

STATUS OF MEDIA LITERACY AND RIGHT OF INFORMATION ACT IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The 18th Amendment in the constitution of Pakistan, which declared in Article 19-A that the right to information was inserted into the constitution, established the right to information "Everyone has the right to information in all issues of public concern, subject to regulation and reasonable limits imposed by law." This study aims to investigate the media status and Act related to the RTI "Right to Information Act" in the country of Pakistan.

Methodology: A survey was used in this analysis to compare the degree to which students at the high school and university levels are subjected to certain critical elements of media literacy education. The data were collected utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Main Findings: According to the findings, students in high school are showing concerns that they are interested in taking more courses of production as well as media usage. Similarly, students in college are also showing more concern that they are interested in taking more media study courses.

Applications of this study: Many data points might provide a distinct view on the economy, as may vast public databases from cities, nations, and government agencies. It is highly possible that using the idea of Access to Open Data might help the Pakistani Government enhance the country's social sector.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The essence of media literacy is supposed to be more dynamic with the rise of social media. It appears to be a new challenge in the eco-system of digital media, which has: the capacity to acquire, analyze, evaluate, and generate information for particular purposes. Finally, this research has described how the Government of Pakistan might outsource some of the previously described activities, adding a new participant into the ecosystem.

Keywords: *Open Data, RTI, SDG's, Development, Media Sector, Technology, Transparency, Accountability, Defense, War and Conflict.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, a digital literacy curriculum campaign has emerged to assist people of all ages in acquiring the skills required to engage in the new field of media convergence truly. However, the media literacy curriculum is not conducted consistently in all educational stages ([Ross, 2011](#)).

In Pakistan, some laws enable the public to access numerous records called "Freedom of Information laws" by the federal and provincial governments. Before 2010, Pakistan's 1973 Constitution didn't expressly spot the right of the general public to know, stating that "every person shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any appropriate restrictions placed by law." Pakistan was obliged to have a right to know in its legal framework after signing the ICCPR "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights." Article 19-A stated that right of knowing to the general public, which was amendment in the constitution by 18th Amendment that "every person shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public interest subject to regulation and fair restrictions placed by law" ([Access to Information and the Sustainable Development Goals, 2017](#)) and open data is easily accessible without any restrictions. Both federal and provincial governments enacted legislation to allow Pakistanis to practice their right to access public data.

Research Questions

1. How can ROI help the Media literacy development in Pakistan?
2. How can using ROI help in formulating helpful strategic policies for the people using Media Literacy?
3. How can suitable information systems play a role in achieving transparency?

Research Objectives

In order to know the answer of how the researcher will carry this study, it is better to probe into the following objectives:

- To evaluate the definition and need of 'Right of Information' terms to find reasons.
- To assess the worth of carrying a case study on Media literacy and analyze the impact.

- To work on a strategy that shows the impact of RTI on development in the country.
- To prove that 'RTI' access can be a key that any country can use to assimilate its development purposes.

Research Hypothesis

H1: A positive relationship exists between social and political development in Pakistan by using and accessing RTI (Right to Information).

H2: Media literacy can be improved through the ROI system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The open data concept refers in terms of the available data for public use with any restriction such as the restrictions like copyright, patents, or other mechanisms of control ([Shabbir et al., 2021](#)). Open data must consider sharing the information pertinent to the organizations needed by the customers of the organizations and government departments ([Finn et al., 2017](#)). Media literacy refers to some sort of skills, habit, and knowledge of mind that is everchanging and is required to participate in a media-saturated society ([Hobbs, 2021](#)). Open data refers to the concept that the data should be freely available to everyone to use and republish as per their requirements and when they wish, without any restrictions ([Kibblewhite & Boshier, 2018](#)). Open data refers to data collection which could be easily accessible by people for use, and there are no restrictions for using the open data. Numerous countries are developing open data for people which could be used without any restriction ([Shabbir et al., 2019](#)). Although at the moment, there is limited literature available on 'Open Data' policies regarding each country. This gap leads to the development of frameworks that are used to strengthen the country's socio-economic development.

The teacher also plays a crucial role in assisting students in the skills they need before leaving school; similarly, the teacher has a critical role in media literacy education in the classroom. In this research survey, seventy-one teachers discovered that there is a positive relationship between integration, knowledge, and confidence in media literacy ([McNelly & Harvey, 2021](#)).

Additionally, the open data systems must offer information frequently utilized, like geographic information, information about the climate, progress statistics, information about the number of visitors per day ([Kitchin & McArdle, 2016](#)), and information about the organization's functions. In this regard, in March 2011, the Finnish Government stressed developing a database for the usage of open information by making it a significant part of the Government's Program ([Goniewicz et al., 2020](#)). Motivated by the Government's initiative and keeping in view the goals like transparency and better outreach, the government departments started sharing their information through open data ([Hood & Heald, 2006](#)). For example, the National Land Survey of Finland began to report advanced topographic details in May. In the same vein, a year later, the Finnish Meteorological Institute initiated sharing climate information online. Research suggests that violent movies may increase aggression in people's feelings and thoughts ([Anderson, 1997](#)). The author discovered that media literacy overestimates the theory critique or importance and underestimates the media's production, contributing to the learnings ([Bragg, 2002](#)).

CIOs' "Chief information Officers" surveys discovered that after signing the directive by President Obama, the achievement was higher by countries' federal agencies; besides this, there is space for upgrading ([Reddick & Ganapati, 2011](#)). The Newham mothers started supporting the housing unit for young people; then they were endangered with eviction in last welfare cuts whoever supported. After mothers' successfully campaign in the city about supporting housing unit, then-campaign moved to the wider as well as broader struggle as social housing, not social cleansing" ([Watt, 2016](#)). If both provided at an equal level, public service and public expenditures would increase the annual rates by about 7 percentage ([Peters, 2018](#)). In the US, the Chilling effect is most described as a constitutional right to free speech ([Worthy, 2017](#)).

Media violence would be harmful as much as more watch by children it will increase in violence of children and adults which will maybe lead toward aggressive to commit crimes ([Freedman, 2017](#)). There is also terrorism in the world, and to tackle terrorism, the US and allies capture the key terrorist operatives and identify methods that could disconnect the people with the ideology of supporting these types of groups ([Tierney, 2006](#)). Researchers discovered that themes of conflict transformation expressively connected to the former combatant identity; it continued by looking at recent transformative actions also ([Flack & Ferguson, 2021](#)).

Another study of digital media literacy discovered that it is divided into sub-factors, economic status, and generation variables, explored empirically. Results discovered that generation effect and economic effect depend on eight components of digital media literacy; it is found that economic effect is more than generation effect ([Zhang et al., 2020](#)).

The primary purpose is to provide all critical information collected and stored by the open organization by 2020 and make them accessible and usable through the Internet and computers to pay nothing out of pocket as a fee. The information should be shared under clear terms of use. The European United Kingdom became the first country to open data for the public and has achieved many positive outcomes in social and economic development ([Shabbir et al., 2021](#)).

METHODOLOGY

The research approach was deductive. The relationship of 'Open Data' (ROI) and Media Literacy is examined with the country's socio-political development.

For this purpose, the construct validity and convergent validity were considerable since all the variables should measure the same concept and hence should be strongly correlated. To test this correlation, we have used factor analysis. Measuring instrument validity here is verified by ensuring that the questionnaire contains questions relevant to the concept being taken. In quantitative techniques, the instrument's validity is more on the theoretical aspect of the purpose. Here, the objectives are clear and construct validity, and its testing technique, i.e., Pearson correlational method, was used, which also substantiates the instrument's validity.

Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used. Interviews and survey research strategies were employed, and data collected from four types of respondents who favored using the open data systems, including (1) businesses, (2) media people, (3) the general public, and (4) Non-Governmental Organizations. A survey was used in this analysis to compare the degree to which students at the high school and university levels are subjected to certain critical elements of media literacy education. Further, the statistical analysis was conducted using different approaches such as correlation, regression analysis, and factor analysis.

Pearson's correlation and regression analysis used to establish and examine the link between the variables having independent and dependent nature, and descriptive statistics helped extract meaningful results from the study.

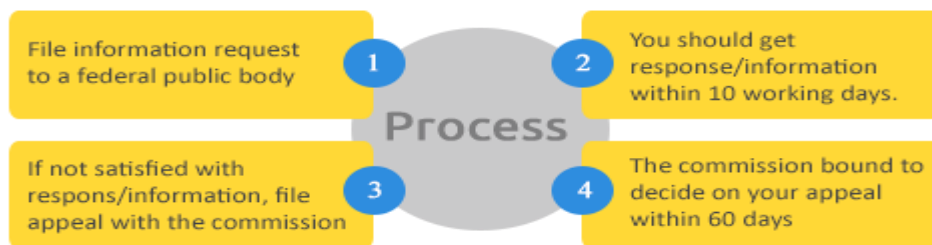


Figure 1: Process to RTI ("[Pakistan Information Commission,](#)" 2021)

The below-mentioned principles are included in the Charter for open data (2015);

- The open status of the data available must be ensured.
- The data provided must be reachable and usable, i.e., accessible.
- The data/information should be exchangeable.
- This is used for better governance and engaging the residents.
- The data must be innovation-supportive.
- The information should be timely, appropriate, and all-encompassing.

Two significant indicators that are generally considered to measure the Open Data maturity are its readiness and maturity. These characteristics must be inducted into the national Open Data Portal (ODP). ODP ensures available data policies for the users of such data added with the economic, political, as well as social Open Data impact ([Vancauwenberghe & Crompvoets, 2018](#)). At the same time, the "maturity" is using a web-based portal and its functions to use overall data again and again and the spread of data.

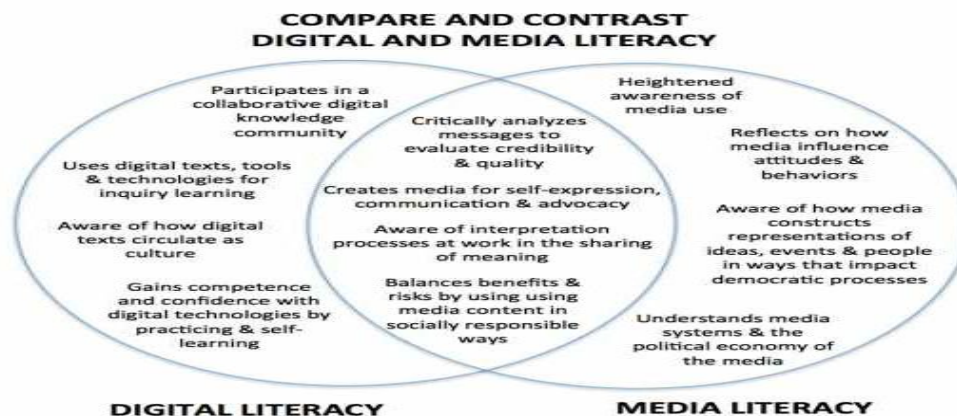


Figure 2: Media Literacy in Compare to Digital Literacy ("[Pakistan Information Commission,](#)" 2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the Pakistan Social Sector accomplishes only 44% of adopting complete Open Data systems according to media literacy. The adoption of complete ODS would require developing a clear ROI “Right of information” act as well as an ODP “Open Data Policy” that must address the licensing aspects. Additionally, it requires developing national guidelines that help the local governments learn and adapt from the developed systems. The open data systems adoption would require better thoughtfulness related to ODP impacts. Besides this, it requires efficient management of the traffic coming towards available data systems. The portal must contain features that should cover different data categories supported with the data download feature. The hypotheses were tested for confirmation or rejection with the help of the measurement of variables through the Pearson correlation method. The results showed a positive relationship between the use of ODS and positive outcomes in the social sectors of Pakistan.

There are many applications for media literacy in a variety of ways. However, one generally recognized concept indicates that media literacy entails the capacity to view, interpret, assess, and convey messages in a range of formats ([Ashley et al., 2017](#)). The National Association for Media Literacy Education created a collection of core ideas involved with viewing, interpreting, reviewing, and sharing media based on this broad definition:

1. All media signals are "built."
2. Each medium has its own set of features, capabilities, and building "words".
3. Media alerts are created for specific reasons.
4. Principles and points of opinion are embedded in all media communications.
5. People create their interpretations from media signals based on their abilities, values, and perceptions.
6. The media and media messaging may affect people's views, perceptions, ideas, and habits, as well as the political process ([Rosen et al., 2020](#)).

'Open Data' doesn't start with data. Instead, it begins with a question. Successfully applying data science to the practice of 'Open Data' requires more than providing context and finding clarity in the vast amount of unstructured data: it will sometimes need media organizations to think differently about how they work and who they serve ([Passi & Jackson, 2018](#)).

Understanding the impact of ODS in the context of Pakistan requires looking at the history of such systems. The initiation of such systems took place in the years back in 2010 that encouraged the country to initiate its formal open data system by developing various databases. Many challenges were experienced in adopting open methods but were adopted keeping in view their unignorable advantages in managing government affairs. Western countries took the lead in introducing such systems for better governmental performance. With the passage of time and based on the utility these systems provide, the eastern countries also started adopting these systems. This is because the governments almost face similar problems in dealing with the general public and customer organizations that require authentic and timely information from the government departments. Their greater importance has compelled countries to prefer using such systems to stay clear about their functioning and responsibilities towards their citizens. This helps governments reduce corruption, and more precise and transparent information can easily flow towards the general public.

Meanwhile, it's recommended to utilize systems to ensure a country's performance, which is crucial and enhances its social and political setup. Moreover, the GDP and economic growth can also be increased by avoiding wastage of resources like financial and other resources. Sharing government information is likely to result in the development of new governmental systems.

The use of open systems is essential for the residents' departments of the Government and public organizations operating under the Government's control to remain connected and share the information freely. This study remains significant by highlighting open data importance for Pakistan country economy. To achieve efficiency and effectiveness and get high targets, the country has to ensure better accountability and transparency in systems that are only possible by adopting and effectively using open data systems. Pakistan can fight the ills of corruption by integrating open data and participation in both social and cultural development.

History of RTI in Pakistan

In 1997, Pakistan became the First nation of south Asia which introduced the ordinance of FOI "Freedom of Information" at the Federal level. This Ordinance was subsequently repealed, and in 2002 new ordinance of FOI was issued, which is still retains in the legal proceedings today since the 17th Amendment of the Constitution protected it. Federal Government imposed Rules related to Information freedom as named “Freedom of Information Rules” 2004 in 2004, which outlined the procedural nature of FOI Ordinance. Pakistan's federal government introduced a draft of the modern FTI “Federal Right to Information” law in 2016 in repealing the hope of the FOI ordinance, which was in legal proceedings of 2002. However, the FTI bill's approval is still awaited.

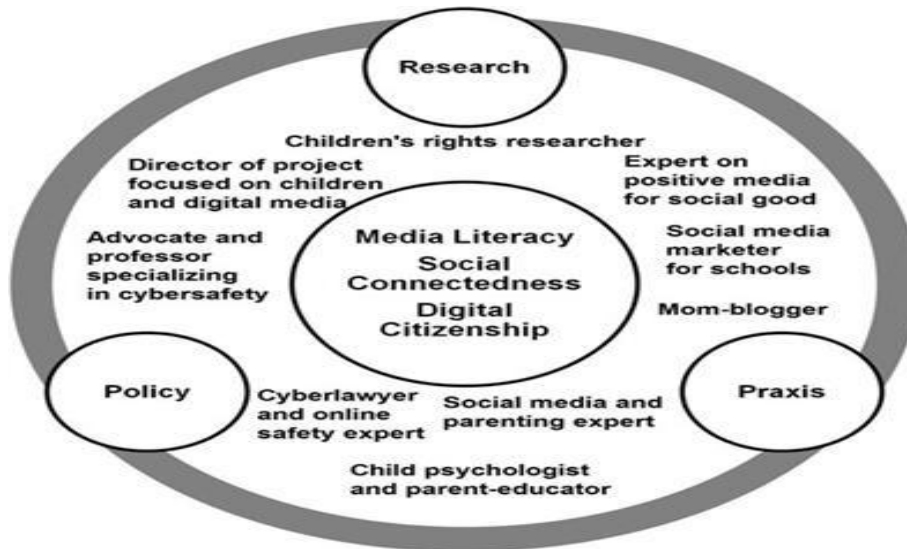


Figure 3: Media Literacy Integrating ("Pakistan Information Commission," 2021)

Federal: The Freedom of Information Ordinance allows Pakistani people to access Government's data. The ordinance applies only to the agencies related to Federal Government does not apply to provincial governments or corporate institutions supported by Federal Government. In "Freedom of Information Rules 2004," the general public must pay some sort of charges or define the purpose of inquiry of any data which is available at national government data with concrete explanations why they need the information. If the complainant may not receive the required details within 21 days, he or she will file a lawsuit with the director of the public authority. Only public reports are available, which excludes documentation such as meeting minutes, meeting timings, personal bank account reports, confidential information, details relating to national security, and so on. The federal RTI draft is not different from the ordinance of FOI, which was introduced in 2004. But it differs from nature because the current bill refers to non-governmental organizations supported or recorded via public agencies as well as national Government.

Provisional: Federal level ordinance of FOI, which was introduced in 2004, served as the foundation for subsequent laws: first is BFIA "Baluchistan Freedom of Information Act" introduced in 2005, and second SFIA "Sindh Freedom of Information Act" introduced in 2006. In 2013, KPK RTI "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act" (KPK RTI) and PTRTI "Punjab Transparency and Right to Information" Ordinance were endorsed. The KPK RTI Act applies to official governing agencies and non-governmental organizations supported by the state. Punjab RTI Act may use by residents of Pakistan and also all entities which are registered in Pakistan's national database. Sindh Government abolished as well as substituted Act of 2006 with STRI "Sindh Transparency and Right to Information" Act, 2016.

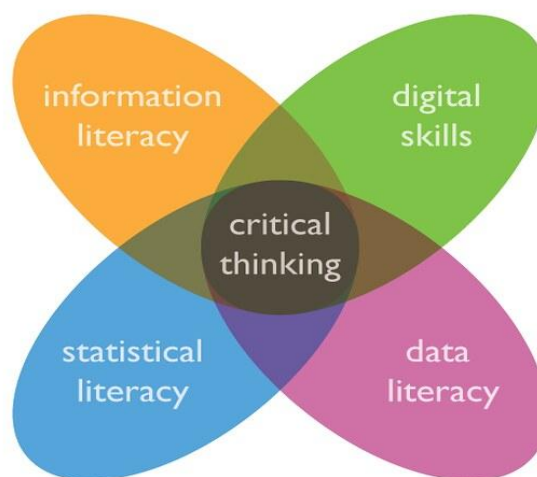


Figure 4: Illustration of Literacy Techniques ("Pakistan Information Commission," 2021)

RTI Impacting Lives of People

Right of Information and Open Data systems impact the lives of people in three significant ways that are:

1. Through the use of such systems, the Government stands more liable than ever before. It makes the Government well-organized, and the Government may become competent by extending effective public services ([Shabbir et al.,](#)

2020).

2. These systems empower the residents by affecting the lives of citizens directly.
3. The governments can introduce advanced economic opportunities for the people living in the cities and remote areas to open new industries and sectors.

Global Impacts of RTI & Open Data Sets

The importance of open data systems cannot be ignored because these are helpful up to a greater extent for the nations. The governments and residents could assess the Government's progress, and the Government can evaluate what is going wrong with the policies implemented. So, they can devise ways to find out the solutions to the challenges faced. The accessibility to such data sets can effectively reap the benefits. Through various studies conducted in various countries, it is observed that open data is an evergreen solution to a variety of problems faced by individuals and governments (Hobley, 2012).

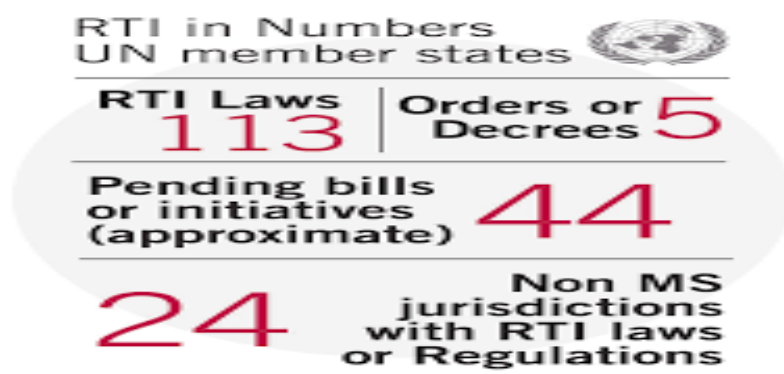


Figure 5: RTI in Numbers ("Pakistan Information Commission," 2021)

Many governments have already provided an opportunity to their residents to access the data and information openly. Such as India has adopted open data, India has a governmental portal showing all the necessary information for the general public. At the same time, USA Data.gov is an effective open data source benefiting its residents containing various relevant data types. In Australia, the website data.gov.au provides accessible information to the public. Similarly, in New Zealand, data.govt.nz offers lists for various datasets extending help to people, and in the UK, data.gov.uk is another helpful platform.

Looking at Spain, it has initiated open access, for its general public, to the data in 2012. More than 150 organizations worked solely to develop the database to deliver valuable information to the public. More than almost 4,000 individuals can use the portal when the yearly administrative cost of accessing this data was estimated at 330– 500 million Euros. In the United States, one of the Weather Channels and one of the organizations responsible for providing GPS advertise named Garmin was established that utilized crude available information. Garmin's estimated worth was above USD seven billion in 2016 (Samuel & Sarprasatha, 2016).

Taking an example of a class comic book, school newsletter, closed-circuit TV news, music video, or any other documentary in video format, all are trying to deliver the material to learn objective as well as observational media skills. Students are encouraged and inspired to become problem solvers as well as critical thinkers as they can easily create and evaluate the different media for various uses and platforms. Consequently, as a byproduct of the manufacturing phase, vital viewing capabilities develop spontaneously and authentically. This technique is more fruitful than other techniques which can motivate and manipulate the media one of the teachers lectures on criticizing pleasures of students. Whenever motivated students trying to make their own media, they will acquire core media principles easily comparing to not motivated students like agency, technology, audience, category, vocabulary, and in last how to representation. Students are often given the ability to intermediate, revise, in certain instances, avoid media signals throughout the process (Wohlwend, 2017). Students develop new understandings and learn to discuss topics relating to the press, advertising, film, tv programs, political analysis, public service announcements, and other media genres as they create, analyze, and compare their own media items. Students develop interests and talents to translate produced media into consumed media. Manufacturing systems often enlarge job options in the future. It blurs gender lines, especially for the female gender, because they study the latest technology as well as play with the position of production, which was traditionally occupied by men (Grace et al., 2016). Furthermore, through creating news stories and video documentaries, students can study topics in their culture and become reform agents.

Main Obstacles in 'Open Data'

What Are the 'Open Data' Obstacles in Pakistan? The main obstacle in Pakistan using 'Open Data' is the lack of understanding of what it is? There is also the non-serious attitude of the Government when it comes to any positive use

of technology. Today all the developed countries are using new digital tools to combat ills in their society. Pakistan still lags as compared to other developing countries in terms of using technology. No doubt, on an individual level, many sharp minds in Pakistan excel in technology, but there is no motivation and support for the government level. Nevertheless, if only investigative journalists learn how to use 'Open Data,' many positive changes can be made (Welch, 2012).

The open data systems influence the higher authorities, e.g., the Government, to ensure transparent information for social and political developments. Following alternatives can be used by the Government;

1. The public awareness about the latest technologies.
2. Sharing information for better engagement of the general public.
3. Upgrading ODS for the Government and public sectors.
4. A general framework for valuation should be developed so that the suggestions of people should be valued.
5. Conduct scientific research for determining innovation.

CONCLUSION

Individuals now need to know more about those topics than ever before. Aside from the realistic reality that media literacy skills are progressively required for gainful work, specific skills are often needed to grasp, respect, and engage in modern social life. As Jenkins (2016) pointed out, media convergence characterizes modern culture. This convergence entails an engaging community of committed, participatory users who develop, exchange, and search out new knowledge relevant to practices such as establishing affiliations (e.g., social networking), speech (e.g., creating new artistic media), collective problem-solving (e.g., Wikipedia entries), and dissemination (e.g., blogging). Individuals must have a combination of critical and creative skills to engage in this media fusion community truly. Educators would help grasp which media awareness priorities to prioritize once they have a better understanding of student media competencies. It would be possible to ensure that colleges and universities effectively address the demands of the new era by continuing that study and knowing the needs of university students.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

More research on media literacy at the college level is needed. Such studies should, for example, take into account both faculty and student expectations. For starters, analyses of faculty attitudes should look at whether faculty members incorporate or exclude media literacy subjects in their courses. Such details will include a new insight and first-hand accounts of the difficulties educators encounter regarding media education. Second, current studies should take into account university students' information literacy abilities. While this study found that university students are seldom introduced to media literacy coursework, future studies should look at whether they are improving media competencies elsewhere.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 2 contributed to sample survey, author 3 in organizing and distributing questionnaires Author 4 contributed to testing result through software, and author 5 contributed in some translation related to the literature review and helps in gathering and filtering all recent literature plus proofread the paper and added some relevant material related to the article.

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