p-ISSN : 2708-2113 | e-ISSN : 2708-3608

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gesr
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gesr/.2024(IX)
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX.I)

www.gesrjournal.com
Global Educational Studies Review
GESR
educating, humanity

GESR

GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL STUDIES REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)

HumanityPublications
sharing research
www.humapub.com
US | UK | Pakistan

Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal
www.gesrjournal.com

Humanity Publications (HumaPub)
www.humapub.com
Doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.31703

Article Title

Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy

Global Educational Studies Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2113 e-ISSN: 2708-3608

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gesr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX)

Issue: I Winter (March-2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I)

Home Page
www.gesrjournal.com

Volume: IX (2024)
https://www.gesrjournal.com/Current-issues

Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)
https://www.gesrjournal.com/Current-issues/9/1/2024

Scope
https://www.gesrjournal.com/about-us/scope

Submission
https://humaglobe.com/index.php/gesr/submissions

Google Scholar

Visit Us

Abstract

This study intends to evaluate the impact of demographic variables on digital literacy. A cross-sectional research design was employed to explore impact of demographic variables on digital literacy. Data from respondents was collected through survey method. The researchers used purposive sampling to select media professionals who met specific criteria, as well as convenience sampling to select students who were easily accessible. We chose 200 participants, consisting of 100 individuals from the media industry and an equal number of students. The results indicated that there were notable disparities in digital literacy based on age and level of education. Younger individuals with higher levels of education demonstrated greater proficiency in digital literacy. The study emphasizes critical role of digital literacy in media consumption and need for targeted educational interventions to address digital literacy deficiencies.

Keywords: Digital literacy, professionals, students, social media, news consumption

Authors:

Ayesha Kiran: (Corresponding Author)
Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. (Email: kiranayesha456@gmail.com)

Muhammad Yousaf: Assistant Professor, Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Zahid Yousaf: Professor (Dean), Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Pages: 145-154

DOI:10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15

DOI link: https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15

Article link: http://www.gesrjournal.com/article/A-b-c

Full-text Link: https://gesrjournal.com/fulltext/

Pdf link: https://www.gesrjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rvIolA2.pdf

Humanity Publications (HumaPub)
www.humapub.com
Doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.31703

Citing this Article

15		Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy						
		Author	Ayesha Kiran Muhammad Yousaf Zahid Yousaf		DOI	10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15		
Pages		145-154	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	I
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Kiran, A., Yousaf, M., & Yousaf, Z. (2024). Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy. *Global Educational Studies Review*, *IX*(I), 145-154. https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15						
	CHICAGO	Kiran, Ayesha, Muhammad Yousaf, and Zahid Yousaf. 2024. "Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy." *Global Educational Studies Review* IX (I):145-154. doi: 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15.						
	HARVARD	KIRAN, A., YOUSAF, M. & YOUSAF, Z. 2024. Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy. *Global Educational Studies Review,* IX**,** 145-154.						
	MHRA	Kiran, Ayesha, Muhammad Yousaf, and Zahid Yousaf. 2024. 'Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy', *Global Educational Studies Review*, IX: 145-54.						
	MLA	Kiran, Ayesha, Muhammad Yousaf, and Zahid Yousaf. "Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy." *Global Educational Studies Review* IX.I (2024): 145-54. Print.						
	OXFORD	Kiran, Ayesha, Yousaf, Muhammad, and Yousaf, Zahid (2024), 'Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy', *Global Educational Studies Review,* IX (I), 145-54.						
	TURABIAN	Kiran, Ayesha, Muhammad Yousaf, and Zahid Yousaf. "Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy." *Global Educational Studies Review* IX, no. I (2024): 145-54. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15.						

e-ISSN: 2708-3608 Volume: IX (2024) Issue: I-Winter (March-2024) p-ISSN: 2708-2113

Global Educational Studies Review
www.gesrjournal.com
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gesr

Pages: 145-154 URL: https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15 Doi: 10.31703/gesr.2024(IX-I).15

Authors:

Ayesha Kiran: (Corresponding Author)
Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.
(Email: kiranayesha456@gmail.com)

Muhammad Yousaf: Assistant Professor, Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Zahid Yousaf: Professor (Dean), Centre for Media and Communication Studies, University of Gujrat, Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan.

Contents

Title

Navigating News Consumption on Social Media: Exploring the Impact of Demographics on Digital Literacy

Abstract

This study intends to evaluate the impact of demographic variables on digital literacy. A cross-sectional research design was employed to explore impact of demographic variables on digital literacy. Data from respondents was collected through survey method. The researchers used purposive sampling to select media professionals who met specific criteria, as well as convenience sampling to select students who were easily accessible. We chose 200 participants, consisting of 100 individuals from the media industry and an equal number of students. The results indicated that there were notable disparities in digital literacy based on age and level of education. Younger individuals with higher levels of education demonstrated greater proficiency in digital literacy. The study emphasizes critical role of digital literacy in media consumption and need for targeted educational interventions to address digital literacy deficiencies.

Keywords: Digital literacy, professionals, students, social media, news consumption

Introduction

In the current world of mediated realities, mass media including social media shape our understanding of the social world (Okocha et al., 2023; Yousaf, 2023; Williams, 2003), influence the image of nations (Ji, Muhammad & Hu, 2016), frame conflicts, (Yousaf et al., 2020), develop consensus among diversified populace (Yousaf, 2018), define attributes of the issues, shape democratic participation (Ijaz & Yousaf, 2023; Shehzad et al., 2021), and create awareness about health threats and cultivate adherence among public towards environmental threats (Iftikhar & Yousaf, 2021). Therefore, digital literacy is of paramount significance to enable and empower the public to read, understand, evaluate, and reach

valid and logical conclusions from media texts. Put differently, digital literacy encompasses a range of aspects, such as technical, cognitive, and socioemotional abilities (Eshet 2012). In the contemporary world of mediated realities, digital literacy influences perceptions regarding our opinions and attitudes towards politics, culture, economy, health, and several other issues.

The Pew Research Center for Journalism Excellence surveyed in 2013 and found that 15% of participants used social media as their prime source of information. This signifies the increasing importance of social media, especially among the younger age group. The increasing prevalence of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter has sparked concerns regarding the genuineness and authenticity of content created and consumed by users. Acquiring the ability to differentiate between authentic and fraudulent content is of utmost importance, especially in the age current era of mediated realities of media, especially social media.

The media industry and the methods of data generation, distribution, and utilization are undergoing a revolution due to the swift proliferation of digital technologies. Given the rapid pace of digital advancements, digital literacy is becoming increasingly important as it empowers users to navigate the intricate and ever-evolving digital environment with efficiency. Importantly, digital literacy encompasses a wide range of abilities (Eshet, 2012). Hence, understanding how various demographic groups, such as college students and professional journalists, are enhancing their digital literacy in response to evolving technological advancements that are reshaping media operations is an important and significant topic to be investigated. Therefore, to understand the different levels of digital literacy across university students and professional journalists in Pakistan, it is imperative to analyze the distinct circumstances and requirements of each group.

Having a high level of digital literacy is essential for achieving excellent job performance in the professional journalism industry, where the stakes are considerably higher. Journalists must continuously adjust to emerging digital tools, platforms, and methodologies to effectively collect, authenticate, and disseminate news. Hence, both continuous professional development and practical application contribute to the enhancement of digital literacy (Singer, 2018). On the other hand, university students are in the early stages of acquiring digital literacy skills. Their interests and academic needs usually shape their use of digital technologies. While students may possess a fundamental understanding of digital tools and social media, they may be deficient in the advanced digital literacy skills necessary for ethical content creation, critical evaluation, and digital security. This disparity highlights the significance of equipping university students with a comprehensive education in digital literacy to adequately prepare them for the digital era (Pérez-Escoda et al., 2019). Therefore, the study seeks to evaluate and compare the digital literacy competence of students and professional journalists in Pakistan. The findings of the study give a valuable understanding of the present state of digital literacy in Pakistan and suggest strategies to enhance educational practices in this domain to empower media users to critically analyze and understand media content.

Literature Review

Society holds the media in high regard for its indispensable function in disseminating information, forming public opinion, and providing entertainment and information (Thussu, 2018). Over the past decade, there has been a substantial worldwide change resulting from the rapid and widespread exchange of data facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT) (Castells, 2013). As the internet becomes more popular, a large number of people regularly use digital media. This results in the generation of large amounts of data that reveal new trends and patterns (Van Dijck, 2013). Organizations are increasingly utilizing social media to gather feedback from stakeholders and provide customers with a platform to voice concerns regarding the accuracy, reliability, and precision of data. In our current mediated realities, the impact of digital media on the social world is substantial (Hepp, 2022).

Media Ecology Theory

Neil Postman's Media Ecology Theory, based on the research of Marshall McLuhan, posits that media environments have a profound impact on societal structures, cultural practices, and human experience (Postman, 2017). Media ecology examines the complex interplay between media, technology, and society, revealing how advancements in media impact cognitive abilities, communication behaviors, and social dynamics. This perspective is also termed as digital determinism wherein media drives everything in society. McLuhan's famous quote, "The medium is the message,"

highlights the notion that the characteristics of a medium, rather than its actual content, significantly shape people's perceptions and actions (McLuhan, 1964). Within the context of digital media, this perspective is particularly relevant, as the merging of various digital platforms and technologies has created a new media environment that significantly influences journalism and education. Media ecology emphasizes the transition of journalism from traditional & broadcast media to online platforms. In addition to a complete transformation in journalistic techniques, it has resulted in the development of new resources for news coverage, dissemination, and collection. The concept of digital media ecology encourages participatory journalism, wherein viewers actively engage in contributing to and collaboratively creating content rather than simply passively consuming it (Altheide, 1995).

Florida (1999) coined the term 'infosphere' to refer to the realm of information, making a comparison to the biosphere. According to Floridi, the informational environment refers to the combined presence of all informational entities, including informational agents, their attributes, interactions, processes, and connections. The environment in question bears resemblance to cyberspace, yet it is separate and different from it. It includes not just digital spaces, but also physical and non-digital spaces of information (Floridi, 2010). Digital literacy is a continuous and evolving process that advances in parallel with technological advancements. Regularly improving one's skills is crucial for both students and professionals to maintain their digital proficiency. As stated by the American Library Association and JISC, digital literacy refers to the cognitive and technical capabilities necessary to effectively navigate and participate in a digital society.

Assessing digital literacy is challenging due to the lack of consensus regarding the specific elements that can be quantified. It involves expertise in tools, computational principles, and cognitive abilities required to solve practical problems using technology. The evaluation of digital literacy is further complicated by the wide array of experiences individuals possess, which are influenced by social, economic, and educational factors (Tactical Tech, 2023). Increasingly, social constructivist frameworks are being utilized in the field of digital literacy education. These frameworks place a high importance on learning through social interactions and firsthand experiences. This approach aligns with the functionalities of social media and other digital tools, suggesting that the acquisition of digital literacy is affected by social and cultural elements. Media ecology examines the influence of digital technologies on university students' learning environments and instructional methods. Utilizing digital tools in the classroom facilitates the cultivation of digital literacy skills, promotes academic engagement, and enables students to access a wealth of knowledge. It also raises questions about the impact of digital distractions, the overwhelming amount of information available, and the necessity of critically evaluating online content (Carr, 2010).

Digital Literacy Perspective

The digital literacy theory centers on the aptitudes necessary to effectively engage with digital content and technologies. Gilster (1997) defined digital literacy, as a capacity to comprehend and effectively use information presented in different computer-based formats from an array of providers. Digital literacy encompasses a range of aspects, such as technical, cognitive, and socioemotional abilities (Eshet 2012). Technical skills encompass proficiency in operating digital devices, navigating online platforms, and utilizing software. Cognitive skills encompass the capacity to engage in critical thinking, assess information, and resolve problems within digital contexts. Digital citizenship, ethical considerations, and responsible online behavior interconnect with socio-emotional skills. In recent years, the definition of digital literacy has broadened to encompass media literacy and information literacy, highlighting the interconnectedness of digital abilities. Media literacy encompasses comprehension of media content, recognition of media bias, and conscientious media creation. The main objective of information literacy is to efficiently locate, evaluate, and utilize information, especially in the current era characterized by disinformation and fake news (Livingstone, 2004).

To effectively navigate the digital information landscape, validate their sources, and produce ethical and factual content, journalists must possess digital literacy. Professional journalists with digital literacy skills can use digital tools for data journalism, audience engagement, and investigative reporting. Moreover, possessing digital literacy is essential for upholding digital security and safeguarding journalists against cyber threats. University students must possess digital literacy to achieve academic excellence and engage in lifelong learning. This program provides students with the necessary resources to engage in online learning communities, analyze digital content thoughtfully, and cultivate digital skills, all of which are becoming progressively more crucial in the

employment industry. Enhancing the educational programs at universities in the field of digital literacy can result in well-informed individuals who possess the necessary skills to effectively tackle the difficulties of the digital era (Ng, 2012).

As defined by the Digital Literacy Task Force of the American Library Association, digital literacy is the ability to effectively use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and share information. This requires the use of both cognitive and technical skills (Liana, 2016). However, digital literacy, as defined by Bow Valley College (2017), encompasses the capacity to comprehend and execute tasks within digital environments. Digital literacy, as defined by Bow Valley College (2017), encompasses the aptitude to comprehend and execute tasks within digital environments. The scope and utilization of digital literacy have greatly expanded since Gilster (1997) initially popularized the concept several decades ago, as evidenced by the works of Smith et al. (2018, 2020). Even so, from Gilster's initial definition, there has been a focus on the necessity to cultivate a more extensive comprehension of literacy in digital environments that surpasses basic technological abilities. This refers to a type of literacy that involves understanding and being skilled in concepts, rather than just being able to use a keyboard.

Martin (2006) argued that digital competencies and digital literacies are closely linked, with digital competence being the primary stage of involvement in digital literacy. Hence, digital competence is typically enhanced by digital literacy, which acts as a fundamental foundation (Martin & Grudziecki, 2006; Spante et al., 2018). Following earlier research, there have been subsequent advancements in comprehending various digital literacies, as elucidated by Alexander et al. (2017). These ideas frequently relate to different literacies that encompass digital technologies. The interlinked literacies encompass the necessary skills to efficiently locate, assess, and employ information, commonly referred to as information literacies. Furthermore, digital literacies are commonly linked to or encompassed by the wider notions of new literacies, which are crucial in the context of swiftly progressing communication technologies (Coiro et al., 2014).

The new literacies encompass a wide range of text forms that are linked to information and multimedia technologies. These literacies, known as multiliteracies, also include multimodalities (Mills, 2010, p. xiii). In addition, media literacies are incorporated, as they are crucial for complete engagement in our society that is saturated with media and abundant in information (Hobbs, 2011, p. vii). In addition, transliteracies are necessary for effectively navigating different technologies, media, and contexts (Sukovic, 2016, para. 2).

Comparison of Digital Literacy for Students and Professionals

Despite facing various obstacles, journalism's core duty of providing accurate information remains unaltered (Fawzi et al., 2020). As online journalists endeavor to publish their stories ahead of their rivals, this undertaking is growing progressively arduous. News reporting errors are more likely to occur because of strict deadlines, so news organizations must issue corrections to fix the harm caused by these mistakes, which undermines the public's trust in the media (Karlsson and Clerwall 2018). In the present era of abundant information, a notable concern emerges: people worldwide have a pervasive skepticism towards news sources, and this skepticism is either diminishing or existing at minimal levels.

There is apprehension that the existing media environment, characterized by a diverse array of options for audiences, might result in a decline in the overall caliber of news. The reason for this is that audience attention is regarded as the most precious asset in this context. A recent study conducted by Araújo-Vila et. al. (2020) indicates that students often lack the requisite skills to proficiently utilize digital technologies in their educational endeavors. Furthermore, they face challenges when it comes to effectively applying the skills they already have to the desired standard. Therefore, it is essential to introduce educational programs that specifically promote these skills. Simon and colleagues recognized the imperative of developing and implementing training programs to acquire digital literacy for the curriculum. The authors suggest that by assessing different levels of digital literacy among students, evaluating professors' ability to incorporate literacy elements into their teaching methods, and implementing a strategy to enhance digital literacy across various academic disciplines, students can develop a more robust digital capacity (Guzmán-Simón et al., 2017). In light of the above literature review, the study proposed the following three research questions.

Research Question

RQ1: To what extent do young and old people differ regarding their scores on digital literacy skills?

RQ2: Does education significantly impact digital literacy skills?

RQ3: Is there a significant difference between professionals and students regarding digital literacy skills?

RQ4: How does digital literacy score differ for those who intend to take a course, don't want to take a course, and those who are not sure?

Research Design

This study employs a cross-sectional research design, specifically using a survey method to gather data from participants including social science students enrolled at the University and media professionals throughout Pakistan. We selected a sample size of 200 participants. To investigate the impact of demographic variables on digital literacy. The study used purposive sampling to identify media professionals who met the research's specific criteria, while convenience sampling was used to select students who were easily accessible and pertinent to the research topic. This study investigates the responses of professionals and students to news on social media, taking into account their levels of digital literacy. We designed a structured questionnaire to collect data from the participants, which included two sections: one for gathering demographic information and another for assessing the participants' digital literacy proficiency. To measure digital literacy, a 31-item digital literacy scale was developed to measure digital literacy. The 31-item digital literacy scale reliability (α= was .93). We analyzed the collected data using SPSS, a widely used software for statistical analysis in social science research. SPSS enables comprehensive statistical analyses, encompassing descriptive statistics, and tests of difference.

Results

The result section is divided into two parts. In the first part, we present descriptive statistics to summarize data. The second parts present the results of inferential statistics to answer research questions. There are 169 respondents between the age 20-30 group and 31 above age 31 group. Likewise, there were 141 graduates and 59 post-graduate students. Moreover, there were 100 professionals and 100 students. In addition, we used an independent samples t-test to find a difference between categorical independent variables and continuous dependent variables to answer three research questions. There were three categorical independent variables, i.e., age measured as a categorical variable, education, and professionals and students are also categorical variables, and one continuous dependent variable.

Table 1

The difference in the means of digital literacy score for young and old respondent

Grouping Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*P*
Young	169	84.11	22.51	3.33	197	005
Old	30	69.63	18.10	Old	30	69.63
Total	199					

An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean digital literacy score for young and old respondents. There was a statistically significant difference in digital literacy score between young (*M*=84.11, *SD*=22.51) and old (*M*= 69.63, *SD*=18.10); t (197) =3.33, p=005, two-tailed). The effect size of the difference reported is very small (eta squared, η2, =.052. This means that a 5.2% variance in the dependent variable is explained by age.

Table 2

The difference in the means of digital literacy score for graduate and post-graduate students

Grouping Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Graduate	141	86.70	21.35	4.936	197	.005
Post Graduate	58	70.33	21.016			
Total	199					

An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean digital literacy score for graduate and post-graduate students. There was a statistically significant difference in digital literacy score between graduate (*M*=86.70, *SD*=21.35) and old (*M*= 70.33, *SD*=21.016); t (197) =4.93, p=005, two-tailed). The effect size of the difference reported is very small (eta squared, η2, =.10. This means that 11% variance in the dependent variable is explained by age.

Table 3

The difference in the means of digital literacy score for professionals and students.

Grouping Variable	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*df*	*p*
Professional	99	79.23	24.14	-1.69	197	.093
Students	100	84.60	20.48	Students		
Total	199					

An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean digital literacy score for professionals and students. There was statistically no significant difference in digital literacy score between graduate (*M*=79.23, *SD*=24.14) and old (*M*= 84.60, *SD*=20.48); t (197) =-1.69, p=005, two-tailed).

Table 4

Descriptive statistics in one–way analysis of variance to compare mean scores of three groups for digital literacy

Group	*N*	*M*	*SD*
Yes	152	78.5395	20.34728
No	18	87.6667	25.42579
Maybe	29	96.1034	25.59205
Total	199		

Table 5

One-way analysis of variance of three groups and digital literacy score

Source	*Sum of squares*	*Df*	*MS*	*F*	*Sig*
Between groups	8165.417	2	4082.708	8.713	.005
Within groups	91844.453	196	468.594		
Total	100009.869	198			

The test of homogeneity of variances (α=.269) shows that the sample has equal variance. One-way analysis of variance was used to compare the effect of three groups on digital literacy. Groups were divided into three groups (yes, no, and maybe). There was a statistically significant difference p= .005 for the three groups, $F(2,196) = 8.7$, p=.005. Post-hoc comparisons using Tukey's test show that mean scores for group 1 (*M*= 78.53, *SD*=20.34) differed from group three (*M*=96.10, *SD*=25.59). Group 2 (M=87.66, *SD*=25.42) did not significantly differ from either group 1 or group 3.

Discussion

This examines the research findings of four primary research questions. Firstly, it assesses the extent of disparities in digital literacy skills between young and old individuals. Furthermore, it evaluates the impact of education on digital literacy by investigating whether educational attainment has a substantial effect on these abilities. In addition, the chapter investigates whether there is a significant difference in digital literacy skills between professionals and students. Ultimately, this study investigates the difference in digital literacy scores among individuals with varying intentions regarding enrollment in a digital literacy course—specifically, those who intend to enroll, those who do not, and those who are uncertain. The objective of this section is to explain the meanings of the findings to get a comprehensive

understanding of the factors that influence digital literacy and to highlight the outcomes of enhancing digital literacy among different demographic groups.

In response to our first research question "To what extent do young and old people differ regarding their scores on digital literacy skills" the results demonstrate a statistically significant difference in digital literacy scores between younger and older participants. The younger participants' demonstrated higher digital literacy compared to the older participants. This indicates that age explains about 5.2% of the variation in digital literacy scores. These findings align with previous research suggesting that younger people are more skilled in using digital technologies, likely due to their early and extensive exposure to and familiarity with digital tools (Fang et al., 2019; Scheerder et al. (2020). These studies also demonstrate that younger generations are more proficient in digital skills than older adults, who often struggle with adopting new technologies.

Our second research question was: Does education significantly impact digital literacy skills? The findings of this study provide evidence that higher levels of education do have an impact on digital literacy. These results support the previous findings (Park and Burford, 2020). The studies show that higher levels of education correspond to enhanced digital skills, as well as increased utilization of digital technologies. To assess the difference between professionals and students regarding digital literacy skills exposed no discernible disparity in digital literacy scores between professionals and students that could be considered statistically significant. The findings for this research question suggest that professional status does not exert a substantial influence on levels of digital literacy.

These findings indicate that both groups have comparable levels of access to and knowledge of digital technologies, therefore, these findings also aligned with the previous literature (Hargittai & Dobransky, 2017). Likewise, in their study, Litt and Palfrey (2019) investigated that students and working professionals exhibit comparable levels of digital literacy, indicating that both groups possess similar digital skills. To find the difference, the findings of one-way ANOVA for those who intend to take a digital literacy course, don't want to take a course, and those who are not sure demonstrated a statistically significant difference. These findings suggest that individuals who are unsure about pursuing additional education may possess a greater degree of digital literacy. Their existing high level of proficiency may lead them to believe they do not require any further training (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014). Similarly, Martin and Grudziecki (2018) support this finding by demonstrating that individuals with high levels of digital literacy are less likely to pursue additional courses as they already possess sufficient skills.

.

Conclusion

This study investigates the impact of demographics on digital literacy. Younger individuals tend to have higher scores due to their earlier exposure to digital technologies, making age a crucial factor in determining digital literacy skills. There is a difference between higher levels of education and improved digital literacy skills. This emphasizes the significance of educational programs in promoting digital literacy among different demographic groups. Occupational status does not have a substantial impact on digital proficiencies, as both students and employed individuals exhibit comparable levels of digital aptitude. We can attribute this phenomenon to the widespread availability and utilization of digital technologies in both educational and professional contexts. Enrollment intentions for digital literacy courses also demonstrate a notable difference in digital literacy scores among individuals with different intentions. Individuals who are unsure about continuing their education often achieve higher scores, potentially because of their pre-existing proficiency. This evidence supports the previous research indicating that digital literacy is becoming an essential skill that is present in all areas of life, surpassing both professional and academic limitations. In conclusion, this research highlights the significance of specific educational programs and policies aimed at reducing the digital literacy gap among individuals of various ages and educational backgrounds. This ultimately contributes to the development of a more inclusive society that embraces digital technology

References

Alexander, B., Becker, S. A., Cummins, M., & Giesinger, C. H. (2017). Digital Literacy in Higher Education, Part II: An NMC Horizon Project Strategic Brief. The New Media Consortium, 1–37. https://www.learntechlib.org/p/182086/
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Altheide, D. L. (1995). *An ecology of communication: Cultural formats of control.* Gruyter.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Altheide, D. L. (2020). An ecology of communication. In *Routledge eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.1201/9780429334122
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Araújo-Vila, N., Estévez-Saá, M., Lesta, X. M., & Carrera-Fernández, M. V. (2020). Evaluating digital competences of higher education students. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 17*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-020-00225-5
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Bow Valley College. (2017). Digital literacy skills for adult learners. *Bow Valley College.*
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Carr, N. (2010). *The shallows: What the Internet is doing to our brains.* Norton & Company.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Castells, M. (2013). Communication power. Oxford University Press, USA.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Coiro, J., Knobel, M., Lankshear, C., & Leu, D. J. (2014). Handbook of Research on New Literacies. In *Routledgee Books.* conflict in dictatorial and democratic regimes in the Pakistani English Press. *Media Watch*, 11(3), 401-415. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2020/v11i3/203045
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

education for university students in the digital age. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 67*(4), 881-896. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-018-0967-2
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2012). Thinking in the Digital Era: A Revised Model for Digital Literacy. *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology, 9*, 267–276. https://doi.org/10.28945/1621
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Fang, Y., Kwok, R., & Wang, C. (2019). Age differences in the relationship between digital literacy and online health information seeking. *Journal of Medical Internet Research, 21*(7), e12346. https://doi.org/10.2196/12346
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Fawzi, N., Obermaier, M., & Reinemann, C. (2020). Journalism's core duty of providing accurate information remains unaltered. *Journalism Studies, 21*(10), 1342-1358. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2020.1759444
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Floridi, L. (1999). *Philosophy and Computing: An Introduction.* https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7409712M/Philosophy_and_Computing
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Floridi, L. (2010). *Information: A very short introduction.* https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24608214M/Information_A_Very_Short_Introduction
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Gilster, P. (1997). *Digital Literacy.* https://www.goodreads.com/work/editions/2346785-digital-literacy
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Guzmán-Simón, F., García-Jiménez, E., & López-Cobo, I. (2017). Undergraduate students' perspectives on digital competence and academic literacy in a Spanish University. *Computers in Human Behavior, 74*, 196–204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.04.040
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Hargittai, E., & Dobransky, K. (2017). Professionals' versus students' digital literacy: A comparative analysis. *Information, Communication & Society, 20*(8), 1207-1224. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1228996
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Hepp, A. (2022). Digital media, data infrastructures, and space. In *Communicative Constructions and the Refiguration of Spaces, 57.* https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367817183-6
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and Media Literacy: connecting culture and classroom.* http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB0943612X
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Iftikhar, N. M., & Yousaf, N. D. M. (2021). The Impact of Climate Change Coverage on Public Adherence towards Health Threat: An Empirical Validation of the Health Belief Model. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research (SJESR), 4*(2), 402–413. https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol4-iss2-2021(402-413
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Ijaz, A., & Yousaf, M. (2023). Media Attention and Offline Political Participation in Pakistan: The Mediating Role of Political Interest and Online Political Participation. In D. O.

Okocha, M. Yousaf, M., & M. J. Onobe (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Deconstructing Culture and Communication in the Global South (pp. 382-398). IGI Global.

Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Ji, D., Hu, Z., & Muhammad, Y. (2016). Neighboring competitor? Indian image in Chinese media. *Global Media and China*, *1*(3), 234–250. https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436416668186
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Karlsson, M., & Clerwall, C. (2018). Transparency to the rescue? Evaluating citizens' views on transparency initiatives within journalism. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies, 7*(2), 285-301. https://doi.org/10.1386/ajms.7.2.285_1
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Karlsson, M., Clerwall, C., & Nord, L. (2017). Do not stand corrected: Transparency and users' attitudes to inaccurate news and corrections in online journalism. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 94*(1), 148-167. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699016654680
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Liana, M. (2016). American Library Association's digital literacy task force: A review. *Journal of Information Literacy, 10*(1), 123-127. https://doi.org/10.11645/10.1.2066
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Litt, E., & Palfrey, J. (2019). Social media literacies: Understanding young adults' digital literacy practices. *Social Media + Society, 5*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118822059
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Livingstone, S. (2004). Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies. *Communication Review, 7*(1), 3-14. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714420490280152
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Livingstone, S., & Drotner, K. (2008). *International Handbook of Children, Media and Culture*. SAGE.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Martin, A. (2006). A European framework for digital literacy. *Digital Kompetanse, 2*(4), 151-161. https://www.tekst.no/ed/04/martin.pdf
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Martin, A., & Grudziecki, J. (2018). DigEuLit: Concepts and tools for digital literacy development. *Innovation in Teaching and Learning in Information and Computer Sciences, 5*(4), 249-267. https://doi.org/10.11120/ital.2006.05040249
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* McGraw-Hill.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Mills, K. A. (2010). A review of the "digital turn" in the new literacy studies. *Review of Educational Research, 80*(2), 246-271. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654310364401
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A. L., & Nielsen, R. K. (2020). Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2020. *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.* Retrieved from https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/survey/2020/overview-key-findings-2020/
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Ng, W. (2012). Can we teach digital natives digital literacy? *Computers & Education, 59*(3),1065-1078. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.04.016
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Okocha, D. O., Yousaf, M., & Onobe, M. J. (Eds.). (2023). *Handbook of Research on Deconstructing Culture and Communication in the Global South*. IGI Global. https://www.igi-global.com/book/handbook-research-deconstructing-culture-communication/311056
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Park, Y. J., & Burford, S. (2020). Digital literacy and academic achievement: A study of
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Pérez-Escoda, A., Martínez, A., & Moreno, J. (2019). The importance of digital literacy
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Porat, E., Blau, I., & Barak, A. (2018). Measuring digital literacies: Junior high school students' perceptions and actual performance. *Computers & Education, 126*, 23-36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.06.030
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Postman, N. (2017). ETC: A Review of General Semantics. *Institute of General Semantics 74*(3/4), 352-363. https://www.jstor.org/stable/e48506798
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Reedy, K. (2017). Media literacies and learning. In K.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Scheerder, A., van Deursen, A., & van Dijk, J. (2020). Determinants of Internet skills, uses, and outcomes: A systematic review of the second- and third-level digital divide. *Telematics and Informatics, 34*(8), 1607-1624. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.07.007

Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Shehzad, M., Yousaf, M., Mahmood, N., & Emenyeonu, O. C. (2021). Impact of Facebook Usage on the Political Participation among Women in Pakistan. *Media Watch*, 12(3), 400-421. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2021/v12i3/165225
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Singer, J. B. (2018). Journalism in the digital age: New challenges and opportunities. *Journalism Practice, 12*(2), 200-214. https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2018.1474649
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Smith, A., Rainie, L., & Zickuhr, K. (2018). College students' digital literacy skills. *Pew Research Center.* https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/12/10/college-students-digital-literacy-skills/
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Spante, M., Hashemi, S. S., Lundin, M., & Algers, A. (2018). Digital competence and digital literacy in higher education research: Systematic review of concept use. *Cogent Education, 5*(1), 1519143. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1519143
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Sukovic, S. (2016). Transliteracy in complex information environments. *Library and Information Science Research, 38*(2), 231-238. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2016.04.001
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Tactical Tech. (2023). Digital literacy: Skills for the 21st century. https://tacticaltech.org
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

The Mediating Role of Political Interest and Online Political Participation. In D. O. Okocha, M. Yousaf, M., & M. J. Onobe (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Deconstructing Culture and Communication in the Global South* (pp. 382-398). IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-8093-9.ch023
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Thussu, D. K. (2018). A new global communication order for a multipolar world. Communication Research and Practice, 4(1), 52-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2018.1432988
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

undergraduates. *Computers & Education, 141*, 103752. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2019.103752
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media.* Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199970773.001.0001
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Van-Deursen, A. J. A. M., & Van-Dijk, J. A. G. M. (2014). The digital divide shifts to differences in usage. *New Media & Society, 16*(3), 507-526. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813487959
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Williams, K. (2003). *Understanding media theory.* https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA89162684
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Wilner, T., Sill, B., & Filak, V. F. (2021). Corrections and credibility: Transparency in news accuracy on social media. *Digital Journalism, 9*(2), 175-192. https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1838046
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Yousaf, M. (2018). *News media roles in bridging gap of our society: Consensus function of Agenda-setting* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Communication University of China, Beijing-China.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Yousaf, M. (2023). Mass Media in Pakistan: Historical Evolution, Challenges, and Prospects. In D. O. Okocha, M. Yousaf, M., & M. J. Onobe (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Deconstructing Culture and Communication in the Global South* (pp. 21-35). IGI Global.
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Yousaf, M., Hu, Z., & Raza, S. H. (2023). News Media Exposure and Community Consensus on Terrorism in a Developing Country: First and Second Level Agenda-Setting Effects. *Media Watch,* 14(1), 33–57. https://doi.org/10.1177/09760911221130818
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext

Yousaf, M., Rahman, B. H., & Yousaf, Z. (2020). Constructing reality: Framing of the Kashmir conflict in dictatorial and democratic regimes in the Pakistani English Press. *Media Watch, 11*(3), 401-415. https://doi.org/10.15655/mw/2020/v11i3/203045
Google Scholar Worldcat Fulltext