

Media Literacy and the Development of Critical Thinking in Children: An Integrated Communication Approach

Ammaria Abdelhakim¹, Laoufi Hamza²

¹ Department of Organizational Communication, University of Algiers 3, Algiers, Algeria

² Department of Political Sociology, University of Algiers 2, Algiers, Algeria

Dr. Ammaria Abdelhakim

Email: hakimammaria@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0526-6446>

Dr. Laoufi Hamza

Email: hamzalaou66@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8942-3509>

Abstract

The rapid transformation of traditional and digital media has created an increasingly open communication environment in which information circulates across ideological, cultural, psychological, and social boundaries with limited editorial gatekeeping. Although contemporary media content reaches heterogeneous audiences, children and adolescents remain particularly vulnerable because they often lack the cognitive and interpretive skills required to evaluate sources, recognise persuasive intent, identify bias, and distinguish reliable information from manipulation or misinformation. This conceptual study examines the role of media literacy in developing children's critical thinking and proposes an integrated communication approach involving the principal actors responsible for their socialisation and education. The analysis emphasises that effective media education should begin within the family as the child's primary social environment and subsequently be reinforced through coordinated contributions from schools, media institutions, civil society organisations, and public authorities. Rather than relying exclusively on restriction or technological control, the proposed approach prioritises age-appropriate guidance, dialogic parental mediation, source verification, reflective interpretation, and responsible participation in digital environments. It further argues that responsibility for children's media development should not be transferred from one actor to another; instead, each stakeholder should fulfil a clearly defined and complementary role. Strengthening cooperation among these actors can provide children with the competencies necessary to question media representations, evaluate evidence, recognise harmful content, and make informed communicative decisions. The study concludes that media literacy should be treated as a continuous and shared educational responsibility essential to children's cognitive autonomy, digital resilience, and responsible citizenship. Future empirical research should evaluate the proposed framework across different age groups and sociocultural contexts.

Keywords: media literacy; critical thinking; children; media education; parental mediation; communication actors; digital resilience

Received: 3 January 2026; Accepted: 7 March 2026; Published: 25 July 2026¹

© 2026 The Author. Published by IMCRA. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, adaptation, and reproduction in any medium, provided that the original author and source are properly credited.

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Introduction

Thanks to technological advancement and the rapid development of communication technologies, the world has gradually evolved into a "screen society," providing an enormous flow of information directed at audiences of different age groups and diverse cultural and intellectual backgrounds. Children and adolescents remain the most vulnerable segment of society because they generally lack the necessary tools to analyze and understand media messages. Consequently, they are greatly influenced by the vast amount of audio, written, animated, and video content that carries the values, beliefs, and orientations of its producers and creators.

There is no doubt that individuals acquire their society's culture and develop their personalities and moral values through the processes of socialization and education. These processes occur through the various socialization agents, particularly the family. Parents' attitudes, the behaviors of those surrounding the child, the child's observation and imitation—or rejection—of these behaviors, as well as expressions of approval and disapproval, collectively accumulate into experiences that facilitate the child's personal development and the formation of an independent personality.

The child then moves to the school environment, which plays a fundamental role in shaping and developing his or her personality, particularly given the considerable amount of time students spend in school. Through educational curricula and teaching programs, schools reinforce society's moral values, encourage positive behavior, eliminate negative conduct, and promote responsible citizenship.

Between the family and the school stands the media, whose influence has expanded significantly over time. Whereas the media once represented merely one of the agents of socialization, it has now become one of the most influential—and potentially most dangerous—socialization institutions. Its impact often surpasses that of the family, the school, or any other social institution, as demonstrated by numerous studies.

In this regard, the researcher Nahoud Al-Qadri Issa states:

"Education today faces numerous risks because it is increasingly viewed as a cumbersome and slow-moving institution that is incapable of keeping pace with the rapid technological developments in communication, media, and information technology. In short, these risks stem from what is known as parallel education within the global system, which is gradually replacing formal education."

Television and the Internet are among the most influential media that have captured the minds and emotions of children and adolescents. Today, many parents believe they are protecting their children from the dangers of the street by keeping them at home and providing them with technological devices.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the influence of the media has reached an unprecedented level of significance. This highlights the importance and necessity of media literacy education—that is, educating children and adolescents on how to interact critically and responsibly with media. Simply discussing the risks and negative effects of media exposure is no longer sufficient. Instead, it is essential to cultivate children's critical thinking skills so that they can analyze and understand diverse media messages. This responsibility should be shared among all socialization institutions.

The Concept of Media Literacy

Media literacy is defined as:

"A process in which all social institutions can participate with the aim of guiding, educating, and training individuals to interact effectively with the media and to think critically about its content. It equips them with the skills necessary for effective use, meaningful benefit, and active participation, enabling them to maximize the advantages of media while minimizing its negative effects."¹

Media literacy is also defined as:

¹ Hind bint Hussein Mohammed Hariri, A Proposed Framework for Integrating Media Literacy into General Education Stages in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, *Journal of Educational Sciences Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, June 2018, p. 252.

"A contemporary global educational approach that seeks to teach audiences the skills required to understand, analyze, use, and evaluate media messages disseminated through various forms of media—print, audio, visual, and digital—as well as to develop their ability to produce and creatively design their own media content."¹

Interest in media and digital literacy is not a recent phenomenon; rather, it has long been part of UNESCO's strategic educational agenda. UNESCO has advocated the teaching of media literacy since 1982. Numerous international organizations and institutions have contributed to defining the concept. The Youth Media Education Conference (2002) defined media literacy as:

"The ability to identify the sources of media content and understand their political, social, commercial, and cultural objectives and intended contexts. It includes the critical analysis of media materials, the production of such materials, and the interpretation of media messages and the values they convey."²

Ultimately, media literacy enables individuals to acquire the skills necessary to use media and communication technologies effectively, select appropriate media content, interpret media messages, construct meaning, develop essential critical inquiry skills, expand knowledge, express themselves in a democratic society, and cultivate a critical media awareness that serves as protection against the risks and negative consequences associated with modern media.

Characteristics of Media Literacy

1. Enhancing Motivation for Learning

Media literacy possesses characteristics that significantly enhance learners' motivation because it deals with tangible issues directly connected to their everyday lives. Its subject matter is relevant, practical, and closely linked to learners' daily experiences, making learning more engaging and meaningful.

2. Realism and Practical Necessity

Media occupies a substantial portion of people's daily lives in the contemporary world and accompanies individuals throughout their lives. Consequently, learners become increasingly aware of the importance of acquiring the skills needed to interact effectively and critically with media through media literacy education.

3. Clarity of Learning Outcomes

The clear manifestation of learning outcomes in the learner's personality and daily life enhances motivation and encourages greater effort. This is because media awareness can be readily observed in an individual's behavior and interactions in everyday life.

4. Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Media literacy helps learners acquire higher-order thinking skills, or at the very least, develop an appreciation of their importance. The media environment provides a rich context for activating and practicing critical and analytical thinking skills.

5. Enhancing Self-Confidence and a Positive Attitude

Media literacy provides learners with a comprehensive understanding of the media environment and reveals many aspects of how media content is produced in accordance with the principles of media literacy. It also equips learners with the tools and skills necessary to interact effectively with media. Consequently, this strengthens learners' self-confidence and fosters a positive attitude that encourages constructive behavior.

6. Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning

¹ Fahd Al-Shammari, *Media Literacy: How Do We Deal with the Media?*, 1st ed., King Fahd National Library, Riyadh, 2010, p. 4.

² Fadel Mohammed Al-Badrani, *Media and Digital Literacy and the Achievement of the Knowledge Society*, Dar Al-Manzomah, Lebanon, 2016, p. 135.

Media literacy lays the essential foundation and serves as the first step that enables learners to continue learning independently in this field through the principles of self-directed and lifelong learning.¹

Objectives of Media Literacy

Media literacy initially emerged with the primary objective of protecting individuals from the negative effects of media messages. As media gradually became an integral part of everyday culture, the objectives of media literacy expanded to include the following:

Protecting young people from the negative effects of media and its diverse content, particularly in the context of the digital age, globalization, and the era of virtual or cyber societies.

Equipping individuals with the fundamental principles of critical thinking, enabling them to analyze, interpret, and critically evaluate both intentional and unintentional media content, as well as assess media performance and formulate informed judgments about various media products.

Providing individuals with the knowledge and information necessary to master the skills required to analyze different types of media messages, decode their meanings, and understand the ideologies that media institutions seek to promote.

Developing the ability to monitor media performance and influence it by expressing informed critical opinions and proposing constructive recommendations for improvement.

Providing individuals with the experiences and competencies needed to make optimal use of communication technologies, keep pace with the continuous and rapid developments of the information society, and utilize these technologies for learning and acquiring scientific, literary, and cultural knowledge on various contemporary issues.

Developing creative expression skills through the effective, responsible, and constructive use of media in everyday life.

Methods of Digital Media Literacy Education

Most contemporary societies have witnessed competition between the educational system and the media system, resulting in contradictions that affect students' thinking and perceptions. While the educational system is based on the values embedded in school curricula and emphasizes academic achievement, self-learning, and individualized education, the media system relies on mass communication that constantly seeks novelty without focusing on a particular specialization. This divergence has created tension between the two systems.

Some pedagogical approaches to digital media literacy include:

Integrating media literacy across school curricula by incorporating it into educational and training activities at all educational levels, from primary education to university, and across all academic disciplines.

Training teachers, educators, and instructors, who share responsibility for media literacy education, in the use of information and communication technologies and effective methods for navigating digital networks.

Training individuals in the safe and responsible daily use of media while encouraging collaboration, knowledge sharing between students and teachers, and active participation in knowledge construction within motivating and adaptive learning environments.

Continuously assessing the media literacy skills acquired by learners throughout different stages of their education².

Media Skills

¹ Khadija Ben Flis, The Role of Family Counseling and Media Literacy in Reducing Adolescent Violence, research paper presented at the National Conference on the Role of Education in Reducing Violence, University of Algiers 2, 7–8 December 2011, pp. 212–222.

² Faten Ben Lagha & Redouane Salamen, Digital Media Literacy in the Context of Modern Technological Transformations and Its Applications, *International Journal of Social Communication*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2019, pp. 64–65.

1. Accessing Media Content

This refers to the ability to access media content through scientific inquiry, research, and investigation using various media platforms and their associated technological tools. This competency encompasses several sub-skills, including:

a. Exposure Skill: This generally refers to the technological dimension, namely the ability to use media platforms and their associated technologies. However, media exposure is not limited to digital media alone; it also includes exposure to traditional forms of mass media.

Traditional media can be accessed by individuals through their knowledge of its channels, programs, and broadcasting schedules. Therefore, individuals should possess the ability to select and choose the media content they wish to access and engage with, a skill that is developed through training and accumulated experience.

b. Symbol Recognition Skill:

Media content contains individual symbols that constitute the language of the messages being communicated. Each type of symbol requires specific knowledge for proper interpretation. When individuals are exposed to media content, they need to recognize and understand these symbols in order to accurately comprehend the intended meaning of the media message.

2. Media Content Analysis Skill:

This skill involves critical thinking and refers to an individual's ability to examine the design, structure, organization, and sequence of media content. It enables individuals to benefit from the various artistic, literary, social, and economic dimensions embedded in media messages, thereby enhancing their ability to understand the broader context of media content.

3. Media Content Criticism Skill:

After accessing and analyzing media content, the next stage is the ability to critically evaluate it. This skill is closely associated with critical thinking, as it enables individuals to assess and judge media content by comparing it with their existing cognitive frameworks and knowledge structures.¹

The Dual Relationship Between Awareness and the Media

Today, we live in an environment saturated with various forms of media, with which we interact consciously or unconsciously in our daily lives. We are constantly exposed to numerous messages that significantly influence the way people think and perceive themselves, others, and the world around them. Media also shapes individuals' values, attitudes, judgments, and behaviors, particularly in the case of children, who often rely on media as a primary source for understanding events. This highlights the importance of enabling children to recognize the role of the media and understand its potential effects on both themselves and society so that they can better regulate its influence.

Media awareness refers to the cognitive processes of knowledge, thinking, and perception that enable audiences to correctly understand media practices, recognize the background and objectives of media messages, and consequently adopt appropriate attitudes toward them.

When individuals are exposed to a media message and attempt to evaluate it critically, they initially respond emotionally to that message while being influenced by various psychological motivations that prompted their exposure to it. They then proceed to think about and comprehend its content. At this stage, they reach the second level of media awareness, which involves understanding, knowledge, and perception. Individuals engage in a series of complex cognitive processes aimed at identifying the background, intentions, and objectives of the media message, linking them to various socio-cultural variables.

¹ Ahmed Gamal Hassan Mohamed, A Proposed Program for Developing University Students' Skills in Analyzing, Critiquing, and Producing Citizen Journalism on Social Networking Sites, *Journal of Research and Education in Psychology*, Vol. 28, No. 1, April 2010, pp. 6–7.

Subsequently, they reach the third level of media awareness, namely the behavioral level, which represents one of the key manifestations and outcomes of media awareness. At this stage, individuals may adopt certain aspects of the media message, ignore others, reject some of its content, or embrace specific ideas, attitudes, values, and information conveyed by it. They may also discuss the content of the media message with colleagues, friends, or family members, thereby creating social interaction following the internal reflection generated by the process of media criticism. This represents one of the essential functions of media criticism, in addition to the many other roles it performs at both the individual and collective levels.

Media Criticism and the Development of Critical Thinking Skills

Media criticism contributes to the development of the recipient's critical thinking skills toward media content, with the aim of enabling individuals to make informed selections regarding the media they are exposed to and to use media effectively. Researchers in psychology and education have offered numerous definitions of critical thinking. Among the most prominent is the definition that describes it as "thinking based on analysis, discrimination, selection, and careful examination, enabling individuals to distinguish between valid and erroneous ideas." Others define it as "an individual's ability to verify and evaluate a phenomenon based on established criteria."

Critical thinking is characterized by a set of skills reflected in the critical thinker, enabling them to make objective judgments consistent with observable facts. According to Harnadek (1996), the characteristics of a critical thinker include:

Being open-minded toward new ideas.

Recognizing the need for additional information.

Distinguishing between conclusions that may be true and those that must be true.

Understanding that people may hold different impressions and opinions regarding the same issue.

Avoiding common errors in analysis.

Frequently asking questions about what they do not understand.

Differentiating between emotional thinking and logical reasoning.

Possessing the ability to clearly express ideas and understand the viewpoints of others.

Supporting opinions and perspectives with sufficient evidence.

Being willing to revise opinions when they are proven to be incorrect.¹

Thinking Skills

Media literacy helps learners acquire higher-order thinking skills, or at least appreciate their significance, because the media environment provides fertile ground for activating these skills. It requires learners to develop the following competencies:

- a. Critical Thinking Skills: These constitute one of the fundamental skills of media literacy.
- b. Creative Thinking Skills: These are closely associated with one of the key outcomes of media literacy, namely the production of media content.
- c. Decision-Making Skills: These relate to another major outcome of media literacy, enabling individuals to make informed decisions regarding selective media exposure and appropriate content choices.
- d. Problem-Solving Skills: These are connected to the media industry as a whole, which faces numerous challenges worldwide. Media literacy education provides real-life situations that serve as

¹ Hind Azzouz, Lectures on Media Criticism, Lecture Notes for Third-Year Students in Information and Communication Sciences (Print Journalism), Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, 2015–2016, pp. 11–14.

practical contexts for developing problem-solving skills, in addition to addressing media-related issues within the family environment.

Core Elements of Media Literacy According to Art Silverblatt

Art Silverblatt, one of the pioneers of media literacy, identified several fundamental elements of media literacy:

1. Developing Strategies for Analyzing and Discussing Media Messages

The creation of media messages requires considerable effort in planning, preparation, and production to ensure high-quality outcomes. Since media messages are carefully designed with specific audiences and communication objectives in mind, they should not be consumed solely based on their apparent meaning. Instead, individuals should possess analytical strategies that enable them to construct informed interpretations of media content. This requires understanding the tools used in creating media messages and developing the ability to evaluate their credibility and underlying construction.

2. Understanding Media Content as a Text that Shapes People's Perceptions of Life and Culture

Media serve as a reflection of culture, influencing how children perceive themselves, others, and different cultures. By examining media messages produced within a particular country, one can identify numerous indicators associated with the culture and characteristics of its people. Through analyzing the values, patterns of thinking, entertainment, fears, attitudes, falsehoods, and truths conveyed by media content, individuals gain a deeper understanding of both culture and media messages.

3. Developing the Ability to Listen, Understand, and Appreciate Media Content

Understanding media does not necessarily mean questioning everything it presents or rejecting its content. Media can provide happiness, entertainment, education, and meaningful cultural enrichment. A media-literate individual becomes a more aware and discerning media consumer, capable of enhancing the enjoyment and educational benefits of media use. Therefore, critical analysis should enrich rather than diminish appreciation for high-quality media, including insightful articles and informative news programs, while fostering the ability to make informed media selections.

4. Critical Thinking Enables the Evaluation of Media Content

Practicing critical thinking in response to media content through constructive and accessible approaches develops the essential skills needed for media access, analysis, and production. Children learn to ask questions, seek answers, discover meanings, and think independently. As a result, they reach effective and positive conclusions, reflecting the values and competencies that media literacy instills regarding the appropriate use of media and the reception of media messages.¹

Functions of Media Criticism

Media criticism establishes the principles for engaging with the media messages to which audiences are exposed. It enables recipients to evaluate media content in its various forms and across the wide range of fields it covers, including political, economic, cultural, sports, and entertainment content.

Media criticism seeks to preserve personal and cultural identity, as well as the civilizational characteristics that distinguish one society from another. The media landscape has witnessed remarkable advances in information and communication technologies, alongside the vast amount of content disseminated through satellite channels and the Internet. This content, carrying diverse ideas, values, and images, has surrounded individuals with an overwhelming volume of media, potentially affecting their cultural and civilizational value systems, particularly those of children.

¹ Sahar Umm Al-Ratam, Media Literacy, PhD Dissertation in Information and Communication Sciences, Specialization in Advertising and Public Relations, University of Setif 2, 2018–2019, pp. 131–132.

Media criticism contributes to the development of recipients' critical thinking skills regarding media content, enabling them to make informed choices about the media they consume and to use media responsibly and effectively.¹

The Role of Socialization Institutions in Developing Children's Critical Media Awareness

A. The Family

The family is considered the immediate social environment surrounding the child, providing for their needs and protecting them from the risks of the surrounding environment. It plays a fundamental role in shaping the child's personality by instilling values and behaviors that strengthen their social identity. Contemporary anthropologists view the family as the intermediary through which civilization fulfills its role in shaping human personality, while sociologists regard it as one of the primary social institutions responsible for personality formation.²

The media has become one of the most influential modern institutions, attracting the attention of all family members. Some forms of media have begun to pose challenges to children's moral upbringing, beliefs, and behavior. Since the family constitutes the nucleus and foundation of society, it bears a significant responsibility in influencing children and shaping their behavior. Consequently, parents should serve as positive role models for their children by fulfilling the following responsibilities:

Sitting with children while they watch media programs.

Choosing appropriate times for viewing television programs and using Internet websites.

Selecting media programs and websites suitable for children's age groups.

Respecting different viewpoints in a manner consistent with religious and moral principles.

Helping children broaden their horizons by encouraging openness to the outside world and introducing them to the cultures and civilizations of other peoples.

Training children to access and exit websites responsibly while developing accountability in selecting appropriate media content.

Limiting the number of children gathered around media devices and regulating the use of online platforms.

Continuously monitoring and evaluating children's interaction with media and electronic websites.

Encouraging children to rely on themselves and develop the ability to recognize and correct their own mistakes.

Equipping children with self-directed learning skills.

Enhancing children's self-confidence and helping them make appropriate choices regarding media platforms and programs.

Guiding and advising children not to spend excessive time using media devices or browsing websites.

³

The vital role and responsibility of the family in this age of information abundance lies in training children to understand and discuss the impact and potential risks of media. This educational process should continue throughout all stages of their development, even after they become young adults, enabling them to critically evaluate media content, analyze its messages, and use media effectively, wisely, and responsibly to communicate their ideas, aspirations, and identity. Society, in turn, should assume its responsibility toward young people by supporting them in achieving this objective. Exposure to media should follow a well-defined system that encourages continuous emotional and

¹ Hind Azzouz, Previously cited source, pp. 12–13.

² Bilal Boufniniza & Ali Maach, "The Role of Socialization Institutions in Media Education in Algeria," *Al-Risalah Journal for Human Studies and Research*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2017, p. 84.

³ Rasha Abdel Latif Mohamed, *Media Education Standards and Their Implementation in Egypt*, Master's Thesis, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, 2011, p. 134.

psychological communication among family members while emphasizing the teaching of social values and helping children distinguish between right and wrong. Such an approach transforms the family's relationship with media from merely criticizing its content into actively utilizing it as a means of fostering children's media literacy, critical thinking, informed decision-making, constructive dialogue, and logical reasoning.

B. The School

The role of the school extends far beyond the transmission of academic knowledge; it also encompasses the development of students' skills and competencies. Given the growing influence of media on contemporary society, schools must assume a new responsibility by educating and training every student to use media and communication technologies appropriately while simultaneously raising awareness of the potential risks associated with both audiovisual and digital media. Educational systems should therefore promote a new form of education that keeps pace with contemporary developments, one that is grounded in critical thinking, liberates individuals from uncritical fascination with technology, and enables them to engage with media in a more responsible, conscious, and positive manner. Consequently, every school administration should actively support media education and incorporate it as a fundamental component of the core curriculum.

In this context, Look Sharp proposes a number of key principles for integrating media literacy into any educational curriculum:

Use media to develop observation skills, critical thinking, and analytical abilities when interpreting and producing media messages.

Use media to stimulate students' interest in new topics.

Identify ways through which students can acquire knowledge about a topic presented in the media.

Use media as an instructional resource that provides information on various subjects.

Identify misconceptions about specific topics that are reinforced by media content.

Compare the different ways in which media present information about a particular issue.

Analyze the influence of specific media on particular issues or topics, either from a historical perspective or across different cultures.¹

Today, with the unprecedented influence of media on children's and students' ideas and behaviors through the values and models it promotes or imposes, the necessity of educating children about media has become firmly established. This includes helping them understand the nature of media, its operational mechanisms, and the ways in which meaning is constructed. It also requires teaching them to decode the symbols and language of media by developing their ability to understand and analyze images, which constitute the foundation of most media content. Accordingly, schools should assist children in the following areas:

Understanding, analyzing, and decoding the symbols of this new language, especially since the language of images is far more complex than it appears.

Using images and sounds to enhance logical understanding and analysis, enabling children to better comprehend how opinions and beliefs are constructed through the intelligent use of visual media.

Developing critical viewing skills. The school's responsibility is not limited to protecting children from misinformation and media manipulation; it should also prepare them to become creative and critical media consumers who are capable of extracting authentic information from media documents based on independent and informed judgment.

¹ Sahar Om Al-Ratm & Samia Awaj, "Media and Digital Literacy within the Requirements of Socialization," *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2019, p. 97.

Recognizing stereotypical representations of individuals, groups, society, and social life promoted by the media, while mastering the analytical skills necessary to evaluate them.¹

C. Civil Society

Civil society also plays a significant role, particularly in occupying children's time outside the school and family environments. Through associations, clubs, and community organizations, it can organize workshops, reading clubs, media clubs, and similar activities that rely on educational tools designed to develop and strengthen children's critical thinking skills. Consequently, enhancing children's critical abilities contributes to shaping them into active and responsible individuals who interact positively with society as a whole, whether within traditional social institutions or within the rapidly evolving virtual community.

Its Continuous Transformations

The importance of developing a child's critical thinking skills in relation to media literacy can be highlighted as follows:

Paying attention to the development of a child's critical thinking skills makes them less susceptible to media content, as it enables them to observe and evaluate media messages from a critical perspective. In this case, the child is not completely absorbed or controlled by new media technologies.

Whether an individual is a receiver or a producer of media messages, critical thinking plays a significant and influential role in shaping their relationship and interaction with various media platforms.²

Conclusion

With their widespread proliferation, the media have become one of the most influential cultural sources contributing to the formation of children's personalities today. They play a significant role in children's linguistic, social, psychological, and moral development. At the same time, they provide both education and entertainment, while also exerting negative influences on children's values and behaviors.

Given the substantial risks posed by media, particularly to children, it has become essential to develop effective solutions to mitigate these challenges. This requires preparing children to engage responsibly with media by equipping them with critical thinking skills and teaching them how to analyze and evaluate media content consciously. This approach is known as media literacy, which necessitates cooperation among all institutions of socialization—including the family, schools, and the media itself—to promote media awareness and foster informed media consumption.

Accordingly, there is an urgent need to develop children's media critical thinking skills and build their technological literacy in light of the remarkable technological advancements and the widespread availability of diverse media platforms and programs.

Declarations

Ethics Approval: Not applicable.

Informed Consent: Not applicable.

Funding: No external funding was received.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: No new data were generated.

Author Contributions: Both authors contributed to the study and approved the final manuscript.

¹ Saleh Al-Saad, *Drugs and Society*, Dar Al-Thaqafa Library for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, 1996, p. 121

² Akka, Zakaria, & Alaoua, Fawzi. Media Literacy: A Philosophical and Pedagogical Approach. *Generation Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, No. 41, 2018, p. 59.

References

References

- Abdel Latif, R. M. (2011). *Media literacy standards and their application in Egypt* [Master's thesis, Cairo University].
- Akka, Z., & Alaoua, F. (2018). Media literacy: A philosophical and pedagogical approach. *Generation Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, (41).
- Al-Badrani, F. M. (2016). *Media and digital literacy and the achievement of the knowledge society*. Dar Al-Manzoma.
- Al-Saad, S. (1996). *Drugs and society*. Dar Al-Thaqafa Library for Publishing and Distribution.
- Al-Shumairi, F. (2010). *Media literacy: How do we deal with the media?* King Fahd National Library.
- Azzouz, H. (2016). *Lectures on media criticism: Coursebook for third-year LMD students in media and communication* [Coursebook]. Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University.
- Ben Flis, K. (2011, December 7–8). *The role of family guidance and media literacy in reducing adolescent violence* [Paper presentation]. National Conference on the Role of Education in Reducing Violence, University of Algiers 2, Algiers, Algeria.
- Ben Lagha, F., & Salamen, R. (2019). Digital media literacy in the context of contemporary technological transformations and its applications. *International Journal of Social Communication*, 6(2).
- Boufnineza, B., & Maâch, A. (2017). The role of socialization institutions in media literacy in Algeria. *Al-Risalah Journal for Human Studies and Research*, 1(2).
- Hariri, H. H. M. (2018). A proposed framework for integrating media literacy into general education stages in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Studies in Educational Sciences*, 1(4).
- Hassan, M. A. G. (2010). A proposed programme for developing university students' skills in analysing, critiquing, and producing citizen journalism on social networking sites. *Journal of Research and Education in Psychology*, 28(1).
- Oum El-Ratem, S., & Aouadj, S. (2019). Media and digital literacy within the requirements of socialization. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 16(1).