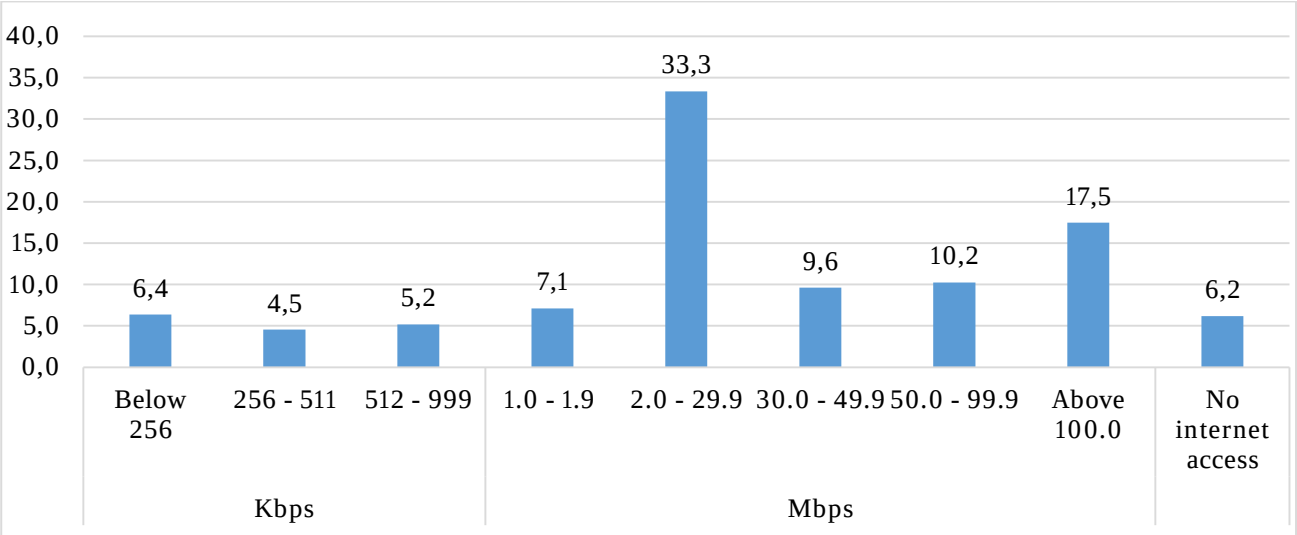

Fig. 4. Distribution of preschool educational organization buildings by internet access speed, 2024, %

Total costs for the implementation and use of digital technologies for preschool educational organizations across the Russian Federation amounted to over 5 billion rubles, with information security products and services costing over 219 million rubles. Internal costs for digital content acquisition amounted to over 44 million rubles.

A recalculation of the costs of implementing and using digital technologies per preschooler showed that they totaled 833.9 rubles per year. Across federal districts, a 3.4-fold discrepancy was recorded between the highest and lowest values.

Preschool educational organization expenditures on information security products and services per preschooler amounted to 34.4 rubles per year; the discrepancy between the highest and lowest values across federal districts was 7.8 times.

The cost of acquiring digital content per preschooler aged 5 years and older amounted to 15.4 rubles per year, with the discrepancy between the highest and lowest values across federal districts being 5.2 times.

5. Conclusion

Thus, in the period from 2014 to 2024, there has been an increase in the availability of computers for teaching staff and preschoolers in preschool educational organizations, and an annual increase in the number of personal computers in preschools, including those connected to the Internet, has been noted.

At the same time, there is differentiation across federal districts and regions in terms of the provision of preschool educational organizations with computers available for use by preschoolers, the share of computers connected to the Internet, and expenditures on the digitalization of preschool education.

Internal expenditures by preschool educational organizations on digital content acquisition per preschooler over 5 years of age remain low, which may indicate limited opportunities for independent selection of necessary additional electronic materials. This process may hinder digital transformation in the preschool education system.

References

Belolutskaya et al., 2023 – *Belolutskaya, A.K., Vachkova, S.N., Patarakin, E.D.* (2023). Svyaz' cifrovogo komponenta obucheniya i razvitiya detej doshkol'nogo i shkol'nogo vozrasta: obzor issledovanij i mezhdunarodnyh obrazovatel'nyh praktik [The connection of the digital learning

component with the development of preschool and school-age children: a review of research and international educational practices]. *Obrazovanie i samorazvitie*. 18(2): 37-55. [in Russian]

Bondarenko et al., 2024 – *Bondarenko, E.A., Demidov, A.A., Strusovsky, S.G.* (2024). Voprosy razvitiya dopolnitel'nogo obrazovaniya detej s ispol'zovaniem sredstv animacii i kinoobrazovaniya v formate mezhvedomstvennoj i mezhsektornoj koordinacii [Issues of development of additional education of children using animation and film education in the format of interdepartmental and intersectoral coordination]. *Vneshkolnik*. 213 (3): 28-39. [in Russian]

Bondarenko, 2004 – *Bondarenko, E.A.* (2004). Formirovanie mediakul'tury podrostkov kak faktor razvitiya informacionno-obrazovatel'noj sredy. Obrazovatel'nye tekhnologii XXI veka [Formation of media culture of teenagers as a factor in the development of the information educational environment. educational technologies of the 21st century]. *OT'04*. Moscow: 89-92. [in Russian]

Bondarenko, 2015 – *Bondarenko, E.A.* (2015). Mediaobrazovanie: shag v budushchee. Issledovaniya Laboratorii mediaobrazovaniya ISMO RAO. Media- i informacionnaya gramotnost' v Rossii: put' v budushchee [Media education: a step into the future. Research of the Media Education Laboratory of the ISMO RAO. Media and Information Literacy in Russia: the Road to the Future]. Media- i informacionnaya gramotnost' v informacionnom obshchestve (Moscow, April 24-27, 2013). Moscow: 85-92. [in Russian]

Bondarenko, Demidov, 2020 – *Bondarenko, E.A., Demidov, A.A.* (2020). Strategii mediaobrazovaniya v doshkol'nom vozraste v cifrovoj obrazovatel'noj srede [Strategies for preschool media education in the digital educational environment]. Obrazovanie i vospitanie detej mladshego vozrasta. 10: 135-136. [in Russian]

Demidov, 2020 – *Demidov, A.A.* Mediaobrazovanie v doshkol'nom obrazovanii: problemy i perspektivy. Aktual'nye voprosy psihologicheskih, psihologo-pedagogicheskih i pedagogicheskih issledovanij [Media education in preschool education: problems and prospects. current issues in psychological, psychological-pedagogical and pedagogical research]. XV Levitovskij marafon (Moscow, April 15-16, 2020). Moscow: 116-125. [in Russian]

Dolgaya, Tagunova, 2019 – *Dolgaya, O.I., Tagunova, I.A.* (2019). Dostupnost' kachestvennogo obrazovaniya dlya vsekh kak mirovaya tendenciya v obshchem obrazovanii [The availability of quality education for all as a global trend in general education. *Shkol'nye tekhnologii*. 1: 3-10. [in Russian]

Dukhanina, Maksimenko, 2021 – *Dukhanina, L.N., Maksimenko, A.A.* (2021). Vynuzhdennaya cifrovizaciya shkol'nogo obrazovaniya v Rossii: roditel'skaya refleksiya [Forced digitalization of school education in Russia: parental reflection]. *Nauchnyj rezul'tat. Ser. Sociologiya i upravlenie*. 7(2): 116-131. DOI: 10.18413/2408-9338-2021-7-2-0-9 [in Russian]

Dvoretskaya, Mertsalova, 2024 – *Dvoretskaya, I.V., Mertsalova, T.A.* (2024). Vozmozhnosti i predpochteniya uchitelej v vybore sposobov razvitiya kompetencij ispol'zovaniya tsifrovyh obrazovatel'nyh tekhnologij [Teachers' capabilities and preferences in choosing how to develop competencies for digital technologies use in teaching]. *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya: ekonomicheskie i social'nye peremeny*. 4: 126-147. DOI: 10.14515/monitoring.2024.4.2487 [in Russian]

Gálik et al., 2024 – *Gálik, S. et al.* (2024). How competencies of media users contribute to deliberative communication. In: Peruško, Z., Lauk, E., Halliki-Loit, H. (eds.). European media systems for deliberative communication: risks and opportunities. New York: Routledge: 98-116. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003476597

Gálik, 2020 – *Gálik, S.* (2020). Thinking in the network. *Central European Journal of Communication*. 27(3): 446-459. DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.13.3(27).9

Geyn, 2024 – *Geyn, A.G., Geyn, N.A.* (2024). Evolyuciya pedagogicheskoj problematiki pod pressom informatizacii i cifrovizacii obrazovaniya [Evolution of pedagogical problems under the press of informatization and digitalization of education]. *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie v Rossii*. 4: 49-62. [in Russian]

Giannini, 2023 – *Giannini, S.* (2023). Generative AI and the Future of Education. Paris: UNESCO. DOI: 10.54675/HOXG8740

Goshin et al., 2024 – *Goshin, M.E., Sorokin, P.S., Kosaretsky, S.G.* (2022). Agentnost' shkol'nikov v usloviyah izmenenij obrazovatel'nogo konteksta v period pandemii COVID-19: istochniki, proyavleniya i effekty [Agency of schoolchildren in the changing educational context during covid-19 pandemic: sources, manifestations, and effects]. *Monitoring obshchestvennogo mneniya:*

ekonomicheskie i social'nye peremeny. 5: 394-417. DOI: 10.14515/monitoring.2022.5.2145 [in Russian]

Grinshkun, Suvorova, 2024 – *Grinshkun, V.V., Suvorova, T.N.* (2024). Osobennosti podgotovki pedagogov v usloviyah cifrovoj transformacii sistemy obrazovaniya [Teacher training in the conditions of digital transformation of the education system]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Seriya 20. Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie.* 22(1): 95-110. DOI: 10.55959/LPEJ-24-05 [in Russian]

Information..., 2014–2024 – Svedeniya po forme federal'nogo statisticheskogo nablyudeniya № 85-K «Svedeniya o deyatel'nosti organizacii, osushchestvlyayushchej obrazovatel'nuyu deyatel'nost' po obrazovatel'nym programmam doshkol'nogo obrazovaniya, prismotr i uhod za det'mi» za 2024 god [Information on the federal statistical observation form N 85-K. Information on the activities of an organization implementing educational activities under educational programs of preschool education, supervision and care of children]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/dff37dab0b54ff95ebb3bbfad5cb4c86/ [in Russian]

Komarova, 2018 – *Komarova, I.I.* (2018). Budushchee doshkol'nogo obrazovaniya v epohu cifrovizacii [The future of preschool education in the digital age]. *Sovremennoe doshkol'noe obrazovanie*. 8(90): 16-25. DOI: 10.24411/1997-9657-2018-10032 [in Russian]

Levitskaya, Fedorov – *Levitskaya, A., Fedorov, A.* Typology and mechanisms of media manipulation. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. 2020. 5(1): 69-78.

Methodological..., 2023 – MR 2.4.0330-23 Metodicheskie rekomendacii po obespecheniyu sanitarno-epidemiologicheskih trebovanij pri realizacii obrazovatel'nyh programm s primeneniem elektronnogo obucheniya i distancionnyh obrazovatel'nyh tekhnologij [Methodological recommendations for ensuring sanitary and epidemiological requirements in the implementation of educational programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies MR 2.4.0330-23. Approved on August 29, 2023]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://rospotrebnadzor.ru/documents/details.php?ELEMENT_ID=26542 [in Russian]

Milovanov, 2021 – *Milovanov, K.Yu.* (2021). Transformaciya obrazovatel'nyh formatov: starye problemy i novye vyzovy [Transformation of educational formats: old problems and new challenges]. *Problemy sovremennogo obrazovaniya*. 6: 120-130. DOI: 10.31862/2218-8711-2021-6-120-130 [in Russian]

Moskvina et al., 2018 – *Moskvina, A.S., Melnikov, T.N., Potanina, L.T.* (2018). Sovremennye informacionno-kommunikacionnye sredstva v sisteme podgotovki uchitelej doshkol'nogo obrazovaniya [Modern information and communication means in the system of teacher training for preschool education]. *Pedagogicheskoe obrazovanie i nauka*. 5: 122-126. [in Russian]

Resolution..., 2020 – Ob utverzhdenii sanitarnyh pravil SP 2.4. 3648-20 "Sanitarno-epidemiologicheskie trebovaniya k organizaciyam vospitaniya i obucheniya, otdyha i ozdorovleniya detej i molodezhi". Zaregistrirovan Minyustom Rossii 18 dekabrya 2020 g. Registracionnyj № 61573. [Resolution of the Chief State Sanitary Doctor of the Russian Federation of September 28, 2020 N 28. On approval of sanitary rules SP 2.4.3648-20 "Sanitary and epidemiological requirements for organizations of education and training, recreation and health improvement of children and youth"]. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&prevDoc=602107773&backlink=1&&nd=102955243 [in Russian]

Rudnik et al., 2024 – *Rudnik, P.B., Zinina, T.S., Akindinova, N.V., et al.* (2024). Tsifrovaya transformaciya: effekty i riski v novyh usloviyah [Digital transformation: effects and risks in new conditions]. Moscow. DOI: 10.17323/978-5-7598-3009-2 [in Russian]

Selina, Kondrateva, 2024 – *Selina, V.A., Kondrateva, N.N.* (2024). Tendencii i faktory razvitiya sfery onlajn-obrazovaniya [Trends and factors in the development of online education]. Municipalitet: ekonomika i upravlenie. 2(47): 51-59. DOI: 10.22394/2304-3385-2024-2-51-59 [in Russian]

Semenov, Vishnyakov, 2021 – *Semenov, A.L., Vishnyakov, Yu.S.* (2021). Tsifrovaya transformaciya obshchego obrazovaniya: perspektivy i puti razvitiya [Digital transformation of general education: prospects and ways of progress]: 8-23. [in Russian]

Semionova et al., 2022 – *Semionova, E.A., Tishchenko, A.S., Tokareva, G.S.* (2022). Distancionnoe obuchenie shkol'nikov: gotovnost' k vyzovam [Distance learning for schoolchildren: readiness for challenges]. *Sociologicheskie issledovaniya*. 5: 145-149. DOI: 10.31857/S013216250017203-6 [in Russian]

Semionova, Tokareva, 2020 – *Semionova, E.A., Tokareva, G.S.* (2020). Gotovnost' rossijskih shkol, uchitelej i uchashchihsya k distancionnomu obucheniyu [Readiness of Russian schools, teachers and students for distance learning]. *Monitoring ekonomicheskoj situacii v Rossii: tendencii i vyzovy socialno-ekonomicheskogo razvitiya*. 108(6): 20-22. [in Russian]

Tarasova et al., 2021– *Tarasova, N.V., Pastukhova, I.P., Chigrina, S.G.* (2021). Nekotorye aspekty metodicheskogo soprovozhdeniya uchitelej v usloviyah cifrovizacii obshchego obrazovaniya [Some aspects of methodological support of teachers in the conditions of digitalization of general education]. *Perspektivy nauki i obrazovaniya*. 53(5): 481-494. DOI: 10.32744/pse.2021.5.33 [in Russian]

Tishchenko, Tokareva, 2022 – *Tishchenko, A.S. Tokareva, G.S.* Kak sokratit' cifrovoe neravenstvo v shkol'nom obrazovanii [How to reduce the digital divide in school education]. *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Rossii*. 29(3): 41-47. [in Russian]

UNESCO, 2023 – UNESCO (2023). Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education – A Tool on Whose Terms? Paris: UNESCO. 526 p.

Vodopian et al., 2023 – *Vodopian, G.M., Dvoretskaya, I.V., Uvarov, A.Yu.* (2023). K postroeniyu mnogoaspektnoj modeli processa tsifrovogo obnovleniya obshcheobrazovatel'noj shkoly [Towards multidimensional digital renewal model for comprehensive schools]. Moscow. [in Russian]

West, 2023 – *West, M.* (2023). An ed-tech tragedy? Educational technologies and school closures in the time of COVID-19. Paris: UNESCO. 650 p. DOI: 10.54675/LYGF2153

Williamson et al., 2024 – *Williamson, B., Komljenovic, J., Gulson, K.N.* (2024). World Yearbook of Education 2024: Digitalisation of education in the era of algorithms, automation and artificial intelligence. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Zaslavskaya, Kashkarova, 2024 – *Zaslavskaya, O.Yu., Kashkarova, E.V.* (2024). Analiz koncepcij informatizacii obrazovaniya v Rossii i za rubezhom [Analysis of the concepts of informatization of education in Russia and abroad]. *Vestnik MGPU. Seriya "Informatika i informatizaciya obrazovaniya"*. 70(4): 7-15. DOI: 10.24412/2072-9014-2024-470-7-15 [in Russian]

Zhukova, 2024 – *Zhukova, V.A.* (2024). Comparative analysis of educational platforms in the education system. *CITISE*. 3: 123-141.

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 70-76

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.70
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Reframing Silence: A Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Gender, Power, and Media Literacy in Pakistani Television Drama *Working Women* (2023)

Insha Khalid Hussain [a, *]

[a] Mohammad Ali Jinnah University, Karachi, Pakistan

Abstract

This study examines the role of silence as a feminist discourse in the Pakistani Television drama *Working Women* (2023), analyzing its portrayal of women's oppression, agency, and resistance within a patriarchal society. Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research explores how linguistic and non-linguistic cues – particularly silence – reveal intersections of gender, power, and ideology. The drama's dialogues and character portrayals are analyzed across textual, discursive, and social levels to demonstrate how silence operates as both a site of subjugation and a tool of empowerment. The analysis identifies eight core themes, including patriarchal oppression, workplace silence, and the normalization of women's suffering. Findings reveal that silence is not merely the absence of speech but a socially constructed mechanism that reflects constrained agency and resistance. The study argues that this critical decoding of silence models a vital media literacy competency: the ability to deconstruct how media texts encode complex power dynamics. The study concludes that *Working Women* subverts traditional passive femininity, serving as a potent resource for feminist media literacy education, framing silence as a complex communicative act that exposes systemic inequality and equips audiences to critically reinterpret gendered discourse in Pakistani media.

Keywords: Pakistani media, working women, feminist discourse analysis, silence, critical discourse analysis, feminist theory.

1. Introduction

In contemporary media studies, the representation of women in television dramas has evolved from simple character portrayals to complex discourses that both reflect and shape social ideologies. Pakistani television acts as a cultural mirror that reproduces and contests gendered norms, offering insight into shifting power dynamics and social expectations (Fairclough, 2023; Naeem, Zaidi, 2024). Dramas such as *Working Women* (2023) not only depict stories of female resilience but also expose the discursive structures that sustain or challenge patriarchal values (Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018).

The depiction of women's silence, agency, and resistance aligns with Butler's notion of performative discourse, suggesting that language and silence are both active forces that construct social reality. Silence, therefore, becomes more than a void; it transforms into a strategic form of resistance and identity expression (Acheson, 2008; Butler, 2021; Lee, 2010; Tabassum, Amin, 2020). In *Working Women*, silence operates as a gendered discourse that simultaneously reflects oppression and subtle defiance, resonating with DeFrancisco's argument that male communication often marginalizes women's voices within institutional contexts.

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: ikh13005@gmail.com (I.K. Hussain)

Recent analyses of Pakistani media highlight how female representation continues to oscillate between idealized domesticity and stigmatized independence, reinforcing and reshaping cultural notions of femininity (Jehangir, 2023; Mishra, 2015). This pattern supports the social-role perspective of gender behavior, which maintains that media discourse plays a significant role in reproducing gendered social scripts (Eagly, 1987; Feingold, 1994).

This study employs Fairclough's three-dimensional model to analyze *Working Women* (2023) through textual, discursive, and sociocultural lenses. Drawing upon feminist communication theories, it explores how silence and speech function as tools of gendered power negotiation in Pakistani television narratives. Moreover, it situates the drama within

broader media frameworks that define how femininity is culturally constructed and contested (Gallagher, 2005; Myrttinen et al, 2025).

This study argues that *Working Women* (2023) illustrates how female silence operates both as compliance and subversion, aligning with Foucault's conception of power as relational and fluid. By decoding its linguistic and narrative patterns, this research exposes how Pakistani dramas sustain or resist gender ideologies, offering insights into the evolving landscape of women's representation in digital-era media (Ali, 2022).

By decoding its linguistic and narrative patterns, this research exposes how Pakistani dramas sustain or resist gender ideologies, offering insights into the evolving landscape of women's representation in digital-era media (Ali, 2022). This study is therefore driven by the central question: How does silence function as a feminist discourse in *Working Women* (2023)? This primary inquiry is explored through the following sub-questions:

1. How is silence represented at the textual, discursive, and social levels in the drama?
2. In what ways does silence operate as both a mechanism of patriarchal oppression and a strategy of female agency and resistance?
3. How can this critical analysis of silence inform the development of feminist media literacy education in Pakistan?

2. Materials and methods

This study employs Norman's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how silence operates as a feminist discourse in the Pakistani television drama *Working Women* (Fairclough, 2023). The model views discourse as a social practice and integrates linguistic, interpretative, and socio-cultural dimensions of meaning-making. Within this framework, silence is analyzed not merely as an absence of speech but as a communicative act that reflects and challenges structures of power. The idea of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis also complements the idea of gender and power relations within discourse (Lazar, 2005). This complements Fairclough's model by foregrounding gender and power relations within discourse.

The research adopts a qualitative design, which is best suited for exploring complex social phenomena such as gendered communication and silence in media. The aim is not to quantify the presence of silence but to interpret its meanings, functions, and implications within specific contexts. By analyzing selected scenes and dialogues, the study seeks to uncover how silence contributes to feminist discourse through narrative choices, character interactions, and visual symbolism. This study applies Fairclough's three dimensions as an analytical structure:

Textual Analysis: At this level, the linguistic and semiotic features of selected scenes are analyzed. This includes verbal interactions, pauses, gestures, tone, and moments of silence. The analysis examines how silence functions in contrast to speech – whether it signifies submission, protest, reflection, or defiance. Visual elements such as camera focus, lighting, and framing are also interpreted as part of the text since they contribute to the construction of meaning.

Discursive Practice: This dimension explores how Working Women constructs, circulates, and reproduces discourses about gender and power. It considers the production and consumption processes of the drama – how audiences interpret female silence, and how the creators' choices reflect broader societal ideologies. Attention is paid to how silence is positioned within dialogues and scenes to produce certain meanings about women's agencies and oppression.

Social Practice: The final dimension situates the drama within the larger socio-cultural and ideological context of Pakistani society. This level interprets silence as a reflection of patriarchal structures, social norms, and moral expectations that regulate female behavior. It also explores how silence serves as a form of resistance, allowing women to navigate and subtly challenge gendered hierarchies.

The primary data for this study are derived from selected scenes of *Working Women*, directed by Yasra Rizvi and produced by Green TV. Sixteen episodes were available for viewing, but the analysis focuses on key scenes featuring one of the characters, Aasha, and other female characters such as Nusrat, Sadia, and Rosie. These scenes were selected based on their relevance to the study's central theme – instances where silence is foregrounded as a communicative or narrative element. 16 episodes were deeply analyzed.

The analysis was conducted in multiple stages. First, the researcher identified moments of silence, verbal suppression, or hesitation across the episodes. Each instance was transcribed with attention to non-verbal cues such as gestures, gaze, and pauses. The data were then coded thematically according to the functions of silence, for instance, silence as compliance, silence as resistance, or silence as trauma. These themes were interpreted through Fairclough's CDA model, connecting linguistic and semiotic patterns with social meanings.

To ensure academic rigor, the study employed triangulation through feminist theoretical perspectives and secondary sources on Pakistani media and gender studies. This helped validate interpretations and situate findings within broader scholarly discussions. Moreover, reflexivity was maintained throughout the process – the researcher remained conscious of their interpretative position and potential biases when analyzing the text.

As the study is based on publicly available media content, it does not involve human participants or sensitive personal data. However, ethical integrity was maintained by acknowledging sources, accurately representing media material, and avoiding speculative or culturally insensitive interpretations. The analysis respects the creative intent of the drama while critically engaging with its ideological implications.

Fairclough's CDA framework is particularly suitable for this study because it integrates language analysis with social theory, allowing a nuanced examination of silence as a gendered discourse. The combination of CDA and FCDA facilitates a multidimensional understanding of how language, silence, and media representation interact to reproduce or resist patriarchal ideologies. Through this methodological approach, the research not only interprets Working Women as a cultural text but also as a social practice that both mirrors and critiques the gendered realities of Pakistani society.

3. Discussion

The representation of women in media has been a central theme within critical media studies, where television serves not merely as an entertainment source but as an ideological apparatus that constructs, normalizes, and contests gendered realities (Fairclough, 2023). Within Pakistani television dramas, this function becomes particularly significant, as the screen operates as both a reflection and a reinforcement of patriarchal social order (Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018). Previous research demonstrates that female representation in Pakistani dramas continues to vacillate between empowerment and subordination, producing complex portrayals that simultaneously challenge and maintain gender hierarchies (Naeem, Zaidi, 2024). These portrayals often mirror cultural anxieties surrounding the modern, educated woman whose social mobility disrupts conventional domestic ideals (Tabassum, Amin, 2020).

Discourse analysts have long maintained that gender is discursively constructed, and the media becomes a crucial space where such constructions are reproduced and negotiated. In the context of Pakistani dramas, women's dialogues, gestures, and even silences become performative sites of meaning where femininity is enacted according to social expectations. This view resonates with social-role theories, which argue that gendered behaviors are learned and reinforced through repeated cultural narratives (Feingold, 1994). Hence, the television screen becomes a pedagogical space where audiences internalize patterns of subservience and idealized womanhood (Gallagher, 2005). However, this process is not unidirectional; it also allows for the articulation of alternative discourses that subtly resist dominant ideologies by portraying women as autonomous, working, and intellectually assertive (Mishra, 2015).

A growing body of feminist media research has emphasized silence as an overlooked but potent form of gendered expression (Acheson, 2008). Silence functions as a communicative gesture rather than an absence of speech, allowing women to navigate restrictive discursive spaces (Lee, 2010). Within South Asian cultures, silence frequently acquires a layered significance – it becomes a strategy of survival, endurance, and even rebellion (Tannen, 2011). Muted Group Theory further explains this phenomenon by suggesting that women's access to dominant linguistic

codes is limited, forcing them to develop alternative means of communication (Kramarae, 2001). Such muted forms, including silence, become subversive tools that challenge patriarchal discourse from within.

Despite considerable scholarship on gender representation in Pakistani media, the specific role of silence as a feminist discourse remains underexplored (Naeem, Zaidi, 2024). Most existing analyses have focused on visible markers of empowerment – such as employment, education, and independence – without considering the subtle linguistic performances that articulate resistance (Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018). The conception of power as relational offers a valuable lens for understanding how silence can simultaneously express compliance and defiance (Deetz, Mumby, 2012). Therefore, examining *Working Women* through Fairclough's three-dimensional model provides a rich opportunity to understand how silence, speech, and representation intersect to shape public perceptions of femininity. This study extends existing literature by uncovering how Pakistani television dramas encode resistance not merely in spoken dialogues but in the spaces where women choose not to speak, revealing silence as a deeply political act embedded in everyday media discourse (Foucault, 2014).

By merging CDA and Feminist CDA, the study uncovers how silence in Pakistani media is both a product of and a response to gendered oppression. The drama reconfigures silence from a sign of weakness to a symbol of resilience, enabling women to navigate social constraints without entirely rejecting cultural values. This duality makes silence an inherently feminist discourse – one that challenges the very systems that attempt to suppress it.

Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of media literacy education in Pakistan. As television dramas continue to influence social attitudes and shape gender perceptions, it becomes essential to equip audiences – particularly women and young viewers – with the skills to critically analyze and interpret media content. Integrating feminist media literacy into educational and community programs enables audiences to recognize ideological manipulation and question gender stereotypes represented in drama narratives. This aspect not only aligns with the objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis but also enhances social awareness through informed and reflective media consumption (Hobbs, 2017; Kellner, Share, 2019).

4. Results

Following the methodological framework and theoretical discussion, this section presents the analytical findings. Using Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this section presents the findings of how *Working Women 2023* constructs silence as a feminist discourse across textual, discursive, and social levels. Silence is examined not as mere muteness but as a communicative resource that reveals internalized oppression, societal control, and women's subtle forms of defiance. The analysis identifies eight interrelated themes that together demonstrate how silence functions as both a symptom of subjugation and a strategy of empowerment within the patriarchal media landscape (Fairclough, 2023).

Theme 1: Silence as a Manifestation of Patriarchal Oppression

At the textual level, the drama repeatedly portrays silence as a response to male authority. In scenes, female characters – especially Aasha-were seen lowering their gaze or remaining quiet when confronted by men in positions of power. Such silence aligns with Fairclough's notion of ideological language, where social hierarchies are linguistically and behaviorally reinforced through everyday practices.

For example, Aasha symbolizes the internalization of patriarchal discipline, reflecting Foucault's idea of self-regulation through discourse. Yet, this silence also exposes the coercive structures that silence women's professional voices in Pakistani society. Through camera focus and minimal dialogue, the text constructs silence as both submission and a coded commentary on the lack of gender inclusivity in institutional spaces.

Theme 2: Professional Spaces and the Reinforcement of Gendered Silence

In Working Women, the workplace becomes a microcosm of patriarchal order. Silence is strategically imposed upon women through systemic dismissal of their opinions and subtle ridicule of their ambitions. At the discursive level, Fairclough's second dimension – the production and interpretation of discourse – reveals how silence is socially reproduced.

The professional environment discourages women from asserting themselves, marking their silence as a form of "appropriate behavior." Aasha's colleagues interpret her restraint as professionalism, whereas in reality, it emerges from gendered anxiety and fear of backlash. This

reveals the power of discourse to disguise oppression as etiquette. Feminist CDA interprets such silences as discursive constructions that maintain gender asymmetry under the façade of decorum and discipline.

Theme 3: Domesticity and the Normalization of Women's Suffering

Within the social dimension of Fairclough's model, the drama situates silence within domestic settings as a cultural expectation. Characters like Nusrat and Sadia embody the silent endurance idealized in Pakistani households. Their quiet suffering reflects symbolic violence, where women's compliance is romanticized as moral strength.

The repeated Imagery of women silently performing household chores or enduring emotional neglect reinforces patriarchal ideologies that equate femininity with patience and silence. However, Fairclough's approach helps uncover the ideological work performed by these depictions, by presenting silence as virtue, the media text naturalizes women's subordination. Yet, by showing the psychological toll of this silence, Working Women simultaneously critiques this normalization.

Theme 4: Silence as Emotional Resilience and Inner Strength

Contrary to oppressive readings, Working Women also constructs silence as an act of inner resilience. In certain moments, Aasha's silence functions as resistance rather than compliance. Fairclough's textual analysis highlights how tonal shifts, camera angles, and expressions reframe silence as empowerment.

For instance, in an emotionally charged scene where Aasha confronts her employer's unjust decision, her refusal to respond verbally signifies control over her emotions – a form of communicative self-defense. Within feminist discourse theory, this silence operates as strategic agency, allowing women to reclaim dignity without confrontation. Through such portrayals, the drama redefines silence as a gendered tool of survival that coexists with resistance, embodying Fairclough's view of discourse as a site of struggle.

Theme 5: Collective Silence and Solidarity among Women

Silence in Working Women also emerges as a shared experience that binds women together. In scenes depicting female coworkers exchanging silent glances of empathy or mutual understanding, silence transcends linguistic boundaries to become a feminist language of solidarity.

At the discursive practice level, this theme reflects how shared silences constitute counter-discourses within patriarchal institutions. By refusing to engage verbally in hostile environments, the women collectively construct an alternative communicative space that defies male authority. Fairclough's framework situates such practices within interdiscursive, where silence intersects with expressions of sisterhood and collective identity. Hence, Working Women portrays silence not as isolation but as a unifying gesture that strengthens women's presence in spaces where their voices are marginalized.

Theme 6: Media Representation and the Ideological Framing of Silence

Applying Fairclough's social practice dimension, Working Women can be read as a media product that both reflects and critiques dominant ideologies. Pakistani television historically portrays vocal women as rebellious and immoral, while silent women are idealized. The drama deliberately reverses this trope by giving moral credibility to women who remain silent strategically rather than submissively.

Through close textual analysis, it becomes evident that silence functions as a cinematic technique that shapes audience perception. The frequent use of prolonged pauses and slow camera movements emphasizes emotional depth and moral gravity. This semiotic representation positions silence as a critical narrative device that challenges sensationalized portrayals of female suffering in mainstream dramas. Thus, silence becomes a vehicle of feminist critique within Pakistan's media discourse.

Theme 7: The Transformation of Silence into Voice

One of the most significant thematic transitions in *Working Women* is the gradual transformation of silence into speech. Aasha's journey from silence to articulation symbolizes a feminist awakening. Through Fairclough's discursive lens, this evolution reflects how social structures are negotiated through individual agency.

The drama's narrative progression illustrates that silence is not static but fluid, shifting from repression to empowerment. Aasha's eventual decision to speak out against harassment demonstrates that silence, when consciously employed, can become the foundation for reclaiming voice. This aligns with feminist scholars, who argue that breaking the silence is a political act of resistance. The transformation thus reinforces Fairclough's principle that discourse has transformative potential, capable of reshaping power relations within the social world.

Theme 8: Silence as a Mirror of Cultural Morality

Finally, *Working Women* situates silence within Pakistan's broader moral and cultural framework. Women's silence is linked to ideas of honor, modesty, and respectability.

Fairclough's third dimension reveals how these moral discourses are sustained through institutional and media practices.

Aasha's silence in moments of public humiliation demonstrates how cultural expectations regulate female expression. Speaking out may be equated with shamelessness, while silence preserves social dignity. Yet, the drama subtly undermines this ideology by exposing the emotional costs of such moral conformity. Through this, silence becomes both a mirror of social morality and a critique of its gendered limitations. The semiotic emphasis on restraint and body language reflects the performative nature of femininity in patriarchal contexts – that gender identity is enacted through repetitive acts shaped by social norms (Butler, 2021).

Across these eight themes, Working Women constructs silence as a multifaceted feminist discourse that both reflects and contests patriarchal power. Fairclough's CDA reveals that at the textual level, silence operates through linguistic absence and visual framing; at the discursive level, it shapes power negotiations among characters; and at the social level, it mirrors cultural ideologies that define women's moral worth.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of *Working Women 2023*through Fairclough's three-dimensional model reveals that silence is not simply an absence of speech, but a powerful feminist discourse embedded in social, cultural, and ideological contexts. Each theme – from patriarchal oppression to societal bias – reflects how women's silence simultaneously embodies trauma, endurance, and subtle resistance. Silence functions as both a communicative act and a social critique, enabling women to navigate structures of domination while expressing resistance through non-verbal means.

The study also highlights that Pakistani television dramas, particularly Working Women, serve as microcosms of society where gendered power hierarchies are not only mirrored but questioned. Characters like Aasha and Hashmat demonstrate how women in South Asia negotiate agency under restrictive circumstances – using silence, expression, or defiance as tools of self-preservation and empowerment.

By applying Fairclough's CDA framework, the research uncovers how media texts reproduce and challenge patriarchal ideologies. At the textual level, dialogues and gestures signify embedded gender expectations; at the discursive level, production choices reinforce or subvert societal norms; and at the social level, silence symbolizes broader structures of inequality and resistance.

This study concludes that Working Women transforms silence from a symbol of submission into a strategy of resilience. The drama not only problematizes women's oppression but also positions silence as a conscious feminist discourse – one that exposes, critiques, and redefines women's roles in a patriarchal media landscape. The integration of feminist media literacy within Pakistani academia and broadcasting policies could contribute to building a more equitable and informed media landscape. Further research could explore comparative studies across regional dramas to examine how silence, gender, and resistance interact in South Asian media cultures.

References

Acheson, 2008 – *Acheson, K.* (2008). Silence as gesture: Rethinking the nature of communicative silences. *Communication Theory*. 18(4): 535-555.

Ali, 2022 – *Ali, S.* (2022). Hegemony, marginalization, and hierarchies: Masculinities in contemporary Pakistani Anglophone fiction. Ph.D. The University of Waikato.

Ashfaq, Shafiq, 2018 – *Ashfaq, A., Shafiq, Z.* (2018). Contested images of 'perfect women' in Pakistani television dramas. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*. 55(1).

Butler, 2021 – *Butler, J.* (2021). Excitable speech: A politics of the performative. Routledge.

Deetz, Mumby, 2012 – *Deetz, S., Mumby, D.K.* (2012). Power, discourse, and the workplace: Reclaiming the critical tradition. In: *Communication Yearbook 13*. Routledge: 18-47.

DeFrancisco, 1991 – *DeFrancisco, V.L.* (1991). The sounds of silence: How men silence women in marital relations. *Discourse & Society*. 2(4): 413-423.

Eagly, 1987 – *Eagly, A.H.* (1987). Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation. Erlbaum.

Fairclough, 2023 – *Fairclough, N.* (2023). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language. Routledge.

Feingold, 1994 – *Feingold, A.* (1994). Gender differences in personality: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*. 116(3): 429-456.

Foucault, 2014 – *Foucault, M.* (2014). Une histoire de la manière don't les choses font problème. *Cultures & Conflits*. 94-109.

Gallagher, 2005 – *Gallagher, M.* (2005). More women in media: The way forward. *Report on the Global Media Monitoring Project*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Hobbs, 2017 – *Hobbs, R.* (2017). Create to learn: Introduction to digital literacy. John Wiley & Sons.

Jehangir, 2023 – *Jehangir, A.* (2023*)*. Afghan refugees, Pakistani media, and the state: The missing peace. Routledge.

Kellner, Share, 2019 – *Kellner, D., Share, J.* (2019). The critical media literacy guide: Engaging media and transforming education. Vol. 2. Brill.

Kramarae, 2001 – *Kramarae, C.* (2001). The third shift: Women learning online. American Association of University Women Educational Foundation.

Lazar, 2007 – *Lazar, M.M.* (2007). Feminist critical discourse analysis: Articulating a feminist discourse praxis. *Critical Discourse Studies*. 4(2): 141-164.

Lee, 2010 – *Lee, P.* (2010). Meditation on silence. *Media Development*. 57(4).

Mishra, 2015 – *Mishra, D.* (2015). Portrayal of women in media. *Journal of Higher Education and Research Society*. 3(2): 122-128.

Myrttinen et al., 2025 – *Myrttinen, H., Lewis, C., Touquet, H., Schulz, P., Yousaf, F., Laruni, E.* (eds.). (2025*)*. Handbook of Masculinities, Conflict, and Peacebuilding. *London*: Routledge

Naeem, Zaidi, 2024 – *Naeem, S., Zaidi, S.* (2024). Imbalances in power structure depicted in Pakistani dramas: An interdiscursive analysis. *Pakistan Journal of Gender Studies*. 24(1): 234-252.

Tabassum, Amin, 2020 – *Tabassum, I., Amin, S.* (2020). Portrayal of women in Pakistani dramas and its impact on Pakistani society and culture. *Human Nature Journal of Social Sciences.* 1(1): 23-31.

Tannen, 2011 – *Tannen, D.* (2011). You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation. Harper Collins Publishers.

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 77-94

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.77
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Analysis of Fact-Checking Practices among Pakistani Journalists

Samina Irshad [a], Farrukh Shahzad [a], Mohsin Hassan Khan [a, *]

[a] Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract

Fact-checking has emerged globally to combat misinformation and ensure accuracy of information. In Pakistan, it is very intricate due to politically polarized media landscape. This study explores the fact-checking practices of Pakistani journalists amid rampant spread of fake news. Using Qualitative research approach, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews of 21 journalists (male/female) from mainstream media (electronic & print) and digital media news outlets selected through purposive sampling. The journalists were investigated about methodologies being employed and challenges being faced in fact-checking process. They were also inquired about the impact of fact-checking on quality of journalism and the influence of source's perspective and context of story during fact-checking. Findings reveal that, despite recognizing fact-checking as a professional and ethical commitment, its effective implementation is hindered by organizational policies, external pressures, the absence of proper mechanisms, time constraints, limited professional development training, and the inaccessibility of authentic data and reliable sources. The research suggests that fact-checking is not just a technical or ethical tool in journalism but a democratic requirement in Pakistan. Hence, adopting this practice profusely will reinforce watchdog role of media, and also help to mitigate polarization in social and political spheres by making people more informed citizens.

Keywords: fact-checking, journalists, Pakistan, gate-keeping, social responsibility theory.

1. Introduction

Fact-checking is a tool to counter rapid flow of misinformation (Singer, 2019), and the media scholars are concerned about the negative effects of misinformation on the overall intellectual wellbeing of the masses (Smith, Seitz, 2019). The concept of fact-checking was introduced in the first decade of 21st century, however, Graves and Amazeen (Graves, Amazeen, 2019) elucidate that the terminologies of fact-checker and fact-checking became a part of vocabulary in 1930s referring to a new role and obligation of media to report factually and objectively. Örsek (Örsek, 2019) highlights that the concept of International Fact-checking Day was also introduced at a conference held at London School of Economics for the journalists and fact-checkers in June 2014. Lewandowsky et al. (Lewandowsky et al., 2017) analyze the prevalence of misinformation during post-truth era and highlight that the Oxford Dictionary chose the term "post-truth' as the word of the year in 2016. The collaborative effort of Amazeen et al. (Amazeen et al., 2017) highlights the necessity for systematic developments to improve the quality and efficacy of fact-checking practices. Various studies highlight the rise of fact-checking as a new and dynamic tool or institution to safeguard democratic values in a country (Amazeen, 2020; Graves, Cherubini, 2016). This growth in fact-checking practices can be seen as an actual global movement in the field of

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: mhkhan.buic@bahria.edu.pk, mohsin18516@gmail.com (M.H. Khan)

journalism (Graves, 2016) which lays stress on the awareness of public and improvement of political behavior as well as the quality of journalism (Amazeen, 2020); Seaton et al. (2020) argue that almost a decade after the creation of fact-checking, it gained even more popularity in a far more cluttered media landscape where the challenges of fact-checkers need to be addressed.

Nieminen and Rapeli (Nieminen, Rapeli, 2019) argued that fact-checking is carried out routinely by many organizations and not merely during elections. An annual event is organized by the Poynter Institute which invites the fact-checkers from all over the world. They have also established an international fact-checking network (IFCN) to guide the fact-checkers across the globe (Singer, 2019). Nieminen and Sankari (Nieminen, Sankari, 2021) analyze the statistics of active fact-checking projects which increased from 44 to 226 between 2014 and 2019 across 60 countries in the world (Juneja, Mitra, 2022).

Though the United States of America boasts to be the major market for fact-checking in the world (Graves, 2016; Graves, Amazeen, 2019), yet just before the reappointment of US President Donald Trump, Meta announced a termination of its fact-checking program in the U.S. Hence, the Duke Reporters' Lab counts 443 dynamic fact-checking projects around the world in 2025, down about 2 percent so far from last year. However, the number of projects has remained largely consistent in recent years, hovering around 450. According to the report, Fact-checkers around the world feared the move could lead to similar cutbacks elsewhere (Duke Reporters' Lab). Graves and Amazeen (Graves, Amazeen, 2019) elaborate that there are basically two kinds of fact-checking. The fact-checking which is done before dissemination of information is known as Ante hoc fact-checking. On the other hand, a report in written form about the inaccuracies, occasionally with a visual system of measurement given by the fact-checking organization is known as post hoc fact-checking. Another quality control process performed by sub-editor is regarded as the first line of defense against misinformation which is done before publication of the content (Prieto, 2023). Currently, the typical fact-checking process consists of (i) claim detection- identifying salient text spans from a large collection; (ii) evidence retrieval- finding sources that either support or repudiate the claim; (iii) fact verification- assessing the accuracy of the claim on the basis of regained proof (Guo et al., 2022).

In Pakistani media landscape, fact-checking is very intricate due to prevalent political polarization and rapid proliferation of fake news. Jane (Jane, 2019) argues that it is the responsibility of every individual to support factual data and censure false data. The fact-checking organizations in Pakistan are tasked with verifying information but no one scrutinizes their processes, partisanship and overall reliability.

A report published in Daily Times in January 2024 by H. Hassan has explained Pakistan's media evolution from broadcast to bytes. The traditional media has always operated under stern regulatory frameworks, influenced by political and military powers. Pakistan's journalism landscape is filled with challenges, where journalists navigate a hazardous balance between reporting and state scrutiny, particularly from powerful state institutions. Reporters Without Borders ranks Pakistan at 152 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index of year 2024 (Ahmed, Karikalan, 2024, para. 3).

H. Hassan (Hassan, 2024) in his report mentions that Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) which was created in 2002 in order to regulate the media sector focuses more on the content regulation overlooking its main objective. PECA (Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act) which was implemented in 2016 to put an embargo on online crimes is putting a censor on critical voices through warrantless and extended detentions depriving them of legal assistance (Observer Diplomat, 2025). H. Hassan (Hassan, 2024) also alludes in his report that the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act (2021) is not properly implemented since the so-called 'protection' is provisional only for those journalists who adopt a certain code of conduct.

Reporters Without Borders released its annual World Press Freedom Index in May 2025, where Pakistan was ranked 158 out of 180 countries in the world indicating a decline in Pakistan's ranking from preceding years despite being a nuclear power and a democratic country. Toxic polarization has divided our society into mutually distrustful "us & them" groups based on religion, ethnicity, language, cultural & provincial lines (Sadiq, 2024). Media outlets owned by pressure groups and political elites promote their agendas through biased reporting and polarization (Arshad et al., 2023).

Media researchers also opine that social media impacts political ideologies and creates political polarization in society (Himma-Kadakas, Ojamets, 2022; Maqsood et al., 2024) especially

the youngsters (Ferguson, 2021) and the more people tend to use social media algorithms, the more they are vulnerable to political polarization (Javed et al., 2023; Kubin et al., 2021). It is also pertinent to mention that social media has a positive effect in the development of a well-balanced society (Calderaro, 2018), but in Pakistan social media is developing political biasedness through fake news (Riasat et al., 2025). Hence, in Pakistan, where the media landscape is vibrant yet often criticized for lacking verification protocols, fact-checking practices play a critical role in maintaining journalistic integrity. However, there is very limited research on the methods and effectiveness of fact-checking by Pakistani journalist which raises concerns about the standards of accuracy and accountability in their reporting.

Foregoing in view, the current study focuses on the predominant methodologies and strategies employed by journalists in the process of fact-checking information (RQ1), impact of fact-checking practices on the accuracy and reliability of journalistic outputs (RQ2), the primary challenges encountered by journalists in verifying the accuracy of sources and information and strategies utilized by them to address these challenges (RQ3) and the influence of perspectives of sources and the contextual elements of a story on the process of fact-checking within journalistic practices (RQ4). Hence, following objectives of the study are derived:

– To identify and analyse the predominant methodologies and strategies employed by journalists in the fact-checking process.

– To explore the primary challenges faced by journalists when verifying the accuracy of sources and information, and to investigate the strategies they use to overcome these challenges.

2. Materials and methods

This study employs Qualitative research as it bears an exclusive operational goal to produce propositional knowledge relevant to some policy or general human concerns (Hammersly, 2012) to explore human beings' perception about the social world and their interpretation of the world to others (Sandelowski, 2004). Barbour (Barbour, 2014) opines that qualitative research is a researcher's mindset to understand the creative process in social situations, providing best research design to explore, comprehend and interpret social phenomena (Sargeant, 2012) by centralizing the individual experiences of those who conduct it (Alasuutari, 1999). Semi-structured interviews have been conducted as data collection technique in this study which is a recurrently used technique by the qualitative researchers. The semi-structured interview grounds itself on a set of candid, amicable and open-ended questions from interviewees to respond freely (Galletta, 2012; Husu, 2020) in order to reach till the core of the matter (Tracy, 2020). It enables the researchers to focus on methodologies, strategies and challenges pertaining to journalists' fact-checking allowing them to give new meanings to fact-checking in the context of journalism. The researchers in this study conducted semi-structured interviews with 21 key stake-holders i.e., journalists from mainstream media (print and electronic) and digital media news outlets, selected through purposive sampling technique which helps to represent the sample for specific purposes (Lavrakas, 2008).

The selection criteria for the interviewees are based on the previous literature (Butt, Rabbani, 2023; Dierickx et al., 2024; Ejaz et al., 2025; Haque et al., 2018; Himma-Kadakas, Ojamets, 2022; Husu, 2020; Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020; Juneja, Mitra, 2022; Micallef et al., 2022; Miguel, 2022; Moreno-Gil et al., 2022; Rabby, 2023; Sah et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2024; Singer, 2019; Steensen et al., 2023).

– To fix the appointment, the journalists were contacted through email/phone along with an ethical consent form.

– The male and female journalists who have been interviewed are full time employees of Pakistan's mainstream media and digital news outlets i.e. 4 Urdu and English language newspapers (Daily Dawn, Daily Express, Express Tribune, The News), 5 leading television news channels (Geo News, Dunya News, Express News, Samaa News, ARY News, Dawn News) and 4 digital news outlets (BBC, Urdu News, WE News, Independent Urdu News)

– Every individual has been interviewed for 30-45 minutes in Urdu or English language which happen to be the national and official languages in our country respectively. The interviews' audios have been transcribed in English afterwards

– All interviews were conducted between 1st May to 1st June 2025.

– The interviewees have academic backgrounds mostly connected to journalism, communication, media studies, law, international relations and political science etc.

– The participants had an average experience of 17 years in Pakistani journalism, with a range of 5 to 34 years.

The selection of 21 journalists as participants in this study is consistent with the principles of qualitative research where the focus is on profundity rather than the extensiveness of data as employed by various scholars in their qualitative research (Brandtzaeg, Chaparro, 2017; Butt et al., 2023; Dierickx, Lindén, 2024; Ejaz et al., 2025; Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020; Juneja, Mitra, 2022; Micallef et al., 2022; Miguel, 2022; Moon et al., 2023; Moreno-Gil et al., 2022; Sharma, 2017; Singer, 2019; Steensen et al., 2023). In semi-structured interviews, sample sizes are typically smaller (15-30 participants) and based on the concept of data saturation – a point at which no new themes or ideas emerge (Creswell, 2013; Guest et al., 2006; Marshall et al., 2013).

3. Discussion

Fact-checking is deeply rooted in investigative and watchdog journalism (Cavalier, 2020; Miguel, 2022) based on the principles of correctness, clarity, confirmation and impartiality while handling news (Coddington et al., 2014; Graves, 2016). Journalists have always endeavoured to maintain their integrity and identity through publicly-appealing ethical norms (Schudson, 2001) and by scrutinizing the statements of public officials and inform citizens accordingly (Dobbs, 2012).

Fact-checking has become a global phenomenon being led by some news organizations, independent media outlets and NGOs (Graves, 2018). Many scholars argue that fact-checking organizations play fundamental and effective role in detecting and debunking misinformation (Aruguete, 2022; Graham, Porter, 2025; Johnson, 2024; Kumar, 2024; Micallef et al., 2022; Miguel, 2022; Nanhekhan, 2024; Nyhan et al., 2019; Primig, 2024; Saeed et al., 2022; Xue, 2021; York et al., 2020). Exposure to fact-checks improves recognition of facts (Nyhan, Reifler, 2015), and even a single exposure to fact-checks can reduce misconceptions of people (Walter et al, 2020).

The wide dissemination of misinformation across social media platforms has badly influenced many facets of society i.e. presidential elections, public health sector and the global economy (Reporters Without Borders, 2023; Shan, 2024). An overwhelming flow of information has made people, especially the dogmatic and religious fundamentalists, more vulnerable to fake news (Abels, 2022; Bronstein, 2019). Fact-checking plays an important role in countering misbeliefs on social media (Aruguete et al., 2023; Park et al., 2021) especially during crises like Covid-19 when information and health crisis got accelerated (Seaton et al., 2020). Scholars suggest that traditional fact-checking practices utilize fewer human resources, hence they don't scale well when it comes to counter a flood of misinformation on social media platforms.

Saeed et al. (Saeed et al., 2022) present a data-driven analysis of the Birdwatch program which carries out fact-checking in three steps: firstly, claim detection is done on the basis of check-worthiness of data; secondly, evidence is retrieved in support of a claim, and thirdly, claim is verified. Scholars also opine that social media users are more prone to share verified information than corrections (Aruguete et al., 2022) and fact-checking behaviour reduces vulnerability to misinformation (Chia et al., 2024), however scepticism continues regarding the utility of fact-checking services on social media (Brandtzaeg et al., 2017).

The false information on social media has contaminated the political discourse and augmented animosity against the media as well (Grimberg, 2023). Reporters without Borders also alludes to the spread of disinformation through artificial intelligence (AI) that deepfakes are in leading position during elections (Reporters Without Borders, 2024 para. 8), thus the popularity of fact-checking among the public owing to its unique format and efficacy in political sphere cannot be denied (Graves, 2013; Shin, Thorson, 2017).

Amazeen (Amazeen, 2013) refers to the fact-checkers as the umpires of democracy who extract untrue political claims from public discourse. Husu (Husu, 2020) refers to political fact-checking that how it can verify political advertisements or debates. The fact-checking sites mention in their mission statement that their main objective is to serve the society and hold political figures accountable for their words and actions (Graves et al., 2016). National news outlets adopt fact-checking features and carry out the process in newsroom or during a live political event (Graves, 2016). Fact-checking has been regarded as a strategic ritual of journalistic objectivity in which the journalist has to check political claims in an objective but strategic way since the vague statements of politicians may be overlooked by the fact-checkers, or they may show some partisan behaviour in media-political networks (Graves, 2013; Lim, 2018).

Nieminen et al. (Nieminen et al., 2017) have summarized the fact-checking practice as follows:

– Identification of checkable claims;
– Source for verification of the claim;
– Comparison of claim against the source,
– Analysing the truthfulness of the claim.

Another study by Rashkin et al. (Rashkin et al., 2017) also suggests that though fact-checking is a challenging task, yet several lexical features can give us awareness about various types of fake news like satire, propaganda and pranks. Some scholars link populism with disinformation and hate speech hence referring to develop a method of rhetoric-checking to mitigate division and discrimination in society (Kakar et al., 2023; Plug, Wagemans, 2020).

The researchers have contested arguments over the effectiveness of fact-checking (Nieminen, Rapeli, 2019). Some researchers (Hamleers, 2019; Lim, 2018; Nyhan, Reifler, 2012) opine that fact-checkers have a deterrent effect and they can expose and compel the politicians to change or correct their false claims. However, some scholars contend the idea of effectiveness of fact-checking. They argue that the latest technology, social media platforms and modern forms of journalism disseminate fake news at a fast pace while the process of fact-checking is either too late or reactive in a way that it cannot reverse the damage caused by fake news and truth must reach the society as early as possible (Hassan et al., 2015; Li, 2023; Ma et al., 2023; York et al., 2020).

Others researchers suggest that fact-checking can be made effective either by using audio-visual features in fact-checking videos (Lu, Shen, 2023) or by ensuring active involvement of key stakeholders i.e. editors, external and internal fact-checkers, researchers, social media managers, and advocates who promote policies for better information (Juneja, Mitra, 2022).

The reliability of fact-checking also remains debated particularly with respect to human vs automated tools. Human fact-checkers use traditional ways to review claims either individually or in groups (Amazeen, 2015), but this is a labour-intensive task (Micallef et al., 2022) in which statistical approach to counter fake news remains restricted due to the absence of categorized yardsticks (Wang, 2017). Studies reveal that progressive users consider AI fact-checkers more effective and reliable than human fact-checkers (Shan, 2024).

Since AI is revolutionizing journalism worldwide by automating news production, fact-checking and audience engagements (Graves, 2018), there must be trained experts who utilize deception detection algorithms (Allen et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023) and counter accelerated misinformation i.e. Large Language Models and deepfake images and videos (Augenstein et al., 2024; Conroy et al., 2015; Guess et al., 2020; Johnson, 2024; Lee et al., 2023; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Liu et al.,2023; Warren, Augenstein, 2025) with urgency and unbiasedness (Adair et al., 2017; Micallef et al., 2022).

Scholars argue that though AI has the potential to improve the efficiency and autonomy of journalists, yet the social acceptance of AI tools is still not clear (Xue, 2021) because of the absence of digital literacy, misuse of AI tools (Vincent, Shahwar, 2025), regulatory gaps, data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias and accountability of AI generated content (Raza et al., 2025) to counter the menace of fake news.

Nieminen and Rapeli (Nieminen, Rapeli, 2019) argue that people doubt the reliability of fact-checks considering it a commentary instead of objective reporting (Garrett, Diep, 2022; Markowitz, 2023; Nyhan, Reifler, 2010), however it can be addressed through adoption of transparency in news production processes, utilize reliable and authentic sources such as experts' statements, external supporting documents, graphics and other types of information which may provide the context of a particular story (Humprecht, 2020; Kumar, 2024; Nyhan, Reifler, 2012; Rabby et al., 2023).

There exist some fringe fact-checkers too who work independently and can either exploit fact-checking for propaganda (Montaña-Niño et al., 2024) or scrutinize facts from false claims to bridge the gap between public and authorities (Luengo, García-Marín, 2020).

Research into the psychological factors influencing individuals' engagement with fact-checking reveals that media consumers engage in "selective exposure" on the basis of their pre-existing beliefs (Hamleers, Van der Meer, 2019; Moon, Kahlor, 2025), hence affecting the rating of some fact-checks (Allen et al., 2022; Walter et al.,2021).

Mattes and Redlawsk (Mattes, Redlawsk, 2020) analyze that voters often tend to engage in fact-checking for negative campaigns and scrutinize the statements of less preferred candidates more rigorously. Martel and Rand (Martel, Rand, 2024) opine that despite having less trust in fact-

checkers, people often tend to share fact-checker labeled misinformation. Graham and Porter (Graham, Porter 2025) explore three strategies to enhance willingness of public to engage with fact-checking. First of all, using an expression "people like you" to urge people to read fact-checks. Secondly, the expression of "civic duty" to remind people of their obligations as a responsible citizen. Thirdly, motivating people through a micro-payment to read fact-checks. Şencan and Soydal (Şencan, Soydal, 2023) suggest that inclusion of fact-checking module in students' curriculum may improve news literacy. Researchers argue that fact-checking practices vary from protocols and message authenticity (Murphy, 2019; Xue, 2021) to the digital tools capacity in improving access (Yang, Christensen, 2024), however, the public shows less trust towards fact-checkers in comparison with the physicians (Moon et al., 2023).

Journalists used to gather information verbally in old times from primary sources (Chinn, 2001) as 'epistemic workers' assessing knowledge claims of others and then make their own knowledge claims (Örnebring, 2016) and remain in public eye (Schudson, 2001).

Fact-checking is majorly done by the journalists (Nieminen, Rapeli, 2019) who shape various narratives about the world (Oladokun et al., 2024) and serve the society by sharing factual data with the masses (Primig, 2024).

Nonetheless, journalists as fact-checkers are often suspected of being an extended arm of the elites. In fact, they have to walk on a double-edged sword while checking and publicizing the false claims of politicians (Graves, 2016) and get the agreement of their audiences by acting fairly (Graves, 2012) and sometimes neutrally during conflicts (Pingree et al., 2014). Scholars argue that journalists come across various challenges in fighting fake news on social media platforms. They endeavor to save watchdog role of media (Ferracioli et al., 2022) but fall a victim to time constraints, inaccurate information (Garrison,1999; Himma-Kadakas, Ojamets, 2022), deepfake videos or pictures generated by AI, lack of proper staff training and verification tools; information overload and shortage of manpower in media department (Kulundu, 2021; Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2023), online threats and harassment from users and conspiracy theorists, mental health issues (Juneja, Mitra, 2022) and inaccessibility of public information, scarcity of resources and increased competition between the media outlets (Moreno-Gil et al., 2022).

However, it is argued by few researchers that journalists must adhere to trust mechanism as well as transparency while undergoing fact-checking process (Kumar, 2024), though Dierickx and Lindén (Dierickx, Lindén, 2024) argue that transparent reporting may also cause criticism and harassment from the authorities. Reporters Without Borders in its Press Freedom Index Report (2023) indicates that the global scenario for press freedom has been facing severe unsteadiness since last decade as the authorities have become very aggressive and hostile towards the journalists not only on social media but in the physical world as well.

Pakistan's media landscape happens to be linguistically diverse, however there are only 6 major media tycoons which not only cover mainstream media platforms (print and broadcast) but also own digital outlets now-a-days. Since the fake news has plagued information environment globally (Butt et al., 2023), it is mandatory for the journalists to speed up fact-checking practices (Ejaz et al., 2025), however, combating misinformation in developing countries is particularly challenging because of limited resources, inadequate technology, and political pressures (Haque et al., 2018), conspiracy theories, false narratives of politicians, violence against public health workers, rumors against minority groups engaged in blasphemy and political turmoil (Ahmad et al., 2022; Mir, Siddiqui, 2022).

The journalist working in chained media landscape like Pakistan can counter misinformation only when their safety is guaranteed and their right to information is recognised. The hierarchy of in fluences model is well applicable to Pakistani journalists which indicates how the journalists get affected by their own attitudes and behaviours while dealing with news content, later the media routines influence their decisions. The pressures from media organizations, external elite and social/cultural values also hinder their fact-checking practices (Reese, 2019; Shoemaker, Reese, 2014). Studies also reveal that Pakistani journalists lag behind in the field of science journalism and cannot pursue fact-checking in science related information (Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020).

Jamil (Jamil, 2020) also opines that journalists have an effective role in sustainable development of the country through promoting good governance, societal interconnection, peace, public participation and empowerment, however, due to lack of subject knowledge, freedom of expression and their less access to information, Pakistani journalists have limited or no role in sustainable development of the country. Scholars argue that since the information is spreading all

over the country through modern forms of journalism, the conventional methods of news verification have been badly influenced (Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2019). Thus, fake news is hovering in global news ecosystem leading to decline in journalistic integrity and quality of journalism.

Butt et al. (Butt et al., 2023) analyse the causes of spread of misinformation and identify that even senior journalists perhaps do not differentiate between analysis, opinion, facts, and information, and this also colors their own perceptions of Fake News. Studies reveal that the Pakistani journalists work in an insecure and controlled environment where they often fall a victim to physical, psychological and financial risks, life threats or mental traumas through harassment. Another major challenge for journalists in Pakistan is the implementation of stringent laws such as Pakistan Penal code 1860, Official Secrecy Act 1923, Defamation Ordinance 2002, Investigation for Fair trial act 2013 and Prevention for Electronics Crimes Act 2016 (Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020).

4. Results

The researchers have employed a two-step process in order to first streamline the data, comprehend the thoughts and perspectives of the interviewees, and then organize it as per the generated themes and codes to carry out a detailed thematic analysis. Initially, key terms, most repeated phrases and tones were analyzed using the software, and then the visualizations were integrated into the research to represent the essential and noteworthy outcomes. Furthermore, the outcomes were interpreted and the study identified meaningful patterns and links aiding in data analysis.

Computer-Assisted Analysis Using NVivo 14

During this phase of research, the researcher utilized NVivo 14 to examine the data and extract key insights, presenting them with meaningful representations.



Fig. 1. Word Cloud of Most Frequently Used Words in Data Set

Figure 1 shows the most frequently used words in data set, where “news”, “media”, “fact”, “checking” and “journalists” can be seen to be used the most, highlighting the patterns depicted by the respondents. Factors such as “verification”, “official source”, “digital”, “information”, “first”, “time”, “organization”, “disinformation”, “fake” and “pressures” can be observed suggesting the different dimensions of the fact-checking practices and challenges being faced by the journalists. Furthermore, the word cloud depicts that sampled experts suggested that Pakistani journalists are cognizant of the significance of fact-checking practices to counter misinformation and disinformation, however they have to come across various challenges i.e. organizational and external pressures.

Figure 2 is a “Tree Map”, which visually represents hierarchical data through a structured display, and helps the researchers to identify the most frequently used words and the terms which are emerging from the extension of those words.

Figure 2 illustrates the most commonly used words by the respondents when discussing the fact-checking practices of Pakistani journalists and the hindrances they come across during the process. It provides insights into the word hierarchy and its implications, for instance “news”, “fact”, “media”, “checking”, “source”, “verification” and “fake” indicate that the respondents have linked different terms to describe the importance of fact-checking of news through sources in order to counter misinformation and fake news. Furthermore, the tree map suggests that a strong emphasis was given on news and facts which highlights the connection between both that every news must be based on facts and must be verified through sources before dissemination. The figure also suggests that the journalists are unable to carry out fact-checking of news because of the flow

of misinformation, organizational and external pressures, lack of training and the race of breaking news which puts them under time constraints etc.

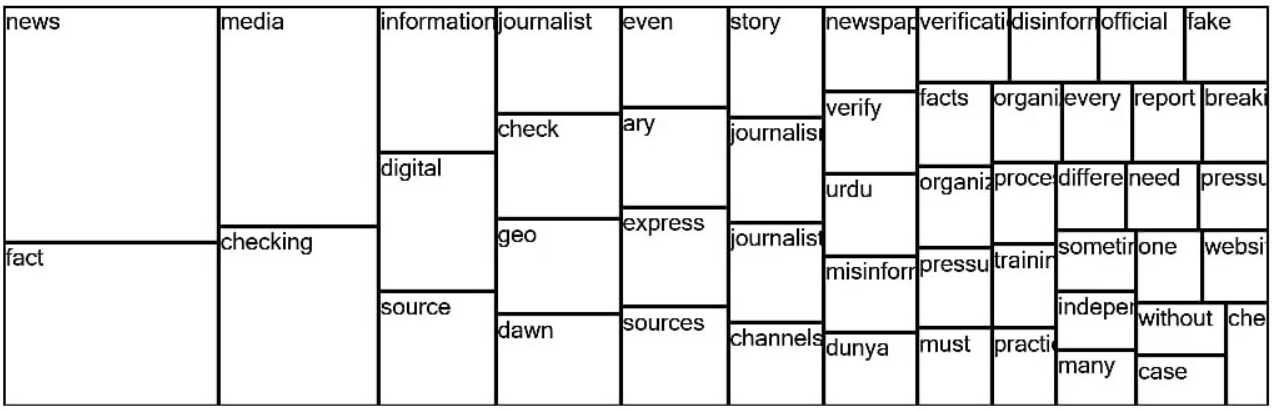

Fig. 2. Tree Map of Most Frequently Used Words

Furthermore, the detailed dissection of these Auto coded themes can be seen in Figure 3, which highlights the prominent discussion points, issues pointed out and solutions generated by the sampled experts.

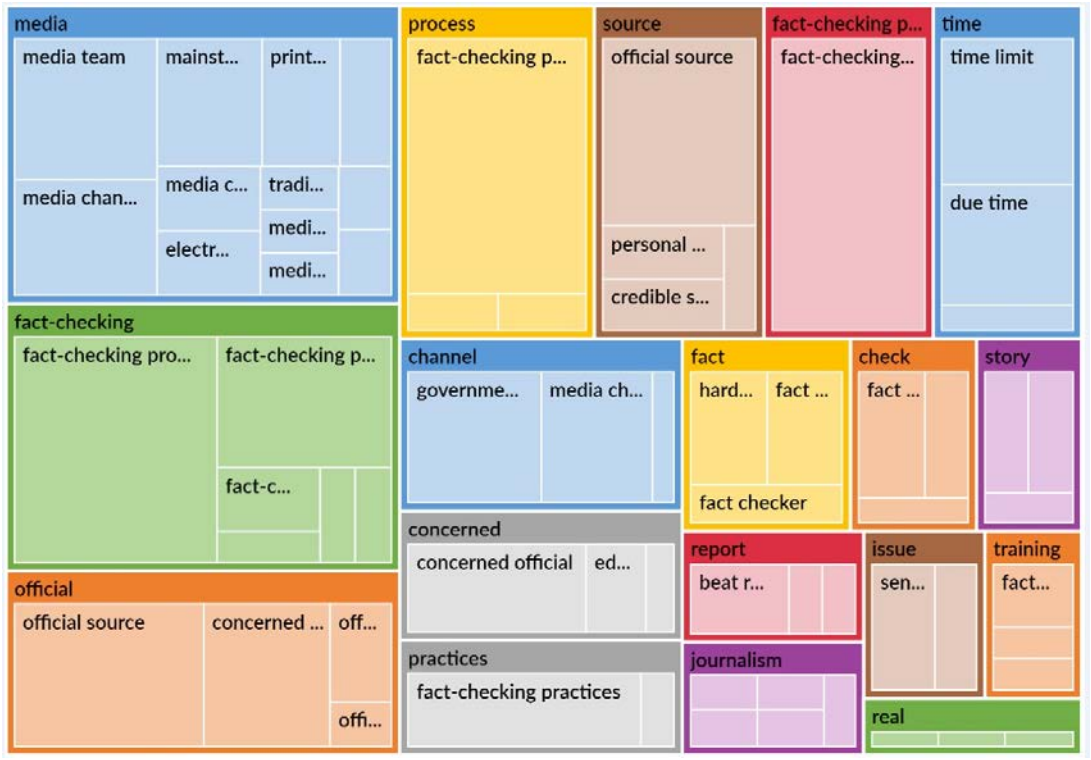

Fig. 3. Auto coded themes and subsequent discussions

Figure 3 are the auto coded themes and the subsequent discussions which followed, a clear emphasis on media channels, fact-checking process, concerned official source, personal and credible source, training and time limit. This figure illustrates that fact-checking is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. The most dominant themes in this figure revolve around media, fact-checking processes and sources to get verification coming together to make information more accurate and credible. The first major theme highlights media-related aspects including mainstream media (print and electronic). The second major theme highlights structured fact-checking practices in verification process. These practices vary across different media types. The third theme refers to the importance of sources, particularly official, personal and credible ones which play fundamental role in fact-checking. Time-related factors including deadlines and

time limits reflect the pressure from organizations which obstruct the verification process and influence the quality of fact-checking. Additional but smaller themes include training, reports, story and journalism which refer to certain challenges on the way to fact-checking and suggestions to improve the quality of journalism. Overall, this visualization depicts that fact-checking is a complex process which depends on media type, sources, time management and professional journalistic practices.

Figure 4 depicts the most frequently used words and the phrases which were associated with them. Here, fact-checking has been discussed in detail exploring predominant methodologies employed by respondents and challenges they come across during the process and strategies adopted to counter those challenges. Pakistan's scenario has been extensively discussed and the practices employed by various media types have been analyzed.

In Figure 4, we can get an in-depth look of how journalists view and experience fact-checking, by throwing light on the realities of its practice within their media organizations. On one side, it depicts the challenges they face including the lack of training, insufficient organizational support and the pressure to meet given deadlines. Journalists report that fact-checking is often reduced to mere proof-reading instead of thorough verification especially while dealing with controversial content. Many highlighted that there are no watch dog bodies and they have to rely on official versions which affects independence and credibility of journalists. The other side of the figure emphasizes the significance of fact-checking in building journalistic integrity, reliability and credibility especially in the context of combating misinformation and disinformation. Few channels are seen as improving quality while others lag behind due to limited training and inconsistent practices. The respondents view that fact-checking is nothing beyond journalism but an essential part of routine journalism, though it takes time and faces organizational and external pressures. Overall, the figure depicts the ideal role of fact-checking as the cornerstone of responsible journalism vis-à-vis the constraints hindering its implementation in newsrooms pointing towards urgent need for training, institutional mechanism and improvement in journalistic practices.

Pakistani journalists consider fact-checking to be a professional skill as well as an ethical responsibility. This description aligns with the global perceptions which place factual accuracy at the heart of journalistic integrity (Cavaliere, 2020; Coddington et al., 2014; Graves, 2016; Graves, Amazeen, 2019; Himma-Kadakas, Ojamets, 2022; Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Murphy, 2019; Schudson, 2001; Smith, Seitz, 2019).

However, several journalists reported that the execution of fact-checking is often neglected owing to government and organizational policies, lack of professional development training in respective field, external pressures from government institutions and corporate sector and the race for breaking news to be the first in reporting. The role of social media as the biggest source fake news impeding fact-checking process was emphasized by majority of the interviewees. They acknowledged the pressure to act hurriedly on viral content, often before verification is possible – a finding that resonates with contemporary concerns about "post-truth" media environments (Gelfert, 2021).

The interviewees views about making common people a part of disinformation campaign through social media align with the deductions of previous studies (Abels, 2022; Ahmad et al., 2022; Bronstein, 2019; Butt et al., 2023; Garrison, 1999; Haque et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2015; Li, 2023; Mir, Siddiqui, 2022; Park et al., 2021; Şencan, Soydal, 2023; Shan, 2024; York et al., 2020). This tension leads to a key challenge: while digital democratization has extended access to information, it has also blurred the boundary between professional and amateur content creation (Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2019). Pakistani journalists work in an unsafe and restricted environment where they face physical, psychological, financial, digital, gender and topic-specific risks that encroach on their routine work (Jamil, 2020; Butt et al., 2023). They work with inadequate resources under political pressures (Haque et al., 2018). Media outlets owned by pressure groups and elites promote their agendas through biased reporting leading to polarization (Arshad et al., 2023).

Journalists' lives become more challenging in Pakistan because of the existence of stringent laws (such as Pakistan Penal Code 1860, Official Secrecy Act 1923, Defamation Ordinance 2002, Investigation for Fair Trial Act 2013, and Prevention for Electronic Crimes Act 2016) and recurrent government's restriction to access information (Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020). The state's averseness to provide data under the Right to Information (National Assembly of Pakistan, 2021) and bureaucratic red tape were highlighted as major impediments in fact-checking process.

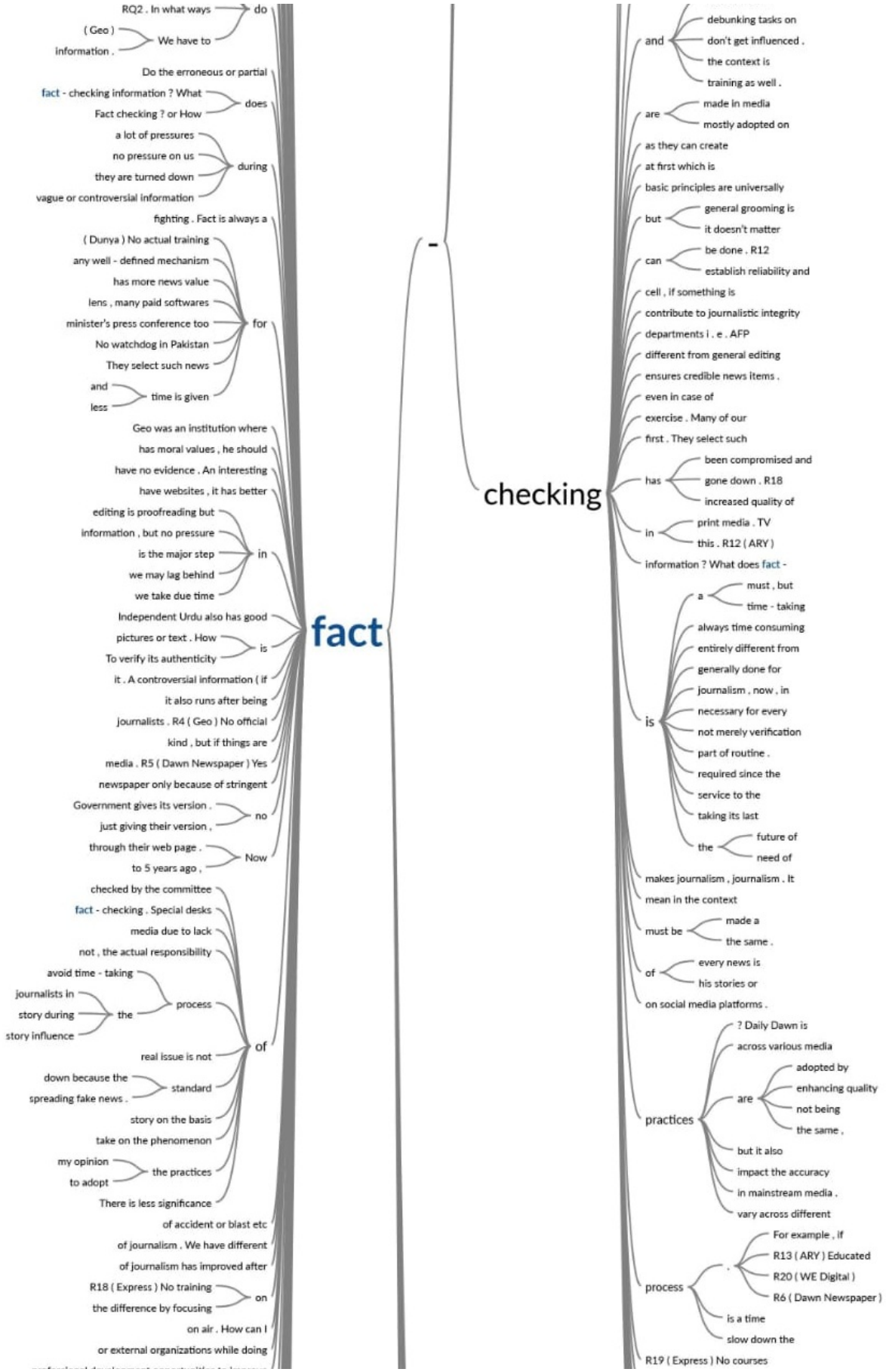

Fig. 4. Word Tree of Frequently Used Terms by Sampled Experts

The current study offers valuable contribution to literature on fact-checking by linking global scholarship with the mostly overlooked realities of Pakistani journalism. The global research has expansively analyzed the rise of fact-checking platforms (Amazeen et al., 2017; Amazeen, 2020; Graves, 2016; Graves, Amazeen, 2019; Graves, Cherubini, 2016; Niminen, Sankari,2021; Singer, 2019), their role in combating misinformation and disinformation (Aruguete, 2022; Graham, Porter, 2025; Johnson, 2024; Kumar, 2024; Micallef et al., 2022; Miguel, 2022; Nanhekhan, 2024; Nyhan et al., 2019; Primig, 2024;; York et al., 2020), their significance in political sphere (Amazeen, 2013; Graves, 2013; Graves, 2016; Husu, 2020; Shin, Thorson, 2017) and their well-structured protocols and professional verification systems (Graves, 2018; Micallef et al., 2022).

However, a very little attention has been given to how such practices translate in developing countries like Pakistan. Building on the above insights, the current study tends to bridge the contextual gap by exploring how Pakistani journalists – working in politically polarized media landscape, with limited resources and restricted freedom of speech – interpret, acclimatize or deviate from these international standards of fact-checking. Using a qualitative, journalist-focused approach, the study offers empirical evidence that how global fact-checking practices interrelate with socio-political realities of Pakistan. This perspective augments comparative scholarship by presenting fact-checking as not only a technical and ethical practice but also a democratic need of the hour.

5. Conclusion

In an era demarcated by the widespread misinformation and growing distrust in media, this study sets out to explore the fact-checking practices among Pakistani journalists – an area that has been critically under-researched within the context of Pakistan's media landscape. The study offers a distinct comprehension of how journalists carry out the complicated process of fact-checking in the face of political polarization, organizational and institutional pressures and technological limitations. The current research also reveals that though the journalists acknowledge that fact-checking is ethically inevitable, yet they fail to implement it due to lack of any specific mechanism in their media organizations. As a result, the journalist often become a part of misinformation and disinformation unintentionally. By offering empirical insights from field reporters/working journalists instead of fact-checkers, the study fills a critical gap in local scholarship. It also highlights the need for policy reforms, organizational support and professional training to improve journalistic credibility and public trust in Pakistani media landscape.

In conclusion, this study suggests that fact-checking is not just a technical or ethical tool in journalism but a democratic requirement. It serves as a counter measure against misinformation, improves journalistic credibility and reliability, and ensures truthful information for the society. For Pakistan, adopting this practice expansively will not only reinforce the media's role as a watchdog but also help to mitigate polarization in social and political spheres by making people informed citizens. A collaborative commitment from journalists, media organizations, academia, civil society and policymakers is required to institutionalize and standardize fact-checking practices as an integral part of responsible journalism.

6. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the field reporters for their willingness to be interviewed and provide valuable suggestions to improve quality of journalism through proper fact-checking.

References

Abels, 2022 – *Abels, C.M.* (2022). Everybody lies: Misinformation and its implication for the 4th space. *Proceedings*. 81(1): 120. MDPI.

Adair et al., 2017 – *Adair, B., Li, C., Yang, J., Yu, C.* (2017). Progress toward "the holy grail": The continued quest to automate fact-checking. *Proceedings of the Computation + Journalism Symposium*.

Ahmad Kamboh et al., 2022 – *Ahmad Kamboh, S., Ittefaq, M., Sahi, A.A.* (2022). Journalistic routines as factors promoting COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Pakistan. *Third World Quarterly*. 43(1): 278-287. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1982577

Ahmed, Karikalan, 2024 – *Ahmed, I., Karikalan, C.* (2024). Fatal silence: Press freedom and perilous journalism in Pakistan. *ISAS Brief*. Institute of South Asian Studies. [Electronic resource].

URL: https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/fatal-silence-press-freedom-and-perilous-journalism-in-pakistan/

Alasuutari, 1999 – *Alasuutari, P.* (1999). Introduction: Three phases of reception studies. In: *Rethinking the media audience: The new agenda*. Sage: 2-21.

Allen et al., 2021 – *Allen, J., Arechar, A.A., Pennycook, G., Rand, D. G.* (2021). Scaling up fact-checking using the wisdom of crowds. *Science Advances*. 7(36): 43-93. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abf4393

Allen et al., 2022 – *Allen, J., Martel, C., Rand, D.G.* (2022). Birds of a feather don't fact-check each other: Partisanship and the evaluation of news in Twitter's Birdwatch crowdsourced fact-checking program. *Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems:* 1-19. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3491102.3517703

Amazeen et al., 2017 – *Amazeen, M.A., Thorson, E., Muddiman, A., Graves, L.* (2017). Correcting political and consumer misperceptions. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699017690213

Amazeen, 2013 – *Amazeen, M.A.* (2013). A critical assessment of fact-checking in 2012. New America Foundation.

Amazeen, 2015 – *Amazeen, M.A.* (2015). Revisiting the epistemology of fact-checking. *Critical Review*. 27(1): 1-22. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2014.993890

Amazeen, 2020 – *Amazeen, M.A.* (2020). Journalistic interventions: Structural factors affecting the global emergence of fact-checking. *Journalism*. 21(1): 95-111. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917730217

Arshad et al., 2023 – *Arshad, A., Shahzadi, A.I., Hassan, A.* (2023). Role of media in political polarization: Impacts on democracy in Pakistan. *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review*. 7(3): 296-311. DOI: https://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2023(7-III)26

Aruguete et al., 2022 – *Aruguete, N., Calvo, E., Bachmann, I., Valenzuela, S., Ventura, V.* (2022). Truth to be told: Cognitive moderators of selective sharing of fact-checks on social media. *Working paper*: 1-37.

Aruguete et al., 2023 – *Aruguete, N., Bachmann, I., Calvo, E., Valenzuela, S., Ventura, T.* (2023). Truth be told: How "true" and "false" labels influence user engagement with fact-checks. *New Media & Society*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231193709

Augenstein et al., 2024 – *Augenstein, I., Baldwin, T., Cha, M., Chakraborty, T., Ciampaglia, G. L., Corney, D., Zagni, G.* (2024). Factuality challenges in the era of large language models and opportunities for fact-checking. *Nature Machine Intelligence*. 6(8): 852-863.

Barbour, 2014 – *Barbour, R.S.* (2014). Quality of data analysis. In: *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis.* Sage: 496-509. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/aris.2009.1440430113

Brandtzaeg et al., 2018 – *Brandtzaeg, P.B., Følstad, A., Chaparro Domínguez, M.Á.* (2018). How journalists and social media users perceive online fact-checking and verification services. *Journalism Practice*. 12(9): 1109-1129. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2017.1363657

Bronstein et al., 2019 – *Bronstein, M. V., Pennycook, G., Bear, A., Rand, D.G., Cannon, T.D.* (2019). Belief in fake news is associated with delusionality, dogmatism, religious fundamentalism, and reduced analytic thinking. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*. 8(1): 108-117. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2018.09.005

Butt et al., 2023 – *Butt, M.N., Riaz, M., Rabbani, A.W.* (2023). Countering fake news in Pakistan: Challenges faced by newsrooms and regulators. *MAIRAJ*. 2(2): 79-87.

Calderaro, 2018 – *Calderaro, A.* (2018). Social media and politics. In: *The SAGE handbook of political sociology*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.academia.edu/35586876/Social_Media_and_Politics

Cavaliere, 2020 – *Cavaliere, P.* (2020). From journalistic ethics to fact-checking practices: Defining standards of content governance in the fight against disinformation. *Journal of Media Law*. 12(2): 133-165. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17577632.2020.1809494

Chia et al., 2024 – *Chia, S.C., Lu, F., Gunther, A.C.* (2024). Who fact-checks and does it matter? *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 29(2): 438-458. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612231213758

Chinn, 2001 – *Chinn, L.A.* (2001). The information-seeking behavior and needs of journalists in context. MA Dis. Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Coddington et al., 2014 – *Coddington, M., Molyneux, L., Lawrence, R.G.* (2014). Fact checking the campaign. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 19(4): 391-409. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161214540942

Conroy et al., 2015 – *Conroy, N.K., Rubin, V.L., Chen, Y.* (2015). Automatic deception detection. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. 52(1): 1-4. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2015.145052010083

Creswell, 2013 – *Creswell, J.* (2013). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Sage. 414 p.

Diep, 2022 – *Diep, P.P.U.* (2022). Check the checks: A comparison of fact-checking practices between newspapers and independent organizations in the United States. Ph.D. Dis. DOI: https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.27499.36646

Dierickx, Linden, 2024 – *Dierickx, L., Lindén, C.G.* (2024). Transparency and fact-checking in open societies, *Journalism*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241292200

Dobbs, 2012 – *Dobbs, M.* (2012). The rise of political fact-checking: How Reagan inspired a journalistic movement – A reporter's eye view. New America Foundation.

Ejaz et al., 2025 – *Ejaz, W., Altay, S., Ittefaq, M.* (2025). How effective are fact-checks in Pakistan and who engages with them? *Information, Communication & Society*. 1-23.

Ferguson, 2021 – *Ferguson, C.J.* (2021). Does the internet make the world worse? Depression, aggression and polarization in the social media age. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society*. 41(4): 116-135.

Ferracioli et al., 2022 – *Ferracioli, P., Kniess, A.B., Marques, F.P.J.* (2022). The watchdog role of fact-checkers in different media systems. *Digital Journalism*. 10(5): 717-737. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1919537

Garrison, 1999 – *Garrison, B.* (1999). Journalists' perspectives on online information-gathering problems. In: *AEJMC Southeast Colloquium*. Lexington. KY.

Graham, Porter, 2025 – *Graham, M.H., Porter, E.V.* (2025). Increasing demand for fact-checking. *Political Communication*. 42(2): 325-348.

Graves et al., 2016a – *Graves, L., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J.* (2016). Why do journalists fact-check? [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.dartmouth.edu/~nyhan/journalist-fact-checking.pdf

Graves et al., 2016b – *Graves, L., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J.* (2016). Understanding innovations in journalistic practice: A field experiment examining motivations for fact-checking. *Journal of Communication*. 66(1): 102-138. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12198

Graves, 2013 – *Graves, L.* (2013). Deciding what's true: Fact-checking journalism and the new ecology of news. Columbia University.

Graves, 2016 – *Graves, L.* (2016). Deciding what's true: The rise of political fact-checking in American journalism. Columbia University Press.

Graves, 2018 – *Graves, L.* (2018). Boundaries not drawn: Mapping the institutional roots of the global fact-checking movement. *Journalism Studies*. 19(5): 613-631.

Graves, Amazeen, 2019 – *Graves, L., Amazeen, M.* (2019). Fact-checking as idea and practice in journalism. In: Waisbord, S. (ed.). *The handbook of global media ethics*. Springer: 269-284.

Graves, Cherubini, 2016 – *Graves, L., Cherubini, F.* (2016). The rise of fact-checking sites in Europe. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk

Graves, 2018 – *Graves, D.* (2018). Understanding the promise and limits of automated fact-checking. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Grimberg, 2023 – *Grimberg, D.* (2023). Impact of information disorder and digital populism on journalistic practices. Ph.D. Dis. University of Canterbury.

Guess et al., 2020 – *Guess, A.M., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J.* (2020). Exposure to untrustworthy websites in the 2016 US election. *Nature Human Behaviour*. 4(5): 472-480. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0833-x

Guest et al., 2006 – *Guest, G., Bunce, A., Johnson, L.* (2006). How many interviews are enough? *Field Methods*. 18(1): 59-82.

Guo et al., 2022 – *Guo, Z., Schlichtkrull, M., Vlachos, A.* (2022). A survey on automated fact-checking. *Transactions of the Association for Computational Linguistics*. 10: 178-206. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1162/tacl_a_00451

Hameleers, 2019 – *Hameleers, M.* (2019). Susceptibility to mis- and disinformation and the effectiveness of fact-checkers. *SCM Studies in Communication and Media*. 8(4): 523-546. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5771/2192-4007-2019-4-523

Hameleers, Van der Meer, 2020 – *Hameleers, M., Van der Meer, T.G.* (2020). Misinformation and polarization in a high-choice media environment. *Communication Research*. 47(2): 227-250. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650218819671

Hammersley, 2012 – *Hammersley, M.* (2012). What is qualitative research? Bloomsbury Academica.

Haque et al., 2018 – *Haque, M. M., Yousuf, M., Arman, Z., Rony, M.M.U., Alam, A.S., Hasan, K.M., Hassan, N.* (2018). Fact-checking initiatives in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. *arXiv preprint*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/1811.01806

Hassan et al., 2015 – *Hassan, N., Adair, B., Hamilton, J.T., Li, C., Tremayne, M., Yang, J., Yu, C.* (2015). The quest to automate fact-checking. In: *Proceedings of the Computation & Journalism Symposium*.

Hassan, 2024 – *Hassan, H.* (2024). Pakistan's media evolution: From broadcast to bytes. *Daily Times*.

Himma-Kadakas, Ojamets, 2022 – *Himma-Kadakas, M., Ojamets, I.* (2022). Debunking false information: Investigating journalists' fact-checking skills. *Digital Journalism*. 10(5): 866-887. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1954260

Humprecht, 2020 – *Humprecht, E.* (2020). How do they debunk "fake news"? *Digital Journalism*. 8(3): 310-327. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2019.1691031

Husu, 2020 – *Husu, E.* (2020). Journalists as political fact-checkers: Rethinking journalism's epistemic authority. MA Dis. University of Helsinki.

Jamil, 2020 – *Jamil, S.* (2020). Journalism for sustainable development: The imperative of journalists' rights to freedom of expression and access to information for promoting sustainable development in Pakistan. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*. 9(3): 271-291. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms_000321

Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2019 – *Jamil, S., Appiah-Adjei, G.* (2019). Journalism in the era of mobile technology: The changing pattern of news production and the thriving culture of fake news in Pakistan and Ghana. *World of Media. Journal of Russian Media and Journalism Studies*. (3): 42-64.

Jamil, Appiah-Adjei, 2020 – *Jamil, S., Appiah-Adjei, G.* (2020). Battling with infodemic and disinfodemic: The quandary of journalists to report on COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. *Media Asia*. 47(34): 88-109. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01296612.2020.1855055

Janesick, 2015 – *Janesick, V.J.* (2015). "Stretching" exercises for qualitative researchers (3rd ed.). Sage.

Javed, 2023 – *Javed, U.* (2023). The influence of social media algorithms on political polarization and public opinion. *Online Media and Society*. 4(2): 44-52.

Johnson, 2024 – *Johnson, P.R.* (2024). A case of claims and facts: Automated fact-checking the future of journalism's authority. *Digital Journalism*. 12(10): 1461-1484. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2186664

Juneja, Mitra, 2022 – *Juneja, P., Mitra, T.* (2022). Human and technological infrastructures of fact-checking. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*. 6(2): 1-36. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3555151

Kakar et al., 2023 – *Kakar, M.A., Hussain, S., Shahzad, F.* (2023). Analyzing problematic information in the political discourse in Pakistan: The case of Twitter. *Global Social Sciences Review*. 8(1): 445-460.

Kubin, Von Sikorski, 2021 – *Kubin, E., Von Sikorski, C.* (2021). The role of (social) media in political polarization: A systematic review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*. 45(3): 188-206. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2021.1925669

Kulundu, 2021 – *Kulundu, M.N.* (2021). Fact-checking in the digital era: A multi-case study of how newsrooms address disinformation during breaking news. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://ecommons.aku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1046&context=etd_ke_gsmc_ma-digjour

Kumar, 2024 – *Kumar, A.* (2024). Fact-checking methodology and its transparency: What Indian fact-checking websites have to say. *Journalism Practice*. 18(6): 1461-1480. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2104550

Lavrakas, 2008 – *Lavrakas, P.J.* (2008). Encyclopedia of survey research methods. Sage.

Lee et al., 2023 – *Lee, S., Xiong, A., Seo, H., Lee, D.* (2023). "Fact-checking" fact checkers: A data-driven approach. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. 4(2). DOI: https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-53

Lewandowsky et al., 2017 – *Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U.K.H., Cook, J.* (2017). Beyond misinformation: Understanding and coping with the "post-truth" era. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*. 6(4): 353-369. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jarmac.2017.07.008

Li et al., 2023 – *Li, M., Peng, B., Galley, M., Gao, J., Zhang, Z.* (2023). Self-checker: Plug-and-play modules for fact-checking with large language models. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.14623

Li, Chang, 2023 – *Li, J., Chang, X. (2023)*. Combating misinformation by sharing the truth: A study on the spread of fact-checks on social media. *Information Systems Frontiers*. 25: 1479-1493. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-023-10343-y

Lim, 2018 – *Lim, C.* (2018). Checking how fact-checkers check. *Research & Politics*. 5(3): 204-232. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168018786848

Liu et al., 2023 – *Liu, X., Qi, L., Wang, L., Metzger, M.J.* (2023). Checking the fact-checkers: The role of source type, perceived credibility, and individual differences in fact-checking effectiveness. *Communication Research*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/00936502231206419

Lu, Shen, 2023 – *Lu, Y., Shen, C.* (2023). Unpacking multimodal fact-checking: Features and engagement of fact-checking videos on Chinese TikTok (Douyin). *Social Media & Society*. 9(1): 201-232. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221150406

Luengo, García-Marín, 2020 – *Luengo, M., García-Marín, D.* (2020). The performance of truth: Politicians, fact-checking journalism, and the struggle to tackle COVID-19 misinformation. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology*. 8(3): 405-427. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/s41290-020-00117-1

Ma et al., 2023 – *Ma, S., Bergan, D., Ahn, S., Carnahan, D., Gimby, N., McGraw, J., Virtue, I.* (2023). Fact-checking as a deterrent? A conceptual replication of the influence of fact-checking on the sharing of misinformation by political elites. *Human Communication Research*. 49(3): 321-338. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/hqad004

Maqsood et al., 2024 – *Maqsood, A., Ashraf, R., Rasool, H., Moazzam, N., Saleem, Y., Butt, M.U., Butt, A.R.* (2024). Social media and political polarization in Pakistan: A case study of Pakistani youth. *Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*. 2(2): 453-476.

Markowitz et al., 2023 – *Markowitz, D.M., Levine, T.R., Serota, K.B., Moore, A.D.* (2023). Cross-checking journalistic fact-checkers: The role of sampling and scaling in interpreting false and misleading statements. *PLOS ONE*. 18(7): e0289004. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0289004

Marshall et al., 2013 – *Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., Fontenot, R.* (2013). Does sample size matter in qualitative research? A review of qualitative interviews in IS research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*. 54(1): 11-22.

Martel, Rand, 2024 – *Martel, C., Rand, D.G.* (2024). Fact-checker warning labels are effective even for those who distrust fact-checkers. *Nature Human Behaviour*. 8(10): 1957-1967. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01717-2

Mattes, Redlawsk, 2020 – *Mattes, K., Redlawsk, D.P.* (2020). Voluntary exposure to political fact checks. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 97(4): 913-935. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699019876087

Micallef et al., 2022 – *Micallef, N., Armacost, V., Memon, N., Patil, S.* (2022). True or false: Studying the work practices of professional fact-checkers. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*. 6(11): 1-44. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3512920

Miguel, 2022 – *Miguel, A.* (2022). Who are they? A biographic study of three professional fact-checkers. American University.

Mir, Siddiqui, 2022 – *Mir, A., Siddiqui, N. (2022)*. Losing facts to fiction: Nationalism, misinformation, and conspiracy theories in Pakistan. United States Institute of Peace.

Montaña-Niño et al., 2024 – *Montaña-Niño, S., Vziatysheva, V., Dehghan, E., Badola, A., Zhu, G., Vinhas, O., Glazunova, S.* (2024). Fact-checkers on the fringe: Investigating methods and practices associated with contested areas of fact-checking. *Media and Communication*. 12(1): 123-137. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v12i1.6890

Moon et al., 2023 – *Moon, Y.E., Roschke, K., Nelson, J.L., Lewis, S.C.* (2023). Doctors fact-check, journalists get fact-checked: Comparing public trust in journalism and healthcare. *Media and Communication*. 11(4): 380-391. DOI: https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i4.6983

Moon, Kahlor, 2025 – *Moon, W.K., Kahlor, L.A.* (2025). Fact-checking in the age of AI: Reducing biases with non-human information sources. *Technology in Society*. 80. 102760.

Moreno-Gil et al., 2022 – *Moreno-Gil, V., Ramon-Vegas, X., Mauri-Ríos, M.* (2022). Bringing journalism back to its roots: Examining fact-checking practices, methods, and challenges in the Mediterranean context. *Profesional de la Información*. 31(2): 310-215. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2022.mar.15

Murphy, 2019 – *Murphy, J.* (2019). Who checks on the fact-checkers: A comparative study of attitudes to fact checking in the UK and US. In: *World Journalism Education Congress 5: Teaching Journalism in a Disruptive Age.*

Nanhekhan, 2024 – *Nanhekhan, K.* (2024). Efficient fact-checking through supporting facts extraction from large data collections. Tech. Rep.

National Assembly of Pakistan, 2021 – National Assembly of Pakistan (2021). Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act, 2021. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1636461074_763.pdf

Nieminen et al., 2017 – *Nieminen, S., Raiskila, M., Wiberg, M.* (2017). Faktantarkistuksen tietoteoriaa. *Politiikka*. 59(4): 260-273.

Nieminen, Rapeli, 2019 – *Nieminen, S., Rapeli, L.* (2019). Fighting misperceptions and doubting journalists' objectivity: A review of fact-checking literature. *Political Studies Review*. 17(3): 296-309. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1478929918786852

Nieminen, Sankari, 2021 – *Nieminen, S., Sankari, V.* (2021). Checking Politifact's fact-checks. *Journalism Studies*. 22(3): 358-378. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1852891

Nyhan et al., 2020 – *Nyhan, B., Porter, E., Reifler, J., Wood, T.J.* (2020). Taking fact-checks literally but not seriously? The effects of journalistic fact-checking on factual beliefs and candidate favorability. *Political Behavior*. 42: 939-960.

Nyhan, Reifler, 2010 – *Nyhan, B., Reifler, J.* (2010). When corrections fail: The persistence of political misperceptions. *Political Behavior*. 32(2): 303-330.

Nyhan, Reifler, 2012 – *Nyhan, B., Reifler, B.* (2012). Misinformation and fact-checking: Research findings from social science. New America Foundation.

Nyhan, Reifler, 2015 – *Nyhan, B., Reifler, J.* (2015). Estimating fact-checking's effects. American Press Institute.

Observer Diplomat, 2025 – Observer Diplomat (2025). Pakistan ranked 158 of 180 in the World Press Freedom Index 2025. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://observerdiplomat.com/pakistan-ranked-158-of-180-in-the-world-press-freedom-index-2025/

Oladokun et al., 2024 – *Oladokun, B.D., Aruwa, J.E., Ottah, G.A., Ajani, Y. A.* (2024). Misinformation and disinformation in the era of social media: The need for fact-checking skills. *Journal of Information and Knowledge*. 1-7.

Örnebring, 2016 – *Örnebring, H.* (2016). Epistemologies and professional roles. In: *Journalistic Role Performance*. Routledge: 93-107.

Örsek, 2019 – *Örsek, B.* (2019). How the world celebrated the third International Fact-Checking Day. Poynter. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/how-the-world-celebrated-the-third-international-fact-checking-day/

Park et al., 2021 – *Park, S., Park, J.Y., Kang, J.H., Cha, M.* (2021). The presence of unexpected biases in online fact-checking. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*.

Pingree et al., 2014 – *Pingree, R.J., Brossard, D., McLeod, D.M.* (2014). Effects of journalistic adjudication on factual beliefs, news evaluations, information seeking, and epistemic political efficacy. *Mass Communication and Society*. 17(5): 615-638. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2013.849313

Plug, Wagemans, 2020 – *Plug, H.J., Wagemans, J.H.* (2020). From fact-checking to rhetoric-checking: Extending methods for evaluating populist discourse. In: *Vox Populi*. Edward Elgar Publishing: 236-252.

Poynter, 2019 – Don't be fooled: Third annual International Fact-Checking Day empowers citizens around the world to sort fact from fiction. (2019). *Poynter*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/international-fact-checking-day-2019/

Prieto Chavana, 2023 – *Prieto Chavana, N.* (2023). Automated fact-checking for supporting sub-editing. Ph.D. University of Sussex.

Primig, 2024 – *Primig, F.* (2024). The influence of media trust and normative role expectations on the credibility of fact checkers. *Journalism Practice.* 18(5): 1137-1157. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2024

Rabby, et al., 2023 – *Rabby, Q.L., January, F.N., Mia Amor, C.T.I., Julieto, E.P., Eddie Bouy, B.P.* (2023). Information verification practices and perception of social media users on fact-checking services. *Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice.* 11(1): 1-13. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1633/jistap.2023.11.1.01

Rashkin et al., 2017 – *Rashkin, H., Choi, E., Jang, J.Y., Volkova, S., Choi, Y.* (2017). Truth of varying shades: Analyzing language in fake news and political fact-checking. In: *Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing:* 2931-2937.

Raza et al., 2025 – *Raza, M., Farooq, U., Moroojo, M.Y., Ali, J., Shabbir, T.* (2025). AI-Driven journalism in Pakistan: Legal constraints and future directions. *ACADEMIA International Journal for Social Sciences.* 4(2): 1929-1944.

Reese, 2019 – *Reese, S.D.* (2019). Hierarchy of influences. In: *The International Encyclopedia of Journalism Studies:* 1-5.

Reporters..., 2023 – Reporters Without Borders (2023). World Press Freedom Index: Journalism threatened by fake content industry. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://rsf.org/en/2023-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-threatened-fake-content-industry

Reporters..., 2024 – Reporters Without Borders (2024). World Press Freedom Index – journalism under political pressure. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://rsf.org/en/2024-world-press-freedom-index-journalism-under-political-pressure

Reporters..., 2025 – Reporters Without Borders (2025). RSF World Press Freedom Index 2025: Economic fragility a leading threat to press freedom. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://rsf.org/en/rsf-world-press-freedom-index-2025-economic-fragility-leading-threat-press-freedom

Riasat et al., 2025 – *Riasat, I., Hussain, M.H., A.G., Rasheed, A.* (2025). Disinformation and political polarization: A qualitative study on the role of social media to develop political biases in Pakistan. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences.* 6(1): 136-148.

Rodríguez-Pérez et al., 2023 – *Rodríguez-Pérez, C., Seibt, T., Magallón-Rosa, R., Paniagua-Rojano, F.J., Chacón-Peinado, S.* (2023). Purposes, principles, and difficulties of fact-checking in Ibero-America: Journalists' perceptions. *Journalism Practice.* 17(10): 2159-2177. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.

Saeed et al., 2022 – *Saeed, M., Traub, N., Nicolas, M., Demartini, G., Papotti, P.* (2022). Crowdsourced fact-checking at Twitter: How does the crowd compare with experts? *Proceedings of the 31st ACM International Conference on Information & Knowledge Management:* 1736-1746.

Sandelowski, 2004 – *Sandelowski, M.* (2004). Encyclopedia of social science research methods.

Sargeant, 2012 – *Sargeant, J.* (2012). Qualitative research part II: Participants, analysis, and quality assurance. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education.* 4(1): 1-3.

Schudson, 2001 – *Schudson, M.* (2001). The objectivity norm in American journalism. *Journalism*. 2(2): 149–170. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490100200202

Seaton et al., 2020 – *Seaton, J., Sippitt, A., Worthy, B.* (2020). Fact checking and information in the age of COVID. *The Political Quarterly*. 91(3): 578-584. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12852

Şencan, Soydal, 2023 – *Şencan, İ., Soydal, İ.* (2023). Fact-checking behaviors of undergraduate students. *Information Development*. https://doi.org/10.1177/02666669231156861

Shah et al., 2024 – *Shah, S.F.A., Archiwal, A., Hussain, S.* (2024). Journalism in chains: A field theory approach to understanding the lived experiences of Afghan journalists. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699024

Shan, 2024 – *Shan, G.* (2024). Online misinformation and fact-checking. Ph.D. Dis. Temple University.

Sharma, 2017 – *Sharma, G.* (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research.* 3(7): 749-752.

Shin, Thorson, 2017 – *Shin, J., Thorson, K.* (2017). Partisan selective sharing: The biased diffusion of fact-checking messages on social media. *Journal of Communication.* 67(2): 233-255. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12284

Singer, 2019 – *Singer, J.* (2019). Fact-checkers as entrepreneurs. *Journalism Practice*. 13(8): 976-981. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1646613

Smith, Seitz, 2019 – *Smith, C.N., Seitz, H.H.* (2019). Correcting misinformation about neuroscience via social media. *Science Communication*. 41(6): 790-819. DOI:v https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547019884713

Tracy, 2020 – *Tracy, S.J.* (2020). Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact (2nd ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

Vincent et al., 2025 – *Vincent, Z., Hashmat, S., Shahwar, D.* (2025). Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Professional Journalism in Pakistan. *Online Media and Society*. 6(2): 29-44.

Walter et al., 2021 – *Walter, N., Edgerly, S., Saucier, C.J.* (2021). "Trust, then verify": When and why people fact-check partisan information. *International Journal of Communication*. 15: 21-45.

Wang, 2017 – *Wang, W.Y. (2017).* "Liar, liar pants on fire": A new benchmark dataset for fake news detection. *arXiv preprint arXiv:1705.00648*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/1705.00648

Warren et al., 2025 – *Warren, G., Shklovski, I., Augenstein, I.* (2025). Show me the work: fact-checkers' requirements for explainable automated fact-checking. *Proceedings of the 2025 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems:* 1-21.

Xue, 2021 – *Xue, H.* (2021). How do language intensity and artificial intelligence (AI) affect perceptions of fact-checking messages and evaluations of fact-checking agencies? MA Dis. University of California, Davis.

Yang et al., 2024 – *Yang, Q., Christensen, T., Gilda, S., Fernandes, J., Oliveira, D., Wilson, R., Woodard, D.* (2024). Are fact-checking tools helpful? An exploration of the usability of Google Fact Check. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.13244

York et al., 2020 – *York, C., Ponder, J.D., Humphries, Z., Goodall, C., Beam, M., Winters, C.* (2020). Effects of fact-checking political misinformation on perceptual accuracy and epistemic political efficacy. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. 97(4): 958-980. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699020926461

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 95-102

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.95
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Media Educational Potential of Open Practices in the Context of Digitalization Of the University Environment

Svetlana Ivanova [a, *], Natalya Dokuchayeva [a], Svetlana Tyurina [b]

[a] Abylkas Saginov Karaganda Technical University, Republic of Kazakhstan
[b] Ivanovo State Power University named after V.I. Lenin, Russian Federation

Abstract

Digital transformation of higher education emphasizes the implementation of open educational resources and practices as a key mechanism to increase knowledge accessibility and develop flexible, personalized educational pathways. This article analyzes the media pedagogical potential of open educational practices in the context of the digitalization of the university environment. The article examines the integration of open educational resources and practices into the digital environment of a technical university using the example of the Karaganda Technical University named after Abylkas Saginov. The aim of the study is to determine the level of use of open educational resources and practices at the technical university, identify the motivational factors and barriers to their application, and determine the contribution of open educational resources to the development of students' media and digital competencies. The methodology includes an analysis of international regulatory documents and scientific publications, a study of the university's digital infrastructure, and a questionnaire. The results demonstrate high student and faculty engagement in using open educational resources, along with differences in their motivations. Key barriers to the systemic integration of open educational practices include insufficient digital training of teachers, time constraints, language difficulties, and the lack of comprehensive institutional support. Open practices have been found to promote critical thinking, digital autonomy, media literacy, the development of individual educational trajectories, and the expansion of international academic interactions. This study concludes that a unified university digital development strategy is needed, encompassing regulatory frameworks, infrastructure modernization, faculty development, and expanded international academic collaboration, for transition from fragmented use of open educational resources to a holistic open education model.

Keywords: open educational practices, open educational resources, digitalization of education, higher education, digital transformation, personalized learning.

1. Introduction

The digital transformation of education is radically changing the ways in which knowledge is created, disseminated, and perceived, shaping new parameters for the educational reality of technical universities. With the rapid development of digital communications and media tools, open educational resources and practices (OER/OEP) are becoming especially important, becoming a crucial mechanism for expanding access to knowledge and creating flexible, personalized educational pathways. As UNESCO strategic documents emphasize, the integration of

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: s.ivanova@ktu.edu.kz (S. Ivanova)

open resources and pedagogical practices serves as the foundation for the sustainable development of educational systems, strengthening the innovative potential of universities (UNESCO, 2019).

In the contemporary media education context, open practices are viewed not only as a way to improve accessibility but also as a tool for developing digital literacy, critical thinking, and creative participation among students. The European Commission notes that open practices promote inclusion, support intercultural interaction, and create conditions for students to participate widely in academic communication (OECD, 2020). In this context, universities increasingly function as open digital ecosystems where knowledge is created, processed, and circulated in collaborative media formats.

The OEP conceptual model expect a shift from the transmission of ready-made information to collaborative, networked content development. This approach is based on the ideas connectivism, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, media cooperation, and learners' digital autonomy. The theory of connectivism rests on the idea that learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions. The more diverse the sources and opinions you can connect, the richer and more complete your understanding will be. Knowledge is not a single, static point of view, it isn't stored only in the human mind. Learning is the ability to access and utilize external knowledge sources. And the capacity to know more is more critical than what is currently known (Siemens, 2005). The theory of connectivism provides a powerful framework for understanding and designing learning in the 21st century, emphasizing digital literacy, critical thinking, network formation, and lifelong learning as essential skills (Dunaway, 2011). This requires a rethinking of the role of the teacher. The teacher is not just a knowledge carrier, he/she becomes a moderator of the open educational environment, a person engaged into the development of the media competence of students (Fedorov, 2008).

Despite the international attention paid to OER/OEP, there is a lack of research in the scientific literature on their integration specifically into the digital infrastructure of technical universities. Implementation is often limited to the fragmented use of individual resources, which prevents them from realizing their strategic potential and developing a holistic model of open education (Wiley, Hilton, 2018). Additional barriers include insufficient digital training for teachers, motivational difficulties, and legal issues related to licensing and intellectual property protection (Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the digital educational environment is creating new conditions for scaling open education. The development of cloud services, collaboration platforms, artificial intelligence tools, and learning analytics is the basis for the deep integration of open models into the educational process. As the OECD notes, such tools promote a culture of openness, continuous professional development, and media literacy among educational participants (OECD, 2020).

This article examines the integration of open educational resources and practices into the digital reality of a technical university. It analyzes current approaches to OER/OEP, defines their role in transforming the educational environment, and identifies key barriers and prospects for their implementation. Particular attention is paid to the specifics of the digital infrastructure of a technical university and the potential for its development to support open educational models.

2. Materials and methods

This study, devoted to the integration of open educational resources and practices into the digital environment of a technical university, is conducted at the Abylkas Saginov Karaganda Technical University. It has an applied nature. In accordance with the study's objective, a methodological framework has been developed, including an analysis of scientific sources, a study of the university's digital infrastructure, and an empirical study among faculty and students in engineering programs. Taken together, these methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the status and prospects for implementing OER/OEP in the educational environment of a technical university.

First and foremost, the study is based on a theoretical and analytical approach, focused on studying key international documents (UNESCO OER Recommendation, OpenEdu Framework), international and domestic research in the fields of open education, digital pedagogy, and media education technologies. This approach allows us to define the conceptual framework of the study and refine the conceptual framework associated with OER and OEP.

To obtain a true picture of the use of open educational resources, a sample of 60 university teachers and 150 students in engineering programs have been recruited. Questionnaires for faculty have been designed to identify the frequency of OER use and the nature of OEP integration into the

educational process, their motivations for using open resources (high-quality content updates, access to relevant materials, international practices, etc.), and challenges hindering the use of OER/OEP (lack of digital skills, time, regulatory issues).

Students, in turn, were asked questions about their experience with open educational resources and the most popular types (video lectures, online courses, digital libraries, etc.), the impact of OER on the quality of material acquisition, individual learning trajectories, and existing challenges (language barriers, search difficulties, time constraints).

To systematize the information obtained, descriptive statistics, data visualization (diagrams, comparative graphs), and qualitative content analysis of respondents' open-ended responses have been used. Comparison of data about university teachers and student allow us to identify characteristic trends, the degree of digital maturity of educational participants, and the factors determining the success of OER/OEP integration.

3. Discussion

The current digital transformation of education has highlighted the search for new pedagogical models that go beyond the simple use of electronic resources. In this context, the concept of Open Educational Practices (OEP) emerged in the early 2000s as a result of the development of the concept of Open Educational Resources (OER). According to UNESCO, OER are "digital materials available for free use, adaptation, and dissemination" (OECD, 2020).

A key challenge in modernizing higher education is the insufficient adoption of open education technology. To address this and ensure high-quality specialist training, institutions must investigate improvements to both their educational content and their open education frameworks (Hurzhii et al., 2021).

Unlike OER, which primarily represent educational content, OEP emphasizes pedagogical approaches that engage students in the collaborative development of the content and revision of educational materials, thereby fostering critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy.

As G. Geser notes, OEP should be viewed not only as the free distribution of resources, but also as the implementation of innovative learning models focused on openness, collaboration, and the development of professional competencies (Geser, 2012). This idea has been consistently developed in the European context, which emphasizes that it is the practice of using and developing open materials that allows for the transformation of the traditional higher education system (Dzhurynskyi et al., 2023; Wiley, Hilton 2018).

Open education is considered an effective approach for mitigating barriers to education caused by social, cultural, and economic disparities (Bali, 2020; Peters, Britez, 2009).

In turn, Kazakhstan supports the global trend of open education, which is still in its infancy. B. Satayev emphasizes that "openness in education is associated with expanding access, reducing barriers, and introducing electronic educational resources and platforms (Sataev, 2019). One form of open education is the integration of MOOCs into education to enhance the development of students' self-study skills and digital autonomy, provide the conditions for collaborative learning and effective interaction (Dokuchaeva et al., 2025).

The results of the contemporary research demonstrate that open educational practices are becoming a key element of the digital transformation of higher education, reflecting the shift from the simple use of digital resources to the formation of a new pedagogical paradigm (Clinton-Lisell et al, 2023; Gálik, 2020; Gálik, Oprala, 2021; Kačinová, 2019; Tillinghast et al, 2020; Vrabec, Bôtošová, 2020).

The integration of OEPs into the university environment enhances academic opportunities, develops critical thinking skills, and promotes collaboration between faculty and students (Dokuchayeva et al., 2024). In such a context, university teachers increasingly act not only as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators of educational interactions, while students become active participants and co-authors of educational content. Consequently, the digital transformation of higher education is acquiring not only a technological but also a value-based and humanistic character, based on the principles of openness, co-creation, and academic exchange. A similar position is taken by B. O. Satayev, who views open education as a means of ensuring equal access to knowledge, developing independent learning, and developing intercultural competence of students (Sataev, 2019).

However, for OER to be widely adopted, targeted efforts by educational institutions to remove barriers and increase university teachers motivation are needed. The main obstacles

include a lack of time to search for and adapt materials, issues with their quality and compliance with the curriculum, and technical difficulties. A lack of remuneration and institutional support also demotivates faculty (Belikov, Bodily, 2016).

4. Results

The results of the study provide a comprehensive overview of the integration of open educational resources and open educational practices in the digital environment of a technical university and identify key factors determining the dynamics of this process. An analysis of empirical data, compared with the characteristics of the digital infrastructure of the Karaganda Technical University named after Abylkas Saginov, has revealed that the use of open resources is gradually becoming a sustainable component of the educational ecosystem, but remains dependent on the level of digital maturity and institutional support.

First of all, the results of the questionary demonstrate a high level of engagement in the use of open educational resources among both university teachers and students (Table 1). The majority of teachers (67 %) regularly incorporate OER into their curriculum, indicating an understanding of the benefits of open materials, such as accessibility, flexible updating, a variety of information presentation formats, and the ability to integrate them with their own methodological developments. However, some teachers (23 %) use OER occasionally which may be due to differences in workload, limited time for class preparation, or insufficient familiarity with digital tools. A small proportion of respondents (10 %) have not use open resources yet, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to improve teachers' motivation and digital professional competence. Following A. Fedorov, (Fedorov, 2008) we consider the notion “professional media competence” of a university teacher as a combination of special skills to conduct educational activities. Among these skills are motivational, technological, operational, and creative ones.

Table 1. Frequency of use of open educational resources by university teachers and students

Frequency of use of OER	University teachers (%)	Students (%)
Regular use	67 % – systematic introduction of OER into the educational process; awareness of the benefits of accessibility, multimedia, and relevance of resources	74 % – systematic use of OER to prepare for classes, complete projects, and expand knowledge; demonstration of high digital competence
Occasional use	23 % – use of OER depends on the workload and level of proficiency in digital tools; application of OER when necessary	17 % – use of OER when necessary, most often to complete individual learning tasks or search for reference materials
Non-use	10 % – lack of experience is due to lack of time, digital skills, or low motivation to use open-source materials	9 % – lack of need, skills or time constraints

Among students, the result is even more illustrative: 74 % of students systematically use OER in their academic and independent work, indicating a strong need for additional information sources, which students actively use to prepare for classes, complete projects, and achieve academic success. Seventeen percent of respondents report periodic access to open sources, while only 9 % do not use them at all. This high student engagement demonstrates their digital preparedness, ability to find and interpret information, and focus on independent media search strategies. These data are consistent with current research on the media education activities of students majoring in technical fields.

Equally important are the identified motivational factors, which demonstrate differences in the perception of the role of open resources between university teachers and students.

For teachers, the primary motivation is the desire to improve the quality of the educational process: 52 % of respondents cited this incentive. This reflects the need for up-to-date materials that allow them to adapt course content to the rapidly changing demands of the digital economy. Nearly 38 % of teachers value access to modern knowledge sources, which is especially important

for engineering programs, where scientific and technical information quickly becomes outdated. The use of multimedia formats (30 %) is also significant, helping to enliven the learning process and increase student engagement. About a third of teachers view open resources as an opportunity to participate in international digital projects, confirming a growing focus on academic mobility. The innovative nature of OER is also perceived positively: 26 % of teachers note them as a tool for implementation of new pedagogical methods and practices, as reflected in Figure 1.

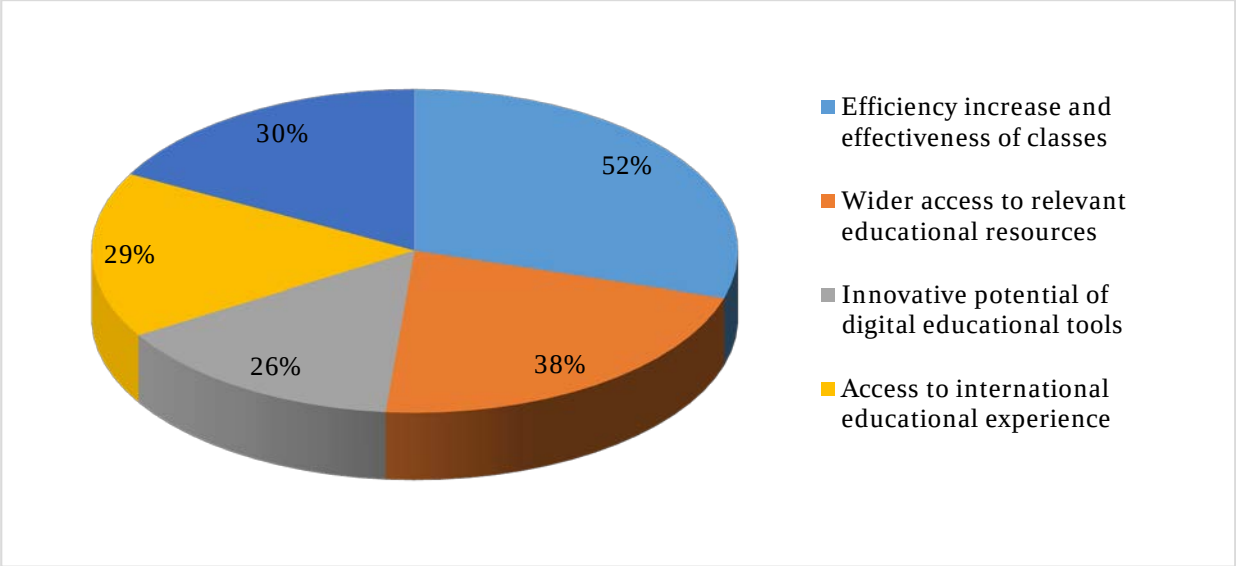

Fig. 1. Factors motivating teachers to use OER

Students characterize their own motivation somewhat differently. They prioritize improved learning (59 %) and access to additional, alternative sources of information (48 %). These figures confirm that students view OER not simply as a supplementary tool, but as a space for expanded learning, allowing them to deepen their knowledge and compare different approaches to topics. Flexibility in individual learning pace is noted by 41 % of students, highlighting the demand for personalized education models. Around 25 % of students cite the importance of the international experience they gain through open platforms, including MOOCs. Multimedia formats attract 24 % of students, reflecting their focus on visual and interactive methods of information acquisition (Figure 2).

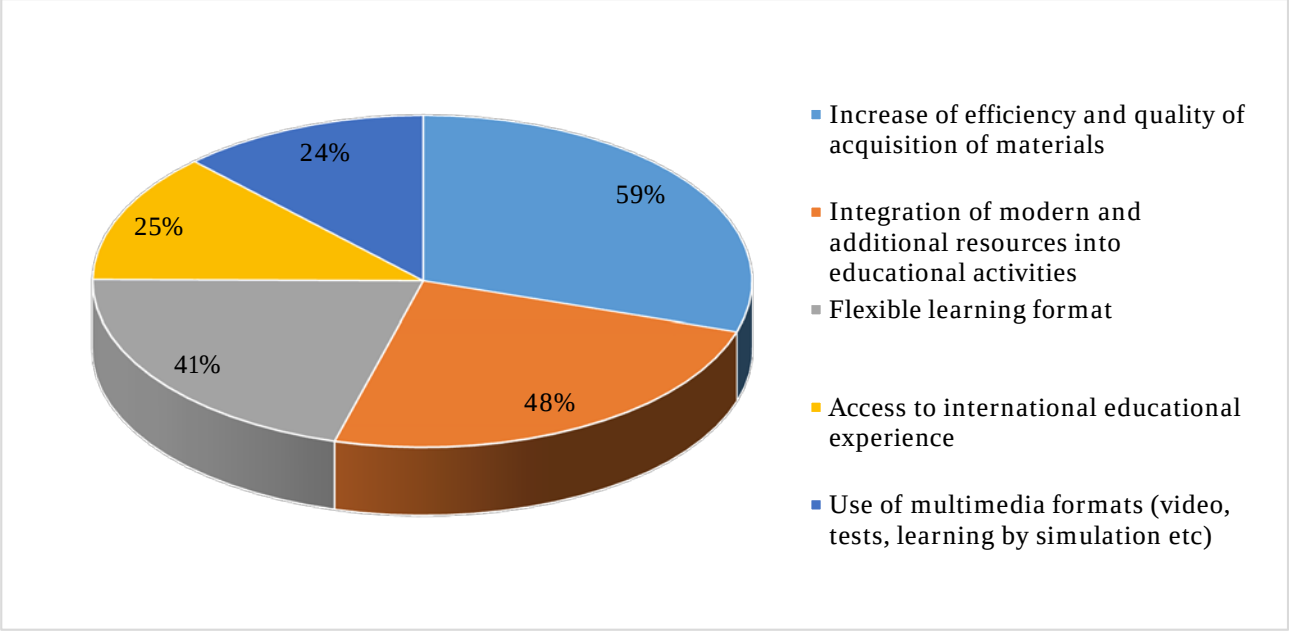

Fig. 2. Factors motivating students to use OER

Despite significant positive results, the study also identified a number of barriers hindering the scale and quality of integrating open source practices into the educational process. Among university teachers, the most common obstacles include insufficient digital training, lack of time to search for and adapt resources, a lack of systematic institutional support for developing their own OER, and legal and licensing restrictions. Language barriers remain significant when working with international platforms and English-language materials, requiring additional attention when planning digital educational initiatives. For students, barriers also include language difficulties, the difficulty of finding high-quality open source materials, and time constraints, which is particularly relevant given the high workload of engineering majors.

Perceptions of the university's digital transformation deserve special attention. An analysis of respondents' responses shows that the majority (62 %) rate the university's digital transformation as moderate. This indicates the presence of a functional digital infrastructure – distance learning systems, digital libraries, and cloud-based collaboration platforms – but also points to the need for further integration at the institutional level. About 25 % of respondents note a high level of digitalization, emphasizing the convenience of accessible online services, electronic journals, and digital platforms. However, 13 % believe that digital transformation is in its early stages and requires comprehensive efforts to modernize the technical infrastructure and improve staff skills.

A comparison of data about university teachers and student suggests that the university is highly prepared to actively implement open educational practices, but further development in this area requires targeted institutional measures. Respondents agree that OER/OEP integration should be implemented within the framework of a unified digital development strategy, encompassing a regulatory framework, incentive mechanisms, and systemic support for teachers. University teachers emphasize the need for advanced training in digital pedagogy and copyright, while students emphasize the importance of expanding access to modern digital platforms and international online projects.

Summarizing the results obtained, it is possible to conclude that open educational resources and practices possess significant transformative potential for the technical higher education system. Their integration contributes to improved quality of education, the development of digital and media educational competencies, enhanced academic mobility, the expansion of individual educational paths, and the development of a culture of open knowledge. However, the transition from fragmented use of OER to a systemic model of open education is only possible with institutional support, a developed digital infrastructure, and a sustainable educational policy focused on openness, collaboration, and innovation.

5. Conclusion

The study allowed us, first and foremost, to comprehensively assess the media potential of open educational practices in the context of the digital transformation of higher education and, moreover, to identify the factors determining the successful implementation of these practices in the university environment. Overall, the analysis of empirical data has shown that both university teachers and students demonstrate a high level of readiness to use OER/OEP and, accordingly, recognize their benefits in improving the quality of education, expanding access to modern digital resources, and shaping individual educational paths.

It is important to emphasize that educators view open resources as a tool for improving the quality of teaching and updating educational content in line with the dynamics of scientific and technological progress, while students emphasize the convenience of independent learning, flexible pace, access to international experience, and expansion of subject matter beyond traditional courses.

At the same time, the identified challenges – namely, a lack of digital competencies, language difficulties, a lack of systemic support for OER development, and insufficient regulatory frameworks – significantly limit the potential for transitioning from the occasional use of open resources to a sustainable digital education model.

The authors note that, from a theoretical perspective, the study clarifies the concept of open educational practices as a pedagogical model focused on openness, collaboration, media cooperation, and the co-creation of educational content. Furthermore, a practically significant result of the study was the development of recommendations for the strategic development of OEPs in universities, including the need for institutional open education policies, the modernization of digital infrastructure, the creation of conditions for university teachers development, and the strengthening of international academic cooperation.

Thus, open educational practices demonstrate high transformational potential and can serve as a key tool for the digital modernization of technical universities. Consequently, their further development requires systemic support, a regulatory framework, and the targeted development of a culture of open knowledge, which will ultimately ensure a sustainable transition to a modern media-oriented model of higher education.

References

Bali et al., 2020 – *Bali, M., Cronin, C., Jhangiani, R.S.* (2020). Framing open educational practices from a social justice perspective. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education.* 2020(1): 1-10. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.565

Belikov, Bodily, 2016 – *Belikov, O.M., Bodily, R.* (2016). Incentives and barriers to OER adoption: A qualitative analysis of faculty perceptions. *Open Praxis.* 8(3): 235-246. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.8.3.308

Clinton-Lisell et al., 2023 – *Clinton-Lisell, V.E., Roberts-Crews, J., Gwozdz, L.* (2023). SCOPE of Open Education: A New Framework for Research. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning.* 24(4): 135-153. DOI: https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v24i4.7356

Dokuchaeva et al., 2025 – *Dokuchaeva, N.V., Ivanova, S.A., Tleumbetova, D. B.* (2025). Yzdiksiz bilim beru konteksindegi zhappaj ashyқ onlajn kurstar məselesi [On the issue of mass open online courses in the context of continuing education]. *Bulletin of Karaganda University. Pedagogy*. 30(1): 116-123. DOI: 10.31489/2025Ped1/116-123 [in Kazakh]

Dokuchayeva et al., 2024 – *Dokuchayeva, N., Ivanova, S., Azimbayeva, Z., Ten, A., Baimamyrov, S.* (2024). Integration of Open Educational Practices in the Digital Transformation of Higher Education: Case of Kazakhstan. *Journal of Educational and Social Research.* 14(4): 85-97. DOI: https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2024-0085

Dunaway, 2011 – *Dunaway, M.K.* (2011). Connectivism: Learning theory and pedagogical practice for networked information landscapes. *Reference Services Review*. 39(4): 675-685.

Dzhurynskyi et al., 2023 – *Dzhurynskyi, P., Petro, I., Grytsenko, I., Sydorenko, N., Lashkul, V., Priadko, O.* (2023). Open education technologies: an important component of higher education digitalization for quality professional training. *Revista Amazonia Investiga.* 12: 102-112. DOI: https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.70.10.9

Fedorov, 2008 – *Fedorov, A.* (2008). On Media Education. Moscow: ICOS UNESCO 'Information for All', 2008.

Gálik, 2020 – *Gálik, S.* (2020). Thinking in the network. *Central European Journal of Communication*. 27(3): 446-459. DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.13.3(27).9

Gálik, Oprala, 2021 – *Gálik, S., Oprala, B.* (2021). Temporal changes under the influence of digital media. *Communication Today*. 12(1): 4-12.

Geser, 2007 – *Geser, G.* (2007). Open Educational Practices and Resources: OLCOS Roadmap 2012. Salzburg: EduMedia Group. 145 p.

Hurzhii et al., 2021 – *Hurzhii, A., Hlazunova, O., Voloshyna, T.* (2021). Digital educational content for the open education system. *Modern Information Technologies and Innovation Methodologies of Education*. 55: 22-30. DOI: https://doi.org/10.31652/2412-1142-2020-55-22-30

Inamorato dos Santos et al., 2019 – *Inamorato dos Santos, A., Punie, Y., Castaño Muñoz, J.* (2019). Practical guidelines on open education for academics: OpenEdu Framework. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Kačinová, 2019 – *Kačinová, V.* (2019). From a reductionist to a holistic model of digital competence and media education. *Communication Today*. 10(2): 16-27.

OECD, 2020 – OECD. Digital education outlook: Pushing the frontiers with AI, blockchain and robots. OECD Publishing. 2020. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/92c2bb0f-en

Peters, Britez, 2009 – *Peters, M., Britez, R.* (2009). Open Education and Education for Openness. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255525908_Open_Education_and_Education_for_Openness

Sataev, 2019 – *Sataev, B.O.* (2019). Otkrytoe obrazovanie kak novyj trend v Kazahstane [Open education as a new trend in Kazakhstan]. CyberLeninka. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/otkrytoe-obrazovanie-kak-novyy-trend-v-kazahstane [in Russian]

Siemens, 2005 – *Siemens, G.* (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.itdl.org/Journal/Jan_05/article01.htm

Tillinghast et al., 2020 – *Tillinghast, B., Fialkowski, M.K., Draper, J.* (2020). Exploring aspects of OER-enabled pedagogy. *Frontiers in Education*. 5(76). [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2020.00076

UNESCO, 2019 – UNESCO. Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER). Paris: UNESCO. 2019. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370936

Vrabec, Bôtošová, 2020 – *Vrabec, N., Bôtošová, L.,* (2020). The Concept of learning-by-doing in the context of media education and school quality assessment. *Communication Today*. 11(1): 140-148.

Wiley, Hilton, 2018 – *Wiley, D., Hilton, J.* (2018). Defining OER enabled pedagogy. *IRRODL*. 19(4). DOI: https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v19i4.3601

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 103-112

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.103
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Regional Youth Television Studio Within Schoolchildren's Media Literacy Education Trends

Tatyana Kaminskaya [a], Olga Navolotskaya [a, *]

[a] Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russian Federation

Abstract

The authors analyze the two-year experience of the Regional Youth Television Studio at Novgorod Oblast Television (Veliky Novgorod), which has evolved from a children's TV program into a professional launchpad and initial media professionalization platform for aspiring young journalists – children and adolescents. Using participant observation, they traced the project's development, evaluated the studio concept, and assessed its thematic implementation on air. The Regional Youth Television Studio on the NT channel creates a practice-oriented educational environment to systematically foster schoolchildren's media literacy education trends and professional skills among children and youth. Its uniqueness stems from integrating youth-led programming into the live broadcast schedule, with schoolchildren as interviewers and hosts. The study examined schoolchildren's on-air work via telecontent on the channel's website, supplemented by interviews with channel executives and participating journalists. In the second phase, expert interviews with project-independent child psychologists and educators addressed benefits and risks of early media professionalization. Identified risks include blurring media-reality boundaries, violations of child hosts' personal boundaries, and the burden of popularity and public exposure. Ultimately, the studio demonstrates how regional television, amid digital communication conditions, integrates media literacy education, enabling self-expression, personal development, professional training, and creativity. It also cultivates regional identity via local cultural codes, aiding human capital retention in economically disadvantaged regions.

Keywords: media literacy education, schoolchildren's media literacy education, regional television, Regional Youth Television Studio, video content, youth TV program.

1. Introduction

The relevance of this analysis stems from the ever-increasing information flows that both adults and children encounter daily, from which they can scarcely shield themselves, coupled with society's growing need to cultivate robust media criticism and information hygiene skills among citizens. In the contemporary digital world, the imperative for early media literacy education intensifies, engaging children not only in conscious consumption but also in the production of information. The primary aim of children's media literacy education is to prepare individuals for safe, constructive integration into the media environment – ultimately fostering media-competent personalities capable of independently navigating media spaces, distinguishing facts from opinions, critically evaluating sources, creating meaningful content, and adhering to digital hygiene, ethics, and law.

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: olga.navolotckaia@mail.ru (O. Navolotskaya), tlkam1@mail.ru (T. Kaminskaya)

This article analyzes the risks inherent in schoolchildren's media literacy education and their involvement in media production – drawing on insights from child psychologists and educators experienced in media teaching and professional media work.

Furthermore, the authors themselves possess hands-on experience as experts and speakers in federal media literacy education projects. This expertise enabled a comprehensive analysis of the Regional Youth Television Studio at Novgorod Television, situating its outcomes within national media literacy education practices and identifying key managerial gaps.

Although media literacy education in Russia traces its origins to the 1970s, it gained institutional form only in the 2000s, with substantive engagement in schoolchildren's programs materializing across institutions during the past decade. Project-based media literacy education stands out as one of the most promising approaches – an interdisciplinary field intersecting pedagogy, psychology, journalism, cultural studies, and technology – particularly amid youth's declining appreciation for traditional education (Teschers et al., 2024; Zvereva, Khvorova, 2022;).

The significance of the media literacy education case under study lies in its potential for practical scalability, benefiting all stakeholders in regional media literacy education processes.

2. Materials and methods

This study aims to analyze and evaluate the operations of the Regional Youth Television Studio on regional television, contextualized within the accumulated experience of federal media literacy education projects, while identifying risks associated with early involvement of schoolchildren as on-air hosts.

The primary sources for this article include, first, over 100 scholarly articles identified via keywords such as *media literacy education for children and adolescents*, *children's television*, and *children's studios*; second, analysis of 138 on-air episodes featuring child hosts and their media promotion on social networks; and third, content analysis of texts from five expert interviews with psychologists and educators involved solely as viewers of the studied project.

Experts for the interviews were selected based on the following criteria: possession of a higher degree in psychology or communication studies, at least five years of experience in practical psychological counseling or teaching schoolchildren, and active engagement in the media sphere (maintaining personal social media accounts and familiarity with the object of this study). Additionally, an interview was conducted directly with the studio's founder and director, Anastasiya Savelieva – a graduate of the Journalism master's program at Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University.

The video content of the episodes was examined with respect to thematic content, ties to the regional media agenda, and scripting decisions.

The methodology draws on established approaches to video analysis (Baykova, 2022; Kress, 2006; Shesterina, 2024), and studies of project-based activities (e.g., Almulla, 2020; Bazikyan, 2025; Fateeva, 2007; Guo et al., 2020).

3. Discussion

Literacy in new media constitutes a core set of social and cultural competencies essential for navigating the digital media space (Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2020; Young, Ronquillo, 2022; Young, 2015). Youth interactions with media often emerge as a central research concern, prompting scrutiny of potential risks alongside their developmental benefits (Edgerly 2025; Livingstone et al., 2021; Oden, Porter, 2023), which underscores the critical role of media competence in fostering informed and constructive engagement.

Thus, according to K.J. Rott and B. Schmidt-Hertha (Rott, Schmidt-Hertha, 2014), German scholar D. Bakke delineates four essential elements of media competence: (1) media criticism, involving analysis and interpretation of media texts; (2) media studies, focused on grasping mass media structures and functions; (3) media use, encompassing technology skills for consuming and processing information; and (4) media content creation, which covers producing original content and participating in the information ecosystem.

Another approach, proposed by M. Tully et al. (Tully et al., 2021), emphasizes constructing effective relationships with the digital space and its vast information volume. It delineates five core domains of news literacy competencies: context; creation; content; distribution; consumption.

Russian researcher A.V. Fedorov developed a more detailed model encompassing five levels of media competence:

– Cognitive (knowledge of the media system);
– Motivational (interest in media analysis);
– Evaluative (critical judgment);
– Activity-based (content creation);
– Ethical (responsibility for produced and published content) (Fedorov, 2008; Fedorov, 2017; Fedorov et al., 2007).

Fedorov's model of media competence holds a leading position in Russian media pedagogy. It conceptualizes media competence as an outcome of purposeful media literacy education, a marker of personal culture, and a vital tool for critically evaluating incoming information. Unlike other models, which typically prioritize functional-instrumental aspects, Fedorov's approach encompasses a wide array of psychological, social, and cultural factors.

Furthermore, youth contribute to territorial development by forging robust cultural identities rooted in place (Gehl, 2013; Zhang et al., 2024). This holds particular significance in contexts of territorial competition for human resources – particularly creative youth – where agendas promoting territorial identity through local cultural codes emerge as essential (Kaminskaya et al., 2024). Such strategies prove paramount for economically disadvantaged regions.

Research on media literacy education projects predominantly examines specific facets – rhetorical, communicative, or socializing (Gritsai, 2025; Hobbs, 2016; Kozlova, 2019). Moreover, middle schoolers represent an optimal developmental stage for media literacy education (Purington Drake et al., 2021). In addition, collaborative content creation strengthens community belonging (Armstrong-Carter, Telzer, 2021), learning motivation, and therefore academic performance (Huang, Cockayne, 2023; Fujita et al., 2019). Thus, active project participation beyond core curricula fosters competitiveness essential for adulthood (Krskova et al., 2024).

Analyzing a five-year children's media studio in Zhukovsky, N.L. Lugovskaya notes: "Not all participants will pursue journalism, but information handling skills prove universally valuable. Mastery of new information technologies remains a prerequisite for competitiveness in the modern world" (Lugovskaya, 2023, 43). I.N. Demina and N.L. Melnikova highlight the Irkutsk *Sok* studio's real-world media production: "Theory and practice complement each other as children master journalistic genres, write texts and scripts, participate in filming, appear on camera, develop projects, and edit them. Activities span news reports, interviews, clips, entertainment and educational programs, live broadcasts, social advertising, documentaries, and fiction films" (Demina, Melnikova, 2024, 30).

Western initiatives further illustrate effective youth media literacy education approaches, emphasizing the importance of actively engaging youth in the learning process rather than adopting top-down or excessively prescriptive strategies (Ni Shuilleabhain et al., 2021; Ramasubramanian, Scharrer, 2015: 183;). The PBS NewsHour Student Reporting Labs project exemplifies this by integrating schoolchildren with PBS's professional newsrooms to cover regional issues (Hobbs, 2016). Implemented through active project-based pedagogy, it yields positive outcomes as R. Hobbs demonstrates heightened intellectual curiosity, enhanced fact-checking competencies, respect for alternative viewpoints, information synthesis skills, and collaborative teamwork under live broadcast conditions.

Examining various media studios' experiences, it is difficult to agree with O.E. Kohanaya's view that children and adolescents constitute a "rather inert and parent-dependent category, easily engaged and directed toward desired goals – effectively manipulating their emotions and desires" (Kokhanaya, 2022, 76). This critique intensifies regarding her assertion that "children participating in TV programs act merely as instruments for the aforementioned category, rendering them victims and, in a sense, television products themselves" (Kokhanaya, 2022, 77).

Research commonly neglects the concrete results of schoolchildren's media literacy education – the actual products of their media endeavors.

4. Results

Among recent Russian federal media literacy education projects involving regional schoolchildren, several merit particular attention.

The flagship initiative of the public organization *MediaPrityajenie* (Media Attraction), under the Movement of the First, enables participants to develop personally while acquiring essential media and journalism competencies. This nationwide program targets talented youth passionate about media development, serving as an excellent springboard for future journalism careers with

its competitive focus. Additionally, within *MediaPrityajenie*, another major initiative called *MediaZachet* (Media Grade) aims to enhance children's and adolescents' media literacy. Unlike MediaPrityajenie, this contest requires individual participation only. Its central task is to engage children in actively covering special federal *Days of United Actions* events through their personal social media accounts. Another project with a media literacy education component from the Movement of the First is the regional initiative *Pervye v Media* (First in Media). Analysis of these three media literacy programs demonstrates that MediaZachet functions as a diagnostic instrument to reveal gaps in schoolchildren's media competencies, whereas MediaPrityajenie and Pervye v Media equip young learners with practical, activity-oriented methods to thoughtfully address and strengthen these areas. Also, in October 2025, Veliky Novgorod hosted the II All-Russian Media Forum of Young Diplomats, attended by 150 children from across Russia, as well as Kazakhstan and Belarus. The business program of the Forum included presentations of participants and their projects – schoolchildren showcased video vignettes dedicated to the cultural-historical landmarks of their regions – and master-classes on media production.

As evident, federally grant-supported projects primarily focus on identifying talented children through competitive formats, while incorporating educational components such as master-classes and nationwide travel.

The Regional Youth Television Studio project on Novgorod Oblast Television (URL: https://novgorod-tv.ru/teleproekty/detskaya-studiya), first, has a clear media specialization in television and, second, is aimed to directly involve schoolchildren in all stages of television production. The project aired in summer 2024, initiated by Novgorod Oblast Television and the Novgorod Oblast Committee for Youth Policy. The first filming of the Regional Youth Television Studio took place during Youth Day celebrations in Veliky Novgorod.

Regional television primarily addressed its image-building objectives: as is well known, featuring children and animals in footage guarantees viewer attention. At the same time, the channel's quarter-century of accumulated experience and the need to attract young journalistic talent amid competition from nearby megacities – Veliky Novgorod lies on the transport corridor between Saint Petersburg and Moscow – cannot be overlooked. As the project leader noted in an interview, the educational component of the Regional Youth Television Studio on Novgorod Oblast Television was not the initial rationale for its creation. Rather, the educational component emerged as a consequence of the need to train children in journalistic skills to enhance the quality of the produced television content.

Today, per the organizers' vision, the project's core goal combines producing television content for young audiences in Novgorod Oblast with fostering an educational environment for schoolchildren. Key objectives include:

– Imparting foundational skills in television journalism;
– Cultivating media culture and literacy;
– Unlocking creative potential;
– Developing communication skills, teamwork, and time management.

Analyzing the target audience of the Regional Youth Television Studio project, it divides into two groups: those prioritizing participation in television production and those viewing it as an educational opportunity. As of early 2026, the project roster includes 13 schoolchildren aged 10–17 serving as hosts.

The program centers on the interview genre, with episodes featuring guest dialogues up to ten minutes long. New episodes air on Novgorod Oblast Television every Tuesday and Thursday – two per week – followed by weekly repeats. Notably, regular scheduling emerged only six months after launch, securing a fixed slot in the broadcast lineup. Moreover, the initial five-minute format proved restrictive, thus the episodes were expanded to ten minutes – doubling the runtime. Current episodes run at least ten minutes, occasionally exceeding 15 minutes in exceptional cases.

A distinctive feature of the project lies in empowering children to independently conceptualize the dialogue structure with invited guests and formulate pertinent questions. The program editor selects topics and guests, furnishing participants with concise details on the interview's objectives and the guest's profile; children are then tasked with conducting thorough research on both the individual and the subject matter. Once the young hosts draft their scripts, these undergo review by the project leader for refinements. The team aims for minimal edits to the children's versions, often achieving this, as noted by the leader.

The training program adopts a bifurcated structure, commencing with a theoretical phase. Experienced Novgorod Television journalists and anchors lead in-person master-classes for beginners, covering essential television production elements: program formats, interview preparation, on-camera behavior, pre-recording nerves, handling unexpected issues, and practical insights tailored to the novice Novgorod Television participants. These sessions acquaint children with core concepts, including information processing, content structuring, fact gathering and validation, on-camera presentation, interview preparation and guest interaction, script development, and appropriate online/social media conduct.

A distinct emphasis in training future journalists is placed on oratory skills and the art of public communication. Professional journalists instruct children in:

– Articulation techniques and voice modulation;

– Teleprompter operation;

– Overcoming communicative barriers on camera.

These elements predominantly pertain to the theoretical phase of training young journalists. Production competencies, by contrast, are honed directly on the set during the recording of new episodes for the Regional Youth Television Studio on Novgorod Oblast Television.

On-camera work demands multifaceted communicative competence from participants, encompassing the following.

– Verbal expressiveness. Young journalists master technically precise, articulate speech, employing intonational variety and cultivating an individual tempo-rhythmic style. They learn to deliberately control their vocal volume, pace, and pauses.

– Nonverbal communication. Through on-camera performance and collaboration with the production crew, children develop command of facial expressions, gestures, posture, and simulated eye contact with the audience beyond the screen. They acquire proficiency in body language, emotional expressivity, spatial orientation relative to cameras and on-screen partners.

– Dialogic interaction. Scripted scenarios facilitate skills in active listening, emotionally responsive reactions to interlocutors, constructive dialogue management, improvisation, and multitasking.

Moreover, the filming process fosters cognitive development, including the following.

– Memory and concentration. Children memorize scripts, personal lines, action sequences, and the project leader's technical directives.

– Creative thinking. Periodic improvisation during shoots cultivates associative thinking, idea generation, and adaptability to unforeseen changes.

– Analytical abilities. Participants develop skills in analyzing situational dynamics and interlocutors' responses to specific questions, forecasting the consequences of their statements and actions, and critically evaluating their own performance upon reviewing program episodes featuring their contributions.

On-camera work further cultivates stress resilience. According to the project leader, children develop self-control, learn to manage anxiety, and respond constructively to critique. The television production process also fosters emotional intelligence, as participants build empathy toward guests and crew members alike. Goal-directedness emerges through repeated takes, wherein children cultivate patience in pursuing results, perseverance, motivation for self-improvement, and accountability for their contributions to the collective endeavor.

Regarding technical skills acquired on set, children primarily master foundational television journalism competencies, including interviewing principles, equipment handling, and prop interaction.

The most critical phase of program production within the Regional Youth Television Studio project is preparation, typically comprising several stages.

– Topic and guest selection. To enhance productivity and minimize costs, multiple programs (five to ten) are filmed per session, enabling shoots every two to three weeks – but necessitating extensive pre-production efforts.

– Topic research, guest background investigation, and curation of compelling facts. The more material uncovered, the more engaging the interview structure becomes.

– Mapping key discussion points for elaboration or emphasis, ensuring a focused narrative rather than a diffuse "everything and nothing" approach.

– Question formulation and narrative structuring. Children develop these independently, utilizing information provided by the editor or gathered through their own research.

– Script review, editing, and refinement of the young hosts' drafts.

– Another crucial pre-recording step is guest warm-up, occasionally omitted due to time constraints or the guest's tardiness. However, this stage significantly streamlines the filming process. Ten to fifteen minutes prior, the host and editor initiate casual conversation with the guest – on their journey, the weather, or any neutral topic – while thoroughly briefing them on on-set procedures. Given the novelty of such environments for most guests, this clarification reduces tension by ensuring all participants comprehend the production workflow.

Another key preparation element involves drawing on personal experiences related to the discussion topic. Children are prompted to recall relevant anecdotes or incidents, which – when incorporated – help breach the "fourth wall," fostering greater proximity between the guest and audience. Before filming, schoolchildren practice articulation drills, learn to guide conversations actively rather than passively follow, and master fundamental on-camera techniques.

Given the program's predominant use of event-driven or portrait-style interviews, guests typically include nationally or regionally prominent figures – who prove inherently compelling due to their professions or talents – or individuals linked to noteworthy events capable of recounting them engagingly.

The Regional Youth Television Studio guests have included athletes, musicians, vocalists, writers, youth project authors, educators, deputies, regional government officials, comedians, entrepreneurs, artists, civic organization representatives, volunteers, journalists, Olympiad and federal contest winners, bloggers, cultural workers, non-profit activists, scientists, and many others.

The project studio has hosted even nationally renowned guests during their visits to Veliky Novgorod. For instance, the Regional Youth Television Studio has featured interviews with Alexander Bianki (grandson of writer Vitaly Bianki); Yuliana Bukholts (dancer and contestant of Russian dance television show aired on a federal channel); Marina Ivanova (vocalist with the Russian-language pop band *Kraski*); and Ekaterina Manoylo (Russian author).

Notably, the Regional Youth Television Studio production team employs a mobile filming format during urban events, such as Youth Day, the Finals of the Championship of High Technologies, and the Family Picnic city holiday. For these occasions, the team deploys a portable studio – a boxed setup with three walls matching the project's primary color scheme and stylistic decor. Additional visual identifiers of the program include hosts' uniforms (blue hoodies branded with Novgorod Oblast insignia), Novgorod Television channel logo pins presented to guests at each shoot's conclusion, and branded tablets used for scripts.

Initially, the Regional Youth Television Studio operated without systematic promotion: episodes aired on Novgorod Oblast Television and were later reposted in the channel social media VKontakte group. From late 2025, regular multichannel promotion strategies were adopted. Organizers report ongoing experimentation, with only effective formats retained long-term.

A mandatory pre-release promotion checklist item now requires teaser posts across all channel social media platforms.

VKontakte teasers feature text posts augmented by on-set photographs, whereas the Telegram channel employs circular video previews wherein guests succinctly preview the interview content in a single sentence. These derive from 30–60-second vertical videos, formatted for Telegram as needed and repurposed in original form for VKontakte Stories.

Another milestone in the Regional Youth Television Studio project's development on Novgorod Television was the host roster renewal, highlighted in channel news: *Novgorod Oblast Television ignites new stars. Regional Youth Television Studio Host Casting Held in TV Tower. Three dozen young Novgorod residents came to test themselves on camera under the glow of studio spotlights* (URL: https://novgorod-tv.ru/news/bolee-30-detei-proshli-kasting-na-novgorodskom-oblastnom-televidenii-chtoby-poprobovat-sebya-v-roli-vedushhih).

Approximately 35 children submitted applications, 30 of whom attended the auditions. Open to ages 10–16, the selection process ultimately invited six participants to collaborate and join filming.

Following the expansion of the television project, it became necessary to introduce a new stage in its educational component, particularly for the new hosts.

Regarding experts' evaluation of media literacy education for schoolchildren, the greatest consensus emerged in response to the question of its necessity at an early age. Key arguments include the following:

– Today's children enter the media world at birth, making it essential to foster their critical thinking, heighten awareness of digital risks (like those in social media), equip them with skills to counter manipulation tactics, and build sharp analytical abilities;

– Approximately half of children verify information, while the rest accept it unconditionally; children's critical thinking is not yet fully developed;

– Childhood provides a prime opportunity for absorbing new knowledge in any area;

– Media literacy education for present-day children extends further than nurturing critical thinking and creative talents; it builds socialization and communication proficiencies – particularly essential, considering that many elementary school pupils encounter difficulties with asking questions, crafting prolonged coherent expressions, or offering logical recounts.

The majority of experts rated the Regional Youth Television Studio project highly, even though one expert sought clarification on success criteria:

– It's a bit stuffy – let me specify: what exactly constitutes success for a children's studio? What scales do we use to measure it? If we're talking coverage and likes, there's room for growth. But if it's about self-realization opportunities for kids with serious media ambitions, the success is evident.

One of the five experts, a practicing psychologist, expressed a critical evaluation: *By my perception, the children do not understand what they are asking or saying. They are mere "talking heads," lacking emotional depth and conceptual clarity in their statements. I am not opposed to children's television, but it should be managed by professionals in both journalism and child psychology. Children need to be taught how to formulate questions and reflect. What I observed lacks these elements – they simply read scripts prepared by others, which is evident and hinders emotional engagement in the dialogues. There is no chemistry*.

Only one of the five experts perceived no issues or risks associated with schoolchildren's early involvement in broadcast media, asserting: *From my perspective, early media broadcasting engagement brings solely benefits: improved speaking and listening skills; new social connections; precocious professional orientation; and enriched life experience.*

The remaining experts identified several risks and challenges associated with schoolchildren's involvement in studio work:

– It is essential to delineate media space from real-life domains (school, home, neighborhood, extracurricular activities); younger children may struggle with this distinction, as their psychological boundaries remain underdeveloped – even many adults fail to compartmentalize professional roles effectively.

– It is crucial to consider how children will experience and psychologically process the encounters arising from media work. Thus, preparation is essential to equip them for potential life changes and to assist in managing "excessive" experiential demands.

– Broadcast settings overload children's nervous systems via cameras, lighting, and audiences, fostering hyperactivity, anxiety, fears, and nightmares; limited life experience impedes accurate information conveyance, while fame pressures cultivate narcissism or diminished self-esteem upon setbacks.

– Popularity and public visibility represent a heavy burden even for adults. For a child, early exposure to broadcasting and audiences can pose a double risk. Critical reflection on one's own actions and others' behavior is still forming in childhood. Ethical and moral sensibilities develop very gradually. Meanwhile, normative age-related crises – with their conflicts between 'want,' 'can,' and 'must' – remain inevitable. Thus, rebellious teenagers and young adults lacking conscience yet inflated egos are a common phenomenon among 'stars' who captured public attention at a tender age.

Thus, the in-depth expert interviews overall demonstrated the project's viability and its practical value.

5. Conclusion

At the current stage, the Regional Youth Television Studio project in Veliky Novgorod fulfills the following functions:

– Initial familiarization of children with television production;

– Development of communicative skills through on-camera work and team interactions at the filming site;

– Formation of basic understandings of media ethics;

– Production of content for regional broadcast airwaves.

At this developmental stage, the project exhibits certain growth areas requiring attention, specifically:

– Fragmentation of the educational program and lack of a systematic educational approach;

– Absence of a clear training plan;

– Insufficient integration – or more precisely, complete lack of integration – with educational institutions;

– Absence of clear and comprehensible mechanisms for evaluating educational outcomes.

Furthermore, instituting a certification system upon completion of educational modules would enable effective tracking of the project efficacy. This would not only enhance children's retention of material but also elevate the quality of the Regional Youth Television Studio program episodes.

Another avenue for project development involves establishing a partnership network with other media literacy education initiatives or institutions. Collaborative events and resource exchanges – for instance, with the Department of Journalism at Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University – could broaden children's knowledge horizons from both practical and theoretical perspectives.

Regarding mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of introduced changes and innovations, the following tools may be employed:

– Vtesting children on foundational television journalism principles to assess theoretical knowledge acquisition;

– Increased viewer engagement in social networks, where metrics such as view counts, likes, and comments would gauge improvements in content quality post-training.

Meanwhile, the project and children's preparation for on-air activities must account for the risks of schoolchildren's involvement as hosts outlined in this article; engaging a child psychologist on a permanent basis may prove necessary.

Despite the risks inherent in this media literacy education approach, it must be underscored that, under contemporary conditions, schoolchildren's media literacy education constitutes an indispensable element of personality formation. Regional media-initiated projects hold substantial potential – not only for addressing staffing needs but also for fulfilling media literacy education mandates. Moreover, involving schoolchildren in the regional information agenda cultivates their deep sense of territorial belonging and mastery of local cultural codes – indispensable assets in the strategic competition for human capital.

References

Almulla, 2020 – *Almulla, M.A.* (2020). The Effectiveness of the project-based learning (pbl) approach as a way to engage students in learning. *Sage Open*. 10(3). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020938702

Armstrong-Carter, Telzer, 2021 – *Armstrong-Carter, E., Telzer, E.H.* (2021). Advancing measurement and research on youths' prosocial behavior in the digital age. *Child Development Perspectives*. 15(1): 31-36. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12396

Baykova, 2022 – *Baykova, A.V.* (2022). Multimodal'nyi diskurs-analiz kak odin iz metodov kommunikativno-pragmaticheskogo podkhoda k ponimaniiu iazyka i teksta [Multimodal discourse analysis as one of the methods of a communicative and pragmatic approach to understanding language and text]. *Vestnik Shadrinskogo Gosudarstvennogo Pedagogicheskogo Universiteta*. 2(54): 230-234. [in Russian]

Bazikyan, 2025 – *Bazikyan, S.A.* (2025). Zhurnalistskoe obrazovanie v usloviiakh transformiruiushcheisia mediasredy: potentsial proekt'nogo obucheniia [Journalistic education in the context of a transforming media environment: Potential of project-based learning]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Demina, Melnikova, 2024 – *Demina, I.N., Melnikova, N.L.* (2024). Yuvenil'naia zhurnalistika kak element mediaobrazovaniia detei i podrostkov. Opyt mediastudii "Sok" (g. Irkutsk) [Juvenile journalism as an element of media education of children and adolescents. experience of the media studio "SOK" (Irkutsk)]. *Znak: Problemnoe Pole Mediaobrazovaniya*. 53: 23-32. [in Russian]

Edgerly, 2025 – *Edgerly, S.* (2025). Developing the habit: The socialization of U.S. teens into distinct repertoires of news consumption. *Journal of Children and Media*. 20(1): 132-150. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2025.2504879

Fateeva, 2007 – *Fateeva, I.A.* (2007). Mediaobrazovanie: teoreticheskie osnovy i opyt realizatsii [Media education: Theoretical foundations and implementation experience]. Chelyabinsk. [in Russian]

Fedorov et al., 2007 – *Fedorov, A.V., Chelysheva, I.V., Novikova, A.A., et al.* (2007). Problemy mediaobrazovaniia (nauchnaia shkola pod rukovodstvom A.V. Fedorova) [Problems of media education (Scientific School of A.V. Fedorov)]. Taganrog. [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2008 – *Fedorov, A.* (2008). On Media Education. Moscow.

Fedorov, 2017 – *Fedorov, A.* (2017). Media and Information Literacy Education Dictionary. Moscow.

Fujita et al., 2019 – *Fujita, M., Paul, H., Geoffrey, N.S.* (2019). The Strategic co-creation of content and student experience in social media: an identity theories perspective. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*. 22(1): 50-69. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-01-2017-0049

Gáliková Tolnaiová, 2020 – *Gáliková Tolnaiová, S.* (2020). Transformation of education and training system in the context of digital information and communication technology in sociocultural perspective and its axiological and ethical dimension. *European Journal of Transformation Studies*. 8(2): 89-105.

Gehl, 2013 – *Gehl, J.* (2013). Cities for people. Island Press.

Gritsai, 2025 – *Gritsai, L.A.* (2025). Rol' mediaobrazovaniia v formirovanii semeinykh vospitatel'nykh tsennostei [Role media education in the formation of family educational values]. *Znak: Problemnoe Pole Mediaobrazovaniya*. 55: 17-28. [in Russian]

Guo et al., 2020 – *Guo, P., Saab, N., Post, L.S., Admiraal, W.* (2020). A review of project-based learning in higher education: Student outcomes and measures. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 102: 101587. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101587

Hobbs, 2016 – *Hobbs, R.* (2016). When teens create the news: Examining the impact of PBS News Hour Student Reporting Labs. *Journalism Education*. 5(1): 61-73.

Huang, Cockayne, 2023 – *Huang, Z.M., Cockayne, H.* (2023). Searching for belonging: learning from students' photographs about their higher education experiences. *London Review of Education*. 21(1): 1-15. DOI: https://doi.org/10.14324/LRE.21.1.27

Kaminskaya et al., 2024 – *Kaminskaya, T.L., Zvereva, E.A., Shesterina, A.M.* (2024). Setevye mediaresursy vystavki "Rossiya" v reprezentatsii simvolicheskogo kapitala territoriy [Network media resources of the exhibition "Russia" and representation of the symbolic capital of the territories]. *Medialingvistika*. 11(4): 448-465. [in Russian]

Kokhanaya, 2022 – *Kokhanaya, O.E.* (2022). Televizionnye programmy s uchastiem detei: kollizii mediakommunikatsii [Television programs involving children: Collisions of media communication]. In: Vladimirova, T.N., Kuptsova, I.A. (eds.). *Media Education: Development Strategies – 2021:* 71-78. Moscow. [in Russian]

Kozlova, 2019 – *Kozlova, A.Yu.* (2019). "Otkrytaia kommunikatsiia" – kul'turnaia praktika rannei proforientatsii detei doshkol'nogo vozrasta ["Open communication" – cultural practice of early career guidance for preschool children]. *Nauchnoe otrazhenie*. 15: 12-14. [in Russian]

Kress, 2006 – *Kress, G.* (2006). Leeuwen van T Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. London: Routledge.

Krskova et al., 2024 – *Krskova, H., Baumann, C., Breyer, Y.A.* (2024). Shaping individual competitiveness: The role of discipline, parental expectations, and participation in extracurricular activities. *Heliyon*. 10(10): e31042. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e31042

Livingstone et al., 2021 – *Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G., Stoilova, M.* (2021). The outcomes of gaining digital skills for young people's lives and wellbeing: A systematic evidence review. *New Media & Society*. 25(5): 1176-1202. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211043189

Lugovskaya, 2023 – *Lugovskaya, L.N.* (2023). Mediaobrazovanie i professional'naia orientatsiia detei i podrostkov (na primere detskogo televideniia "Vzlet") [Media education and professional orientation of children and adolescents (using the example of children's television "Vzlet")]. *Magister*. 4: 41-46. [in Russian]

Ni Shuilleabhain et al., 2021 – *Ni Shuilleabhain, N., Rich, E., Fullagar, S.* (2021). Rethinking digital media literacy to address body dissatisfaction in schools: Lessons from feminist new materialisms. *New Media & Society*. 25(12): 3247-3265. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448211041715

Oden, Porter, 2023 – *Oden, A., Porter, L.* (2023). The Kids are online: teen social media use, civic engagement, and affective polarization. *Social Media+Society*. 9(3). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231186364

Purington Drake et al., 2021 – *Purington Drake, A., Masur, P.K., Bazarova, N.N., Zou, W., Whitlock, J.* (2023). The youth social media literacy inventory: Development and validation using item response theory in the US. *Journal of Children and Media*. 17(4): 467-487. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2023.2230493

Ramasubramanian, Scharrer, 2015 – *Ramasubramanian, S., Scharrer, E.* (2015). Intervening in the media's influence on stereotypes of race and ethnicity: the role of media literacy education. *Journal of Social Issues*. 71(1): 183.

Rott, Schmidt-Hertha, 2014 – *Rott, K.J., Schmidt-Hertha, B.* (2014). Developing media competence and work-related informational behavior in academic studies. *International Journal on Advances in Education Research*. 1(1): 90-108.

Shesterina, 2024 – *Shesterina, A.M.* (2024). O potentsiale primeneniya semioticheskogo podkhoda k analizu sovremennykh setevykh videoformatov [On the potential of applying a semiotic approach to the analysis of modern network video formats]. *Vestnik Akademii Media Industrii*. 40: 37-51. [in Russian]

Teschers et al., 2024 – *Teschers, C., Neuhaus, T., Vogt, M.* (2024). Troubling the boundaries of traditional schooling for a rapidly changing future – Looking back and looking forward. Educational *Philosophy and Theory*. 56(9): 873-884. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2024.2321932

Tully et al., 2021 – *Tully, M., Maksl, A., Ashley, S., Vraga, E.K., Craft, S.* (2021). Defining and conceptualizing news literacy. *Journalism*. 23(8): 1589-1606. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211005888

Young, 2015 – *Young, J.A.* (2015). Assessing new media literacies in social work education: the development and validation of a comprehensive assessment instrument. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*. 33(1): 72-86. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15228835.2014.998577

Young, Ronquillo, 2022 – *Young, J.A., Ronquillo, R.* (2022) Enhancing new media literacies of social work students through a participatory learning environment. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*. 40(1): 58-78. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15228835.2021.2004572

Zhang et al., 2024 – *Zhang, Y., Ikiz Kaya, D., van Wesemael, P., Colenbrander, B.J.* (2024). Youth participation in cultural heritage management: a conceptual framework. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*. 30(1): 56-80. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2023.2275261

Zvereva, Khvorova, 2022 – *Zvereva, E.A., Khvorova, V.A.* (2022). Transformatsiia tsennostnykh orientirov molodezhi v sovremennoi informatsionno-kommunikatsionnoi srede [Transformation of value orientations of young people in a modern information and communication environment]. *Kommunikativnye Issledovaniya*. 9(1): 7-28. [in Russian]

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 113-120

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.113
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Media Communicative Strategies and Axiological System in Interview Programs (based on the Interview in the Program *Nadezhda Strelets*)

Ella Kulikova [a, b, *], Victor Barabash [a]

[a] Peoples' Friendship University of Russia named after Patrice Lumumba (RUDN University named after Patrice Lumumba), Russian Federation
[b] Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

Abstract

The article is devoted to the transformation of the interview genre in the "post-information" era, in new media technologies prevailing and so-called "surplus" (different information excess), in turn resulting in new communication problems. The article relevance is connected with the analysis of verbal and non-verbal actions aimed at achieving a communicative goal in drawing attention to the traditional axiological system in the interview genre. The purpose of the article is to identify the features of communication strategies in interviewing by professional interviewer. The article based on the method of analyzing the communicative strategies and tactics used by a professional interviewer from the point of view of logic and consistency, means of speech/language expression, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the interview, as well as the description method, including a system of procedures for collecting, primary analysis and presentation of data and their characteristics. The article analyzes the interview in the program *Nadezhda Strelets* by journalist Nadezhda Strelets. The scientific novelty of the article is connected with the study of the influence of modern communication strategies used in media communication on the genre of interview, its transformation in the context of changing socio-cultural and media realities. The article presents an analysis and classification of the media communicative strategies used in interview program, the influence of the axiological system broadcasted in interview programs on social stereotypes. The study of axiological parameters in the interview genre is extremely important in teaching media education and spreading media literacy. Only by relying on these important components it is possible to harmonize media communication, as well as exclude all the conflict communication manifestations from media space.

Keywords: interview genre, media communicative strategies, media discourse, standard, media communication, evaluation, conflict, axiological system.

1. Introduction

In the "post-information" era, prevailing new media technologies and "surplus", an excess of different information, that resulting in new communication problems.

The increase of information amount raises a lot of intermediaries between information and audience. Bloggers, who often lack not only journalistic experience and specialized education, but also any kind of education, began to spread information, which leads to linguistic and cognitive transformations in understanding. N.M. Usenko notes: "Literacy of adults at the current stage of society's development is over 80 %, and the level for people aged 15–24 is recognized to be even

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: kulikova_ella21@mail.ru (E. Kulikova)

higher. However, with the formal ability to read and write, an adequate understanding of someone else's text, and even more so the production of own one, often causes serious difficulties. The problem of communicative illiteracy (functional illiteracy) was identified 50 years ago in the United States, when the inability (complete or partial) of formally literate people to understand texts regulating different kinds of actions became a widespread phenomenon. It goes without saying that the difference between cognition and language signs has serious consequences for both individuals and society as a whole" (Usenko, 2024: 129).

The spread of communicative illiteracy is also due to the fact that illiterate, communicatively illiterate people broadcasting their values, unfortunately, become role models.

Due to the large volume of information disseminated in media, it is difficult to verify for its authenticity, distortion of facts, shifting accents, and other manipulative techniques. Knowing the specifics of communication strategies in the interview (familiarization with the interviewee's biography, his/her earlier interviews, media appearances, statements, beliefs, values, the ability to think through the topic of the conversation, questions) helps to create an interesting interview, successful dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee.

The main task of the interviewer is to win over the interlocutor in order to get "fresh", interesting information from him/her. In the age of the "post-information" society, when obtaining and distributing high-quality information becomes one of the important human needs, interviews as a genre and method of information get more and more important.

The interviewer is responsible for the quality of the transmitting information. The relevance of the article is connected with the analysis of a set of verbal and non-verbal actions aimed at achieving a communicative goal in drawing attention to the traditional axiological system in the interview genre. The study of axiological parameters in the interview genre is extremely important in teaching media education and spreading media literacy. Only by relying on these important components it is possible to harmonize media communication, which is very influential on the usage of native speakers as well as exclude all the conflict communication manifestations from media space.

The purpose of the article is to identify the features of the application of communication strategies in the interview by professional interviewers. The scientific novelty of the article is in the study of the influence of modern communication strategies on the genre of interview, its transformation in the context of changing socio-cultural and media realities. The article presents an analysis and classification of the media communicative strategies used in interview programs, the influence of the axiological system broadcasted in interview programs on social stereotypes. The study of axiological parameters in the interview genre is extremely important in teaching media education and spreading media literacy. Only by relying on these important components it is possible to harmonize media communication, as well as exclude all the conflict communication manifestations from media space. The research results can be applied in media education in teaching the theory of journalism, etiquette in the field of mass communications and in creating media products.

2. Materials and methods

The article based on the method of analyzing the communicative strategies and tactics used by a professional interviewer from the point of view of logic and consistency, means of speech/language expression, identifying the advantages and disadvantages of the interview, as well as the description method, including a system of procedures for collecting, primary analysis and presentation of data and their characteristics. The article analyzes an interview in the program *Nadezhda Strelets* by journalist Nadezhda Strelets.

3. Discussion

Today a vast amount of scientific research and educational works is devoted media education in whole and to the interview genre study in particular (Agarkova, 2004; Fedorov, 2008; Fedorov et al., 2014; Fedorov, Chelysheva, 2002; Fedorov et al., 2019; Gálik et al., 2024; Peskova, 2015; Pronyakina, 2016; Shmakova, 2016; Sokolovskaya, 2020; Kirchhoff, 2022; Stoumpos et al., 2023; Švelch, 2008; Yang et al., 2023). M.M. Lukina (Lukina, 2012) presents the most effective interview structure, considering the basics of a journalist's creative activity based on her own experience and the experience of both domestic journalists and Western colleagues.

N.V. Kodola (Kodola, 2007) analyzes the compositional features of the interview, the stages of preparation for the interview, and the interviewer's communicative features.

The researchers give recipes for which etiquette formulas of the Russian language are preferred, necessary for successful interviews, and focus on phrases that can be uttered in communication and which should not. Non-verbal vocal and visual components of communication, such as intonation, body language, facial expressions and postures, too. They help the journalist to get the desired answers from the interlocutor are very important.

According to A.D. Sokolovskaya (Sokolovskaya, 2020), in portrait interviews, intonation plays a major role in expressing modal evaluative values, because it contains different emotions of the interlocutors, which can be used to determine their attitude to something.

Also researchers (Brusenskaya et al., 2022; Brusenskaya, Kulikova, 2022; Fedorov, 2001; Kulikova, 2022; Kulikova, 2025; Langer, Gruber, 2021; Pakhomova, 2008; Shin et al., 2022; Švelch, 2008) noted violations of ethical and ethical linguistic norms of media communication (Li et al., 2023).

Many researchers note, that interview-conversation is one of the most difficult types of interviews, so only the interviewers with the greatest experience succeed in this type of interview, because for this this type of interview it is necessary to use maximum creative abilities. Here, the journalist plays the role of a participant in the conversation, and not just an intermediary between the respondent and the audience. A variation of such an interview is a personal interview. The interviewer should reveal the personality of the interlocutor as much as possible so that the audience sees him from all sides, the interviewer should be a psychologist at the same time (Ozbek at el., 2023): the interviewer should be able to identify the socio-psychological, emotional characteristics of the interviewee, to identify his/her value system.

L.P. Shesterkina and T.D. Nikolaeva believe, that “portrait interview has entertainment and recreational functionality” (Shesterkina, Nikolaeva, 2012: 30). Such an interview is often referred to biographical ones, because a journalist collects information about a person, media person, his/her life, and professional activities reflecting the character of the main hero and etc. (Fedorov, 2017; Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015; Lane, 2020; Macgilchrist et al., 2020; Kayal, Saha, 2023).

It is necessary to use special tactics the “star interview”, as the “star mask” hides a personality. Now such an interview is very popular among the youth audience.

As the youth audience has moved to the Internet, journalists and non-professional interviewers create interview blogs on different Internet platforms.

V.V. Korabelskaya in the article “The role of video blog in modern Internet communication” writes: “...interview blogs are arranged in this way: a celebrity from any sphere (social, political, economic life, a movie or theater star, a musician, etc.) is invited to a particular issue, then the host, who is most often the author and creator of the blog, interviews his/her guest. A distinctive feature of such interviews is their informality, which can be considered an advantage when comparing such blogs with interviews on television” (Korabelskaya, 2020: 70). For example, the characteristics and communication strategies and tactics of Nadezhda Strelets' portrait “star” blog interview with theater and film actress Ekaterina Klimova.

4. Results

We try to look at the Blog interview of Nadezhda Strelets with theater and film actress Ekaterina Klimova (Issue on March 26, 2023) (Nadezhda Strelets, 2023)

from the point of view of logic and consistency. The interview begins without an introduction or greeting. The first issue question is a “warm-up” question to the respondent in the dressing room: “*What does a beautiful woman mean to you?*”

The respondent Ekaterina Klimova answers this question not abstractly, but she mentions the names such as Angelina Jolie and Monica Bellucci. Then, a sketch of the actress' theatrical life is shown to the audience in order to set up the audience that the interview will focus most of all on her professional activities.

Then the interviewer moves on to neutral questions, the first of which is: “*Katya, you are a precious hero for a YouTuber because you have not been to any interviews. Is it because you had a negative experience?*” This is a really good first question in order to understand the position of the interlocutor in relation to the genre of interviews on the Internet platform. Ekaterina replied: “*I don't understand why you should spend time preparing for a conversation, coming to it and getting punched in the face*”. Here, the respondent hinted at those interviewers who use a

destructive strategy in order not to recognize a person, not to reveal all his/her facets, but to "drown" and humiliate him/her.

Such an answer showed Nadezhda that since a person with such a position came to her for an interview, it means that there is trust on his part and the expectation that the conversation will take place in a positive way.

The questions are all consistent and logical, the journalist most of all asks them based on the statements of the interlocutor. For example, when they are talking about the TV series "Poor Nastya", in which Ekaterina starred at the age of 20, Nadezhda smoothly made the transition to the topic "secrets of beauty and youth": "You haven't changed much since then, and at 45 you look like a girl ...". This is a kind of compliment, that is, the interviewer uses the pragmatic tactic of "greasing the argument".

After neutral questions, the interlocutors move on to the main ones, where the social theme of harassment in the cinema is raised. It is clear that the interviewer is well versed in this topic, because she gives a number of specific examples where directors are accused of harassment. In addition, this topic becomes cyclical with the topic of social media raised in the first part of the interview. There, the interlocutors discussed that it has now become "fashionable" for the general public to share all the details of their lives, both positive moments and tragic ones (illness, death, childhood injuries). Such an important topic as war cinema was also raised. "*There is an opinion that "We are from the Future", in which you play the main role, is the only modern successful film. There are no correct intonations or truths right now. Do you agree with this opinion?*". Here, Nadezhda uses such tactics in order to get confirmation of her position, but the respondent does not agree with this opinion, as she believes that this is a matter of taste and films about the war should continue to be shot. Nevertheless, the journalist does not give up and tries to prove her point of view:

"*– Wouldn't it hurt if the picture turned out to be unsuccessful, and the perception of a great event would suffer from false intonations?*

– But we have to talk about what happened, because we watch great Hollywood movies, but there's not a word about us at all.

– The people of that generation who were filming right after the war, there was such a piercing authenticity to it. It was very different from the kind of movie where Soviet aesthetics are imitated.

– Because we are different. Now all the landmarks are lost, what is love, what is duty, honour. Perhaps now, going through these difficult times, making losses, we will come out of this situation with different eyes".

It must be admitted that throughout the interview, a parallel is drawn between Western and domestic cinema, where the interviewer tries to convey the idea that "they" shoot better. And the respondent proves the opposite point of view, arguing that when "we" copy foreign films, they do not bring success, and the original films demonstrating our values become successful, for example, *Moscow does not believe in tears, Cheburashka, Poor Nastya*, etc.

Nevertheless, Nadezhda does not argue, does not demonstrate the opposite point of view, but accepts the point of view of the interlocutor. We emphasize that the interviewer uses "indirect questions" when the respondent deviates from the topic:

"*– What if your child's head hit the board like that?*

– It didn't become my lifelong psychological trauma, I don't blame this teacher for the fact that something didn't work out in my life, my life was a success.

– But if this were the case with your children today, would you surely take some measures?"

All topics were raised in the interview: the respondent's professional activity, her personal life, family, childhood, and close circle of friends. Interesting questions were also asked, revealing Ekaterina Klimova as a multifaceted personality from all sides and showing the opinions of the interlocutor on many issues. The last question dealt with the topic of religion, but it did not violate the "maxim of tact": "*You said in one of the interviews that it seemed indecent to you to dig into who cut off what, how much money was in your wallet, and talk about religion. And why, in your opinion, is it indecent to talk about religion?*"

Ekaterina Klimova explains her point of view: these themes are for discussing in a family, with friends, and confessor, but not in public space, where people, for example, swear. And the

final question, as it should be, was in a positive way: "*What are you dreaming about?*". Thus, the interviewer used the following techniques.

Strategies and tactics, using by Nadezhda. A cooperative strategy, that is, an honest, sincere and friendly conversation. Moreover, from the beginning it was clear that the journalist would behave diplomatically so that the respondent would feel comfortable in a "foreign territory" and be open. The tactics of "greasing the argument" prevail, for example, compliments: "*When someone tells you that you are a sex symbol of our cinema, how do you feel? Are you pleased*?"

But the interviewer made an inappropriate compliment, which the respondent did not like, to which she retorted with an instant reaction:

– "*I think your type could be in demand in Hollywood. Play, for example, Russian spies*".

– "*Let them play spies themselves, and I'm playing Empresses here*".

In the interview, the tactic of "making contact with the interlocutor" was clearly manifested, for this Nadezhda Strelets identifies herself with the respondent, telling about her feelings.

For example, Nadezhda Strelets says that she like Ekaterina Klimova, feels uncomfortable at Ostankino, too. The tactic of "identification" is tinged with humor: "*I wouldn't be able to lose 30 kg, but it's easy to gain weight*". Nadezhda uses the technique of "influencing the interlocutor" to ensure that Ekaterina Klimova agrees with Nadezhda's opinion.

– It's just that not all actors are perfect, like Vyacheslav Tikhonov.

– But they should be.

– Well, what do you mean they should?

– Can we cancel Woody Allen just because he doesn't have such an unambiguous biography? Isn't he a genius?

– I absolutely agree"

When a respondent tries to answer a question abstractly, Nadezhda Strelets formulates the question in such a way that the interviewee has to answer definitely. Moreover, the journalist points to this indirectly: "*Here are the glossy actresses saying: I'm just lucky with my genes, I get enough sleep, I drink a lot of water. But these are not the life hacks that we would like to hear. I would like something concrete: Dietary supplements, procedures*". So, she hinted that Ekaterina Klimova was trying to respond the same way. Therefore, Nadezhda's next phrase: "I saw you jumping rope", here, perhaps, Nadezhda Strelets wanted to hear from the actress about specific exercises and procedures to preserve youth.

The technique "comparison" runs through the entire interview. In particular, Nadezhda compares Ekaterina Klimova with other actresses: Svetlana Khodchenkova, Paulina Andreeva, who, unlike Ekaterina Klimova, will not give an interview to the magazine "7 days". But this comparison was made not with the aim to offend the actress, but to show that, although she looks like a glossy heroine, she is "her own" among a wide readership. The respondent is also given the opportunity to respond: "*You're in your 20s and 40s. A sense of what a man should be like, what man's actions are. How has the attitude towards this changed over time?*"

Such questions are asked in order to show whether the interlocutor has changed and her opinion. Most of all positive tactics are used, the merits of the interlocutor are emphasized, the interviewer treats her worldview with understanding and respect, does not violate the "maxim of tact", that is, does not cross personal boundaries.

Speech. The form of communication is semiofficial, they address each other as "ty" (*You* in singular, this form of the pronoun is used in relation to friends), while using a short name. The vocabulary is colloquial, using slang lexemes and expressions: "*zazhralis*'" (jargon: shit-eating), "lokh" (jargon: easy meat), "bukhayut" (jargon: booze); "buzzwords" – "*triggernuli*" (jargon: triggered), "trollyat" (trolled); idioms – "*gde rodilsya, tam i prigodilsya*" (proverb: Be of use and carry your business on in the country where you were born), "*umnyi poimet, durak nikogda*" (proverb: a smart man will understand, a fool never) in the respondent's speech. Ekaterina Klimova also actively uses non-verbal means (gestures). Popular ("trendy") words such as "hype", "trashy content", and "insight" are often found in the interviewer's speech. Perhaps units of youth slang are used to be on the same "wavelength" with their young audience, especially since Ekaterina Klimova has four children, three of whom are teenagers, and she is fully familiar with this vocabulary. Ekaterina Klimova also actively uses nonverbal means (gestures). Popular ("trendy") words such as "*khaipanut*'" (verb: hype), "*treshnyi kontent*" (trashy content), and "*insait*" (insight) are often found in the interviewer's speech. Perhaps units of youth slang are used

to be on the same “wavelength” with her young audience, especially since Ekaterina Klimova has four children, three of whom are teenagers, and she is fully familiar with this vocabulary.

5. Conclusion

An analysis of the interview by Nadezhda Strelets in the format of conversation, presented rather high proficiency of Nadezhda Strelets, background (professional philological education), experience, her (sometimes) wisdom, system of values, understanding which question is better to ask, which tactics to apply. For Nadezhda, it is more important to reveal the interlocutor from all sides, to show his/her professional orientation, life orientations, and also to find out his/her attitude to certain socially significant problems. The interviewer leads a “rapprochement” strategy, which is highlighted by the guests of her program.

It is due to tactics such as “identification”, “humor”, and technique “attention” the respondent's level of trust in the journalist increases. The competence of the interviewer, her erudition in different areas is traced, not just a question and answer, but a full-fledged, meaningful conversation, where not only the interlocutor, but also the journalist thinks deeply. The journalist's preparation for the interview is also visible: the respondent's biography, her previous statements, as well as materials from colleagues have been studied. This interview may be used as an example, journalists can be taught how to conduct interviews.

References

Agarkova, 2004 – *Agarkova, O.A.* (2004). Pragmaticheskie aspekty komplimenta kak formy rechevogo ehtiketa [Pragmatic aspects of compliment as a form of speech etiquette]. Ph.D. Dis. Chelyabinsk. [in Russian]

Brusenskaya et al., 2022 – *Brusenskaya L.A., Barabash V.V., Kulikova E.G.* (2022). Ehtiko-rechevye normy sovremennogo russkogo yazyka [Ethical and speech norms of the modern Russian language]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Brusenskaya, Kulikova, 2022 – *Brusenskaya, L.A., Kulikova, E.G.* (2022). Animalisticheskaya metafora v sovremennom politicheskom mediadiskurse [Animalistic metaphor in the modern political media discourse]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 6*:* 87-108. DOI: 10.30547/vestnik.journ.6.2022.87108 [in Russian]

Fedorov et al., 2014 – *Fedorov, A.V., Chelysheva, I.V., Muryukina, E.V., Gorbatkova, O.I., Kovaleva M.E. Knyazev A.A.* (2014). Massovoe mediaobrazovanie v SSSR i Rossii: osnovnye ehtapy [Mass media education in the USSR and Russia: the main stages]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Fedorov et al., 2019 – *Fedorov, A., Levitskaya, A., Gorbatkova, O.* (2019). Students' audience competency levels on the topic “School and university in the mirror of audiovisual media texts”. *European researcher. Series A*. 10(4): 209-222.

Fedorov, 2001 – *Fedorov, A.V* (2001). Mediaobrazovanie: istoriya, teoriya i metodika [Media education: history, theory and methodology]. Rostov-na-Donu. [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2008 – *Fedorov, A.* (2008). On Media Education. Moscow.

Fedorov, 2017 – *Fedorov, A.* (2017). Media and Information Literacy Education Dictionary. Moscow.

Fedorov, Chelysheva, 2002 – *Fedorov, A.V, Chelysheva, I.V.* (2002). Mediaobrazovanie v Rossii: kratkaya istoriya razvitiya [Media education in Russia: a brief history of development]. Taganrog: Poznanie. [in Russian]

Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015 – *Fedorov, A., Levitskaya, A.* (2015). The Framework of media education and media criticism in the contemporary world: the opinion of international experts. *Comunicar*. 45(23): 107-115. DOI: 10.3916/C45-2015-11

Gálik et al., 2024 – *Gálik, S. et al.* (2024). How competencies of media users contribute to deliberative communication. In: Peruško, Z., Lauk, E., Halliki-Loit, H. (eds.). European media systems for deliberative communication: risks and opportunities. New York: Routledge: 98-116. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003476597

Kayal, Saha, 2023 – *Kayal, Sh., Saha, R.* (2023). Decoding the myth of luxury in cosmetics herbal products advertisements. *Vestnik RUDN. Seriya: Literaturovedenie. Zhurnalistika*. 28(1): 175-186. DOI: https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-9220-2023-28-1-175-186

Kirchhoff, 2022 – *Kirchhoff, S.* (2022). Journalism education's response to the challenges of digital transformation: a dispositive analysis of journalism training and education programs. *Journalism Studies*. 23(1): 108-130. DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2021.2004555

Kodola, 2007 – *Kodola, N.V.* (2007). Interv'yu kak zhanr publitsistiki: soderzhanie i metodika obucheniya [Interviews as a genre of publicism: content and teaching methods]. Ph.D. Dis. Moscow. [in Russian]

Korabelskaya, 2020 – *Korabelskaya, V.V.* (2020). Rol' videobloga v sovremennoi internet-kommunikatsii [The role of video blog in modern Internet communication]. *Khronoehkonomika.* 4(25): 63-70. [in Russian]

Kulikova, 2022 – *Kulikova, E.G.* (2022). Pragmaticheskaya ehnansiosemiya sotsial'no-politicheskikh terminov i ee otrazhenie v sovremennykh media [Pragmatic enantiosemy of socio-political terms and its reflection in modern media]. *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism*. 27(3): 557-566. DOI: 10.22363/2312-9220-2022-27-3-557-566 [in Russian]

Kulikova, 2025 – *Kulikova, E.G.* (2025). Aksiologiya i pragmatika tekstov retsenzii T. Moskvinoi: avtorskaya spetsifika zhanra [Axiology and pragmatics of the review texts by T. Moskvina: the author's genre specifics]. *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta. Seriya 10. Zhurnalistika*. 2(50): 96-114. DOI: 10.55959/msu.vestnik.journ.2.2025.96114 [in Russian]

Lane, 2020 – *Lane, D.S.* (2020). Social media design for youth political expression: Testing the roles of identifiability and geo-boundedness. *New Media & Society*. 22(8): 1394-1413. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819879103

Langer, Gruber, 2021 – *Langer, A.I., Gruber, J.B.* (2021). Political agenda setting in the hybrid media system: Why legacy media still matter a great deal. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 26(2): 313-340

Lukina, 2012 – *Lukina, M.M.* (2012). Tekhnologiya interv'yu [Interview Technology]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Li et al., 2023 – *Li, F., Larimo, J., Leonidou, L.C.* (2023). Social media in marketing research: Theoretical bases, methodological aspects, and thematic focus. *Psychology & Marketing*. 40(1): 124-145. DOI: 10.1002/mar.21746

Macgilchrist et al., 2020 – *Macgilchrist, F., Allert, H., Bruch,* A. (2020). Students and society in the 2020s. Three future 'histories' of education and technology. *Learning, Media and Technology*. 45: 76-89. DOI: 10.1080/17439884.2019.165623

Nadezhda Strelets, 2023 – Nadezhda Strelets (2023). Nadezhda Strelets. Interv'yuer zhurnalist – Nadezhda Strelets, gost' – aktrisa Ekaterina Klimova. Vypusk ot 26.03.2023 [Nadezhda Sagittarius. The guest is actress Ekaterina Klimova. Issue from 26.03.2023]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCD-mzKzWs8&t=129s

Ozbek at el., 2023 – *Ozbek, S., Greville, J., Hooper, N.* (2023). The Thin-Ideal across two cultural contexts: the role of body image inflexibility and the fear of negative evaluation. *Psychology of Popular Media*. 13(3). DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000464

Pakhomova, 2008 – *Pakhomova, I.N.* (2008). Novye yavleniya v russkom rechevom ehtikete: na materiale sredstv massovoi informatsii [New phenomena in Russian speech etiquette: based on the material of mass media]. Ph.D. Dis. Moscow. [in Russian]

Pronyakina, 2016 – *Pronyakina, M.V.* (2016). Faktor slushayushchego i ego rol' v protsesse interv'yuirovaniya (na primere tekstov zhurnal'nogo interv'yu) [The listener factor and its role in the interviewing process (using the example of magazine interview texts)]. *Filologicheskie nauki. Voprosy teorii i praktiki.* 9(63): 143-146. [in Russian]

Peskova, 2015 – *Peskova, E.N.* (2015). Biograficheskoe interv'yu v imidzhevom izdanii: zhanroobrazuyushchie priznaki [Biographical interview in an image publication: genre-forming features]. *Vestnik Yuzhno-Ural'skogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya: Lingvistika.* 12(2): 39-43. [in Russian]

Shin et al., 2022 – *Shin, M., Juventin, M., Wai Chu, J.T., Manor, Y., Kemps, E.* (2022). Online media consumption and depression in young people: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 128: 107129. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/J.CHB.2021.107129

Stoumpos et al., 2023 – *Stoumpos, A.I., Kitsios, F., Talias, M.A.* (2023). Digital transformation in healthcare: Technology acceptance and its applications. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 20(4): 3407. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043407

Švelch, 2008 – *Švelch, J.* (2008). Normalizing player surveillance through video game infographics. *New Media & Society*. 26(6): 6-12. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221097889

Sokolovskaya, 2020 – *Sokolovskaya, A.D.* (2020). Prosodicheskie sredstva realizatsii modal'no-otsenochnykh znachenii v portretnykh interv'yu [Prosodic means of implementing modal

evaluative values in portrait interviews]. *Vestnik Baltiiskogo federal'nogo universiteta im. I. Kanta. Seriya: Filologiya, pedagogika, psikhologiya*. 1: 33-39. [in Russian]

Shvets, 2008 – *Shvets, E.V.* (2008). Literaturnaya recenziya v kontekste sovremennykh tendencij razvitiya kul'tury [A star's interview in a communicative and pragmatic aspect]. Ph.D. Dis. Kaliningrad. [in Russian]

Shesterkina, Nikolaeva, 2012 – *Shesterkina, L.P., Nikolaeva, T.D.* (2012). Metodika televizionnoi zhurnalistiki [The methodology of television journalism]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Shmakova, 2016 – *Shmakova, G.A.* (2016). Interv'yu: ot modeli "vopros-otvet" k modelirovaniyu strategii [Interview: From the Q&A model to strategy modeling]. *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya: Istoriya. Filologiya*. 1(15): 143-151. [in Russian]

Usenko, 2024 – *Usenko, N.M.* (2024). Funktsional'naya negramotnost' kak sotsiolingvisticheskaya problema [Functional illiteracy as a sociolinguistic problem]. *Gumanitarnye i sotsial'nye nauki*. 103(2): 129-136. [in Russian]

Yang et al., 2023 – *Yang, B., Zhang, R., Cheng, X., Zhao, C.* (2023). Exploring information dissemination effect on social media: An empirical investigation. *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*. 27(4): 1469-1482. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/s00779-023-01710-7

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 121-130

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.121
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Toward A Second-Order Media Literacy: Conceptual Untranslatables and the Historical Semantics of the Digital

Alexander Markov [a, *], Oksana Shtayn [b]

[a] Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation
[b] Ural Federal University, Yekaterinburg, Russian Federation

Abstract

The contemporary crisis of media literacy education is not merely pedagogical but conceptual. As digital environments dissolve traditional boundaries between human and machine, original and copy, private and public, the foundational lexicon of media studies – terms like "agency," "body," "truth," "participation" – enters a state of radical instability. This article proposes a paradigm shift from a first-order literacy, focused on skills for navigating a given media landscape, to a second-order literacy, focused on the historical and philosophical contestation of the very concepts that constitute that landscape. Drawing upon Barbara Cassin's notion of the "untranslatable" as a productive philosophical difference, Quentin Skinner's speech-act theory of conceptual use, and Reinhart Koselleck's history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*), we construct a framework for analyzing what we term "media untranslatables": key notions whose semantic fissures reveal the ideological and ontological tensions of digital culture. Through an extended examination of three such pivotal untranslatables – the Mask, the Doll/Avatar, and the Transhumanist Project – we demonstrate how they operate as sites where meanings of self, embodiment, and futurity are negotiated. The article culminates in a detailed exposition of the principles and practices of second-order media literacy, arguing that its ultimate aim is to cultivate not merely critical users but reflexive conceptual cartographers.

Keywords: media literacy, untranslatables, conceptual history, media philosophy, digital culture, pedagogy, posthumanism, agency, embodiment.

1. Introduction

The project of media literacy (Buckingham, 2007), in its dominant global iterations, finds itself at an impasse. Born of a twentieth-century concern with powerful, centralized media institutions and the persuasive power of images and texts, its classic toolkit–derived from semiotics, ideology critique, and theories of representation – was designed to empower citizens to decode, resist, and produce alternative messages (Masterman, 1985; Kellner, Share, 2007). This first-order paradigm, which we might call operational-critical literacy, remains vital. Yet, it operates within a tacitly assumed conceptual universe where "author," "reality," "audience," and "influence" retain a stable, if complex, semantic core. The digital *Sattelzeit* – to borrow Reinhart Koselleck's term for a period of accelerated conceptual transformation – has unsettled these very foundations (Koselleck, 2004). We no longer inhabit a media ecology of primarily representational texts but an ontological infrastructure (Bratton, 2016; Gálik, 2019) that generates new modes of being: algorithmic selves, synthetic intimacies, and hybrid agencies. In this environment, the core

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: markovius@gmail.com (A.V. Markov), shtaynshtayn@gmail.com (O.A. Shtayn)

vocabulary of media education undergoes a profound crisis of translation. What does it mean to teach "privacy" when the self is constitutively porous, a data-point in a predictive model (Zuboff, 2019)? How do we approach "authorship" when creative acts are collaborations with generative neural networks, remixing endless training data (Manovich, 2020)?

The crisis is not that we lack words, but that our words have become what philosopher Barbara Cassin calls "untranslatables": not terms that cannot be translated, but those that should not be translated too quickly, for they mark sites of crucial philosophical and historical difference (Cassin, 2014). An untranslatable is a conceptual knot, a point where language reveals its limits and its world-making power simultaneously. To continue teaching media literacy as if its key terms were transparent is to risk a form of conceptual anachronism, applying the semantics of the broadcasting era to the reality of the platform-driven, post-digital condition (Berry, Dieter, 2015). This article argues that the way forward lies not in refining first-order skills but in inaugurating a project of second-order media literacy. Its primary object shifts from media content to the conceptual preconditions of understanding that content. It is a literacy about the language of literacy itself – a meta-critical, historically informed engagement with the shifting semantics of our digital lifeworld. To theorize this shift, we weave together three distinct but complementary threads: Cassin's philological-philosophical project of mapping untranslatables, Quentin Skinner's (Skinner, 2002) contextualist method of understanding concepts as speech-acts within historical debates, and Koselleck's (Koselleck, 2004) grand narrative of concepts as seismographs of socio-political change. This synthesis allows us to treat media phenomena not just as texts or technologies but as conceptual events.

2. Materials and methods

To equip media literacy for the challenges of the digital *Sattelzeit*, we must first recalibrate its theoretical instruments. The traditional toolkit of ideological analysis, political economy, and audience studies, while indispensable, requires supplementation by a methodology attuned to the historicity and performativity of the very concepts we use to think with. Our framework is built on a triadic synthesis. Barbara Cassin's monumental *Dictionary of Untranslatables* (Cassin, 2014) provides the first pillar. The project is not a lament about the failure of translation but a celebration of its necessity and difficulty. An untranslatable, for Cassin, is a "privileged signifier" that indexes a difference in ways of world-making. To trace the journeys of *logos*, *pravda*, *Weltanschauung*, or *intellectus* is not to find synonyms but to map philosophical archipelagos. Translating such a term is always an interpretative, often violent, act of forcing one conceptual universe into the grammar of another. In the context of media, terms like "interactivity," "community," "memory," or "public" function similarly. Is "interactivity" the technical capacity of a system (Engelbart, 1962), the phenomenological experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), or the neoliberal co-option of user labor (Terranova, 2000)? These are not different aspects of the same thing but competing conceptualizations that emerge from different historical and ideological matrices. A second-order literacy begins by suspending the desire for a single definition and instead learning to cartograph these semantic fields.

Quentin Skinner's contextualist methodology, developed within the Cambridge School of intellectual history, provides the second, pragmatic pillar (Skinner, 2002). Skinner insists that to understand a concept, we must recover the historical "language game" in which it was deployed. The meaning of a term is bound up with what an author was doing in using it – justifying, legitimizing, criticizing, excluding. This speech-act approach is acutely relevant to digital culture. When a social media platform declares its mission is to "bring the world closer together," it is not making a descriptive statement but performing a legitimizing act, seeking to align its corporate practice with a cherished social value (Couldry, Mejias, 2019). When an influencer speaks of their "authentic voice," they are engaging in a justificatory rhetoric, countering the potential charge of commercial calculation. Second-order literacy, informed by Skinner, trains the eye to see concepts as moves in a game, imbued with intention and seeking specific perlocutionary effects. It asks not only "what does 'algorithmic fairness' mean?" but "what work is this concept doing in this white paper, this regulatory debate, this activist manifesto?" Reinhart Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte* (history of concepts) provides the third, temporal pillar (Koselleck, 2004).

Koselleck argued that during periods of intense social and political transformation, basic concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) become "contested," "ambiguous," and "future-oriented." They become sites where collective experience condenses and future expectations are articulated. Concepts like

"revolution," "crisis," or "progress" are not just descriptors but engines of historical change. Our digital era is ripe with such Koselleckian concepts: "the cloud," "the network," "the virtual," "big data." They are palimpsests, carrying older meanings (the network as a metaphor of connection) while being loaded with new, often utopian or dystopian, expectations of total knowledge or control (Gitelman, 2013).

The transhumanist concept of the "posthuman" is perhaps the ultimate Koselleckian concept of our time – a condensation of technoscientific progress into an expectation of a fundamental rupture, redefining "human" as a temporary, upgradeable condition (Hayles, 1999; Ferrando, 2013). Together, this synthesis forms a powerful lens. Cassin gives us the spatial dimension of conceptual difference across languages and traditions; Skinner gives us the pragmatic dimension of conceptual use in argumentative contexts; Koselleck gives us the temporal dimension of conceptual change under historical pressure. Applying this lens to media phenomena means treating them not as stable objects of analysis but as dynamic sites where conceptual battles are fought, where the semantics of self, society, and reality are perpetually rewritten. This is the preparatory work for a literacy of the second order.

3. Discussion

With this theoretical apparatus in place, we can now turn to the concrete. The following explorations (see Table 1) are not mere applications but extended demonstrations of how thinking with untranslatables reframes our understanding of key digital phenomena, engaging with contemporary empirical research in media literacy and digital culture to ground our conceptual arguments.

The Mask: From Persona to Platformed Profile. The mask is one of humanity's oldest media technologies, yet its digital reincarnation reveals its enduring untranslatability (Markov, Shtayn, 2024). In Cassinian terms, its semantic field is vast and conflicted: the Roman *persona* (the theatrical mask that gave us "person" and legal personality), the Greek *prosopon* (face, role, but also person in a relational sense), the Russian *lichina* (a false face implying deception), and the contemporary profile, handle, or avatar. Each term implies a different ontology of the self. The *persona* is a legal and social fiction necessary for interaction; the *prosopon* is a face turned toward another in dialogue (Taylor, 1989); the *lichina* presupposes a hidden, truer self beneath; the profile is a datafied identity, a composite of metrics, preferences, and behavioral traces (Cheney-Lippold, 2011).

The digital mask, therefore, is not simply a tool for concealment. Following Skinner, we must ask what we are doing when we craft a profile. We are performing a complex speech-act: we are claiming a space of agency ("this is my account"), we are signaling belonging to a community, we are engaging in a curatorial practice of the self (Boyd, 2014), and we are providing raw material for algorithmic classification. The Koselleckian tension here is between the modern concept of the autonomous, inward-looking self (the "authentic" individual behind the mask) and the emerging concept of the distributed, networked, performative self (the profile as a constitutive interface).

The mask is untranslatable because it forever oscillates between being something we have (a tool) and something we are (a condition of subjectivity in a mediated world). This oscillation is the source of both creative possibility and profound anxiety about authenticity and accountability in digital life. Contemporary research into social media literacy and body image acutely captures this tension, where the "profile" becomes a site for the meticulous curation and subsequent internal evaluation of the self against often idealized standards (Fatt, Fardouly, 2023; Paxton et al., 2022).

Studies show that the frequency and nature of digital social evaluation – likes, comments, follows – are directly correlated with body image concerns, highlighting how the platformed mask becomes a conduit for external validation (Fatt, Fardouly, 2023). Furthermore, the concept of social media literacy (SoMeLit) as defined by (Cho et al., 2024), which centers on the user's self in dynamic causation with their chosen messages and networks, resonates deeply with the Skinnerian analysis of the profile as a performative speech-act. The user is not just decoding messages but actively, though not always consciously, constructing a "self" within the boundaries set by platform architectures (Cho et al., 2024).

The Doll/Avatar: The Enigma of Quasi-Agency. If the mask operates on identity, the doll or avatar operates on embodiment (Markov, Shtayn, 2025). This untranslatable sits at the crossroads of tool, toy, artwork, and agent. Its Cassinian map would include the *pupa* (Latin: doll, girl, suggesting an object of care or a diminished person), the *marionnette* (with its rich history linking to divine puppeteers and critiques of illusion, from Plato to Kleist), the Japanese *kyara*

("character," essential to the affective economies of anime, gaming, and VTuber culture), and the Sanskrit *avatar*, a descent of the divine into worldly form.

The digital avatar inherits all these conflicting legacies. It is a tool for navigation and action in virtual spaces (Murray, 1997), a commercial property with licensed attributes, a canvas for self-expression, and, in phenomena like VTubing, a sustained fictional persona behind which a human performer labors (Lamarre, 2009). A Skinnerian analysis reveals the complexity of statements like "My avatar was killed" or "I am my avatar."

These are not simple reports but claims that distribute agency in novel ways, blending the intentionality of the user, the affordances and rules of the software, and the cultural codes of the platform. They perform a blending of self and interface. From a Koselleckian perspective, the avatar is a futuristic reconfiguration of the concept of the body. It materializes the expectation of plasticity, multiplicity, and dis-embodiment/re-embodiment that characterizes much posthuman thought (Hayles, 1999). It challenges the Kantian unity of the embodied self, proposing instead a model of the self as a pilot or a ghost in a series of ever-changeable shells. The pedagogical challenge it poses is profound: how do we teach empathy, ethics, or critique in relation to entities that are neither fully human nor merely objects, but occupy a liminal space of quasi-agency? The untranslatability of the doll/avatar forces us to confront the crumbling boundaries between the animate and inanimate, the authentic and the synthetic, in our affective and social lives. This conceptual instability is reflected in the nuanced "tactics" young people employ when engaging with news and information on social media, where they must constantly negotiate their own agency against algorithmic curation and platform norms (Swart, 2023).

Swart's findings that news literacy is practiced as a form of situated knowledge, shaped by platform context and perceptions of agency, mirror the distributed agency experienced by a user navigating through an avatar. The challenge for media literacy education, therefore, extends to fostering critical empathy and ethical reasoning within these complex, hybrid assemblages of human and non-human agency.

The Transhumanist Project: Rendering the Human Untranslatable. While mask and avatar reconfigure existing categories, the transhumanist project – as a discursive formation and a cluster of techno-scientific aspirations – aims explicitly to render its central term untranslatable. It seeks to make "human" a concept of the past. In Cassin's framework, it orchestrates a clash between *humanitas* (the cultured, moral being), *Homo sapiens* (the biological species), *Mensch* (the existential or ethical subject), and its own neologisms: transhuman, posthuman, cyborg (Haraway, 1991).

It asks which of these meanings is accidental, a limitation to be overcome. Transhumanist rhetoric, subjected to Skinnerian analysis, is a revolutionary speech-act par excellence. Its key terms – "morphological freedom," "cognitive enhancement," "mind uploading" – are not just descriptive but performative; they aim to alter the normative language game of human rights and ethics, shifting the grounds from protecting a given nature to authorizing its radical self-modification (Bostrom, 2005). This is a profound conceptual power-grab.

For Koselleck, transhumanism is the ultimate "concept of the future." It practices an intense "futurization of time," reading all of history as a prelude to a horizon of expectation where death, disease, and biological finitude are seen as solvable engineering problems (Fukuyama, 2002). It makes the "human past" – with its vulnerabilities and its traditional dignities–a foreign country, preparing the semantic ground for a post-biological condition. As a media phenomenon, transhumanism is propagated through a potent mix of scholarly manifestos, Silicon Valley hype, science fiction narratives, and news coverage of biotech breakthroughs.

A second-order media literacy must equip students to deconstruct this discourse not by dismissing it as science fiction, but by understanding it as a powerful conceptual force that is actively reshaping our collective imagination of the possible and the desirable, redefining what it means to be a subject, a citizen, and a biological entity in the 21st century. This critical deconstruction is akin to the analytical work required to combat political misinformation, where the combination of news media literacy interventions and fact-checking has proven most effective (Hameleers, 2022). Furthermore, the transhumanist discourse intersects with critical debates about the body, technology, and representation that are already playing out on social media platforms through movements like body positivity and body neutrality. Research indicates that while body-positive content can have benefits, health professionals express concerns and often prefer the frame of body neutrality, highlighting the ongoing conceptual negotiation about the "good" or "acceptable" body in a digitally mediated age (Rodgers et al., 2022; Sharp et al., 2023).

Media literacy must therefore navigate these debates without falling into either essentialist or naïve techno-optimist frameworks, a task complicated by findings that even media literacy itself can sometimes exacerbate negative comparisons in certain contexts (Mink, Szymanski, 2022). The work (Harriger et al., 2023) further underscores the need for new theories that capture the unique, complex influences of social media on body image, moving beyond models developed for traditional media – a call that aligns perfectly with the need for a second-order literacy that can grapple with the conceptual untranslatability of the "human" itself.

Table 1. The Three Media Untranslatables – A Conceptual Synthesis

Untranslatable	Core Semantic Tension (Cassin)	Key Speech-Act (Skinner)	Historical Temporality (Koselleck)	Pedagogical Challenge
The Mask	*Persona* (legal fiction) vs. *Lichina* (deception) vs. Profile (datafied self).	Justifying a curated, platformed identity as legitimate and "authentic."	Shift from modern inner self to networked, performative interface-self.	Teaching accountability and ethics for actions performed "in character."
The Doll/Avatar	*Pupa* (object of care) vs. *Marionnette* (controlled object) vs. *Avatar* (divine descent) vs. *Kyara* (affective property).	Claiming agency and experience through a digital proxy ("I was attacked").	Reconfiguration of the body toward plasticity, multiplicity, and pilot-based identity.	Fostering critical empathy toward quasi-agential, synthetic entities.
Transhumanist Project	*Humanitas* (moral being) vs. *Homo sapiens* (species) vs. Posthuman (engineered successor).	Legitimizing the radical redesign of human nature as a right and an imperative.	"Futurization" of the human, making the biological past a condition to be overcome.	Navigating ethical debates on enhancement without essentialist or naïve techno-optimist frameworks.

4. Results

Having traced the contours of these conceptual fault lines through discussion, we can now articulate the nature of the pedagogical project they necessitate as the result of applying our methodological framework (see Table 2). Second-order media literacy is not a replacement for the first order but its necessary meta-level. It is less a specific curriculum than a pervasive intellectual orientation, an ethos that can inform teaching and learning at all levels. Its core premise is that conceptual clarity is not a starting point but an achievement – and often a temporary one – arrived at through historical understanding and rhetorical analysis.

The first principle of this literacy is conceptual historicization. This moves beyond simplistic timelines of technological invention. It involves, for instance, exploring how the concept of "public" mutated from the Greek *agora* and the Enlightenment *Öffentlichkeit* (Habermas, 1991) to the "networked public sphere" (Benkler, 2006) and finally to the "algorithmic public" (Gillespie, 2014) curated by platform feeds. Students would not just learn what an algorithm is, but how the very idea of a "public" is being recursively configured by these technical systems. They would read not only contemporary critics of social media but also historical texts on earlier media transformations (e.g., Plato's *Phaedrus* on writing, or 19th-century debates on the telegraph) to recognize recurring patterns of anxiety and utopianism around mediation (Peters, 1999; Standage, 1998).

The second principle is semantic cartography. Inspired by Cassin, this involves mapping the competing definitions of a key untranslatable within a contemporary debate. A classroom exercise might focus on "fake news." Instead of providing a checklist for detection, students would be tasked

with collecting and contrasting definitions from: a) legal documents (e.g., proposed legislation), b) platform community guidelines, c) journalism ethics manuals, d) communication theory (e.g., misinformation vs. disinformation), and e) political rhetoric (where "fake news" is often used as a delegitimizing label). The goal is to visualize the concept not as a stable entity but as a contested field where legal, technical, ethical, and political battles are fought (Tandoc et al., 2018). This cultivates an awareness that using a term always means taking a position within a semantic struggle.

The third principle is speech-act analysis in practice. Drawing on Skinner, this trains students to analyze media discourses as forms of persuasive action. When a tech CEO gives a keynote announcing a new "ethical AI framework," the task is to dissect the performative nature of the announcement. What norms is it trying to establish? What criticisms is it pre-empting? What vision of the company's social role is it constructing? Similarly, analyzing the comments section of a controversial video becomes an exercise in identifying the illocutionary forces at play: are commenters informing, insulting, performatively aligning with a tribe, or signaling virtue? This moves analysis from what is said to what is being done by saying it, revealing the deep pragmatics of digital communication.

The fourth principle is scenario-based conceptual negotiation. Here, the abstract becomes concrete through ethical and design dilemmas. A scenario might ask: "You are on the ethics board of a company developing companion AI dolls for the elderly. The doll learns and adapts to the user's personality. How do you define and safeguard 'consent,' 'privacy,' and 'emotional manipulation' in this context, given that these concepts were developed for human-to-human interaction?" Such exercises force students to actively negotiate the meaning of untranslatables in novel, applied contexts, understanding that ethics is not the application of fixed rules but the careful, contextual translation of values into new technological arrangements (Vallor, 2016). This is particularly relevant in light of research on vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, where social media use shows complex, dual impacts on body image and healthy behaviors, demanding nuanced ethical and educational responses (Zeeni et al., 2023).

The ultimate aim of this multifaceted pedagogy is to foster what we might call conceptual agency. This is the capacity to recognize when one is operating within a particular conceptual framework, to understand its historical formation and ideological implications, and to consciously engage in the work of reframing or re-translating concepts for new contexts. It is the opposite of being a passive consumer of prefabricated meanings. A student with conceptual agency does not just ask "Is this source biased?" but also "What underlying model of 'truth' or 'objectivity' am I using to make that judgment, and where does it come from?" They do not just create a digital artifact, but reflect on how their choices of platform, genre, and interface enact specific, often hidden, assumptions about community, authorship, and the senses.

Table 2. From First-Order to Second-Order Media Literacy – A Paradigm Shift

Dimension	First-Order Media Literacy (Operational-Critical)	Second-Order Media Literacy (Conceptual-Historical)
Primary Object	Media content, messages, representations, and the skills to decode/produce them.	The historical, contested concepts used to analyze and produce media (e.g., privacy, identity, public).
Theoretical Basis	Semiotics, ideology critique, political economy, psychology of persuasion.	Conceptual history (*Begriffsgeschichte*), philosophy of language (speech-acts), comparative philology (untranslatables).
Key Question	"What does this media text mean, and how does it attempt to influence me?"	"What are the historical and semantic conditions that allow us to ask this question in this way? What concepts are at stake, and how are they being defined/contested?"
Pedagogical Goal	Critical, savvy, ethically responsible media users and creators.	Reflexive conceptual cartographers, capable of navigating and participating in the ongoing negotiation of the language of mediation.
Typical Activity	Analyzing bias in a news report, creating a counter-advertisement, verifying a	Mapping the historical evolution of "news" as a concept; designing an interface that makes its algorithmic curation of the "public" visible.

Dimension	First-Order Media Literacy (Operational-Critical)	Second-Order Media Literacy (Conceptual-Historical)
	fact.	
Relationship to Crisis	Provides tools to navigate a complex media environment.	Takes the conceptual instability of that environment as its primary object of study.

Following the elucidation of its core ethos, the praxis of second-order media literacy must translate these philosophical commitments into tangible classroom strategies. This translation is not a prescriptive curriculum but a generative methodology, a series of iterative practices designed to make conceptual work experiential. The first such practice is the "Conceptual Archaeology" workshop. Here, students are presented not with a definition, but with a constellation of historical texts surrounding a key untranslatable. For the concept of "community," for instance, they might analyze excerpts from Aristotle's *Politics* (the *koinonia*), Benedict Anderson's seminal work on *Imagined Communities* (the nation as a print-mediated construct) (Anderson, 2006), and Robert Putnam's diagnosis of civic disengagement in *Bowling Alone*, before finally turning to contemporary platform studies literature on "networked publics" (boyd, 2014) and "affective publics" (Papacharissi, 2015). The task is not to find a linear progression but to map the discontinuities–to see how each articulation of "community" is tied to specific media ecologies (oral, print, broadcast, digital) and political imaginations. This historical layering denaturalizes the present, revealing that the algorithmically sorted "groups" of social media are not a natural form of human association but a historically specific, technically enabled configuration with its own affordances and constraints (van Dijck, 2013).

The second practice, "Speech-Act Mapping," operationalizes Skinnerian analysis for digital discourse. Students select a contemporary media text rich in normative claims – a platform's Terms of Service, a tech CEO's manifesto on "ethical AI," a viral political post, or the comment thread beneath a controversial video. Their analysis moves beyond content summary to pragmatic deconstruction. They are guided by a series of questions: What is the speaker doing with words like "innovation," "safety," "freedom," or "truth" in this context? What opposing viewpoint or criticism is this language act attempting to pre-empt, legitimize, or delegitimize? What vision of social order or human nature is being performed or proposed? For example, dissecting a statement like "We built this platform to give everyone a voice" involves recognizing it as a justificatory speech-act that seeks to align corporate power with democratic ideals, potentially obscuring the platform's concurrent role in amplifying some voices while silencing others through opaque moderation (Gillespie, 2018). This practice trains students to see language as a form of action and power, crucial for navigating the persuasive architectures of digital platforms.

Building on this, the third practice is the "Semantic Cartography" exercise, a direct application of Cassin's project. Students choose a single, fraught untranslatable relevant to their own media practices – "interaction," "memory," "participation," "addiction." Their task is to construct a visual map (a diagram, an infographic, a zine) that plots the competing definitions and contextual uses of this term. They must gather sources from diverse, often conflicting, domains: computer science papers (defining interaction as input-output efficiency), phenomenological philosophy (interaction as embodied dialogue), political theory (participation as civic engagement), and platform economics (engagement as a metric for monetization). The cartography reveals the concept not as a point but as a field of tension. The final step is a reflective commentary: in which of these semantic territories do they personally reside when using a given app? Which definitions are empowered by current business models or regulatory frameworks? This exercise cultivates a meta-awareness of one's own conceptual positioning and the political economy of meaning (Fuchs, 2021).

The fourth, more advanced practice is "Scenario-Based Conceptual Negotiation." This moves from analysis to ethical and creative application within simulated, yet highly plausible, near-future dilemmas. A scenario might posit: "You are part of a design team developing an immersive educational VR experience about ancient history. The AI-driven non-player characters (NPCs) adapt their speech and behavior based on student interactions, creating 'authentic' relationships. How do you negotiate the competing demands of historical 'accuracy,' pedagogical effectiveness, emotional safety, and data privacy? Draft a set of design principles that define your operational

understanding of 'authenticity,' 'agency,' and 'care' in this context." Such scenarios force students out of the role of critic and into the role of a responsible co-creator, requiring them to actively translate abstract values and contested concepts into concrete design decisions, understanding that there is no perfect translation, only responsible, reflexive compromises (Vallor, 2016). This practice bridges the gap between critical theory and applied media ethics.

Finally, the methodological arc culminates in the "Critical Design Intervention" project. Here, students are asked not merely to analyze or negotiate concepts but to materialize their critical understanding. The brief is to design a prototype for a digital tool, interface, or media artifact that makes a specific conceptual untranslatability tangible to its user. For example, a group might design a browser extension that visually alters a social media feed to expose the shifting semantic context of "trending" – juxtaposing the algorithmic logic of velocity and engagement with a historical timeline of what was "trending" on the same date in past years, or with parallel news headlines from non-commercial sources. Another project might create a "Data Self-Portrait" app that re-represents the user's own data traces (location, searches, purchases) not as a profile for targeting, but through the aesthetic lenses of different philosophical concepts of the self – as a Humean bundle of perceptions, a Foucaultian dossier of discipline (Foucault, 1977), or a Harawayan cyborg network. This practice, inspired by the tradition of critical design and adversarial artifacts (Dunne, Raby, 2013), affirms that second-order literacy is not passive comprehension but active, generative critique. It positions students as agents capable of interrogating and re-imagining the very conceptual infrastructures of their media environment, completing the loop from historical understanding through critical analysis to imaginative reconstruction.

5. Conclusion

We have argued throughout that the most pressing task for media education today is to meet conceptual instability with conceptual sophistication. The digital transformation is not just changing what we see and how we communicate; it is changing who we think we are, what we believe a society is, and what we imagine is possible. In this milieu, a literacy that stops at the operational and the critically representational, while necessary, is insufficient. It risks leaving learners fluent in a language whose grammar is decaying, adept at using tools whose philosophical implications remain opaque. Second-order media literacy, as we have endeavored to outline in detail, proposes a more foundational engagement. By integrating the philological sensitivity of Cassin, the rhetorical pragmatism of Skinner, and the historical depth of Koselleck, it offers a framework for turning the crisis of translation into a curriculum. It teaches that to be media literate is to understand that every tweet, every profile, every AI-generated image, and every promise of technological transcendence is an event in an ongoing history of concepts. These concepts – mask, avatar, human, and countless others – are the living, shifting ground of our political, ethical, and existential lives in a mediated world. The outcome of this education is not a student who has all the answers, but one who has been equipped with better questions. A student who, confronted with the next disruptive technology or cultural phenomenon, will instinctively ask not only "How does it work?" or "Is it good or bad?", but "What old concepts does this force into crisis? What new language games is it initiating? What futures is it making conceivable, and what pasts is it rendering obsolete?" This is the literacy required for citizenship in an age where the very definition of the human, the social, and the real is up for grabs–a literacy of the second order, for a world in a state of permanent, and profound, translation.

References

Anderson, 2006 – *Anderson, B.* (2006). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism. Verso.

Benkler, 2006 – *Benkler, Y.* (2006). The wealth of networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom. Yale University Press.

Berry, Dieter, 2015 – *Berry, D.M., Dieter, M.* (Eds.). (2015). Postdigital aesthetics: Art, computation and design. Palgrave Macmillan.

Bostrom, 2005 – *Bostrom, N.* (2005). A history of transhumanist thought. *Journal of Evolution and Technology*. 14(1): 1-25.

Boyd, 2014 – *Boyd, d.* (2014). It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens. Yale University Press.

Bratton, 2016 – *Bratton, B.H.* (2016). *The stack:* On software and sovereignty. MIT Press.

Buckingham, 2007 – *Buckingham, D.* (2007). Digital media literacies: rethinking media education in the age of the internet. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. 2(1): 43-55. DOI: 10.2304/rcie.2007.2.1.43

Cassin, 2014 – *Cassin, B.* (ed.). (2014). Dictionary of untranslatables: A philosophical lexicon. Princeton University Press.

Cheney-Lippold, 2011 – *Cheney-Lippold, J.* (2011). A new algorithmic identity: Soft biopolitics and the modulation of control. *Theory, Culture, Society*. 28(6): 164-181. DOI: 10.1177/0263276411424420

Cho et al., 2024 – *Cho, H., Cannon, J., Lopez, R., Li, W.* (2024). Social media literacy: A conceptual framework. *New Media, Society*. 26(2): 941-960. DOI: 10.1177/14614448211068530

Couldry, Mejias, 2019 – *Couldry, N., Mejias, U.A.* (2019). The costs of connection: How data is colonizing human life and appropriating it for capitalism. Stanford University Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, 1990 – *Csikszentmihalyi, M.* (1990). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. Harper, Row.

Dunne, Raby, 2013 – *Dunne, A., Raby, F.* (2013). Speculative everything: Design, fiction, and social dreaming. MIT Press.

Engelbart, 1962 – *Engelbart, D.C.* (1962). Augmenting human intellect: A conceptual framework. Stanford Research Institute.

Fatt, Fardouly, 2023 – *Fatt, S.J., Fardouly, J.* (2023). Digital social evaluation: Relationships between receiving likes, comments, and follows on social media and adolescents' body image concerns. *Body Image*. 47: 101621. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.101621

Ferrando, 2013 – *Ferrando, F.* (2013). Posthumanism, transhumanism, antihumanism, metahumanism, and new materialisms: Differences and relations. *Existenz*. 8(2): 26-32.

Foucault, 1977 – *Foucault, M.* (1977). Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison (A. Sheridan, Trans.). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1975).

Fuchs, 2021 – *Fuchs, C.* (2021). Social media: A critical introduction (3rd ed.). Sage.

Fukuyama, 2002 – *Fukuyama, F.* (2002). Our posthuman future: Consequences of the biotechnology revolution. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Gálik, 2019 – *Gálik, S.* (2019). On ontological definition of media truth and the role of media. *European Journal of Science and Theology*. 15(1): 1-8.

Gillespie, 2014 – *Gillespie, T.* (2014). The relevance of algorithms. In: Gillespie, T., Boczkowski, P.J., Foot, K.A. (eds.). *Media technologies: Essays on communication, materiality, and society*. MIT Press: 167-194.

Gillespie, 2018 – *Gillespie, T.* (2018). Custodians of the internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media. Yale University Press.

Gitelman, 2013 – *Gitelman, L.* (ed.). (2013). "Raw data" is an oxymoron. MIT Press.

Habermas, 1991 – *Habermas, J.* (1991). The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society. MIT Press.

Hameleers, 2022 – *Hameleers, M.* (2022). Separating truth from lies: Comparing the effects of news media literacy interventions and fact-checkers in response to political misinformation in the US and Netherlands. *Information, Communication, Society*. 25(1): 110-126. DOI: 10.1080/1369118X.2020.1764603

Haraway, 1991 – *Haraway, D.* (1991). A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century. In: *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge: 149-181.

Harriger et al., 2023 – *Harriger, J.A., Thompson, J.K., Tiggemann, M.* (2023). TikTok, TikTok, the time is now: Future directions in social media and body image. *Body Image*. 44: 222-226. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.01.005

Hayles, 1999 – *Hayles, N.K.* (1999). How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics. University of Chicago Press.

Kellner, Share, 2007 – *Kellner, D., Share, J.* (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. In: Macedo, D., Steinberg, S.R. (eds.). *Media literacy: A reader*. Peter Lang: 3-23.

Koselleck, 2004 – *Koselleck, R.* (2004). Futures past: On the semantics of historical time. Columbia University Press.

Lamarre, 2009 – *Lamarre, T.* (2009). The anime machine: A media theory of animation. University of Minnesota Press.

Manovich, 2020 – *Manovich, L.* (2020). Cultural analytics. MIT Press.

Markov, Shtayn, 2024 – *Markov, A.V., Shtayn, O.A.* (2024). G. Agamben's theatrical models: Questioning their autocommunication relevance. *Logos et Praxis*. 23(4): 12-23. DOI: 10.15688/lp.jvolsu.2024.4.2

Markov, Shtayn, 2025 – *Markov, A.V., Shtayn, O.A.* (2025). Interesnoe: filosofskaya tematizaciya cherez masku i kuklu [The interesting: Philosophical thematization through a mask and a puppet]. *Vestnik Chelyabinskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*. 495(1): 64-71. DOI: 10.47475/1994-2796-2025-495-1-64-71 [in Russian]

Masterman, 1985 – *Masterman, L.* (1985). Teaching the media. Comedia Publishing Group.

Mink, Szymanski, 2022 – *Mink, D.B., Szymanski, D.M.* (2022). TikTok use and body dissatisfaction: Examining direct, indirect, and moderated relations. *Body Image*. 43: 205-216. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.09.006

Murray, 1997 – *Murray, J.H.* (1997). Hamlet on the Holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace. The Free Press.

Papacharissi, 2015 – *Papacharissi, Z.* (2015). Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199999736.001.0001

Paxton et al., 2022 – *Paxton, S.J., McLean, S.A., Rodgers, R.F.* (2022). "My critical filter buffers your app filter": Social media literacy as a protective factor for body image. *Body Image*. 40: 158-164. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2021.12.009

Peters, 1999 – *Peters, J.D.* (1999). Speaking into the air: A history of the idea of communication. University of Chicago Press.

Putnam, 2000 – *Putnam, R.D.* (2000). Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community. Simon, Schuster.

Rodgers et al., 2022 – *Rodgers, R.F., Wertheim, E.H., Paxton, S.J., Tylka, T.L., Harriger, J.A.* (2022). #Bopo: Enhancing body image through body positive social media-evidence to date and research directions. *Body Image*. 41: 367-374. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.03.008

Sharp et al., 2023 – *Sharp, G., Fisher, M., Kulkarni, J., Johnson, R.* (2023). Examining health professional perspectives on social media body image movements: A qualitative exploration. *Body Image*. 46: 230-237. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.06.004

Skinner, 2002 – *Skinner, Q.* (2002). Visions of politics: Vol. 1, Regarding method. Cambridge University Press.

Standage, 1998 – *Standage, T.* (1998). The Victorian internet: The remarkable story of the telegraph and the nineteenth century's on-line pioneers. Walker, Company.

Swart, 2023 – *Swart, J.* (2023). Tactics of news literacy: How young people access, evaluate, and engage with news on social media. *New Media, Society*. 25(3): 505-521. DOI: 10.1177/14614448211011447

Tandoc et al., 2018 – *Tandoc, E.C., Lim, Z.W., Ling, R.* (2018). Defining "fake news." *Digital Journalism*. 6(2): 137-153. DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2017.1360143

Taylor, 1989 – *Taylor, C.* (1989). Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity. Harvard University Press.

Terranova, 2000 – *Terranova, T.* (2000). Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy. *Social Text*. 18(2): 33-58. DOI: 10.1215/01642472-18-2_63-33

Vallor, 2016 – *Vallor, S.* (2016). Technology and the virtues: A philosophical guide to a future worth wanting. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190498511.001.0001

van Dijck, 2013 – *van Dijck, J.* (2013). The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media. Oxford University Press. DOI: 10.7146/mediekultur.v30i56.16314

Zeeni et al., 2023 – *Zeeni, N., Abi Kharma, J., Mattar, L.* (2023). Social media use impacts body image and eating behavior in pregnant women. *Current Psychology*. 42(6): 4948-4955. DOI: 10.1007/s12144-021-01848-8

Zuboff, 2019 – *Zuboff, S.* (2019). The age of surveillance capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power. PublicAffairs.

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 131-137

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.131
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Contemporary Russian Media Education: Advances and Challenges

Galina Mikhaleva [a, *]

[a] Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

Abstract

The article examines contemporary Russian media education as a dynamic field of science shaped by rapid digitalization, expanding media influence, and evolving socio-cultural conditions. Drawing on a comprehensive analysis of academic literature from the past twenty-five years, the study explores theoretical foundations, institutional practices, and current trends in Russian media pedagogy within both national and global contexts. Particular attention is paid to cultural, semiotic, critical, and value-oriented approaches that conceptualize media education as a means of developing people's media literacy, critical thinking, creative competencies, and civic engagement. The paper highlights key models and formats of media education in Russia, including integrated, project-based, extracurricular, inclusive, and lifelong learning approaches, as well as the convergence of pedagogical and journalistic paradigms. At the institutional level, media education is embedded in university curricula and research centers, combining media analysis with practical media production. At the same time, the study identifies persistent challenges of present-day media education, such as uneven regional implementation, insufficient school-level integration, technological and infrastructural constraints, methodological imbalances between theory and practice, and limited international cooperation. The findings suggest that while Russian media education demonstrates strong theoretical traditions and growing social relevance, its future development depends on systemic reforms, enhanced digital resources, methodological modernization, and renewed global academic engagement.

Keywords: media, media text, media education, media literacy, media competence, media culture, media violence.

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid digitalization and the growing influence of media on all spheres of social life, media education has become one of the key areas of contemporary pedagogical research. The transformations of information environments, communication practices, and cultural consumption patterns have significantly reshaped the educational approaches, foregrounding the need to develop learners' critical thinking, media literacy, and creative competencies. In Russia, media education is increasingly viewed not only as a response to technological change, but also as a socio-cultural and value-oriented phenomenon that contributes to personal development (Akmanova et al., 2019), civic engagement, and social resilience in the face of modern information challenges.

Contemporary Russian media education represents a complex and evolving field of science situated at the intersection of national educational traditions and global media literacy paradigms. Over the past decades, Russian media education has evolved from a primarily vocational and theoretical model into a multifaceted academic and pedagogical domain that addresses media

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: galinamikhaleva@list.ru (G. Mikhaleva)

literacy, media competence, and professional media training. Within the global context, it reflects both convergence with international standards and divergence shaped by Russia's specific socio-cultural, political, and institutional conditions: "In recent years, there has been an awareness of the importance of developing media literacy at the federal level. Taking into account international professional standards and the practical experience of other countries, the Russian government approves of new major national projects aimed at developing the relevant competencies of citizens" (Vartanova, 2021).

At the theoretical level, Russian media education is strongly influenced by cultural, semiotic, and critical approaches to media analysis. Scholars emphasize the study of media texts as cultural artifacts, focusing on narrative structures, genre conventions, ideological representations, and audience interpretation (Fedorov, 2021). This tradition aligns Russian media education with global trends in media studies, particularly those developed in Europe, while also preserving distinctive emphases on cultural pedagogy and aesthetic analysis. Concepts such as media culture, media competence, and critical autonomy occupy a central place in Russian academic discourse and are comparable to the international frameworks promoted by organizations such as UNESCO in the field of media and information literacy: "Media and Information Literacy provides a set of essential skills to address the challenges of the 21st century including the proliferation of mis- and disinformation and hate speech, the decline of trust in media and digital innovations notably Artificial Intelligence" (https://www.unesco.org/en/media-information-literacy).

2. Materials and methods

The study materials consist of academic books and scholarly articles on media education during the last twenty-five years. The research employs the following methods: content analysis and comparative approaches. The methods used also include the collection of relevant data (monographs, articles, and reports), analysis of academic literature, theoretical analysis and synthesis, and processes of generalization and classification.

3. Discussion

Modern Russian media pedagogy conceptualizes media education as a multidimensional and integrative process that encompasses educational, cultural, ethical, and communicative aspects. Researchers emphasize its role in preparing individuals for life, fostering conscious interaction with media, and supporting self-actualization in a technogenic society. At the same time, scholarly discussions reflect a diversity of theoretical approaches, ranging from professionally oriented models focused on media industries to universal and synergetic interpretations regarding mass media education as an essential component of general education and lifelong learning. For instance, G.S. Fedyanina considers media education as a "an important component of the educational process, a powerful factor in the application of new forms and methods of teaching, its main task is to prepare modern youth for life in new in-formation conditions. Media education is a complex means of mastering the surrounding world by a person, serves to increase the effectiveness of education, makes it possible to model independent professional activity, and develop creative potential" (Fedynina, 2022: 125). N.A. Simbirtseva also defines media pedagogy as an adaptive environment in which "conscious communication with the media" develops the personality qualities "necessary for the self-actualization of a person in the technogenic world and the critical perception of the 21st century reality" (Simbirtseva, 2018: 21).

Analysing the concept of present-day media education in Russia, I.A. Kuptsova and T.N. Vladimirova identify the following two main trends: "a highly specialized/professional approach to defining media education" implying the process of obtaining qualifications in the field of media, focusing on the applied features of media education, and a "synergetic/universal approach to the interpretation of media education" that takes into account the depth of penetration of media channels and the media environment into modern culture and everyday life, thus interpreting media education as "training and education means of media and/or in the field of media through the process of communication in order to form of general cultural and professional competencies, value guidelines, information culture of the individual, development of his intellectual and creative potential" (Kuptsova, Vladimirova, 2024: 59). Therefore, I.A. Kuptsova and T.N. Vladimirova consider media education as a means of forming value guidelines and intellectual and creative potential of an individual (Kuptsova, Vladimirova, 2024).

A number of current Russian scientific findings (Gorbatkova et al., 2021; Novikov, Fedorov, 2022) focus on combating media manipulation in response to the growing influence of digital media and its persuasive and deceptive communication practices. In this context, media education seeks to equip learners with the critical competencies necessary to navigate this complex media landscape, thus fostering their informed judgment, democratic participation, and social resilience. It is also worth mentioning the present-day research studies devoted to protecting children and youth from media violence and aggression (Chelysheva, 2011; Fedorov, 2015).

The life-long or continuous concept of media education is also emphasized in Russian contemporary studies (Akmanova et al., 2019) since it incorporates developing people's critical thinking skills and helps individuals recognize misinformation, manipulation, and commercial or ideological interests behind media messages. At the same time, it encourages their active participation in media culture, enabling people to express themselves, communicate effectively, and engage in democratic processes. The Russian scholars researching integrated and optional (extracurricular) media education highlight its complementary potential within the education system. Integrated media education refers to the continuous incorporation of media-related competencies into regular subject teaching and everyday school or university practice, whereas optional or extracurricular media studies take place outside compulsory education, for example, in clubs, workshops, project weeks, or voluntary courses (Arbuzova, Fortus, 2023; Bobrovnitskaya, 2017; Bondarenko, Gudilina, 2016; Chelysheva, Mysheva, 2021).

Meanwhile, scientific researches on inclusive media education (Shalagina, 2024; Voronova, Kravets, 2020) show that effective media education must go beyond technical media skills and address the questions of social and cultural equity, representation, access, and participation: such studies in media pedagogy and educational sciences consistently emphasize that inclusion in media education involves both *who* participates and *how* media are taught, used, and critically examined. Thus, inclusive media education is understood as an approach that enables learners with diverse social, cultural, linguistic, and physical backgrounds to access media, reflect on media production, and actively contribute to media culture.

Unfortunately, we cannot but agree with professor A. Fedorov, that "media education in Russia has not progressed from an experimental stage to a widespread practical implementation yet. This requires consolidating pedagogical universities, journalism faculties, experimental media educators, and the media community, as well as coordinated interactions between government agencies, existing media education centers, and experimental platforms in this field" (Fedorov, 2009: 20).

4. Results

Institutionally, Russian media education is embedded within universities, pedagogical institutes (Chelysheva, Mikhaleva, 2022), and research centers, most notably in faculties of education, journalism, and communication. Leading universities have incorporated media education into bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, thus combining theoretical coursework with practical training in journalism, audiovisual production, and digital media technologies. In recent years, curricula have increasingly reflected global transformations in the media environment, including digitalization, convergence, and the rise of social media platforms. This shift demonstrates Russia's participation in the broader global movement toward integrating digital competencies and multimedia skills into media education.

Analysing the current trends in media and information literacy in research and scientific publications of the 21st century A. Fedorov and G. Mikhaleva define the following leading directions in the scientific studies devoted to media education: "major function of media and information literacy is to provide access to information and knowledge and promote free, independent and pluralistic mediated social environments (UNESCO); media literacy as a vital, survival skill for an individual; minimizing online risks and expanding online opportunities in media literacy education; information or digital literacy in the educational and professional contexts; focus on studying human behaviour in social computer-mediated interactions and challenges of global cross-cultural communication; promoting people's media and information literacy for active social change; media literacy and digital literacy as critical instruments against various online risks and manipulations; media and information literacy integrated into the school curriculum and university syllabus; media literacy education aimed at students' applying their critical thinking skills to media messages and creating media texts; focus on media language and representation

analysis in media and film studies; national peculiarities of promoting media and information literacy in different countries; international media literacy based on the effective strategies used in different cultures" (Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020: 153).

On the international stage, Russian media education has achieved visibility through scholarly publications, conference participation, and cross-border academic collaboration. Russian researchers are contributing to international debates on media literacy, comparative media education, and media pedagogy, and their work is being cited within global academic networks. On the other hand, although Russian media educators regularly participate in global academic exchanges, their integration into international research and educational networks has recently become limited: reduced academic mobility, fewer joint programs, and restricted access to international funding and platforms unfortunately hinder cross-cultural dialogue and comparative research. Consequently, Russian media education risks becoming more inward-looking, which may slow theoretical innovation and methodological renewal.

R.V. Salny points out in his article the following trends in present-day Russian media education:

– Integrated media education (use of media education technologies within school and university courses; art-historical and cultural approach promoting the creative development of students' personalities; systematic training of learners within integrated media education using interdisciplinary, activity-based, and competence-based approaches; master's programs adapted to the training of specialists in media and information literacy; media education integration school and university subjects at all levels, elective media studies);

– Project-based media education activities (student media outlets; film festivals; Internet projects or electronic educational resources; digital media projects);

– The convergence of journalism and media education leading to the formation of media criticism as an element of pedagogy;

– Contemporary media education is developing within two models: pedagogical and journalistic (Salny, 2020).

A distinctive feature of contemporary Russian media education is its dual orientation toward critical analysis and media production. While critical media literacy aims to develop students' ability to interpret and evaluate media messages, practical training emphasizes professional skills required in journalism, broadcasting, and creating digital content (Zhilavskaya, 2021). This balance corresponds to global educational models that seek to combine analytical and creative competencies.

On the other hand, modern Russian media education faces a range of interrelated problems and challenges that reflect broader transformations in the media environment, higher education system, and socio-political conditions. For instance, one of the challenges of Russian media education is the uneven integration of media education across educational levels and regions. While leading universities and major urban centers offer well-developed media education programs, access to high-quality media education still remains limited in many regional institutions and secondary schools: "today an insufficient attention is paid to the problem of media literacy and media education at the school level" (Bykov, Medvedeva, 2020: 393). This disparity results in an unequal distribution of media literacy skills and competencies, reinforcing broader social and educational inequalities. The lack of a unified national strategy for media education further exacerbates this problem, thus leading to fragmented curricula and inconsistent learning outcomes.

During the last twenty-five years Russian media education has become more value-oriented as media has become one of the major environments in which human values, attitudes, and behavioural models are formed. That is why its purpose is not only to develop people's media literacy and critical thinking, but also to guide them toward socially significant values through conscious and reflective interaction with media content. Within this approach, civic, patriotic, moral, and family education are closely interconnected and reinforced through contemporary media analysis, interpretation, and creation (Chelysheva, 2023; Gritsai, 2025; Mikhaleva, 2021).

Technological challenges also play a critical role in shaping contemporary Russian media education. The rapid pace of digital transformation requires constant updating of curricula, teaching methods, and technical infrastructure. Besides, many educational institutions face shortages of modern equipment, software, and qualified personnel capable of teaching advanced digital media skills. As a result, media education programs may lag behind the realities of the contemporary media industry and global technological trends.

In addition to infrastructural issues, there is a methodological challenge related to balancing theory and practice (Gavrilov, 2023). Russian media education has a strong theoretical foundation, particularly in cultural and aesthetic approaches to media analysis. However, the translation of theoretical knowledge into practical competencies is not always effective. Students may receive extensive training in media theory without sufficient opportunities for hands-on experimentation, collaborative projects (Snegireva, Isakova, 2021), and engagement with real-world media environments. This imbalance can reduce graduates' competitiveness in both domestic and international media labour markets.

Finally, there is a broader societal challenge related to public perceptions of media education. Media literacy has often been undervalued outside academic circles and not always recognized as a vital civic competence: this may limit institutional support and public investment in media education initiatives, particularly at the school and community levels. Without a strong societal demand for media literacy, the transformative potential of media education in fostering informed, critically engaged citizens may remain underrealized.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, modern Russian studies highlight the growing importance of media education in addressing urgent social issues, including media manipulation, misinformation, digital aggression, and inequality of access to media resources. Special attention is paid to continuous, integrated, extracurricular, and inclusive models of media education, which expand its pedagogical potential and adapt it to diverse educational contexts and learners' needs. However, despite the theoretical richness and methodological diversity of Russian media education research, scholars note persistent difficulties in its large-scale practical implementation.

Overall, contemporary Russian media education can be characterized as a dynamic and complex system that combines strong scholarly traditions with global integration: it contributes original theoretical perspectives and pedagogical models to international media education discourse while simultaneously adapting to global technological and educational trends. Its future role on the global scale will largely depend on the extent to which it can expand international collaboration, enhance academic openness, and respond flexibly to the rapidly changing world's media landscape. The challenges of contemporary Russian media education stem from a complicated interplay of political, institutional, technological, and cultural factors. Therefore, addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, increased investment in digital infrastructure, methodological modernization, and greater openness to international collaboration. Only under such conditions can Russian media education strengthen its role both nationally and within the global media education landscape.

6. Acknowledgements

This research is funded by the grant of the Russian Science Foundation (RSF, project No. 25-28-02450, https://rscf.ru/project/25-28-02450/) at the Rostov State University of Economics. Project theme: "Strategies for the Development of Contemporary Russian Media Education". Head of the project is G. V. Mikhaleva.

References

Akmanova et al., 2019 – *Akmanova, S.V., Kurzaeva, L.V., Kopylova, N.A.* (2019). Dinamicheskiy i kompetentnostnyy aspekty mediaobrazovatel'noy kontseptsii razvitiya gotovnosti lichnosti k samoobucheniyu v techeniye vsey zhizni [Dynamic and competence aspects of the media educational concept of developing an individual's readiness for self-learning throughout life]. *Informatika i obrazovaniye*. 2(301): 23-33. DOI: 10.32517/0234-0453-2019-34-2-23-33 [in Russian]

Arbuzova, Fortus, 2023 – *Arbuzova, Ye.N., Fortus, A.V.* (2023). Proyektirovaniye modeli metodiki integrirovannogo mediaobrazovaniya v kurse biologii s tsel'yu razvitiya funktsional'noy gramotnosti studentov srednego professional'nogo obrazovaniya [Designing a model of integrated media education methodology in a biology course to develop functional literacy of students of secondary vocational education]. *Biznes. Obrazovaniye. Pravo.* 3(64): 363-367. DOI: 10.25683/VOLBI.2023.64.701 [in Russian]

Bobrovnitskaya, 2017 – *Bobrovnitskaya, V.Yu.* (2017). Mediaobrazovaniye v uchrezhdenii dopolnitel'nogo obrazovaniya [Media education in an institution of supplementary education]. *Znak: problemnoye pole mediaobrazovaniya*. 1(23): 35-39. [in Russian]

Bondarenko, Gudilina, 2016 – *Bondarenko, E.A., Gudilina, S.I.* (2016). Shagi v mediasrede: O vnedrenii integrirovannogo mediaobrazovaniya [Steps in the media environment: On the implementation of integrated media education]. *Media. Informatsiya. Kommunikatsiya*. 19: 110-116. [in Russian]

Bykov, Medvedeva, 2020 – *Bykov, I.A., Medvedeva, M.* (2020). Media literacy in the system of the secondary education in Russia. *Espacios*. 41(48): 393-401. DOI: 10.48082/espacios-a20v41n48p29

Chelysheva, 2023 – *Chelysheva, I.V.* (2023). Podgotovka budushchikh pedagogov-psikhologov k organizatsii patrioticheskogo vospitaniya sredstvami mediaobrazovaniya [Training future educational psychologists to organize patriotic education by means of media education]. Moscow. DOI: 10.23681/705129 [in Russian]

Chelysheva, Mysheva, 2021 – *Chelysheva, I.V., Mysheva, T.P.* (2021). Organizatsiya vneurochnoy deyatel'nosti shkol'nikov v mediaobrazovatel'nom i muzeyevedcheskom kontekste [Organization of extracurricular activities of schoolchildren in the media educational and museological context]. Moscow-Berlin. DOI: 10.23681/616112 [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2009 – *Fedorov, A.* (2009). Sovremennoye massovoye mediaobrazovaniye v Rossii: poiski novykh teoreticheskikh kontseptsiy i modeley [Modern mass media education in Russia: the search for new theoretical concepts and models]. *Innovatsii v obrazovanii*. 9: 4-24. [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2015 – *Fedorov, A.* (2015). Critical analysis of media violence text on the media education lessons. *European Researcher*. 6(95): 442-450. DOI: 10.13187/er.2015.95.442

Fedorov, 2021 – *Fedorov, A.* (2021). Mediaobrazovanie: istoria i teoria [Media education: history and theory]. Moscow-Berlin. DOI: 10.23681/610938 [in Russian]

Fedorov, Mikhaleva, 2020 – *Fedorov, A., Mikhaleva, G.* (2020). Current trends in media and information literacy in research and scientific publications of the early 21st century. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. 5(2): 153-163. DOI: 10.13187/ijmil.2020.2.153

Fedyanina, 2022 – *Fedyanina, G.S.* (2022). Mesto i rol' mediaobrazovaniya v sovremennom mire [Place and role of media education in the modern world]. *Vestnik Kyrgyzsko-Rossiyskogo Slavyanskogo universiteta*. 22(2): 125-128. DOI: 10.36979/1694-500X-2022-22-2-125-128 [in Russian]

Gáliková Tolnaiová, Gálik, 2020 – *Gáliková Tolnaiová, S.*, Gálik, S. (2020). Cyberspace as a new living world and its axiological contexts. In: Abu-Taieh, E., Mouatasim, A., Al Hadid, I.H. (eds.). *Cyberspace*. London: 39-52.

Gavrilov, 2023 – *Gavrilov, V.V.* (2023). Klyuchevyye problemy i tendentsii razvitiya sovremennogo massovogo mediaobrazovaniya (na osnove izucheniya mneniya predstaviteley mediasoobshchestva Ural'skogo federal'nogo okruga) [Key problems and trends in the development of modern mass media education (based on a study of the opinions of representatives of the media community of the Ural Federal District)]. *Vestnik Surgutskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta*. 5(86): 174-183. DOI: 10.26105/SSPU.2023.86.5.018. [in Russian]

Gorbatkova et al., 2021 – *Gorbatkova, O., Kochergina, O., Kiryushina, O.* (2021). Digital environment as effective pedagogical tool of socialization in the context of modern education. *14th International Scientific and Practical Conference on State and Prospects for the Development of Agribusiness*. Rostov on Don. DOI: 10.1051/e3sconf/202127312087

Gritsai, 2025 – *Gritsai, L.A.* (2025). Rol' mediaobrazovaniya v formirovanii semeynykh vospitatel'nykh tsennostey [The role of media education in the formation of family educational values]. *Znak: problemnoye pole mediaobrazovaniya*. 1(55): 17-28. DOI: 10.47475/2070-0695-2025-55-1-17-28 [in Russian]

Kuptsova, Vladimirova, 2024 – *Kuptsova, I.A., Vladimirova, T.N.* (2024). Mediaobrazovaniye kak sredstvo formirovaniya tsennostnykh oriyentirov i intellektual'no-tvorcheskogo potentsiala lichnosti [Media education as a means of formation of value orientations and intellectual and creative potential of the personality]. *Nauka i shkola*. 3: 55-64. DOI: 10.31862/1819-463X-2024-3-55-64 [in Russian]

Kuptsova, Vladimirova, 2024 – *Kuptsova, I.A., Vladimirova, T.N.* (2024). Mediaobrazovaniye kak sredstvo formirovaniya tsennostnykh oriyentirov i intellektual'no-tvorcheskogo potentsiala lichnosti [Media education as a means of forming value guidelines and intellectual and creative potential of an individual]. *Nauka i shkola*. 3: 55-64. DOI: 10.31862/1819-463X-2024-3-55-64 [in Russian]

Mikhaleva, 2021 – *Mikhaleva, G.V.* (2021). Vospitaniye grazhdanskoy aktivnosti i patriotizma sredstvami kinoobrazovaniya: programma uchebnogo kursa dlya studentov vuzov [Fostering civic engagement and patriotism through film education: a curriculum for university students]. *Bulletin of the International Centre of Art and Education*. 5: 267-275. [in Russian]

Novikov, Fedorov, 2022 – *Novikov, A., Fedorov, A.* (2022). Russian Topic on BBC and Media Manipulations. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. 7(1): 179-189. DOI: 10.13187/ijmil.2022.1.179

Salny, 2020 – *Salny, R.V.* (2020). Mediaobrazovaniye v Rossii: sovremennyye tendentsii (2018-2020) [Media education in Russia: current trends (2018-2020)]. *Crede Experto: transport, society, education, language*. 2: 89-121. [in Russian]

Shalagina, 2024 – *Shalagina, E.V.* (2024). Osobennosti ispol'zovaniya resursov mediaobrazovaniya v usloviyakh inklyuzivnoy shkoly: predstavleniya roditeley detey s ogranichennymi vozmozhnostyami zdorov'ya (po rezul'tatam prikladnogo sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniya) [Features of the use of media education resources in the context of an inclusive school: views of parents of children with disabilities (based on the results of an applied sociological study)]. *Obshchestvo. Sreda. Razvitiye*. 3 (72): 26-33. DOI: 10.53115/19975996_2024_03_026_034 [in Russian]

Simbirtseva, 2018 – *Simbirtseva, N.A.* (2018). Mediapedagogika kak prioritetnoye napravleniye sovremennogo obrazovaniya [Media pedagogy as a priority direction of modern education]. *Pedagogicheskoye obrazovaniye v Rossii*. 5: 21-26. DOI: 10.26170/po18-05-03 [in Russian]

Snegireva, Isakova, 2021 – *Snegireva, M.V., Isakova, M.V.* (2021). Regional'nyye mediaobrazovatel'nyye proyekty: aktul'nyye problemy raboty s raznovozrastnoy i mnogonatsional'noy auditoriyey [Regional media education projects: current issues of working with mixed-age and multinational audiences]. *Vestnik Volzhskogo universiteta im. V.N. Tatishcheva*. 2(35): 170-182. DOI: 10.51965/2076-7919_2021_2_2_170 [in Russian]

Vartanova, et al., 2021 – *Vartanova, E.L., Vikhrova, O.Yu., Samorodova, E.V.* (2021). Media literacy as a condition for overcoming the digital divide in the Russian Federation. *Mediascope*. 1. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.mediascope.ru/2679. DOI: 10.30547/mediascope.1.2021.1

Voronova, Kravets, 2020 – *Voronova, A.A., Kravets, K.K.* (2020). Model' formirovaniya mediagramotnosti u obuchayushchikhsya v usloviyakh inklyuzivnogo obrazovaniya [Model of formation of media literacy of students in the context of inclusive education]. *Nauchno-metodicheskiy elektronnyy zhurnal "Kontsept"*. 5: 146-157. DOI: 10.24411/2304-120X-2020-11040 [in Russian]

Zhilavskaya, 2021 – *Zhilavskaya, I.V.* (2021). Sistemnyye i institutsional'nyye transformatsii rossiyskogo mediaobrazovaniya [Systemic and institutional transformations of Russian media education]. Moscow. DOI: 10.31862/9785426310438 [in Russian]

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 138-149

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.138
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Fake News Management Policy in Russia: Lessons for Vietnam in Integrating State Governance, Platform Responsibility and Media Literacy

Van Thieu Nguyen [a, *]

[a] Thang Long University, Vietnam

Abstract

The article compares the policies for managing "fake news" in the Russian Federation and Vietnam in the context of the digital age. It aims to analyze the legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and policy effectiveness of both countries, thereby drawing relevant lessons for Vietnam. The study employs a document-synthesis and policy-comparison method: the author reviews key legal documents (Russia: *Law 31-FZ* and subsequent amendments; Vietnam: *Decree 15/2020* and *Decree 147/2024*), reports from international organizations, and academic literature on misinformation and disinformation. It also draws on other studies and case analyses related to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent information crises to illustrate how regulatory tools were applied in practice. The findings reveal that both Russia and Vietnam rely primarily on state-led instruments to address fake news, but with varying intensities. Russia prioritizes criminal sanctions, rapid content removal, and strong intervention by Roskomnadzor, while Vietnam combines administrative penalties with platform governance requirements, data-handling obligations, and cross-platform coordination, resulting in distinct implications for press freedom. The paper concludes with policy recommendations aimed at balancing the mitigation of fake news with the protection of freedom of expression, emphasizing that regulatory approaches must be complemented by media literacy education to ensure long-term societal resilience.

Keywords: fake news, fake news management, disinformation, misinformation, Federal Law No. 31-FZ, media literacy, Decree 15/2020/ND-CP, freedom of expression, media education.

1. Introduction

In the digital age, fake news has become a global challenge for both the media sector and state governance. Fake news is not merely inaccurate information; it is often deliberately crafted to manipulate public perceptions, undermine trust, or disrupt social order (Wardle, Derakhshan, 2017). During times of crisis-such as the COVID-19 pandemic-it has contributed significantly to what the WHO describes as a global "infodemic" (Nguyen, 2020; Quach, 2022; WHO, 2020).

In response, many countries have introduced various measures to curb the spread of fake news. Yet fake-news governance requires a delicate balance: protecting public interests and maintaining social stability without disproportionately infringing on freedom of expression and the right to access information (Le, 2022). For instance, France and Germany have enacted laws obliging social media platforms to remove false content within a specified timeframe (Vese, 2022). Russia adopted its anti-fake-news law in 2019, while several Southeast Asian countries have also tightened regulation of online content. However, the approach and degree of state intervention differ across countries, reflecting their political institutions and regulatory philosophies.

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: thieunv@thanglong.edu.vn (V.T. Nguyen)

Against this backdrop, the author examines the regulatory approaches of the Russian Federation and Vietnam as two representative case studies of state responses to fake news from the perspective of media governance and public administration. In Russia, *Federal Law No. 31-FZ* 2019 enhances criminal liability for disseminating false information and authorizes the media regulator, Roskomnadzor, to block access to online content deemed harmful (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2022). Since 2022, Russia has gone further by criminalizing the dissemination of what it defines as "fake news" about military operations, with penalties reaching up to 15 years in prison (Sherstoboeva, 2024).

In Vietnam, the spread of fake news on social media platforms has also become increasingly complex. Forms of misinformation vary widely-from rumors about epidemics to fabricated reports concerning natural disasters or state policies. To address this issue, the Vietnamese government has introduced several regulatory measures, including *Decree 15/2020/ND-CP*, which stipulates administrative fines for individuals and organizations that produce or share false information online (Nguyen et al., 2022). In addition, Vietnam has enacted the 2018 *Cybersecurity Law*, alongside regulations governing the use of internet services and responsibilities of digital platforms in moderating harmful content (Nguyen, 2023).

In contrast to many Western countries-where the governance of fake news tends to rely on platform self-regulation and efforts to improve public media literacy-both Russia and Vietnam adopt approaches that are predominantly state-directed. A comparative examination of the fake-news management policies in these two countries therefore provides useful insights into how different political systems conceptualize and respond to the same problem. Identifying their points of convergence and divergence helps illuminate the strengths and limitations of each model, thereby offering practical lessons for Vietnam as it continues to refine its legal framework and policy measures for managing online information.

Although both Russia and Vietnam have acknowledged the harmful effects of fake news and have implemented strict management measures, several issues still require further examination. First, fake news continues to proliferate despite regulatory efforts. In Russia, shortly after the 2019 anti-fake news law came into effect, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, triggering an explosion of rumors: in April 2020 alone, Russian authorities recorded at least 3,701 fake news items related to COVID-19 on the Russian Internet (Pravo.ru, 2020). Fabricated information surrounding disasters has also had serious consequences-for example, false reports about the 2018 Kemerovo shopping mall fire and the late-2018 Magnitogorsk explosion caused widespread public panic, prompting authorities to tighten legal controls (Samorodova, 2020).

In Vietnam, fabricated and distorted information circulates widely on social media, ranging from minor incidents (e.g., false rumors about personal lives or unsafe food) to major events (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, political matters). During the 2023 flood, several individuals spread rumors about broken dikes, causing public alarm and forcing the police to intervene within 1-2 days (Trong, Minh, 2024).

Clearly, fake news remains a persistent problem that has not been thoroughly addressed, necessitating an analysis of why current policies have not achieved optimal effectiveness.

Russian and Vietnamese laws share a common feature: both grant significant power to the state in controlling online content. However, the question remains whether these regulations are sufficiently clear and practical. For instance, Russian law provides a relatively specific definition of "unreliable news"-information associated with risks to life, security, and public order (Samorodova, 2020). In contrast, Vietnamese law employs general terms such as "fake" or "untrue information" without detailing the degree of falsity or the contextual factors involved. This raises concerns about the criteria used to identify fake news and the distinction between false information and sensitive or counter-narrative content.

Moreover, the effectiveness of enforcement among agencies responsible for combating fake news varies. Russia has Roskomnadzor, which can monitor and block websites rapidly (Dairbekov, Barata, 2019), whereas Vietnam primarily requires social media platforms to remove violating posts within 24 hours under *the Cybersecurity Law* or imposes administrative fines on individuals who circulate such information. The level of coordination between agencies-such as the police, information and communications authorities, and network operators-also affects the overall effectiveness of efforts to counter fake news.

This study examines these issues to identify gaps and challenges in policy implementation in both countries. In summary, the research focuses on:

(1) the current status and limitations of legal policies on fake news management in Russia and Vietnam;

(2) the fundamental differences between the approaches adopted by the two countries; and

(3) lessons that Vietnam can draw to strengthen its efforts to combat fake news in cyberspace.

2. Materials and methods

In communication and information-management research, "fake news" is generally understood as false or misleading information. However, scholars emphasize the importance of distinguishing among misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (Broda, Strömbäck, 2023). In this sense, fake news may involve entirely fabricated content or information that blends truth with falsehood in order to deceive the public (Lazer et al., 2018). Although widely used, the term lacks a unified definition in the academic community. This conceptual ambiguity can be problematic: when "fake news" is defined too broadly, state authorities may exercise discretionary power over the flow of information, potentially infringing upon freedom of expression and press freedom (Altay et al., 2023). A clear and coherent theoretical framework is therefore essential for designing effective governance policies.

Another theoretical perspective treats fake news as an information-security threat, given that misinformation and disinformation can influence state institutions and society at large-not only by shaping policy outcomes but also by eroding public trust (Silva, Vaz, 2024). From this viewpoint, some countries seek to regulate digital infrastructure, platforms, and online content through measures such as access blocking, local data storage requirements, and content-monitoring mechanisms. Fake-news governance can thus be understood within a broader platform-governance paradigm that includes three main options: self-regulation, state regulation, and media-literacy-based approaches (Vese, 2021). Among the factors, media literacy plays an important role in reducing the impact of misinformation by enhancing users' ability to evaluate information (Potter, 2022; Rivotella, 2020). Research on internet governance in the post-truth era further demonstrates that governments must determine "who is responsible" for online information-users, platforms, or the state-and what degree of regulatory intervention is appropriate (Horne, 2021). The choice of approach varies depending on each country's social and political system.

Drawing on the theoretical discussions above, this article proposes an analytical framework consisting of five key components. First, the definition and classification of fake news are examined based on purpose, form, and level of harm, allowing for a more precise understanding of different types of misleading information. Second, platform self-regulation is considered, focusing on the internal governance mechanisms adopted by social media companies. Third, state regulation refers to legal, administrative, and technical measures used by governments to control harmful content and maintain information security. Fourth, public education and media literacy emphasize the role of enhancing citizens' abilities to identify, interpret, and critically evaluate online information. Finally, policy implementation and effectiveness assessment address the capacity of institutions to detect, respond to, and mitigate the spread of fake news.

This analytical framework highlights the importance of achieving an appropriate balance between protecting the public from harmful misinformation and ensuring that measures taken do not unduly restrict freedom of expression within society.

The article employs a qualitative document analysis methodology. First, the author examines legal documents related to fake news management in Russia and Vietnam, such as Russia's *Federal Law No. 31-FZ* of 2019 and subsequent amendments in 2020 and 2022, as well as Vietnam's *Decree 15/2020/ND-CP* and the 2018 *Cybersecurity Law*. These documents are analyzed to clarify the legal definitions, regulatory scope, authorities responsible for enforcement, and the sanctions applied to fake news within each legal system.

Next, the study synthesizes materials from academic sources and reputable reports, including scholarly articles, theses, and monographs in Russian, Vietnamese, and English. For example, an article in *Mediascope* provides an academic perspective on anti-fake news legislation in Russia and internationally; an ISEAS report highlights how "anti-fake news" measures have been used as tools for censorship in several Asian countries; and related analyses are presented in the *Vietnam Law Journal*. In addition, the author incorporates statistical data-such as the number of penalties issued for fake news and notable cases reported by credible organizations-to support the analysis.

A comparative method is then applied to assess the management approaches in the two countries, identifying similarities and differences in the definition of fake news, enforcement mechanisms, and the political contexts influencing legal implementation. Based on these analyses, the article offers observations and policy recommendations for Vietnam.

3. Discussion

Russia's fake news management policy is considered based on different criteria such as: Legal framework and definitions, Sanctions and enforcement mechanisms and Effectiveness.

Legal framework and definitions: The Russian Federation officially enacted its anti-fake news legislation on March 18, 2019, through two related laws: *Federal Law No. 31-FZ* amending *the law on Information, Information Technologies, and Information Protection*", and *Federal Law No. 27-FZ* amending *the Code of Administrative Offenses* (Samorodova, 2020). *Federal Law No. 31-FZ*-commonly referred to as the Fake news Law-grants the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) the authority to restrict access to online content deemed "unreliable" information (Pollicino, 2019). The law provides a clear definition of "unreliable news" as false information about a socially significant event, presented as factual news, that is capable of causing harm to human life, health, or property; provoking wide-scale public disorder; or obstructing the functioning of critical infrastructure, including transportation, energy, finance, and telecommunications systems (Samorodova, 2020). This definition emphasizes the element of public danger, thereby distinguishing serious forms of harmful misinformation from ordinary false news.

Sanctions and enforcement mechanisms: First, Roskomnadzor has the authority to demand the removal of fake news. If the violating website does not comply within 24 hours, the agency can order that the site be blocked throughout Russia (VOV, 2019). The procedure operates as follows: once a violation is detected, Roskomnadzor notifies the editorial board of the website that the unlawful information must be deleted. After receiving the notice, the website is obligated to remove the unreliable content. If it fails to do so, Roskomnadzor instructs internet service providers to restrict access to the site. Second, administrative fines are imposed on individuals and organizations that disseminate fake news. Individuals may be fined between 30,000 and 100,000 rubles; public officials between 60,000 and 200,000 rubles; and organizations between 200,000 and 500,000 rubles (Duma..., 2019). These penalties are considered sufficiently deterrent and are designed primarily to prevent the spread of fake news in a timely manner rather than punish media outlets. As a result, the central objective is to block harmful information before it circulates widely and causes public panic (Andrey, 2019).

After 2019, Russia continued to amend its legislation to address fake news in exceptional circumstances. In April 2020, amid a surge of COVID-19-related misinformation, Russia introduced Articles 207.1 and 207.2 to *the Criminal Code*, establishing criminal liability for spreading false information about emergency situations that endanger life and health. Under these provisions, individuals disseminating fake news about epidemics that result in serious consequences may face up to three years of imprisonment, or up to five years if the consequences are particularly severe (Duma..., 2025). This criminalization reflects the high priority the Russian government places on preventing fake news, especially misinformation deemed to threaten public health and public security.

Effectiveness: The promulgation of the 2019 fake news law has had a noticeable social impact. Statistics show that the number of mentions of the phrase "fake news" in the Russian mainstream press increased 13.5 times on the day following the law's passage, indicating that the issue immediately became a focal point of public discourse (Samorodova, 2020). A 2018 survey by VCIOM (the Russian Public Opinion Research Center) reported that 83 % of respondents supported the initiative to introduce an anti-fake news law, and more than half expected the legislation to help reduce misinformation in the media (VCIOM, 2019). These findings suggest broad public approval of state efforts to foster a healthier online information environment. In terms of enforcement, Roskomnadzor has acted actively, compiling a list of websites that repeatedly disseminate fake news. According to a June 2020 report, the Russian government had sanctioned dozens of violations and blocked multiple pieces of misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, an individual in Moscow was criminally prosecuted for spreading false information about the number of COVID-19 deaths at a local hospital, and a YouTube channel promoting conspiracy theories about the virus was also removed (Pravo.ru,

2020). However, Russia's fake news policy has also faced criticism from human rights organizations. *The Russian Presidential Human Rights Council* (HRC) sent a letter to *the Federation Council* opposing the bill, arguing that it "restricts the constitutional right to freedom of speech" (Interfax, 2019).

Meanwhile, fake news in Vietnam is defined and managed in a way that reflects the country's specific political and social characteristics.

Legal framework and definition: Under Vietnamese law, fake news is defined as information that is partially or entirely false compared with the truth, created by one or more individuals to serve specific purposes or intentions (Government of Vietnam, 2024). The management of false information on the Internet is regulated through various legal documents, the most prominent of which are *Decree 15/2020/ND-CP* (effective April 15, 2020) and *Decree 14/2022/ND-CP*, which amends and supplements several provisions of Decree 15 and has been in effect since 2022. *Decree 15/2020* establishes administrative sanctions for violations in the fields of postal services, telecommunications, and information technology. Accordingly, providing or sharing fake or false information; distorting or slandering; or insulting the reputation of agencies and organizations, as well as the honor and dignity of individuals, results in fines ranging from VND 10 million to VND 20 million for individuals, with organizational fines typically doubled (up to VND 40 million). The Decree also requires violators to remove illegal content they have posted (Government of Vietnam, 2020). In addition, it sets penalties for disseminating information that causes public panic, incites violence, or promotes social evils. The issuance of *Decree 14/2022/ND-CP* demonstrates the Vietnamese government's intention to strengthen its response to online violations, including fake news. Under this Decree, fines between VND 300 million and VND 400 million may be imposed for posting or distributing distorted or fabricated information that causes confusion among the public (Government of Vietnam, 2022). Beyond Decree 15, Vietnam has several other legal documents that indirectly address the issue of fake news. The 2018 *Law on Cybersecurity* prohibits the dissemination of information that is "distorted or untrue, causing public confusion; damaging socio-economic activities; or creating difficulties for state agencies." The law authorizes *the Ministry of Public Security* to request service providers, such as Facebook and Google to remove violating content and provide user data for investigative purposes (Vietnam National Assembly, 2018). The growth of social media has significantly accelerated the spread of misinformation in cyberspace (Magin et al., 2022). Beginning December 25, 2024, Vietnam will implement *Decree 147/2024/ND-CP* on the management, provision, and use of Internet services and online information. The decree introduces several notable new provisions, including: (i) requiring online platforms to remove infringing content within a short timeframe-typically 24 hours-upon request from competent authorities; (ii) regulations on account verification and enhanced obligations for storing and providing data for state management; (iii) mechanisms for permanently locking accounts, groups, or channels in cases of serious violations; and (iv) clearer responsibilities for coordination between platform operators and regulatory agencies (Government of Vietnam, 2024).

From an anti-fake news policy perspective, *Decree 147/2024* represents a shift from primarily penalizing individual users (Government of Vietnam, 2020) to strengthening platforms' obligations in "content management," such as content removal, account blocking, and data provision. This shift enhances the state's ability to control large-scale misinformation and shortens the response time for addressing harmful online content.

Enforcement and effectiveness: Recently, Vietnam has intensified the monitoring and handling of false information on digital platforms. In Quang Ninh, authorities detected and addressed nearly 80 cases of individuals posting false information about the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in total fines exceeding VND 200 million (Quang Ninh Newspaper, 2021).

In Ninh Binh, during the first six months of 2025, the Department of Culture and Sports, in coordination with relevant agencies, reviewed and requested the removal of nearly 100 false articles and videos circulating on social networks (Ninh Binh..., 2025). As of December 2024, *the Vietnam Fake News Handling Center* (VAFC) had received 1,378 complaints, 591 of which involved toxic content (Department of Radio, Television and Electronic Information, 2025).

In addition to imposing sanctions on individuals, Vietnam has required social media platforms to cooperate in the removal of fake news. Official statistics indicate that in 2022 alone, Facebook blocked or removed 2,751 posts identified as false news, anti-Party, anti-State, or defamatory toward individuals and organizations; YouTube removed 7,935 videos; and TikTok

deleted hundreds of videos and accounts. Furthermore, Force 47 under *the Ministry of National Defense*, along with cyber security units, actively monitored, detected, and promptly prevented the dissemination of harmful and toxic information (Committee to Protect journalists, 2023).

Table 1. Comparison table of fake news management models between the Russian Federation and Vietnam

Criteria	Russian Federation	Vietnam
Legal framework	A strict legal system with heavy penalties: Law 31-FZ and amendments. High levels of administrative and criminal sanctions.	A rapidly expanding and updated legal framework: Decree 15/2020, Decree 53/2022, Decree 147/2024/ND-CP. Clear classification of administrative vs. criminal violations and enforcement authority.
Policy approach	Security-oriented - information control, focusing on removing content that affects government agencies, political issues, or "social stability"	A combined approach of management - education - platform cooperation. Aims to reduce harmful information, protect users, and enhance cybersecurity.
Role of social media platforms	Platforms are required to place servers/representative offices in Russia; rapid content removal requirements; policies for sharing/handing over user data.	Vietnam has achieved a 90-95% cooperation rate with Facebook, TikTok, Google during 2023-2024; no requirement yet for data localization under Decree 53/2022.
Penalties	Heavy punishments (including imprisonment and large administrative fines). Some scholars warn of risks of "overblocking" and limited freedom of expression.	Penalties expanded under Decree 15/2020 & 147/2024; administrative sanctions prioritized but with clear provisions for special cases.
Cooperation in combating misinformation	Limited due to tensions with Western countries; policies on "information sovereignty" reduce the scope for international cooperation.	Actively participates in ASEAN, APAC, EU, WHO, UNESCO forums on combating misinformation.
Effectiveness	Controls harmful content but is evaluated by the international community as restrictive of freedom of speech.	Vietnamese data shows improvement in handling, reducing harmful content, but challenges remain due to limited resources.

4. Results

Level of state intervention and legal framework: Both Russia and Vietnam follow a model of active state intervention in controlling fake news, treating it as a core task of state information security management. However, Russia's legal framework is more detailed and stringent, featuring a dedicated anti-fake news law that clearly defines violations and prescribes sanctions, including criminal penalties. In contrast, Vietnam does not have a standalone law on fake news; instead, it regulates false information primarily through administrative decrees integrated into other legal instruments, with fines imposed on individuals and organizations. Vietnam has not criminalized the independent act of spreading fake news, and serious cases are often prosecuted under other offenses, such as slander or sabotage. This comparison suggests that Vietnam could benefit from developing a comprehensive and clearly articulated legal framework to reduce overlap and ambiguity. Specifically, Vietnam might consider creating a dedicated law or specialized legal document on fake news that clearly identifies particularly dangerous types-such as content threatening public safety or distorting state policies-similar to the Russian approach. A precise definition would make enforcement more transparent and predictable. At the same time, care should be taken to avoid overly broad definitions, which could inadvertently turn anti-fake news policies into tools of censorship. To achieve this balance, Vietnam could draw on the expertise of domestic and international media specialists and legal scholars. At the same time, it is necessary to

balance regulatory intervention with the development of digital literacy among citizens (Buckingham et al., 2021).

Censorship and content removal mechanism: In Russia, the government agency Roskomnadzor has the authority to rapidly block access to websites that disseminate fake news. In Vietnam, by contrast, the primary mechanism relies on requesting social media platforms to remove or restrict access to offending content. Despite the procedural differences, the end result is similar: false information is removed from public view-through site blocking in Russia and content deletion or de-display on platforms in Vietnam. Russia's approach is generally more forceful and comprehensive, allowing authorities to completely block offending websites, including electronic newspapers that fail to promptly remove "fake news" (VOV, 2019).

Vietnam has rarely implemented technical measures such as DNS or IP blocking, except in special cases. This suggests that Vietnam could consider using technical blocking selectively-for example, when fake news sources are malicious, operate servers abroad, and deliberately ignore removal requests. However, website blocking must be carefully weighed against potential impacts on users' rights to access information, press freedom, and freedom of expression. Sometimes, technological factors, such as deepfakes, also increase skepticism about the authenticity of information, thereby putting pressure on the content control mechanisms of platforms and regulatory agencies (Vaccari, Chadwick, 2020).

As an intermediate approach, Vietnam has emphasized close cooperation with social media platforms. Platforms are required to actively remove content that violates Vietnamese law and to implement measures to prevent and eliminate false or harmful information. Major platforms such as Facebook, Google, and TikTok have applied AI technologies to automatically detect and manage violating content in response to requests from the Ministry of Information and Communications (Authority of Broadcasting and Electronic Information, 2024). Regulating platforms needs to consider public values and social responsibility, not just simply blocking information (Seipp et al., 2023; Taylor, West, 2021). It requires a combination of efforts from governments, platforms, and users.

Sanctions for violators: Russia maintains a clear and tiered system of sanctions for spreading fake news, including administrative fines and criminal penalties, which vary depending on the severity and consequences of the violation. In Vietnam, enforcement primarily relies on fines. While these fines are generally lower than in Russia, they are relatively substantial in relation to average income, and the total number of fines imposed is high. Unlike Russia, Vietnam has not yet established criminal penalties specifically for spreading fake news.

Vietnam could consider introducing sanctions proportionate to the seriousness of the violation, particularly for cases that threaten public safety or social order. For example, *the Criminal Code* could include a dedicated offense for spreading false information that results in severe consequences, such as riots, injuries, or deaths caused by misinformation. Currently, such cases are prosecuted indirectly under offenses like disturbing public order or sabotage, but a specific criminal provision could enhance deterrence and facilitate prosecution. At the same time, criminal sanctions should be applied cautiously to avoid perceptions of repression in cases that are not socially dangerous. For most violations, administrative fines, public education, and corrective measures-as currently practiced in Vietnam for false rumors-remain sufficient to deter individuals without imposing excessive pressure on human rights. This balanced approach allows authorities to address serious threats while protecting freedom of expression in less harmful cases.

The role of media literacy and public awareness: Both Russia and Vietnam recognize that legal measures alone are insufficient to manage fake news; public knowledge and media literacy are equally crucial for helping people identify and avoid misinformation. Media literacy is widely regarded as an essential component in combating misinformation. Legal measures alone cannot create long-term resilience; individuals must be able to critically evaluate, verify, and interpret digital content (Buckingham et al., 2021).

In the Vietnamese context, integrating media literacy into educational curricula and mass media campaigns can help mitigate the negative impact of online content on users. Psychological factors, such as the level of attention to accuracy or the tendency to think habitually rather than analytically, make users more likely to believe and share information (Pennycook, Rand, 2021).

A brief intervention can also help increase the ability to distinguish real news from fake news (Guess et al., 2020). Furthermore, media literacy is understood as incorporating pre-bunking interventions into educational programs, which are considered a sustainable psychological strategy

to combat fake news (Neylan et al., 2023; Roozenbeek, van der Linden, 2022), rather than a substitute for law (Lewandowsky et al., 2021).

In Russia, beyond the legal framework, specialized platforms have been developed to support information verification. For instance, *the Global Fact-Checking Network website* provides verification and data comparison tools to help users access reliable sources. *The War on Fakes channel* functions as a platform to synthesize, analyze, and respond to information deemed false, particularly in matters related to Russia. These initiatives demonstrate an effort to establish systematic information control and filtering mechanisms to address the challenges posed by fake news in the modern media environment.

In Vietnam, press agencies and media management authorities have implemented multiple measures to identify, prevent, and refute false information. A notable example is the *FactcheckVN* project by *the Vietnam News Agency*, operating on TikTok with a concise and engaging format that enables young audiences to access verified information easily. Verifying public information, or in other words, media education for the public, should not only target young audiences but also special population groups, such as the elderly, to be more effective in combating fake news (Moore et al., 2022). Along with verifying information, proofreading also helps reduce cognitive bias, thereby limiting the spread of fake news (Vraga, Bode, 2020). This represents a significant shift from traditional reporting to active verification.

Additionally, *the Portal for Receiving and Handling Fake News* (*Tingia.gov.vn*), operated by the Ministry of Information and Communications, serves as a link between the public and regulatory authorities, processing thousands of complaints annually, primarily related to toxic content and online scams. Another notable initiative is the *Tin Campaign*, implemented by *the Department of Radio, Television and Electronic Information* in collaboration with *VnExpress*, which raises public awareness and encourages the dissemination of positive, accurate content.

Beyond large-scale projects, many media outlets-including *VTV*, *VietnamPlus*, Tuoi Tre Online, Thanh Nien, and *VnExpress*-regularly produce programs, articles, and columns to educate the public on identifying fake news and understanding its societal impact. These efforts collectively reflect Vietnam's commitment to combining legal enforcement with media literacy and public engagement as part of a comprehensive strategy against misinformation.

The comparison indicates that Vietnam and Russia share the same fundamental goals and approaches in combating fake news: the state plays a central role, and legal mechanisms are employed to prevent the spread of misinformation. However, the extent of legal enforcement and the effectiveness of these measures differ due to variations in political and social contexts. Russia tends to act more decisively and strongly, which can provoke mixed reactions domestically and internationally.

Vietnam can adopt a more flexible and cautious approach in applying laws and state management. For instance, regulations perceived as overly harsh by the public could be amended to align with international standards, thereby preventing anti-fake news policies from becoming a target of criticism by human rights organizations. At the same time, Vietnam can draw lessons from Russia regarding the importance of coordinated action among regulatory bodies, law enforcement, and judicial authorities, which enhances the effectiveness of fake news management.

5. Conclusion

Fake news is a pressing issue in the information age, threatening multiple aspects of social life, including security, politics, the economy, health, and public order. Governments worldwide, including those of the Russian Federation and Vietnam, have been compelled to adopt measures to manage this phenomenon. Through comparative research, it is evident that Russia's anti-fake news policy stands out for its decisive approach-establishing a comprehensive legal framework, implementing strict sanctions, and ensuring rapid responses. In contrast, Vietnam primarily relies on administrative penalties and has not yet criminalized violations related to fake news. However, the general trend is toward strengthening control to prevent the spread of fake news that could negatively impact society and the country's image.

The analysis identifies several similarities between the two countries: both consider combating fake news essential for protecting public interest, grant significant powers to information management agencies (Roskomnadzor in Russia; the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Ministry of Public Security in Vietnam), and employ measures such as fines, forced content removal, and access blocking when necessary. At the same time, notable

differences exist: Russia has a specialized legal system and is willing to impose imprisonment on individuals who spread fake news, whereas Vietnam relies primarily on administrative sanctions. Russia exercises direct control over content, while Vietnam depends more on cooperation with service providers to remove violating content. These differences reflect each country's political and social contexts and policy priorities, while also providing valuable lessons for Vietnam.

For Vietnam, the most important lesson is likely the need to strike a balance**:** protecting information security and social order while safeguarding freedom of speech and press rights as guaranteed by the Constitution. Vietnam should continue to improve its legal framework on fake news in a specific, transparent, and controlled manner-for example, by adding clear definitions, categorizing levels of fake news, and regulating handling procedures with judicial supervision when necessary. At the same time, Vietnam can learn from Russia's adaptability-being ready to update laws as new forms of fake news emerge, as Russia did during the COVID-19 pandemic and other special circumstances.

Furthermore, lessons from both countries show that building societal resilience against fake news is a sustainable solution. Vietnam should invest more in media education and public awareness, enabling people to verify information independently. When the majority of the public develops the habit of checking information, fake news is less likely to spread, and the risk of state overreach in censorship is reduced. Only then can a healthy and transparent information environment be established, contributing to social stability and maintaining public trust in policies and the law.

References

Altay, 2023 – *Altay, S., Berriche, M., Heuer, H., Farkas, J., Rathje, S.* (2023). A survey of expert views on misinformation: Definitions, determinants, solutions, and future of the field. *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review*. 4(4): 1-34. DOI: 10.37016/mr-2020-119

Andrey, 2019 – *Andrey K.* (2019). Zakon o suverennom Runete ne ob ogranicheniyakh, a o zashchite Runeta [The law on a sovereign runet is not about restrictions, but about protecting the Runet]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://kod.ru/klishas-o-suverennom-runete-aug-2019 [in Russian]

Authority..., 2024 – Authority of Broadcasting and Electronic Information, Ministry of Information and Communications. Efforts made to tighten management of information on social networks. 2024. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://english.mst.gov.vn/efforts-made-to-tighten-management-of-information-on-social-networks-society-vietnam-vietnamplus-197240118101350865.htm

Broda, 2024 – *Broda, E., Strömbäck, J.* (2024). Misinformation, disinformation, and fake news: Lessons from an interdisciplinary systematic literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*. 48(2): 139-166. DOI: 10.1080/23808985.2024.2323736

Buckingham et al., 2021 – *Buckingham, D., Farinacci, E., Manzoli, G.* (2021). Media education in the digital age: An interview with David Buckingham. *Sociologia della Comunicazione*. DOI: 10.3280/SC2021-062002

Committee to Protect Journalists, 2022 – Committee to Protect Journalists. Understanding the laws relating to "fake news" in Russia. 2022. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://cpj.org/2022/07/understanding-the-laws-relating-to-fake-news-in-russia/

Committee to Protect Journalists, 2023 – Committee to Protect Journalists. Joint Submission for UPR 2024: Vietnam. CPJ. 2023. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023-Vietnam-UPR-Submission.pdf

Dairbekov, 2019 – *Dairbekov, R., Barata, J.* (2019). Federal Law No. 31-FZ, on amending the Article 15.3 of the Federal law "On information, information technologies, and protection of information". [Electronic resource]. URL: https://wilmap.stanford.edu/entries/federal-law-no-31-fz-amending-article-153-federal-law-information-information-technologies

Department..., 2025 – Department of Radio, Television and Electronic Information. Gần 16.000 nội dung vi phạm đã được gỡ bỏ trên các nền tảng xuyên biên giới. [Nearly 16,000 pieces of infringing content have been removed from cross-border platforms]. 2025. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://abei.gov.vn/thong-tin-dien-tu/gan-16000-noi-dung-vi-pham-da-duoc-go-bo-tren-cac-nen-tang-xuyen-bien-gioi/118629 [in Vietnamese]

Duma..., 2019 – Duma [State Duma of the Russian Federation]. Chto takoye feykovyye novosti i kak za nikh budut otvechat [What is fake news and how will it be dealt with?]. 2019. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://duma.gov.ru/news/46035/ [in Russian]

Duma..., 2025 – Duma [State Duma of the Russian Federation]. Ugolovnyy kodeks Rossiyskoy Federatsii [Criminal code of the Russian Federation], Federal Law No. 63-FZ of June 13, 1996 (as amended November 17, 2025). 2025. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_10699/ [in Russian]

Government of Vietnam, 2020 – Government of Vietnam. Nghị định 15/2020/NĐ-CP về Quy định xử phạt vi phạm hành chính trong lĩnh vực bưu chính, viễn thông, tần số vô tuyến điện, công nghệ thông tin và giao dịch điện tử [Decree No. 15/2020/ND-CP on Penalties for administrative violations against regulations on postal services, telecommunication, radio frequencies, information technology and electronic transactions]. 2020. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Cong-nghe-thong-tin/Nghi-dinh-15-2020-ND-CP-xu-phat-vi-pham-hanh-chinh-linh-vuc-buu-chinh-vien-thong-tan-so-vo-tuyen-dien-350499.aspx [in Vietnamese]

Government of Vietnam, 2022 – Government of Vietnam. Nghị định 14/2022/NĐ-CP về sửa đổi, bổ sung một số điều của Nghị định số 15/2020/NĐ-CP ngày 03 tháng 02 năm 2020 của Chính phủ quy định xử phạt vi phạm hành chính trong lĩnh vực bưu chính, viễn thông, tần số vô tuyến điện, công nghệ thông tin và giao dịch điện tử và Nghị định số 119/2020/NĐ-CP ngày 07 tháng 10 năm 2020 của Chính phủ quy định xử phạt vi phạm hành chính trong hoạt động báo chí, hoạt động xuất bản. [Decree No. 14/2022/ND-CP on Amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 15/2020/ND-CP prescribing penalties for administrative violations in postal services, telecommunications, radio frequencies, information technology and electronic transactions and Decree No. 119/2020/ND-CP prescribing penalties for administrative violations in journalistic and publishing activities]. 2022. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Vi-pham-hanh-chinh/Nghi-dinh-14-2022-ND-CP-sua-doi-Nghi-dinh-15-2020-ND-CP-xu-phat-hanh-chinh-buu-chinh-482325.aspx [in Vietnamese]

Government of Vietnam, 2024 – Government of Vietnam. Nghị định 147/2024/NĐ-CP về quản lý, cung cấp, sử dụng dịch vụ Internet và thông tin trên mạng. [Decree No. 147/2024/ND-CP on the management, provision, and use of internet services and cyber information]. 2024. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Cong-nghe-thong-tin/Nghi-dinh-147-2024-ND-CP-quan-ly-cung-cap-su-dung-dich-vu-Internet-thong-tin-tren-mang-480755.aspx [in Vietnamese]

Guess et al., 2020 – *Guess, A.M., Lerner, M., Lyons, B.A., Montgomery, J.M., Nyhan, B., Reifler, J., Sircar, N.* (2020). A digital media literacy intervention increases discernment between mainstream and false news in the United States and India. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 117(27): 15536-15545. DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1920498117

Horne, 2021 – *Horne, C.L.* (2021). Internet governance in the "post-truth era": Analyzing key topics in "fake news" discussions at IGF. *Telecommunications Policy*. 45(6): 102150.

Interfax, 2019 – Interfax. Interfax. SPCH prizval Sovfed otklonit' zakonoproyekty o neuvazhenii k vlasti i feyk novostyakh [Interfax. The Human Rights Council called on the Federation Council to reject bills on disrespect for authority and fake news]. 2019. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.interfax.ru/russia/653698. [in Russian]

Lazer et al., 2018 – *Lazer, D.M.J. et al.* (2018). The science of fake news. *Science*. 359(6380): 1094-1096. DOI: 10.1126/science.aao2998

Le, 2022 – *Le, T.* (2022). Journalists and Fake News. *VNUHCM Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*. 6(2): 1519-1526. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://stdjssh.scienceandtechnology.com.vn/index.php/stdjssh/article/view/701

Lewandowsky et al., 2021 – *Lewandowsky, S., Maertens, R., Roozenbeek, J.* (2021). Countering misinformation and fake news through inoculation and prebunking. *European Review of Social Psychology*. 32(1): 1-38. DOI: 10.1080/10463283.2021.1876983

Magin et al., 2022 – *Magin, M., Geiß, S., Jürgens, P., Stark, B.* (2022). Common core in danger? Personalized information and the fragmentation of the public agenda. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*. 27(4): 887-909. DOI: 10.1177/19401612211026595

Moore et al., 2022 – *Moore, R.C., Kowal, K., Lewandowsky, S.* (2022). A digital media literacy intervention for older adults improves their discernment of online misinformation. *Scientific Reports*. 12. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-022-08437-0

Neylan, 2023 – *Neylan, J., Biddlestone, M., Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S.* (2023). How to "inoculate" against multimodal misinformation: A conceptual replication of Roozenbeek and van der Linden. *Scientific Reports*, 13, Article 18273. DOI: 10.1038/s41598-023-43885-2

Nguyen et al., 2022 – *Nguyen, D.T.T., Bui, T.T., Dinh, T.N.H., Le, H.H., Nguyen, T.H.* (2022). A regulation approach of publishing false or fake news: A case study of Vietnam magazines.

International Journal of Ecosystems & Ecology Science. 12(2): 427-432. DOI: 10.31407/ijees12.214

Nguyen, 2020 – *Nguyen, H., Nguyen, A.* (2020). Covid-19 misinformation and social media amplification in Vietnam. *Media and Communication*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/document/68398/1/ssoar-mediacomm-2020-2-nguyen_et_al-Covid-19_Misinformation_and_the_Social.pdf?utm_source

Nguyen, 2023 – *Nguyen, V.T.* (2023). Media ethics on social media in Vietnam. *InterNauka*. DOI: 10.32743/UsaConf.2023.1.40.350635

Ninh Binh..., 2025 – Ninh Binh Newspaper and Radio-Television (2025). Quyết liệt đấu tranh chống tin giả, tin sai sự thật. [Resolutely fight against fake news and false news]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://nbtv.vn/news/50504/quyet-liet-dau-tranh-chong-tin-gia-tin-sai-su-that [in Vietnamese]

Pennycool, Rand, 2021 – *Pennycook, G., Rand, D.G.* (2021). The psychology of fake news. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. 25(5): 388-402. DOI: 10.1016/j.tics.2021.02.007

Pollicino, 2019 – *Pollicino, O.* (2019). Fundamental rights as bycatch – Russia's anti fake news legislation. *Verfassungsblog*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://verfassungsblog.de/fundamental-rights-as-bycatch-russias-anti-fake-news-legislation/

Potter, 2022 – *Potter, W.J. (2022).* Analysis of definitions of media literacy. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 14(2): 27-43. DOI: 10.23860/JMLE-2022-14-2-3

Pravo.ru, 2020 – Pravo.ru. Fake news i pandemiya: kak zakonodatel'stvo boretsya s dezinformatsiyey (2020). [Pravo.ru. Fake news and the pandemic: how legislation combats disinformation]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://pravo.ru/story/222165/. [in Russian]

Quach, 2022 – *Quach, H.L. et al.* (2022). A longitudinal analysis of online information about COVID-19 in Vietnam. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8989240/

Quang Ninh Newspaper, 2021 – *Quang Ninh Newspaper*. (2021). Mạnh tay xử lý tin giả, tin sai sự thật về dịch COVID-19. [Strongly handle fake news and false information about COVID-19 epidemic]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://baoquangninh.vn/khong-de-tin-gia-lam-anh-huong-den-thanh-qua-phong-chong-dich-covid-19-2940851.html. [in Vietnamese]

Rivoltella, 2022 – *Rivoltella, P.C.* (2022). Educating to digital citizenship: conceptual development and a framework proposal. *Journal of e-Learning and Knowledge Society*. 18(3): 52-57. DOI: 10.20368/1971-8829/1135821

Roozenbeek, van der Linden, 2022 – *Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S.* (2022). Psychological inoculation improves resilience against misinformation at scale. *Science Advances*. 8(37). DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.abo6254

Samorodova, 2020 – *Samorodova, E.V.* (2020). Osobennosti sovremennogo regulirovaniya feykovykh novostey. [Features of modern regulation of fake news] *Mediascope*. 3. DOI: http://www.mediascope.ru/2641 [in Russian]

Seipp, 2023 – *Seipp, T.J., Ausloos, J., Helberger, N., de Vreese, C. (*2023). Dealing with opinion power in the platform world: Why we really have to rethink media concentration law. *Digital Journalism*. 11(8): 1542-1567. DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2022.2161924

Sherstoboeva, 2024 – *Sherstoboeva, E.* (2024). Russian bans on "fake news" about the war in Ukraine. DOI: 10.1177/17480485231220141

Silva, 2024 – *Silva, E.C. de M., Vaz, J.C.* (2024). How disinformation and fake news impact public policies? DOI: 10.48550/arXiv.2406.00951

Taylor, West, 2021 – *Taylor, L., West, S.M.* (2021). Public actors without public values: Legitimacy crises in platform governance. *Philosophy & Technology*. 34(4): 897-922. DOI: 10.1007/s13347-020-00441-4

Trong, 2024 – *Trong, T., Minh. V.* (2024). Citizens warned against misinformation during natural disasters. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://en.sggp.org.vn/citizens-warned-against-sea-of-misinformation-during-natural-disasters-post112424.html

Vaccari, Chadwick, 2020 – *Vaccari, C., Chadwick, A.* (2020). Deepfakes and disinformation: Exploring the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty, and trust in news. *Social Media + Society*. 6(1): 1-13. DOI: 10.1177/2056305120903408

Vese, 2021 – *Vese, D.* (2021). Governing fake news: The regulation of social media and the right to freedom of expression in the era of emergency. *European Journal of Risk Regulation*. 13(3): 477-513. DOI: 10.1017/err.2021.48

Vietnam National Assembly, 2018 – Vietnam National Assembly. Luật An ninh mạng. [Cybersecurity law]. 2018. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://vanban.chinhphu.vn/?pageid=27160&docid=206114 [in Vietnamese]

VOV, 2019 – VOV. Nga xử phạt tới 22.000 USD với đối tượng tung tin giả. [Russia fines up to $22,000 for spreading fake news]. 2019. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://vov.vn/the-gioi/nga-xu-phat-toi-22000-usd-voi-doi-tuong-tung-tin-gia-tren-internet-887958.vov [in Vietnamese]

Vraga, Bode, 2020 – *Vraga, E. K., Bode, L.* (2020). Correction as a solution for health misinformation on social media. *American Journal of Public Health.* 110(S3): S278-S280. DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2020.305916

Wardle, 2017 – *Wardle, C., Derakhshan, H.* (2017). Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making. Council of Europe / First Draft.

WCIOM, 2019 – WCIOM [Russian Public Opinion Research Center]. (2019). Feyk n'yus: mneniye rossiyan o novom zakone [Fake news: russians' opinions on the new law]. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://wciom.ru/analytical-reviews/analiticheskii-obzor/fejk-nyus-mnenie-rossiyan-o-novom-zakone- [in Russian]

WHO, 2020 – WHO. Managing the COVID-19 infodemic: Promoting healthy behaviours and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation. WHO Report. 2020. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation?

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 150-165

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.150
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Media Education and Critical Thinking Skills: A Bibliometric Mapping of Research Development (1996–2025)

Shahid Rafiq [a], Ayesha Afzal [b, *], Uzma Niaz [a]

[a] Emerson University Multan, Pakistan
[b] University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of global research at the intersection of media education and critical thinking from 1996 to 2025, utilizing a curated dataset of 2,376 peer-reviewed articles extracted from the Web of Science Core Collection. Following systematic filtering by document type (articles), language (English), and disciplinary relevance (education, media and communication, and social sciences), the analysis was conducted using the Bibliometrix R package and the Biblioshiny interface. Key indicators, including annual scientific production, citation trends, author productivity, source dynamics, institutional output, and international collaboration, reveal a steady increase in research activity, with a significant acceleration after 2015 and peaking in 2025. Conceptual structure mapping identified dominant themes including media literacy, digital literacy, misinformation, and critical thinking among youth, with keywords such as fake news, social media, and education emerging as high-frequency terms. Thematic evolution and coupling analysis showed a shift from foundational media literacy to more critical, digitally embedded pedagogical models. Despite the field's growth, key gaps remain, particularly the underrepresentation of Global South regions, the limited number of intervention-based empirical studies, and a lack of integration between cognitive and pedagogical frameworks. Collaboration networks reveal a concentration of output among a few academic institutions and authors, primarily in the United States, Western Europe, and Australia. This study presents a comprehensive synthesis of the field's development over three decades, offering actionable insights for researchers, policymakers, and educators seeking to align their future work with evolving global and technological contexts.

Keywords: Media education, critical thinking, misinformation, digital literacy, global research trends, educational technology, media literacy.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the ubiquity of digital technologies has redefined the educational landscape, with media emerging as both a pedagogical tool and a cultural force. The concept of media education, which traditionally emphasized understanding media forms and content, has evolved into a multidimensional construct involving critical engagement, digital literacy, and civic participation (Buckingham, 2007; Livingstone, 2004). As digital platforms reshape how individuals' access, interpret, and disseminate information, the need for equipping learners with critical thinking skills has gained global prominence. These skills, encompassing analysis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation, are essential not only for academic success but also for

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: ayeshaafzal@umt.edu.pk (A. Afzal)

navigating complex information ecosystems and resisting misinformation (Facione, 2011; Kahne, Bowyer, 2016). Consequently, the intersection of media education and critical thinking has emerged as a vital domain of scholarly inquiry and educational practice.

The rise of media literacy as a core educational competency reflects growing concerns about the role of media in shaping beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. Media literacy education, particularly within formal schooling, seeks to cultivate the capacity to question media content, understand production techniques, and identify ideological bias (Hobbs, 2011). This critical orientation aligns with broader goals of education aimed at fostering reflective, independent thinkers who can navigate diverse perspectives. Simultaneously, critical thinking has been recognized by global educational frameworks, such as UNESCO's Education 2030 Agenda and the OECD's Future of Education and Skills 2030, as a foundational skill necessary for lifelong learning and democratic citizenship (Grizzle et al., 2014; OECD, 2019). While these two domains, media education and critical thinking, have developed along parallel trajectories, their conceptual overlap and mutual reinforcement have been increasingly acknowledged in recent years (Tommasi et al., 2021).

Despite the growing attention to the synergistic relationship between media literacy and critical thinking, academic literature remains fragmented. Scholars have explored various facets of this intersection, ranging from the media's influence on reasoning and judgment to the use of digital tools in critical pedagogy, but often within isolated disciplinary contexts (Martens, Hobbs, 2015; Mihailidis, Viotty, 2017). The result is a disjointed field, where empirical findings and theoretical contributions are scattered across education, communication studies, psychology, and media studies. This fragmentation poses challenges for synthesizing knowledge, identifying trends, and building coherent frameworks that bridge practice and policy. Moreover, there is an evident lack of large-scale, systematic reviews that trace how this intersection has evolved, particularly in light of technological, geopolitical, and educational shifts over the past two decades.

The absence of a comprehensive bibliometric synthesis represents a significant gap in the literature. While prior studies have reviewed critical thinking development or the evolution of media literacy (Vuojärvi et al., 2021), no one has employed bibliometric mapping to chart the co-development of these fields. Bibliometric analysis offers a powerful methodological approach to address this gap by quantitatively analyzing the structure, dynamics, and thematic evolution of scholarly output (Donthu et al., 2021). By leveraging techniques such as co-citation, co-word, and thematic mapping, researchers can uncover intellectual foundations, collaborative networks, and emerging areas of inquiry. Such an approach not only enhances the transparency of research landscapes but also provides strategic guidance for scholars, educators, and policymakers.

The present study addresses this lacuna by offering a bibliometric mapping of research connecting media education and critical thinking from 1996 to 2025. Drawing on data from the Web of Science database, this study traces global publication trends, identifies key authors and journals, visualizes conceptual clusters, and uncovers evolving research themes. The focus is on understanding how media education has been conceptualized as a mechanism for critical thinking development, and how scholarly interest in this intersection has unfolded over the last two decades.

To guide this inquiry, the following research questions (RQs) are proposed:

1. What is the growth pattern and geographic distribution of research on media education and critical thinking from 1996–2025?

This question investigates temporal dynamics and the contributions of countries and institutions to the global research landscape.

2. What are the key thematic areas and intellectual structures in this field?

This includes the identification of dominant research clusters, foundational authors, and core theoretical frameworks shaping the discourse.

3. What emerging trends, influential authors, and key publication sources shape this area?

It aims to highlight intellectual momentum, evolving topical interests, and leading journals that define the research ecosystem.

4. What gaps or underexplored areas can be identified for future research?

This forward-looking question seeks to chart possible future trajectories and provide actionable insights for research, practice, and policy.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to systematically structure an otherwise fragmented body of knowledge, providing a comprehensive overview of a rapidly evolving field. By integrating bibliometric insights with educational theory, this paper contributes to both academic literature and practical application. First, it equips researchers with a roadmap of

influential works, emergent themes, and methodological pathways. Second, it enables educators and curriculum designers to identify evidence-based strategies for integrating media education into critical thinking instruction. Third, it supports policymakers in recognizing global trends and prioritizing investment in areas that enhance media literacy and civic resilience. In an era marked by algorithmic influence, information overload, and epistemic polarization, fostering critical media competence is not merely an academic imperative but a societal necessity.

Media Education Historical and Theoretical Overview: Media education has undergone a significant transformation since the 20th century, evolving from a focus on passive content consumption to active, critical engagement with digital media. The theoretical foundations of media education are closely aligned with concepts such as media literacy, digital literacy, and more recently, multiliteracies (Buckingham, 2003; Livingstone, 2004). Media literacy emphasizes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages in a variety of forms. This literacy is not merely technical; it is deeply critical and reflective, encouraging learners to interrogate media's influence on ideologies, identities, and power structures (Potter, 2010). The shift from traditional literacy toward digital literacy has been catalyzed by the expansion of the internet and mobile technologies. Digital literacy integrates critical thinking with the ability to navigate, evaluate, and create information across digital platforms (Ng, 2012). Building on these literacies, media education is framed as both a field of study and a pedagogical practice, encompassing theoretical models like Buckingham's framework of critical media education, which focuses on representation, language, audience, and production (Buckingham, 2007).

Global frameworks have been instrumental in shaping how media education is conceptualized and implemented. The UNESCO Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, launched in 2011, explicitly links media competencies with civic engagement, intercultural dialogue, and lifelong learning. UNESCO's approach promotes a unified vision of media and information literacy that includes traditional, digital, and news literacies (Gendina, 2016). Similarly, the European Commission's Digital Competence Framework (DigComp) defines a set of competencies such as information and data literacy, digital content creation, and problem-solving, integrating media education into digital citizenship (Carretero et al., 2017). The convergence of these global frameworks illustrates a growing consensus: media education must be critical, participatory, and responsive to evolving technologies. This theoretical foundation lays the groundwork for exploring how media education supports broader cognitive and civic outcomes, particularly critical thinking.

Critical Thinking in Education: Critical thinking is widely recognized as one of the most essential competencies for the 21st century. Broadly defined as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information for reasoned judgment and decision-making, it forms the cornerstone of educational goals across national curricula and international frameworks (Facione, 1990; Ennis, 2011). The concept of critical thinking is normally connected with higher-order thinking skills and viewed as a requirement of lifelong learning and democratic participation in the process of education research. A number of pedagogical models have developed in order to incorporate critical thinking in education. The model of critical thinking (Paul, Elder, 2006) focuses on intellectual standards (clarity, accuracy, relevance) and aspects of reasoning (purpose, evidence, assumptions) as a systematic approach to teaching and evaluating critical thinking. Another approach, proposed by Halpern (Halpern, 2013), focuses on teaching both the dispositional and cognitive aspects of thinking, encouraging students to want to think critically, and equipping them with the tools to do so.

Assessment of critical thinking has also advanced, with tools such as the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal being used to evaluate students' reasoning abilities in diverse contexts (Stedman, Andenoro, 2007). Moreover, the integration of critical thinking into OECD's Learning Compass 2030 and UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) framework underscores its value not just for employability, but for navigating increasingly complex socio-political environments (OECD, 2019). Yet despite its inclusion in curricular policies, research highlights a persistent gap between aspirations and practice. Educators often struggle to translate theoretical models into classroom strategies, particularly in the absence of critical pedagogical training (Zohar, Barzilai, 2013). This underscores the importance of interdisciplinary integration, particularly with fields like media education that naturally lend themselves to inquiry, analysis, and reflection.

Connecting Media Education and Critical Thinking: The convergence of media education and critical thinking is both instinctive and backed by research. Acquiring media literacy naturally compels students to assess the reliability, purpose, and partiality of media messages, which aligns closely with critical thinking skills (Kahne, Bowyer, 2016). In an era where media landscapes are increasingly interactive and governed by algorithms, the capacity to analyze digital information critically transcends academic importance; it also holds civic and moral significance (Mihailidis, Thevenin, 2013). Empirical studies show that media education interventions can enhance critical thinking in diverse populations.

For instance, Martens and Hobbs (Martens, Hobbs, 2015) found that integrating media analysis into high school curricula improved students' reasoning about evidence and argumentation. Similarly, a study by Ashley et al. (Ashley et al., 2017) showed that media literacy education increased adolescents' skepticism toward misinformation and deepened their understanding of evidence-based reasoning. From a cognitive perspective, media education activates evaluative thinking through processes such as content deconstruction, source triangulation, and perspective-taking, cognitive tasks central to critical thinking models (Fisher, 2011). Meanwhile, socio-cultural theorists argue that media literacy fosters critical consciousness by situating learning within real-world, culturally relevant media contexts (Freire, 1970; Mihailidis, Viotty, 2017). This dual lens, cognitive and socio-cultural, positions media education as a unique conduit for cultivating critical thinkers. Despite this promise, the relationship between media education and critical thinking remains under-theorized and under-explored at scale. Much of the existing research is localized, context-specific, and qualitative. A comprehensive synthesis of the field, especially across time and geography, is needed to clarify patterns, gaps, and opportunities.

Previous Bibliometric Reviews: Bibliometric reviews have gained prominence as a way to map scholarly development, especially in interdisciplinary domains. Within the field of media literacy, several bibliometric studies have examined its evolution. For example, Vuojärvi et al. (Vuojärvi et al., 2021) conducted a systematic review of empirical media literacy studies, noting the growing diversification of themes but also the dominance of research from the Global North. Similarly, Wang, Si (Wang, Si, 2023) conducted a bibliometric analysis of media literacy and digital competence, identifying core clusters such as digital safety, teacher training, and civic engagement. In the domain of critical thinking, bibliometric research has been more limited. Engel et al. (Engel et al., 2019) analyzed publications on critical thinking in education, revealing a recent surge in interest driven by global competency frameworks. They emphasized the need for cross-national collaboration and longitudinal studies to advance the field.

Yet to date, there exists no bibliometric study that systematically analyzes the intersection of media education and critical thinking. This absence is striking, given the increasing interdependence of digital engagement and reflective reasoning in educational policy and practice. A bibliometric mapping that spans two decades can illuminate how these two literacies have co-developed, where scholarly attention is concentrated, and what areas remain underexplored. Such analysis is especially valuable in a time of disinformation, polarized media, and AI-generated content, phenomena that challenge the very foundations of both media literacy and critical thinking.

2. Materials and methods

This study employs a bibliometric analysis to map the evolution, structure, and thematic development of research at the intersection of media education and critical thinking skills between 1996 and 2025. Bibliometric techniques provide quantitative insights into publication trends, influential contributors, collaboration networks, and emerging research themes, making them especially valuable in systematically underexplored interdisciplinary fields like this one.

Data Source: The bibliometric data for this research was retrieved exclusively from the Web of Science Core Collection (WoS-CC). This database was selected for several reasons. First, WoS is widely regarded for its comprehensive indexing of peer-reviewed scholarly literature, especially in the fields of education, communication, and social sciences. It provides rich metadata necessary for advanced bibliometric operations, including author affiliations, keyword indexing, citation data, and reference lists, features that are not uniformly available in other platforms such as Google Scholar or ERIC. Furthermore, WoS allows refined filtering by document type, language, publication year, and disciplinary area, making it ideal for targeted bibliometric mapping. The selected timespan for this study is 1996–2025, encompassing 30 years of research and ensuring coverage of both early digital literacy literature and more recent developments shaped by AI, misinformation, and global education reforms.

Search Strategy: A multi-stage filtering process was applied to develop a robust dataset. The initial search used the following Boolean string:

("media education" OR "media literacy education") AND ("critical thinking skills" OR "media literacy")

This broad query yielded 4,207 records. To refine this for quality and relevance, the following steps were taken:

1. Document Type Filter: Only "Articles" and "Review Articles" were included, excluding conference papers, editorials, and other non-peer-reviewed content. This step reduced the dataset to 3,313 records.
2. Language Filter: Only studies published in English were retained, bringing the count to 2,780 articles. This ensures accessibility and alignment with widely cited academic work.
3. Disciplinary Filter: Using WoS subject categorization, only articles categorized under Education, Media and Communication, and Social Sciences were retained. This step focused the analysis on the most relevant scholarly domains.
4. Temporal Inclusion: The final dataset spans articles published from 1996 to 2025 (including early foundational works and in-press 2025 publications, due to early online access).

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria Summary:

– Inclusion: Peer-reviewed articles and reviews; English-language; publication years 1996–2025; subject areas in education, communication, social sciences.

– Exclusion: Editorials, notes, book reviews, conference abstracts, non-English papers, articles from unrelated disciplines (biomedical sciences).

Analytical Methods: The methodology follows two major phases: performance analysis and science mapping, using established bibliometric techniques.

Performance Analysis: This involves descriptive statistics of the publication dataset to evaluate the productivity and impact of authors, journals, institutions, and countries. Key indicators analyzed include:

– *Annual Scientific Production:* Tracks the number of publications per year, revealing growth trends and inflection points in research interest.

– *Authors and Co-authors:* Measures author productivity, single author vs. collaborative works, and author networks.

– *Citation Analysis:* Assesses the most cited documents and authors, providing insight into influential contributions.

– *Source Analysis:* Identifies key journals that have consistently been published in this domain.

– *Geographic Distribution:* Highlights the leading countries and institutions by publication count and citations.

These metrics help answer research questions regarding the temporal and geographic development of the field.

Science Mapping: This advanced phase investigates the intellectual, conceptual, and social structure of the research field through network analysis:

– *Co-authorship Analysis:* Visualizes collaborative networks among authors and countries, uncovering research hubs and international partnerships.

– *Co-word Analysis:* Maps keyword co-occurrences to identify conceptual clusters and thematic patterns in the literature.

– *Co-citation Analysis:* Reveals the intellectual structure by examining which authors and documents are most frequently cited together.

– *Thematic Evolution Mapping:* Tracks how core topics evolve across time intervals, highlighting emerging, motor, and declining themes through thematic maps.

The objective is not only to quantify scholarly output but to surface underlying dynamics and research fronts.

Software Tools: All analyses were conducted using the Bibliometrix R package (Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017) and its web-based graphical interface, Biblioshiny. This toolset was selected for its comprehensive integration of performance and science mapping functions and its proven use in peer-reviewed bibliometric studies. Key features include:

– Import of WoS BibTeX files

– Network visualization (author co-citation, keyword clusters)

– Statistical output of growth trends, H-index metrics

– Dynamic thematic mapping by time slices

Using Biblioshiny enabled both quantitative metrics and visualizations such as collaboration networks and conceptual maps, ensuring rigor and interpretability.

Ethical Considerations: This study utilized secondary bibliographic data from the Web of Science, a publicly accessible database available through institutional subscription. As no human participants were involved, ethical approval was not required. All analyses complied with responsible research and data-management standards.

3. Discussion

The bibliometric analysis revealed two major thematic clusters: one centered on Media Literacy in K–12 education and the other on Digital Critical Pedagogy. Cluster A predominantly focuses on the role of media literacy as a foundational skill in early education. It emphasizes developing students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and create media messages, which is vital in an age of information overload and misinformation (Buckingham, 2003; Hobbs, 2011). This cluster reflects educational practices integrating media analysis in school curricula and highlights empirical studies that assess outcomes in student engagement and critical thinking. Meanwhile, Cluster B illustrates the emergence of Digital Critical Pedagogy, a theme that intersects media literacy with critical theory, emphasizing student agency, reflexivity, and social justice in digital learning environments (Kellner, Share, 2005). This thematic group includes studies that critique dominant narratives, explore algorithmic biases, and empower learners to question digital power structures, echoing the work of Freirean pedagogy adapted for digital contexts.

Trends and Gaps: Recent trends indicate a substantial increase in literature focused on misinformation, digital platforms, and adolescents' media behavior. This reflects growing concerns over fake news and online safety, particularly during political events and public health crises such as COVID-19 (Tully et al., 2020; Vraga, Tully, 2021). However, several gaps remain. First, there is a noticeable underrepresentation of research from the Global South, including Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. Most publications stem from Western countries, especially the United States, the UK, and Australia, suggesting an imbalance in global knowledge production and a lack of culturally relevant media literacy approaches for non-Western populations (Cortes, 2020; Mihailidis, Viotty, 2017). Second, intervention-based studies often lack rigorous empirical validation. While many theoretical or descriptive papers propose pedagogical strategies, fewer studies offer longitudinal data or controlled experiments to assess the effectiveness of media literacy interventions (Jeong et al., 2012; McDougall et al., 2018).

Integration with Previous Literature: This study's thematic mapping generally aligns with earlier literature on media literacy, confirming that traditional concerns, such as critical viewing, message construction, and advertising literacy, remain relevant (Potter, 2010). However, it also demonstrates a shift towards newer paradigms that emphasize platform literacy, algorithmic awareness, and civic reasoning. For instance, while D. Buckingham (Buckingham, 2003) focused on media education as a way to navigate traditional mass media, current literature integrates digital participatory cultures and the influence of social media algorithms (Livingstone, 2004). This reflects both convergence and evolution in the field: foundational skills in critical analysis persist, but they are now applied to new media environments with more complex socio-technical dynamics.

Implications: Thematically, this bibliometric mapping supports the evolution of media literacy from a basic functional skill set towards a critical and reflexive framework. It reinforces theories that consider media literacy a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, emotional, and socio-political competencies. Furthermore, the emergence of clusters around misinformation and digital pedagogy highlights the theoretical shift towards critical digital literacy, a concept that merges Freirean critical pedagogy with 21st-century digital realities (Kellner, Share, 2005). At the same time, the current literature challenges earlier education models that view media literacy primarily through a protectionist lens (i.e., shielding youth from harmful media). Instead, it promotes empowering models that prepare learners to actively and ethically engage in media production and discourse (Hobbs, Jensen, 2009). These developments suggest a maturation of the field, pointing toward frameworks that are both critically robust and adaptable to evolving digital ecologies.

4. Results

The data analysis for this study was conducted using a comprehensive bibliometric approach, drawing on a curated dataset of 2,376 peer-reviewed articles published between 1996 and 2025. These records were retrieved from the Web of Science Core Collection, following rigorous filtering

based on document type (articles), language (English), and disciplinary relevance (education, media and communication, and social sciences). Utilizing the Bibliometrix package in R and its Biblioshiny interface, the analysis focused on both performance indicators (such as annual scientific production, most cited documents, prolific authors, and leading journals) and science mapping techniques (including co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, co-citation analysis, and thematic evolution). The objective was to uncover patterns in scholarly output, trace the intellectual and social structures of the field, and identify emerging areas of research linking media education and critical thinking. The findings presented in this section offer quantitative insights into the dynamics, growth, and gaps in this interdisciplinary research domain over the past three decades.

Annual Scientific Production: Figure 1 shows a clear upward trend in annual scientific production on media education and critical thinking from 1996 to 2025. Research output remained low until 2010 but began increasing steadily afterward. A sharp rise is visible from 2015, with significant growth peaking in 2025, with over 400 articles. This surge reflects growing global emphasis on digital literacy, critical thinking, and media education. The rise aligns with policy efforts like UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy frameworks. This growth also suggests the academic community's response to challenges like misinformation, digital citizenship, and education reform. The increasing volume of research signifies that the intersection of media education and critical thinking is becoming a well-recognized and rapidly developing area of study.

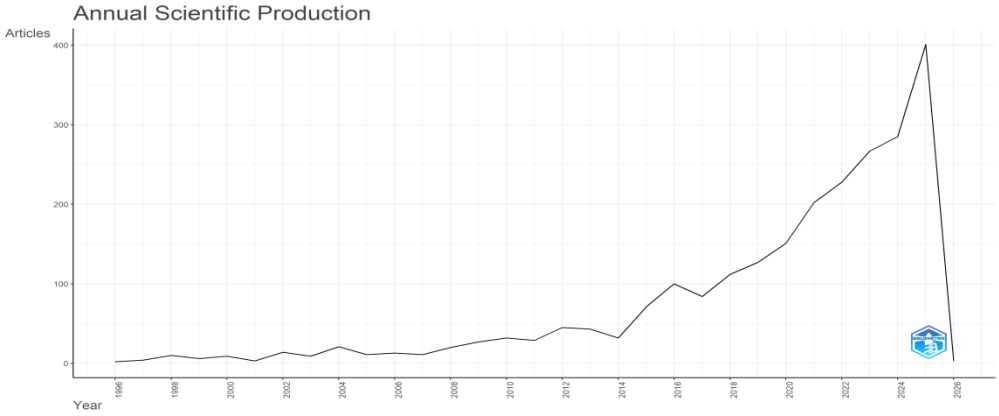

Fig. 1. Annual Scientific Production

Average Citations per Year: Figure 2 illustrates the average number of citations received per article published each year between 1996 and 2025. The trend is notably fluctuating, indicating variations in the long-term impact of publications over time. Peaks can be observed in 2003, 2007, and 2012–2013, where articles published in those years received higher average citations. This suggests the presence of highly influential studies or a smaller volume of publications with broader reach during those years.

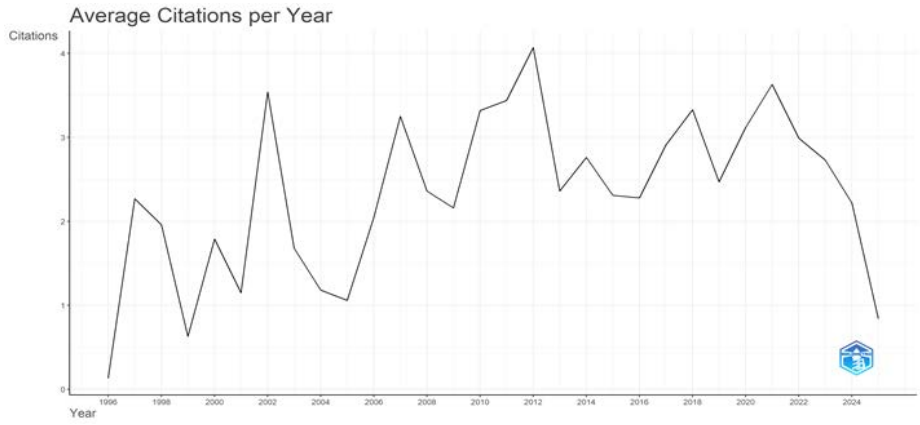

Fig. 2. Average Citations per Year

From 2017 to 2021, citation averages remained relatively high and stable, reflecting increased scholarly attention and citation activity in the field. However, there is a clear decline in the years 2024 and especially 2025. This drop is expected, as recent publications have had limited time to accumulate citations. Overall, the pattern suggests that older publications have had more time to influence academic discourse, while newer ones may still be gaining visibility.

Three-Field Plot (CR–AU–KW): Figure 3 presents a three-field plot connecting three key bibliometric dimensions: Cited References (CR), Authors (AU), and Keywords (KW). It illustrates the intellectual structure of the field by showing how frequently cited works (left), influential authors (middle), and dominant research themes (right) interrelate. Prominent cited works include seminal contributions by D. Buckinham (Buckingham, 2003) and R. Hobbs (Hobbs, 2011), indicating their foundational role in shaping discourse around media literacy and education. Influential authors such as A. Fedorov and A. Levitskaya (Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015, etc), M. Tully (Tully et al., 2020, etc.) are positioned centrally, demonstrating high connectivity with both the cited literature and thematic keywords.

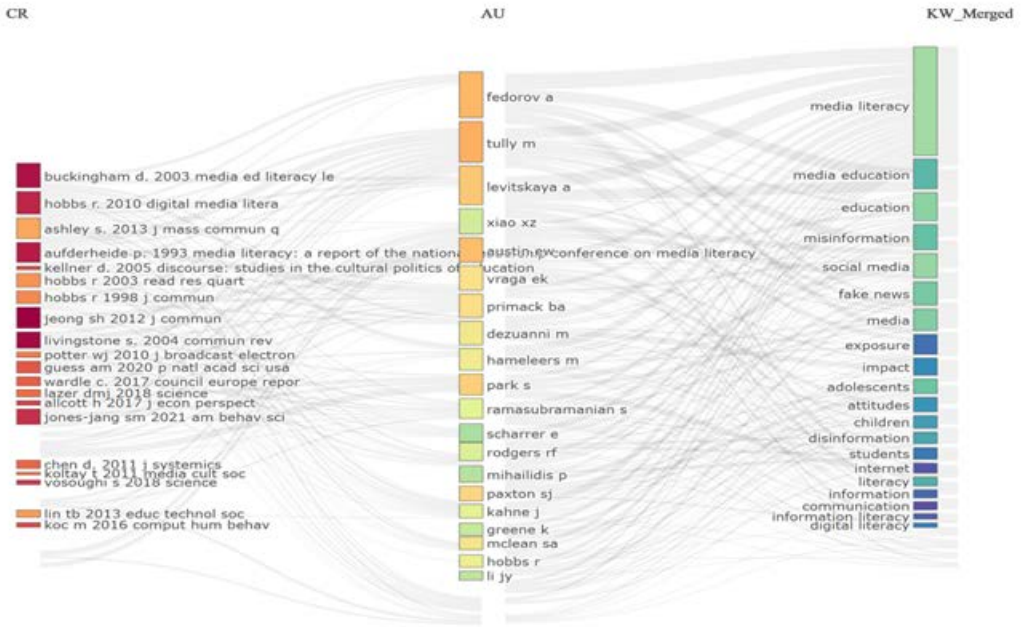

Fig. 3. Three-Field Plot

On the keyword side, dominant terms like media literacy, media education, education, and misinformation highlight the thematic focus of the research landscape. The linkage between authors and keywords reveals that contemporary research is increasingly addressing the intersection of media use, critical thinking, and digital challenges like fake news and disinformation, especially among adolescents and students.

Most Relevant Sources: Figure 4 displays the most relevant academic sources publishing research on media education and critical thinking. The journal *Media Education–Mediaobrazovanie* leads significantly with 73 publications, indicating its central role in this scholarly domain. It is followed by *Comunicar* (44 documents) and *Media and Communication* (41 documents), both of which are well-known for addressing interdisciplinary themes in education, media, and society. Other prominent journals include *Body Image* (37), *Media Literacy and Academic Research* (34), and International *Journal of Communication* (33), showcasing a diverse range of perspectives from psychology, communication, and educational research. Journals like *Journal of Children and Media*, *New Media & Society*, and *American Behavioral Scientist* further emphasize the field's relevance to both youth-oriented studies and social behavior.

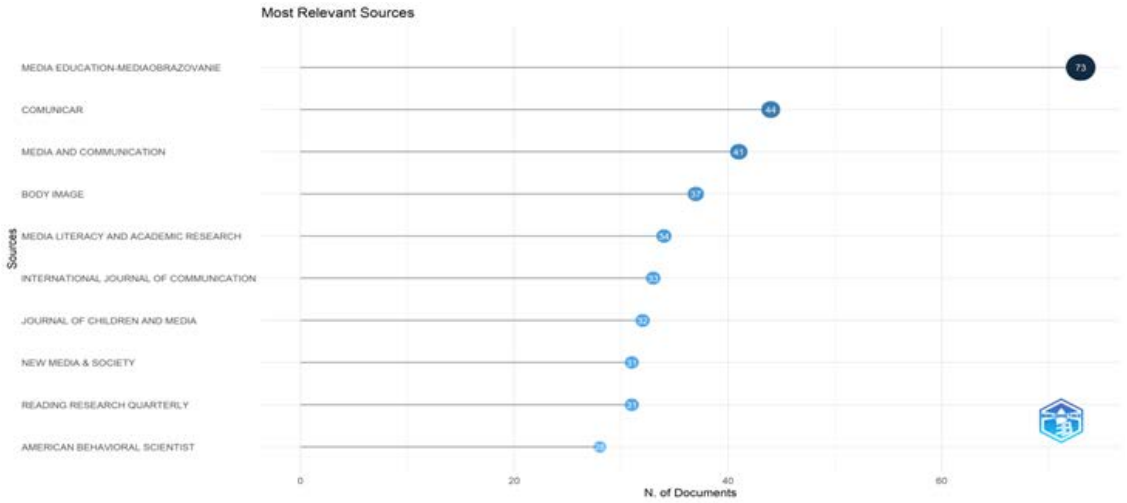

Fig. 4. Most Relevant Sources

This distribution highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and shows that research is being published across journals focused on media studies, communication, education, and behavioral science. These outlets collectively shape the discourse on how media education supports the development of critical thinking skills.

Authors' Production Over Time: Figure 5 visualizes the publication activity of leading authors in the field of media education and critical thinking over time. Each bubble represents the number of articles published in a given year, with larger and darker bubbles indicating more articles and higher citation impact (TC per year).

M. Tully shows strong and consistent output from 2015 onward, peaking in recent years, which explains their top position in total publications. A. Fedorov also demonstrates steady contributions, with impactful work between 2015 and 2022. E.W. Austin has the longest publishing timeline, beginning in the late 1990s, and sustained contributions up to 2024. A. Levitskaya and S. Park show steady output from 2015 onward, while SJ. Paxton and B.A. Primack had earlier spikes, particularly around 2017–2019.

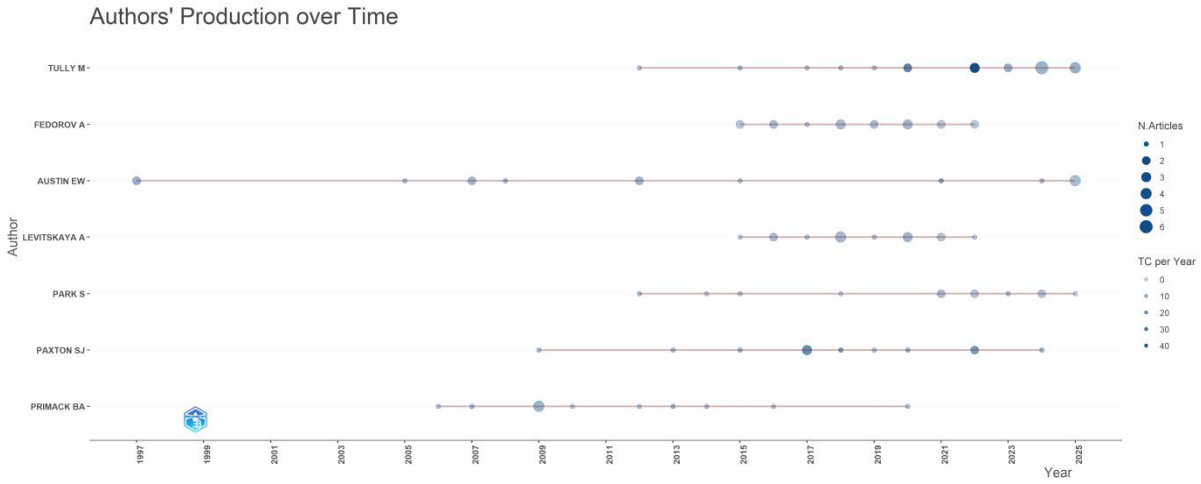

Fig.5. Authors' Production over Time

Corresponding Author's Countries: Figure 6 depicts the geographic distribution of corresponding authors in the field of media education and critical thinking research.

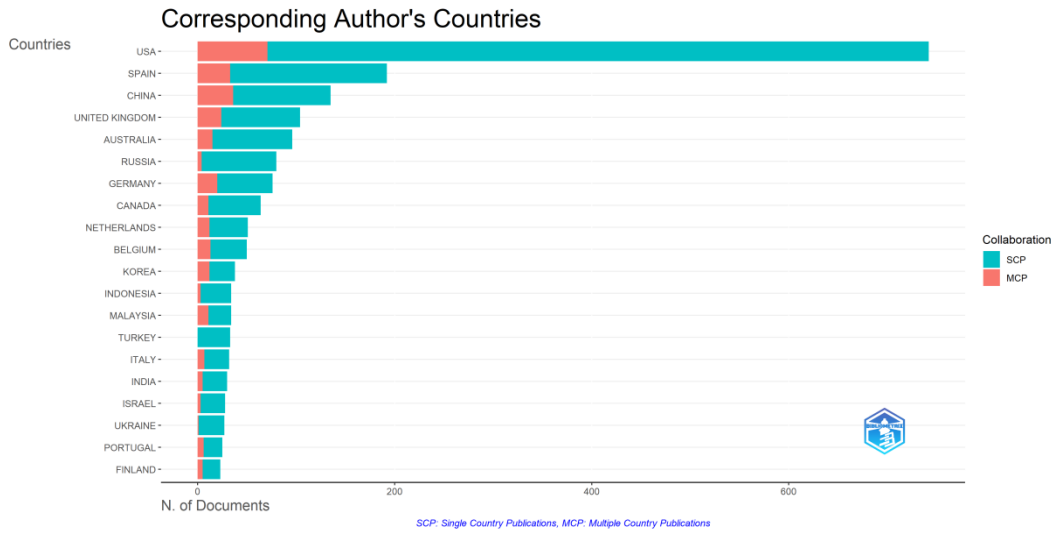

Fig. 6. Corresponding Author's Countries

The United States overwhelmingly leads the field with the highest number of publications, primarily through Single Country Publications (SCP), indicating a dominant national research presence. Spain and China follow as the second and third most productive countries, showing a healthy balance between SCP and Multiple Country Publications (MCP), suggesting both strong internal output and international collaboration. The United Kingdom, Australia, and Russia also display notable activity, reflecting the global relevance of the topic.

European countries like Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland, as well as Asian nations such as South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India, contribute to the field but with fewer collaborative works, as indicated by the relatively smaller MCP segments. Largely, the figure illustrates a broad international interest in media literacy and critical thinking, with the U.S. as the epicenter, but growing research engagement across Europe and Asia as well.

Country Production Over Time: Figure 7 illustrates the cumulative scholarly output on media education and critical thinking from five leading countries, the USA, China, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Australia, from 1995 to 2025. The United States clearly dominates in terms of total article production, showing a steep and continuous growth curve, especially after 2015, and peaking sharply after 2020. China and Spain also demonstrate a notable increase in research activity beginning around 2018, with China surpassing the UK and Australia in total output. The United Kingdom and Australia, while contributing consistently, maintain comparatively moderate growth rates throughout the period. This trend reflects the growing international engagement in media education and critical thinking research, with developing nations like China rapidly increasing their contributions, while the U.S. continues to maintain a stronghold in the field. The graph underscores the shift towards global scholarly involvement over time.

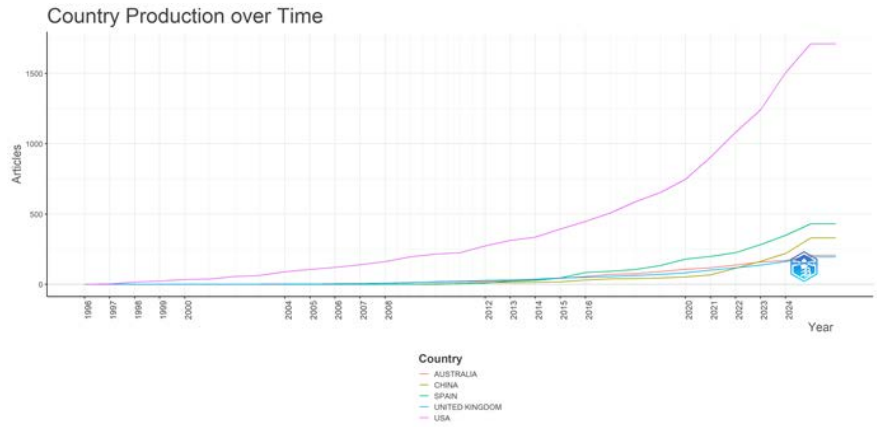

Fig. 7. Country Production Over Time

Tree Map of Most Frequent Keywords: Figure 8 presents a tree map visualization of the most relevant keywords used in research on media education and critical thinking. The largest segment is "media literacy" with 1,061 occurrences, representing 19 % of all keywords, which confirms its dominant position in literature.

Other frequently used terms include "social media" (287, 5 %), "education" (242, 4 %), "media" (240, 4 %), "fake news" (191, 3 %), and "adolescents" (176, 3%). These keywords highlight the main thematic focus areas, how media literacy is taught and developed, especially among youth, and the challenges posed by misinformation. Keywords such as "misinformation", "media education", "digital literacy", "students", and "internet" suggest an educational and digital context, while others like "attitudes", "behavior", "impact", and "exposure" point toward psychological and social implications of media use. Largely, this tree map provides a compact overview of keyword prevalence and thematic distribution, illustrating the field's interdisciplinary nature and the prominence of issues like misinformation, youth engagement, and education in the digital age.



Fig. 8. Tree map

Trend Topics Over Time: Figure 9 illustrates the evolution of trending research topics in media literacy and related fields from 2013 to 2025. The terms are plotted based on their time of appearance and frequency, represented by the size of the bubbles. "Media literacy" remains the most consistently discussed topic, appearing heavily between 2018 and 2021 with the largest bubble, indicating high frequency. Other enduring themes include "education", "media", and "adolescents", showing steady academic interest across multiple years. More recent and fast-growing topics such as "misinformation", "disinformation", "fake news", and "social media" have emerged prominently after 2020, indicating a shift in focus toward digital threats and the critical evaluation of information in online spaces.

Additionally, concepts like "digital literacy", "communication", "information literacy", and "technology" have gained traction in the last few years, reflecting the growing relevance of digital platforms in education and information consumption. The figure shows a clear transition from traditional themes like television and gender (pre-2018) to contemporary concerns around digital media, misinformation, and youth engagement in the digital age.

Clusters by Document Coupling: Figure 10 illustrates clusters derived from document coupling, highlighting how closely research topics are connected based on shared references. The x-axis represents centrality, indicating how interconnected a topic is within the research field, while the y-axis shows impact, reflecting its influence in literature. The map reveals two distinct clusters. The first cluster, located in the upper-right quadrant, includes “media literacy,” “fake news,” and

"misinformation," with high confidence levels, most notably, "misinformation" (93.9 %) and "fake news" (92.5 %). These topics are both highly central and impactful, indicating their dominant role and wide scholarly attention in the research landscape.

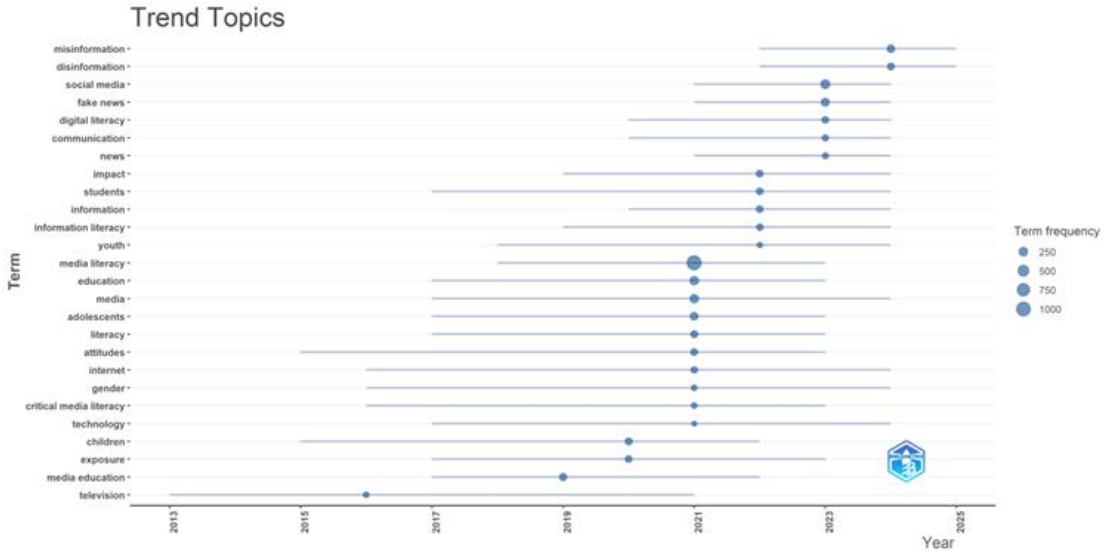

Fig. 9. Trend Topics

In contrast, the second cluster in the lower-left quadrant comprises "social media," "digital literacy," and another form of "media literacy." These topics have lower centrality and impact, suggesting they are either emerging themes or represent more niche or context-specific research that is not yet fully integrated into the broader discourse. Largely, the figure emphasizes the pivotal role of misinformation-related studies within media literacy, positioning them as core themes driving current academic inquiry.

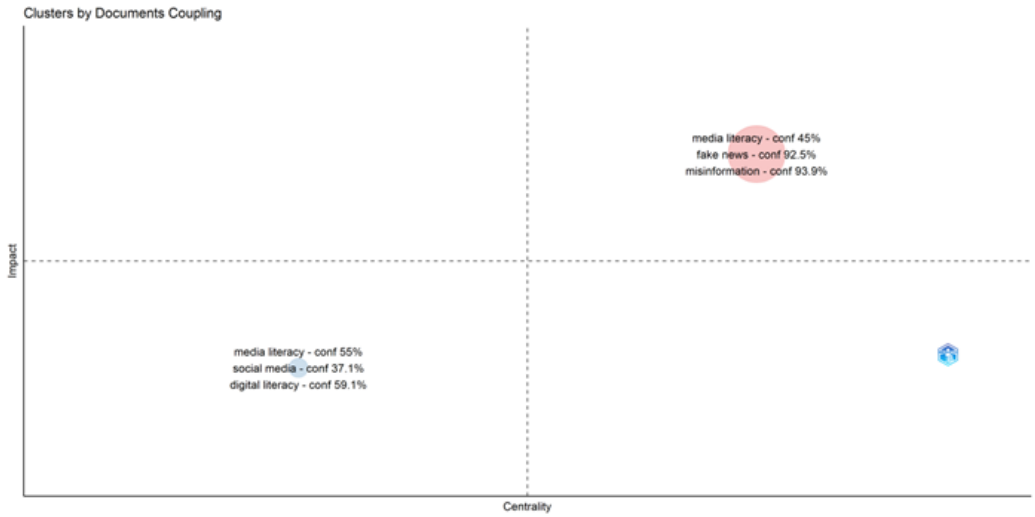

Fig. 10. Cluster by Document Coupling

Collaboration Network Among Authors: Figure 11 presents a collaboration network among authors, where nodes represent individual researchers and connecting lines indicate co-authorship relationships. The size of each node reflects the number of publications, while the thickness of the links shows the strength or frequency of collaboration. The most prominent clusters are centered around authors such as E.W. Austin, M. Tully, and S.J. Paxton, indicating they are leading figures with extensive co-authorship networks. E.W. Austin, with the largest node, appears to be the most active and well-connected researcher, working closely with others like S.J.T. Hust and B.E. Pinkleton. Similarly, M. Tully shows a strong collaboration with E.K. Vraga, suggesting a

tightly-knit research partnership. Paxton SJ also forms a notable cluster with S.A. Mclean and S.M. Wilksch, representing another active research group. Largely, the figure highlights the collaborative nature of scholarly work in this field, identifying both core contributors and the structure of research communities through co-authorship patterns.

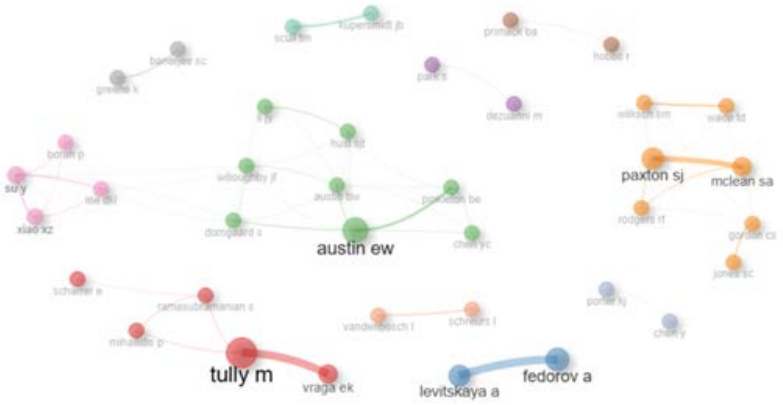

Fig. 11. Collaboration Network Among Authors

World Map Collaboration: Figure 12 and data from the world map collaboration visualization illustrate the global research collaborations in the field. The visual map highlights strong international connections, especially involving the USA, which appears to be the central hub of scholarly collaboration. The USA has established numerous bilateral partnerships with countries such as Australia, China, the United Kingdom, and several European nations. These collaborations are shown by thick connecting lines, indicating high frequencies of co-authored publications.

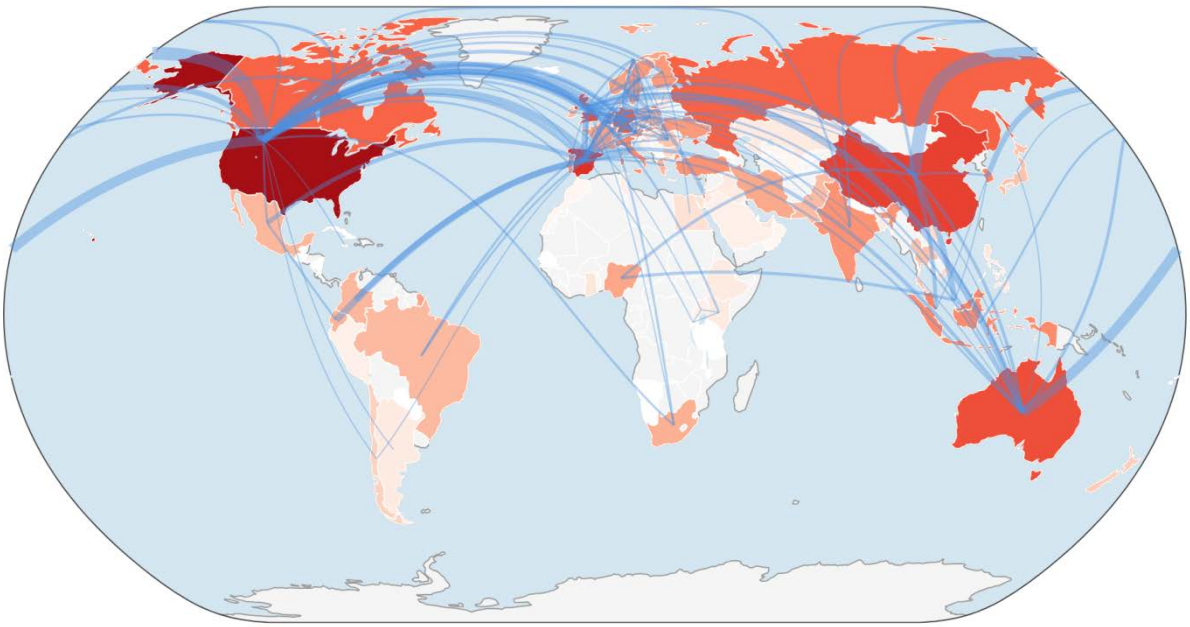

Fig. 12. World Map Collaboration

The accompanying data table confirms this, showing detailed frequencies of collaboration between specific countries. For example, Australia has frequent partnerships with countries like Canada and China. This visualization reflects the interconnectedness of the academic community and underscores the dominance of a few core countries in shaping global research in the area of study. The darker shades and thicker lines on the map emphasize the more active contributors,

reinforcing how certain nations significantly influence knowledge production through robust international collaboration networks.

5. Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of media literacy research. The findings reveal a growing but fragmented field, with significant thematic concentrations around topics such as media literacy education, misinformation, digital pedagogy, and social media engagement. While the volume of publications has increased substantially in recent years, the field lacks cohesive integration between cognitive and pedagogical strands. Much of the research remains siloed, with theoretical and empirical studies often disconnected. This underscores the need for more unified frameworks that combine educational theory with practical interventions and media analysis. To advance the field, future work should prioritize interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies that bridge media studies, education, psychology, and communication. Researchers are encouraged to extend bibliometric insights into tangible applications, such as curriculum development and teacher training programs. Doing so can foster pedagogical innovation and ensure that media literacy education is responsive to diverse cultural and technological contexts. Moreover, studies should seek to include underrepresented regions and non-English literature to broaden the global scope of inquiry and avoid Western-centric perspectives.

Several limitations affect the present analysis. The study relied on specific databases, which may exclude relevant work from smaller journals or grey literature. Language bias is another concern, as English-language publications often dominate bibliometric databases, potentially marginalizing research conducted in languages other than English. Additionally, citations, especially for recently published works, can skew the perceived impact and relevance of emerging topics.

Looking ahead, future research should include experimental studies to validate the themes identified in bibliometric mapping. There is also value in conducting mixed-methods syntheses that incorporate qualitative insights to contextualize quantitative trends. Such approaches may enrich our understanding of how media literacy is taught, perceived, and practiced across different educational and cultural environments, ultimately contributing to a more holistic and impactful research agenda.

References

Aria, Cuccurullo, 2017 – *Aria, M., Cuccurullo, C.* (2017). Bibliometrix: An R-tool for comprehensive science mapping analysis. *Journal of Informetrics*. 11(4): 959-975. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2017.08.007

Ashley et al., 2017 – *Ashley, S., Maksl, A., Craft, S.* (2017). News media literacy and political engagement: What's the connection? *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 9(1): 79-98. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1151035

Buckingham, 2003 – *Buckingham, D.* (2003). Media education: Literacy, learning and contemporary culture. Polity Press.

Buckingham, 2007 – *Buckingham, D.* (2007). Digital media literacies: Rethinking media education in the age of the Internet. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. 2(1): 43-55. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2007.2.1.43

Carretero et al., 2017 – *Carretero, S., Vuorikari, R., Punie, Y.* (2017). *DigComp 2.1.* The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens. With eight proficiency levels and examples of use. Publications Office of the European Union.

Cortes, 2020 – *Cortes, R.Z.* (2020). A critical evaluation of Clifford Christians's media ethics theory: a précis. Church Communication and Culture. 5(2): 157-186. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2020.1765694

Donthu et al., 2021 – *Donthu, N., Kumar, S., Mukherjee, D., Pandey, N., Lim, W.M.* (2021). How to conduct a bibliometric analysis: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 133: 285-296. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.04.070

Engel et al., 2019 – *Engel, L.C., Rutkowski, D., Thompson, G. (*2019). Toward an international measure of global competence? A critical look at the PISA 2018 framework. *Globalisation Societies and Education*. 17(2): 117-131. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1642183

Ennis, 2011 – *Ennis, R.* (2011). Critical thinking: Reflection and perspective Part II. *Inquiry Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines*. 26(2): 5-19. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5840/inquiryctnews 201126215

Facione, 1990 – *Facione, P.* (1990). Critical thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction (The Delphi Report).

Facione, 2011 – *Facione, P.A.* (2011). Critical thinking: What it is and why it counts. *Insight assessment*. 1(1): 1-23.

Fedorov, Levitskaya, 2015 – *Fedorov, A., Levitskaya, A.* (2015). The Framework of media education and media criticism in the contemporary world: the opinion of international experts. *Comunicar*. 45(23): 107-115. DOI: 10.3916/C45-2015-11

Fisher, 2011 – *Fisher, R. M.* (2011). A critique of critical thinking: Towards a critical integral pedagogy of fearlessness. *NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry*. 9(2): 92.

Freire, 1970 – *Freire, P.* (1970). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom. *Harvard educational review*. 40(2): 205-225.

Gendina, 2016 – *Gendina, N.* (2016). Integrating the Personal Information Culture concept and the idea of media and information literacy offered in the UNESCO curriculum for Teachers: Experiences of Russia and Uzbekistan. In: *Communications in computer and information science* (pp. 543–554). Cham: Springer International Publishing. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52162-6_54

Grizzle et al., 2014 – *Grizzle, A., Moore, P., Dezuanni, M., Asthana, S., Wilson, C., Banda, F., Onumah, C.* (2014). Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines. UNESCO.

Halpern, 2013 – *Halpern, D.F.* (2013). Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking. Psychology press.

Hobbs, 2011 – *Hobbs, R.* (2011). Digital and media literacy: Connecting culture and classroom. Corwin Press.

Hobbs, Jensen, 2009 – *Hobbs, R., Jensen, A.* (2009). The past, present, and future of media literacy education. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 1(1): 1-11. DOI: https://doi.org/10.23860/jmle-1-1-1

Jeong et al., 2012 – *Jeong, S.H., Cho, H., Hwang, Y.* (2012). Media literacy interventions: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Communication*. 62(3): 454-472. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01643.x

Kahne, Bowyer, 2016 – *Kahne, J., Bowyer, B.* (2016). Educating for democracy in a partisan age. *American Educational Research Journal.* 54(1): 3-34. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831216679817

Kellner, Share, 2005 – *Kellner, D., Share, J.* (2005). Toward critical media literacy: core concepts, debates, organizations, and policy. *Discourse Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 26(3): 369-386. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300500200169

Livingstone, 2004 – *Livingstone, S.* (2004). Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies. *The Communication Review*. 7(1): 3-14. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490280152

Martens, Hobbs, 2015 – *Martens, H., Hobbs, R.* (2015). How media literacy supports civic engagement in a digital Age. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*. 23(2): 120-137. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2014.961636

McDougall et al., 2018 – *McDougall, J., Zezulkova, M., Van Driel, B., Sternadel, D.* (2018). Teaching media literacy in Europe: evidence of effective school practices in primary and secondary education, NESET II report.

Mihailidis, Thevenin, 2013 – *Mihailidis, P., Thevenin, B.* (2013). Media literacy as a core competency for engaged citizenship in participatory democracy. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 57(11): 1611-1622. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764213489015

Mihailidis, Viotty, 2017 – *Mihailidis, P., Viotty, S.* (2017). Spreadable spectacle in digital culture: civic expression, fake news, and the role of media literacies in "Post-Fact" society. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 61(4): 441-454. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217701217

Ng, 2012 – *Ng, W.* (2012). Can we teach digital natives digital literacy? *Computers & Education*. 59(3): 1065-1078. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.04.016

OECD, 2019 – OECD. An OECD learning framework 2030. In*: The future of education and labor*. 2019. Cham: Springer International Publishing: 23-35.

Paul, Elder, 2006 – *Paul, R., Elder, L.* (2006). Critical thinking competency standards. Dillon Beach: Foundation for critical thinking.

Potter, 2010 – *Potter, W.J.* (2010). The state of media literacy. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 54(4): 675-696. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.521462

Stedman, Andenoro, 2007 – *Stedman, N.L., Andenoro, A.C.* (2007). Identification of Relationships between Emotional Intelligence Skill & Critical Thinking Disposition in Undergraduate Leadership Students. *Journal of Leadership Education*. 6(1): 190-208. DOI: https://doi.org/10.12806/v6/i1/rf10

Tommasi et al., 2021 – *Tommasi, F., Ceschi, A., Sartori, R., Gostimir, M., Passaia, G., Genero, S., Belotto, S.* (2021). Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy in the context of IVET: a systematic scoping review. *European Journal of Training and Development*. 47(1/2): 85-104. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1108/ejtd-06-2021-0074

Tully et al., 2020 – *Tully, M., Vraga, E.K., Bode, L.* (2020). Designing and testing news literacy messages for social media. *Mass Communication & Society*. 23(1): 22-46. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2019.1604970

Vraga, Tully, 2021 – *Vraga, E.K., Tully, M.* (2021). News literacy, social media behaviors, and skepticism toward information on social media. *Information Communication & Society*. 24(2): 150-166. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2019.1637445

Vuojärvi et al., 2021 – *Vuojärvi, H., Sirpa Purtilo-Nieminen, Rasi, P., Rivinen, S.* (2021). Conceptions of adult education teachers-in-training regarding the media literacy education of older people. A phenomenographic study to inform a course design. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 13(3): 1-18. DOI: https://doi.org/10.23860/jmle-2021-13-3-1

Wang, Si, 2023 – *Wang, C., Si, L.* (2023). A Bibliometric Analysis of Digital Literacy Research from 1990 to 2022 and Research on Emerging Themes during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability*. 15(7): 5769. DOI: https://doi.org/10.3390/su15075769

Zohar, Barzilai, 2013 – *Zohar, A., Barzilai, S.* (2013). A review of research on metacognition in science education: current and future directions. *Studies in Science Education*. 49(2): 121-169. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/03057267.2013.847261

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 166-173

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.166
https://me.cherkasgu.press



YouTube as Media in Constructing Behavioral Change in Children

Dias Putri Salsabila [a], Frans Sayogie [a, *], Muhammad Farkhan [a], Fitriatul Uzma [a]

[a] Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

YouTube has emerged as a dominant global platform for digital storytelling, offering unprecedented opportunities for creators to project their identities to a massive visual audience. This study investigates the psychological and behavioral evolution of child influencers, specifically focusing on the longitudinal changes observed in Ryan Kaji of the YouTube channel "Ryan's World." Using a behaviorist theoretical framework, the study applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model to analyze how the digital environment acts as a catalyst for behavioral modification in young influencers. This investigation explores the various factors that contributed to the channel's exponential growth and subsequent developmental shifts in its subjects. The findings indicate that as a child YouTuber, Ryan Kaji experienced a significant character transformation shaped by intense environmental stimuli, including brand expectations, audience feedback, and the repetitive nature of content production. Furthermore, the study concludes that while YouTube serves as a broad educational and entertainment medium, the platform also facilitates complex dynamics between parental involvement and child labor. This research highlights concerns about parental exploitation, where the constant push for content production serves as a primary driver of behavioral change. This study also indicates that the intersection of commercial interests and digital exposure creates a unique behavioral paradigm that requires further ethical scrutiny.

Keywords: behavioral change, children, content creator, Ryan's World, YouTube Kids.

1. Introduction

A media literacy intervention is an educational strategy aimed at augmenting critical thinking through the enhancement of media knowledge, the elevation of awareness regarding media influence, and the refinement of skills to evaluate media representations (Byrne, 2009). These interventions seek to enhance people's abilities to comprehend media. Analyze messages, identify biases, evaluate credible sources, and comprehend media impacts on individuals and society. Digital skills treatments aim to equip individuals with the capability to utilize digital technology effectively and securely (Alon et al., 2024).

Effective media literacy education seeks to safeguard audiences from adverse effects while simultaneously empowering them to be ethical media creators and engaged, responsible digital citizens (Potter, 2010). One of the most popular media providing video hosting services today is YouTube (Bärtl, 2018), which offers a free upload option. Free video clips can be loaded, viewed, and shared by users. YouTube is also a great option for those seeking knowledge without reading papers. There are many videos on YouTube, such as vlogs, music video clips, do-it-yourself or DIY

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: frans.sayogie@uinjkt.ac.id (F. Sayogie)

videos, skits, live performances, and others. Media literacy education is essential for assisting children in navigating YouTube content and promoting positive behavioral change (Zanatta, 2017).

Platforms such as YouTube, equipped with sophisticated recommendation algorithms and an extensive array of information, can significantly influence children's social norms, values, and behavioral expectations. An essential component of media literacy is the emphasis on critical analysis and comprehension of the commercial motives underlying the content consumed. Children must be instructed not to passively consume content, but to recognize that each video is a deliberate creation, frequently designed for financial profit through advertising or endorsements (Hobbs, 2017). The capacity to discern and interrogate commercial motivations and concealed goals enables youngsters to withstand consumerist influences and deter the emulation of unrealistic lives depicted by influencers. Consequently, media literacy functions as a cognitive safeguard, empowering children to assess the reliability and emotional resonance of content, thereby fostering more informed decision-making and the cultivation of a more genuine self-identity independent of media influence (Buckingham, 2003).

The more famous YouTube is, the more people look for business opportunities there. It is not surprising if this happens because YouTube provides various rewards for content creators (Holmbom, 2015). For example, someone who becomes a content creator gets a lot of money from every video they upload. They upload the video to their YouTube account. Their loyal viewers who have followed or are interested in the topic brought by the account owner will watch it, and the money will flow to the creator's account depending on the number of people who watch the video (Zanatta, 2017). Besides being useful as a business opportunity that makes money, we can also find various videos that people of all ages need. Videos that many need include video tips and tricks, talk shows and variety shows, web dramas, music videos, and many more.

Overall, not only adults but also many kids are using YouTube. They either use YouTube Kids or use an account from their family. There are many types of videos that kids will access, such as educational videos for children, children's nurseries, fairytale animation, videos with children as actors, toy reviews, animation or cartoon characters, and others. A video uploaded with children as its target usually will gain a million views quickly. YouTube has made YouTube Kids an application that could be used mainly by children. They claim to provide a better-organized domain for children to wander on YouTube and make it more controllable for parents and guardians to steer their exploration. The main difference is that there is no comment section in the kids' version of the YouTube app. With over 100 million downloads, the app tries to answer parents' complaints about how YouTube content is unsuitable for their children. Some popular genres in the YouTube Kids app, namely video blogs (Vlogs), comedy sketch videos or skits, and "hanging out" videos in which kids record their day interactions with friends and siblings. Videos in which kids recorded events such as sporting activities, games, school functions, and car shows are also popular (Lange, 2016). However, it still reassures parents that letting their children be on YouTube without supervision is okay.

One of the kids' YouTubers who has a great subscribers is Ryan's World. The video was published on April 28, 2020, with the title Ryan Pretend Play Funny Police Story Helps Find Missing Items!!! (Ryan's World, 2020). Ryan shows up in the video with the theme of playing pretend. He used many properties such as clothes that fit the roles, toy equipment of toys, and play friends. Ryan's family acts as a helper or guide for the play. In the video, Ryan and her parents create roles in the police story play. As the video was uploaded on the YouTube Kids channel, it is interesting to discuss how the play portrays the life of Ryan in Ryan's World as a kid. YouTube has become a source of entertainment for many kids worldwide, and the apps have a particular effect on them. This kind of channel targets kids as its audience, provides entertainment and education in its content. The importance of examining the benefits and drawbacks that directly or indirectly promote babies' and kids' mental and physical growth is feasible because of YouTube's children's media platforms (Imaniah et al., 2020). Therefore, the content might trigger an organism's response according to the topic of the content. Thus, as the video highlights the play and its properties used, the construction behavioral change in the child is the focus of this research. Ryan's World has regularly uploaded its videos on YouTube daily, whether a new video or a re-upload video. Considering his content on YouTube, having 35 million views and 33,8 million subscribers, this video on Ryan's World YouTube Channel is chosen for analysis.

Understanding how other experts' similar studies show when investigating the topic on YouTube is essential. Three contemporary pieces of research relating to this subject are mentioned here. First, the 2020 article journal publication by Boerman and van Reijmersdal examines the

impact of the consumption of sponsored influencer YouTube videos on children's advertising literacy and para-social relationships (PSR). PSR is a potential country limit for the effects of disclosure on persuasion based on the connection between children and influencers. According to this research, when kids accurately recall influencer-sponsored YouTube video disclosures, it raises their attention to advertisements and helps them comprehend how to persuade and sell (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, 2020).

Second, a 2020 journal publication of research by Zhou et al. The article examines how behavioral, contextual, and psychological variables affect how users utilize the YouTube app as a learning tool. The results demonstrate that individual characteristics, including expectations for learning outcomes and attitudes, directly impact whether YouTube is used as a learning material. On the other hand, contextual variables, like socializing on YouTube, affect attitudes, while personality characteristics, such as pre-kindergarten experiences, impact the expectation of learning results (Zhou et al., 2020).

The third study investigates the causes of YouTube addictive behaviors by examining the connections between social anxiety, para-social relationships with YouTubers, and YouTube addiction using a conceptual model rooted in cognitive behavioral theorists. This study was conducted by de Bérail et al. and was publicly released in 2019. This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding para-social compensation theory (de Bérail et al., 2019).

Based on the previous research, the studies did not examine the construction of behavioral change that happens to children because of YouTube videos and their content. This study then attempts to reach the behavioral aspect of a child on YouTube as they are associated with it. Here, by emphasizing the content creator's language and behavior when sharing his play as a child on YouTube. Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) enables a researcher to see how individuals react to media content, particularly in children. Stimulus organism response theory provides a way to understand the meaning of behavioral change as a child connected with YouTube. According to Mehrabian and Russell, the SOR hypothesis highlights that people often respond to their environment in one of two ways. Positive habits, such as the desire to explore, remain, attach, or perform, are all included in one collection from participants. Trying to prevent habits, however, involves wanting to do the opposite of the last activity, such as acting negatively (Mehrabian, Russell, 1974). By applying a behaviorist study approach that works within the Stimulus Organism Response framework, this research aims to investigate the factors that influence changes in children's behavior that are closely related to watching the related video. This study addresses the researcher's questions: how much influence do children's YouTube videos have on their behavior change?

2. Materials and methods

The researcher uses qualitative descriptive methods as the research method for reviewing the YouTube video channel *Ryan's World*. The data is gathered by watching some videos from the YouTube channel with a critical awareness of children's behavioral change and concentrating on all of the activities the content creator has done in the video. We used a practical framework to analyze children's behavior change more deeply by examining the elements connected to children's behavior using the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) theory. The Theory of Stimulus Organism Response is a response or reaction to external stimuli. It also classified human behavior into open and closed behavior (Skinner, 1938). The SOR hypothesis has been used in research on servicescapes (Bitner, 1992), arousal and enjoyment (Mehrabian, Russell, 1974), and aesthetics across a variety of disciplines (Wohlwill, 1976). In investigating the video's content, the relationships between inputs (stimulus), processes (organism), and outputs (response) have been studied in depth by using the SOR theory (Kim et al., 2020).

3. Discussion

The discussion began with examining one of Ryan's World videos (Ryan's World, 2020) entitled *Ryan Pretend Play funny Police story helps find missing items!!!* Later, followed by a comparison of the behavioral changes Ryan Kaji underwent using the Mehrabian-Russell SOR theory approach, which was broken down into the stimuli from the environment (S) through the acquisition of organisms (O) that affect changes in a person's behavior (R). The organism is the end product of a process carried out by the stimulus, which typically plays a role between stimulus and reaction. In contrast, the stimulus may be viewed as a factor that impacts a person's situation. As a

consequence of Stimulus and Organisms, including numerous aspects like intentions or conduct, Response is the leading outcome (Mehrabian, Russell, 1974).

The proliferation of social media makes it easier for people to find work, including becoming a content creator. Working as a content creator is a job anyone can do anytime. Armed with good cameras for taking videos and content that engages the audience, many people push their luck as content creators. However, developing channels for content creators to become more famous and in demand by many people does require persistence, diligence, and much time. For example, on YouTube, people attempt to make their fortune as content creators by creating their own YouTube channel and begin uploading their videos. The YouTube app has developed substantially over the years and has become the world's most popular online video platform. Be notable for the engagement created between content creators and consumers through comments, likes, and sharing as the website transitions from being a static site to one that serves as a social network (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2020). Uploaded videos have various types and genres, from children to adults, all available on the platform.

Children like content made explicitly for YouTube by content creators such as YouTube personalities. Children watch YouTube Kids' content, including pranks, video games, online streaming, unboxing things, product reviews, and individuals showing their musical skills. Some also watch videos of people living their daily lives, sometimes called video blogs or vlogs (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, 2020). Especially now, a particular YouTube platform for children is called YouTube Kids. To present a safer online experience for their underage audience, YouTube established the YouTube Kids application. Parents can determine what their children can watch on YouTube Kids (Papadamou et al., 2020). Design elements like repetitive content, highlights of learning segments, and support of social-emotional development should be considered in children's planning and creation of video content. Adults or more knowledgeable others should make a mindful and careful selection of videos to ensure that children spend their time on YouTube as beneficially as possible (Neumann, Herodotou, 2020).

Ryan's World is a toy reviewer YouTube channel founded by Ryan Kaji in 2015. In each of his YouTube videos, Ryan continuously reviews various kinds of children's toys, especially toys that contain surprises inside them, with his family. Apart from reviewing children's toys, Ryan also has his own brand of toys (Hains, Jennings, 2021). With the support of his parents, content that initially only contained little Ryan playing with his new toys has now turned into content that can induce much money. Ryan began to diligently upload videos containing his activities in unboxing and reviewing toys that would interest children his age. Unboxing videos that show a product being opened are one of the most popular genres of video on YouTube. Unboxing videos may thrill children since they suppose that watching them is joyful, almost as if they are opening their presents. The "unboxing" videos have evolved into reviews of products for children (Neumann, Herodotou, 2020). Ryan's World, which used to be named Ryan ToyReview, is a channel that regularly makes toy review videos.

Several major toy manufacturers also constantly ask Ryan for his endorsement. For instance, Ryan, a kids' YouTuber with 33 million followers, unpacks and showcases toys from the advertiser in his channel's videos and bakes cookies with the support of a well-known butter product (Boerman, van Reijmersdal, 2020). With so many subscribers, it has become one of the most famous YouTube content creators, and he has a high income at a young age. As a result, advertisers, typically young individuals, are drawn to social media influencers and unconventional endorsers because of their capacity to interact with people on social media (Martínez, Olsson, 2019). As the Ryan's World YouTube channel proliferates, which has more and more subscribers and viewers, it has made many changes to the content provided by the channel. It also made Ryan Kaji, who used to be a child who liked to make vlogs or be called a vlogger, evolve into an 'influencer'. An Influencer is a specialist who becomes a trustworthy recommender of a product or service for the general public. It is because of their expertise and skill in the field (Castillo-Abdul et al., 2020). Mainly, YouTube personalities, usually referred to as YouTubers, have emerged as a new fame category, attracting millions of subscribers and making millions of dollars annually (Tolbert, Drogos, 2019).

Everyone's dream is success at a young age, like Ryan Kaji, who made $ 26 million in 2019 (Hains, Jennings, 2021). At the age of eight, he made that much money, which was a boast of his parents. However, there are changes in behavior shown by Ryan Kaji in one of his videos. One of the videos with a high number of viewers is *Ryan Police Pretend Play and Late Going to School!!!*

Furthermore, his first video, entitled *Kid Playing with Toys Lego Duplo Number Train* (Ryan's World, 2015), shows how the contrast is the difference in behavior shown by Ryan during the video. The first video they uploaded shows how Ryan -who was four years old at that time- created toy review content that his mother recorded. In the video, Ryan looked very happy, like children of the same age who had just gotten the new toy they wanted. Meanwhile, the introductory video that will be discussed shows Ryan's attitude, around nine years old at that time, which looked different from that in the first-ever video. Somehow, Ryan's attitude and behavior in the video seem unnatural.

A stimulus can be interpreted as a stimulus that can cause a change in a person's attitude or behavior. The causes vary, but environmental factors influence most. Ryan Kaji, who was four years old the first time they recorded a video for YouTube, told his parents that he wanted to make YouTube content, and because they wanted their children to be happy, they agreed to Ryan's wishes. Ryan then began his content by reviewing various exciting toys; he also looked delighted, and his attitude looked like any other 4-year-old. In his first video, *Kid Playing with Toys Lego Duplo Number Train* (Ryan's World, 2015), Ryan looks genuine in reviewing the toys Ryan and his mother bought at the toy store. In the video, it is shown how Ryan is having fun and looks joyful. In front of the camera, Ryan is happy but confused at certain moments, like other four-year-old children who do not know what to do, especially during the video. The warm interaction between the mother and child in the video frames their happy moments – this video models positive parent – child interactions. Even though what appears to us is Ryan Kaji, who wants to create a YouTube channel, without the influence and contribution of his parents, the Ryan's World YouTube channel would not have expanded well. It concludes that Ryan's parents took a crucial role in changing their son's behavior. The social learning theory claims that children learn their social agents' actions and ideas. Modeling, reinforcing, and social connection also play a part in the process (Folkvord et al., 2019). Changes in children's behavior are caused by the many videos made to make their son's YouTube channel something that both parents can earn from. Under the pretext of complying with their children's wishes, they indirectly exploit minors who should still be playing with their friends and being directed to as content creators instead.

Organisms here can be interpreted as the main actors in the discussion and the center of this research topic: Ryan Kaji. Ryan already has his own YouTube channel at the age of four and has become one of the most well-known kids YouTubers in the toy review field after several years of pursuing his activities. Ironically, even though YouTube provides a particular app for children, it has allowed minor children to become content creators, producers, and even more disseminators using simple devices such as mobile phones (Tur-Viñes et al., 2018). Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that a kid at that age could work his own YouTube channel to become one of the highest-earning channels for the toy review genre. The categories of video game play, toys, and DIY are where children's YouTubers have the most significant influence (Castelló-Martínez, Tur-Viñes, 2020). Not to mention that almost every day, Ryan uploads new videos on his channel, making this even more challenging to visualize. At least it takes hours to make a video with a span of 6-10 minutes. It may include the editing process, and it may just be the process of making the video. Furthermore, counting the more than 2,000 videos Ryan has uploaded on his YouTube channel, including his compilation videos with his family.

The response is the outcome of the consequences between the stimulus and the organism. It serves as the phase at which an individual's behavior toward the stimulus can be observed. In the case of Ryan Kaji, he went from making vlogs with his mother videotaping him to becoming a kid influencer who created various content. The accumulation of kids' user-created content has formed its entertainment genres. It includes gaming tutorials and plays videos, comedy acts, pranks, DIY videos, and children's play. The video content usually involves materials like slime or Play-Doh that children are familiar with. In addition, content creators frequently upload videos of themselves examining and evaluating different retail toy products, known as "unboxing toy videos" (Nicoll, Nansen, 2018). Ryan eventually developed content that appeared more professional and exciting, and his parents also participated in the video. As a result of the encouragement of the parents who accompanied him, a child who was simply interested in toys gradually seemed to learn how to become a content creator or influencer. Unlike kid actors, the influencer does not appear to play and enjoy themselves with toys, increasing their relatability to the viewers and covertly carrying out any clear or commercial purpose (De Veirman et al., 2019).

The involvement of parents, who frequently remind and educate children to describe toys or help children learn through toys, leads to behavioral changes in children. As YouTube content improves, it is

noticeable that Ryan Kaji understands more about creating content, as seen by his acting in specific content. Here, the role of parents is not to regulate or moderate children but rather to help shape or modulate how children participate in the YouTube content space (Nansen, Jayemanne, 2016). Ryan Kaji's behavior has evolved from that of an ordinary child who enjoys playing to the behavior of an intelligent child who can act to ensure the continuity of his YouTube content.

The focus on psychological well-being and educational outcomes underscores the connection between media use, mental health, and academic success. Rising apprehensions regarding the effects of digital media on mental health, including heightened stress, anxiety, and depression, have compelled researchers to examine these domains more rigorously (Primack et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the findings indicate that no substantial effects were observed for the majority of these outcomes. A systematic review and meta-analysis of interventions employing digital tools for mental health promotion in children aged 11–18 revealed modest yet encouraging effects on well-being, anxiety reduction, and enhancement of protective factors (Wright et al., 2023). Global awareness of mental health issues is rising, leading to more research on factors affecting psychological well-being. Research indicates that media use and digital interactions substantially affect mental health (Zsila, Reyes, 2023); hence, interventions aimed at enhancing media literacy and digital competencies are essential to mitigate their adverse effects.

4. Results

Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory of Mehrabian and Russell, the researcher analyzes changes in children's behavior caused by YouTube on the Ryan's World YouTube channel. The researchers explored how children can change their behavior by focusing on Stimuli, Organisms, and the Response Ryan Kaji gave for more than eight years, creating content on his YouTube channel. The results of this study indicate that Ryan Kaji experienced significant changes in character and behavior, which were influenced by various environmental factors. The result was that Ryan, who was only four years old, wanted his own YouTube channel, and then his parents realized this desire as a stimulus. Ryan Kaji, the object of this research, must act in front of the camera while reviewing the toys he just bought. It ends with Ryan Kaji's changing behavior as a result of the response he gave to his daily life, which he had to act in front of the camera since childhood. Furthermore, Ryan Kaji's parents act not only as his guardians but also as his work partners. Children's play shown in the first-ever video of Ryan Kaji later changes into a routine that needs to be recorded every time.

5. Conclusion

YouTube exposed children to a wide range of YouTube video content. In this case, children who act as YouTube content creators or those who work as an audience may feel a shift. Not only because of the children's growth as average children but also because of the environment surrounding them, making them seem more grown-up than their peers. Changes in a child's behavior are always related to their parents. The relationship between parents who exploit their children into YouTubers who constantly make video content is one of the reasons for the change in children's behavior. Kids YouTubers have parents who are both guardians and colleagues simultaneously. This study found that children who are typically recorded will become more camera-conscious. They will provide a more camera-friendly attitude and act with a focus on showing everything to the camera as a content creator. It will later lead the children to act like children rather than naturally act like children.

References

Alon et.al.., 2024 – *Alon, A.T., Rahimi, I.D., Tahar, H.* (2024). Fighting fake news on social media: a comparative evaluation of digital literacy interventions. *Current Psychology*. 43: 17343-17361. DOI: 10.1007/s12144 024-05668-4

Bärtl, 2018 – *Bärtl, M.* (2018). YouTube channels, uploads, and views: A statistical analysis of the past ten years. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*. 24(1): 16-32. DOI: 10.1177/1354856517736979

Bitner, 1992 – *Bitner, M.J.* (1992). Servicescapes: The impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*. 56(2): 57-71.

Boerman, van Reijmersdal, 2020 – *Boerman, S.C., van Reijmersdal, E.A.* (2020). Disclosing influencer marketing on YouTube to children: The moderating role of para-social relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 10: 1-15. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.03042

Buckingham, 2003 – *Buckingham, D.* (2003). Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture. Polity Press.

Byrne, 2009 – *Byrne, S.* (2009). Media literacy interventions: What makes them boom or boomerang? *Communication Education*. 58(1): 1-14. DOI: 10.1080/03634520802226444

Castelló-Martínez, Tur-Viñes, 2020 – *Castelló-Martínez, A., Tur-Viñes, V.* (2020). Obesity and food-related content aimed at children on YouTube. *Clin Obes*. 10(5): 1-10. DOI: 10.1111/cob.12389

Castillo-Abdul et al., 2020 – *Castillo-Abdul, B., Romero-Rodríguez, L.M., Larrea-Ayala, A.* (2020). Kid influencers in Spain: understanding the themes they address and preteens' engagement with their YouTube channels. *Heliyon*. 6(9): 1-10. DOI: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05056

de Bérail et al., 2019 – *de Bérail, P., Guillon, M., Bungener, C.* (2019). The relations between YouTube addiction, social anxiety, and parasocial relationships with YouTubers: A moderated-mediation model based on a cognitive-behavioral framework. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 99: 190-204. DOI: 10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.007

De Veirman et al., 2019 – *De Veirman, M., Hudders, L., Nelson, M.R.* (2019). What is influencer marketing, and how does it target children? A review and direction for future research. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 10: 1-16. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02685

Emir et al., 2016 – *Emir, A., Halim, H., Hedre, A., Abdullah, D., Azmi, A., Kamal, S.B.M.* (2016). Factors influencing online hotel booking intention: A conceptual framework from the Stimulus-Organism-Response perspective. *International Academic Journal of Business and Technology*. 2(2): 129-134.

Folkvord et al., 2019 – *Folkvord, F., Bevelander, K.E., Rozendaal, E., Hermans, R.* (2019). Children's bonding with popular YouTube vloggers and their attitudes toward brand and product endorsements in vlogs: an explorative study. *Young Consumers*. 20(2): 77-90. DOI: 10.1108/YC-12-2018-0896

Hains, Jennings, 2021 – *Hains, R.C., Jennings, N.A.* (2021). The Marketing of Children's Toys: Critical Perspectives on Children's Consumer Culture. Springer Publishing.

Hobbs, 2017 – *Hobbs, R.* (2017). Media Literacy: Digital Skills, Critical Thinking, and Responsible Citizenship in the 21st Century. Sage.

Holmbom, 2015 – *Holmbom, M.* (2015). The YouTuber: A qualitative study of popular content creators. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-YouTuber-%3A-A-Qualitative-Study-of-Popular-Holmbom/208c405bb6dae49ee3f63b0bd9362517cf4b402e

Imaniah et al., 2020 – *Imaniah, I., Dewi, N.F.K., Zakky, A.* (2020). YouTube kids channels in developing young children's communication skills in English: Parents' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. *International Journal of Language Education and Culture Review*. 6(1): 20-30. DOI: 10.21009/IJLECR.061.03

Kim et al., 2020 – *Kim, M.J., Lee, C.K., Jung, T.* (2020). Exploring consumer behavior in virtual reality using an extended Stimulus-Organism-Response model. *Journal of Travel Research*. 59(1): 69-89. DOI: 10.1177/0047287518818915

Lange, 2016 – *Lange, P.G.* (2016). Kids on YouTube: Technical identities and digital literacies. Routledge.

Martínez, Olsson, 2019 – *Martínez, C., Olsson, T.* (2019) Making sense of YouTubers: How Swedish children construct and negotiate the YouTuber Misslisibell as a girl celebrity. *Journal of Children and Media*. 13(1): 36-52, DOI: 10.1080/17482798.2018.1517656

Mehrabian, Russell, 1974 – *Mehrabian, A., Russell, J.A.* (1974). An Approach to Environmental Psychology. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Nansen, Jayemanne, 2016 – *Nanse, B., Jayemanne, D.* (2016). Infants, interfaces, and intermediation: Digital parenting in the production of "iPad Baby" YouTube videos. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 60(4): 587-603. DOI: 10.1080/08838151.2016.1234475

Neumann, Herodotou, 2020 – *Neumann, M.M., Herodotou, C.* (2020). Evaluating YouTube videos for young children. *Education and Information Technologies*. 25(5): 4459-4475. DOI: 10.1007/s10639-020-10183-7

Neumann, Herodotou, 2020 – *Neumann, M.M., Herodotou, C.* (2020). Young children and YouTube: A global phenomenon. *Childhood Education*. 96(4): 72-77. DOI: 10.1080/00094056.2020.1796459

Nicoll, Nansen, 2018 – *Nicoll, B., Nansen, B.* (2018). Mimetic production in YouTube toy unboxing videos. *Social Media and Society*. 4(3): 1-12. DOI: 10.1177/2056305118790761

Papadamou et al., 2020 – *Papadamou, K., Papasavva, A., Zannettou, S., Blackburn, J., Kourtellis, N., Leontiadis, I., Stringhini, G., Sirivianos, M.* (2020). Disturbed YouTube for kids: Characterizing and detecting inappropriate videos targeting young children. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*. 14(1): 522-533. DOI: 10.1609/icwsm.v14i1.7320

Potter, 2010 – *Potter, W.* (2010). The State of Media Literacy. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. 54(4): 675-696.

Primack et al., 2009 – *Primack, B.A., Swanier, B., Georgiopoulos, A., Land, S., Fine, M.J.* (2009). Association between media use in adolescence and depression in young adulthood: a longitudinal study. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 66(2): 181-188. DOI: 10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2008.532

Rosida, Azwar, 2021 – *Rosida, I., Azwar, M.* (2021). YouTube as a New Culture in Indonesia: The construction of gender role in the lens of the circuit of culture. *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*. 6(1): 182-192. DOI: 10.13187/ijmil.2021.1.182

Ryan's World, 2015 – *Ryan's World* (2015). Kid Playing with Toys Lego Duplo Number Train. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVwSJ9q3kOc&t=44s

Ryan's World, 2020 – *Ryan's World* (2020). Ryan Police Pretend Play and late going to School!!!!. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwX6HNqjeJc

Skinner, 1938 – *Skinner, B.F.* (1938). The Behaviour of Organisms. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Tolbert, Drogos, 2019 – *Tolbert, A.N., Drogos, K.L.* (2019). Tweens' Wishful Identification and Parasocial Relationships With YouTubers. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 10: 1-15. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02781

Tur-Viñes et al., 2018 – *Tur-Viñes, V., Núñez-Gómez, P., González-Río, M.J.* (2018). Kid influencers on YouTube: A space for responsibility. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*. 73:1211-1230. DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-2018-1303

Wohlwill, 1976 – *Wohlwill, J.F.* (1976). Environmental aesthetics: The environment as a source of affect. *Human Behavior and Environment*. 1: 37-86.

Wright et al., 2023 – *Wright, M., Reitegger, F., Cela, H., Papst, A., Gasteiger-Klicpera, B.* (2023). Interventions with digital tools for mental health promotion among 11–18 year olds: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. 52(4): 754-779. DOI: 10.1007/s10964-023-01735-4

Zanatta, 2017 – *Zanatta, J.* (2017). Understanding YouTube culture and how it affects today's media [Other]. DOI: 10.33015/dominican.edu/2017.CMS.ST.03

Zhou et al., 2020 – *Zhou, Q., Lee, C.S., Sin, S.-C.J., Lin, S., Hu, H., Firdaus Bin Ismail, M.F.* (2020). Understanding the use of YouTube as a learning resource: a social cognitive perspective. *Aslib Journal of Information Management*. 72(3): 339-359. DOI: 10.1108/AJIM-10-2019-0290

Zsila, Reyes , 2023 – *Zsila, Á., Reyes, M.E.S.* (2023). Pros & cons: Impacts of social media on mental health. *BMC Psychology*. 11(1). Article 201. DOI: 10.1186/s40359-023-01243-x

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 174-185

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.174
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Costume, Culture, and Contrast: Significance of Black & White in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Color Films

Tanmay Samanta [a, *], Ramesh Kumar Rawat [a]

[a] Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Abstract

This paper explores the symbolic significance of black and white in the films of Sanjay Leela Bhansali, with a specific focus on *Devdas*, *Black*, and *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. The study aims to examine how black and white operate as symbolic codes, shape character identity, and communicate psychological and emotional meanings through cinematic aesthetics. The study applies a qualitative analytical method, combining visual content analysis and cinematic semiotics, to investigate how these two colors function as cultural texts and narrative devices. Drawing on theories of color symbolism and semiotics, the research treats black and white as signs that carry shifting meanings, depending on the context, costume, and character. The findings reveal that Bhansali consistently uses black and white to shape character identity, cultural representation, and emotional resonance. White, a color traditionally tied to purity, widowhood, and restraint in Indian culture, is redefined as a marker of resilience, authority, and empowerment, especially in *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. Black, frequently associated with stigma and despair, is used in *Black* to express inner struggle, silence, and the contrast between ignorance and enlightenment. In *Devdas*, the interplay of black and white reflects class conflict, sacrifice, and tragic decline. This challenging of traditional codes compels the audience to engage in critical media literacy, deconstructing visual signs to understand shifting cultural and emotional narratives.

Keywords: color symbolism, film color, cinematic semiotics, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, visual narrative.

1. Introduction

Color has traditionally been a significant storytelling tool in films, affecting both the way they look and the way they convey. Color in film not only sets the ambiance but also conveys cultural codes, psychological moods, and character identity (Bellantoni, 2005). Color symbolism is an important part of storytelling in Indian movies, where clothing and set design are very important. In a film, the careful choice of colors by the director, director of photography, and production designer plays a crucial role in shaping the audience's experience, even before shooting begins. The shift to color cinematography marked a significant change from the earlier black and white era. The advent of color cinematography compelled filmmakers to conceptualize and implement tailored color palettes for their movies (Matkar, Ghodake, 2024). While colors carry specific meanings in films and in everyday life, the intentional use of black and white within other hues in a film is particularly meaningful. These two colors often have many connotations. For example, they might indicate purity and sacrifice on one hand and grief or being on the outside on the other (Dwyer, Patel, 2002). This study examines the significance of black and white in Sanjay Leela

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: bandhutanmay@gmail.com (T. Samanta)

Bhansali's films through costume, culture, and contrast. Focusing on Gangubai Kathiawadi (Gangubai Kathiawadi, 2022), Black (Black, 2005), and Devdas (Devdas, 2002), it investigates how these two colors function as cultural texts and narrative structures. Sanjay Leela Bhansali is broadly acknowledged as one of the most visually ambitious auteurs in Hindi cinema, with films that incorporate intricate sets, meticulously designed costumes, and meticulously managed color palettes. He often uses color as a type of cinematic language, combining spectacle with emotional impact (Sharma, Goswami, 2021). In Bhansali's films, every shade is intentional, contributing to narrative depth and cultural symbolism (Kulkarni, 2021).

Building on this understanding of Bhansali's visual language, it is essential to consider the psychology of color in films. According to Swiss psychologist Carl Jung (1875–1961), colors are the subconscious' native language. Color and culture are closely linked; in fact, color is often used to show faith and values (Panjwani, 2014). In films, color is a semiotic tool that helps filmmakers encode story, emotion, and character attributes (Elliot, 2015). Filmmakers utilize color selections to enhance narrative, cultivate characters, and establish immersive environments. Every hue has its own meanings and associations that affect how the spectator sees and feels about it (Fusco, Hellerman, 2023). Colours have the psychological ability to influence our perceptions and evoke strong feelings. There is a common perception that warm colors (red, orange, etc.) represent energy, intensity, and vitality, whereas cool colors (blue, green, etc.) represent equilibrium, serenity, and tranquility. White often signifies purity, honesty, or regeneration, yet in other situations it can also mean emptiness or death. *Black*, on the other hand, is often associated with mystery, power, or authority, but it can also mean fright, oppression, or despair (Wexner, 1954). It is crucial to analyze these visual codes in order to develop media literacy, particularly within higher education film classrooms that aim to cultivate informed and ethical media practitioners (Romero-Walker, 2022). By deliberately engaging with and often subverting traditional color schemes, this work encourages audiences to critically examine cinematic narratives and challenge entrenched cultural assumptions, an essential aspect of critical literacy (Marsh, 2022).

2. Materials and methods

This study examines three of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's films where black and white emerge as central symbolic motifs. *Devdas* stands as the third Hindi film adaptation of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's 1917 novella, but it is the first to be created in full color (Gokulsing, Dissanayake, 2004). Bhansali's adaptation is different from prior ones because it puts the story in a rich setting where the costumes, music, and colors make the story even more emotive (Dwyer, 2014). *Black* draws inspiration from the life and writings of Helen Keller, particularly her autobiography *The Story of My Life*, and reimagines it in an Indian context (Kumari, 2017). What makes the film unique is its restricted color scheme: Bhansali largely avoids bright hues, using blacks, whites, and muted blues to intensify the drama (Puthur, 2013). *Black* earned major Filmfare awards, screened at Cannes, and featured in TIME's best films of 2005 (Mathur, 2017a). *Gangubai Kathiawadi* is adapted from a chapter in Hussain Zaidi's book *Mafia Queens of Mumbai*, published in 2011. The film fictionalizes the life of *Gangubai Kothewali*, a brothel madam who became an influential activist in Kamathipura (Fanani et al., 2025). In this film, the costumes not only visualize cultural codes but also construct Gangubai's identity as a gendered subaltern resisting oppression (Sarkar, Rai, 2022).

This research is based on theories of color symbolism and cinematic semiotics. Color symbolism refers to the subjective significance that individuals ascribe to different hues (IxDF, 2021). If a hue has influenced your emotions or thoughts in any way, it becomes a form of color symbolism (Katatikarn, 2024). As noted by Goethe, colors are associated with emotional states and moral values (Goethe, 1840). Later developments by Kandinsky highlighted the psychological resonance of colors (Kandinsky, 1911). In film studies, Monaco emphasizes that color operates as a signifier, while Bellantoni demonstrates how color design in cinema translates emotions into visual form (Monaco, 2009; Bellantoni, 2005). Similarly, Kim, Jun, and Kim demonstrate how costume color serves as a symbolic expression in film (Kim et al., 2014). On the other hand, the semiotic approach draws on Barthes, who argued that cultural texts carry multiple layers of meaning (Barthes, 1967). In cinema, costumes act as cultural texts (Barnwell, 2019), revealing identity, power, and ideology. Semiotics views cinema as a system of signs, where images, sounds, and colors work like a language. Metz describes film as a "*language without a code*," where Buckland further explains how contrasts and framing create signifiers that guide narrative and

emotion (Metz, 1991; Buckland, 1999). Within this framework, black and white are studied as recurring cinematic signs.

The objectives of this research are: (1) to examine the symbolic significance of black and white in Bhansali's selected films, (2) to analyze how these contrasts shape character identity and emotional journeys, and (3) to explore their psychological and cultural meanings as expressed through cinematic aesthetics. This study follows a qualitative analytical approach, drawing on visual and textual analysis of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's films. The research integrates visual content analysis with cinematic semiotics to understand how Bhansali uses black and white. The analysis is structured into five thematic headings: costume and cultural identity, contrast and context, cinematic symbolism of black and white, aesthetic and narrative implications, and psychology of color and emotion. Dialogues, costume details, and key scenes are examined to trace how black and white function in different contexts.

3. Discussion

The analysis can begin with a striking dialogue from *Gangubai Kathiawadi*. When Afsaan comes to her house with white sarees, Gangubai playfully asks: "*Kaunsa wala safed? Chand wala? Baadal wala? Safed kaagaz wala? Sabse zyada gulab bana sakta hai? Safed namak wala? Doodh wala? Shankh wala? Jharne wala? Barish wala*?" ("*Which white? The white of the moon, or the white of clouds? White of paper, or the one that makes roses stand out? White of salt, milk, or a conch shell? The white of a waterfall, or the white of rain?*"). To this, Afsaan replies, "*Hansha wala Safed*" ("*White is like a duck*").

This short exchange captures Bhansali's layered approach to color. White, in this film, is not static. At times, it signifies purity and fairness. In other moments, it becomes the mark of leadership, unification, or even a mode of protest. Through this dialogue, the director clearly sets out his vision: white carries many shades, many meanings. It has a wide spectrum of emotions and possibilities. Costume designer Sheetal Sharma later revealed that Bhansali insisted Gangubai appear mostly in white. He took inspiration from heroines of the 1950s–60s, like Madhubala and Meena Kumari. At first, Sharma worried about monotony. But Bhansali reminded her: white has many shades. Their discussion itself inspired this dialogue (Parasuraman, 2022). Just as white dominates *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, black shapes the core of *Black*. The film's very title turns a color into a theme. Though shot in color, Bhansali restricts himself to blacks, whites, and muted blues. Shadows and light become a language of ignorance and learning. Debraj, the teacher, often insists, "*Come... into... the light*!" This echoes the entire narrative. Darkness is not the end. It can be broken. At one point, he tells Michelle, "*Your world is not black*". Later, he begins her lessons with, "*Your alphabets begin with B, L, A, C, K... Black*". Here, Bhansali uses black both as a limit and as a beginning. This dialogue shows how Bhansali transforms a color into an existential condition, then into a possibility of transcendence (Puthur, 2013). In contrast to the film *Black*, white is a central color in *Devdas*, carrying layered meaning. At first, it may suggest purity, but in the film, it transcends that. We can see how white reflects custom and ritual, marking the traditions that shape the characters' lives. It also signals nobility. The all-white dress of Devdas's family underscores their Zamindar status, wealth, and pride. Devdas' Haveli is dominated by white, a shade that reflects the family's aristocratic status as zamindars. The white interiors underscore their adherence to tradition and social prestige, turning the household into a visual metaphor for heritage, restraint, and the weight of honor in the narrative.

The discussion starts by looking at how costumes and colors shape identity and show cultural semiotics. The color of a character's attire enhances their personality on screen. To achieve a significant effect, it is essential to comprehend color value. Costume selections (silks, intricate embroidery, and layered blacks) signify gender and class, rendering identification perceptible on screen (Bell, 2023). Colorization and archival work demonstrate how changing a costume's color can transform its historical significance; this clarifies why Bhansali's intentional palette for period dress redefines cultural identity in films like *Devdas* and *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (Watkins, Williams, 2025). In *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022), Bhansali revisits the atmosphere of the 1950s and 1960s. Gangubai's costumes follow three main schemes: pure whites, soft floral pastels, and designs influenced by Ajrakh and Kathiawadi traditions. Each of these choices signals something about her transformation and the impression she leaves on those around her. While most women in the brothels appear in subdued, faded shades, Gangubai's presence is marked by glowing white. The brightness of her sarees makes her

stand apart, almost as if her body radiates its own light. This whiteness does not simply decorate her but becomes her aura, a sign of strength, dignity, and leadership.

The thematic essence of *Gangubai Kathiawadi* centers on the color white. Gangubai isn't the only character to wear this hue; it's present in the attire of many others as well, such as the Prime Minister, Rahim Lala, Hamid Fezi, and Afsaan, local leaders, protestors, and many more. Each carries the shade in some form. White is everywhere, but never in the same way. Its meaning shifts with the person and the moment. Sometimes it marks authority. At other times, it stands for honesty, or protest, or quiet resistance. Bhansali, through these subtle variations, reminds the audience that white is never singular but a spectrum of tones and connotations.

In *Black*, Michelle's dress is usually in darker shades. We often see her in black, grey, or deep tones rather than bright colors. This choice is not casual. Her clothes mirror the secluded environment she lives in, where hearing loss, blindness, and quiet are the norm. The absence of color in her attire reflects her isolation and emotional darkness. This principle applies not only to Michelle but also to those around her. The costumes of her sister Sara, her father Paul, her mother Catherine, and her teacher Debraj all fall into shades of white, black, or grey. We can see that Bhansali avoids the usual bright tones of Indian cinema. The few colors that do appear are faint, muted, or drained of energy. This choice is deliberate. It reflects Michelle's life, which stands in contrast to the vivid world outside her home. The subdued palette becomes a symbol of emptiness and silence. Through this careful design, costume becomes more than fabric. It becomes a code. Black, white, and gray represent Michelle's inner existence, encompassing her struggles, loneliness, and her gradual journey from darkness to light.

In *Devdas*, costume becomes a vital medium for expressing cultural identity and social customs. During the funeral of Devdas' father, the frame is saturated in white. Every member of the household wears plain white attire, adhering to Hindu mourning traditions. The absence of ornamentation stresses purity, discipline, and the collective sorrow of the zamindar family. Here, white functions as both a cultural marker and an emotional language.

In contrast, the "*Dola Re Dola*" sequence highlights another layer of identity through costume. Paro and Chandramukhi, though divided by class, wear similar white-and-red Bengali sarees, the traditional attire during Durga Puja. The red border signifies festivity, fertility, and devotion, while the white base symbolizes purity. Their shared costume bridges the cultural gap between a thakurain and a courtesan, showing how devotion to Devdas and the goddess unites them. By staging this in a religious festival, Bhansali blends individual love with collective celebration. Therefore, the use of black and white, or in this case, white with red, transcends aesthetics to embody emotional and cultural symbolism. Recent research shows that higher saturation and certain colour harmonies heighten visual engagement and emotional recall (Lin et al., 2023). In this sequence, the vibrant red backdrop not only amplifies the whiteness of the costumes but also intensifies the audience's emotional response, transforming the scene into a powerful fusion of cultural identity and cinematic emotion.

Now it is important to discuss how Contrast and Context work together to create mood and meaning in a scene. Classic film-psychology experiments show that the same color can produce different emotions depending on context and sequencing (Cao et al., 2024b). Rcent research shows that, Lighting temperature (warm/cool) and contrast strongly affect where viewers look and what they feel about a scene (Shahidi et al., 2021). Research on restoration and digital recoloring indicates that even minor shifts in contrast, such as saturation and tonal changes, can significantly affect perceptions of period and authenticity. This is pertinent to Bhansali's application of high-contrast frames in *Black* (Liu et al., 2022).

The visual design of Gangubai and Afsaan's first outing together rests almost entirely on the interplay of black and white. Gangubai appears in a white saree paired with a black blouse. But Afsaan is dressed in a black kurta. The tanga, or horse carriage, is also black, which deepens the contrast. Against this dark setting, her saree seems brighter, almost luminous. Every element in the frame follows this restrained palette. The carriage driver wears white, and even the horse is white, reinforcing the balance of opposites. Color is stripped away, leaving the scene in a monochrome scheme. Only Gangubai's red bindi and the red rose in her hair break this pattern. These flashes of red suggest intimacy, a subtle expression of emotion, in a world otherwise reduced to black and white. The composition recalls classic cinema of the 1950s and 1960s, where romance was often staged through carefully balanced contrasts. The scene becomes more than a depiction of a date. It turns into an evocation of nostalgia, an echo of timeless love stories.

In *Black*, Bhansali uses color to reflect Debraj and Michelle's struggles. Debraj, facing Alzheimer's, is shown in a white and empty hospital room. His white kurta blends with the sterile space, marking absence, emptiness, and memory slipping away. Michelle appears in black attire with dark glasses, her dress extending the idea of blindness and silence. Michelle's all-black ensemble could be interpreted as a symbol of the intensity and profundity of her feelings. Black signals limitation, while white suggests fragility and loss. Their struggles with communication and understanding are reinforced through this visual contrast. The narrative shifts when Michelle begins to teach Debraj, and the reversal unfolds through the subtle play of black and white.

In *Devdas*, Kaushalya's contrasting colors of costumes reflect both personal change and cultural expectation. Her clothing often contrasts with her surroundings, marking her individuality within the household. But the black and white in her clothes is quite significant. When her husband lies on his deathbed, she wears a black saree. Black here is not fashion but ritual, symbolizing grief, loss, and the shadow of death. After his passing, her dress shifts permanently to white. In Hindu custom, white is the color of widowhood, a constant reminder of renunciation and restraint. By showing Kaushalya in black at one turning point and in white thereafter, Bhansali ties costume to identity. Her attire becomes a visible marker of her social role, her sorrow, and her place within tradition.

Visual storytelling goes beyond just aesthetics when color becomes a symbolic code. According to studies on colorization between film and photography, color selections produce new narrative layers, which lends credence to the interpretation of Bhansali's color schemes as deliberate symbolic devices as opposed to merely ornamental elements (Saxton, 2025). Studies of color plus editing show that color cues combined with montage serve symbolic and emotional functions. Colour has the power to intensify the emotional tone of any given scene, whether happy or sad (Cao et al., 2024a). The closing sequence of *Gangubai Kathiawadi* carries immense that symbolic value. As Gangubai meets the Prime Minister and later returns to Kamathipura in a celebratory procession, the screen is almost entirely taken over by white. The crowd is dressed in white garments; men wear white turbans and caps, women appear in white sarees, and petals fall like snow. The effect is overwhelming, transforming the setting into a space of purity and collective affirmation. The narration underlines this moment: *"On that day, the whole of Kamathipura glowed with light, with happiness, with color. And the shade of that happiness was white, like Gangubai herself."* White, then, does not simply dress the characters. It becomes the very language of the scene, a shared identity that transcends individual difference. Yet Bhansali introduces a subtle disruption. Gangubai's saree, while white, carries a deep red border. This detail is striking. It recalls sacrifice, passion, but also strength. Even Raziya, once her rival, is seen in white at this point, signaling reconciliation and unity. This collective whiteness operates not only as a costume design but as narrative closure. It symbolizes victory, dignity, and the transformation of a marginalized figure into an emblem of empowerment. The scene shows how Bhansali deploys color as cinematic language – where white is not absence but presence, charged with history and emotion. Memory studies show that dynamic, richly coloured scenes become more memorable; this helps explain why Bhansali's lush tableaux remain emotionally and cognitively salient to audiences (Şimşek et al., 2023).

With *Black*, Bhansali achieves a sense of grandeur despite employing a minimalist color scheme of black and white. The film uses the contrast between these two hues to convey profound implications. Debraj, dressed in white and placed in a sterile white room, embodies the emptiness of his fading life with Alzheimer's. The walls, draperies, and pillars all repeat this blankness, creating a visual echo of his decline. Michelle, often dressed in black with dark glasses, reflects blindness, silence, and the isolation of her world. Debraj's black cap disturbs the whiteness, suggesting the sudden lapses of memory and his longing for light. Through such deliberate color placement, Bhansali transforms costume and space into psychological symbols, producing images that resemble painted canvases in their depth and emotion (Sachdeva, 2014a).

In *Devdas*, one of the most powerful uses of color occurs before the final moment of his life. As he leaves Chandramukhi's brothel, Devdas rides in a black horse-drawn carriage, wrapped in a black shawl. Later, the same imagery repeats at Pandua station, when another black carriage takes him on the last journey toward Paro's home in Manikpur. Bhansali avoids bright colors, presenting the sequence in achromatic tones. Black becomes a symbol of inevitability, marking the path toward death. In Hindu mythology, a black chariot is often linked to the soul's departure, a cultural reference echoed here.

The analysis also discusses the intentional use of color design and compositional balance to create aesthetic and narrative coherence. Gangubai's first appearance is staged almost like a vision. She is seen through the sunlight that falls across the white sheer. The effect makes her seem radiant, almost divine. The saree itself is not ordinary widow's clothing. Its fine chikankari embroidery adds delicacy, and at the same time marks her apart. Costume designer Sheetal Sharma noted that this choice gave depth and texture, making the attire both traditional and distinctive. Along with the saree, the accessories play a crucial role. A black umbrella, a black purse, and dark sunglasses build contrast against the white fabric. Her jewelry, too, adds detail, projecting dignity as well as authority. Together, these elements construct the image of a woman who is not bound by the codes of her environment. What Bhansali achieves here is a reframing of the brothel space. Instead of repeating the usual images of darkness and despair, he creates a visual that is striking, layered, and alive. The blending of modern objects with classical textile art shows Gangubai as someone ahead of her time, rooted in tradition yet moving beyond it (Kanaskar, 2023).

The use of color in the *Shikayat* sequence is both deliberate and layered. Huma Qureshi, positioned at the center of the stage, performs in a white saree embroidered with golden motifs. Around her, the chorus of women appears in coordinated lavender sarees, while the backdrop is framed in green. The combination of purple and green, with white serving as a stark contrast, forms a powerful complementary scheme (Kanaskar, 2023). The choice of white for the lead costume is significant. It does not merely set Huma apart from the group but also links her symbolically to Gangubai, who watches from below the stage. In this arrangement, Huma's performance becomes the *alter ego* of Gangubai herself, voicing what the protagonist feels but cannot articulate. The song's theme of endless love problems is like Gangubai's own pain, and the white clothes show this struggle without saying anything. By staging white in this way, Bhansali transforms color into a narrative tool. White is not neutral; it embodies conflict, longing, and separation. Color here becomes psychology, giving form to emotional complexity and deepening the resonance of the story.

In *Black*, the first sequence shows us how Bhansali sets the tone with color and light. The film opens on a dark screen, with Michelle's voice guiding the audience. What we see is not color but absence. The darkness becomes a direct symbol of her condition, a life shaped by blindness and silence. Then the screen shifts. We enter a large room, designed almost entirely in black. Walls, furniture, and shadows create a heavy atmosphere. This blackness is not just décor. It is a visual metaphor for deprivation, for a world cut off from sense and sight.

Yet the silence of black is interrupted by white. From six tall windows, three send streams of light across the floor. These rays fall like lines of hope. They suggest three supports in Michelle's life: her teacher, her mother, and her sister. In visual terms, the black room shows limitation, while the white light points to guidance and care. Michelle, sitting at her typewriter, stands between the two. The contrast speaks louder than words. Darkness surrounds her, but light still enters. Through this arrangement of black and white, Bhansali introduces the entire narrative. The prologue works as a visual essay, explaining Michelle's inner world before the story even begins.

The last scene of *Black* stands as a culmination of Bhansali's visual and emotional design. Michelle returns home after receiving her degree, wearing her black graduation robe. Debraj, now an Alzheimer's patient, touches her robe; his hands tremble. He begins to cry, sensing its meaning. Through this moment, the robe is no longer just cloth; it becomes a memory trigger, a symbol of her journey, and his role in it. Outside, rain falls heavily. Both Michelle and Debraj move toward the window. They extend their hands into the water, letting the rain connect them to the world outside. The frame is entirely white, with white walls, curtains, and window frames. Michelle's black robe creates a striking contrast against the white background, reminding us of how the entire narrative has unfolded between these two shades. And then comes the turning point. Debraj, who has forgotten almost everything, speaks. His first word is *"Water."*

Michelle repeats his words with tears of joy. The narration reminds us, *"Mrs. Nair, you will be happy to know, we have come into the light. My teacher remembered his first word today. His alphabets just like my but not starts with A, B, C, D... but with B-L-A-C-K."* This sequence is Bhansali's final statement on color and meaning. Black is not simply darkness. It is also a beginning, a place where language, memory, and identity can come to life. The closing sequence of *Devdas* draws its strength from the visual contrast of black and white. As Dev lies beneath the Gulmohar tree, his costume, a white shirt draped with a black shawl, reflects the duality of his life. White here signifies his inner vulnerability, the purity of his love for Paro, and his final longing for acceptance.

Yet the black shawl covering him marks the weight of despair, signaling the inevitability of death. The combination of his body shows both innocence and burden, hope and resignation.

At the same time, Paro runs toward him in a white saree with a red border, echoing her lifelong role as the bearer of devotion, sacrifice, and duty. Her white attire underlines purity and loyalty, while the red border foreshadows the unfulfilled passion that frames their tragic love. Against the backdrop of red petals raining down from the Gulmohar tree, their black-and-white costumes stand out as symbolic anchors. Through this final imagery, Bhansali creates a visual dialogue: Dev wrapped in the shadows of black, Paro framed in the light of white. Their union remains incomplete, yet the narrative resolves in color, black as closure, white as memory.

Finally, the study looks at the psychological aspects of color, focusing on how it can make people feel and how it can change how they see things. Color Perception and psychophysical work shows that fine-grained colour symbols reliably predict emotional labels in film and video. When it comes to color perception features, there is a big variance in how each feature is related to emotion. This implies that each color perceptual feature has a varied effect on each emotion dimension (Wang et al., 2024). Research on vision and attention indicates that chromatic information directs attention and can rapidly alter perceptions; this corroborates interpretations of Bhansali's color choices as tactics to influence audience concentration and emotion (Hiramatsu et al., 2023).

In color psychology, white often carries the meanings of purity and resilience. It can also signal a difference. In *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, this idea becomes central. Gangubai's white sarees stand out sharply against the vivid, noisy setting of Kamathipura. The contrast is not just visual. It also reflects her inner determination. Through this choice, Bhansali shapes a character who does not simply blend into her environment. The brightness of white gives Gangubai a kind of shield. It makes her visible, untouchable, and distinct. Emotionally, the effect is powerful. Audiences see her not only as a woman surviving, but as someone radiating strength. White also becomes transformative. It moves beyond being a costume to serve as a mark of authority. In this sense, Bhansali uses warm and brown color grading to enhance the intensity and establishes the mood of the scene. Archival colourisation research shows that adding color in proper way to historical footage redefines cultural memory and authenticity, echoing how Bhansali reimagines the past through saturated palettes in *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (Simor, 2025).

One of the most tragic moments in the film occurs at the death of Kamli, a sex worker from Kamathipura. The women gather around her body, preparing it for cremation. Gangubai instructs them with a sharp remark: "*Tie her legs tight, these men can't even be trusted with dead bodies.*" In this single line, she expresses both anger at male exploitation and recognition of its unending presence (Sathyamoorthy, 2022). The visual arrangement intensifies the emotional weight. The group of women, dressed in faded and darkened tones, reflects the grief of the moment. Their muted colors suggest suffering, exhaustion, and collective despair. Against this background, we can see a remarkable contrast when Gangubai is shown in a black bordered white saree. The chosen color scheme for this situation grabs the audience's attention and gives them a strong emotion with feminine grace. The choice is deliberate. Her attire cuts through the darkness, creating a striking point of contrast. The impact is psychological as well as visual. White here represents dignity, purity of intent, and calm authority, even in the middle of loss. The black border acknowledges reality – death, exploitation, and pain.

In Michelle's childhood, we can see how Bhansali uses color to shape emotion. The bathing scene is dimly lit, almost swallowed by shadows. Catherine, Michelle's mother, wears a white dress. Her clothing suggests purity, innocence, and maternal care. But this whiteness also becomes fragile when set against the blackness of the room. Paul, Michelle's father, enters dressed in black. His costume adds heaviness to the frame, and with him comes the news that Michelle is both blind and deaf. This revelation throws Catherine into shock. We notice how the mood shifts with light: the door opens, brightness enters, and then quickly falls back into darkness. The movement between white and black reflects the emotional turbulence of the moment. On the wall behind them, paintings of the nativity appear in gray tones, creating a symbolic backdrop. The birth of Christ is usually tied to joy and hope, yet here it is overshadowed by gloom. Catherine claps to draw Michelle's attention, but the child gives no response. The lack of reaction intensifies the silence.

On her graduation day, Michelle explains the meaning of black in her own words:

"*Mere liye sab kuch black tha. Par mere teacher ne mere black ka ek naya arth samjhaya. Black ka matlab sirf ghratala aur andhera nahin hota. It is the color of achievement, the color of knowledge, the color of the graduation robe. Wahi rang jo sabne aaj pehna hai.*" ("*For me,*

everything was black. But my teacher gave black a new meaning. Black is not only chaos and darkness. It is the color of achievement, the color of knowledge, the color of the graduation robe. The same color that everyone has worn today.")

The convocation scene in *Black* changes the way we read the color itself. Throughout the film, black has been tied to blindness, silence, and inner struggles. Here, the same shade is transformed into pride and accomplishment. Michelle wears a black graduation robe, a universal symbol of knowledge and learning. Holding her certificate, she embodies years of effort finally recognized. We can see how Bhansali plays with emotional codes. Visually, the contrast is powerful. She stands in a white room, and the robe defines her presence sharply against the light. Darkness is no longer fear but dignity. Bhansali uses costume to remind us that color is never fixed. Black may express despair, but it can also represent growth, knowledge, and triumph, depending on context. In this scene, psychology and color meet directly, showing us how one shade can express both vulnerability and victory depending on the moment.

In *Devdas*, the shifting colors of Dev's costumes mirror his changing emotions and inner state. At first, he appears in Western dress, a white shirt, black blazer, red bow, and gray hat. These choices suggest youth, energy, and the influence of Western culture. White here signals purity of heart, while the hints of gray and red point to confidence and pride. When he leaves his home, the black overcoat marks his entry into uncertainty, carrying the shadow of sorrow that will soon follow. The true turning point comes after his separation from Paro. From this moment, Dev is most often seen in white. His attire, the simple dhuti and panjabi, strips away color, joy, and vitality. In Indian culture, white is the color of mourning for widows, and in Dev's case, it becomes a visual marker of loss. His shift into white clothing reflects not only his broken relationship but also his descent into emptiness. Bhansali's choice of costume here gives shape to grief. Through the contrast of black and white, the film translates Dev's journey from youthful pride to emotional void, making his decline visible before a single word is spoken.

4. Results

From the above discussion, a consolidated table (Table 1) has been prepared to summarize the key findings. It presents how black and white function across four of Bhansali's films under the five thematic sections of this research.

Table 1. Summary of Black and White in Selected Bhansali Films

Section	Gangubai Kathiawadi	Black	Devdas
Costume & Cultural Identity	White sarees signify power and defiance. White also marks leadership for men like Rahim	Black costumes dominate Michelle's world of blindness and isolation.	Devdas's shift to white clothing shows his emotional void and mourning
Contrast & Context	Gangubai in a white saree/black blouse and Afsaan in a black kurta on a black carriage show deliberate contrast but signify love amid monochrome	Hospital scene: Debraj in a white kurta with a black cap; Michelle in full black with dark glasses. Symbolizes role reversal. Black and white are used as existential codes	Contrast between the white attire of early symbolizing grief, loss, and the later white costumes of widowhood. Visual coding marks cultural expectations of women
Cinematic Symbolism	The final procession is a sea of white, symbolizing collective victory and dignity	The film is a visual dialogue between light and darkness, with a sterile white hospital room contrasting with Debraj's fading memory	A black horse-drawn carriage symbolizes Devdas's inevitable path toward death

Section	Gangubai Kathiawadi	Black	Devdas
Aesthetic & Narrative	Gangubai's white saree is a visual reframing of her space, marking her as distinct from her surroundings	The minimalist palette heightens the emotional drama. The absence of color reflects Michelle's world and her journey	Paro's red-bordered white saree echoes her devotion, sacrifice, and duty. For Dev, a white shirt draped with a black shawl, reflects the duality of his life
Psychology of Color	White becomes a psychological shield for Gangubai, radiating strength and dignity	Black signifies not just despair but also dignity and triumph, as seen in Michelle's graduation robe	White is a visual representation of Devdas's emotional void after his separation from Paro

Source: authors' Data Analysis

Table 2 summarizes the two symbolic roles of black and white based on a thorough analysis of each film. It emphasizes that both colors are associated with both positive and negative meanings in *Gangubai Kathiawadi* (2022), *Black* (2005), and *Devdas* (2002), providing a comparative analysis of their cultural and narrative importance.

Table 2. Positive and Negative Meanings of Black and White in Selected Bhansali's Films

Film	Black: Positive Meaning(s)	Black: Negative Meaning(s)	White: Positive Meaning(s)	White: Negative Meaning(s)
Gangubai Kathiawadi (2022)	Symbol of resistance, power, and strength; Gangubai's use of black accessories asserts authority	Represents marginality, oppression, and social stigma of courtesans.	Purity, resilience, inner illumination; unity in the final procession (entire Kamathipura in white)	Black border on the funeral sari shows grief, loss, and mourning
Black (2005)	Color of achievement, knowledge, Success, and the color of the graduation robe	Embodies Michelle's inner darkness, silence, and isolation; Associated with suffering, despair, and the void of communication	Linked to Debraj's presence and memory, light is a symbol of knowledge, guidance, and hope	The white hospital room reflects emptiness, fragility, and fading memory
Devdas (2002)	Early outfit of Dev represents youth, energy, and Western influence	Color of death, sorrow, grief, sadness, and darkness symbolize decay, exile, and tragic downfall	Reflects nobility, aristocratic status, and tradition. Symbolizes purity and the innocence of love	Marks a tragic descent into an emotional void. The color of mourning for a widower symbolizes loss. Represents restraint and renunciation in Hindu custom

Source: authors' Data Analysis

The subtle use of color in the analyzed films provides a valuable lesson in media literacy. The strategic subversion of color conventions requires the audience to critically evaluate cinematic aesthetics rather than relying on automatic cultural associations. For instance, recognizing White as a symbol of power in *Gangubai Kathiawadi* challenges traditional interpretations of purity,

fostering critical reading of visual texts. In the same way, the transformation of Black from symbolizing sadness to conveying knowledge in *Black* compels the audience to interpret meaning based on evolving narrative context.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research shows that Sanjay Leela Bhansali's usage of black and white is a purposeful and advanced way to portray a narrative, not just a subject of personal preference. The analysis of *Gangubai Kathiawadi, Black,* and *Devdas* demonstrates that these colors operate as a symbolic language that influences character identity, emotional trajectories, and central narrative themes. The study's objectives were effectively achieved by analyzing the symbolic importance of these colors, studying their function in character development, and exploring the psychological impacts.

The theoretical framework, based on cinematic semiotics and color symbolism theory, offers a strong way to understand Bhansali's visual work. The research has demonstrated that black and white operate as signs imbued with complex cultural and narrative significations through the lens of semiotics. In *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, white is not just a symbol of purity, but it also becomes a strong indication of power. In *Devdas*, it is a sign of an emotional blank as well as status, and tradition. In the same way, black changes from a sign of blindness in Black to a sign of victory and knowledge.

The findings also indicate that Bhansali's visual language supports media literacy by encouraging critical viewing practices. Audiences learn to read color as a cultural and emotional code rather than as decoration. By using black and white in a smart way with his distinctive bright colors, he turns his movies from visual spectacles into deep studies of the human condition. The difference between these two hues makes a strong visual conversation that helps the audience understand the emotional depth of his characters and has a lasting effect on their minds.

References

Barnwell, 2019 – *Barnwell, J.* (2019). The fundamentals of film-making. Bloomsbury.

Barthes, 1967 – *Barthes, R.* (1967). Elements of semiology. Hill and Wang.

Bell, 2023 – *Bell, M.* (2023). Feminist histories of costuming film: Gordon Conway, 1930s British cinema and the collaborative world of Mayfair sewing. *Screen*. 64(2): 141-168. DOI: 10.1093/screen/hjad017

Bellantoni, 2005 – *Bellantoni, P.* (2005). If it's purple, someone's gonna die: The power of color in visual storytelling. Routledge.

Black, 2005 – *Black*, 2005. A film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Netflix. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.netflix.com/in/title/70031975

Cao et al., 2024a – *Cao, Z., Wang, Y., Li, R., Xiao, X., Xie, Y., Bi, S., Wu, L., Zhu, Y., Wang, Y.* (2024a). Exploring the combined impact of color and editing on emotional perception in authentic films: insights from behavioral and neuroimaging experiments. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*. 11(1). DOI: 10.1057/s41599-024-03874-w

Cao et al., 2024b – *Cao, Z., Wang, Y., Wu, L., Xie, Y., Shi, Z., Zhong, Y., Wang, Y.* (2024b). Reexamining the Kuleshov effect: behavioral and neural evidence from authentic film experiments. *PLOS ONE*. 19(8): e0308295. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0308295.

Devdas, 2002 – *Devdas*, 2002. A film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. *Eros Now*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://erosnow.com/movie/watch/1000162/devdas

Devdas, 2002 – *Devdas*, 2002. A film by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. *Eros Now*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://erosnow.com/movie/watch/1000162/devdas

Dwyer, 2014 – *Dwyer, R.* (2014). Bollywood's India: Hindi cinema as a guide to contemporary India. *Asian Affairs*. 45(3): 319-336. DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2010.508231

Dwyer, Patel, 2002 – *Dwyer, R., Patel, D.* (2002). Cinema India: The visual culture of Hindi film. Rutgers University Press.

Elliot, 2015 – *Elliot, A.J.* (2015). Color and psychological functioning: a review of theoretical and empirical work. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 6: 368. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00368.

Fanani et al., 2025 – *Fanani, Z., Sukarman, L.J.P., Lubis, I.S.* (2025). The chronicles of Gangubai Kathiawadi: an evolution from book to blockbuster. *World Journal of English Literature*. 15(1): 17-25. DOI: 10.5430/wjel.v15n1p17

Fusco, Hellerman, 2023 – *Fusco, J., Hellerman, J.* (2023). The psychology of color in film (with examples). No Film School. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://nofilmschool.com/color-psychology-in-film

Goethe, 1840 – *Goethe, J.W.V.* (1840). Goethe's theory of colours. Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780429400292

Gokulsing, Dissanayake, 2004 – *Gokulsing, K.M., Dissanayake, W.* (2004). Indian popular cinema: a narrative of cultural change. Trentham Books. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.28032.66568.

Hiramatsu et al., 2023 – *Hiramatsu, C., Takashima, T., Sakaguchi, H., Chen, X., Tajima, S., Seno, T., Kawamura, S.* (2023). Influence of colour vision on attention to, and impression of, complex aesthetic images. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences.* 290(2006): 20231332. DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2023.1332

Interaction Design Foundation, 2021 – Interaction Design Foundation (2021). What is color symbolism? *Interaction Design Foundation.* [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/color-symbolism

Juhee, 2019 – *Juhee* (2019). An investigation into the use of colour in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Padmavat. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research.* 4(5): 3653-3660. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://ijsser.org/files_2019/ijsser_04__277.pdf

Kanaskar, 2023 – *Kanaskar, K.* (2023). Analyzing the costumes of Gangubai Kathiawadi. *Medium*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://krutikanaskar.medium.com/analyzing-the-costumes-of-gangubai-kathiawadi-e107365fa769

Kandinsky, 1977 – *Kandinsky, W.* (1977). Concerning the spiritual in art. Dover Publications.

Katatikarn, 2024 – *Katatikarn, J.* (2024). What is color symbolism? The meaning of color. *Academy of Animated Art.* [Electronic resource]. URL: https://academyofanimatedart.com/color-symbolism/

Kim et al., 2014 – *Kim, J., Jun, Y., Kim, Y.* (2014). Costume color design as a symbolic expression in the independent film Bittersweet Life: images in situations of movie location. *The Research Journal of the Costume Culture.* 22(1): 167-182. DOI: 10.7741/rjcc.2014.22.1.167

Kovsha, Dziuba, 2022 – *Kovsha, O., Dziuba, M.* (2022). Symbolism of color in cinema. *Bulletin of Kiev National University of Culture and Arts. Series in Audiovisual Art.* 5(2): 75-87.

Kulkarni, 2021 – *Kulkarni, S.* (2021). Visual parallels between two auteur directors in Hindi cinema: Vishal Bhardwaj & Sanjay Leela Bhansali. *Journal of Future Generation Communication and Networking.* 14(1): 2269-2276.

Kumari, 2017 – *Kumari, R.* (2017). Progressive outlook regarding disability and pedagogy in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Black. *An International Peer-Reviewed Open Access Journal.* 5(1): 45-55.

Lin et al., 2023 – *Lin, C., Mottaghi, S., Shams, L.* (2023). The effects of color and saturation on the enjoyment of real-life images. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*. 31(1): 361-372. DOI: 10.3758/s13423-023-02357-4

Liu et al., 2022 – *Liu, L., Catelli, E., Katsaggelos, A., Sciutto, G., Mazzeo, R., Milanic, M., Stergar, J., Prati, S., Walton, M.* (2022). Digital restoration of colour cinematic films using imaging spectroscopy and machine learning. *Scientific Reports.* 12(1). DOI: 10.1038/s41598-022-25248-5

Marsh, 2022 – *Marsh, F.* (2022). Unsettling information literacy: exploring critical approaches with academic researchers for decolonizing the university. *Journal of Information Literacy*. 16(1): 4-29.

Mathur, 2017 – *Mathur, M.* (2017). The films of Sanjay Leela Bhansali: Black (2005). Talk Film Society. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://talkfilmsociety.com/articles/the-films-of-sanjay-leela-bhansali-black-2005

Matkar, Ghodake, 2024 – *Matkar, S., Ghodake, S.* (2024). Unveiling symbols through colours: colorizing Gangubai Kathiawadi. *The Creative Launcher.* 9(6): 88-97. DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2024.9.6.09

Monaco, 2009 – *Monaco, J.* (2009). How to read a film: movies, media, and beyond. Oxford University Press.

Parasuraman, 2022 – *Parasuraman, P.* (2022). Breaking down Alia Bhatt's all-white costumes of Gangubai Kathiawadi. Film Companion. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.film companion.in/interviews/gangubai-kathiawadi-alia-bhatt-sanjay-leela-bhansali-breaking-down-all-white-costumes

Prerna, 2018 – *Prerna* (2018). Symbolism of color: exploring the psychological and cultural significance. *ECONSPEAK: A Journal of Advances in Management IT & Social Sciences.* 8(3): 193-196. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://skirec.org/wp-content/uploads/Econ20March18DrP-1.pdf

Puthur, 2013 – *Puthur, S.* (2013). Colour and settings in Sanjay Leela Bhansali films. Sheryl Puthur Blog. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://sherylputhur.com/2013/06/01/colour-and-settings-in-sanjay-leela-bhansali-films/

Romero-Walker, 2022 – *Romero-Walker, A.* (2022). A more equitable film pedagogy: including media literacy in higher education film classrooms to result in better media practitioners. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*. 14(1): 153-167. DOI: 10.23860/JMLE-2022-14-1-11.

Sarkar, Rai, 2022 – *Sarkar, A., Rai, I.S.* (2022). Suppression and subjugation yet daring and dynamic: representation of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Gangubai Kathiawadi as a gendered subaltern. *Research Journal of English*. 7(2): 151-160. DOI: 10.36993/RJOE.2022.7.2.51

Sathyamoorthy, 2022 – *Sathyamoorthy, K.* (2022). Gangubai: a perspective. *Medium*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://medium.com/@kavyasathyamoorthy/gangubai-a-perspective-42904a14ce0d

Saxton, 2025 – *Saxton, L.* (2025). In/human hues: colourisation between photography and film. *Visual Studies*. 40(1): 17-29. DOI: 10.1080/1472586X.2024.2437442

Shahidi et al., 2021 – *Shahidi, R., Golmohammadi, R., Babamiri, M., Faradmal, J., Aliabadi, M.* (2021). Effect of warm/cool white lights on visual perception and mood in warm/cool color environments. *EXCLI Journal*. 20: 1379-1393. DOI: 10.17179/excli2021-3974.

Sharma, Goswami, 2021 – *Sharma, S., Goswami, R.* (2021). Beautification of cinema with colours and codes: a study of Padmaavat. *IIS Journal of Arts*. 1(2): 112-124.

Simor, 2025 – *Simor, K.* (2025). Wars in colour. Critical perspectives on digital colourisation in historical documentaries. *Visual Studies*. 40(1): 30-40. DOI: 10.1080/1472586X.2024.2433022

Şimşek et al., 2023 – *Şimşek, A.C., Karaca, N., Kırmızı, B.C., Ekiz, F.* (2023). What makes a visual scene more memorable? A rapid serial visual presentation (RSVP) study with dynamic visual scenes. *Visual Cognition*. 31(6): 452-471. DOI: 10.1080/13506285.2023.2288361

Wang et al., 2024 – *Wang, S., Liu, J., Feng, Y., Ren, X., Hu, H., Zhang, M., Su, Z.* (2024). Human color perception: the impact of color perception on fine-grained emotion prediction in movie and television videos. *Sensors*. 24(23): 7770. DOI: 10.3390/s24237770

Watkins, Williams, 2025 – *Watkins, L., Williams, D.* (2025). Colourised histories, reading digital/analogue photography and film archives now. *Visual Studies*. 40(1): 3-8. DOI: 10.1080/1472586X.2025.2443351

Wexner, 1954 – *Wexner, L.B.* (1954). The degree to which colors (hues) are associated with mood-tones. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 38(6): 432-435. DOI: 10.1037/h0062181

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 186-194

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.186
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Media Literacy as a Tool for Social Change: Examining the Influence of Social Media on Youth Perspective

Kajal Sharma [a, *], Zakia Tasmin Rahman [a]

[a] Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Social media has been evolved into a powerful tool that mitigates and addresses variety of social causes in today's digital era. People are re-defining communication due to new developments in the media platforms. The study investigates the possible use of social media in solving social problems in our society. The aim of the study is to establish how social changes, mobilizing communities, and awareness creation can be done through the use of social media sites. The paper analyzes the influence of social media on the role of education in our society and how there is propagation of information and enhancement of the awareness and understanding of the people regarding the causes that are important. The paper examines the various forms of social capital in its positive association in both mobilization and community organization whereby it is capable of establishing and constructing online communities that generate action among people. The study uncovers the impact of social media in policy and legislative change as an analysis of how online activism has the potential to build and rebuild political agendas. It also recognizes the weaknesses and traps of social media as a tool of social change including misinformation, creation of echo chambers, filter bubble, and the digital divide. Lastly, research explores the theoretical concepts that govern the role of social media sites in social change, such as network theory and social capital theory, in order to achieve a clear insight into its dynamics. The research has cone on the basis of primary and secondary data both. Primary data would be gathered through survey questionnaire that will consist of both close and open ended questions. Secondary data has been collected by government reports and records, Newspapers and magazines, websites and previous researches. The nature of the research is quantitative and qualitative both. The nature of the study is descriptive and quantitative; the respondents' sample size was 100. The study ends with recommendations for ensuring maximum effectiveness of social media for advocacy purposes, stressing digital literacy, participatory inclusivity, and also measures to address disinformation.

Keywords: social media, social change, mobilization, awareness, education, community building.

1. Introduction

Social media has brought out such a transition from previous practices in the way that people communicate or relate with their group or community, exchanging information, and assembling to act together. Within the last decade, social media, including Meta, Instagram, and Twitter, have become an integral part of people's daily lives and inform education, community building, political activism, and policy change. Social media reshapes traditional channels of operation of communication into spaces of participation and engagement into the societal discourse.

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: varshavpsnoida@gmail.com (K. Sharma)

Impact on the Societal Change: The social media can be profound and multidimensional in its influence because the social media can spread information rapidly. This way, users can, in real time, share and access news and opinions. In this way, users can, through social media, have ideas in real time, which can contribute to societal change (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This immediacy has been responsible for the most prominent issues at hand, such as the Arab Spring, where social media intervened to organize protests and provide information during government censorship (Howard, Hussain, 2011). This also applies to movements such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter, which through social media, amplify voices, mobilize supporters, and result in change by altering the strength of such platforms, in this case, to be able to influence social justice initiatives (Jackson et al., 2020).

Social media has created new avenues for learning and collaboration across geographic boundaries that connect learners around the world, according to Greenhow and Lewin (Greenhow, Lewin, 2016). Learning institutions and instructors use social media to involve students, share resources and create an interactive environment for learning, thereby heightening the learning experience.

Additionally, social media has significantly transformed political sceneries by providing a forum for political conversation and facilitating direct communication between politicians and the people (Loader, Mercea, 2011). Information is also democratized since the voices of marginalized members can be part of and included in more representative ways in political activity.

Nonetheless, social media has its challenges in its roles concerning change in society. Some of the critical issues that challenge the positive potential of social media includes misinformation, digital privacy, and the digital divide (Allcott, Gentzkow, 2017; Van, Dijk, 2012). Nevertheless, it is evident that social media is a transformative influencer for society, and knowledge about the present social dynamics cannot be fully understood without this area of study.

2. Materials and methods

Research has used a mixed-method approach which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies in order to delve into the research problem from all aspects. The research is mainly explorative.

Primary data were gathered through using survey questionnaires targeted at users of social media platforms, which include Facebook (Meta), Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. The sample population is people aged 18 to 40 residing in the Delhi NCR region.

To support the primary data, related secondary data were collected from government reports, news reports, magazines, websites, and some existing surveys. This will ensure a robust analysis through the use of firsthand experiences and literature in hand, thus making it comprehensive on the subject matter.

For quantitative research, a stratified random sampling has been used to recruit 80 participants from diverse demographic backgrounds from youth of Delhi NCR (aged 18-40). And for qualitative research, content from previous reports, articles, newspapers, websites and research papers has been gathered.

3. Discussion

Rapidly growing usage of social media platforms has indeed changed societies from place to place extensively with regard to mobilization, communication and the actual changes in society. Social media has been deeply explored by numerous researchers in terms of how they affect the structure of the society in one way or another, whether in terms of the role they play in education and communal development or merely observing the changes in policies, issues surrounding them and many others. The literature review integrates some of the main findings of existing studies to provide a general and broad insight on the role of social media in bringing about change in the society.

The cooperation and learning are some of the new forms of education that have been transformed by social media. As it can be seen, social media platforms have been used to play a crucial role in knowledge exchange, facilitating digital literacy, and augmenting student engagement (Greenhow, Lewin, 2016). Various studies show that social media platforms including Facebook (Meta) and Twitter help teachers' professional development and process of informal learning (Manca, Ranieri, 2016). Concerns include the division of the digital age, digital diversion, and information validity (Kirschner, Karpinski, 2010).

The widespread use of social media sites like Facebook (Meta), Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagramin education and gaining information has been developed. According to research, such social media platforms help with academic discussions; knowledge sharing, socializing and team work (Manca, Ranieri, 2016). On the other side, students can also take part in academic discussions beyond the conventional classroom setting, access educational content, and participate in online learning communities thanks to social media (Tess, 2013).

Social media platforms have been linked to increased engagement of students in educational activities. As per the research of (Junco et al., 2011), students who used Twitter for academic discussions performed better academically and were more involved. Collective or combined learning is promoted by online forums and interactive educational activities on apps like Telegram and WhatsApp (Al-Rahmi et al., 2014).

Furthermore, social media makes it possible for students to participate in virtual study groups, follow educational and informative pages or channels, and communicate with teachers outside of scheduled class times, allowing for personalized experiences in learning (Veletsianos, Navarrete, 2012).

Social media has privilege, but it also has disadvantage for education. One of the main problem is that it's a huge a distraction. Research shows that excessive use of social media can impact negatively on students' academic focus and performance (Rosen et al., 2013). According to a 2010 study by Kirschner and Karpinski, students who use Facebook (Meta) regularly typically have lower GPAs than their non-Facebook users.

The circulation of fabricated information presents another difficulty. Students may come across wrong or misleading information on social media platforms because it is an open-source platform that frequently lacks its credibility (Luo et al., 2021). With many universities using Facebook Live, YouTube, and Zoom for lectures and scholarly discussions, social media platforms became crucial for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Crawford et al., 2020). According to research, social media motivates collaborative learning in virtual classrooms and increases student involvement in online courses (Hrastinski, 2009).

Social media platforms now make an appearance as the new hub for community building and mobilization. They offer the possibility for creating virtual communities that go beyond geographical perimeters, thus bringing up solidarity and collective action (Bennett, Segerberg, 2012). Large-scale mobilizations through social media are perhaps best described through case studies of activities like the Arab Spring and #BlackLivesMatter, which have utilized social media for bringing awareness and amplifying the voices of other societal groups (Freelon et al., 2018; Howard, Hussain, 2011). Online mobilization, however, remains debatable in the idea of transforming into durable offline change (Gladwell, 2010).

The influence of social media is becoming more observable on policy and legislative change. Politicians and policy makers use social media sites to have personal communication and to widely communicate with the public and they try to measure people's point of views on a particular issue (Lassen, Brown, 2011). Social media movements have also been seen to impact the policies and their passage into law, most particularly in climate action and net neutrality movements (Karpf, 2012). Despite such achievements, however, the challenge of disinformation remains a problem of grave concern in regulating virtual spaces (Allcott, Gentzkow, 2017).

Social media does provide elaborate tools for social change, though it has several challenges and limitations too. Problems of digital privacy, cyber stalking, and the abiding spread of disqualification detract from the positive uses of social media (Boyd, 2014). The division in the digital world also expands the lines of inequality as access to social media is not evenly spread among the socio-economic groups (Van Dijk, 2012). Additionally, the capitalizing of social media platforms raises questions about their role in promoting genuine social change versus profit-driven agendas (Fuchs, 2017).

The main theoretical structures are applied to enable conceptual understanding in respect of the role of social media in generating major changes. Networked public sphere theory postulates that by providing a space of discussion and deliberation, social media introduces a new kind of public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002). Castells' theory of network society describes how social media has formed a non-centralized yet parallel- communication network structure which empowers the individual or group as a whole (Castells, 2011). In fact, the theory of digital activism examines how social media facilitates grassroots movements and collective action (Gerbaudo, 2012).

4. Results

Impact of social media on significance of education

With its impact on student learning, academic engagement, and career opportunities, social media has highly changed the educational landscape in Delhi NCR. Social media has both advantages and disadvantages on education in the area, according to research studies.

Table 1. Respondents who believe social media can replace traditional education to some extent

Response Category	Percentage (%)	No. of respondents
Strongly Agree	12.5 %	10
Agree	35 %	28
Neutral	32.5 %	26
Disagree	20 %	16

Source: author's own compilation

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents (35 %) agreed with the statement, while 32.5 % remained neutral. Only 12.5 % strongly agreed, and 20 % disagreed with the statement that social media has power to replace traditional education at some level.

Research shows that social media platforms like Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and educational forums increase the availability to access a quality education. As per the research by (Gupta, Sharma, 2021) found out that dependence is increasing among students in Delhi NCR for online courses, academic discussions and exam preparation. Social media has filled the gap between students and educators, offering instant access to learning materials beyond traditional classroom practices.

A study by Kumar et al., 2020 (Kumar et al., 2020) indicated that social media motivates students to learn together. Study groups, note sharing, and discussions of tough subjects are facilitated by apps like Telegram and WhatsApp. Social media offers easily accessible and adaptable venues for group projects and communication, which improves student collaboration. According to collaborative learning theories, social interactions are the foundation of knowledge construction, and social media provides a perfect platform for these kinds of interactions. Scholarly engagement has also been improved by creatives of institutions that use social media to host live lectures, Q&A sessions, and career counseling.

Due to the growing use of Social media, the role of skill-based education is currently becoming more significant in Delhi NCR. According to a study conducted by Mishra (Mishra, 2019), LinkedIn, Coursera, and Instagram career pages offer real-time information on the industry, internship openings, and career skills development to students. Networking has never been simpler in the past due to social media and this is critical to career development. Get acquainted with the key players in the field, engage with their content and engage in profound conversations. Connecting with the right people may lead to job opportunities, mentoring and valuable information.

Along with the positive aspects, there are also problems noted in the users of social networks: depression, anxiety, addiction, sleeping problems, and comparison, short attention span, misinformation, and loss of concentration on academic priorities. Social media has the drawbacks of lack of privacy and security. It is connected to the volume of data and information that an individual can post on digital networks, and that can infringe our privacy and jeopardize our integrity in some sense (Rafiq et al., 2022).

Even in cases where social media has made education more affordable, the digital divide still prevails. In a 2021 survey by NITI Aayog, students with low income living in Delhi NCR reported difficulty accessing digital learning due to lack of devices, and to a low internet connection. This affects the implications of social media in education at large and creates an imbalanced learning environment.

Social Media Community Building and mobilizing people

Social media has transformed the civic scene and community building in metropolitan cities like Delhi NCR, especially. Research indicates that through uniting individuals with diverse backgrounds, online platforms encourage cultural transformation, political participation, modernization and fundamental activism.

Research reports that social media applications such as Facebook (Meta), twitter, and WhatsApp have evolved into online forums in recent years where people can talk about social, political, and environmental issues. According to the study of Banaji and Bhat (Banaji, Bhat,

2022), online groups and pages that focus on the women rights, urban development, and environmental activism have succeeded in establishing a collective identity among the residents of the Delhi NCR. Social media has provided a voice to the underprivileged groups, as their issues have been voiced through digital advocacy campaigns and they have gained a following.

Hyper local social networking, such as community forums and neighborhood WhatsApp groups, also improves civic engagement by giving real-time updates on public issues, protests, and local governance, according to a study by Jha and Kodila-Tedika (Jha, Kodila-Tedika, 2020). These hyper local media channels promote cooperative problem solving when it comes to resolving municipal complaints and planning community welfare initiatives.

In Delhi NCR, the current state of social media sites have played a significant role not only in organizing people for elections, protests, and civilized causes but also created a space for diverse political opinion. A study by Bhilwar (Bhilwar, 2021) looked at the movements like the 2020 farmers' protests and the 2019 anti-CAA protests used Facebook and Twitter to organize protests, spread the word, and eliminate the false information. According to the study, social media has been facilitated the quick spread of information, which made it possible for activists to effectively plan sizable gatherings.

Also, the evolution of disaster relief efforts has been greatly aided by digital sites. According to studies on the effect of social media during COVID-19 crisis (Kumar et al., 2021), greatly aided the affected population in Delhi NCR by facilitating resource-sharing, including hospital availability, plasma donations, and coordination of oxygen supplies.

Research also points to problems such as misinformation, echo-chambers and digital inequalities caused by algorithms, despite the social media positively influencing community mobilization and engagement (Fernandez, Alani, 2018). The studies indicate that in certain cases, the public opinion can be reshaped by the politically related campaigns, leading to polarization and activism based on the false information. Also, the digital divide and the minimal internet penetration of economically marginalized communities, remains an obstacle to the inclusive mobilization.

Influence of Social Media on Policy and Legislative Changes

Table 2. Respondents' opinions on whether social media campaigns can lead to significant changes in laws or government policies (N = 80).

Response Category	Percentage (%)	No. of respondents
Strongly agree	12.5 %	10
Agree	45 %	36
Neutral	27.5 %	22
Disagree	13.8 %	11
Strongly Disagree	1.2 %	1

Source: author's own compilation

This table captures that a majority of respondents (45 %) agreed that social media campaigns can influence government policies and legal reforms. Additionally, 12.5 % strongly agreed, indicating strong belief in the effectiveness of social media as an agent of change. However, 27.5 % remained neutral, and a minority (15 %) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

It has been found that the majority of respondents are aware of the social media platforms as potent tools with the ability to influence changes at the policy level, but the fact still remains that there is a degree of ambiguity among a part of the respondents.

The study examines the influence of social media on decision-making in regard to legislation and policies in Delhi NCR. The key findings of qualitative and quantitative data gathered through the online questionnaires, interviews with the policymakers, and content analysis of social media trends are presented below.

The main platforms of political activism and discourse in Delhi-NCR have become the social media platform, such as Meta, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter. Hashtag movements have been successfully used to mobilize the public opinion and compel authorities to act. Citizen initiated campaigns have played a key role in generating awareness and drawing attention to issues by lawmakers.

The reorganization of the collective action depending on policy network sources has been a product of the digital circulation of policies on social media. Policy communication network

communities can be enhanced to hasten spread of policy information. The determination of the general community sentiment can be engineered and encouraged through emotional mobilization of these communities especially by opinion leaders.

Judiciary debate of burning social themes like women safety and education reform has been caused by online petitions and digital advocacy. Onlne activism has not only helped the voices of the marginalized people to be heard but has also changed the national discourse on relevant legal and social matters. Social media content is sharply viral, which compels authorities to respond quickly to complaints of citizens.

Although social media elevates voices, the issues do not go viral, and prioritization of policies is selective. Misinformation and fake news have the potential to distort policy debates, even to halt legislative efforts. Digital activism, although widespread, does not have organized leadership, so it is hard to achieve a lasting policy effect.

Government agencies in Delhi-NCR have adopted digital platforms for circulating policy announcements, crisis management, and public engagement. Verified accounts of politicians, bureaucrats, and police departments have improved direct communication with citizens. AI-driven data analytics are increasingly being used to track social media sentiments and predict policy concerns.

The main challenges in using social media as a tool for a social change-

While social media has emerged as a powerful tool for social activism and policy influence in Delhi-NCR, several challenges and limitations hinder its effectiveness in driving sustainable change.

Table 3. Major Challenges of social media as perceived by respondents

Challenge Category	Percentage (%)	No. of Respondents
Lack of regulation	13.8 %	11
Spread of misinformation	53.8 %	43
Short attention span	20 %	16
Privacy concerns	12.5 %	10

Source: author's own compilation

This table summarizes the perception of the respondents regarding the issues they are experiencing in social media. The finding implies that false information has been the prevailing problem in the social media context, which regulatory frameworks and media literacy should be strengthened.

The high rate of spread of unconfirmed information tends to create a false impression on society and makes people forget about real social problems. Social media is sometimes used to disseminate agendas with the use of political parties and vested interests that alter opinions of the people in a misleading manner. False stories have the potential to accumulate more tensions until they are refuted and there is still a lack of fact-checking.

A lot of social campaigns in social media get so much momentum within such a short period before it slows down after days or weeks. Users tend to change to other trending topics and it is not always easy to stay an activist without actions offline. The outcomes of topic going viral that do not necessarily involve governmental action or long term structural changes are possible.

Despite the extensive use of social media, some fears of increasing security and privacy have also been raised. Due to the volume of information that users share on these sites, and the manners in which the sites utilize this information, the issue of social media privacy is an issue that is being discussed numerous times over.

Occasionally, the government blocks online platforms restricting freedom of speech and activism. The wave of online movements has been affected by some instances of internet shutdowns and content takedowns. Digital activism has not been regulated or legalized, and thus the social media-based advocacy groups remain unsure of the regulation.

Theoretical approach of social media towards social change

The influence of social media in the changes of society is supported by the presence of various theoretical models that define its psychological, communicative, and structural effects. These frameworks show how platforms transform the process of identity formation, information ecosystems, and collective behaviour.

Table 4. List of Theories Underpinning Social Media for Social Change and their theorists

S. No.	Theories	Theorists
1.	Social Identity Theory	Henri Tajfel and John Turner
2.	Transactional Affordance Theory	James J. Gibson
3.	Cultivation Theory	George Gerbner
4.	Cognitive Dissonance Theory	Leon Festinger

Source: author's own compilation

Social Identity Theory – It is a social psychological theory that is an interactionist and where people identify themselves by means of group affiliation in social media which strengthens in-group cohesion and increases differences between out-groups. This is how algorithmically-controlled echo chambers work, as users tend to move into groups that confirm their views, which further polarizes them.

Transactional Affordance Theory – This theory combines the elements of the platform (e.g., likes, shares) with the behavior of users, highlighting how design decisions can make it go viral and provide an avenue to self-presentation. As an illustration, algorithm personalization puts an emphasis on emotionally charged content which always amplifies confirmation bias.

Cultivation Theory – This implies that after many years of using social media, certain accounts, accounts of things, become normalized, which alters the social understanding of reality. This is compounded by the Theory of Network Effects where the value of a platform increases with the number of users engaged thereby, establishing feedback mechanisms which value sensationalism rather than accuracy.

Cognitive Dissonance Theory – The theory elucidates the discomfort of cognitions and the manner in which the user attempts to balance conflicting data via compliance to the majority opinion, and tends to ignore the minority opinion according to the Spiral of Silence Theory.

5. Conclusion

There are far too many effects on education in the city of Delhi NCR. Although they have transformed the prospects, collaboration, and learning to pursue career growth, such problems as digital divide, distractions, and misinformation have to communicate. The future research should be aimed at developing a strategy to effectively integrate social media in traditional education systems and lessen its adverse impact.

Research indicates that social media has become a formidable tool because it had augmented the civic participation presently in building and organizing the community in Delhi NCR. It encourages civic participation, rise up grass root activism as well as enhance group problem solving. In order to maximize its positive impact, though, ethical aspects related to disinformation and digital availability must be addressed. Future research may focus on how these challenges may be reduced and social media can help create an informed, engaged, and inclusive society. Effective and good policy-changing campaigns, strategic messaging and role of influencers all add up to mould the attitude of the people resulting in positive outcomes.

The findings of the research indicate the transformation of the social media in Delhi-NCR as a passive means of information sharing to an active means of action through legislation urging and policy advocacy. Although this has enhanced the responsiveness of the government and empowered the citizens, issues such as misinformation and short-term digital activism still prevail. The effective inclusion of social media in governance can lead to more inclusive and open policy making.

Even though the social media is a powerful tool of social changes, it has certain impediments that limit its utility. To overcome these challenges, activists ought to integrate offline and online activism, promote media literacy and fact-checking, utilize safe means of communication to maintain privacy, and concentrate on the long-term activism, as opposed to trends.

Collectively, the structures provided in the findings and analysis demonstrate that social media can make communication more democratic and lead to fragmentation of the society. Although models such as networked publics emphasize the possibility of participation, algorithmic bias and echo chambers are often in control. To understand these dynamics, it adopts an interdisciplinary approach, which involves the integration of sociology, computational design, and communication studies.

References

Allcott, Gentzkow, 2017 – *Allcott, H., Gentzkow, M.* (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 31(2): 211-236. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.31.2.211

Al-Rahmi et al., 2014 – *Al-Rahmi, W.M., Othman, M.S., Yusuf, L.M.* (2014). The role of social media for collaborative learning to improve academic performance and learning outcomes. *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*. 2(1): 1-17.

Al-Rahmi et al., 2018 – *Al-Rahmi, W.M., Yahaya, N., Aldraiweesh, A., Alamri, M.M., Aljarboa, N.A., Alturki, U., Aljeraiwi, A.A.* (2018). Social media use and student satisfaction in higher education. *Heliyon*. 4(11): e00962.

Banaji, Bhat, 2022 – *Banaji, S., Bhat, R.* (2022). Social media and hate. Routledge. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003083078

Bennet, Segerberg, 2012 – *Bennett, W.L., Segerberg, A.* (2012). The Logic of connective action: digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*. 15(5): 739-768. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661

Bhilwar, 2021 – *Bhilwar, A.* (2021). Social media and protest: A case study on anti CAA protest in India. In: University of Stirling, University of Stirling. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.dpublication.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/16-225.pdf

Boyd, 2014 – *Boyd, D.* (2014). It's complicated: the social lives of networked teens. Yale University Press: ix-273

Castells, 2011 – *Castells, M.* (2011). The Rise of the Network Society. Wiley-Blackwell.

Crawford et al., 2020 – *Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., Magni, P. A., Lam, S.* (2020). COVID-19: 20 countries' higher education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Learning & Teaching*. 3(1): 1-20.

Fernandez, Alani, 2018 – *Fernandez, M., Alani, H.* (2018). Online Misinformation: Challenges and Future Directions. Association for Computing Machinery: 595-602. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1145/3184558.3188730

Freelon et al., 2016 – *Freelon, D., McIlwain, C.D., Clark, M.* (2016). Beyond the hashtags: #Ferguson, #BlackLivesmatter, and the online struggle for offline justice. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2747066

Fuchs, 2017 – *Fuchs, C.* (2017). From digital positivism and administrative big data analytics towards critical digital and social media research! *European Journal of Communication*. 32(1): 37-49. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323116682804

Gerbaudo, 2012 – *Gerbaudo, P.* (2012). Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism. Pluto Press. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183pdzs

Greenhow, Lewin, 2015 – *Greenhow, C., Lewin, C.* (2015). Social media and education: reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. *Learning Media and Technology*. 41(1): 6-30. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2015.1064954

Hogg, 2016 – *Hogg, M.A.* (2016). Social Identity Theory. In: Peace psychology book series: 3-17). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_1

Hrastinski, 2009 – *Hrastinski, S.* (2009). A theory of online learning as online participation. *Computers & Education*. 52(1): 78-82.

Jackson et al., 2020 – *Jackson, S.J., Bailey, M., Welles, B.F.* (2020). #HashtagActivism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice. MIT Press.

Jha, Kodila-Tedika, 2020 – *Jha, C., Kodila-Tedika, O.* (2020). Does social media promote democracy? Some empirical evidence. *Journal of Policy Modeling*. 42(2): 271-290.

Junco et al., 2011 – *Junco, R., Heiberger, G., Loken, E.* (2011). The effect of Twitter on college student engagement and grades. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 27(2): 119-132.

Kallmer, 2024 – *Kallmer, B.* (2024). The Upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The role of Digital media. *Journal of Democracy*. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/the-upheavals-in-egypt-and-tunisia-the-role-of-digital-media/

Karpf, 2012 – *Karpf, D.* (2012). The MoveOn Effect: The Unexpected transformation of american political advocacy. Oxford University Press.

Kietzmann et al., 2011 – *Kietzmann, J.H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I.P., Silvestre, B.S.* (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons*. 54(3): 241-251. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005

Kirschner, Karpinski, 2010 – *Kirschner, P.A., Karpinski, A.C.* (2010). Facebook® and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 26(6): 1237-1245.

Kumar, Sharma, 2021 – *Kumar, V., Sharma, D.* (2021). The impact of YouTube on student learning. *Education and Information Technologies*. 26(2): 2121-2145.

Lassen, Brown, 2010 – *Lassen, D.S., Brown, A.R.* (2010). Twitter. *Social Science Computer Review*. 29(4): 419-436. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439310382749

Loader, Mercea, 2011 – *Loader, B.D., Mercea, D.* (2011). Networking democracy? *Information Communication & Society*. 14(6): 757-769. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118x.2011.592648

Luo et al., 2021 – *Luo, T., Shah, S., Cox, J.* (2021). The influence of social media misinformation on students' learning. *Education and Information Technologies*. 26(4): 4109-4125.

Manca, Ranieri, 2016 – *Manca, S., Ranieri, M.* (2016). Facebook and the others. Potentials and obstacles of social media for teaching in higher education. *Computers & Education*. 95: 216-230.

Papacharissi, 2002 – *Papacharissi, Z.* (2002). The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere. *New Media & Society*. 4(1): 9-27.

Rafiq et al., 2022 – *Rafiq, F., Awan, M.J., Yasin, A., Nobanee, H., Zain, A.M., Bahaj, S.A.* (2022). Privacy prevention of big data applications: a systematic literature review. *SAGE Open*. 12(2). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221096445

Rosen et al., 2013 – *Rosen, L.D., Carrier, L.M., Cheever, N.A.* (2013). Facebook and texting made me do it: Media-induced task-switching while studying. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29(3): 948-958.

Tess, 2013 – *Tess, P.A.* (2013). The role of social media in higher education classes (real and virtual) – A literature review. *Computers in Human Behavior*. 29(5): A60-A68.

The Network Society, 2024 – The Network Society. SAGE Publications Inc. 2024. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-network-society/book268672

Veletsianos, Navarrete, 2012 – *Veletsianos, G., Navarrete, C.C.* (2012). Online social networks as formal learning environments: Learner experiences and activities. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*. 13(1): 144-166.

Copyright © 2026 by Cherkas Global University

Published in the USA
Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)
Issued since 2005.
ISSN 1994-4160
E-ISSN 1994-4195
2026. 22(1): 195-200

DOI: 10.13187/me.2026.1.195
https://me.cherkasgu.press



Developing Media Competence of Future Teachers in a University Pedagogy Course

Marina Tselykh [a, *]

[a] Rostov State University of Economics, Russian Federation

Abstract

This article examines the development of media competence in future teachers within the context of a university Pedagogy Course. The study addresses the systemic challenge facing higher pedagogical education in the digital age: the need to transition from a knowledge-oriented model to a competency-oriented approach that integrates media literacy as an essential professional characteristic. The research analyzes the theoretical foundations of media competence, tracing its evolution from the concept of "media literacy" to the more comprehensive "media competence" paradigm, which encompasses motivational, cognitive, value-semantic, activity-based, and communicative components. Drawing on the Federal State Educational Standards, the study identifies the normative requirements that establish media competence as a link between regulatory expectations and educational outcomes. The methodology involves a theoretical analysis of existing scientific approaches and a practical examination of the Pedagogy Course curriculum at Rostov State University of Economics. The results demonstrate that the Pedagogy Course provides an integrative foundation for developing media competence. The article presents specific pedagogical methods and assignments – including media text analysis, project-based learning, case studies, and role-playing games – that embed media education into professional training. A detailed table illustrates how each section of the Pedagogy Course integrates media competence components through practical activities such as teacher image analysis, examination of historical teaching tools as media artifacts, didactic analysis of digital learning environments, creation of subject-specific media content, and observation of technology use during school placements. The study concludes that the Pedagogy Course possesses unique integrative potential, enabling the development of media competence in direct connection with general pedagogical competencies, thereby preparing future teachers to solve real-world educational challenges in digital environments while meeting professional standards.

Keywords: media competence, future teachers, teacher education, Pedagogy Course, media literacy, digital technologies, educational media.

1. Introduction

Digitalization and the emergence of the information society are driving a profound transformation of higher education. The centuries-old traditional education model, centered on the dissemination of ready-made knowledge, is now demonstrating its limitations. This is reflected in the evolution of not only educational process (lectures and seminars), but also in a fundamental rethinking of the content of professional training and expected educational results.

In the field of teacher education, these changes are particularly complex and comprehensive. The key challenge is the need to transition from a knowledge-oriented model to a practice- and

* Corresponding author
E-mail addresses: m.tselykh@mail.ru (M. Tselykh)

competency-oriented one. This requires a fundamental shift in the pedagogical culture within universities themselves: the creation of an educational environment that not only informs future teachers but also purposefully promotes the development of their long-term professional competence. The latter includes, in addition to subject knowledge, digital and media literacy, skills in designing a personalized educational trajectory, critical thinking, and the ability to continuously learn in a rapidly changing world.

Requirements for working with information and digital technologies are integrated into the structure of modern professional pedagogical activity. Media competence is a normatively established component of a teacher's professional activity, stemming from the provisions of the Professional Standard and the Federal State Educational Standards (FGOS, 2018). The updated in 2022 version of the Standard explicitly defines teachers' digital responsibilities: conducting video conferences, using digital communication tools while adhering to information security standards, maintaining electronic documentation, and creating their own digital materials. Consequently, media competence serves as a link between the professional standard's regulatory requirements for teachers' work activities and the educational outcomes established in the Federal State Educational Standard. Its development is a prerequisite for the implementation of the state policy on the digitalization of education and the improvement of teachers' professional education.

In this article, we focus on the development of media competence in professional education of teachers. Clearly, this professional field has its own specific characteristics and imposes specific requirements on the methods and content of developing media competence of future pedagogues. The tasks in this area, as formulated in the Federal State Educational Standard, include preparation for such activities as: teaching; project creation; methodological; organizational and managerial; cultural and educational; and pedagogical support. Moreover, one of the key competencies required for successful teaching career is systemic and critical thinking, which presupposes the ability to search, critically analyze, and synthesize information, as well as apply a systems approach to solving the assigned tasks (FGOS, 2018). In other words, effective professional activity requires the would-be teachers not only to use, but also to critically evaluate, create and teach with media.

Thus, the current stage of development of higher pedagogical education is characterized by a systemic challenge, the response to which must be complex work affecting its goals, methods, content and results evaluation. In this regard, it becomes obvious that the development of media competence for teaching staff is an integral professional characteristic that requires special theoretical justification and practical development.

2. Materials and methods

In this article, we will limit ourselves to examining ways to develop media competence of future teachers within the context of a Pedagogy Course. Our objectives include a brief analysis of the essence and structure of the concept of "teachers' media competence," determining the potential of a Pedagogy Course as an integrative foundation for developing media competence, and highlighting some methods, forms, and assignments for integrating media aspects into the content of pedagogical disciplines.

3. Discussion

The theoretical foundations of media competence as a general concept are well developed and presented in numerous works by foreign and Russian authors. These primarily include studies by L. Masterman (Masterman, 1985), D. Buckingham (Buckingham, 2003), C. Worsnop (Worsnop, 1999), Y. Usov (Usov, 1995), A. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2007), A. Sharikov (Sharikov, 1990), A. Fedorov and A. Levitskaya (Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2022), I. Chelysheva (Chelysheva, 2022) and others.

Our analysis of the scientific literature shows that the evolution of concepts in the field of media education has shifted from “media literacy” to “media competence”. This shift has been a key trend in academic discourse and has resulted in a shift from defining a set of skills to be taught to exploring ways to develop personal qualities expressed in competencies. Among the first scholars to develop the concept of "media literacy" (the defensive paradigm) were S. Livingstone (Livingstone, 2002) and R. Kuby (Kuby, 2019). Their works in the 1990s and 2000s laid the foundation for understanding media literacy as the ability to "access, analyze, evaluate, and create media." This was a skills-based approach. D. Considine and A. Hall actively promoted it in school education, prompted by the rapidly growing influence of media in society.

The Russian tradition maintains a clear distinction between these concepts. In Russian discourse the theory of media competence predominates. A. Fedorov (Fedorov, 2007; Fedorov, 2015) has provided the most comprehensive and systematic justification for this evolutionary transition in Russian scholarship. He explicitly states that "personal media competence" is an integrative personality trait, a combination of motives, knowledge, skills, and abilities (perceptual, analytical, critical, and creative) that enable effective, critical, and responsible action in a complex media environment. It is a synthesis of motivational, contact, informational, perceptual, interpretive, practical-operational, and creative components.

Regarding the development of theoretical foundations for media competence of educators and teachers, an analysis of the scientific literature shows that this is an interdisciplinary field, uniting media education, pedagogy, psychology, and communication studies. Research is being conducted in key the following key area: clarifying the conceptual apparatus (Buckingham, 2003; Gálik et al., 2024; Kuby, 2019; Usov, 1993), defining the structure of the main components of media competence (Fedorov, 2015; Worsnop, 1999), developing pedagogical models for its formation (Grigor'eva, 2014; Muydinov, 2023) and assessing of their effectiveness (Hobbs, 2018).

After covering a wide range of material on the topic we may argue that media competence is a person's ability to participate in culturally significant events using mass media. In the context of a teacher's activities, it is characterized by the ability to conduct professional and cultural dialogue, solve professional and pedagogical problems in the information society, integrate media education and media educational technologies into the educational process, implement socially significant media educational projects, and organize the information and educational space in the classroom.

Theoretical analysis and systematization of established scientific approaches to defining a teacher’s media competence create the basis for identifying and describing its structural components. Most modern models of media competence of teachers includes following components: 1) cognitive (knowledge of media theory, media language, genres, and perception features); 2) value-semantic (critical attitude, ethical and legal assessment of media content); 3) activity-based (ability to search for, analyze, create, and distribute pedagogical media content); 4) communicative (use of media to interact with students, parents, and colleagues).

The identification of these components, in turn, allows us to determine effective ways and methods for their targeted development in the system of professional pedagogical education.

4. Results

The Pedagogy Course has great potential for developing media competence of university students. It is not simply a discipline that conveys knowledge about education and training, but a system-forming foundation for developing future teachers' media competence. It integrates technical skills for working with information into a professional and pedagogical context, ensuring that graduates are prepared to solve real-world educational challenges in the digital environment. The potential of the Pedagogy Course lies in its ability to translate theoretical concepts of media into practical pedagogical actions. By mastering the various sections of the course, students learn not only to use media, but also to design educational situations based on them, evaluate their educational impact, and manage communication in a digital educational environment. Unlike highly specialized disciplines (for example, Information Technology), Pedagogy allows to consider media not as an end in itself, but as a tool for solving professional tasks.

The pedagogy curriculum consists of several sections, each of which organically integrates media aspects. Traditionally, the course "Pedagogy" is divided into History of Education, Didactics, Educational Theory, School Studies, etc. But nowadays the list of pedagogical courses may vary among different universities. In accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education, Rostov State University of Economics has developed a bachelor's degree in the field of Pedagogical Education in which the course "Pedagogy" is studied over five semesters since the 1st to the 3rd year of education. It includes a sequence of several interrelated disciplines: Introduction to the Teaching Profession, History of Education and Pedagogical Thought, Theoretical Pedagogy, Practical Pedagogy, and Technologies and Organization of Educational Practice. This allows to consistently and fully organize work on the formation of the main structural components of media competence of future teachers.

Let's briefly describe the most promising pedagogical forms, methods, and techniques and how we use them in our university classrooms to provide high-quality student learning in both media education and professional fields.

In general Pedagogy, as a science of education and training, offers methods that in themselves are tools for developing media competence. For example, using Media Text Analysis in the classroom helps students learn to critically evaluate educational resources, online courses, digital textbooks, and traditional texts in terms of didactics, scientific validity, and age-appropriateness.

Project-based learning technologies develop students' skills in creating their own educational products (infographics on pedagogical theories, trailers for books by famous pedagogues, podcasts with interviews with practicing teachers, etc.).

In the process of teaching pedagogical disciplines, the method of analyzing specific cases from pedagogical practice is traditionally used. Case study method includes analysis of real pedagogical situations related to education. It may also concern issues related to the media and development of media competencies (e.g.: “A student brought a video with unreliable scientific information to class,” “A conflict arose in the parent chat”, etc.).

Another unique element of pedagogical training is the technology of Role-Playing games, which bridges the gap between abstract theory (knowing what media competence is) and practical application (knowing how to act). For example, students may experiment with different communication strategies, make mistakes, and experience the consequences of poor media decisions (e.g., privacy violations) without facing real-world consequences.

In Table 1, we summarize and illustrate how we implement the integration of media competence into the content of various sections of the Pedagogical Course and form its main components in university students at Chekhov Institute (Taganrog, Russia).

Table 1. Media Competence Integration into the content of various sections of the Pedagogy Course

№	Sections of the Pedagogy Course	Educational Focus	Media CompetenceIntegration
1	Introduction to the Teaching Profession	Shaping professional identity and understanding the modern teacher's role	*Teacher Image Analysis:* students analyze how teachers are portrayed in movies, TV shows, news articles, and social media trends. They find out what stereotypes exist, and how they shape public perception of the profession. *Digital Professional Identity:* students discuss the concept of the teacher's "digital footprint" and create guidelines for their own professional online presence (online profiles, privacy settings for personal accounts, the implications of a public-facing role). *The Evolving Teacher Role:* students create the modern teacher’s frame not just as a knowledge transmitter, but as a "learning facilitator" and "digital gatekeeper" in an information-rich world.
2	History of Education and Pedagogical Thought	Understanding the evolution of educational ideas and practices	*Media as a Historical Artifact:* students analyze historical teaching tools as the "media" of their time: from hornbooks and slates to the printing press, radio, and early educational TV. They draw conclusions about pedagogical shifts that new teaching tool enabled. *Tracing Pedagogical Ideas Online*: students research the modern digital presence and interpretation of historical figures (e.g., they create Jan Amos Comenius/Ushinsky/Makarenko, etc. VK page or find out “how Montessori's ideas are discussed in online teacher forums”). *Critical Analysis of "Timeless" Truths*: using digital archives and online sources students compare how the same pedagogical concept (e.g., "the concept of free/collective education") has been framed differently across different eras and media.

№	Sections of the Pedagogy Course	Educational Focus	Media CompetenceIntegration
3	Theoretical Pedagogy (Didactics & Theory of Education)	Principles of teaching, learning, and curriculum design	*Media as a Didactic Tool:* students analyze the affordances and limitations of different media for specific learning objectives (e.g. they explore whether and when a podcast is more effective than a simulation; what could be better for learning: interactive infographics or a chapter from a textbook). *Theories of Learning in Digital Spaces:* students connect learning theories (behaviorism/cognitivism/ constructivism) to the design of digital learning environments, educational apps, and online courses. (e.g. How do platforms like Khan Academy or Duolingo embody these theories?) *Designing with Media*: students create a micro-lesson plan that intentionally integrates a specific media type, justifying their choice based on didactic principles.
4	Practical Pedagogy (Methods of Teaching Specific Subjects)	Subject-specific teaching methodologies and classroom techniques	*Creation of thematic media content:* in our case, future foreign language teachers learn to create and analyze media content relevant to their target language. – To teach *vocabulary and grammar,* students are encouraged to use photo stories, short visual narratives and word clouds. – To develop *listening and speaking skills,* students are encouraged to create podcasts, talk show segments, and video blogs that encourage oral communication. – Media techniques such as infographics, digital storytelling, timelines, and social media simulations contribute to the development of *intercultural competence* and the teaching of *reading and writing* as a way of understanding information. – Interactive stories, quizzes, and digital flashcards help increase student *motivation* and create a low-risk, error-prone practice environment.
5	Technologies and Organization of Educational Practice (Including School Placements/ Practicum)	The practical application of technology in managing and delivering education	*Learning Management Systems as a Site of Practice*: students practice structuring a course site (e.g. Moodle, Canvas, Google Classroom, etc.), creating digital content within it, and using its communication tools. *Digital Communication with Stakeholders:* students participate in role-playing and real-practice scenarios for professional communication (writing clear and respectful emails to parents, coworkers, managing parent-teacher communication via school portals, and using digital tools for collaboration with colleagues). *Observation and Analysis of Media in the Classroom:* students have a specific task: to observe and analyze how their mentor teachers and the school itself use media. What tools are used? For what purposes? What are the implicit norms around technology use? This connects theory to lived experience.

In essence, when future teachers create different types of media across the foundational Pedagogical modules, they are actively designing the very materials they will one day use in their own classroom. They are learning to think like instructional designers, considering not just what to

teach, but how to present it in the most engaging and effective way for the digital-native students they will soon teach.

5. Conclusion

We use the above-discussed technologies in our university classrooms and believe that they help students acquire the necessary components of media competence: students move from thinking about media to acting with media as a natural and integral part of their professional practice.

Thus, it can be argued that the Pedagogy Course possesses unique integrative technological resources: it allows develop media competence not in isolation, but in an inextricable connection with the development of general pedagogical competencies of future teachers, which corresponds to the logic of the professional standard and the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard.

References

Buckingham, 2003 – *Buckingham, D.* (2003). Media education: literacy, learning, and contemporary culture. Cambridge, UK.

Chelysheva, 2022 – *Chelysheva, I.V.* (2022). Rol', funkciiisoderzhanierabotynauchno-obrazovatel'nogo centra v mediaobrazovaniiimediaprosveshcheniipedagogov. [Role, functions and content of work of the scientific and educational center in media education and media education of teachers]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2007 – *Fedorov, A.* (2007). Razvitiye mediakompetentnosti i kriticheskogo myshleniya studentov pedagogicheskogo vuza [Development of media competence and critical thinking of students of a pedagogical university]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Fedorov, 2015 – *Fedorov, A.* (2015). Levels of Media Competence: Russian Approach. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*. 4(2-3).

FGOS, 2018 – FGOS. Prikaz Minobrnauki Rossii No. 121. [Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, No. 121]. 2018. [Electronic resource]. URL: https://fgos.ru/fgos/fgos-44-03-01-pedagogicheskoe-obrazovanie-121] [in Russian]

Gálik et al., 2024 – *Gálik, S. et al.* (2024). How competencies of media users contribute to deliberative communication. In: Peruško, Z., Lauk, E., Halliki-Loit, H. (eds.). European media systems for deliberative communication: risks and opportunities. New York: Routledge: 98-116. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003476597

Grigor'eva, 2014 – *Grigor'eva, I.V.* (2014). Informacionno-obrazovatel'noe prostranstvo vuza kak factor formirovaniya mediakompetentnosti budushchego pedagoga [Information and educational space of the university as a factor in the formation of media competence of future teachers]. Ph.D. Dis. Moscow. [in Russian]

Hobbs, 2018 – *Hobbs, R.* (2018). The Routledge companion to media education, copyright and fair use. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Kuby, 2019 – *Kuby, C.R., Spector, K., Thiel J.J.* (2019). Posthumanism and literacy education: knowing/becoming/doing literacies. New York: Routledge.

Levitskaya, Fedorov, 2022 – *Levitskaya, A., Fedorov A.* (2022). Mediaobrazovanie studentov pedagogicheskih vuzov I fakul'tetov kak instrument, protivostoyashchij medijnym manipulyacionnym vozdejstviyam. [Media education of students of pedagogical universities and faculties as a tool to counter media manipulative influences]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Livingstone, 2002 – *Livingstone, S.* (2002). Young people and new media: childhood and the changing media environment. London: Sage.

Masterman, 1985 – *Masterman, L.* (1985). Teaching the Media. London: Routledge.

Muydinov, 2023 – *Muydinov, F.* (2023). Theoretical foundations for the development of media competence when preparing students for professional activities. *The American Journal of Applied Sciences*. 5(9): 67-74. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37547/tajssei/Volume05Issue09-08

Sharikov, 1990 – *Sharikov A.V.* (1990). Mediaobrazovanie: mirovoj i otechestvennyj opyt. [Media education: global and domestic experience]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Usov, 1993 – *Usov, Y.N.* (1993). Osnovy ekrannoj kul'tury. [Fundamentals of screen culture]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Usov, 1995 – *Usov, Y.N.* (1995). V mire ekrannyhiskusstv [In the world of screen arts]. Moscow. [in Russian]

Worsnop, 1999 – *Worsnop, C.M.* (1999). Screening Images: Ideas for Media Education. Wright Communications.