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DIGITAL ONLINE MEDIA LITERACY AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This study measured levels of Digital Online Media literacy among Higher Education Students of Mumbai, India. The purpose of the study was to compare digital online media literacy among students on the basis of religion, gender, stream, educational qualification, ICT experience, work experience, marital status and medium of instruction. Quantitative survey method was used to assess the Digital Online Media Literacy among higher education students. Due to pandemic the data were collected through online survey method. Data was collected from 125 higher education students. The study revealed that majority of the students that is 74% higher education students have low level of Digital Online Media Literacy (DOML). There is no significant difference in DOML on the basis of religion, stream, ICT experience, gender and medium of instruction however there is significant difference in DOML on the basis of work experience, marital status and educational qualification. Graduate, working and married students have high DOML as compare to their counterparts. This paper concludes with some pedagogical implications for emergency remote learning.

Keywords*: Digital Online Media Literacy, Higher Education students*

Introduction:

The present generation is exposed to different types of media. Today's students are powerful consumers and producers of media. Yet for all their access and use of media, many students need assistance from educators to develop critical media skills. These skills are necessary for participation in a culture increasingly characterized by the prevalence of the Internet and social web. The existence of Internet and other electronic sources of information makes it difficult to choose the right source for the right purpose at the right time. One can find innumerable number of sources for any particular information. The problem is which source is to be selected and on what basis. The quality of various information sources are questioned on the basis of its authenticity and updated information status. It is also very important that this selection process is addressed right in the beginning of a student's life. So it has become utmost important for students to be digitally literate. Media literacy skills "help... people to use media intelligently, to discriminate and evaluate media content, to critically dissect media forms, to investigate media effects and uses, and to construct alternative media" (Kellner & Share, 2005) and include "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of media forms" (Aufderheide, 1993). Students needs to know how to access, manage, understand, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies.While the perception exists that today's university students are digital natives, comfortable with all forms of new media and digital technology, previous research has suggested that there may be limits to our students' media savvy. This study

considers the extent to which students possess competencies related to the message communication dimension of media literacy.

Need of the study:

Due to the technology era lot of upcoming technologies have changed the way the people communicate, interact and work. There is transition in teaching learning process too which as brought new ways of learning. It involves learning through various platforms such as learning through computer, laptop and

any other electronic devices. With this students will develop technological skills, Learn authorship such as copyright, plagiarism, understand how to access online information, understand how and where to draw a line to maintain privacy, learn social responsibility while interacting on social networks. Media literacy plays a key role in creating a new generation that can retain critical thinking skills in today's generations. Through media literacy students will get to identify different types of media and understands the messages they are sending. Students are more active on online resources as internet and media platforms

have made them more dependent on using online platforms as due to pandemic where not only adults but even students are dealing their studies, assignments and also exams by using laptop/computers. Where more than books students were introduced how to get access on e- learning, how to handle media fluently. So, it becomes a responsibility to make students understands how to handle media effectively and responsibly. As, online crimes are growing day by day.

Media literacy will also help students to become more smart and wiser to consume media as well as responsible producers of their own media. Because media literacy develops critical thinking from their it becomes easy for them to handle, operate and make use of media effectively. This is why the researcher wanted to know the Digital Online Media Literacy among higher education students.

Theoretical Framework:

The word "media" applies to many things in the 21st century, from mass media to news media, and traditional media to the many emerging forms of digital media. Media is an expression that brings some type of information or entertainment from one body to another. Before the emergence of digital age, the most popular forms of media were what we now call analog or traditional media: radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, journals, and the like. And since then the technological revolution has brought with it many new types of media that now play a major role in spreading information and entertainment to populations around the world. The word digital media is explained as Digital media is any form of media that uses electronic devices for distribution. This form of media can be created, viewed, modified and distributed via electronic devices. Digital media is commonly used software, video games, videos, websites, social media, and online advertising. However, with the constant shifts in technology, one cannot deny the influence that digital media has over our way of life. It changes the way we educate, entertain, publish and interact with one another on a daily basis. And, as a result of this influence, digital media pushes the business world out of the industrial age and into the information age.

There are 5 construct concept to look into the Digital Online Media Literacy matter more deeply. These 5 construct concept helps an individual to look from the critical, creative and also through safety point of view.

Constructs are the basic principles found to be common throughout the literature and throughout the strong media literacy education programs across the country.

Constructs identified for this study were: media awareness (MAW), media access (MAc), ethical awareness (EA), media evaluation (ME), and media production (MP). These components are defined as follows.

Digital Online Media Literacy:

It is a set of skills that are essential for the higher education students to make use of digital online media with 5 construct concept such as Media access, Media awareness, Ethical awareness, Media evaluation and Media production.

Media Access*:* It include the skills in using available technologies and the ability to understand and interpret media. It is an ability to conduct online class, ability to log in different websites etc.

Media awareness*:* Its an ability to understand the different methods for presenting information in newspaper, TV, internet etc. To know the uses and dangers of these platforms. Familiarity with the different forms of files. Evaluation of information to check credibility.

Ethical awareness*:* Ability to understand and focus on the authenticity of the content. Responsibility to gather information to properly use media. Ethical consideration to use other media's in the academic environment.

Media Evaluation*:* Ability to take decision on the preference of media while identifying its pros and cons. Ability to determine if online information is biased and make use of different platforms to learn information of one's interest.

Media Production*:* Ability to make proper use of videos, motion pictures, internet videos, especially for producing and editing sound and video content. Familiarity with free open source programs to create media projects.

Objectives of the study:

➢ To study the digital online media literacy among higher education students.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of religion.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of gender.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of stream.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of educational qualification.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of work experience.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of marital status.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy on the basis of medium of instruction.
➢ To compare digital online media literacy of ICT trained and untrained students.

Hypotheses of the study:

In order to study the digital online media literacy among higher education students the researcher has stated following hypotheses

➢ There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of Hindu, Muslim and Christian students.
➢ There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of male and female students.

- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of students of arts, commerce, science, and other faculty.
- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of working and non- working students.
- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of graduates and post- graduate students.
- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of married and unmarried students.
- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of students of English and Vernacular medium.
- There is no significant difference in digital online media literacy of students who have undergone ICT training and who haven't.

Methodology of the study:

In the present study, quantitative approach was used. The method is descriptive, and the survey method was adopted to gather information about Digital Online Media Literacy among higher education students.

Sample for the study:

The data for the study was gathered from higher education students of Mumbai district, using online survey . The tool was sent through whatsapp by creating the link. Total 125 respondents filled the survey. Due to pandemic it was not possible to collect data physically so it was decided to conduct online survey for data collection. Snowball sampling technique was used for data collection.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study:

The study is conducted on only higher education students. All the streams (Arts, Science, Commerce, and other)were included in the study . Both the genders were included . The research focuses only on Digital Online Media Literacy. Students who are pursuing higher education programs from first year of degree program to Ph.D were considered for the present study. Students from English and Vernacular medium of instructions were included in the sample. A major limitation of the study is that quantitative survey method was used to assess the Digital Online Media Literacy.

Research Instrument:

The tool used in the research was Digital Online Media Literacy scale (DOML)

Developed by Tom Hallaq (2016). The personal data sheet was prepared by the researcher in order to get demographic data such as gender, religion, educational qualification, working status, marital status, stream ,medium of instruction and ICT training of students.

Data Collection :

The tool was administered to the higher education students. Total 125 responses were collected from higher education students. The survey was prepared on Microsoft Forms. It was conducted by administering the rating scale .The data were collected during November to December 2020.

Data Analysis:

Data was analyzed using following inferential analysis techniques.

- t test

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➢ ANOVA

Major findings of the study:

1. Majority of the students i.e 93 (74%) higher education students have low level of Digital Online Media Literacy. This indicates that the respondents show low level of DOML.

2. There is a significant difference of DOML of higher education students on the basis of education qualification. The DOML is highest in graduate's students as compare to post graduate and Ph.D students.

3. There is a significant difference of DOML of higher education students on the basis of work- experience. The DOML is higher in working students.

4. There is a significant difference of DOML of higher education students on the basis of marital status. The DOML is higher in married students.

5. There is a significant difference of DOML of higher education students on the basis of ICT training. The DOML is higher in ICT trained students.

6. However there is no significant difference in DOML of higher education students on the basis of gender, medium of instructions, stream and religion.

Conclusion:

In the conclusion it can be said that the higher education students are not very equipped in knowing and handling Digital Online Media . The overall result indicates that the the maximum students have low level of DOML, which indicate that the students are not much exposed digitally and it also shows that they have poor knowledge in knowing the importance of media, its safety and security, keeping an account confidential, or where and where not to put personal information. Only the students who are working and dealing with media and digital world regularly have high media literacy . Also, students who have gone under ICT training have higher media literacy .

Recommendations:

Major importance should be given to ICT training and digital Literacy of higher education students.

Students should be encouraged and motivated to improve their Digital Online Media Literacy Skills.

Media literacy should be a compulsory component of curriculum at higher education level. It will enhance student's exposure to Digital and Media world.

Students should be trained in the skill of handling and utilizing media in appropriate and effective manner.

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