How Students Think about Digital Media Literacy Skills: A Study of the MCJ Discipline University of Khulna

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Abstract

Digital media literacy is often regarded as an intellectual endeavor inside academic circles. In the current era characterized by rapid technological advancements, students must demonstrate a high level of competence in digital media literacy. This study aims to assess the level of digital media literacy among students using a framework of five items designed to measure individual competency. These assessments encompass a range of technical capabilities, critical thinking abilities, communicative capacity, and other pertinent aspects. The study's participants were recruited randomly from the population of MCJ students at Khulna University. A total of 50 students participated in the study. According to the research findings, a significant proportion of the participants demonstrated a considerable degree of competency in technical abilities. Furthermore, they demonstrated a profound comprehension of critical analysis, active engagement in civic affairs, and adeptness in generating and conveying information. Furthermore, a notable percentage of the participants (88%) make use of the social media platform Facebook, but the bulk of the respondents (86%) possess the capability to differentiate between falsified content. This study exhibits a moderate degree of comprehension of the legal regulations about digital media conduct.

Keywords: Cognition, Digital Media, Literacy, Skills, Public University, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

The current era is characterized by the prevalence of information and technology, as observed in the twenty-first century. The impact of this technology extends to several aspects of human existence, including individual lives, social structures, national entities, and the global community. This technology simplifies and streamlines our daily routines, reducing complexity and enhancing convenience. The impact of digital media on global development is significant (Tetep & Suparman, 2019). The fast expansion of information and communication technology (ICT) on a global scale has had a profound impact on our life styles and cognitive processes, as evidenced by the influence of digital media and digital technology (Genereux, 2015).

According to Gialamas et al. (2013), the Internet and computers have emerged as the predominant tools for learning, while new media have revolutionized the processes of information generation and dissemination. In contemporary society, characterized by an emphasis on information and knowledge, the acquisition of digital media literacy has been recognized as an essential skill that everyone should acquire (European Commission, 2007; Ferrari, 2013). The significance of media literacy among young individuals in the digital era arises from the potential influence and alteration of their perceptions of reality and overall worldview due to the convenient availability of news through various media platforms (Shin & Zanuddin, 2019). The curriculum aims to educate students on the intelligent utilization of media, the discernment and assessment of media content, the critical analysis of media formats, the exploration of media effects and applications, and the creation of alternative media (Kellner & Share, 2005). Additionally, it seeks to equip students with the skills to access, analyze, evaluate, and generate communication across diverse media platforms (Aufderheide, 1993).

According to Shin and Zanuddin (2019), the increasing accessibility of digital materials has resulted in students having greater internet-based access to such resources. Consequently, there is a growing emphasis among scholars and educators on the integration of digital media and the cultivation of digital media literacy within educational frameworks (Alvarez et al., 2013; Hobbs, 2004; Zhang et al., 2014). Vygotsky (1978) asserts that education should occur within the zone of proximal development, a conceptual space situated between an individual's current and potential levels of development. It is advisable to engage in this activity with the guidance of adults or in collaboration with more proficient peers. The proper application of digital media literacy instruction necessitates an understanding of students' levels of digital media literacy (Arke & Primack, 2009). It has the potential to offer educators guidance regarding the content and methodology of instruction. Nevertheless, the assessment of digital media literacy continues to present a significant challenge, as there is a scarcity of empirical studies that examine digital media literacy levels among university students (Arke & Primack, 2009). This study aimed to assess the digital media literacy skills of students in the mass communication and journalism program at Khulna University. Additionally, it sought to examine the internal and external factors associated with the digital media literacy of university students.

2. Objectives of the Study

● Evaluate the levels of digital media literacy among Khulna University MCJ students.

● Determine the impact of digital media on Khulna University MCJ students.

● Examine the significance of MCJ students' digital media literacy at Khulna University.

● To comprehend the factors that motivate MCJ students at Khulna University to use digital media.

3. Research questions

I. Is there an understanding of digital media among MCJ students at Khulna University?

II. To what extent do students in the MCJ program at Khulna University have access to digital media?

III. How and why do students at MCJ Khulna University use various forms of digital media in their daily lives?

4. Theoretical Framework

To explain why and how people actively seek out different forms of media to satisfy specific needs, the theory of uses and gratifications (UGT) was developed. Jay Blumer and Elihu Katz first proposed this theory in 1974. UGT is a way of analyzing mass media from the perspective of its viewers. This positivist theory of communication has its roots in the socio-psychological communication canon and emphasizes news and other forms of mass media. UGT's central question is, "Why do people use media, and for what purposes?" UGT looks at how people select media for various purposes, such as education, entertainment, distraction, socialization, and so on. The research methods used here are consistent with the Theory of Uses and Satisfaction. Those who participated in this study primarily use digital media for self-satisfaction. Many respondents use a wide variety of digital media outlets to satisfy their varied information needs and pursuits.

Respondents' motivations for engaging with digital media range widely: to stay current, to learn something new, to amuse themselves, to learn a new language, to challenge themselves intellectually, to develop new perspectives on themselves and the world, to broaden their horizons socially and intellectually, and so on. Digital

media provides all these amenities to its viewers to keep them happy, but it is unable to give them the information they require. In this case, the audience is the focus of digital media.

5. Literature Review

Media literacy is proficiency in the effective use of media. The ability to "access, analyze, evaluate, and produce communication in a variety of media forms" (Aufderheide 1993) is part of "this skill," which "helps people use media intelligently by discriminating and evaluating media content, critically dissecting media forms, researching media effects and uses, and creating alternative media" (Kellner & Share 2005, 372). In his book, "Media Literacy," Potter (2004) defines media literacy as "exposure to media that permits us to evaluate the meaning of every message we receive on it." Therefore, we create our own interpretation of the message. A person who is well-versed in the media would analyze the messages they receive and send with great care. The ability to evaluate information presented in various media sources critically is a key component of media literacy (Sholihudin, 2014). Media literate students can access, analyse, and evaluate the persuasiveness of the pictures and messages they are exposed to daily (European Commission, 2009).

There has been a lot of study on the topic of media literacy in the past. Studying "Digital Media Literacy to higher students in Indonesia," Supratman and Wahyudin (2017) found that while most respondents are active on social media, most do not understand how to utilize it effectively. Fake news is not a novel concept in the digital media. Notably, the idea originated before the advent of the Internet, during a time when media frequently used false and misleading information to further their own goals. As reported by Aldwairi and Alwahedi (2018).

Most students have a moderate level of new media literacy, according to Shin and Zanuddin (2019), which is useful information for public or private institutions or groups responsible for or interested in combating fake news. False news is spread on social media and news channels, say Aldwairi and Alwahedi (2018), either to increase viewership or as a form of psychological warfare.

Researchers Li and Ranieri (2010) found that Chinese high school students' digital media literacy was only "pass," not "good" or "outstanding." Higher-order thinking skills and technical fundamentals are both part of digital media literacy (Janssen et al. 2013; Ng. According to Arke and Primack (2009), measuring digital media literacy is still one of the biggest challenges to getting a handle on the concept. Li

and Ranieri (2010) argue that to effectively incorporate digital media literacy into training, it is important to identify students' prior levels and characteristics related to them.

Media fluency in the digital age Zhang and Zhu (2016) found that elementary school children in China lacked both critical comprehension and technical competence when it came to working with digital media. Students' prior exposure to digital media and parental mediation were also cited as factors in shaping pupils' eventual level of competence in this area.

A large gap in digital media literacy was found between low and high media users, according to research by Shin and Zanuddin (2019). This demonstrates that as more people engage with new media, they will be better able to produce and disseminate their own media content, such as articles, blogs, and films that provide critical analysis of current events from a variety of perspectives. More frequent media consumers also tend to be more engaged in and vocal in online community discussions. Sixty to eighty percent of respondents had middling technical skills, eighty to ninety percent had middling critical comprehension, and forty-five percent had middling communication skills, with media literacy having a significant influence on students' social character by as much as forty-nine percent (Tetep & Suparman, 2019).

Muzykante et al., (2022) emphasized media literacy's role in minimizing rumors, misinformation, disinformation, and fake news from a Bangladeshi perspective. Over 40 secondary data sources from Bengali, English, Russian, Indonesian, and Turkish literatureresearch papers, reports, news items, periodicals, and novels, and thesewere evaluated using descriptive research methods. Higher media literacy is needed to counteract misinformation, rumors, fake news, and yellow journalism in developing nations like Bangladesh, where literacy rates are low. In this context, governments and NGOs should collaborate to remedy process flaws.

Begum & Khan (2022) in their study found that 70% of journalism students have a progressive and satisfactory news media literacy level. Most students (70%) wrote and produced news items in print, television, or online in addition to media or journalism education programs or publications. The study found that 40% of non-journalism students engaged with media or journalism education programs or publications while receiving no formal education from their department. However, the study shows that 63% of non-journalism students write and produce media stories, which is commendable

6. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach to examine the digital media literacy skills of students enrolled in the mass communication and journalism program at Khulna University Mass Communication and Journalism Discipline students in Bangladesh. The survey methodology was employed in this study because of its widespread use in quantitative research and its ability to efficiently gather accurate data from a large and diverse population within a limited time frame. Given the nature and demands of the present research, a survey analysis was employed to examine the digital media literacy skills of students enrolled in the mass communication and journalism program at Khulna University. The sample for this study was selected from the discipline of Mass Communication and Journalism at Khulna University, in accordance with the study's requirements. The study encompassed individuals from various academic levels, including first-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year, and master's students within the discipline.

This study was done utilizing random sampling techniques among the students enrolled in the Mass Communication and Journalism Discipline at Khulna University. The study's sample consisted of a population size of 240 individuals. The researchers employed a convenience sample strategy to recruit participants for this study. Based on a 95% level of confidence and a margin of error of 0.125, the necessary sample size was determined to be n=50, given a standard error of 4%.

The determination of the sample size was conducted using the formula proposed by Yemane. Based on Yamane's formula (1967), the determined sample size was:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^{\cdot}}$$

Where: n signifies the sample size

N signifies the population under study

e signifies the margin error

Therefore, n= 240/ (1+240(0.125)2)

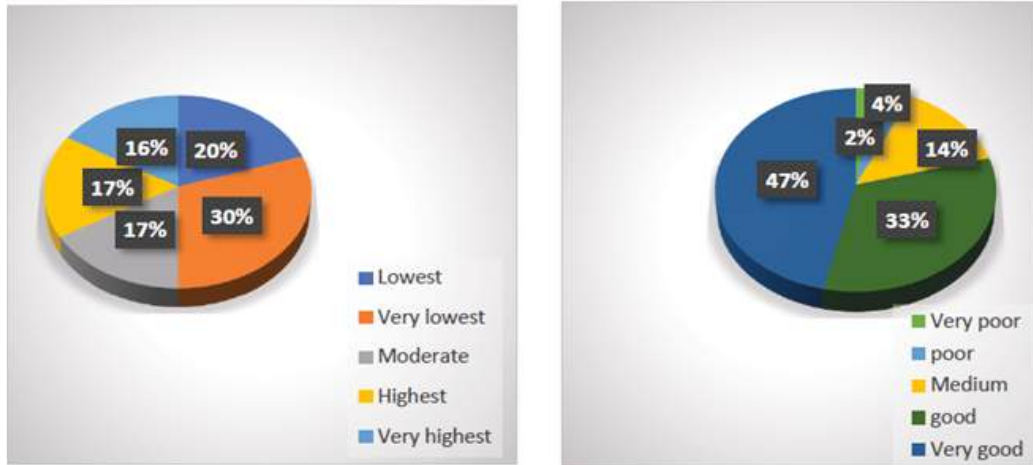n= 50.52

n= 50 (for study purposes only)

7. Findings

Figure 1: The prior digital media experience of the respondents.) (Figure 2: The proficiency of the participants in the field of Digital Media.

According to the results shown in Figure 1, roughly one-third of the respondents (30%) have the very lowest skill regarding previous experience with digital media, while one-fifth have the lowest, almost one-fifth (17%) have moderate and highest respectively, and 16% have the very highest skill regarding previous experience with digital media. This percentage shows that most respondents have minimal familiarity with digital media. On the other hand, figure 2 shows that while over half of respondents (47%) have excellent technical knowledge of digital media, 33% have mediocre knowledge, 14% have medium knowledge, 4% have poor knowledge, and the lowest 2% have extremely poor knowledge.

According to the data presented in Figure 3, the majority of the participants (88%) reported using Facebook, while a smaller proportion of respondents (6%) indicated using Instagram. Additionally, 4% of the participants reported using YouTube, while a mere 2% reported using Reddit. However, Figure 4 illustrates that a significant proportion of the respondents, specifically 12 individuals (24%), utilize social media as a means of communication with their friends. Additionally, 14% of the respondents employ social media for entertainment purposes, while 12% utilize it for self-updates. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents utilise social media as a source of information, 8% for
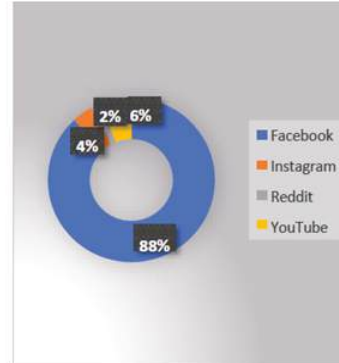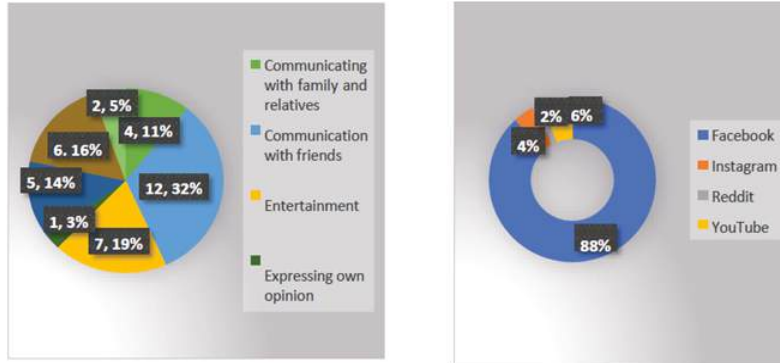
(Figure 3: Favorable social media of the respondents) (Figure 4: Reason for using the social media)

communication with friends, 4% as a platform for studying, and a mere 2% for expressing personal opinions.
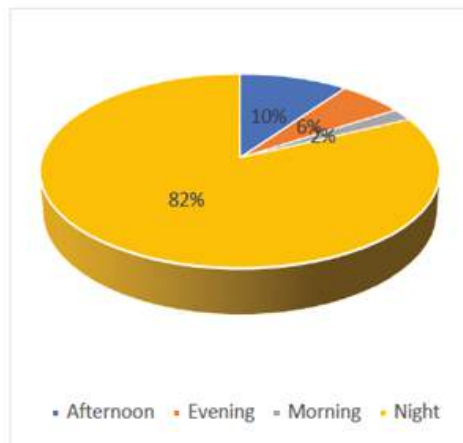
(Figure 5: Favorable time of using the social media) (Figure 6:Spending time of respondents on social media)

Figure 5 shows that most respondents access social media late at night, while a relatively small percentage do so in the morning. Specifically, 2% of respondents access social media before 10 AM, 5% before 2 PM, and 6% between 2 PM and 5 AM. Almost a third of respondents (32%) spend more than four hours per day, while one-fifth (20%) spend between one and two hours, another 16% spend between two and three hours, and a smaller percentage (12%) spend between three and four hours per day.
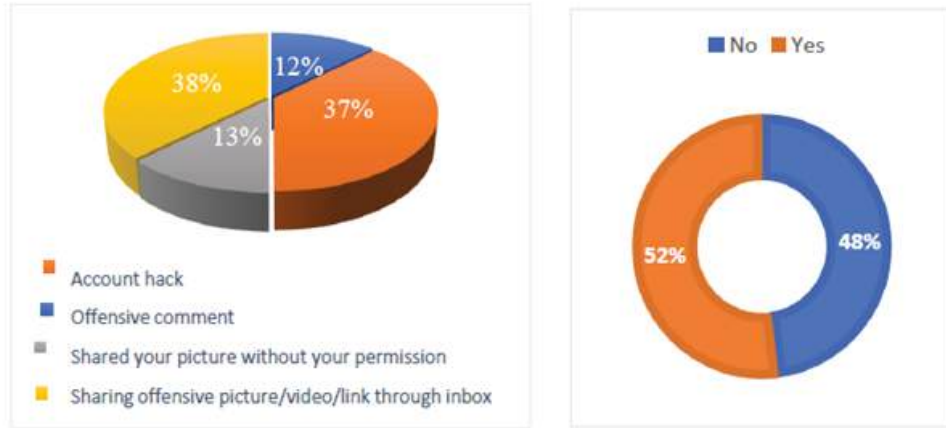
(Figure 7: Facing problems or threats in social networking sites)   (Figure 8: Problems that face during using social media)

Figure 7 shows that a significant percentage of respondents (38%) are experiencing issues with offensive pictures, videos, or links being sent to them via their inboxes, while a similar percentage (37%) are dealing with offensive comments, and a smaller percentage (13%), their pictures being shared without their permission. Figure 8 shows that while over half of respondents do not experience any difficulties or dangers when utilizing social media, over half do (52% to 48%).
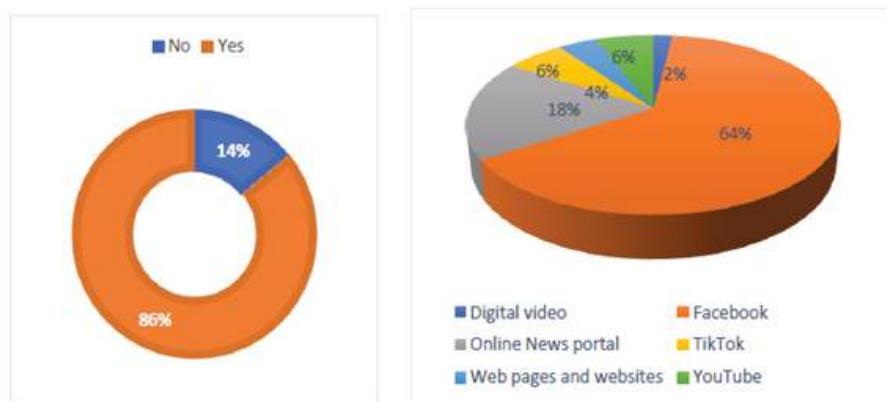
(Figure 9: Fake news identifying knowledge) (Figure 10: Most providing fake news of digital medium)

Figure 9 shows that most respondents (86%) can spot fake news in digital media, while a sizable minority (14%) cannot. Almost two-thirds of respondents (64%) say that Facebook is the highest medium of spreading fake news, while the second highest number of respondents (18%) express that online news portal is the highest medium of spreading fake news. Additionally, 6% of respondents expose that YouTube is the highest medium of spreading fake news, and 6% of respondents similarly expose that TikTok is the highest medium of spreading fake news.
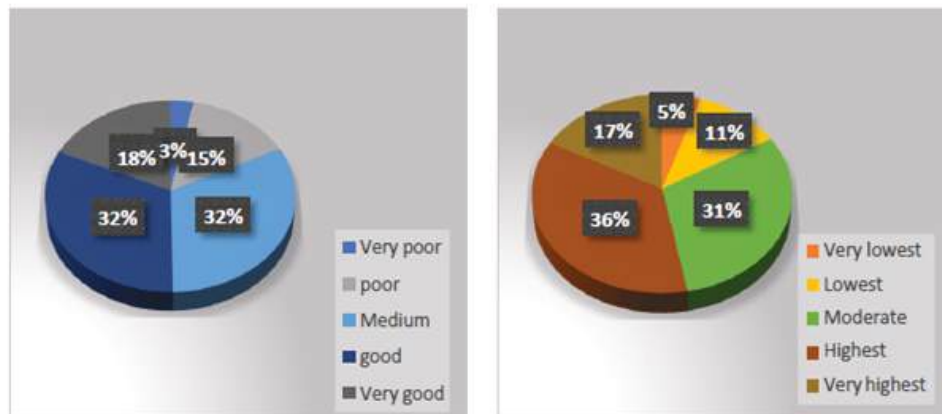
(Figure11: Respondents' evaluating skills of media content) (Figure12:Respondents' awareness about the laws of digitalmedia)

Figure 11 demonstrates that while one-fifth of respondents (18%) have very strong abilities in evaluating media content across a variety of categories, one-fifth (15%) have mediocre skills, and 3% have extremely bad skills. This chart demonstrates that most respondents have either high or medium levels of ability to evaluate media material. However, figure 12 shows that more than a third of respondents (36%) have awareness level is highest, while roughly one-third (31%) is moderate, as well as 17% are very high, 11% are lowest, and below 5% are very lowest. The largest percentage of responders with a good understanding of the rules governing online conduct.

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Table 1: Supplementary New Media Platform and Curbing Fake Information

Variables	No. respondent & frequencies
Additional social media platforms utilized by the participants	
Messenger, YouTube, What'sApp	32 (64)
Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter	14 (28)
Google, Skype	4 (8)
Methods for Regulating Misinformation	
Govt. should supervise the online portal and websites	10 (20)
The online portal must have a License	4 (8)
To execute the laws	3 (6)
To increase public awareness	7 (14)
Above all ways	26 (52)
Methods for detecting misinformation in the realm of digital media	
Checking the source	16 (32)
Checking the facts, data, statistics, and quotes from experts.	10 (20)
Scrutinize photos and Other media	5 (10)
Checking the comments about this News in various sites.	4 (8)

Table 1 shows that over three-fifths of respondents use Messenger, YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, and fewer than 8% use Google, Skype, and their preferred social media. Table 2 shows that almost one-third of respondents 16 (32%) can identify fake news by checking the source, one-fifth of respondents 10 (20%) can identify it by checking facts, data, statistics, and quotes from experts, 5% by carefully scrutinizing photos and other media that accompany the stories, and 8% by carefully scrutinizing One-fifth of respondents say the government must supervise the online portal and websites to control fake news, 14% say it can be controlled by raising public awareness, 8% say it must be a license, 6% say it should be enforced, and 52% say it can be controlled by following the above steps.

8. Discussion

This study demonstrates that most respondents have a high level of critical understanding and moderate prior experience with digital media, similar to what Zhang and Zhu (2016) discovered in their study. This study found that the majority of respondents have excellent technical skills in digital media, consistent with the findings of Zhang and Zhu (2016) and Tetep & Suparman (2019), e.g., 60-80% of respondents had medium technical skills in digital media. Shin and Zanuddin (2019) found that the more individuals use new media, the greater their ability to generate and share media content, such as articles and blogs, as well as videos that can include critical analyses of current events from a variety of perspectives. This study found the same relationship, including that most of the respondents' creation and communication skills are excellent, whereas Zhang and Zhu (2016) found that most participants have the lowest skills in telecommunications.

Chowdhury (2020) reveals that approximately 64% of participants can identify false news, while this study reveals that the majority of respondents (86%) can also identify fake news. This study reveals that the majority of respondents (88%) use Facebook among social media, while,Quarmal et al.(2018) also found a correlation between Facebook usage and the majority of respondents (72%).One-fourth of respondents use social media to obtain information, while 24% of participants use social media to communicate with friends and 16% of respondents use social media to communicate with friends (Quarmal et al., 2018). Approximately one-fourth of respondents use social media to communicate with their peers, while ten percent of respondents use social media to obtain information and eight percent use social media to communicate with their friends. This study reveals that almost one-third of the respondents (32%) are spending more than four hours, while one-fifth of the

respondents (21%) are spending one to two hours and two to three hours daily, respectively. However, Quarmal et al., (2018) discovered that more than two-fifths of the participants (54%) are spending less than one hour daily, while almost one-third of the respondents (32%) are spending one to two hours daily.

This study also revealed that more than half of respondents (52%) encounter problems or threats when using social media. The largest proportion of respondents, 38%, face the problem of objectionable image/video/link sharing via email, whereas.Quarmal et al., (2018) found slightly different results, including 8.1% of respondents facing the problem of account hacking, 5.8% facing inoffensive comments, and 3.9% facing the problem of sharing respondents' pictures without their permission. This study also reveals that the majority of respondents have a high level of skill in digital media citizenship participation, that the majority of participants have a high level of skill in evaluating media content according to various criteria, and that the majority of respondents have a high level of skill in digital media behavior laws. Shin and Zanuddin (2019) demonstrated that the majority of students possessed a moderate level of knowledge regarding these criteria.

This study found that the majority of respondents (82%) use social media at night, the majority of respondents (86%) can identify false news, and approximately one-third of respondents (32%) identify fake news by examining the news source in digital media. This also highlights that almost two-thirds of the respondents (64%) express that Facebook is the highest medium of spreading fake news among digital media and one-fifth of the respondents express that Govt. must have to superintend the online portal and websites to control the fake news.

9. Conclusion

The challenges and opportunities of keeping up with the rapid development of information technology and digital media are shared by generations of people. Academic achievement and positive personal growth are mutually dependent on students' media literacy skills. A person's digital media literacy can be shaped by their technical competence, critical understanding, and linguistic fluency. You can't do any harm with digital media if you're well-versed in its use. The media will focus more on positive events. Therefore, combining students' media knowledge and skills will yield positive outcomes.

This study possesses several limitations, the primary one being its reliance on self-reported quantitative research about digital media literacy. The use of self-reporting

as an indirect measure may not always provide an accurate representation of students' actual performance levels. Future studies may use a range of methodologies to assess digital media literacy, including performance-based evaluations. Furthermore, the data utilized in this study was collected from a sample of students specializing in public communication and journalism at Khulna University, located in Bangladesh. The sample consisted only of students enrolled in the MCJ program at Khulna University. Due to the limitations imposed by the limited duration and sample size, it is not possible to generalize the statistical findings to the full population of university students in Bangladesh.

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