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 **TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF MEDIA LITERACY TOWARDS 21ST-CENTURY LEARNING
IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ahmad Fajar Fadlillah, Mohammad Ali2, Asep Herry Hernawan3, Cepi Riyana4**

1Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

2Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

3Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

4Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

*affadh@upi.edu1**,* *emaa.lith@upi.edu2**,* *asepherry@upi.edu3**,* *cepi@upi.edu*

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| **ABSTRACT** |  | **ARTICLE INFO** |
| This research aimed to analyze teachers’ perception of media literacy skills in junior high schools in West Java, Indonesia. The sample consisted of 381 respondents obtained using a purposive sampling technique and descriptive method. Data collection involved the distribution of rating scale questionnaires and open-ended questions through online platforms. Meanwhile, data analysis used descriptive statistics as well as Mile and Huberman model. The results analyzed the current perceptions of teachers regarding their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward media literacy. Teachers also possessed a sound understanding of the concept, recognizing that it extended beyond traditional notions of literacy encompassing reading and writing. Proficiency was also shown in accessing various forms of media such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, televisions, and the Internet. However, media literacy skills remained relatively weak in the area of content analysis and integration into teaching practices because the teachers lacked the necessary skills to effectively integrate the concept into their teaching practices. A positive attitude was reported towards the concept, acknowledging the ability to equip students with the essential 21st-century skills necessary for the present and future. Training should be received to enhance media literacy competencies and advance professional development. |  | ***Article History:****Received: 31 Jan 2024**Revised: 26 Feb 2024**Accepted: 10 Mar 2024**Available online: 11 Mar 2024**Publish: 1 Jun 2024* |
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| ***ABSTRAK*** |
| *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis persepsi guru tentang keterampilan literasi media di sekolah menengah di Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Sampel terdiri dari 381 responden yang diperoleh menggunakan teknik sampling khusus dan metode deskriptif. Pengumpulan data melibatkan distribusi kuesioner skala peringkat dan pertanyaan terbuka melalui platform online. Sementara itu, analisis data menggunakan statistik deskriptif serta model Mile dan Huberman. Hasilnya menganalisis persepsi guru saat ini tentang pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan sikap mereka terhadap literasi media. Para guru juga memiliki pemahaman yang kuat tentang konsep ini, mengakui bahwa itu melampaui konsep tradisional tentang literasi yang mencakup membaca dan menulis. Keahlian juga ditunjukkan dalam mengakses berbagai bentuk media seperti smartphone, laptop, tablet, televisi, dan Internet. Namun, keterampilan media masih relatif lemah di bidang analisis konten dan integrasi ke dalam praktik pengajaran karena para guru tidak memiliki keterampilan yang diperlukan untuk secara efektif mengintegrasikan konsep ke dalam praktek pengajaran mereka. Sikap positif terutama terhadap konsep ini, mengakui kemampuan untuk membekali siswa dengan keterampilan abad ke-21 yang diperlukan untuk saat ini dan masa depan. Pelatihan harus diterima untuk meningkatkan kompetensi keterampilan media dan memajukan pengembangan profesional.* |
| ***Kata Kunci:*** *Media Literacy; Junior High School; Teachers’ Perceptions.* |

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**INTRODUCTION**

Media literacy is a crucial component of contemporary education (Finegold, 2010), and the Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21) has devised a comprehensive set of competencies that students must master to thrive in current professional and personal spheres. These proficiencies encompass study skills, life skills, and literacy skills (P21, 2019). Learning skills are classified into the 4Cs, namely Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity. The educational competencies of the 21st-century can be categorized into four distinct groups, encompassing diverse modes of thinking, working, and utilizing tools in the interconnected world (Griffin et al., 2012). This research specifically focuses on media literacy as a vital aspect of 21st-century skills. The concept necessitates the utilization of higher-order cognitive abilities, embedded within the 4Cs of 21st-century learning skills. Achieving the proficiency demands the judicious and effective employment of media, including the ability to evaluate the credibility of information originating from various sources. Even though traditional literacy encompasses both reading and writing skills, media literacy places particular emphasis on generating effective communication through an array of diverse media formats (Scheibe & Rogow, n.d.).

The current era, characterized by technological advancements and widespread access to information, necessitates certain traits and skills from individuals. Among these skills, media literacy holds paramount importance in combating the dissemination of misinformation, propaganda, and fraudulent content across various media platforms. In the present day, it has transformed into a global influencer that shapes people's values, beliefs, behaviors, and decision-making processes (Baran, 2014). Media platforms not only provide easy access to information but also facilitate social connections and enable the creation and sharing of content (Simons et al., 2017). The Regulation of Badan Siber dan Sandi Negara (BSSN) Number 3 of 2021 Concerning the Implementation of Media Literacy and Cybersecurity Literacy explains that media literacy is an activity to increase the ability to access, research, evaluate and create information in different forms (BSSN, 2021). Furthermore, initiatives are tailored to specific age groups, including children, young adults, and the elderly, as well as different levels of education, ranging from basic education to secondary and higher education. Teachers, being adults and important figures in the education sector, require media literacy skills due to the pivotal role in shaping the future generations.

Education plays a pivotal role in the dissemination of media literacy, serving as a critical conduit for acquiring essential 21st-century skills. The incorporation of media literacy into education can be achieved through various strategic approaches, wherein teachers can effectively cultivate the process by integrating specific lesson content. This empowers students to engage in information retrieval, analysis, and presentation using diverse media platforms. The attainment of successful media literacy within educational institutions significantly hinges upon teachers’ role and actions (Simons et al., 2017). In current digital landscape, the ease of accessing information through internet-connected search engines is indisputable. However, the pressing challenge lies in the quality and credibility of such information, which has emerged as a consequential predicament for contemporary society (Burnett & Merchant, 2011). The efficacy of media literacy education hinges upon the essentiality for teachers and other educators to possess proficient skills (Domine, 2011; Goetze et al., 2005; Thoman & Jolls, 2004). In addition to teaching the concept directly, teachers need the skills to integrate new media into their subjects (Tiede & Grafe, 2016). Wineburg fervently underscores the urgency to prioritize the pedagogy of media literacy as a transformative force across the curriculum. By equipping students with critical engagement tools and fostering their creative potential, media literacy empowers them to interact discerningly with information (Lonergan, 2022). Consequently, neglecting the fundamental importance of imparting media literacy skills would constitute a significant oversight since it fails to adequately prepare students for the exigencies of the present and future.

Based on the research background above, media literacy is an important 21st-century skill, and teachers must transmit the concept to students. There is a significant gap in teacher preparation and professional development when it comes to media literacy skills (Aufi, 2021; Gretter & Yadav, 2018; Ranieri et al., 2017). Many pre-service teachers do not feel that media literacy is highlighted in their teacher education programs (Gretter & Yadav, 2018). This lack of preparation creates a disconnect between the societal rationale for students to become media literate and the sustainable preparation of teachers (Aufi, 2021). Additionally, there is a need for teachers to incorporate digital and media literacy into the curriculum to align students' educational worlds inside and outside the classroom (O’Rourke et al., 2019; “The Implications of Instructors’ Digital Literacy Skills for Their Attitudes to Teach Critical Media Literacy in EFL Classrooms,” 2022). It is important for teachers to develop their own digital and media literacy skills in order to effectively teach these skills to their students (Ranieri et al., 2017). Overall, there is a need for more research and resources to guide teachers in implementing media literacy education (Abbas, 2021). Therefore, the research analyses teachers’ perception of media literacy in West Java.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Media literacy is derived from the fusion of two words, namely literacy, and media. The Education Development Center (EDC) asserts that the concept transcends basic reading and writing skills, encompassing an individual's capacity to leverage their inherent potential and abilities in their life. According to Brian Street, literacy comprises a repertoire of skills, the practical application of literacy within social contexts, the acquisition of literacy through a learning process, and the interpretation of literacy within textual frameworks (Fransman, 2005). Literacy acquires significance within the realm of media in this context. Media functions as an intermediary for transmitting messages from communicators to recipients. According to the Association of Education Communication Technology (AECT), it is the diverse forms and channels employed to disseminate messages or information. Media can be perceived, read, heard, and manipulated, and possesses the capacity to evoke emotional responses, stimulate thoughts, address concerns, and pique the interests of students.

Hobb defined media literacy as active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages received and created (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Media literacy involves critical thinking, analytical skills, and the ability to express oneself in different ways. It builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. Furthermore, the concept comprises a collection of principles that individuals employ proactively to engage with mass media, facilitating the processing and interpretation of the underlying messages encountered. The overarching objective is to bestow individuals with the capacity to construct personal meaning from messages, aligning with their aspirations and objectives (Potter, 2016).

National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) defines media literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication (NAMLE, 2020). It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in a variety of forms from print to video to the Internet. NAMLE offers these definitions: Media refers to all electronic or digital means and print or artistic visuals used to transmit messages. Meanwhile, literacy is the ability to encode and decode symbols and to synthesize and analyze messages. Media literacy is the ability to encode and decode the symbols transmitted through media and synthesize, analyze, and produce mediated messages. The advent of the digital age has greatly facilitated the creation of media, granting the ability to generate content. This ease of creation has introduced challenges in determining the origins of media, the intentions behind its creation, and the overall credibility. Consequently, media literacy becomes a complex skill to acquire and impart, and in the digital age, it stands as an indispensable competency to be possessed. NAMLE has developed The Core Principles of Media Literacy Education:

1. Media Literacy Education requires active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages received and created.
2. Media Literacy Education expands the concept of literacy to include all forms of media (i.e., reading and writing).
3. Media Literacy Education is instrumental in cultivating and strengthening skills among learners across all age groups. Similar to print literacy, these skills demand a comprehensive approach that incorporates integration, interactivity, and repetitive practice.
4. Media Literacy Education develops informed, reflective, and engaged participants essential for a democratic society.
5. Media Literacy Education recognizes that media are a part of culture and function as agents of socialization.
6. Media Literacy Education affirms that people use their skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct meanings from media messages.

NAMLE in 2007 developed a media literacy tool in the form of key questions as a foundation for building investigative habits about media messages like audience & authorship, message & mearning, and representations & reality.

NAMLE in 2007 developed a media literacy tool in the form of key questions as a foundation for building investigative habits about media messages (NAMLE, 2007).

**Table 1**. Key Question To Ask When Analysing Media Messages

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| Audience & Authorship | Authorship | Who made this message? |
| Purpose | Why was this made? |
|  | Who is the target audience (and how do you know)? |
| Economics | Who paid for this? |
| Impact  | Who might benefit from this message?Who might be harmed by it?Who might this message matter to me? |
| Response  | What kind of actions might I take in response to this message? |
| Message & Meaning | Content | What is this about (what makes you think that)?What ideas, values, information, and/or points of view are overt? Implied?What is left out of this message that might be important to know? |
| Techniques | What techniques are used?Why were those techniques used?How do they communicate the message? |
| Interpretations | How might different people understand this message differently?What is my interpretation and what do I learn about myself from my reaction or interpretation? |
| Representations & Reality | Context | When was this made?Where or how was it shared with the public? |
| Credibility | Is this fact, opinion, or something else?How credible is this (and how do you know)?What are the sources of the information, ideas, or assertions?Can I trust this source to tell me the truth about this topic? |

Media literacy has several benefits (1) to be a good use of media, (2) to manage information and utilize media based on information needs, (3) to ask basic questions about what to read, see and hear, (4) to be critical of media content, (5) to analyze the cultural, social, economic, and advertising context of the media environment, and (6) to create healthy social relations through information and knowledge (Ahmady et al., 2020).

**METHODS**

This research was conducted in April 2023 utilized a descriptive method to examine the subject matter. The target population consisted of junior high school teachers residing in West Java, Indonesia with purposive sampling techniques were employed to select participants who possessed specific characteristics aligned with the research objectives. A total of 381 junior high school teachers from West Java constituted the sample for this research. To collect data, teachers were administered a questionnaire online through Google Forms. Furthermore, the questionnaire comprised the first and second parts containing eight rating scale statements and a single open-ended question, respectively. The data obtained from the rating scale were analyzed using descriptive statistics and percentages, employing the SPSS 26 software. The data derived from the open-ended question were also analyzed using the Mile & Huberman model, which encompassed data reduction, display, and conclusion and verification (Ali, 2021).

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The demographic data described the information on the characteristics of respondents. It included educational background, teaching experience, and teachers’ field of study. Based on the educational background of teachers, there were 354 and 27 bachelor's and Non-bachelor degrees. According to the research findings, a significant proportion of junior high school teachers in West Java, specifically 93%, held a Bachelor of Education degree.

**Figure 1**. Educational Background

The second characteristic of respondents was based on teaching experience. A total of 134 (35%), 133 (34%), 99 (26%), and 15 (4%) teachers had teaching experience of 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40 years, respectively. The majority of teachers had teaching experience ranging from 1 to 10 years.

**Figure 2**. Teaching Experiences

The data obtained from the rating scale questionnaires showed three indicators related to media literacy, namely knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers' perception of their understanding of media literacy was reported at 80%. In terms of skills, teachers showed a high level of proficiency, with 91% being able to use different media devices such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, TV, and the internet. About 85% were able to understand and evaluate the messages conveyed through media. Concerning the creation of media content in the form of audio, visual, video, and multimedia, 74% possessed the necessary skills. Furthermore, 78% were capable of integrating media literacy into their teaching and daily work. Regarding attitudes towards media literacy, an overwhelming majority, 92% of teachers, acknowledged that the concept equips students with essential 21st-century skills. About 93% of teachers expressed a strong desire to enhance their media literacy competence as professional teachers.

**Figure 3**. Current Conditions of Media Literacy Among Junior High School Teachers in West Java

Among Junior High School Teachers in West Java

Information:

1. Understand the concept of media literacy
2. Have attended media literacy training
3. Able to use media devices such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, TV, and the internet
4. Able to understand and evaluate the messages contained in the media
5. Able to create media content in the form of audio, visual, video, and multimedia media
6. Able to integrate media literacy into learning and daily work
7. Media literacy equips students with 21st-century skills
8. Have the desire to improve media literacy competence as a professional teacher

The open-ended question asked for teachers' perceptions regarding the current state of media literacy among junior high school teachers. One respondent stated that their media literacy skills were still poor. This lack of proficiency resulted in a limited understanding of the subject and access to necessary resources for its implementation:

*“The literacy condition of MTs teachers is currently lacking, this is caused by the absence of facilities and understanding of literacy, even though a teacher's only capital is developing material from literacy. Therefore, there needs to be an attraction for literacy enthusiasts themselves.”*

Junior high school teachers generally exhibit stronger media literacy skills compared to their senior counterparts. This is likely due to their familiarity with digital media devices, having grown up in an era where such technology was prevalent. In contrast, senior teachers, often referred to as digital immigrants, may have encountered more challenges. Junior teachers have less than 10 years of teaching experience, while their senior counterparts boast over 30 years. Even though their media literacy skills are commendable, there is still room for improvement in overall proficiency.

*“In my perception, younger teachers tend to possess a higher level of media literacy compared to their senior counterparts who are aged 40 and above. This is because younger teachers are more attuned to current advancements in science and technology, while senior teachers may have a lower level of curiosity in comparison."*

Media literacy was implemented in learning even though teachers' use of ICT or digital devices was good. Teachers possess a profound understanding of literacy, encompassing the conventional aspects of reading and writing. In the present era, the concept has expanded to include information, ICT, and media literacy. A specific instance, provided was as follows:

*“It is still not optimal, even though I can use media devices for personal use but they have not used them optimally for learning. Teachers in my school are still only fixated on physical books as media literacy, even though the concept is very broad including literacy in electronic media.”*

 Perceptions of teachers' attitudes toward media literacy were good. In the 21st-century, media was used to support learning as stated below:

*“In my opinion, media literacy is very important for a teacher to master. Given the context of the 21st-century, the integration of media is indispensable in facilitating learning processes, not only for teachers but also for students. The utilization simplifies teaching methods and enhances students’ engagement in educational activities. Consequently, media literacy has become increasingly crucial in this era due to the rapid advancements in technology and changing times.”*

Proficient teachers must be responsive to the evolving times and digital devices are pervasive across all spheres of life. Accessing information on the internet has become remarkably effortless. Therefore, teachers need to adapt to these technological advancements and incorporate digital tools into their instructional practices.

*With its rapid development, the education sector necessitates educators equipped with skills that effectively support this progression. The failure inevitably widens the gap between students who thrive in the digital era and educators accustomed to traditional book-based approaches. The advent of numerous programs, such as teacher training initiatives and driving schools for educators, play a pivotal role in fostering learning advancements. Consequently, teachers must consistently engage in creative, innovative, and visionary thinking to enhance digital literacy, particularly in this evolving landscape*.

Currently, the media literacy knowledge among middle school teachers in West Java is at 80%. This figure aligns with the response to an open-ended question, showing that their media literacy knowledge remains inadequate and requires enhancement. The proficiency in creating content presented through different media channels is subpar, with a rate of 74%. This can be attributed to their perception of limited resources and capabilities to develop media content. However, the attitude towards the concept is highly positive, with 93% expressing a strong desire to increase their proficiency to become professional teachers. This sentiment reflects their belief that teachers must adapt to the demands of the 21st-century by acquiring relevant skills. Consequently, there exists a keen interest to improve media literacy through training and other developmental opportunities.

**Discussion**

Competency can defined as the set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to achieve the goals of the teacher profession. Competency is defined as the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experience, characteristics, and abilities needed to achieve the goals of the profession (Gunawan et al., 2020). Core of Media literacy skills encompasses the competence to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and engage with different forms of communication. In this research media literacy competencies are divided into knowledge, skills and attitudes. This section The following section delves into the present state of media literacy among junior high school teachers in West Java, Indonesia.

**Knowledge of Media Literacy**

Junior High School teachers have good knowledge of media literacy but they need to improve the concept due to reduced level of knowledge. Furthermore, the knowledge includes the importance, definition, principles, key questions for analyzing media, and benefits of media literacy (Hobbs & Jensen, 2009). Contemporary literacy encompasses a broader range of abilities and competencies that individuals employ in their daily lives. Brian Street asserts that literacy encompasses multiple dimensions, including skills, applications within social contexts, the learning process, and engagement with different forms of text (Fransman, 2005). The definition of literacy has developed into a diverse ability and partnership 21st-century skills to formulate literacy covering ICT, information, and media literacy. Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication (NAMLE, 2020). It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in a variety of forms from print to video to the Internet. The reason for limited awareness is lack of access to information on the subject. It is imperative to possess an understanding of media literacy and the necessary skills to effectively incorporate the concept into teaching methods.

According to the findings, a majority of teachers have not received comprehensive training. This aligns with the expressed desire, as shown through open-ended questions, to acquire media literacy training. The training holds significant importance, extending beyond teachers directly involved in teaching the subject (Domine, 2011; Goetze et al., 2005; Thoman & Jolls, 2004). The literature highlights the lack of structured media literacy education in teachers’ education.

**Skills of Media Literacy**

Media literacy skills encompass the abilities to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and engage with messages across diverse formats (Hobbs, 2010) (NAMLE, 2020). Based on the results, teachers can access media using smartphones, laptops, tablets, tv, and the internet. In Indonesia, the majority of individuals rely on smartphones (66.3%), followed by laptops (22.52%), computers (13.70%), and tablets (6.52%) as their preferred digital devices (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2020). Consequently, ownership and utilization of media technology contribute significantly to the access aspect of media literacy skills. Teachers exhibit limited proficiency in two crucial areas: creation and integration, indicating room for improvement in these specific media literacy skills. Firstly, teachers currently face challenges in creating content across various media platforms. This limitation hinders their ability to effectively engage students through diverse media. In the digital age, students rely on digital media for daily learning activities. These media possess the advantage of stimulating students' cognitive and emotional faculties. They aid in focusing students' attention, thereby facilitating effective learning. Secondly, the integration of media literacy into instructional practices is yet to be fully realized by teachers. There are numerous avenues through which media literacy can be integrated into the learning process. For instance, teachers can incorporate specific lesson content that encourages students to search for, analyze, and present information using media tools. By critically examining media messages, students can delve into key questions related to audience, authorship, message, meaning representations, and reality (NAMLE, 2007).

**Attitudes to Media Literacy**

Junior high school teachers in West Java hold the belief that media literacy is instrumental in equipping students with 21st-century skills. The Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21) has categorized the concept into ICT, information, and media literacy (P21, 2019). Education plays an important role in transmitting media literacy to achieve skills. Additionally, media literacy can be integrated into education in various ways since teachers can develop the concept by using certain lesson content to analyze and present information. Professional teachers recognize the significance of possessing media literacy skills. The success of implementing this concept in schools is greatly reliant on the role and actions of teachers (Simons et al., 2017). They should improve and develop academic qualifications and competencies on an ongoing basis in line with developments in science, technology, and art (UURI Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 Tentang Guru Dan Dosen, 2005). Furthermore, teachers must improve relevant skills, one of which is 21st-century skills such as media literacy.

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Junior high school teachers in West Java showed a good understanding of media literacy, and their media literacy skills were still inadequate. The lack of skills in creating media content was primarily attributed to limited abilities and resources. However, the teachers excelled in accessing media platforms proficiently, using smartphones, laptops, tablets, and the Internet. This strong foundation of media access served as a stepping stone to further enhance media literacy skills. The ability to integrate media literacy was poor because of the concept implementation. Accordingly, it provided knowledge and skills to have better media literacy skills. Junior high school teachers in West Java showed positive attitudes towards media literacy, recognizing the concept as an essential component of 21st-century skills. Education played a crucial role in shaping a better future generation by imparting contemporary skills such as media literacy. Furthermore, teachers bear the responsibility of transmitting media literacy skills to their students and incorporating the concept into their daily teaching practices. By fulfilling this role, students were equipped with the necessary competencies for success in an increasingly media-driven world.

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**

The author states that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article. The author affirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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