

Research Article

Cite this article: Salameh, R., & Abuhasirah, R. (2025). Media Literacy Concepts in the Education and Professional Practice of Journalism and Media Students. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 15, e2025137. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.15.137>

Received January 19, 2025

Accepted March 10, 2025

Published Online April 7, 2025

Keywords: Media literacy, media faculties, verify information, fake news, social media

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Media Literacy Concepts in the Education and Professional Practice of Journalism and Media Students

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Abstract

Background/purpose. This study aimed to identify the concept of media literacy among students of media faculties and its application in journalism and media, in light of the efforts exerted to enhance media culture in Jordanian universities, as a result of exposure to a vast amount of information through the media and social media platforms, in addition to the popularity of misleading or fabricated news. The inability of students to understand the concept of media literacy and how to apply it in their daily lives leads to their inability to critically analyze and evaluate the content of the media, which leads to possible negative consequences on their personal and academic lives.

Materials/methods. This study employed a cross-sectional survey approach. The study population included 1926 students enrolled in the 2022/2023 academic year. A total of 385 students, representing 20% of the population, were selected through simple random sampling from the Faculties of Media at Yarmouk University and the Middle East University. This sample was chosen to ensure proportional representation from both universities. Data were collected via an electronic questionnaire containing six questions designed to measure the opinions of media students towards their knowledge of the meaning of the term media literacy.

Results. The majority of media students know the meaning of the term media literacy, and they heard about it for the first time at the university, where the most prominent concept they have was associated with verifying information, photos, videos, and fake news and distinguishing information from opinion in media materials. Despite their need for training, the students did not receive specialized training in media literacy. The hypotheses proved that the ability of media students to define the concept is positively related to the teachers' introduction of media literacy terms in their explanation of some courses, which was reflected in their ability to identify the most prominent concept of media literacy.

Conclusion. The need to raise awareness of the importance of media and information literacy in universities through holding training courses with the aim of enhancing students' skills in understanding, analyzing, and using media and social media.



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1. Introduction

Media literacy is a modern educational field aimed at raising awareness among individuals about the influence of media and technology on society and culture. It is based on key concepts and principles, including media awareness, critical and analytical thinking, and the effective and responsible use of media and technology (Almaani, 2024). Media literacy is an effective approach for engaging with media and social media in a responsible and positive manner. It seeks to enhance individuals' ability to analyze and understand media messages, evaluate the credibility and bias of media content, identify propaganda and misinformation, and understand the role of the media in shaping public opinion. (Mohammad et al., 2024; Safori & Sorri, 2024). These skills are crucial for achieving effective integration into modern society and improving society's capacity to engage with information sources, news, and digital technology tools (Abuhasirah & Ismael, 2023; Dadakhonov, 2024; Shalevska, 2024).

The current stage presents an urgent need to learn the basics of media literacy due to the unprecedented influx of media through traditional and social media platforms. Recognizing this, many universities have begun to introduce the subject of media literacy in their curricula (Salameh, 2019). Consequently, teachers must catch up with the latest developments in this field, particularly in the technology sector and social media (Almashaqbeh et al., 2025; Murad, 2023).

In recent years, Jordan has made great efforts to promote media culture in Jordanian society. The government has launched various initiatives aimed at educating students about the importance of media literacy. Following an announcement by the Jordanian Government, the teaching of media and information literacy has been incorporated into university curricula. The National Executive Plan for Media and Information Literacy 2020-2023 was introduced to enhance faculty members' capabilities, establish a compulsory course within university requirements, and explore the potential for postgraduate programs in the field of media literacy at Jordanian universities (Al-Qudah, 2021).

Jordanian academic institutions have taken a significant step forward in the project to develop media literacy and enhance its effectiveness. The Jordan Media Institute, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), launched the project to introduce media and information literacy for Jordan in 2016. The Institute is the executing body for institutional projects in Jordan and offers training on media and information literacy to journalism and media graduates. These graduates, in turn, train various groups, including teachers and university professors, and oversee their teaching and supervision of students. The goal is to develop media capabilities by providing appropriate lessons and training programs, utilizing modern technology in the educational process, and teaching methods to analyze and evaluate media messages. (Abuhasirah, 2022; Oreqat & Abuhasirah, 2022).

Consequently, media literacy has become an increasingly important necessity in the digital age due to the vast amount of information disseminated through media and social media platforms, coupled with the prevalence of misleading or fabricated news. Students' lack of understanding of media literacy concepts and their application in daily life impedes their ability to critically analyze and evaluate media content, which can result in negative consequences for their personal and academic lives (Al-Masshaqbah & Abuhasirah, 2023; Fabbro & Gabbi, 2024).

Accordingly, in light of the National Initiative for the Dissemination of Media and Information Literacy (2020-2023), which aimed to enhance individuals' capacity to navigate the complexities of contemporary media, information, and news sources, as well as digital technology tools. This is particularly pertinent in light of the paucity of research that has been conducted on the capacity of teachers to incorporate the concept of media literacy into the curriculum of Jordanian university students, to develop their practical skills in evaluating the credibility of media materials, including all the rumours, false or fabricated information, or messages that may be involved.

Therefore, the significance of this study lies in the critical importance of media literacy as one of the foremost projects for educational reform and quality improvement in Jordan. Media literacy enables students to effectively engage with media, mainly digital communication and social media platforms. This study may contribute to evaluating teachers' ability to impart critical thinking skills to students, thereby enhancing their competency in navigating media and social media, as well as verifying information and news. The objective of this study is to identify the concept of media literacy among students in media faculties and its application in journalism and media and to ascertain whether students at Jordanian universities have received training in media literacy. Additionally, the study aims to determine if further training is needed, considering the ongoing efforts to promote media culture among students and the vast influx of media materials accessible to the public through various media and social media platforms.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Media literacy and its explanatory theoretical models

This study is based on the concept of media literacy, drawing from various theoretical frameworks and philosophical approaches. Numerous researchers and communication experts have adopted a range of concepts, dimensions, and critical frameworks that emphasize educating individuals, developing their critical thinking through analysis and evaluation, producing media content, as well as the effective and responsible use of the media (Al-Shiekh & Al-Rajabi, 2021; Austin & Domgaard, 2024; Bosnjak et al., 2020; Cho et al., 2024; Domgaard & Park, 2021; Zouhri, 2024). These theoretical frameworks stem from the main assumption that individuals' awareness of the concept of media literacy and their possession of its skills reduces the negative effects of false media content circulated through the media; And the mechanism of interaction with him (Abuhasirah & Salameh, 2024a; Haddad & Khurshid, 2021; Navarro Pérez, 2024; Sádaba et al., 2023) while others are related to the recipient and his possession of critical thinking skills (access, analysis, evaluation, content production), or the communicator and his roles, the effectiveness of his mediation and active participation, as well as the user's transformation into a digital content producer (Al-Rajabi, 2022; Makkawi et al., 2021; Moore & Hancock, 2022; Peng et al., 2023).

These theoretical frameworks have varied in the interpretation of this hypothesis within the framework of different intellectual and philosophical approaches. Freed (2003) proposes a model for media literacy based on the concept of interactivity, which characterizes social media as digital platforms allowing individuals to interact in large-scale interactive digital environments. Therefore, critical thinking skills, technical and technological skills alone are not insufficient to define the concept of media literacy without understanding the nature and power of interaction in those means, so the model proposes the need to understand the interaction process as a basis for media literacy, and presented a model called deep media literacy, consisting of three levels: skills of using information technologies and dealing with digital platforms, critical thinking skills for the content of media messages, and appreciation of global interaction.

Potter (2004) introduced the cognitive model of media literacy, emphasizing the significance of knowledge and perception in engaging with media. This model addresses the challenge of confronting false content, positing that media often disseminate harmful messages that contribute to a false awareness in society, thereby advancing its ideological agenda. The best way to protect individuals from these messages is to pressure the media to change their practice, or to educate individuals about the concept of media literacy, by enabling them to read media messages better, or to identify the ideologies behind media messages, thus raising awareness in dealing with content provided through the media. Martens (2010) asserts that the ideas presented by communication and media scholars in describing the concept of media literacy depend at its core on knowledge and skills; individuals need to acquire knowledge about the main aspects of the work of the media, Such as: the

media industry, media messaging, audience, and media influences, in addition to their need to employ skills to use this knowledge to protect themselves and immunize them from potential negative effects, and enable them to use the media more consciously, and then make decisions that can improve their lives (Abuhasirah & Salameh, 2024b).

These visions are discussed by Hobbs (2011), within the immunization or persuasion model, and presents his critical vision of the concept of media literacy; he emphasizes that the concept does not depend only on developing the effectiveness of critical thinking or communication skills, but also on immunization or persuasion against the dangers of the media, and the model focuses on the effectiveness of active mediation, logical and emotional paths, By making individuals engage with the media as active decision-makers who participate in the process of interpretation and understanding; thus helping them reach informed choices that align with their own values through active and shared practice. With the development of the concept of media literacy, as a result of the different social, cultural, economic and technological contexts, as well as the development of means of communication, which made the user move from the level of exposure to digital media messages via social media to the production of digital content through them, Lee (2018) put forward the protection motive model in the context of Internet risks, The model assumes the existence of four variables that constitute the motivation of users to interact with digital content within the threat assessment of false content and the ability to respond to it, and these variables are: awareness of the strength and seriousness of the threat, given that the Internet constitutes an effective environment for the circulation of false content, the possibility of threat, as all users may be exposed to false content, the effectiveness of the response, through the mechanisms used to avoid false content, self-efficacy and the ability of users to take positive behavior to correct false content.

Based on the explanatory frameworks of media literacy, and their variation in defining the dimensions of the concept, experts and researchers agree that it is necessary to teach students the initial skills in critical thinking, and the initial skills in verifying news and information, in addition to teaching students how to deal with technology, and how search engines and algorithms export certain content and not others (McWhorter & Mitchell Patterson, 2023; Okela, 2024; Salameh, 2019a).

2.2. Previous Study

Tran-Duong (2023) indicated that the dimensions of media literacy (functional consumption, critical thinking, and critical assumption) have significant positive effects on student learning outcomes in the online learning environment in terms of developing skills in understanding, analyzing, and evaluating media content. Rajab et al. (2023) aimed to identify the effectiveness of a proposed program in digital media literacy to develop cognitive awareness of digital privacy among students. The results concluded that students were more familiar with the dimensions of media literacy and its concept in terms of cognitive awareness of the digital privacy of media literacy after the experiment and the post-test. Dolanbay (2022) sought to identify the benefit of Turkish university students from training programs for media literacy and evaluation of students' activities. The results found that media literacy contributes to increasing students' ability to effectively access information, evaluate and analyze the content of media messages, understand the effects of the media, as well as freedom of opinion and expression, and effective participation in society.

Potter (2022) investigated the concept of media literacy among the authors of articles published in the American Media Literacy Journal and the sources on which they rely to provide these terms through an analysis of 210 articles published in this journal. The results concluded that there is no specific definition of media literacy among researchers, In addition to relying on a large number of sources to cite these definitions, the number of definitions in published articles reached more than 400 definitions, including: the ability to evaluate and analyze, recognize patterns in media messages,

judge the validity of information, search for the truth, avoid influence, as well as the ability to protect users from false and fabricated messages in the media. Al-Mashaqaba (2022) revealed that the degree of application of media literacy fields in Jordanian universities came to an average degree, and news sites as one of the fields of media literacy contribute weakly to increasing students' knowledge of national events, spreading a culture of tolerance, and instilling a spirit of teamwork and cooperation among students.

McNelly and Harvey (2021) investigated the concept of media literacy among teachers, their confidence in their ability to integrate this concept into their teaching, and the actual integration of the concept of media literacy into classroom lectures. The results concluded that despite the excellent knowledge of teachers in the concept of media literacy and their confidence in the ability to integrate the concept of media literacy in the classroom technically and practically, the actual integration of media literacy education seemed limited concerning student participation and the formation of a critical opinion on social and global issues using the media and the production of media content, unlike those related to teaching how to use technology in the education process such as computers and information sources. Auf (2021) aimed to identify the challenges facing media literacy in the field of education in light of digital transformation. The study concluded that the most prominent professional challenges facing media literacy were: Weakness of specialized professional training courses for specialists; This leads to a lack of keeping pace with developments in the field of media and the changes of the times, and the failure to include a media literacy curriculum to spread media culture and face the dangers of digital transformation, in addition to the lack of knowledge and skills related to modern theories and applications in digital media literacy.

Xiao et al. (2021) explored the importance of media literacy for American university students and their ability to critically analyze information and news in digital media. The results showed that applying media literacy in universities is associated with increased search for and verification of information, which is a critical behavior that helps in obtaining more accurate information to correct misconceptions. In addition, media literacy has preventive effects that protect students from the negative impact of misinformation. Al-Khazaaleh (2020) sought to identify the degree to which Al al-Bayt University students possess media literacy skills. The results concluded that university students acquired the concepts of media literacy during their studies at the university to an average degree. The most prominent of these concepts were the ability to judge media content negatively or positively, determine the source, content, and type of media message, the ability to classify the media message into fact, opinion, or fiction, and the skill of reading and deciphering the media message. Ali's study (2020) sought to identify the attitudes of the academic elite toward applying the principles of media literacy in Egyptian universities. The results showed that the most significant percentage of the academic elite applies the concept of media literacy during teaching students courses, as the best way to teach media literacy to students is: Workshops and courses, The study concluded that the criteria on which media literacy should be based are: recognizing the impact of the media on students and society, and conscious and rational dealing with modern media such as the Internet, Realizing that the media message has commercial, political, social, cultural and aesthetic dimensions, in addition to the most prominent knowledge that should be included in the content of media literacy, is the definition of media concepts and means, sources of media materials, methods of media work, and methods of media influence.

3. Methodology

This study belongs to the descriptive studies that aim to study a specific phenomenon or issue to obtain sufficient information to understand its characteristics and to provide scientific facts to address it or predict its future (Abuhasirah, 2021), and within the framework of descriptive studies. The study employed a cross-sectional survey approach, through which it aims to provide a description

of the opinions of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities towards their awareness of the meaning of the term media literacy and to identify the most prominent concept of media literacy.

3.1. Study population and sample

The study population is represented by all students of the faculties of mass communication at Yarmouk University and the Middle East University who are enrolled in the bachelor's program for the academic year 2022/2023, totaling 1926 male and female students. According to official statistics from the Department of Admission and Registration at both universities, the Faculty of Mass Communication at Yarmouk University has 1437 students, while the Middle East University has 489 students.

A sample of 385 students, representing 20% of the study population, was selected using simple random sampling. This sample is distributed between Yarmouk University (287 students) and the Middle East University (98 students). The selection of this sample size is based on the equation by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which indicates that a larger population requires a more representative sample, typically consisting of 384 individuals. Given the relatively large size of the study population, 20% of the original population equates to (385), a number considered appropriate within the framework of literature reviews that have utilized similar sample sizes (Abuhasirah et al., 2024; Irshiedat & Khurshid, 2024; Mohammad et al., 2024; Oulaydi et al., 2025).

Statistically, the sample size of 385 was determined by considering the total population size (1926), desired confidence level (95%), and acceptable margin of error (5%). For a population of 1926, a sample size of approximately 385 is often sufficient to achieve a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of around 5%. Additionally, a sample size 385 provides adequate statistical power to detect significant differences or relationships within the data. This ensures the study results are reliable and valid, allowing for robust statistical analyses. Table 1 shows the personal characteristics of the study sample:

Table 1. Study Sample

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	176	%54.3
	Female	209	%45.7
University	Yarmouk University	287	%74.5
	Middle East University	98	%25.5
Age	20 years and below	161	%41.8
	From 20 years - less than 22 years	133	%34.5
	22 years and above	91	%23.6
Specialization	Radio and television	153	%39.7
	Journalism	135	%35.1
	Public Relations & Advertising	62	%16.1
	Digital Media	35	%9.1
Education level	Bachelor's degree First year	63	%16.4
	Bachelor's degree Second year	103	%26.8
	Bachelor's degree Third year	134	%34.8
	Bachelor's degree Fourth year	85	%22.1
Total (N)= 385			

3.2. Study Tools and Data Analysis

The questionnaire was relied upon as a tool to collect data from media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities through the design of an electronic questionnaire on the Google Drive website. The link to the electronic questionnaire was sent to students via e-mail, Facebook, and WhatsApp during the period (02 February -10 May 2024). The questionnaire included six questions to measure the opinions of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities towards their knowledge of the meaning of the term media literacy. The data were statistically processed and analyzed using the statistical analysis program (SPSS), using the following statistical tests: simple frequencies and percentages, two independent samples (Independent Sample T Test), One-way ANOVA test, Dimensional Variance Analysis Test (LSD), and Spearman's Correlation.

Considering all the information above, this work aimed to identify the concept of media literacy among students of media faculties and its application in journalism and media, and know whether students of media faculties in Jordanian universities received training on media literacy and if they need more training. The study hypothesis guiding this work is as follows:

H1: There are statistically significant differences between the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the following variables: gender, age, university, specialization, and educational level.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between the knowledge of media students in the meaning of the term media literacy and the most prominent concept they have about media literacy.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between the most prominent concept of media literacy among students and the introduction of media literacy terminology by media professors in their explanation of some courses.

This study anticipates contributing to the growing literature by offering evidence on the application of media literacy concepts in the university environment in the Arab world. It emphasizes the importance of its role in promoting the responsible use of media and enhancing critical thinking skills among university students.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative Results

This section presents the results obtained in each section of the Questionnaire. First, do students of media faculties know the meaning of the term media literacy?

Table 2. Percentages of Students Knowing the Meaning of the Term Media Literacy

Meaning of the term media literacy	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Yes	173	%78.3	48	%21.7	221	%57.4
Not Sure	80	%70.8	33	%29.2	113	%29.4
No	34	%66.7	17	%33.3	51	%13.2
Total					385	%100

Table 2 shows that the most significant percentage of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities know the meaning of the term media literacy. The Yarmouk University students are more familiar with the meaning of the term media literacy.

Second question: When was the first time that media students heard the term media literacy?

Table 3. Percentages of Hearing Media Literacy for the First Time

The first time to hear the term media literacy	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
At University	143	73.3%	52	26.7%	195	50.6%
Through Media	68	81%	16	19%	84	21.8%
Through Training	30	75%	10	25%	40	10.4%
I've never heard of it before	46	69.7%	20	30.3%	66	17.2%
Total					385	%100

Table 3 shows that the most significant percentage of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities heard the meaning of the term media literacy for the first time at the university, then through the media, and then through training. This confirms the role of faculty members in providing students with the most essential media literacy terms during the courses. On the other hand, it appears that there are students who have not heard this term before.

Third question: Did media students receive training on media literacy?

Table 4. Percentages of Respondents Receiving Training on Media Literacy

Media Literacy Training	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Yes	57	%70.4	24	%29.6	81	%21
No	230	%75.7	74	%24.3	304	%79
Total					385	%100

Table 4 shows that the most significant percentage of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities did not receive training on media literacy. Yarmouk University students came the most students who received training on media literacy.

Fourth question: What is the most prominent concept in media literacy for students?

Table 5. Percentages of the Most Prominent Concept of Media Literacy

The concept of media literacy	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		%	N
	N	%	N	%		
All Mentioned (below)	108	71.5%	43	28.5%	151	39.3%
Check information, photos and videos	58	%71.6	23	%28.4	81	%21
None of Mentioned	41	73.2%	15	26.8%	56	14.5%
Fabricated News	40	83.3%	8	16.7%	48	%12.5
Distinguishing information from opinion in media materials	24	%80	6	%20	30	%7.8
Detection of propaganda and advertisements amid media materials	16	%84.2	3	%15.8	19	%4.9
Total					385	100%

Table (5) shows that the most prominent concept of media literacy among media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities were all of that: verifying information, photos and videos, fake news, distinguishing information from opinion in media materials, and detecting propaganda and advertisements amidst advertising materials. While most students agreed on these concepts, a percentage of students did not know the concept of media literacy.

Fifth question: Did media professors include media literacy terminology in their explanation of some curricula?

Table 6. Percentages of Teachers' Introduction of Media Literacy Terminology

Media literacy terminology in courses	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Yes	205	%75.9	65	%24.1	270	%70.1
No	82	%71.3	33	%28.7	115	%29.9
Total					385	%100

Table 6 shows that the most significant percentage of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities believe that media professors introduced media literacy terms while explaining some courses. These results confirm the results of Table 3, which indicated that the students heard the meaning of the term media literacy for the first time at the university. This confirms the critical role of professors in providing students with media literacy concepts.

Sixth question: Do students of media faculties need more training on media literacy?

Table 7. Percentages of Students' Need for More Training on Media Literacy

Further training on media literacy	Yarmouk University		Middle East University		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Yes	228	%73.3	83	%26.7	311	%80.8
No	59	%79.7	15	%20.3	74	%19.2
Total					385	%100

Table 7 shows that the most significant percentage of media students at Yarmouk University and the Middle East University believe they need more training on media literacy. The Yarmouk University students came the most, who needed more training on media literacy, than the Middle East University students.

4.2. Hypothesis Finding

This section presents the hypothesis finding. The first hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences between the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the following variables: gender, age, university, specialization, and educational level. To test the validity of this hypothesis, the statistical analysis program (SPSS) was relied upon through the use of the independent Sample T-Test, one-way ANOVA test, and the Dimensional Variance Analysis Test (LSD), and the results of the tests reached each of the following:

Gender (Table 8): The T - test showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the gender variable, where the value of t was (0.532) at the level of significance (0.909), which is not statistically significant at the level of (0.05).

Table 8. (T-test) Differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy

Gender	Number (N)	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Value of (T)	(DF)	Significant
Male	176	2.31	0.893	0.532	383	0.909
Female	209	2.26	0.888			

University (Table 9): The T - test showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the university variable, where the value of t was (-1.647) at the level of significance (0.709), which is not statistically significant at the level of (0.05).

Table 9. (T-test) differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy according to the university variable

University	(N) Number	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)	Value of (T)	(DF)	Significant
Yarmouk University	287	2.32	0.883	-1.647	383	0.709
Middle East University	98	2.15	0.901			

Age (Table 10): The One-Way ANOVA test showed that there are statistically significant differences in the knowledge of media students in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the age variable, where the value of P (12.695) at the level of significance (0.000), which is statistically significant at the level of (0.05).

Table 10. (ANOVA test) differences in the knowledge of students of faculties of media in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy according to the variable of age

Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	(DF)	Squares Average	(F) Value	Significant
Between groups	27.095	2	13.548		
Inside groups	276.609	382	0.724	18.709	0.000
Total	303.704	384			

To find out the sources of variation in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the age variable, the analysis of dimensional variance was used by the method of (LSD), to make multiple comparisons between age groups and clarify the source of the differences, and the results were as follows:

Table 11. (LSD test) Sources of variation in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the age variable

Age Categories	Comparison with other categories	Number (N)	The difference between the two averages	Significant
Years and 22 above	20 years and below	161	0.680*	0.000
	From 20 years - less than 22 years	133	0.555*	0.000

It is clear from the (Table 11) that there are statistically significant differences in the knowledge of media students in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the age variable, where the age group (22 years and over) came in first place with the most defined categories in the meaning of the term media literacy, followed by those aged between (20 years to less than 22 years), and then in third place (20 years and below).

Specialization (Table 12): The One Way ANOVA test showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the variable of specialization, where the value of P (2.119) at the level of significance (0.097), which is not statistically significant at the level of (0.05).

Table 12. (ANOVA test) differences in the knowledge of students of faculties of mass communication in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the variable of specialization

Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	(DF)	Squares Average	(F) Value	Significant
Between groups	4.984	3	1.661		
Inside groups	298.720	381	0.784	2.119	0.097
Total	303.704	384			

Educational level (Table 13): The One Way Anova test showed that there are statistically significant differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the educational level variable, where the value of P (15.129) at the level of significance (0.000), which is statistically significant at the level of (0.05).

Table 13. (ANOVA test) differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the variable of educational level

Sources of variation	Sum of squares	(DF)	Squares Average	(F) Value	Significant
Between groups	32.328	3	10.776	15.129	0.000
Inside groups	271.376	381	0.712		
Total	303.704	384			

To find out the sources of variation in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the educational level variable, the analysis of dimensional variance was used by the (LSD) method, to make multiple comparisons between the categories of the educational level and clarify the source of the differences, and the results were as follows:

Table 14. (LSD test) Sources of variation in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the educational level variable

Education level	Comparison with other categories	Number (N)	The difference between the two averages	Significant
Bachelor's degree first year	Bachelor's second year	103	.631*0-	0.000
	Bachelor's third year	134	.773*0-	.0000
	Bachelor's fourth year	85	.834*0-	.0000

It is clear from the (Table 14) that there are statistically significant differences in the knowledge of students of media faculties in Jordanian universities in the meaning of the term media literacy, according to the variable of educational level, where the educational level (bachelor's fourth year) came in first place with the most defined categories in the meaning of the term media literacy, followed by second place (bachelor's third year), then in third place (bachelor's second year), and then in fourth place (bachelor's first year).

The second hypothesis is that there is a statistically significant relationship between the knowledge of media students about the meaning of the term media literacy and their most prominent concept about it.

Table 15. Spearman's correlation coefficient for the relationship between media students' knowledge of the meaning of the term media literacy and their most prominent concept of media literacy

Knowledge of media students in the meaning of the term media literacy	The most prominent concept among students about media literacy		
	Number (N)	Spearman's correlation coefficient	Significant
	385	**301.0	0.000

The use of the Spearman correlation coefficient (Table 15) showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the knowledge of media students in the meaning of the term media literacy and their most prominent concept about media literacy, where the value of the Spearman correlation coefficient was (0.301**) at the significance level (0.000), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.05).

The third hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between the most prominent concept of media literacy among students and media professors' introduction of media literacy terminology in their explanation of some courses.

Table 16. Spearman's correlation coefficient for the relationship between the most prominent concept of media literacy among students and the introduction of media literacy terminology by media professors in their explanation of some courses

The most prominent concept of media literacy among students	Media professors' introduction of media literacy terminology in their explanation of some curricula		
	Number (N)	Spearman's correlation coefficient	Significant
	385	0.229**	0.000

The use of Spearman's correlation coefficient showed a statistically significant positive correlation between the most prominent concept of media literacy among students, and the introduction of media professors to media literacy terms in their explanation of some courses, where the value of the Spearman correlation coefficient was (0.229**) at the level of significance (0.000), which is a statistically significant value at the level of (0.05).

The following figure (Figure 1) illustrates an explanatory model of the correlation between students' knowledge of the meaning of the term media literacy, and the most prominent concept they have about the concept, and the ability of students to define the concept of media literacy is positively related to the introduction of terminology by professors in their explanation of courses.

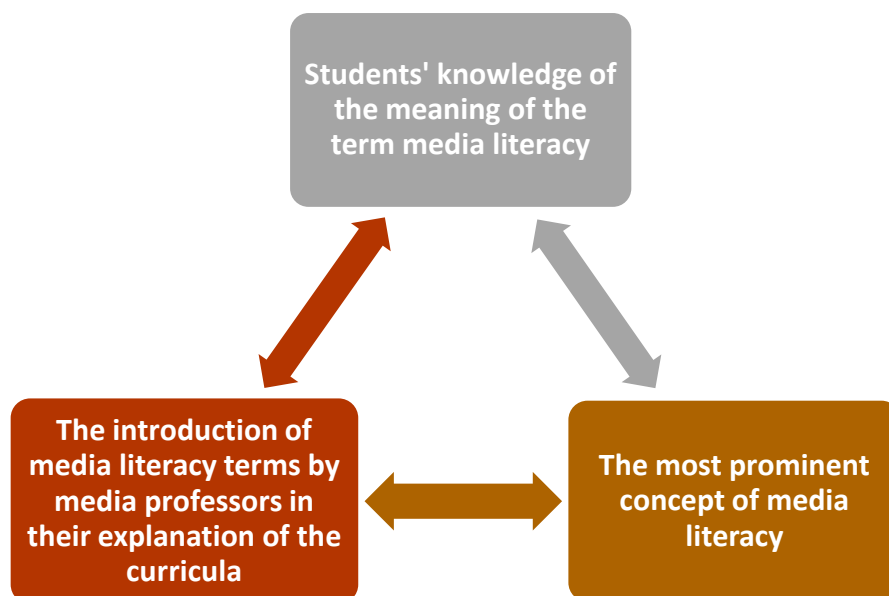


Figure 1. An explanatory model of the relationship between students' knowledge of the meaning of the term media literacy, the most prominent concept of media literacy, and the introduction of media literacy terms by media professors in their explanation of the curricula

5. Discussion

The results of the study concluded that the majority of media students at Yarmouk and Middle East universities know the meaning of the term media literacy. However, a small percentage (29.4%) were unsure of the term and had heard about it for the first time at the university. Still, in general, the reason for students' awareness of the term media literacy stems from the nature of their specialization and their field of study of media, as professors and teachers include the concept of media literacy and its skills; As a significant part of the courses, which include media ethics, critical thinking, tools for analyzing media discourse, and the effects of the media, in addition to promoting these concepts through practical courses that aim to produce responsible media content, and deal with the challenges associated with the media, and thus the awareness of these terms for students becomes one of the basics that enable them to understand the work of the media. These results are consistent with the results of Rajab et al. (2023), Dolanbay (2022), and Al-Khazaaleh (2020), who concluded that university students were aware of the concept of media literacy and its various dimensions, while these results differ with the results of McNelly and Harvey (2021), Which found that students' awareness of the concept of media literacy seemed limited with regard to forming a critical opinion using media and producing media content, and also disagrees with the results of the Auf study (2021), which found that students' lack of knowledge of the concept of media literacy contributes to the lack of knowledge and skills related to modern theories and applications in digital media literacy. These results confirm the hypothesis of Navarro Pérez (2024), which assumes that individuals' awareness of the concept of media literacy and their possession of its skills reduces the negative effects of false media content circulated through the media.

Media students at Yarmouk University and the Middle East University disagreed on a single concept of media literacy, as their most prominent concepts were associated with verifying information, photos and videos, fake news, distinguishing information from opinion in media materials, and detecting propaganda and advertisements amid media materials. These concepts are fundamental principles of media literacy, which media professors in universities emphasize during the teaching process. Their goal is to encourage critical thinking and cognitive immunization against rumors and media disinformation, enabling students to develop initial skills in verifying news and information and engaging with technology more consciously. This aligns with the findings of Potter's (2022) study, which concluded that there is no universally accepted concept of media literacy due to varying social, cultural, economic, and technological contexts. In addition to the development of means of communication, but in general it refers to the ability of students to evaluate and analyze media messages, judge the validity of information, and the ability to protect against false and fabricated messages, as consistent with the study of Xiao et al. (2021), which found that the concept of media literacy in universities is associated with increased search for and verification of information, which is a critical behavior that helps in obtaining more accurate information to correct misconceptions, and protect against the negative effects of disinformation. The students' lack of agreement on a single concept of media literacy has been argued by Freed (2003) who proposes a model for media literacy based on the concept of interactivity on social media, as critical thinking skills, technical and technological skills are not sufficient to define the concept of media literacy without understanding the nature and power of interaction in those means.

In addition, most media students at Yarmouk University and Middle East University have not received specialized training in media literacy, despite their need for training, which can be explained in light of the students' reluctance to enroll in such training courses, due to their lack of interest in the subject of media literacy, and their lack of awareness of its importance, considering that such training courses are optional and not compulsory in universities, in addition to the limited time available to students to participate in training courses outside the curricula, This may be due to the absence of holding training courses specialized in media literacy in universities constantly, due to

their focus on courses and workshops related to technical and technical skills such as photography, montage, editing and others, instead of media literacy as an independent concept, in addition to the budget and plans prepared in advance by Jordanian universities and their material and financial capabilities in holding such training courses that require planning, coordination and additional resources. These results provide evidence of the critical role of training in media literacy skills. Potter (2004) indicated the importance of knowledge and training in dealing with the media, and how to confront false content through it, Also, Martens (2010) asserts that the individuals need to acquire knowledge and practice about the main aspects of the work of the media, Such as: the media industry, media messaging, audience, and media influences, in addition to their need to employ skills to use this knowledge to protect themselves and immunize them from potential negative effects, and enable them to use the media more consciously.

Despite Jordan's efforts through its academic institutions to enhance the effectiveness of media literacy through the National Executive Plan for Media and Information Literacy 2020-2023, these results indicate that students need intensive training in this field, not through individual initiatives or within academic courses. They also need trainers with experience and competence to deepen students' understanding of the concept, devote their skills practically, and not keep them within the scope of theory. These skills should be applied practically rather than remaining solely theoretical. This aligns with Ali's (2020) finding that workshops and courses are the most effective pedagogical approaches for media literacy education. Also, these results are consistent with the results of the Tran-Duong (2023), which found that training students in media literacy skills has positive effects on student learning outcomes in the online learning environment, in terms of developing skills in understanding, analyzing and evaluating media content, and is consistent with the results of the McNelly & Harvey (2021), which showed teachers' excellent knowledge of the concept of media literacy and their ability to integrate the concept into the classroom theoretically, technically and practically, while these results differ with the results of the Al-Mashaqaba (2022), which showed that the degree of application of media literacy fields in Jordanian universities came to an average degree.

The hypotheses of the study proved that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of media students of the meaning of the term media literacy, according to age, and educational level, as older students with a high level of education were more able to define media literacy terms, and this is due to the accumulated experience and knowledge in this field; they had a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the concepts of media literacy, and hypotheses proved that the ability of media students to define the concept of media literacy is positively related to the teachers' introduction of media literacy terms in their explanation of some courses, which was reflected in their ability to define the most prominent concept of media literacy. Lee (2018) discusses these hypotheses when he puts forward the protection motive model in the context of Internet risks. The model assumes the existence of four variables that motivate users to interact with digital content within the threat assessment of false content and the ability to respond to it. These variables are: awareness of the strength and seriousness of the threat, given that the Internet constitutes an effective environment for the circulation of false content, the possibility of threat, as all users may be exposed to false content, the effectiveness of the response, through the mechanisms used to avoid false content, self-efficacy and the ability of users to take positive behavior to correct false content. These assumptions confirm that it is necessary to teach students critical thinking skills, verify news and information, and how to deal with technology.

6. Conclusion

The study provides compelling evidence that the students' awareness of the concept of media literacy and their skills fall within the strategic objectives of the National Executive Plan for Media and Information Literacy in Jordan 2020-2023. These objectives aim to integrate media and information literacy concepts and skills into the Jordanian educational system, promote them within

universities, and incorporate them into all academic and youth institution activities. Additionally, the plan focuses on training and building the capacity of teachers and faculty members in universities on media and information literacy curricula (Ragab et al., 2023) in addition to creating a compulsory subject within the university requirements in universities, to improve students' ability to deal with information sources, news and digital technology tools (Dolanbay, 2022). This trend stems from the increasing interest in media literacy worldwide, and the efforts exerted to promote it in educational systems and different societies, to develop students' interaction with the media and social media, the ability to understand the biases and methods used by these means to produce media content, so that students are able to identify reliable sources, and understand the intentions and motives behind the media messages circulating in those media (McNelly & Harvey, 2021; Potter, 2022). However, these skills require years of continuous work, effective plans, and the drain of many material, human, and financial resources.

The study concludes that the level of awareness and understanding of media literacy among students is significantly influenced by several factors. For instance, older students and those with higher educational levels demonstrated a better grasp of media literacy concepts, suggesting that accumulated experience and knowledge play a crucial role (Lee, 2018). Additionally, faculty members' integration of media literacy terminology directly impacts students' ability to understand these concepts. Thus, the cause-and-effect relationship indicates that if universities prioritize the incorporation of media literacy into the curriculum and enhance teaching methods, it could lead to improved student comprehension and critical engagement with media content. Conversely, a lack of structured training and emphasis on media literacy in educational settings can result in students being ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of information in the digital age, leading to negative personal and academic outcomes from exposure to misinformation (Xiao et al., 2021).

7. Suggestion

In light of the results of the study and according to the nature and specificity of Jordanian universities, several suggestions can be made to promote media and information literacy. First, raising awareness of the importance of media and information literacy in universities through holding specialized training courses and interactive workshops can enhance students' skills in critically, responsibly, and creatively understanding and using media and social media. Second, providing qualified and experienced trainers to teach the principles of media literacy and provide basic concepts and skills for dealing with social media is essential. Third, including Media literacy as a compulsory curriculum requirement in universities and integrating professors and faculty members into these courses is crucial. Fourth, universities should encourage their faculty members to conduct research and scientific projects related to media literacy, contributing to enriching knowledge and enhancing awareness of its importance. Finally, establishing a modern national plan that adapts to the evolving digital media landscape and is periodically reviewed to assess its strengths and weaknesses is recommended.

8. Limitations and Implications

The study acknowledges several limitations, including potential biases in self-reported data from the survey and the restricted focus on just two universities in Jordan, which may not represent the broader population of media students in the country. Additionally, the research's cross-sectional nature limits the ability to draw causal inferences over time.

The implications of the study suggest a critical need to enhance media literacy education in Jordanian universities. This includes developing a compulsory curriculum on media literacy, providing specialized training for educators, and creating continuous professional development opportunities. Future research should consider several avenues to further our understanding of media literacy. Firstly, expanding the sample size to include more universities across different regions would provide

a comprehensive understanding of media literacy levels. Secondly, conducting longitudinal studies would help assess how media literacy skills develop over time with increased exposure to educational initiatives. Thirdly, exploring the impact of specific teaching methods and interventions on students' media literacy outcomes would offer valuable insights. Lastly, it would be crucial to investigate the role of digital technologies and social media in shaping students' media literacy skills and their ability to assess information critically.

Declarations

Author Contributions. All authors have read and approved the published version of the article.

Conflicts of Interest. The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

Funding. This study was supported by Middle East University, which provided financial support for the conduct of the research but had no such involvement in the writing of the article.

Ethical Approval. The study followed the guidelines approved by the Middle East University, Amman. Informed consent was not applicable since the study did not involve human subjects and only used anonymized student data.

Data Availability Statement. The data can be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank Middle East University for funding this project.

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