



An analysis of awareness of media and information literacy among research scholars at Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith University

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Abstract

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) places a strong emphasis on an essential literacy strategy that empowers readers to critically evaluate what they have read, heard, and understood. All educational levels demand it, but universities require it much more. The survey method and questionnaire instrument are used in the study's execution. The study's objectives are to determine the degree of MIL awareness among research scholars and to evaluate the utility and relevance of MIL among research scholars. The majority of responders are familiar with the term MIL, which helps them save time.

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1. Introduction

The spread of covid has changed the entire educational system, making it more reliant on online sources for information. Users may access and share vast amounts of information and expertise among many individuals thanks to various telecommunications technologies. However, it is still difficult to obtain accurate and important information without any inconveniences. This emphasises the value of media and information literacy as a component of education that brings together academicians, researchers, and teachers. MIL, however, is not a new idea; rather, it has expanded in scope. According to the European Commission (2007), "media literacy is generally defined as the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content, as well as to develop communications in a broad range of situations." This definition includes all forms of media, including print, audiovisual, computer, and telephony. Information literacy and digital literacy are the fundamental building blocks of media literacy. In order for users to distinguish between different information retrieval strategies for becoming literate, it is necessary to identify the many types of illiteracy that make up media literacy. The current pandemic scenario drove academics towards digital media; using cellphones to access material quickly became popular. The years have seen the development of numerous app-based digital learning packages. There are numerous various modes that can be employed to access information resources. Users must be knowledgeable and skilled in order to identify, locate, and access information. MIL is therefore crucial for all users, whether they operate from home, in an office, at a university, or in any other setting. However, as academicians engage in research and development, its importance for them has increased. To take into account this, the current study looks at the "awareness and usefulness of Media and Information Literacy, among the research scholars of MGKVP University.

2. Objective of Study

This study was carried out with a view to the following objectives

- To present the conceptual framework of MIL
 - To examine the competences and awareness of MIL among research scholars
 - To know the extent of usefulness of MIL during a pandemic situation.
 - To identify the problems faced by the research scholars while using MIL tools
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- To put forward some recommendations to increase the competences of research scholars of MGKVP University.

3. Methodology

The use of a survey method and questionnaire was chosen for this study because it was thought to be a quick and simple way to collect data from a diverse population. The study includes research scholars (RS) from several Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith University departments who are working towards a Ph.D. In the investigation, simple random sampling is employed. A total of 140 questionnaires covering various subject areas were given to research scholars at MGKVP University. According to table 1. With a response rate of 62% from 140 questionnaires, 85 responses were received. After the university reopened in the month of October 2022 following the covid pandemic 2021 lockdown, this survey was conducted.

4. Data Analysis

Data was gathered from a research assistant at MGKVP University using a questionnaire and the simple random sample approach. For the analysis and display of data, straightforward statistical techniques using percentages and graphic representation were used. MS Excel software is used to combine data into various tables with brief explanations.

4.1. Analysis of chosen population

On the basis of gender, age groups, departments, subject, and research experience, the responses were divided into groups. According to Table 1. According to the statistics in Table 1, 45 individuals (52.9%) were male, while the remaining 47% were female. Out of the overall population, more than 50% of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 30 and 16.7% were between the ages of 31 and 35. According to Table 1, they were pursuing doctoral programmes in a variety of academic fields. Out of the whole population, students make up the majority, with 50% having two years of experience, 33.3% having one year, and only 16.7% having more than four years.

Table 1: General analysis of chosen population

Gender	No of respondent	% of respondents
Male	40	47%
Female	45	52.9%
Age Group in years	No of respondent	% of respondents
20-25	1	1%
26-30	42	50%
31-35	14	16.7%
40-above	3	3.5%
Research experience	No of respondent	% of respondents
Less than a year	----	----
One year	28	33.3%
Two year	42	50%
Three year	10	11.7%
Four year and above	5	5%

4.2 Awareness of Media and Information Literacy

As given in table 2. Out of the total population, 67% of respondents are formally known with MIL, less than half 24% have moderate understanding of MIL, Very few have only 9 % highly understood about the MIL.

Table 2: Awareness of Media and Information Literacy

Knowing the term MIL	No of respondent	% of respondents
Formally aware	57	67%
Moderately aware	20	24%
Highly aware	8	9%

4.3 Level of Awareness of Different Literacies

There are several varieties of media, and understanding them is crucial. Media, as used here, is a general term for mass media, which includes print, electronic, and digital. Examining the many forms of media illiteracy and their purposes Table 3 demonstrates that 67% of people are informed. The respondents' literacy levels can only somewhat distinguish between different forms of illiteracy. Discussing the use of various mediums the majority of the 82% of respondents who responded use the Internet frequently for academic purposes. Both their computer and digital literacy skills are strong. 90% of respondents heavily relied on the Internet for academic purposes as a result of the pandemic surge in internet use. The awareness of other common forms of literacy, such as the library, news, and television, is, however, gradually declining. However, 80% more people are aware of social media, which brings up questions about reliable information and false news.

Table 3: Level of Awareness of Different Literacies

Kinds of awareness of MIL	No of respondent	% of respondents
Information literacy	57	67%
Computer literacy	20	24%
Internet literacy	70	82%
Digital literacy	8	9%
Library literacy	72	85%
Social media awareness	82	96%

4.4 kind of Information Resources Used for Research

It is abundantly obvious from the prior table that Internet dependence has grown. The majority of research scholars use internet sources of data as a result of their work. The majority of academics (88%) utilize electronic journals and papers, followed by electronic news publications (55), e-books (67.65%), e-magazines (25.57%), blogs (25.49%), and other websites. Over two-thirds of the respondents use both electronic and print media for their research, which speaks to the format of the information resources utilized. The utilization of printed information resources for study is rapidly decreasing as a result of the pandemic.

Table 4: Kind of Information Resources Used for Research

Type of information resources	No. of respondents	s % of respondents
Internet	82	96%
Journals/papers	75	88%
Textbooks	60	71%
reference books	45	52%
E-books	32	37%
E-journals	75	88%
E-newspapers	55	64%
Blogs	42	49%
institutional websites	33	38%

4.5 Usefulness and Relevance of MIL (media information literacy) to Research

To learn how MIL can be used for research. Table 5 lists the

comments from research scholars. The table is divided into two sections: one for understanding importance and the other for understanding how importance is determined. The majority of the research scholars concurred that MIL is crucial for their work. Their selections ranged from modest to Most Important. Most research scholars (97%) strongly agreed that MIL saves time and improves the quality of work when discussing its advantages and usefulness. The majority of them (84%) said that MIL is crucial for their research as a whole, therefore their selections ranged from Average to Most Important. Less than three-quarters (74%) of respondents said that MIL gives fundamental knowledge, whereas the majority (87.25%) of respondents felt that MIL would expand their knowledge. However, 84% of respondents said that they needed skills to assess MIL's performance.

Table 5: Usefulness and Relevance of MIL (media information literacy) to Research

MIL for research	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Not so Important	1	2%
Moderately Important	2	3%
Important	10	11%
Essentially important	72	84%
Saves time	83	97%
Provides Fundamental Knowledge	63	74%
Require Skills to Evaluate	72	84%

4.6 issues in accessing the necessary information

In India, the media has exploded in recent years (Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India, 2015). Since the invention of smartphones, the majority of communication, reading, educational, and entertainment activities are now carried out digitally. Although it has greatly benefited the populace, many people's misuse of these technology has also resulted in numerous issues. The respondents in this survey discussed the many challenges they encountered while trying to gather the necessary information as a result of media misinformation (64%), false news (49.02), sensationalism (41%), and alternative facts (25.49%). These findings demonstrate the numerous challenges faced by research scientists when trying to get reliable data. Lack of awareness (52.94%), lack of information (71%), and a tiny percentage of issues stemming from a lack of necessary abilities are the main issues that research academics encounter. Issues Obtaining MIL Training 76% of the responders reported having trouble finding MIL training.

Table 6: Issues in accessing the necessary information

Difficulties in accessing required information	Number of respondents	s % of respondents
Misinformation by media	55	64
Fake news	42	49%
Sensationalism	35	41%
Alternative facts	32	37%
Types of problems faced by research scholars		
Lack of awareness	60	71
Lack of skills	25	85
problems in securing MIL training	65	76%

5. Results and discussion

The study was carried out by a diverse collection of research

experts with a range of academic backgrounds, age groups, genders, and research experience. This study investigated research scholars' perceptions of and awareness of MIL, their level of awareness of MIL, the types of literacys they are aware of, the usefulness and relevance of MIL to their research, the mode and length of MIL training that is necessary, the methods of delivering MIL, and the challenges they face. The list of all significant results is provided below. Male responses outweighed female respondents, and the majority of respondents are Ph.D. students in the 26–30 age range. The majority of respondents (67%) are formally familiar with the phrase MIL. Few of them are well knowledgeable about this word. While just a small percentage of them are aware of the term "digital literacy," 67% of them are aware of "library literacy," followed by 24% of "computer" users and 82% of "Internet" users. However, they have a large following on social media. i.e. 96%. In terms of the information sources utilised for research, the majority of respondents prefer journals and papers; the Internet is also a popular choice, followed by textbooks, reference books, videos, and other sources. Additionally, it was shown that the majority of respondents still relied on printed materials like textbooks. Research academics can save time by using MIL. Most of them received 'very appreciable' ratings out of the total. Additionally, respondents believed that MIL talents enhanced the level of the work. But more over a third of them gave a "Average" response, while a minor percentage gave a "Less Important" or "Not so Important" response. A majority of respondents (75.49%) chose workshop-based training when it came to the form and length of training needed for MIL skills, while more than a quarter favoured both taught courses and online courses.

The majority of them agreed that Media Literacy, Information Literacy, Computer Literacy, News Literacy, Literary Literacy, and Digital Literacy should be taught subjects in MIL classes. Given the aforementioned information, MIL is crucial for research researchers, and departments and libraries need to collaborate on learning. According to Carlsson (2019), a number of prerequisites must be met before a full and cohesive MIL programme may exist [3]. Sadly, MIL is not present throughout initial teacher training and in-service training in the majority of European nations and globally (Frau-Meigs, D., 2019). Nearly half of the respondents said they had trouble finding the needed information because of fake news, which was followed by media inaccuracy (42.16%), sensationalism (415%), and 37% owing to alternative facts. Additionally, more than half (71%) and 85% of respondents cited a lack of knowledge and abilities that contributed to MIL-related issues among research scientists.

6. Conclusion

People who are media literate are better equipped to comprehend public debate, participate in it, and ultimately elect leaders who will lead them in moral and ethical ways. Whatever their opinions on a subject are, media savvy people can take a critical perspective when deciphering media messages. In conclusion, the low degree of learners' media literacy knowledge and their distributions in the pre-test's anticipation and meditation stages demonstrated the lack of any adequate educational programmes in universities. The necessity for a theory-based media literacy education programme among adolescents was indicated by this study.

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