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The Challenges and the Policies of Media Literacy Programs in Egyptian Schools

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By

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School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

The Challenges and the Policies of Media Literacy Programs in Egyptian Schools

Salma S. El Ghetany

Supervised by Dr. Hussein Amin

Abstract

Current limitations in Egypt hinder citizens from obtaining an acceptable understanding of the effects of current affairs on their daily lives; these limitations include a rigid state control on news media, an absence of journalistic ethical standards that result in wide spreading of rumors, polarity and political bias, and a lack of adequate media awareness. Citizens need to be equipped to overcome these obstacles in media systems by developing a good understanding of the media landscape, challenge defective media practices, and acquire needed skills to filter information for reliability and accuracy. Citizens should learn the value of the media around them and the worth of freedom of expression and freedom of information. This thesis focuses on current challenges teachers in Egyptian private and public schools may face in implementing media literacy programs. An Egypt-based model of media education in schools is drafted with recommendations based on descriptive analysis of such programs in different countries, and derived from in-depth interviews with experts and surveys with teachers. The purpose of this thesis is to establish a well-rounded media literacy educational model that can serve as a basis for application in private and public schools across grades K-12. The problem being addressed is the lack of comprehensive education that teaches youngsters in Egyptian schools how to critically and purposively consume, and create media. Theoretical framework is based on Uses and Gratification as well as Media Ecology theories.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Egypt, Policy, Media Education, Critical Analysis, Uses and Gratifications, Limited Effects, In-depth Interviews, Survey, Case Study, Media Policy

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In countries' attempts to exercise political, economic, or social authority, the media become a powerful dynamic in societies all over the world. In fact, they have been assuming more roles that were once played by families, religious institutions or through formal education. These roles are not only constricted to merely spreading knowledge, but rather modeling values and norms, shaping opinions, attitudes and behavior, as well as having a direct impact on people's daily lifestyles (Moeller, Joseph, Lau, & Carbo, 2011). According to the 'cultivation' theory pioneer, George Gerbner (1999), the stories told by media –now practically around the clock and via different communication channels –'weave the seamless web of the cultural environment that cultivates most of what we think, what we do, and how we conduct our affairs."

With the wide spreading of social media or "we media" like Facebook, Instagram, blogs, Twitter, YouTube, as well as citizen journalism platforms, a participatory communication environment has replaced a typical passive recipient one. This makes today's students more of media producers than mere consumers. It has become easy for them to upload and share their media productions online. In this novel technological atmosphere, students are intensely immersed in both new and traditional media, creating a need for cultivating media literacy and reaching "critical autonomy." Furthermore, despite this unlimited access to produce content, students may not be mature enough to make use of this power. This is why they need direction to deal with communication technologies to their benefit (Lee, 2016). The news and information we are exposed to on a daily basis come from many directions, usually packed in a way that is

confusing, if not totally misleading or inconsistent. This makes even the most cultured audience ambivalent to legitimate news versus fake or exploitive information (thenewsliteracyproject.org).

Media literacy curricula in schools have been a widely debated topic over the last decades, but it was Hobbs' (1998) work on the Seven Great Debates that shed more light onto the topic bringing it to the mainstream discussion. Since 1998, more research has been directed at exploring how to implement media literacy inside the classroom. This has given rise to two main tracks with some teachers still considering 'the media,' as the 'bad guy' and going on extra steps to protect their students from their adverse and devastating effects. Others, on the other hand, adopted the view that the ability to deconstruct the texts found in popular culture and media messages can support students in better understanding the messages they are exposed to everyday (Hobbs, 1998). Countries that do not enjoy a well-established media education program seem to be motivated by a preconceived notion that young people have to be 'protected' from the media. An example of this mindset is clear in the UNDA (the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television) report from Africa. The document reports that the main objective of media education is to 'save' and protect young children from inappropriate material; or, more directly, to distinguish between imported culture and 'original local' culture. This approach, however, is not restricted to developing countries only. In fact, similar attitudes are present in the United States, reflecting a continued influence of a 'threatening' approach when it comes to issues of media violence, stereotypes, drugs and sex (Domaille & Buckingham, 2001).

Furthermore, some academics proposed that media literacy should and can be a discipline of its own, while others claim that such discipline would be futile and that the subject matter

should be incorporated in different courses and fields rather than be a standalone subject, given the field's intertwining nature with all subjects.

According to Hobbs (1998), media literacy research tends to concentrate on the material and the recipient or the student, and not much emphasis is placed on researching the needs of the providers of such education, or the teachers. An example of researchers who addressed the teacher/provider were Deal, Flores-Koulish, and Sears (2010) who examined ten teachers of a literacy master program after completing one semester. The researchers pinpointed many challenges faced by media literacy teachers, namely that some of them misinterpreted the term media literacy, and used it synonymously with technology utilization. The latter was defined by the authors as simply employing technology inside the classroom, whether by teachers or students. Media literacy, however, utilizes technology, but also includes the ability to analyze and evaluate the message. Other challenges included "contextual limitations and restrictions, [media literacy] content knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge" (Deal, et al, 2010).

This thesis focuses on the current challenges that teachers and educators in Egyptian private and public schools face in implementing media literacy educational programs across school grades. I attempt to draft an Egypt-based model of media education in schools with recommendations based on descriptive analysis of media literacy programs in different countries, as well as derived from in-depth interviews with experts and surveys with teachers on the ground in Egypt.

Qualitative research typically intends to understand participants' experiences and responses in context. This contrasts with quantitative research conducted inside a lab or artificial setting or targeted at anonymous respondents. That is why outcomes of qualitative investigations are not generalizable; but rather create "a deeper understanding of experience from the perspectives of the participants selected for study" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 44). Berg (1989) explained that "an interview is a conversation with a distinct purpose." Through in-depth interviews with experts in the field and surveys with school teachers of different grades and teaching experience, the purpose of this thesis is to identify current challenges that media literacy education in Egypt is or will be facing through the eyes of the educators as well as those who are on the decision and policy making level. Recommendations are drawn to establish a well-rounded media literacy educational model that can serve as a basis for application in private and public schools across grades K-12 and in pre-university grades.

In order to achieve the above objectives of this thesis, the interview and survey questions were addressed to the respondents on several layers: definitional, contextual, application and social considerations. Respondents were asked about their definitions of media literacy in order to yield an understanding of how practical definitions compare to those found in the literature. Questions on the contextual considerations examined how teacher implement lessons, if any, on media in their curriculum. Furthermore, questions on teacher perceptions of possible motives behind student engagement were addressed to pinpoint areas of improvement to enhance engagement with study material. Age considerations were investigated to determine when media literacy components are ideally introduced to students at different school grades. The main goal of these interviews and surveys was to reveal variables that affect media literacy education

among students in different grades, such as teaching methods, available resources, family involvement and others, as well as pinpointing benchmarks for well-rounded media literacy programs to be presented for consideration by government directives for implementation nation-wide.

Teachers in public and private schools were purposefully chosen for the survey to provide insight into how media education can be introduced and how students' skills to analyze media messages critically can progress and be measured. Training and professional development needs of teachers are also addressed as a basic step to equipping teachers with the needed knowledge and mindset to transfer this information into the classroom. Ideally, this thesis will conclude with recommendations for adopting obligatory media literacy education into school curricula, and for addressing capacity building needs for media education teachers. Furthermore, recommendations will also examine present opportunities for academic research to further discuss obstacles and challenges facing media literacy in Egypt. <u>The problem being addressed in this thesis</u> is the lack of well-rounded or comprehensive education targeted at teaching youngsters in Egyptian schools how to critically and purposively consume, as well as create media; skills imperative for an engaged and active citizen in this country. With the current lack of concrete media laws and regulations to maintain and demand ethical and legal practices, it is up to the individual citizen to be able to take from the media only what he/she deems useful.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

What is Media Literacy?

In today's modern world, societies are more and more shifting to become more knowledge-rather than industrial based (Lee, 2014). With the introduction of the Internet in the 1970's and the following growth spurt in technological and digital means of communication, people need to possess a set of non-traditional competencies to cope with the faster than ever transformation and be able to 'stay connected.' Koelsch (1995) referred to the "infomedia revolution" that began when computer and media technologies merged last century in ways that made life unimaginable without these communication tools (Duran et. al., 2008). As a result, people-referred to otherwise as audiences, receivers, clients or even content creators, - needed to assume a basic level of education-literacy-when consuming, and producing, the hundreds of communication messages they encounter every day. Hence, the term 'media literacy (Lee, 2014). Duran, Yousman, Walsh, & Longshore (2008) expressed the crucial need for this type of literacy in today's world, "recognizing the central role that media play in our lives, scholars, educators, parents, public health officials, and activists are leading a movement toward media literacy that seeks to empower media audiences to take more active roles in their media use."

According to Freire (1998), the notion of literacy is not only about "a mechanical process, which overemphasizes the technical acquisition of reading and writing skills", but is in fact "a vehicle by which the oppressed are equipped with the necessary tools to re-appropriate their history, culture, and language practices. It is, thus, a way to enable the oppressed to reclaim 'those historical and existential experiences that are devalued in everyday life by the dominant culture in order to be both validated and critically understood.'"

Media as a term includes a wide range of communication channels; television, radio, newspapers, magazines, in addition to more unorthodox listings including photography, advertising, recorded music, computer games and, of course, the Internet (Buckingham, 2009). The term can also stretch enough to include mass media, digital media, multimedia, and genres like news, entertainment, and so on. According to Buckingham "all these media are equally worthy of study, and there is no logical reason why they should be considered separately." Since people usually do not differentiate among these forms and types of media, being an informed citizen is not associated with knowledge of one type of media. Moreover, information for citizens is passed on through all these forms of media.

A Glance at Media Literacy

Media literacy as a concept has been gaining huge momentum, in terms of research and application, in the past two decades, appearing in research dating back to 1995. Ever since, a substantial amount of scholarship has been dedicated to the simple attempt of defining what the term means, what in encompasses and how it can be applied. In simple terms, media education involves the process by which citizens become media literate, or are able to understand and critically analyze "the nature, techniques and impacts of media messages and productions" (Lee, 2014). In the United Kingdom, Ofcom added the process of 'creating' communication messages for varying contexts to the concept of media literacy. Other nations attempting to define and address media literacy issues include Australia, Spain and the United States, among others. The European Commission presented the below diagram (figure 1) to demonstrate constituents of media literacy.
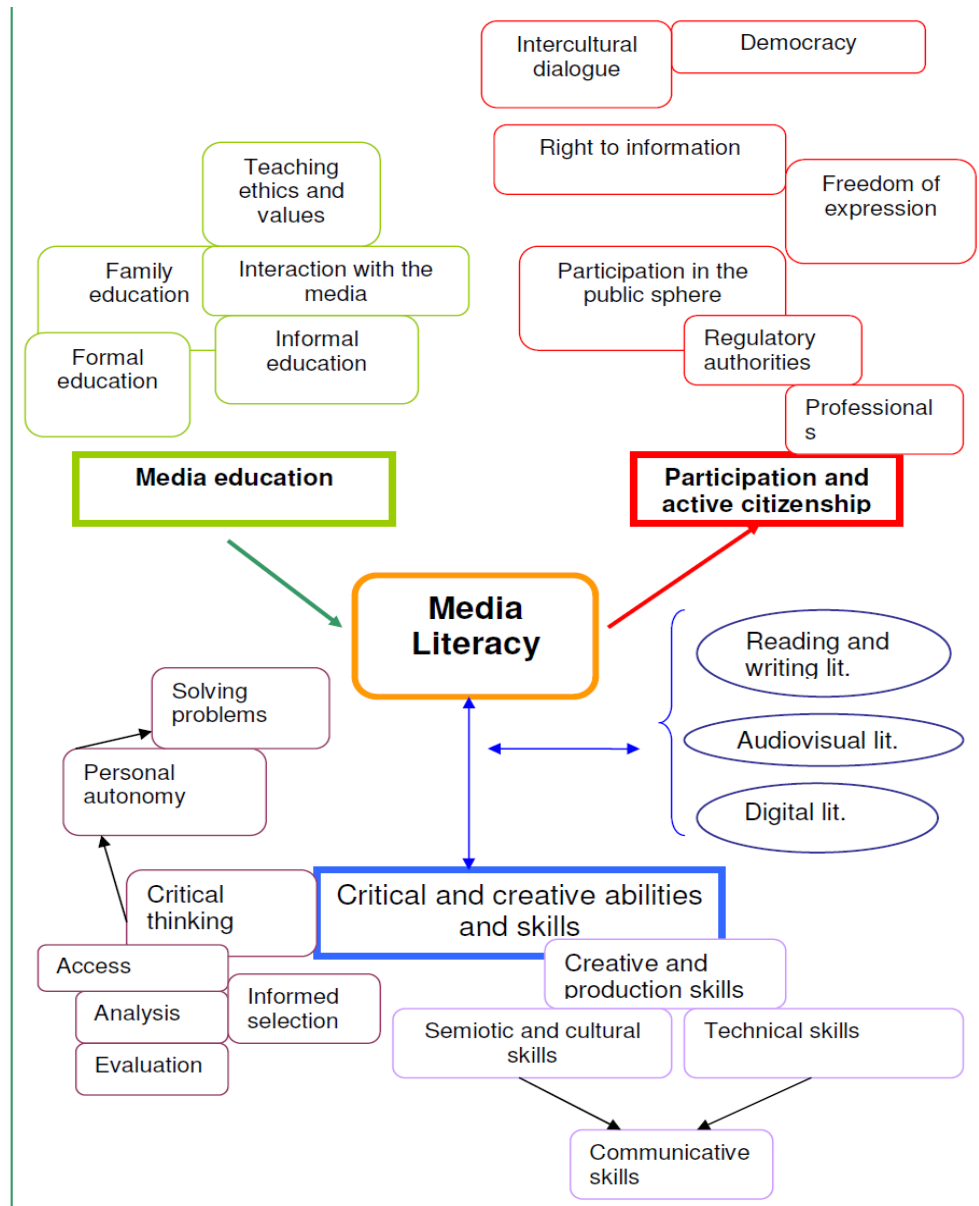
Figure 1. European Commission. (2007). Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/literacy/docs/studies/ex_sum.pdf

Who needs media literacy is another research endeavor in itself, with many scholars claiming that it is best directed at youth, since they are the most vulnerable to adverse effects of media consumption. They are also the biggest and most experienced users of modern digital media; in fact, youth are often referred to in research studies as "digital natives" given the fact that they are more tech-savvy and digitally connected than older generations (Correa, 2016) who

are still "migrating" to these media platforms (Prensky, 2001). Technologies are often viewed by adults as work tools for finding information, while younger generations adopt technologies as social and communication tools of uses far beyond information gathering (Correa, 2016). For example, around 95% of American teenagers and youth up to 33 years are connected to the Internet, with 65% of those aged 65 and up, and the same pattern is found in developing nations as well (Correa, 2016). Furthermore, youth play a big role in a family's purchase decision-making in terms of communication and media tools. They can lead to a more 'digitally connected' household, like having an Internet connection, more so than a household without children, and often children and youth are the ones who teach their parents how to become digitally connected (Correa, 2016). As Duran et. al. (2008) put it "children are exposed to television soon after their birth, and it remains a staple of their cultural diet throughout their lives. An evolution is noticed of such socialization patterns from "unidirectional" where acquisition of new habits and customs is led by single agents in a one-way effect like that of parents or teachers on youth, to a more "interactive" or "bidirectional" pattern where receiving agents such as children and youth can change the conventional one-way, top-down influence (Correa, 2016). The former pattern assumes youth and children as "agents of digital inclusion in a family" and "entry points for new ideas" by virtue of their greater immersion in digital media (Correa, 2016). Today's children are web savvy, but not necessarily media savvy. "There was sort of a filter on what was available to kids," explained Bob Thomas, a middle school education technology specialist in Massachusetts, referring to traditional gatekeeping role of conventional media. "Now those filters are all off. Anyone can publish (anything) on the web" (Holcombe, 2017).

Students in today's world see and consume media in novel ways. Their out-of-school experiences have varied significantly from traditional learning experiences, especially where education is centred on teachers and textbooks. For example, it is said that today's students of journalism or communication disciplines are the "Google Generation" - young people who have always had the Internet in their lives. This generation does not accept the fact that news or information used to come from a newspaper once a day or at certain times on television or radio. They, however, expect to get information or news anytime they want it. They also expect to share their experiences via social networking platforms. This 24/7 world becomes dynamic and the ease of using and accessing new media motivates more participation. School-age students likewise communicate with each other through networks such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter, with typically little consideration for potential consequences or dangers of posting their activities in very public areas (Moore, 2008).

Since it is established how children and young adults are becoming heavy consumers of media, it becomes more crucial than ever to address means by which to assist our children in mitigating the adverse effects of media. Ratings or systems for regulating or sponsoring content by parents do not provide a bullet-proof solution to monitor media content children are exposed to. Parents are, therefore, under more pressure to personally monitor their children's media consumption. This is despite the fact that regulating media should be the government and the industry's responsibility. Livingstone (2002) has suggested a shift in the conceptualization of regulation to highlight social norms needed by children to help them navigate the media more positively. This paradigm shift becomes from "negative restrictive orientation" to "positive regulation, defined in terms of goals rather than dangers, part of the current interest in defending

public service (and the public good), [and] children's rights to cultural expression and consumer empowerment."

The idea that media, the Internet and other information sources are 'everywhere' calls for a bigger emphasis on empowering children and young adults. This is achieved through providing these groups with the skills and the resources to make them more media and information literate. Moreover, it can be deduced from several research studies that typically the researchers concentrate on the adverse, rather than the positive, effects. Buckingham (1998) calls that approach the "search for negative effects." Under that notion, studies focus on media's negative habits such as stereotyping, concluding that watching television, for instance, adversely affects the attitudes that children may have regarding certain gender roles or beliefs about certain social groups like family, or government. Based on this, Buckingham argues that there are not enough studies that address the positive or 'pro-social' educational influences media, and the Internet can have on children.

Research on media literacy skills aimed at children is usually intertwined with research on parental mediation. Mediation is defined as "any strategy parents use to control, supervise, or interpret [media] content" for children and adolescents (Warren, 2001). However, despite the fact that parental mediation is often encouraged to mitigate media effects, it fails to practically connect with ideas or principles situated in media literacy aimed at the same goals. A more cohesive conversation is required between the two research areas to strengthen the approaches of parent involvement with children's consumption of media. There isn't enough research on how parents utilize media literacy with their children, or if, in fact, they are aware that whatever

conversations are raised with their children on media messages and their comprehension, fall under the term 'media literacy.' It is not clear what type of parents engage in media literacy activities with their children, how they do it, or how effective they are. Parent intervention in children's media use can result in stronger media literacy skills like critical analysis of and thinking about media messages, received or created (Warren, 2001). That is why media literacy can be directed at parents of younger children so as to help them gauge the value of selected programs for their children, help them set limits for media use and develop effective discussion strategies with their little ones (Hobbs, 2004). Henry Jenkins (2006) spoke about how media literacy should consider children's element of pleasure when consuming media. Parents need to learn how to avoid the anxiety trap concerning the ever changing media landscape for children and that entails more participatory roles for them. Jenkins proposed that "parents play important roles in helping [children] make meaningful choices in their use of media and helping them anticipate the consequences of the choices they make."

In the United States, media literacy has been defined as the ability to "access, evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media" (Aufderheide, 1993). This broad definition can be better fit for children's school education, but it does not provide ample guidance to how these concepts can be applied in teaching techniques or outcomes of learning for university education. That vagueness resulted in the term media literacy to assume various roles across different academic departments within any university (Mihailidis, 2008).

There is an undoubted need for the adoption of national policies on media and information literacy, with the underlying acknowledgment of two opposing views on media and

information literacy. One view places media, and the Internet in a harmful or even damaging light; calling for media literacy programs to protect audiences from these adversities. On the other hand, a view acknowledges the positive developmental role for media, arguing that media and information literacy activities should aim at empowering and liberating people through free access to information and freedom of expression. According to UNESCO (2013), media and information literacy should not be viewed in one or the other of these views, but rather calibrate the two standpoints in the policy and strategy development of media and information literacy within a nation. Historically, these considerations were typically concerned with issues of "media and children, media and violence, media and culture," or generally, effects of exposure to media (UNESCO, 2013).

Basic, Information and Meta-Literacy

According to the UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report of 2007, the term literacy is multi-tiered and remains to be dynamic encompassing visual literacy, information literacy, media literacy, scientific literacy, among others. UNESCO's definition of basic literacy is "a person who can, with understanding, both read and write a short statement on his or her everyday life" (UNESCO, 2007).

Going several steps deeper, and with the Internet age and advancements in digital technology, scholars began to compare and contrast media literacy with a concept that withstood a long time, Information Literacy, which is simply "the ability to [recognize], access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources" (Lee, 2014). In 2008, UNESCO affirmed that information literacy included an individual's capacity to identify their information needs, evaluate available information quality, retrieve needed information when needed, make efficient

and ethical use of it to finally be able to practically apply information acquired and add to it.

Already, similarities arise between the two concepts, media and information literacy, in that both

strive for an individual capable of accessing, utilizing and creating, be it information or media

messages (Lee, 2014). In 2013, UNESCO's "Conceptual Relationship of Information and Media

Literacy in Knowledge Societies" identified three main commonalities between media literacy

and information literacy; 1) the heavy weight role that Information Communication

Technologies (ICTs) play in both, 2) the emphasis that both concepts place on a need to

'critically' evaluate content, and 3) the highlight both place on the ethical use of acquired

information.

Taking it one step further, media and information literacies can actually be combined;

given growing people's needs to acquire multiple literacies or become "multiliterate." Some

academics point that media literacy is, in fact, one component of information literacy since both

terms encompass a development of skills directed at different types of information. Livingstone,

Couvering and Thumim (2005) explained that "media literacy sees media as a lens through

which to view the world and express oneself, while information literacy sees information as a

tool with which to act on the world," making both concepts more intertwined and relevant to

each other. Moreover, both types of literacies attempt to promote literate individuals capable of

"informed judgments regarding the use of information in the digital age" (Lee, 2014). Other

scholars see that media and information literacy cannot be subsets of each other, since media

literacy involves knowledge of media institutions and the overall industry, which is irrelevant

from what information literacy entails. A third group of scholars, including Carbo (2013)

proposed a larger concept, "metalitercy," that brings together various competencies and skills

needed in our new digital era. According to Mudhai, Wright and Musa, (2016), reaching a state

of enjoying 'critical literacy' applies to and exceeds basic, information or media literacies, since being critical "encourages reflective, questioning stance on form and content for ideologies and agendas." It is through acquiring this advanced literacy that people can understand how mainstream media can set discourse priorities (Mudhai, Wright, & Musa, 2016).

According to the report on "Conditions for a Sustainable Information Transculture," that was part of the Reflections on Media Education Futures conference held in Finland in 2014, one research study addressed French students' 'information transliteracy' which refers to the "ability to use and produce a large variety of multimedia layout, with a large variety of skills—reading, writing, counting, and computing—and the capacity to adapt information processing to its knowledge and social context" (Lehmans & Liquète, 2013). The study further examines how literacy is transferred, or how students locate and utilize information, including all factors at play such as resources, tools, spaces, etc., as well as determines the social interactions that take place among students and that help in the transfer.

While several academics claim the presence of clear differences between media literacy and technological literacy, others claim the opposite and tend to blur these differences. McKahan (2008), for example, defines technological literacy as "a set of tools to help students thoughtfully participate in the world around them; especially with matters that affect or are affected by communication." Cavanaugh (2005) outlines six "Technology Foundation Standards for Students" that should be adopted by a society to be able to offer technology education to its students and these are basic operation, social and human issues, technology productivity, communication, research and problem-solving tools. While it can be said that communication is

certainly one component of technological literacy, the term encompasses other tools as well, as indicated above, in addition to tools, such as hardware and software (Breuch, 2002). On the other hand, although using media requires using some form of technology, being media literate does not simply mean knowing how to operate this technology. It requires a level of proficiency in analyzing and evaluating the messages received. However, Breuch (2002) managed to blur the lines between the two definitions when he defined technological literacy as "the ability to read, write and communicate using technology; and the ability to think critically about technology."

Information providing platforms can include traditional and unconventional/novel media such as libraries, television, the Internet, archives, outdoor media, commercial messages or oral communication. Routing these different platforms calls for diverse literacies. Furthermore, new digital media that are more widespread among younger ages globally also need additional critical literacies since these media include an enormous amount of user-generated information. The fast evolution of these new and digital platforms added an even deeper dimension to media literacy. This is why new media literacy can be considered a coming together of all types of literacies including basic literacy, audiovisual, digital and information literacy (Pérez -Tor Nero & Varis, 2010). Based on this idea of a new consolidated form of literacy, Chen, Wu and Wang (2010) suggest a basis that provides a methodical view of new media literacy. The researchers claim that new media literacy can be explained as "two continuums from consuming to prosuming literacy and from functional to critical literacy." Moreover, educators in the media literacy field have also concluded that programs that include media and information literacy are usually culturally situated.

The Importance of Media Literacy

Media literacy is currently perceived as "an emerging field," that combines many perspectives and that is built on educational practices. It comes at "the crossroads of communication and education sciences" (Verniers, 2014). Despite its continuous growth, it is still facing some hurdles of being acknowledged as a specialized discipline, academically and on policy levels (Verniers, 2014). Supporters of media literacy often claim that adopting such education in curricula on the school level helps in promoting a sense of civic engagement early on. It also makes young media consumers more aware of the different powers at play in popular media, and adds to their critical skills much needed in today's world (Scull, Kupersmidt, Elmore, Benson, 2010). Media literacy education is also said to mitigate the negative effects of exposure to media messages. A study conducted at Stanford University in November, 2016 discovered that around 8,000 students from 12 states (middle school, high school and university students) claimed their inability to evaluate the credibility of the media messages that flood their daily lives via smartphones, tablets or computers, even though they claimed aptitude for digital and social media (thenewsliteracyproject.org).

The applications of media literacy have been linked to different disciplines and societal behaviors; including but not restricted to, health interventions in decreasing peer pressure for substance abuse, for example (Scull, Kupersmidt, Elmore, Benson, 2010). One study by Scull, Kupersmidt, Elmore, Benson (2010) found that students who were taught to critically decode messages portrayed in the media they consume were less likely to fall prey to alcohol or drug use/abuse down the road, averting adverse health behavior associated with adolescence. Another health related application for media literacy is childhood obesity and unhealthy eating habits. In

a study on 140 5th grade students in Taiwan, the correlation between the aftereffects of exposure to a food advertising literacy program and food consumption habits was measured. The program taught students how to measure the nutritional value of any food products in advertisements and how to employ marketing techniques to promote healthy eating habits among their colleagues. In comparison to the control group that did not receive the program, those who did showed measurably more knowledge in nutritional value of food items, better awareness of balanced food purchasing behavior and overall food advertising literacy. Despite that effect, however, follow up with the same students after a period of time showed a decrease in these newly acquired skills (Liao, Lai, Chang, Lee, 2016).

Other applications of media literacy can be associated with violence prevention, especially in teenagers. A study in Los Angeles by Webb, Martin, Afifi and Kraus (2010) found that introducing a high school curriculum targeted at critiquing violent messages, verbal and physical, in the media can increase students' "critical thinking skills and knowledge about violence in the media and real world." In the study, students self-report on their knowledge of and attitudes towards surrounding violence in the media before and after they took the program.

Furthermore, a study by Puchner, Markowitz and Hedley (2015) examined how a media literacy program aimed at addressing gender stereotypes in the media can teach middle school students how to critically consume the media when it comes to their inaccurate representations of men and women. The researchers employed survey analysis of students pre and post the literacy program. They concluded that those who received the program were more likely to adopt a more critical view of how media influence gender representations and stereotypes in a society (Puchner, Markowitz, Hedley, 2015).

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Another practical application of media literacy in our everyday lives can be how it effectively addresses issues of body image and self-esteem, as they related to media messaging and effects. Chambers and Alexander (2007) examined how advertising can affect female body image. They showed female college students a short video on how advertisers can adversely influence women's body image and dictate what an ideal woman looks like. They reported that the women who watched the film reported higher sense of satisfaction with their body, "meaning the difference between their perceived body type and their ideal body type was much smaller compared to those who did not watch the video" (Chambers and Alexander, 2007).

In simple terms, according to a report by the Alliance for a Media Literate America in 2004, "media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers of an increasingly wide range of messages using image, language, and sound" (in Duran et. al., 2008). The notion carries both a contextual dimension directly relating to the creation and consumption of media messages or "why messages are produced [and] by whom," in addition to an attitudinal dimension that deals with how to analyze and utilize these messages to one's benefit and not against it (Duran et. al., 2008). According to McGeough (2015), critical media literacy challenges being ideologically neutral when consuming media, and "argues for the need to develop a critical consciousness and to act against oppression." This adds a deeper tier to the concept of media literacy in that it encourages civic engagement in general, and a critical understanding of messages' underpinnings in particular.

New media and new understandings of democracy go hand in hand. In 1998, Schudson claimed that the definition of citizenship and understanding of its underpinnings is directly

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linked to new digital media, since the notion of the informed citizen evolves to include the role

of available information for the betterment of their society, hence the existence of media to fulfill

that information need. Schudson's concept of a citizen is based on the idea that he or she possess

the ability to interact with information, an ability polished by receiving media education.

Popular Swedish economic expert, Gunnar Myrdal, spoke those words back in 1958, and can still

be of relevance to date,

"Progress has to rely on education. The individual must be made to know the social facts more

accurately, including his own true interests and the ideals he holds on a deeper level of his sphere

of valuations...I am quite aware that this prescription is nothing less and nothing more than the

age old liberal faith that "knowledge will make us free."

To put Myrdal's words in context of the topic of this thesis, he reinforces people's need

to learn about the information they receive so that they are able to question the messages they

come across and that dictate their civic paradigms. Since the United Nation's Education

Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Grunwald Declaration on Media Education of

1982, published as part of the International Symposium on Media Education at Grunwald,

Federal Republic of Germany, a strong and grounded connection has been drawn between media

education and literacy, and citizen empowerment (UNESCO, 1982). The Declaration stated that

"media are omnipresent; an increasing number of people spend a great deal of time watching

television, reading newspapers and magazines, playing records and listening to the radio. In

some countries, [children] already spend more time watching television than they do attending

school." It is by accepting and endorsing, rather than condemning, this pressing fact of the

undisputed power media have on our lives, we can appreciate the roles they play as elements of

our culture. Having said that, it is unfortunately the case now that most "informal and non-formal

educational systems do little to promote media education or education for communication,"
(UNESCO, 1982) creating a disturbing gap between whatever education people receive and the
'real world' people live in. However, if arguments that a sound media education yields a
responsible citizen are now widely held and applauded, we can in the foreseeable future witness
vast developments in communication technologies and people's abilities to optimize their use.
"Responsible educators will not ignore these developments, but will work alongside their
students in understanding them and making sense of such consequences as the rapid
development of two-way communication and the ensuing individualization and access to
information" (UNESCO, 1982). The same rhetoric appeared in the "New Directions in Media
Education" presented at the International Conference at the University of Toulouse, France, in
1990. The directions also connected both areas of media education and citizen empowerment.
These declarations and other research endeavors all solidify the strong relationship and higher
goal of media education; to have a civic purpose, or to "be endowed with an ethical, social and
democratic base that empowers citizens in their dealings with the media" (Gozálvez &
Contreras-Pulido in Caprino & Martínez-Cerdá, 2016).

It becomes needed that media literacy programs become integrated at all educational
levels, be them kindergarten, primary, secondary and at the university level. Universities should
add on the basic school-level education, especially that this is where future professionals are
trained and receive proper communication education (Tucho, Fernandez-Planells, Lozano &
Figueras-Maz, 2015). Perhaps one of the biggest challenges for modern day education becomes
how to approach the crossbreeding of media and education using creative, updated and
participatory parameters. On the university level, course offerings need to be responsive to the

persistent calling by international organizations to introduce training and guidance in media literacy, assuming that these skills are mandatory for societies, and to include students in trainings for future communicators regardless of their area of specialization or major (Tucho, Fernandez-Planells, Lozano & Figueras-Maz, 2015).

According to the British Film Institute, 'moving image media' or non-print media can be considered a necessary entitlement for children. This viewpoint mandates seeing literacy in a different way, since it is "the repertoire of knowledge, understanding and skills that enables us all to participate in social, cultural and political life" (BFI.org.uk). This repertoire, therefore, needs to be updated to include skills needed to 'read' and 'write' in non-print media. Since different forms of media have common approaches, media literacy is, fortunately, not medium-specific. With the basic availability of television, DVDs or videos, children as young as four and five years old go to school with a ready understanding of many of the key concepts underpinned in media literacy. When asked, they can easily address questions about television content like "can you tell what is going to happen next? Or how can you tell?" even before they are able to read or write. This signifies children's cognitive ability to make inferences and predict outcomes, which are necessary skills when critically analyzing any text. Starting 1999, the British Film Institute began its efforts to redefine literacy to include non-print. On the school level, a lot of political impact was placed on national curricula starting 2007, when all primary schools in England adopted a revised plan for literacy teaching that includes non-print components.

In the early 1990's, the Media Education movement became highly aware of a need to rephrase its main principles, training approaches and definitions. The term 'media' during the

movement's inception, mainly referred to television, so media education concentrated on how children react to television messages, so they are better equipped to cope in a world that delivered messages so differently than a conventional classroom setting. Over the last decade, however, media and information literacy advocates have presented how deep the impact of 'screen' technology and the availability of various types of digital screens can have on children in particular, and audiences at large, since children's total number of screen hours far exceed time spent in front of television alone (Soukup, 2016).

In her report on "Media Education as an Important Part of Library Services in Poland, Agata Walczak-Niewiadomska (2013) explains how it can be said that the vast and fast development of technology paved the way for people to buy cheaper and more advanced devices that has, in turn, let to heavy dependency and usage patterns of these tools, such as the Internet and computer games. This evolution led to a need for new research efforts to examine this newly isolated group of people who are immersed in such consumption. Furthermore, this situation opens up new opportunities for media literacy programs that can be even applied by public library services, if taken outside the formal school system. In 2010, The Center for Media Literacy emphasized the importance of receiving media literacy education in order to contribute to "young people's thinking about citizenship and social responsibility." This is because media education has the ability to show students how the media can in fact frame and dictate public opinion. With a clear grasp of how and why media create the messages they do, students can achieve self-efficacy with regard to crucial social issues, like public affairs, civic engagement, and health issues, to name a few.

According to Frau-Meigs and Torrent (2009), policy-makers have the need to overcome the alleged threats that media education may have for governmental or political power, or a nation's dominance, or even the society's cultural identity. In fact, media literacy can result in a sense of empowerment for all citizens, if the said programs are laid within "a framework of good media governance where the benefits of the new cognitive ways of learning are shared, people-centered and not simply machine-induced." Governments' resistance to that move can yield hostility or even violence, whereas embracing the move can bring about 'smart' change and not merely soft change, all whilst safeguarding and developing cultures at the same time. Educating audiences and citizens to consume media and ICTs with transparency and skill fosters confidence and respect among society members, benefiting all stakeholders.

What topics fall under media literacy programs has also been a matter of many debates and discussion, with institutions and academics alike attempting to clearly define what constitutes a well-rounded media literacy program. According to the British Film Institute, main aspects of Media Education include; *Media agencies*: who communicates what message and with what ideologies or intentions, *Media categories*: what is the type of message and in what shape or form, *Media technologies*: how is this message produced and using what types of technologies, *Media languages*: what does the message mean, *Media audiences*: who receives and processes the message, and *Media representations*: what is the relation between the messages and real life or how messages stereotype and consequences of that (Bazalgette, 1989). In Spain, media 'competence' initially arose in 2006 and was defined as "a command of the knowledge, skill sets and attitudes related to six basic dimensions…[which] are language;

technology; interaction processes; production and dissemination processes; ideology and values and aesthetics" (Tucho, Fernandez-Planells, Lozano & Figueras-Maz, 2015).

In his book chapter, Four Scenarios to Consider Regarding the Future of Media Education, Patrick Verniers (2014) suggests four directions for the discipline; a 'standalone' discipline" that approaches the field inside the classroom in a structured manner, "an integrated and transversal development" through which students engage with media educational activities at the level of different fields of study, the "project oriented integration scenario," that introduces media literacy education in schools and on the societal level as well, and finally the "single 'meta' discipline" that perceives media education as a novel means to gain access to the knowledge society. In this last scenario, school is no longer the only place where people receive knowledge, but are equipped to access and critically utilize the knowledge that is available elsewhere (Verniers, 2014).

CHAPTER III
International Models and Efforts

It can be said that countries around the world exhibit a need for media literacy. To address that need, many efforts have been recently established on international as well as local levels, such UNESCO, the European Union, The Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA), The Center for Media Literacy (CML)[1]; on governmental and non-governmental levels…etc, all with the aim of bringing attention to the much needed relationship between media and education. The UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers was introduced during the First International Forum on Media and Information Literacy in June, 2011. The curriculum places teachers at the center of the media literacy process as key players towards implementation. This approach aligns with the objectives of the Grunwald Declaration (1982), the Alexandria Declaration (2005) and the UNESCO Paris Agenda (2007) that had similar takeaways and placed equal emphasis on teachers (Nfissi, 2013).

One prominent example of global cooperation to promote media and information literacy is the UNITWIN Program on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue (MILID). MILID was established in 2011 based on an initiative from UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). The program was formed to align with UNESCO's mission to act as a catalyst for media and information literacy around the world, in addition to the mandate of UNAOC, to also facilitate the drive for innovative projects that strive to reduce polarization among countries and cultures. MILID network includes eight universities from

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[1] The Center for Media and Information Literacy (CMIL) (http://www.centermil. org), founded in 2011 at Temple University, Pennsylvania, United States. The Center's main goal is research, education, and capacity building on issues pertinent to media literacy and information literacy in the United States and around the world.

around the world; Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain; Cairo University, Egypt; the

University of West Indies, Jamaica; the University of São Paulo, Brazil; Temple University,

USA; Tsinghua University, China; Queensland University of Technology, Australia; and Sidi

Mohamed Bin Abdellah University, Morocco. The network also includes other associate

members and is expected to gradually expand. Its primary targets are to encourage collaboration

among member universities in building the capacities in their countries, to advance media and

information literacy and intercultural dialogue, and to advocate freedom of speech and

information (Carlsson & Culver, 2013).

In 2006, The International Center for Media and the Public Agenda (ICMPA), founded

by the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism, together with the Salzburg

Global Seminar, established the Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change. The initiative

aims at utilizing media literacy for global student bodies with the goal of reaching a "global

media literacy" curriculum that can empower students, raise their awareness of the crucial roles

of media as well as their global responsibility. The Global Media Literacy program has since

founded the 5 A's of media literacy, suitable for that discipline in any part of the world: Access

(to the different media), Awareness (of their power), Assessment (of how they tackle issues and

happenings), Appreciation (for their role in developing a civil society), & Action (to call for

stronger communication among different cultures and societies)[2].

Furthermore, Henry Jenkins, Professor of Literature and Director of the Comparative

Media Studies program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), has later introduced

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[2] http://www.salzburg.umd.edu/

the New Media Literacies project, which is a program "working to integrate new media materials into compelling activities for K-12 students for use in or out of school" (Mihailidis, 2008). Moreover, Temple University's media literacy scholar, Renee Hobbs, has run the "Media Education Lab, "that aims at enhancing "media literacy education through scholarship and community service" (Collins, Doyon, McAuley, & Quijada, 2011).

In South Africa, media literacy as a concept has been gaining momentum, with many initiatives, such as the *B Media Ys* training program of 2011, that aimed to raise awareness of exactly how different media operate, as well as empower South African youth with technical and editorial tools on how to use mobile phones to produce stories of societal relevance and importance. However, according to Mudhai, Wright and Musa (2016), South Africa's aspiration to make media and information literacy readily available to everyone, especially younger generations, still falls short of achieving the aspired results on practical terms.

UNESCO has been heavily engaged with global media, digital and information literacy initiatives and programs over the last three decades, such as the Grunwald Declaration on Media Education of 1982 and the New Directions in Media Education of Toulouse in 1990 discussed above, as well as programs such as the "Media Education. A Kit for Teachers, Students, Parents and Professionals" and "Media and Information Literacy. Curriculum for Teachers" (Caprino & Martínez-Cerdá, 2016). Moreover, UNESCO has been involved in mapping global recommendations on media education policies, programs, and objectives concerning media literacy worldwide. Today, several countries, mainly in the Northern hemisphere, mandate topics related to media literacy in their obligatory school and university curricula, as well as employ

civic society and public councils to support the cause. On the other hand, in South and Latin America, programs on media literacy have been typically applied on the non-formal education or on the civil society levels, rather than on the formal school level (Caprino & Martínez-Cerdá, 2016).

In typical situations, media literacy programs address three main concepts; highlighting social inequality, emphasizing notions of citizenship, or political empowerment. In their paper titled, "Media and Information Literacies and the Well-being of Young People: Comparative Perspectives," Kotilainen and Pathak-Shelat (2013) address generic characteristics of media literacy and media education around the world, and especially in the South, rather than look at specific countries. They conducted a comparative study including Argentina, Egypt, Finland and India, and focused on "child well-being" as a main take away from media education. For each of these countries, they pinpointed common themes found in media literacy programs, including "1. Practices and media use and motives for media use ... 2. Activities, participation in events through public media . . . 3. Ethical reflections including media criticism." Furthermore, they concluded that a significant role can be held by international organizations in addition to local and international educators to develop media literacy modules applicable to youth and children.

The Establishment of Media Literacy as a Discipline

Some scholars say that media literacy education started off in the UK, Canada and Australia, making them global pioneers of the movement, years before it was introduced as a specialized area of interest in the United States (Mihailidis, 2008). It came as a direct response to the film and entertainment industries gaining huge momentum.

Australia. Media literacy education has been incorporated in school curricula-kindergarten through high school- since 1970's (Hobbs, 1998). In fact, the US has drawn many of its currently used programs and initiatives from the Australian model. The movement known as the Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) has made significant contributions to integrate basic media education in all school levels. Furthermore, the country's other teacher training initiatives have integrated media education in their syllabi (Mihailidis, 2008). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) accepted media education as a basic prerogative for all children through adoption of policies that link to the Australian Arts Curriculum. In fact, ACARA, has mandated Media Arts as a subject every child from preschool to year six have to take, justifying this by acknowledging that the youth are growing up in a digital multi-faceted world and therefore, they need to be educated on how to creatively and critically communicate and participate both socially and culturally as well as to creatively express themselves (ACARA, 2010)[3].The first empirical media literacy scales were developed by two Australian researchers in 1993, Robyn Quin and Barrie McMahon. They came up with a quantitative method to measure levels of media literacy in nine graders, contributing with their studies to the pool of research and serving as a foundation for quantitative measurement of media literacy research.

One significant initiative Australia has taken on through the country's 'URLearning' project was the establishment of the 'Media Club,' an after school extracurricular activity/club that students starting Year 4 and up to Year 7 can enroll at in a school picked for that pilot in the city of Brisbane. The club members use the school's computer room or library for a couple of

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[3] http://www.acara.edu.au/

hours weekly and during the afternoons. Members in this club were between 15-18 students depending on the available computers and other equipment needed. In this club, students are taught how to operate new tools, such as podcast production on iPads, as well as new means of communication, such as how to conduct live interviews. They play, experiment and solve problems in order to successfully communicate their message to an audience, receiving guidance and feedback on their productions. The club activities focus on different formats of media production every semester, such as "filmmaking, Lego robotics, music production, stop-motion animation, photography, filmmaking and webpage building, comic creation, digital publishing (eBooks, posters, podcasting, video games [...etc.]" (Dezuanni & Hughes, 2013).

One main objective behind the Media Club is to enable students to develop skills and competencies about media and communication through new media platforms. This is because digital participation is crucial in a time when digital technologies are key to societal engagement (Dezuanni, 2010). From this standpoint, digital literacy involves the ability to utilize digital technologies to communicate and engage. Australia's Media Club had that same goal of developing a positive outlook to digital technologies and to ease their use in the hands of students who are also taught the limitations of these technologies. These skills students have reported to be of great use in their daily digital lives outside the club (Dezuanni & Hughes, 2013).

In addition to the above example of Australia's initiatives for students, in 2013, QUT University's Faculty of Education has worked with UNESCO to develop an online professional development media and information literacy course and toolkit targeted at teachers in Australia

and around the world. The professional development course was inspired by UNESCO's Media

and Information Literacy (MIL) curriculum and is available online to selected participants. The

course's website includes information, course material, handouts, resources, as well as an

interactive feature (forums, chat, webinars, and live online teaching). Registered participants can

complete the basic program (40 hours), Intermediary (80 hours) or Advanced level (120 hours).

Upon successful completion of any of the modules, participants receive a certificate of

completion (Dezuanni & Hughes, 2013).

North America

The United States of America. Media literacy has been added to Core Curriculum State

Standards, recognizing the discipline's importance and timeliness, and ensuring that students are

exposed to these skills inside the classroom. This, however, does not guarantee that teachers

have what it takes, are comfortable to teach these skills or are properly equipped to introduce

these standards. This is because media and information literacy is typically not taught by a

specific trained or specialized teacher, but is usually taught by a teacher of another subject area.

This is not to say that teachers of other subjects cannot teach media literacy with competence;

but rather they face a challenge of a need for professional and skill development in that area. In

the US, practical implementation of media and information literacy is a school-by-school

directive; since it differs where the subject can be best fitted within faculty at the different

schools. Moreover, the country enjoys a highly decentralized schooling system that allows for

the easy implementation of this practice on a "school-by-school" basis. The result, however, is

that some schools have a stronger media literacy program than others, creating a nation-wide

imbalance. With media literacy becoming an important prerequisite to critically analyzing and

accessing media and information from lower school age, this imbalance becomes a concern. The

need for teacher professional development has been recognized in UNESCO documents on media and information literacy and was addressed in the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers. In some schools across the US, a growing relationship between K-12 teachers or staff has been developing with University "centers" that focus on media literacy. These "centers" mainly carry out research to develop and test best practice models for teaching media literacy. The information they deduce becomes readily available to K-12 teachers through professional development or other forms of capacity building (Culver, 2013). Perhaps the most prominent of these centers are the Center for Media and Information Literacy and the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE)[4]. These two centers among others make the US one of few countries that have professional associations for media literacy (Mihailidis, 2008).

A recent independent project that was established to cater to US schools was the News Literacy Project (NLP). NLP was launched in 2009 with the aim of reaching "middle school and high school students through classroom, after-school and e-learning programs, [offering] in-person and online professional development for educators" (thenewsliteracyproject.org). The program mainly teaches methods of evaluating news credibility. It created a model that offers real-world learning activities and gets students in touch with journalists and media practitioners

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[4] NAMLE is an independent organization, with a "national" and an "education" focus" to expand and improve the practice of media literacy education in the United States." (www.NAMLE.net) The organization serves anyone involved in education and media literacy such as teachers, academics, University educators, after school programs or clubs, media professionals, or other any practitioners of the field. The organization offers resources available online for free, as well as an online, peer-reviewed Journal of Media Literacy Education that drives research and scholarship on media literacy education – also for free.

who further reinforce the offered lessons through examples from the field and their own experiences.

Canada. Is home to one of the most established media education initiatives on the national level. The Media Awareness Network is one of the pioneering institutions dedicated to media literacy. The Network was created by Canadians and has become one of the most comprehensive references for media education programs. Canada's origins in media education date back, like Britain, to initiatives to raise more screen awareness in the 1930's. After that, Canada responded to a need for raising illiteracy levels by reverting the government's concentration to programs on basic literacy. It, however, regained its focus on media education in the late 1990's (Arke, 2005). The school system in Canada has mandated media education classes for all grades from 7-12 for almost twenty years (Kubey, 1998). In 1987, the Ministry of Education decreed media literacy an obligatory part curricula. Media education has become one of four mandatory disciplines in the English curriculum for grades 9-12, together with reading, writing, and language. Furthermore, "media communication skills" is a course that part of the English curriculum for grades 1-8 (Heins & Cho, 2003). The Association for Media Literacy in Canada publishes a guide on media literacy competencies that is translated into many languages, and referenced by global education providers. In order to avoid any discrepancies, Canada has opted for centralizing its media education protocols and has, thus, created nationwide guidelines. When considering lower and high school media education (K-12), Canada is said to be a pioneer in this movement (Mihailidis, 2008).

South America

Argentina. Argentina has been advocating for media literacy as a catalyst for achieving democracy. The country believes in media literacy's ability to enable citizens to critically consume media and exercise autonomous thinking, "to act in and on the real world" (Chaffee, Morduchowicz & Galperin, 1997). In Latin American countries like Argentina, there still exists a media divide between poor young adults and those with more privileged access to media. Youth from poorer areas have more limited access to technology than their more prosperous peers, creating more reasons to integrate media education in schools.

With a massive amount of information that children are exposed to outside of school, it can be said that most of it stems from media. Schools, therefore, needs to be the place where this information comes together for analysis and discussion, since a lot of times children find it confusing or misleading. Furthermore, the media and its technologies provide children with access to realities they would otherwise not have. The media, such as the Internet, bring new dimensions of time and space, the nature of which also need to be taught at schools. In addition, pop culture in many societies gives children and youth the meaning they need to build their character. This is why, according to Chaffee, Morduchowicz & Galperin (1997), schools should get closer to this age group and narrow the gap through integrating pop culture. In Latin America, access to media and technologies is unequal creating a deep digital divide. Schools, therefore, need to better distribute information and knowledge to those with the least access.

Some media literacy related projects implemented by schools in Argentina include; School, Camera…Action, which invited secondary grade students (13- and 14-years-old) to create a fictional story. Three winning stories from all participating schools were made into short

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films and were screened at Argentinian cinemas before the scheduled film for one month. This project allowed young adults to be heard and have their opinions exposed to others.

A project called The School Makes TV invited primary grade students (11- and 12-years-old) to write a story about a specific topic. Six winning stories from all schools were produced as an "advertisement campaign" and were aired on Argentinian television for one month. A more recent project, Thinking of the Other, gave students an assignment of exploring who "the Other" is (older generation, less wealthy segments, people with disabilities, etc.). Journalists for a Day was another project that invited secondary grade students (16- and 17-years old) to prepare an in-depth report on any topic of interest. A jury composed of editors from Argentinian newspapers chose around 90 reports to be published on the first Sunday in the month in each newspaper. This project exposed young adults' opinions to adult readers on various social matters, narrowing the gap between generations (Chaffee, Morduchowicz & Galperin, 1997).

Europe

The United Kingdom. Media literacy in the UK dates as old as the 1930's. In fact, it can be said that the UK is the founder of the discipline. It was when class teachers at schools started to teach their students about the rise of motion pictures, how to participate and how they affected them culturally (Masterman, 1985). In Britain, media education is incorporated in primary and secondary levels in schools. One reason why the UK's model has been successful to a certain degree is that countries under the UK have more centralization in their educational curricula, more so than the US, making it more feasible to adopt nationwide or regional programs addressing media literacy (Heins & Cho, 2003). In the UK, scholarly and academic contributions from David Buckingham and other scholars have resulted in a rise in media education for the secondary or pre-university levels.

Germany. In Germany, an integrated media education system has been effective, whereby schools demand that all teachers engage their students in extra-curricular activities that involve media. In addition, students' values, knowledge, skills and other elements related to their media daily experiences are integrated into the classroom and their school-life in general. As such, different media tools are naturally used as a method to cope with education, professional tasks, as well as tools of expressing opinions and communicating with others. Furthermore, all media platforms are utilized in pedagogy without restriction, making videos or computer games as valuable inside the classroom as books; all depending on the content and the objectives or benefits of using these media (Spanhel, 1999). German schools embraced 'media didactics', which refers to the use of media as a learning method for improving the teaching process, in addition to adopting media education in the classroom which is the study of media as an independent subject that aims at enabling students to deal with media in a critical, reflective and responsible manner. As such, media education is integrated in the general setting of school. According to Spanhel (1999), teachers in Germany are responsible for integrating media in education whereby it is not limited to a certain subject with a specifically trained educator but is included in cross-curriculum projects, as well as events and activities beyond the school boundaries. Furthermore, Spanhel assumes an extended concept of text in media, one that includes all intricate symbolic texts in addition to conventional written texts. In that sense, German lessons become a central point of an 'integrated media education.'

In his paper, "An Approach to Integrating Media Education into Everyday School Life and Instruction at Secondary School Level, Spanhel proposes an approach to media education that integrates it in the usual school curriculum. The vertical structure of this curriculum focuses

on the idea of model media, whereby for every grade learning is focused on one medium only, (without specifically eliminating use of other media). This is useful since teachers can then focus on teaching their students everything about one medium during one school year, helping students to gradually achieve competence in different media over the years. The order of the media across the grades is:

"5th grade: pictures (photographs, slides, drawings, comics, prints)

6th grade: audio-visual media (films, videos, TV)

7th grade: audio media (radio, cassettes, CD)

8th grade: print media (newspapers, magazines)

9th grade: multimedia (CD-ROM. Internet, e-mail)"

This model has been complemented by two working principles:

- Advancing the language and reading competences since they compose an integral aspect of media education across all school levels.

- Using computers as a universal learning method, so working on computers has to be incorporated in daily teaching across all grades. This necessitates that at least one computer be present in each classroom (Spanhel, 1999).

On the other hand, the horizontal buildup of the model includes the various ways of media education and technology integration into the classroom. This integration includes:

- Connecting the learning objectives of the different subjects with media literacy deliverables in specific lessons, such as the text of advertisements in German class, the analysis of violent videos in social studies class…etc.

- Linking the application of media literacy topics in specific subjects, such as the comparative analysis of art presentation in the media in Arts subjects.

- Developing cross-curriculum outcomes, such as producing a radio show that addresses a historic issue in co-operation with History or German subjects.

Practices for school level integration include:

- Offering media specific groups, such as photography, radio, videos…etc, and training students to become media specialists.

- Extending media literacy related activities beyond school time, linking other schools via e-mail, or co-operating with local media (newspapers, local radio…etc.).

(Spanhel, 1999).

     Greece. In his paper on "Media Education in Greece, Antecedents and the New Challenges in a Time of Crisis," Kostas Voros (2013) presents the situation of media literacy and education in Greece. Voros discusses how school curricula have been going through restructuring and developments over the past 15 years, to include more media education components. He cites that the first and only systematized media education program for Greek schools was the Melina Project – Education and Culture. This initiative was introduced in 1995 as a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture to teach students the arts 'with the arts.' This came in a time when the prevalent attitude towards the media was protectionist, the project, however, viewed media as open and full of potential for children. In fact, media were seen as a type of art and a communication tool. In 2010, the Ministry of Education adopted an initiative for teachers on television education, encouraging schools to embark on similar projects. The Television Education Network was circulated to 120 schools, in addition to supporting teaching resources. Voros pointed out, however, that this project operated under the umbrella of Health Education, raising comments on how this initiative

implied that the media can pose a danger on children, whether health or ideology wise, limiting the role of media education to only protection (Voros, 2013).

Asia

In China, Zhang Yanqiu's study "Media Literacy in China: Research, Practices and Challenges" (2010) addresses recent media literacy approaches. Even though media literacy programs have been integrated in the educational system for many years in other countries of the world, it can be said that "China is still young at the end of the 20th century when media literacy remained as a borrowed term from the English-speaking world. It was right at the end of the last century scholars in mainland China started to fix their eyes on media literacy and media education." In his research, Zhang pinpoints journalism education examples in the early 20th century, with the notion of "political communication through wallpaper" highlighted during this revolutionary period, in addition to film education in the 1980s and 1990s. He labels these approaches as the "first wave of media education." Furthermore, Zhang identified what he believed to be the second wave booming in the late 1990s, concluding that "the developments and achievements in media literacy research and practice so far are inspiring."

Regionally

According to Jad Melki (2014), media literacy as an emerging field of media literacy in Lebanon and the Middle East still faces several challenges, the most obvious being a lack of research or case studies catered to the local audiences so as to utilize in building curricula. Furthermore, Melki identifies one specific research area the region lacks which is habits of young Arabs in media use, that, thus, makes it more problematic to build relevant and useable curricula.

As a backdrop for the Middle East's media landscape, it can be said that significant developments were witnessed in the region starting the mid-1990s, and the evolution of satellite television, mobile communication and the Internet (Kraidy, 2002). In recent years, social and digital media provided previously marginalized individuals with a voice as well as the resources needed to make these growing voices more heard (Melki, 2014). In fact, these novel media channels have been associated with intensifying and exacerbating the 'Arab uprisings' (Ghannam, 2011). The influential role these media played in the Arab Spring, however, remains a debated topic that is open for more studies and research, with one side arguing for social media's insignificance in the movement, and others going as far as labeling the Arab Spring a 'Facebook revolution' (Melki, 2014).

Despite the fact that Internet penetration in Arab countries is still below average globally, according to the 2009 Arab Knowledge Report, there is a surge in Arabic content online (Melki, 2015). This is why it is crucial for Arab governments to integrate digital and media literacy into school curricula. What Arab governments have been doing, however, according to Rinnawi (2011) is trying to advance but also restrain and control the Internet at the same time. "At the same time that they are aware of its importance to their economic development and its vitality in attracting foreign investments, they perceive it as a factor that affects the political and social stability of their countries" (Rinnawi, 2011). Adding to that, Hroub (2009) claimed that not only governments, but also religious institutions attempt to control the Internet. He also argued that the impact of digital media and the Internet is exaggerated in Arab societies, since access is still available mainly to advantaged elites. "With the continuity of socio–political authoritarian

systems coupled with illiteracy rates and technological poverty, the Internet stays on the margin both as a public sphere of freedom and as a venue for political action" (Hroub, 2009).

Lebanon. Lebanon's International College (IC) can serve as a useful case study of a private K-12 school that successfully integrated media literacy components in all its courses. The vision of the school is "to inspire the learners of today to be global citizen leaders of tomorrow," highlighting critical thinking that empowers students to become role models (Abu-Fadil, 2007). Mojabber Mourani[5] explained how media literacy instruction is incorporated in IC's curricula; using print and electronic media to educate students on how to search for bias, unannounced agendas, or intentionally misleading messages. Moreover, students are asked to analyze what they see and feel. The school's International Baccalaureate curriculum includes using media literacy in Language, Social Studies and Information Technology in a Global Society (ITGS) classes. During these classes, students look at journalists' work as well as social media to report their findings. Media literacy has also been a big part of IC library competency classes held for interdisciplinary purposes. During these classes, students learn to analyze websites for possible biases and identify the agenda of those responsible (Abu-Fadil, 2007).

The Media and Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB), established in 2013, has worked on expanding media and digital literacy education in the Middle East through offering needed training, curricular content and resources, as well as motivating teachers and professors to transfer what they learn at the Academy to their students[6]. The Academy provides its trainees

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[5] IC Executive Vice President

[6] http://mdlab.center/

of students and faculty with a unique opportunity to study media and digital literacy, as well as develop curricula to publish in an open source environment.

        Morocco. Media literacy is still in its beginnings in Morocco; it is not incorporated in schools and it is not on the government's agenda. As is the case with many Arab nations, for Moroccans, "literacy" translates to the ability to simply read and write. This definition, however, falls short of identifying how to read and write in today's digital world (Nfissi, 2013). In 2009, The Moroccan Emergency Plan for Higher Education announced that 'Media Studies and Cyber Culture' will be introduced in the course curricula of the Arts and Humanities faculties. This aimed at helping students better understand and analyze the roles and functions of media. The main concepts introduced to students included; how media messages are intentioned to make profits and assume power; how to critically think to be able to recognize fabricated statements endorsed by media; how the media can shape people's values and opinions; the importance of questioning the contents of media messages (who is this message targeted at, using what strategies and with kinds of effects?), the importance of not being addicted to any one source for information given that different sources use different ways to present a topic; the importance to dig deeper than the surface and to detect discrimination, stereotypes, offence, manipulation, misrepresentation, or distortion for certain reasons; finally, how media can be utilized for sustainable development (Nfissi, 2013).

        Qatar. According to Abu-Fadil (2007), in 2012, a big project to teach school educators about media literacy was conducted to provide them with tools to better communicate with their students such as how to use social media for educational purposes. The project's objective was to

clarify to teachers how students use media, so they can utilize this knowledge to enhance

communication with them. Devices used by students, such as smartphones, laptops and tablets,

were introduced to teachers to use for watching videos, playing video games, or uploading

produced content online. The training also introduced primary- to-secondary school teachers and

administrators to UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy: Curriculum for Teachers, which

has been a vital resource readily available in four languages (Abu-Fadil, 2007).

CHAPTER IV
MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

When and How?

"Education improves health and livelihoods, empowers women and other vulnerable groups, boosts economic growth and reduces poverty in ways that helps to lock in gains for generations to come. Education enhances economic growth… Equitable education can help people claim the kind of democratic change that will ensure development benefits all citizens"[7] (UNESCO). According to Xiguang (2013), effective education reflects; 1) an open environment to novel technology and understanding; 2) knowledge dissemination through teacher-student collaboration; 3) classroom teaching methods that encourage a positive teacher-student relationship (Xiguang, 2013).

It is worth noting that media education is "the process of teaching and learning about media" (Buckingham, 2003); whilst media literacy becomes the result. Media literacy is comprised of a set of communication skills that include people's ability to "access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication" (National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), 2016). In many countries, 'media literacy' is more widely used than 'media education.' According to Domaille & Buckingham (2001), the use of the notion of literacy is strategic, as it provides a foundation for integrating media tools alongside textbooks in established curricula. Furthermore, the use of the term 'literacy' reveals a wider argument of evolving student needs in a media-packed world. A broader umbrella of 'literacy' is needed if education can effectively address modern day realities (Domaille & Buckingham, 2001). It is

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[7] http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002192/219202E.pdf

important to also differentiate between media education and educational media - that includes the use of media tools or technologies for educational purposes. In the context educational media, learning through media is considered a means rather than an end (Domaille & Buckingham, 2001).

Two striking trends in the scholarship on media literacy and education have emerged; the call for societies to become more media literate and pinpointing the skills required to reach that level, evident in numerous initiatives adopted by different governments and civic institutions. This is in addition to research conducted to assess the results of acquiring these skills in achieving better civic and political engagement, and reaching a higher awareness of one's own surroundings. Furthermore, the study of how citizens reach a deeper understanding of media content, achieving higher levels of enjoyment and appreciation for the leisure aspect in media consumption, as well as a better appreciation of the social roles that media should have (Mihailidis, 2008).

A nationwide survey (conducted in 2002) of media literacy courses in higher education found that there is a lack of well-rounded grasp of what media literacy education actually entails, or what such education aims at achieving within a university classroom (Silverblatt et al., 2002). These same ambiguities can be said to still exist to date. This has contributed to why the infiltration of media literacy tools in universities has been slow.

In his thesis dissertation titled, "Beyond Cynicism: How Media Literacy Can Make Students More Engaged Citizens," Paul Mihailidis (2008) explains how there are not enough

studies done on assessing and analyzing the outcomes of media education at the university level. Moreover, not much research has been dedicated to such outcomes as measured for higher education or pre-university levels.

This is alarming since students, young adults, are repeatedly exposed to judgmental and adverse media messages without being exposed to the media as essential tools for a democratic society. They become more prone to express cynicism towards their media. Conventional media literacy and education models, therefore, usually focus on attaining critical analysis skills. A more comprehensive media literacy program will also predict how these newly acquired analytical skills produce more aware, engaged, and empowered citizens (Mihailidis, 2008).

According to Buckingham and Domaille (2009), there are 'key concepts' that are internationally recognized as a primary framework for developing media literacy curricula in schools. The 'languages concept' tackles "technical, symbolic and narrative codes and conventions used across communications forms, including the print, audio-based and moving image technologies." This is followed by 'representations' that deal with all social or cultural factors that are considered when a version of reality is reproduced by media. Moreover, 'knowledge about institutions' addresses information about the entities, processes or the people involved in either empowering and limiting certain media messages or use through "funding, producing, distributing, circulating, promoting, accessing and regulating media and popular culture." The 'technologies' concept enables students to consider the operational as well as the social factors associated with production and communication technologies. Finally, 'audiences' are acknowledged directly as a message's 'target audience', or in terms of how different

members of the audience react to media as citizens or message consumers, or even message creators, since they become producers themselves (Dezuanni & Hughes, 2013).

An example of a media literacy course worth addressing is the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism's Media Literacy course (2008). The course generally covered trends in the media landscape (media as businesses, ownership structures, history), in addition to themes found in media messaging (news, politics, gender representation, race/ethnicity stereotypes, sex indicators), and addressed specific media outlets (print, radio, TV, digital media, the Internet). The course addressed the above topics in a critical manner, and exposed attendees to issues pertaining to advertising, body image depictions, violence, war, propaganda, political campaigning...etc. Furthermore, it instilled in the students how to be more active and aware media users. Results of the evaluation of this course showed students who possess skills in media assessment, and an ability to deconstruct messages critically and in detail (Mihailidis, 2008).

Despite implementation of more media literacy programs on the university level, Silverblatt et al. (2002) still believe that some confusion still exists on the components of such program and its acknowledgement. They claim that "there appears to be considerable confusion within the higher education community about what media literacy is and what makes up a media literacy curriculum." Courses otherwise not categorized under media literacy have been reported with other titles such as "educational technology, introduction to mass communication, mass media, television production, digital video, basic filmmaking, mass communication theory and research, media and community... [etc.]" (Silverblatt et al., 2002). All these courses can possess a

media literacy orientation. However, given varying content, it becomes hard to differentiate whether or not such courses have what it takes to create a media literacy educational experience.

In attempts to avert that confusion, many courses are being offered that include the term "media literacy" as part of the course title. Where this approach does not necessarily reflect a media literacy philosophy, it signifies that they are using the term basically to adopt curricular changes to the courses. Going one step ahead, some course providers offer media literacy education catered to a specific discipline. The University of Vermont, for example, has offered a "Media Literacy and the Environment" course that tackled basics of media literacy competencies in relation to environmental issues, including "advertising, public relations, consumerism, commercialism, media economics (ownership and control), media coverage of environmental and global issues, and media and environmental activism" (University of Vermont). Another example is the University of San Francisco and how it incorporated digital media literacy in a course about classroom educational technologies. These efforts exemplify how the term media literacy is versatile, and is constantly expanding to include different disciplines and subjects of study.

Such versatility, however, makes it more challenging to pinpoint what exactly can pass as a media literacy curriculum. As evident in scholarship, there is no one single answer to that question. It becomes safe to assume that media literacy is, by virtue, subject to many and diversified interpretations. Generally speaking, media literacy includes most constituents found in media studies and/or mass communication fields. It is different, however, from the general

study of mass communication in that it is based on how to apply content to achieve certain outcomes (Silverblatt et al., 2002).

Where media literacy courses should be offered has also been an area of focus for experts and academics on the subject matter. Typically, media literacy as a subject of study falls under media studies or educational studies. The most evident venue has been through mass communication or journalism studies schools in universities. Through the media studies field, media literacy is often concerned with critical analysis of media messages to acquire skills necessary to view these messages in more well-rounded, comprehensive and knowledgeable ways. Media literacy in educational studies tackles how to prepare future teachers and trainers to include audio-visual or multimedia tools in their study plans. Both areas of media literacy usually coexist to yield most effective results (Mihailidis, 2008).

Mihailidis (2008) proposes that ideally, media literacy courses are offered to undergraduate students in universities as a core subject that is taken across all majors. This is because Mihailidis believes that the ever growing and diversified media landscape makes it crucial for students to get exposed to at least some form of basic education on the various ways media influence their lives, socially, politically, economically…etc. More advanced and detailed courses can be offered at a more specialized level for media and journalism students, as well as students of educational fields. Prospective journalists and media professionals are in dire need to learn how their work can have profound influences on their societies. Furthermore, teachers and trainers are also in need of education on how to integrate media tools in their teaching methods. All these goals can be attained through proper media literacy courses.

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It has been widely accepted that media literacy education is ideally integrated across curricula of all disciplines to yield best results (Christ, 2004). It can and should go beyond typical mass communication or media courses since it can provide "a new way to teach and more importantly, a new way to learn" (Thoman & Jolls, 2004).

In her study "Augmented Media and Information Literacy (MIL): How Can MIL Harness the Affordances of Digital Information Cultures," Divina Frau-Meigs (2014) recommends three methodologies that can be implemented in schools in terms of media education. The first model, 'competence model' that basically places students and learners as the focal point in the process, with objectives of enabling and empowering them with media tools and possible effects. Secondly, the 'citizenship model,' that places media in relation to the public, focusing on these channels as means to construct a well-educated opinion. This model promotes engagement among young people. The third model, the 'creativity model' fosters a practical and hands-on use of the media by the learners themselves, tending to be image and visually driven, with the assumption that producing media messages encourages critical thinking.

On the other hand, Tilleul, Fastrez, & De Smedt (2014) in "Education Competences of Future Media Educators" place more focus on the educators rather than the learners. The researchers posit questions such as the kind of literacy program to best serve teachers of young people, or questions that deal with teacher competencies. From their research, they view media as "infonnational, technical, and social objects," and they emphasize that teachers as well as students need to expand on their reading and writing skills in addition to navigating and organizing.

Marketa Zezulkova's research on media learning titled, "Media Learning in Primary School Classrooms: Following the Teacher's Pedagogy and the Child's Experience" (2015) examines teachers' pedagogical approaches and how they align with children's multilayered media engagements. The researcher conducted interviews with teachers in several regions in the world and explained how primary school teachers approach media literacy education. Zezulkova found that in their media education, primary school teachers focused more on the potentially adverse effects of media in their students' lives. They had the belief that they should work on rectifying or modifying the role that media play in social relationships or child development, and that they needed to fix their students' media preferences or consumption habits by revealing to them media's hidden and 'evil' agendas. She proposed that limiting media learning to these approaches can overlook the notion that these children's learning process and media experience are "holistic and lived, and should therefore be understood and approached as a single continuous experience" (Zezulkova, 2015). That is why teachers of young children should make use of the different media worlds that the children co-create and get engaged with instead of shunning these worlds out in hopes of protecting them. Zezulkova claims that "the sense of heterogeneity and homogeneity connected to individual and collective media preferences and practices, as well as classroom media trends, could assist the nurturing and balancing of sociocultural development and individuation." In fact, when teachers actively participate in their students' media culture, this can significantly strengthen student-teacher relationships, since the teacher draws on the child's media experience and builds on it rather than depend on scholarly concepts and rigid theories.

According to the UNESCO (1990), there are four main elements needed for developing media education in any country:

- o Establishing national and regional curriculum guidelines through the proper educational authorities.

- o Offering teacher training programs; which are not necessarily degree programs in journalism or broadcasting, but education degree programs with a 'media studies' specialization.

- o Providing teacher support through frequent educational programs, summer "refresher" courses, establishing organizations for teachers' growth and development on the national level, — through which teachers' specialization can evolve.

- o Making available needed educational teaching resources such as lesson plans, curricula, textbooks, videos or other multimedia tools…etc.

As for the informal training component in media literacy;

- Since media awareness is ideally integrated in all facets of education, be them formal or informal, all educators involved in "teaching" media literacy, starting from "day-care providers, religious educators, youth directors and perhaps even social workers and counselors" (UNESCO, 1990) are eligible to enroll in media studies courses that enable them to integrate media analysis and awareness into their teaching. More experienced school teachers can also make use of summer study opportunities or trainings on new trends to teach today's tech-savvy students.

- Teachers specializing in media or communication studies need specific trainings that include:
    1. Different theories on media education.

2. History and main concepts of media literacy.

3. History of main media channels: television, film, radio, newspaper, etc.

4. Introductory skills in production for print, electronic and broadcast media.

5. Practicum in teaching methods on media and communication studies that are appropriate to the developmental needs of the age group being taught.

In order for media and information consumers to make the most out of the messages they access, their minds need to receive the needed empowerment and training to be able to understand and respond to them. "Without a [media literacy] policy and strategy, disparities are likely to increase between those who have and those who do not have access to information and media, and enjoy or not freedom of expression. Additional disparities will emerge between those who are able and unable to analyze and critically evaluate and apply information and media content for decision-making" (UNESCO, 2013).

According to UNESCO (2013), media and information literacy as a concept entails competencies and skills that allow audiences to:

• Recognize the different roles that media play in democratic societies

• Communicate a need to receive particular information

• Be able to access the needed information

• Possess the ability to critically decode the content in terms of ownership, intention, objectives and credibility

• Be able to make sense of and utilize the ideas/information extracted

• Communicate the message that was extracted in an ethical and responsible manner

- Apply technological/digital skills in processing media messages as well as in producing/creating content

- Engage with other media producers, including those online, to express one's ideas, exercise freedom of expression, and create intercultural dialogue

Also, according to UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers[8], several intertwined literacies can be involved with media literacy. These are; "Computer Literacy, Digital Literacy, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information Literacy, Information Literacy Internet Literacy, Library Literacy, Media Literacy and News Literacy."

The curriculum lists main outcomes of media literacy as:

Media Literacy

Understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies	Understand the conditions under which media can fulfil their functions	Critically evaluate media content in the light of media functions	Engage with media for self-expression and democratic participation,	Skills needed to produce user-generated content	Use of ICTs in this process

Figure 2. UNESCO Media and Information Curriculum for Teachers. Outcomes of Media Literacy[9].

CHAPTER V
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and Gratifications Theory

In the middle of the 20th century and with the widely accepted theory of direct media effects; media messages have been seen to have immediate effects on all people in the same way. Researchers including Blumler, Katz, and Gurevitch started to question this theory and proposed new theories that evolved around the ideas of limited effects of media messages, selectivity, perception and retention, as well as uses and gratifications. The latter assumed that media effects mainly depend on how individuals 'use' media in what selective ways to achieve certain 'gratifications' they need, – or what people want out of consuming the media. If people seek information they need and actively use it, this information in turn has a great effect. In the same sense, when people use media for purposes such as "escapism, entertainment, or social relaxation," they will not have the same strong effect (Mihailidis, 2008). Furthermore, Uses & Gratifications theory considers the audience as active individuals who take part in a decision making process when consuming media. This is as opposed to the previously widely acclaimed notion that audiences were passive recipients of media messages (Mihailidis, 2008). In 1974, media scholars Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz published their work on The Uses of Mass Communication. They included Professor Michael Gurevitch's model on uses and gratifications that entailed seven points addressing the "social and psychological origin of needs, and how such needs relate to media" (Newbold, 1995). These scholars investigated the amount of time individuals typically spend with television, and analyzed factors such as "companionship, relaxation, passing time, arousal and habit" in order to build the Uses and Gratifications theory (Sparks, 2002). Results from these studies helped the researchers formulate the displacement

hypothesis, "time spent watching television takes away from time spent on other important activities;" in addition to more studies linking television viewership habits to obesity (Sparks, 2002).

The Seven Point Outline Katz et al., came up with included: (1) origins of social and psychological (2) needs that create (3) expectations of (4) media messages or other sources, leading to (5) diversified patterns of exposure (or engagement in other activities), that in turn result in (6) gratification needs and (7) other consequences, mostly unintended ones (Katz, et al, 1974).

One of the main drawbacks of the Uses and Gratifications theory is how it is measured, or its methodology. This is because studies on this theory heavily depend on people self-reporting their consumption habits of media, which is contingent on people accurately making these reports. Participants in this type of research may end up reporting the ideal number of hours they spend with media instead of how many they actually do. The Uses and Gratifications theory, however, continues to have a strong influence in 'the media effects' research track, and continues to make significant contributions to the concept of active, rather than passive, audiences (Mihailidis, 2008).

How does the limited effects model, and Uses and Gratifications theory that stems from it relate to media literacy? This is important for teachers of media literacy or media educators who need to consider how media are 'used' by audiences to reach certain 'gratifications.' In this day and age, media consumers can basically get hold of diversified or relevant information from

many sources. These sources typically reflect "a mix of entertainment, leisure media and civically relevant information. The choices that uses and gratifications address are the departure points for media literacy" (Mihailidis, 2008). People who are taught how to make use of the media to achieve goals of entertainment or civic gratification become citizens who are better informed of their choices and more empowered. Through media literacy, people can learn how to use the media for their benefit, how to extract from them what they need and leave what they do not need out (how to be wiser selectors). They can learn how to enjoy what they see or read, and how to pinpoint relevant information to them. "**Media literacy must teach how to intelligently use media. It must teach how to find the information that is most relevant to users— whether for entertainment or civic purposes,**" (Mihailidis, 2008). In a time when audiences suffer from information overload, displayed on an infinite array of outlets and media forms, uses and gratifications become extremely relevant issues that concern the audiences' media consumption choices. Furthermore, given the availability of many options and means of communication, more so than ever before, the limited effects model and uses and gratifications theory also become relevant to media literacy education.

The study of the audience is deeply rooted in the Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). Furthermore, the flexibility, availability and wealth of media channels and messages in today's world as well as their empowering force, and their surveillance aspects have led to an evolution in the scope of audience research to include new social and digital media. This has led to a subsequent evolution in the Uses and Gratifications model in an unprecedented way, including factors such as citizen empowerment, engagement, activism and a synchronized utilization of different multimedia (Melki, 2014). According to Kraidy (2008), it

can be said that media uses in today's world encompass not just media messages, but can include a decent amount of content creation as well. This expansion complicates the previously clear division between message producers and message consumers defined under the uses and gratification theory. Audiences can become message producers who are in turn influenced by the way other 'producers' use the content they produced. For media literacy, this can have repercussions on proposed educational content or curricula. Kraidy explains that, "Arab media institutions have in recent years adopted what can perhaps be best described as a modified encoding–decoding model through which viewers are given a sense of agency and where various staged 'oppositional' readings of the media text stand at the heart of the new trend in programming." This notion develops the idea of an 'active' audience that has empowered and interactive choices, and that in turn 'reproduces' a system by participating in it (Kraidy, 2008). This becomes why media literacy education should include critical writing or reflexivity in addition to critical reading of media messages.

Media Ecology Theory

As a mass communications theory and subfield from communications research, Media Ecology addresses diverse disciplines at its core. In fact, the theory's main role is to pinpoint how different variables within a 'communication environment' interact; be them the messages, the channels, or the audience at both ends, all that given certain societal, political, or economic factors that in turn shape the communication context (Jiankang & Jun, 2015). As there is an ideal state of balance to that environment, or an equilibrium, typically reached when all the above factors harmoniously come together with the main objective of empowering and informing the citizen in a democratic landscape, there are other viewpoints that tackle the state of 'imbalance' in a given media environment or ecosystem. These perspectives on the unsettling of media's

balance include, but are not restricted to, the upsurge in social media marketing, the growing

trend of spreading rumors and misinforming audiences, in turn resulting in a general distrust of

media as a source of information. Furthermore, the absence of regulation of or regulatory bodies

for the online media industry, as well as the digital gap between urban and rural audience, also

contribute to a state of imbalance in the media ecology (Jiankang & Jun, 2015). Media literacy

steps in to contribute to restoring a media's balance in the ecosystem in which they exist. When

audiences are well informed of their options, media's intentions, messaging schemes, as well as

have the necessary skills to become active participants in creating media, the issue of

'imbalance' is resolved, and the lack of regulation does not become an obstacle anymore as

audiences can pick and choose what is in their best interest and what is not.

An example of a media ecosystem includes different media channels such as newspapers,

television, radio, magazines, the Internet as well as digital and telecommunications media.

Currently, the industry focuses more on new media, personal media, as well as the convergence

of these new typologies with traditional media (Jiankang & Jun, 2015). It can be said that new

technologies in the communications field and their influence have become the new focus of

many scholars working on media ecology studies. "Communication technology is one factor that

affects media ecology. As one of the most profound technological innovations in human history,

new communication technologies will have a great impact on both the internal ecology and

external ecological factors in a media environment and will eventually lead to the change of the

entire media ecosystem" (Jiankang & Jun, 2015).

Tracing the origins of the theory, it can be noted that its rise began around the year 1996 up until 2003, with works represented by two leading professors in that area; Professor Yi Hong and Professor Shao Peiren. It can be said that Professor Yi Hong was the first academic to utilize the media ecology theory in conducting research. It was Professor Shao Peiren who began to address Media Ecology systematically, eventually establishing the subfield (Jiankang & Jun, 2015).

Media Ecology was introduced as a theory in the 1960s but was originally ignored by scholars. It was the creation of the Media Ecology Association in 1998, as well as the spreading of the Internet, and the focus on media convergence—that led to a renewed interest in approaching the media as a whole, and thus, academics such as Marshall McLuhan began consolidating media ecology in the communication and social sciences studies (Scolari, 2012). The theory attempts to determine the different roles media make us play, and how they structure what we see or think, what we feel and eventually, what we do. Postman (1970) postulated that it is "the study of media as environments" and developed the metaphor of ecology that applies to different texts (Scolari, 2012).

The metaphor assumes that media are environments meaning that people can live within these environments, much like fish live in water. It is within this environment that people create technologies, including the press, television, radio…etc., that end up modeling our perceptions and cognitions of the world around us. In 1977, McLuhan postulated that media ecology arranges "various media to help each other so they won't cancel each other out, to buttress one medium with another. You might say, for example, that radio is a bigger help to literacy than television,

but television might be a very wonderful aid to teaching languages. And so you can do some things on some media that you cannot do on others." Other researchers including Nystrom (1973) also claimed that media ecology can be defined as the study of "complex communication systems as environments" (in Scolari, 2012).

The scientific approach to media as a holistic environment that we live in rather than as small components that affect us, rose in parallel with the environment-awareness movements in the United States that emerged in the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, the first Earth Day was in April, 1970 (Dann, 1999). The same ideologies spread to other fields such as sociology and economy. According to E. P. Odum (1977), scientific endeavor should not seek to understand phenomena through meticulous study of smaller and smaller components only, but should also have a holistic approach, or to seek "to understand large components as functional wholes." It can be, therefore, said that the rise of this new theory came in response to a need for bigger attention to 'holism' in media, as in sciences and technology (Scolari, 2012).

Media Ecology serves a good theoretical underpinning for media education in the sense that it is through observing and analyzing young people's spent times with their surrounding media environments that consumption habits can be determined. Resulting would be well-targeted and meticulously formulated media literacy programs that can be derived. For example, in their study "Studying Youth in the Media City: Multi-sited Reflections," Sumiala, Suurpaa, Hjelm, and Tikka (2014) address the methodological challenges they face in studying youth and new media consumption habits. They, therefore, define a media city or environment as a place where young people live and interact using technology. They explain that "cities and youth are

both fluid phenomena that evade rigid definition: youth . . . are everywhere and nowhere; and contemporary cityscapes are sites that occupy both physical and digital realms, often simultaneously." The researchers, then, attempt to study urban youth and their media consumption habits, noting that the notion of a 'media city' was not novel. In fact, 19th century cities included a great deal of media experience, through public advertising or newspapers or even theaters. Today, the complexity of this media environment has deepened, therefore, through observing young people and recognizing their media spaces, the existing habits can be determined and the areas of needed education can be pinpointed and addressed.

Directed by the present literature on media literacy, I was able to uncover different variables that are at stake in media literacy among school age students in Egypt, including the student himself, the teacher, the school, the government, the private sector and the family role. The thesis will aim to address the following *research questions*:

RQ1: How is media literacy defined in the Egyptian context? and how does this definition compare to ones found in the academic literature?

RQ2: Based on teacher and expert observations, what are some of the indicators for media literacy that can be derived from receiving media education in Egyptian schools?

RQ3: How can a basic model of media education be incorporated in Egyptian schools? And what are some of the needed resources?

RQ4: What can be the expected skills and competencies that Egyptian students should develop by receiving media education? How can this progression be evaluated?

RQ5: Based on teacher and expert observations, what are the obstacles and challenges of introducing media education or the concept of media literacy in Egyptian schools?

RQ6: How can media literacy as a movement be advocated in Egypt?

CHAPTER VI
METHODOLOGY

Globalization in today's world entails a reconsideration of how education policy is approached and analyzed. This is mainly due to the fact that globalization has had a significant impact on policy production in general, and education policy in specific. Some of these variations include the global gradual migration from 'government' to 'governance' (Rhodes, 1997); in addition to more privatization directions within the public sector, which can also apply to the Egyptian context (e.g., the emergence of public-private partnerships in mega and national projects), and finally the trends of new public management that basically import management practices of the private sector to the public domain. Having said that, a widely accepted definition of public policy – and education policy for the purposes of this thesis – is "the authoritative allocation of values" (Easton, 1953). Moreover, a distinction can be drawn between an analysis *of* and an analysis *for* policy (Gordon, Lewis, & Young, 1977), with the former being the more academic approach seeking a better understanding of why and how a certain policy came together at a certain time, as well as how it has affected the status quo. On the other hand, an analysis *for* policy addresses research carried out with the objective of developing an actual policy, usually an initiative commissioned by policy makers. Policy research that is commissioned or prompted typically involves methodology that follows an 'engineering' process with a certain set of steps starting from specifying the policy objectives, examining possible strategies for implementation, determining the available resources, then choosing the efficient strategies needed to achieve the policy goals, and finally, implementing the policy on the action level.

Modern research methodologies, especially in the social sciences, emphasize the importance of 'reflexivity,' or establishing cause and effect, in a quality research study. Such approach, thus, requires an obvious articulation of the researcher's position, which is also significant to the phase of data collection and analysis. Bourdieu (Bourdieu et al., 1999), for example, spoke of a must to discard "epistemological innocence," that demands that the researcher articulates their position within the research frame "in terms of their value stances, their problem choice, and their theoretical and methodological frames." Furthermore, Bourdieu (2004) also spoke of the need for researchers to "objectivate" themselves so that they are able to deconstruct "taken for granted" rulebooks. On the methodological level, the attitude of being "qualitative and illuminative" can be seen in much of the research conducted for policy sociology. This, of course, does not suggest that all policy research should merely reject quantitative methodology; but rather, for empirical policy problems, a quantitative approach can be more appropriate. It can be said that policy sociology has several drives, not just descriptive or analytical, but can be normative or imaginative as well. Therefore, policy research can pinpoint potential strategies for change, in addition to narrating relations of power or identifying how policy processes can be developed, all leading to progressive change towards better democracies. On the practical side, studies on policy implementation in education have been successful, for example in the United States (Honig, 2006). Such studies can be top-down or bottom-up, using "backward mapping" approaches in the bottom-up studies (Elmore, 1979). "Backward mapping as a normative policy production approach looks at the site of practice which the policy wants to change, and then strategizes backwards to create the policy, structures, culture, and implementation strategy necessary to achieve such change" (Elmore, 1979). On the

other hand, a top-down study is typically concerned with "refractions, failures, or deficits in policy implementation" (Lingard, 2009).

Case study on media literacy in Egyptian schools. This thesis addresses the status quo in Egypt as well as offer policy recommendations for a nationwide model to introduce media literacy competencies in Egyptian public and private schools across different grades. My role as a researcher in this study was to collect data and attempt to derive meaning from it, and this meaning was subject to change and modification as the study progressed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). By definition, a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence… [and] is not intended as a study of the entire organization, [but] rather is intended to focus on a particular issue" (Noor, 2008). Typically, critics of case studies cite the lack of "systematic handling of data" as a key drawback to the method. This can be countered through a regular reporting of all evidence found throughout the research phase. Moreover, it is said that case studies offer no basis for establishing scientific external validity or generalizable results, a weakness addressed above (Yin, 2013).

For my case study, I employed both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, establishing triangulation, in order to be able to gain insight into the different variables involved with this timely topic. Perspectives of teachers were pivotal in deriving this model, since they form a variable that can be often neglected in media literacy research that tends to focus on the receiver and the material (Hobbs, 1998). With that in mind, the main purpose of this research is not the generalization of results, but rather to provide a greater understanding of the status quo in

Egyptian schools when addressing media literacy, as well as provide key recommendations to better implement these programs for school age students. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994), "The outcome of [qualitative] studies is not the generalization of results, but a deeper understanding of experience from the perspectives of the participants selected for study."

Qualitative method. Using in-depth semi-structured interviews with experts in the field, collectively referred to in this thesis as the Expert Group. This group provided needed insight into the main components and indicators of media literacy programs across different school years. They also uncovered a current lack of comprehensive and specialized media literacy programs in school grades. Experts chosen for interviews had some or all of the following criteria for selection; 'educators' with 20 or more years in the field of education communication or media education; 'researchers' who produced significant research in the fields of education, communication or media; 'professional position' they are holding or have at one point held that deal with research, policy and regulation in the fields of communication, education and media; 'affiliation to international organizations' or those who have participated in local, regional or international projects related to media, communication or communication education held under international organizations.

For this study, I also used an analytic inductive approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to be able to look beyond the academic literature and build on theoretical frameworks (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Unlike a conventional journalistic interview for a news story, an interview for qualitative research purposes is considered a type of discourse that is rich with discussions of sentiments and opinions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The semi-structured interviews were

approximately 20 to 30 minutes, and were typically conducted during the weekdays. Before

beginning the interview, the interviewees were given enough time to review the consent form

(see appendix 4), that explained the purpose of the interview, any possible harmful effects as

well as the objective of the thesis. All interview questions were open-ended and allowed for

follow up conversations. The interview consisted of a total of 12 questions that addressed the

research questions posited in this thesis.

Upon completing the interview questions, interviewees were debriefed and were provided

with links to media literacy education resources available online. All interviews, conducted via

email, phone or in person, were transcribed. For easier reporting on responses, interviewees'

responses were grouped according to themes identified below, and were referred to as the Expert

Group where applicable. Where not applicable, names were replaced by a study code (ex.

"Interviewee A"). See Appendix B for the interview questions and Appendix A for a list of

expert interviewees. Out of 34 experts that I reached out to, I received responses from a total of

13 experts.

The interviewees' responses were transcribed and categorized into themes (also used in

the teacher survey analysis); indicators of media literacy and its implementation in Egyptian

schools, resources needed and possible challenges, in addition to possible evaluation/assessment

mechanisms. Recommendations for a media literacy program catered to Egyptian schools were

derived from the descriptive analysis, interviews and survey results.

Quantitative method. Surveys with closed and open ended questions were administered to a total of 202 teachers across grades 1 through 12 (elementary, primary and secondary stages) in both private and public schools in Cairo governorate (157 from private schools, 77.7%, and 45 from public schools, 22.2%). Participants were from a total of 28 schools; 18 private, and 10 public. School selection was based on accessibility and I attempted to balance between public government schools and private schools (national and international). Despite that attempt, it was challenging to enter public schools since they required a security permit issued from the schooling district and stamped by relevant security offices. This permit was needed over and above the CAPMAS approval letter that I received prior to beginning the date collection phase. This permit deemed very time consuming and bureaucratic, making it difficult to obtain, and creating this limitation. In fact, the public schools that were accessible are the only ones within the geographic area specified that allowed the research assistant inside at their own risk without the security permission. Schools selected were mainly in the Fifth Settlement and Heliopolis districts of Cairo. Future research with a bigger budget and less time constraints should be conducted to replicate this study outside the Cairo area and in other governorates across Egypt. As clear in Appendix C, the closed-ended 22 question survey followed a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree), as well as multiple choice questions. The questions included attempted to gauge teachers' motivations, preferred format and needed indicators to teach media literacy competencies in their respective classes as well as to list the challenges they claim to face in implementing any form of structured or unstructured media education.

Participant Sampling and Recruitment

According to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), as of October 2016, there were 1.2 million pre-university teachers across Egyptian

public and Azhari schools. This study relied on selective purposive non-random sampling, meaning that expert interview and teacher survey participants were selected based on certain criteria, most importantly-of which -aside from the screening factors mentioned above for the expert interviews -were availability and willingness to participate in the survey given the challenges mentioned above. Teachers selected had a minimum of a bachelor's degree, with years of experience ranging between 0 and more than 25 years. According to the Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods (2008), the primary aim for using a purposive sample is to create a sample that has the logical potential of being assumed to be representative; "This is often accomplished by applying expert knowledge of the population to select in a nonrandom manner a sample of elements that represents a cross-section of the population." This is why a purposive sample can be generally reflected as the most appropriate for selecting small samples typically from a restricted geographic area and when reference to the general population is not of highest priority (Lavrakas, 2008).

Upon receiving university IRB approval, permission was solicited from CAMPAS to administer the interviews and the surveys. A pilot survey, with a 2nd grade teacher in a private international school, was conducted to be able to refine the survey questions and establish face validity. Following the pilot and modifications, trained research assistants began to administer the surveys by going door to door to schools. Exclusion from the study was not based on gender, age or ethnicity. In fact, all teachers who met this overarching criterion were considered for inclusion in this study. This model of sampling "increases the likelihood that variability common in any social phenomenon will be represented in the data, in contrast to random sampling which tries to achieve variation through the use of random selection and large sample size" (Maykut

and Morhouse, 1994). Challenges other than bureaucracy in the date collection phase included; inaccurate or misinformation provided at the gate, such as that no free teachers are available to take the survey, which turns out to be not true. Further challenges inside the schools themselves included getting the teachers to take the time to complete the surveys. Many teachers expressed their belief that such a topic, albeit necessary, will not be implemented in the Egyptian schooling system in the near future, making the research subject irrelevant and uninteresting to them.

Expert interview participants were contacted in person, via email or via phone, and the nature of the research was disclosed, without prompting them to specific questions to ensure candidness and spontaneity.

Data Collection

I employed Riessman's (2008) thematic analysis model in analyzing the collected interview and survey data. This means that the data are construed through developed themes from literature, the research questions and the collected data. Three primary themes were identified as priori codes for the purposes of this research; media literacy indicators (what to include in a model media literacy curriculum), program implementation (resources, tools, when and how, teacher role, teacher training), and Challenges faced (what these challenges might be).

Both interview and survey questions were available to participants in both English and Arabic, depending on the participant's preference. After data analysis, all responses collected in Arabic were translated back to English for findings writing.

To reach more school teachers, I designed an online English and Arabic survey on www.surveymonkey.com that included the same questions in the same order as the hard copy survey disseminated by hand to school teachers in different schools. Data collection for the survey was, however, very challenging as well. Firstly, not many schools allowed the researcher or the research assistant in to conduct the survey citing security purposes or that teachers are busy in classes during that time. Secondly, many teachers were suspicious of the nature of this study and were hesitant to participate. Thirdly, the online survey, albeit easy to access (even from mobile phones), had relatively low response rates as well. The researcher attempted to reach teachers through word of mouth, as well as social networking platforms, namely, Facebook. Participation in the online survey was solicited on various relevant groups such as (Educators in Egypt, Teachers Community: Egypt, iTeach, American Teachers in Egypt, The English Language Teachers' Corner, English Teachers All Over Egypt, among others). I had intended to collect a sample of approx. 300 surveys, but given the above hurdles, that also include time constraints, I was able to obtain 203 completed surveys.

The interview and survey questions covered the six research questions, and included asking about personal experience; opinions; sentiment; challenges faced, and current success stories, if any. Questions for both the interviews and surveys were derived and inspired from my literature review since many foreign and regional media literacy models clearly outlined the needed skills and competencies a media literate person should typical enjoy.

Design

The purpose of this thesis is to examine areas where new policies can be introduced to promote the nationwide integration of media literacy education in Egyptian school curricula.

This is why it is essential to seek in-depth information on the current challenges that face the wide scale implementation of these programs. This study employs descriptive analysis of research, which offers fact-finding efforts requiring precise interpretation of results. The chosen qualitative and quantitative methodologies are, therefore, suitable for the study since they aim at highlighting the current situation on school-level media literacy in Egypt. Considering the research objectives of this thesis, the first task was to examine current media literacy programs, if any, carried out in schools by either the government or civil organizations as independent initiatives. After preliminary research into available records of school programs about media or communication education was conducted, primary data collection was initiated.

Operational Definitions

ICT. An umbrella term that "includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning" (TechTarget, 2016).

Media Education. The process learning about media through acquiring general skills in production and reception practices of the field. It is not restricted to printed material but includes other symbolic representations such as images and sounds. It enables individuals to analyze media messages in ways to understand their hidden and spoken meanings as well as evaluate their values. The process also includes critical and creative thinking. It empowers young people to be informed media consumers as well as media producers themselves (Frau-Meigs, 2007).

Learning through Media. Using media tools such as television, videos, newspapers, the Internet…etc.

Learning about Media. Learning about media messages, roles, responsibilities, effects…etc.

Active Learning. Learning by doing rather than just receiving lessons from their teachers. Active learning involves research, creative writing and production of content to be shared with others. It is a form of student-centered instruction emphasizes understanding the world rather than mimicking content. Understanding the world requires students to actively process and manipulate information. They have to observe the world and strive to reduce discrepancies between what they know and what they observe.

CHAPTER VII
FINDINGS

Survey Respondent Demographics

Out of the 203 completed surveys, the majority of the teachers were females (71.3%), while only (22.3%) of the respondents were male. As explained above, due to security difficulties, the majority of the schools that allowed the researcher and assistants to enter were private (77.3%), with only (22%) responses from public schools. Teachers who completed the survey reported teaching subjects ranging from English language (23.5%), Arabic (15.8%), sciences (14.5%), computer (4%), math (16.5%) and languages (French, German, Italian) (4%), as well as history, art and social studies. Many of the respondents teach more than one subject, such as literacy, numeracy, humanities and sciences; an arrangement in many private schools where there is a class teacher for every class who teaches the core subjects. This is not the case in public schools, where teachers teach the same subject, but mostly across many grade levels. One teacher reported teaching religion across all grades inside the school. As for teaching experience, the highest percentage of respondents (27.7%) had 6-11 years of teaching experience, making them fairly experienced and knowledgeable about the Egyptian schooling system. The majority (60.4%), however, only listed a bachelor's degree as their highest academic degree received, indicating a possible need for more professional development. Only 1.5% were PhD holders and 16.8% were MA holders. A small percentage (4%) indicated receiving a specialized diploma in education or teaching or PCGE qualification.
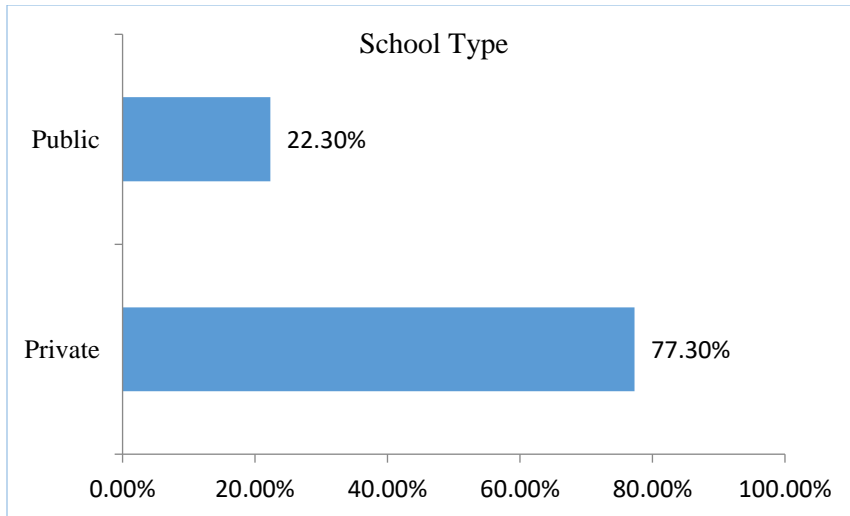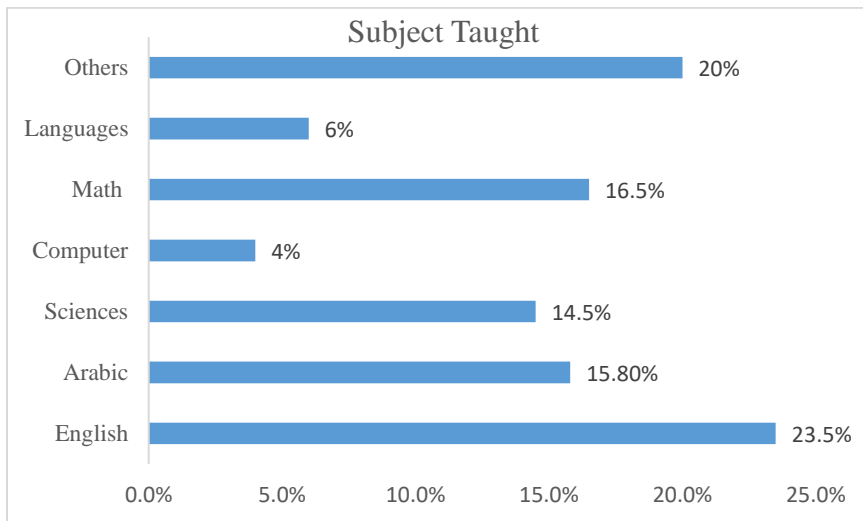
Figure 3. School Type

Figure 4. Subject Taught
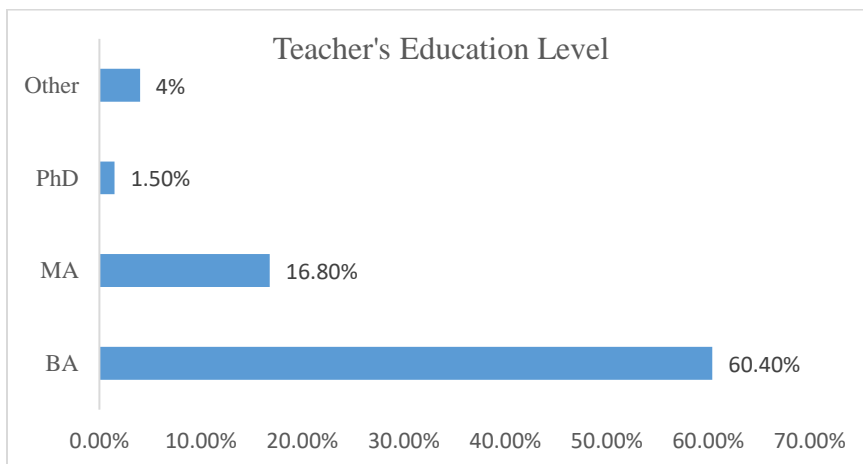
Figure 5. Teacher's Education Level

Media Education Indicators and Implementation

Based on the survey responses, the majority of teachers (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that receiving media education can help their students mitigate negative media messages. The average response was "agree" (mean=4.3 on Likert scale; SA=5, SD=1), and the standard deviation was only .799. The teachers, however, seemed to agree or strongly agree that their students can in fact distinguish fact from opinion in a given media message, with 53% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, and 22.3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (mean=3.4, falling between neutral and agree, with a bigger SD of 1.042). 41.6% of the respondents also believed (agree or strongly agree) their student can recognize that different media channels have their own editorial bearings; with 28.3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 28.7% remaining neutral to the statement. In fact, the average (mean) response was "Neutral." Furthermore, 51.3% of teachers also agreed or strongly agreed that their students can acknowledge, on their own, that information available online might not be reliable, while 34% believed their students do not possess such competence. The average (mean) response was 3.2, also close to neutral. Based on the above, while it seems that school teachers agree their students are in need of media education to avert negative effects of media messaging, they still acknowledge that their students possess critical skills to differentiate between fact and opinion, understand editorial idiosyncrasies of media channels, as well as the need to verify information online for reliability.

When asked about the potential threats students can be exposed to from the media around them, the majority response (64%) was 'misleading information' presented in the media, followed by 'negative body image' and 'stereotypes' with 53.7% and 52.2% respectively.

Threats such as radicalization (38.4%), discrimination (39.4%), commercial exploitation (39.9%) and gender misrepresentation (36.5%) were among the responses selected. Exposure to harmful trends such as "planking and clubbing" was listed in the 'other' option as a possible threat. 16.5% of respondents actually picked all available responses in that question since the question allowed for multiple choices. 87.1% agreed that these threats/risks can be avoided if children learn more about them at school (3.5% did not believe these threats are avoidable by receiving mediation at school, and 8% did not know).

As a follow up question to potential threats of media messages, students' current competence at critically analyzing these messages and whether receiving education helps mitigate these threats, the teachers were, then, asked to choose how they would teach their students to make use of the media around them for their benefit. More than half the respondents (58.1%) listed to teach the students how to be selective in choosing which media channels and which programming to consume daily. Teaching students about becoming aware of present media biases and motivations was also highly listed by respondents (52.7%), followed by teaching to question media intentions (40.4%) and creating an awareness of media's adverse effects such as stereotyping, violence, fundamentalism…etc (44.8%). Out of the 4.4% who selected 'other,' teaching students the importance of not accepting any opinions or news without verification as well as types of persuasion, were among the listed media education components.

It was clear from the survey question on whether school age students are receiving any or some form of formal media education that they are, in fact, exposed to some skills and competencies inherent in media education, but just not under that label or umbrella. Almost all

respondents chose from the listed media education components as being taught inside their classrooms. The below table indicates these choices and their percentages;

- Media languages: what is being said, how, why, by whom…etc.

- Media ownership schemes: media conglomerates, political or economic affiliations, ideology…etc.

- Media intentions: propagating certain messages, commercial purposes, public relations, false light…etc.

- Advertising effects: negative or positive effects, consumerism, creating a need…etc.

- Internet safety: cyber-bullying, Internet pornography/pedophiles, fundamentalism and recruitment to religious cults…etc.

- Online privacy: hacking, fake identities, fake accounts…etc.

- Audio-visual content creation: producing videos, podcasts, blogs…etc.

- Media audiences

- Critical analysis of media representations: body image messaging, stereotypes, propaganda, political recruitment, economic or business motivations, voter swaying, gender or religious representations…etc.
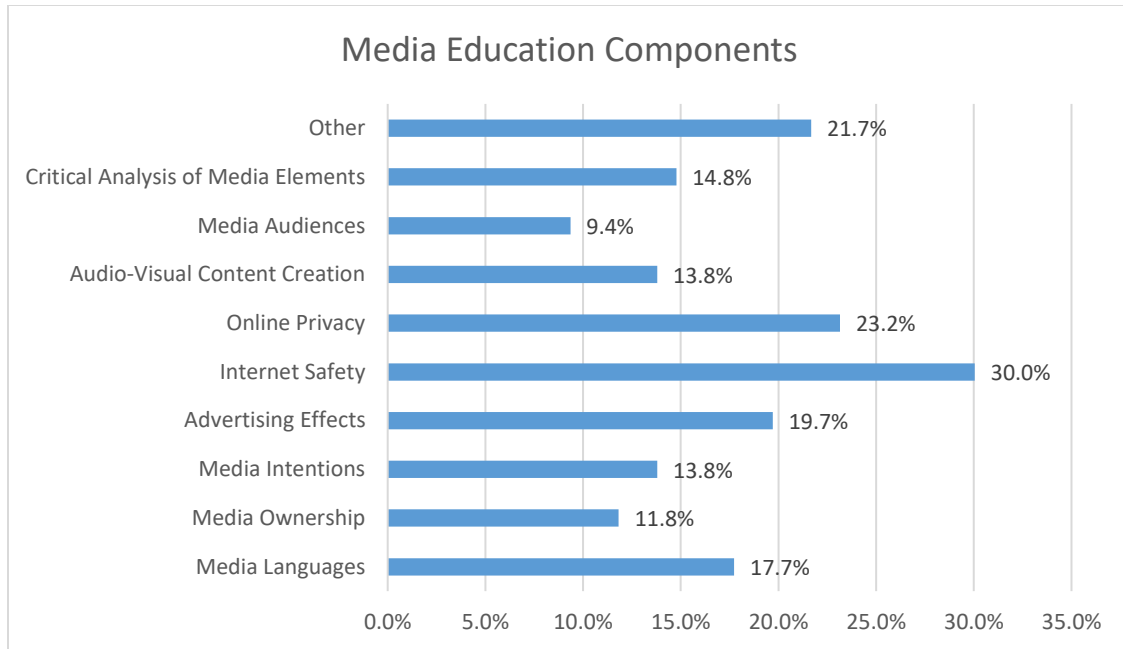
Figure 6. Are children in schools receiving any form of formal education about any of these media education components?

'Copy rights' was one of the topics listed in the 'other' response, in addition to online harassment and violence. Around 10% of respondents mentioned that none of these components are taught in their schools and they did not mention any alternative similar teachings.

From the literature, contrasts within media literacy approaches were found with two distinct outlooks, 'protectionist' versus 'empowering' (Micheli, 2013). The protectionist view, typically connected with media effects models, stems from ethical and societal considerations related to youngsters' consumption of media. The approach assumes that audiences are namely passive victims. The protectionist approach 'justifies media literacy by noting its power to reduce the negative impact of media on youth' (Hobbs, 1998). This is why such programs usually focus on adverse sides of media messages (violence, stereotypes, deception, etc.). It becomes the role of educators in that sense to protect young people from these negative effects by explaining the threats and problems found in messages, or teaching them to become defensive (Micheli, 2013).

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This approach has received wide criticism by scholars. For example, Buckingham (2007) stated that "effective practice in media education is not a matter of protecting children from the allegedly harmful influences of the media; [but] more active and critical participation in the media culture that surrounds them." On the other hand, media literacy academics who adopt the empowering outlook marginalize the media effects models and place media literacy within critical studies. They believe that media literacy ideally develops from audience experiences, and therefore, the main purpose becomes to teach these audiences how to utilize and harness the media rather than how to defend themselves from media messages (Micheli, 2013). To examine whether teachers in Egyptian schools will be inclined towards the 'protectionist' or 'empowering' approaches to media education, they were asked whether their roles in teaching their students about the media involved teaching that media are bad, misleading, and have negative effects on them, or teaching them that media are good as tools of finding and sharing information and opinions. 67.8% of respondents selected the empowering approach to media education, and only 10% selected the protectionist approach. Around 8% mentioned that both approaches are valid since media can be a double edged weapon, so students need to learn about their pros and cons.

In order to determine the basic buildup of a media education program within Egyptian schools, teachers were asked if students need to be exposed to media education integrated as part of an existing core course, or if a specialized dedicated course should be introduced to tackle these teachings. They were also asked whether this curriculum, if standalone or integrated, should be graded and counted towards the student's overall GPA; should not be graded (pass or fail, similar to Physical Education or Art classes); or offered as an elective/optional class that

interested students can enroll at. 58.4% of respondents preferred to have media education integrated in existing courses, while a relatively big percentage (34.7%) indicated their preference to have a standalone media education course, and 2% indicated the adoption of both arrangements. Half the respondents (50.5%), however, indicated that media education components should not be graded, but rather placed on a pass/fail rubric. 28% preferred offering media education as an elective course that only interested students can join. Some teachers in the 'other' section explained that media education should be offered as a mandatory class in terms of attendance only, or a class that is based on competitions and projects only, also not graded. When asked if learning about the media should be during regular school time (through formal education), or after school hours (as an extracurricular activity or session through informal learning), the majority of teachers (80.7%) selected the formal education option, with only 10.9% selecting informal education and 4.5% selecting 'other', mainly listing both options as viable.

Teachers were also asked which school subject they believe would be best to integrate media education, if it were to be incorporated in an existing subject. More than half the respondents (57.1%) selected English/Arabic (main subject) to integrate media competencies in. Computer, Social Sciences and Science will also highly selected with 40.9%, 43.3% and 40.4% respectively. Art and Math scored 17.2% and 30% respectively. Religion and Study Skills were among the 'other' subjects suggested by teachers, and approx. 8% selected all subjects as viable for integrating media education.

Subjects to integrate media education

Subject	Percentage
Other	4.4%
Computer	40.9%
Social Sciences	43.3%
English/Arabic	57.1%
Math	30.0%
Art	17.2%
Science	40.4%
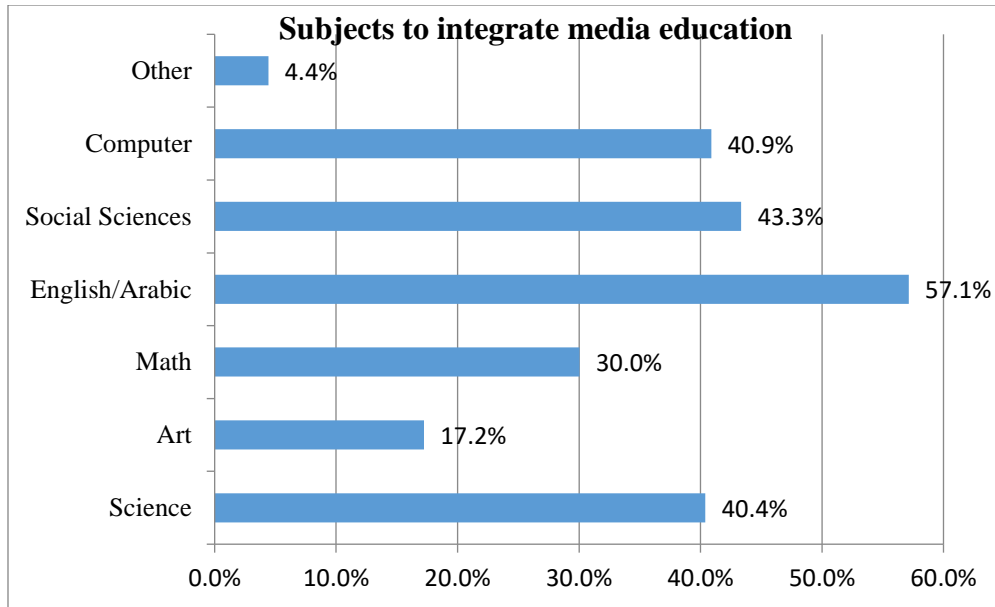
Figure 7. Proposed subjects to integrate media education

Through the survey questions, I also attempted to pinpoint the reported ideal age groups to begin receiving media education in its different components. Teachers were asked when they preferred school age students can start learning through the media, with 40.4% selecting higher primary stages (8-10 years old), followed by 23.2% selecting lower primary stages (5-7 years), 22.7% selecting preparatory stages (11-14), and only 9.4% selecting secondary stages (15-18) to begin exposing students to these skills. In fact, the teachers' responses to this question formed a bell shaped curve, with mean (average) answer of 3 (higher primary), and close deviation on both sides.
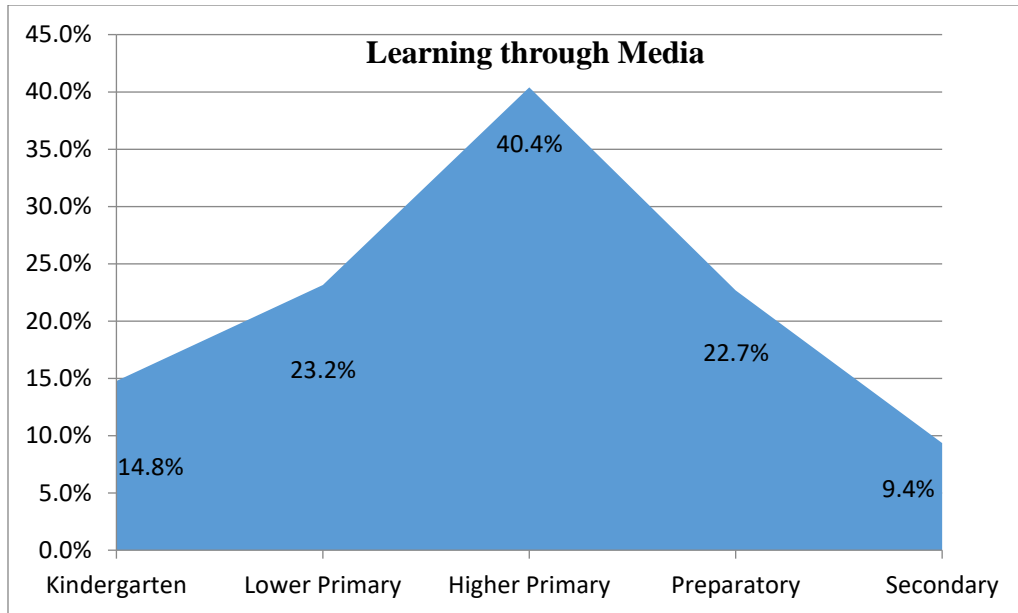
Figure 8. Ideal age to begin learning through media

In terms of ideal age to begin learning about media, the same response pattern also emerged, with 41.9% selecting high primary stages (8-10), 24.1% selecting preparatory stages (11-14), 23.2% selecting lower primary stages (5-7 years), and only 10.8% and 6.9% selecting secondary and kindergarten respectively.
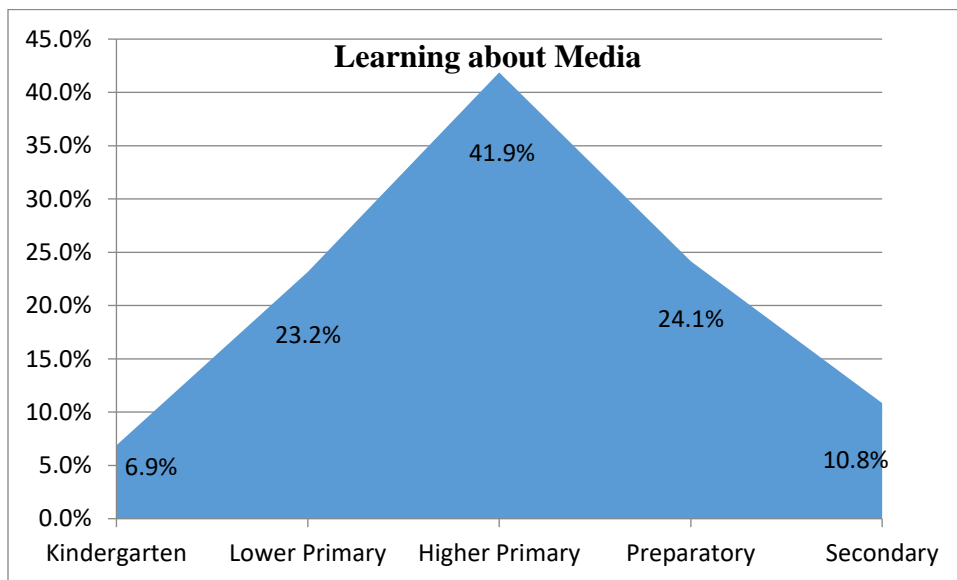
Figure 9. Ideal age to begin learning about media

Digital/Technological Tools and Education

Teachers were asked whether they typically incorporate digital or technological tools inside their classrooms, and whether, if they do so, this teaching approach is done as an initiative they volunteer with, or rather a school directive to utilize classroom technology. 76.2% of teachers reported using digital tools inside the classroom, while 22.3% do not. Out of those who do, however, only 19.3% do so on their own; while 44.6% do so as part of their school's teaching philosophy. Around 8% reported both approaches; their school's philosophy encourages the use of ICTs, and they also volunteer to incorporate more of these tools inside their classrooms

When asked when they believed children can start producing/creating content on their own for sharing with others, and in contrast with the ideal report age group to start learning through and about media (higher primary), more responses for this question lay in the older stages (preparatory: 45.3%), with 28.6% selecting higher primary, and only 4% choosing kindergarten stages (4-5 years).
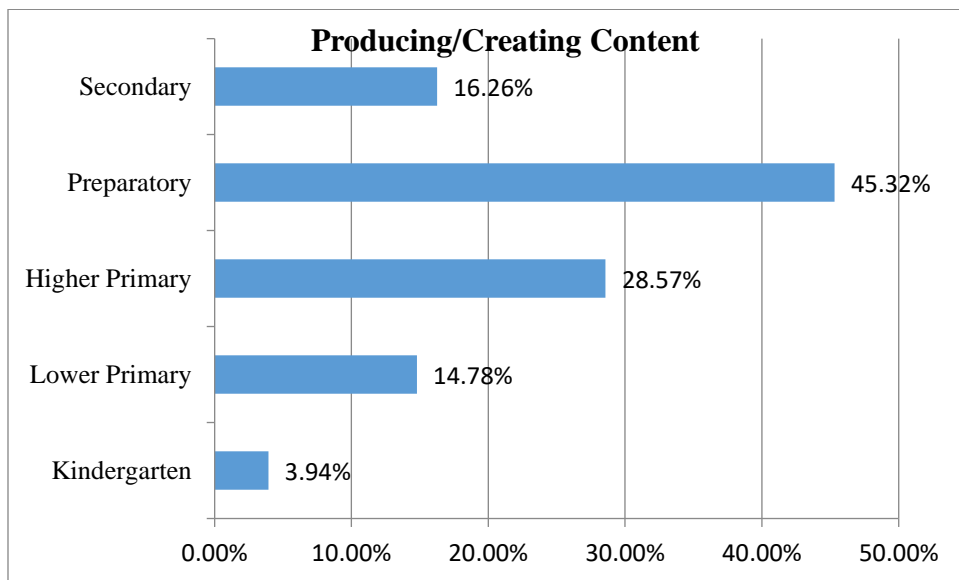
Figure 10. Ideal age to start producing/creating content

The survey also asked teachers if they think school children can be engaged in active learning; or learning by doing, as explained in the operational definitions, and if so, when to ideally begin that teaching method. This is because active learning is a key component of media education since it involves students' critical analysis, research, production…etc. The majority of teachers (91%) agreed that their students can engage in active learning (only 3% disagreed and 4% did not know). Out of this majority, 41.9% selected higher primary stages (8-10 years) as the ideal age to begin the pedagogical approach of active learning, followed by 24.6% selecting lower primary stages (5-7 years).

Engagement in Active Learning

Category	Percentage
Secondary	10.3%
Preparatory	24.6%
Higher Primary	41.9%
Lower Primary	19.7%
Kindergarten	19.7%
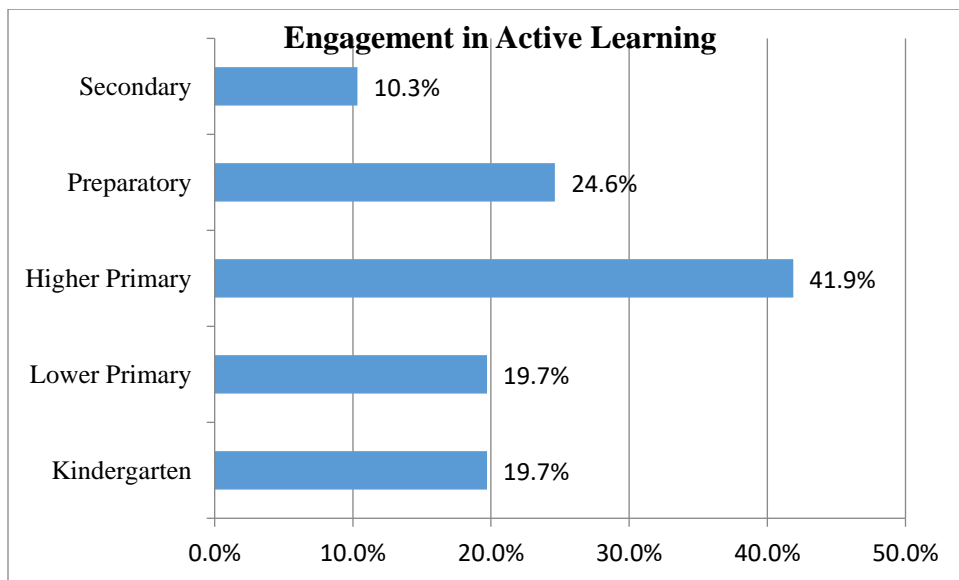
Figure 11. Ideal age to start engaging in active learning

Resources and Challenges

Since the survey questions were addressed at school teachers, the main question about needed resources addressed to them was concerning their needed training or capacity building. This is because teachers are not concerned with budgetary or ICT needs for media education. Their input was mainly needed in regards to the classroom implementation of media education and the idiosyncrasies associated with that. When asked whether they believe teachers in Egypt

need specialized training to be better able to incorporate learning through media in their

classrooms, 91.1% agreed, with only 5% not agreeing and 4% remaining undetermined. When

asked the same about incorporating learning about media inside the classroom, the same

response pattern emerged; 91% agreed to a need for specialized training, 5% did not see a need,

and 4% remained undetermined.

Finally, teachers were asked to select from a list of possible challenges which they

believed to be the main obstacles that schools will face in introducing media education to

different grades. A total of 11 choices were provided, that were derived from the literature, in

addition to 'other' option. The two challenges with the highest percentages were; lack of trained

teachers or educators for teaching the subject matter (44.8%), as well as the over crowdedness of

current school curricula which makes it difficult to add such new competencies. The latter choice

contrasts with teachers' choice to integrate media education in existing courses (58.4% of

respondents) and during school hours (80.7% of respondents). Furthermore, 3.4% of respondents

chose 'other' listing the following challenges; lack of reliable Internet connection, students'

unawareness of the importance of this skillset, and lack of motivation from parents.

Challenges

Challenge	Percentage
Other	3.45%
Over crowded curricula	44.33%
Lack of assessment rubrics	20.69%
Lack of time	40.39%
Lack of curriculum models	31.53%
Lack of school philosophy	20.20%
Lack of motivation from students	31.03%
Lack of motivation from teachers	28.08%
Lack of trained teachers	44.83%
Lack of production tools	32.51%
Lack of computer-based resources	28.57%
Lack of media tools	21.67%
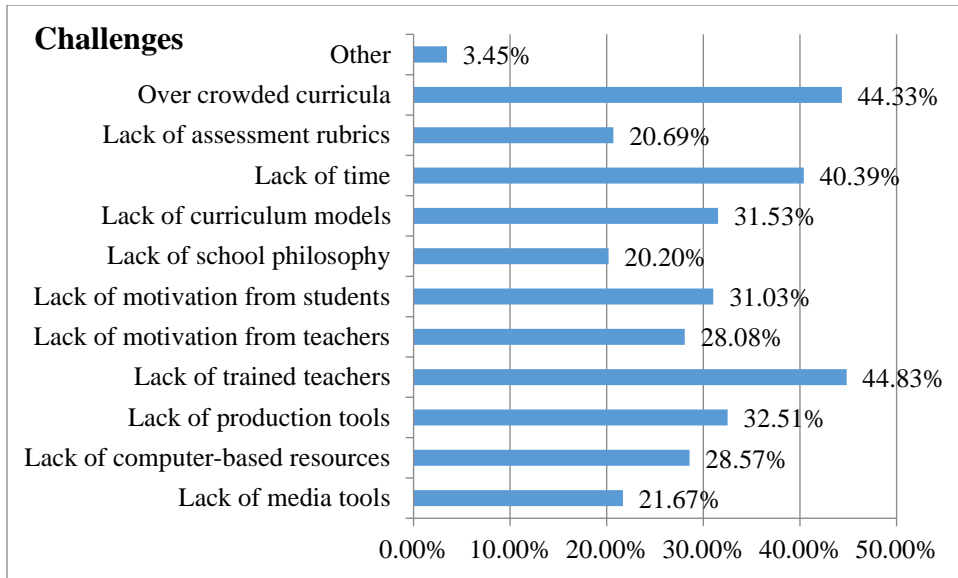
Figure 12. Possible challenges in introducing media education inside the classroom

CHAPTER VIII
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the primary research conducted through in-depth interviews and surveys, I was able to address the research questions posited in this thesis as detailed below;

RQ1: How is media literacy defined in the Egyptian context? and how does this definition compare to ones found in the academic literature?

The Expert Group presented interesting responses while defining media literacy, bringing some similarities with the literature, but also bringing new ideas. Most of the responses focused on the notion of 'awareness' when dealing with the media. Furthermore, 'empowerment' was also repeatedly brought up as a key takeaway from media literacy. "Rational use" of the media was a novel concept associated with media literacy. In that sense, interviewee K referred to the importance of teaching Egyptian youth how to rationally and fairly use traditional (television, press and radio) or new (Internet and blogs) media as well as satellite TV.

Interviewee H defined media literacy from an audience perspective as the ability to logically estimate what the intended effect that the writer wants to have on the audience is (the source agenda). This is in addition to the ability to control the effects media messages have and to select what is of benefit. "The goal is for Egyptian youth to be active consumers of messages not passive sponges to them."

Interviewee E emphasized the role of the family, and specifically the mother, in clarifying to her children the basics of media literacy. According to her, a mother should always follow what kids watch, supervising their freedom, especially in the first few years of education.

RQ2: Based on teacher and expert observations, what are some of the indicators for media literacy that can be derived from receiving media education in Egyptian schools?

RQ3: How can a basic model of media education be incorporated in Egyptian schools? And what are some of the needed resources?

On the basic level, indicators of media literacy include the ability to critically distinguish between fact from opinion; acknowledge that different media channels employ different editorial guidelines that dictate their outlook and content; recognize the information available online is not necessarily reliable, but requires verification. The expert group also indicated that among media literacy indicators is the skepticism associated with authenticity or goals of the message source, to end up with quality information which students can use to build their cognitions and behavior.

Furthermore, basic media literacy indicators, according to Interviewee B, involve explaining to the students why media's impact is more dangerous than they think. This is because students at an early age would not be conscious enough about how media work, so the more they recognize the significance of media, the more they will be willing to learn about it.

Interviewee H emphasized practical application; an audience -students- are given examples of media messages and they are asked to discuss what they think the automatic effects on them would be and what, as an active audience, they want to take from these messages. Moreover, students need to learn how to identify the different effects media have (some are strong, some are limited), as well as learn about how these effects differ by individual and cultural variations. Interviewee M provided examples on basic media literacy teachings; media

education aims to protect students from media influence; empower students as critical consumers; and enable them to produce their own media.

Interviewee D proposed a balance between theory/conceptual, critical/analytical, and digital/production teaching, as well as having the curriculum current and rooted in the local and national issues (as opposed to importing from outside). On the other hand, interviewee C posited that it depends on who offers the program; the state, a particular school, or a ministry, for instance. The Egyptian National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA) can have a code for media literacy, the League of Arab States can have a different code for media literacy, and so on. In the absence of effective media regulations, media literacy becomes a key demand, therefore, the platform needs to be cross-country or nationwide and not limited to one area or governorate. Media literacy should include a multiplicity of programs that work harmoniously and dynamically under a major media literacy umbrella adopted by the state.

In terms of the appropriate ages to receive media literacy competencies, it was indicated by teachers that perhaps the ideal age would be the higher primary stages (8-10) and up, especially in areas such as active learning and content production. Younger stages can be exposed to media education in terms of learning through and about media in the basic sense, keeping the more analytical and complex cognitive processes to the older school levels. Interviewee J also expressed a preference for media education to start around 7th grade (early preparatory stage), indicating that the best way to reach this group is for media literacy to be part of the regular formal school curriculum.

Interviewee D emphasized, however, that media literacy should be instilled in a person from birth to death. Younger kids: through their parents and caregivers; school age children: through summer camps, activities as well as by injecting media and digital literacy components in various classes and curricula. University students: through a core media literacy course, and adults: through trainings, workshops and awareness campaigns organized by local communities, NGOs, activists, political groups, religious groups (churches/mosques), and municipalities. Interviewee C believes that school-age children and youngsters are best suited to receive media education through their schools and universities, where they ideally spend most of their day. Media literacy education programs should be designed as a unit that progresses as the educational stages for the students do; meaning that a small component can be offered for ages 4-7, a bigger component for ages 8-14, a bigger more complex component for 15-18, and finally a major component for university students aged 18-23. Other modules can be established by the private sector or NGO's for special groups outside of school, after being reviewed by experts for assessment and accreditation. These experts can include educational departments or faculties of Education or Mass Communication that have a role in the development of faculty members and producing research in this field. They can also collaborate to determine (based on scientific research) the rules and regulations for media literacy/education trainers or teachers so to ensure high calibers who will later work in schools.

Based on the research findings, the Expert Group indicated that media education may not necessarily be graded, but can fall under a pass or fail study course similar to religion and/or morality classes. In fact, one interviewee saw a close link between religious, moral and media education, since they all constitute a system of adapting the minds of young people to be more

open and accepting of others. Teachers also agreed (50.5%) that media education does not need to be graded.

The Expert Group was also predominately against having separate courses for media education, also in agreement with teachers on the ground (58.4%). Instead, media education can be part of associated activities to some other courses like writing an essay that critically analyzes a movie, or a discussion on how to choose kinds of media to be aired on the school radio. Interviewee E mentioned that the culture of media education can be added to Arabic language or art courses such as music and drawing. "The topic should be highlighted at school and at home as well. Children should be raised while seeing wise choices taken by us so that they can learn to do the same."

Teachers and educators have roles that are very important in training students to gain media skills, produce media content and create media tools such as wall magazines, news magazines, school radio and school theater, as well as, to instruct them on how to deal with the media outlets.

RQ4: What can be the expected skills and competencies that Egyptian students should develop by receiving media education? How can this progression be evaluated?

By the end of a well-rounded media literacy course, school children should exhibit a basic understanding of what was presented to them. They need to be able to identify content that is not suitable for them. Suitability should be introduced in a way that does not create antagonism or rejection from the target audience. Students should be more critical, analytical, and skeptical of the information that they are confronted with on a day to day basis in the media

and even within their casual conversations/interactions with other people. They should be able to dissect the information they get from multiple perspectives to understand the underlying forces that shape these messages and to whose benefit/detriment (economic, political, social— gender/race stereotypes). Some key concepts should be: distinguishing fact from opinion, understanding sources, verifying information especially on the Internet, understanding the effects of media on society. Ideally, students should also have been introduced to the basics of digital media content creation, and in the best case scenario have found at least one digital medium that they feel comfortable with and empowered by to create and disseminate their own messages and information. Class can become much more interactive and appealing to students if they can compare their media productions with their peers in a productive and constructive manner. "They would never forget what they have learned if they are involved in the production process in all stages," explained interviewee A.

A balance needs to be created between the theoretical approaches and the practical ones. Because of local limits on equipment and infrastructure, it is always best to start with the free/cheap platforms that allow access to anyone with a smart phone and a basic data plan, for example. Content creation is in one way, shape, or form, directly tied to digital tools and the Internet. So the first barrier to overcome is for all citizens to have equal access to reliable and relatively affordable Internet. From there, the possibilities are endless, starting with "free" tools and platforms and then working up from there to more sophisticated tools. But again, this has to be done in tandem with media literacy principles—knowing how and where to find reliable information, the difference between fact and opinion, the importance of giving credit for other's work/ideas and not plagiarizing, etc.

In terms of evaluation and assessment, the Expert Group mentioned pre- and post-testing for students to determine their grasp of the material learnt. Students' critical abilities in terms of identifying message intent, fake news, politically or religiously loaded messaging…etc., can be measured through KPIs that are set when the lessons are planned.

RQ5: Based on teacher and expert observations, what are the obstacles and challenges of introducing media education or the concept of media literacy in Egyptian schools?

According to interviewee C, one main challenge is the official resistance to introducing media literacy approaches in education that requires modifying long-standing, nationalized curricula. Private educational institutions may have more success, but for public education systems/institutions, there is often a lot of pushback as media literacy is seen in some way as dangerous. Again, control over information is directly linked to power; so if you are democratizing information in the ways that media literacy aims to do, the powers that be (whether in the field of government or education) often get uncomfortable about what that will mean for their base of control over their constituents. Most established systems are resistant to any sort of change, as it often leads to a domino effect of other changes that the status quo is not always ready to deal with. This bureaucratic education culture in Egypt in addition to the environment, especially in national/public schools, is not ready on the teacher side or on the student side to receive such modules on media literacy. However, once a well-rounded model is reached, it can be replicated in public schools. Media literacy approaches need to be tailored to the specific local contexts, cultures and ideologies, so as to be effective without being offensive or threatening to more conservative sensibilities. Universal and affordable access to the Internet is also a must. No one can talk about media literacy in 2017 without the Internet.

There is also the obstacle that deals with the creation and promotion of this kind of programs, as well as the coordination among the state, the public sector and NGO's to implement such programs on the school or out of school levels (formal and non-formal education). The contribution of the private sector can be in making national campaigns and Public Service Announcements (PSAs), as well as creating relevant media programs and making them the discussion topics on popular talk shows in Egypt.

The lack of motivation on the part of school teachers was also a challenge addressed by the Expert Group. The teachers themselves also reported lack of motivation from students and educators as some of the challenges, with 31% and 28% respectively. "So far, we do not value the importance of media literacy that much. We deal with media without being aware and conscious of what media presents. Everybody thinks, wrongly, [that] he would never be influenced by media while he is being targeted and overwhelmed by it in a way or another," explained interviewee B. He emphasized a need, therefore, to first spread media literacy awareness among the society in general and among school students in specific. Over crowdedness of the school curricula is a major challenge if educators want to include media literacy competencies in different school subjects, as well as make time for active learning and student production. Interviewee D highlighted the lack of locally relevant curricula and teaching material in Arabic, and interviewee J described the connection between media literacy and free speech, believing that the former is founded on free speech and free press. "If the society isn't adhering to these norms, then a media literacy program will not be effective."

In terms of resources needed, the lack thereof is a challenge in itself. The Expert Group as well as the surveyed teachers reported a current lack of needed media tools mainly due to budgetary shortages for education in Egypt. Many schools do not afford computer-based resources (smart boards, computers, projectors, etc.), especially in public schools. Moreover, the lack of media production tools (cameras, audio recorders, etc.) in addition to the lack of trained teachers for teaching the subject matter. Teachers need to be educated how to deliver this knowledge to the students in an effective and proper way, so they have to become media literate themselves.

RQ6: How can media literacy as a movement be advocated in Egypt?

As detailed below in the *Chapter IX on Media Literacy in Egypt*, in order for a media literate population to emerge in Egypt, it is the responsibility of all sectors (private, public and civic) to come together for micro- and macro-programs on media literacy. According to interviewee C, governments, through ministries (ministries of Education and Higher Education) and school/university boards, are responsible. The civil society has a role as well in approaching potential groups and different audiences in different locations. The private sector is also an important player. Media outlets must carry messages regarding media literacy as well as promote it.

Furthermore, at the interplay among sectors, both top-down and bottom-up approaches need to be implemented; at the grassroots level as well as the policy making level. Top-down approaches can face challenges, such as the basic introduction of such education to different existing programs, as well as creating the caliber capable of teaching and managing content suitable to different age groups. Moreover, recruiting media professionals to endorse, educate

and create content suitable for audiences is also a tough task. The bottom-up approach can be

tricky, as providers need to ensure accurate measurement of comprehension and recall of

information through different kinds of research, whether through focus groups, survey research,

in addition to content analyses to measure applicability of content.

Interviewee H did not believe the media themselves can have an effective role in raising

media literacy awareness. This is because in her opinion, the media's primary goal is to sell the

audience to advertisers or serve a political and economic agenda. Families and caregivers, on the

other hand, in addition to schools, religious establishments and universities have bigger roles. In

the current absence of formal education, NGOs can step in.

CHAPTER IX
MEDIA LITERACY IN EGYPT

Current limitations in Egypt hinder average citizens from obtaining an acceptable understanding of the effects of current affairs on their daily lives; these limitations include a rigid state control on news media, an absence of journalistic ethical standards that result in wide spreading of rumors, polarity and political bias, in addition to a lack of adequate media awareness. Citizens, including children, therefore, need to be better equipped to overcome these obstacles in media systems by developing a good understanding of the media landscape, and be able to challenge defective media practices, in addition to acquiring needed skills to filter provided information for reliability and accuracy. Furthermore, citizens should learn and appreciate the value of the media around them and the worth of freedom of expression and freedom of information.

Egyptian Schooling System – A Quick Overview

The schooling system in Egypt can be considered one of the largest and most diversified across the Middle East[10]. Education in Egypt can be divided into secular and Islamic[11]. Secular schools can be public or private. Public schools in Egypt can be Arabic schools that teach the national Egyptian curriculum or Experimental Language schools that teach in English and that add a second language starting preparatory levels. As for private schools, there are four types; "ordinary" schools that adopt a curriculum close to that of public schools, but with better facilities and teachers; "language" schools that teach in English and introduce a second foreign language (German or French); "religious" or missionary schools with curricula based on religion

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[10] http://wenr.wes.org/2013/11/education-in-egypt

[11] Islamic schools teach conventional subjects in addition to Islamic and Quranic studies.

such as Catholicism; and "international" schools that introduce external curricula from the Unites States, the United Kingdom, Germany…etc.[12] Language and International schools fall under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and they typically offer a degree in addition to national *thanaweya amma*[13].

In Egypt, public schools fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. They are funded and supervised by the ministry and are free to the public. Primary and preparatory levels are compulsory for all students, with approximately 92% enrollment rates. Despite reported high enrollment rates in schools, UNICEF reports that "the quality of education remains a major challenge that hinders the capacity of children to develop to their full potential."[14] This is because most of public schools are overcrowded with students and lack adequate facilities, resources and qualified teachers.

For the purposes of this thesis, schools in Egypt have been divided into public and private, which are the two overarching categories that encompass the other types explained above.

Egypt-based Model for Media Education in Egyptian Schools - Challenges and Policies

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[12] http://www.expatarrivals.com/egypt/education-and-schools-in-egypt

[13] http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-school-system-taking-look-schools-their-curricula-and-accreditation

[14] http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/egypt-s-school-system-taking-look-schools-their-curricula-and-accreditation

Based on the literature, existing scholarship on media literacy and the research results, this thesis proposes a model for introducing media literacy as part of formal or informal education to school age children. Moreover, policy recommendations will be two-fold; for media education in schools as well as a nationwide project for developing media literacy in the Egyptian society.

Recommendations for Raising a Media Literate Society in Egypt

In addition to the mandatory nationwide integration project proposed for media literacy constituents in formal and informal school education across all grades, it is up to the Egyptian cabinet and parliament to place this timely matter on the government, and therefore, the public's agenda. Media education across schools will not be enough. There needs to be an overarching vision for instilling these invaluable skills across all sectors of the Egyptian society, creating a protective 'cultural shield' from unwarranted media effects and external influences. Some action steps that are derived from the existing literature and applied international and regional models include, but are not restricted to;

- The newly established Higher Council for Media under Chapter 10, Article 213, of the new Egyptian Constitution (2014), needs to declare that all Egyptian private and public networks must carry 15 minutes per day of content pertinent to raising media awareness through programs, PSAs, campaigns, segments…etc.

- Adopting a wide scale campaign to raise awareness of the importance of and need for media literacy to safeguard Egyptian youth from media's adverse effects, and promote its benefits and uses, in the absence of concrete media laws and regulations. The campaign can include media messages (as stated above), expert symposia and lectures in youth centers, universities and community workshops. It can also include speeches by religious and political opinion

leaders and social media influencers that can be widely circulated via social media platforms, radio, television and online.

- Enabling interested individuals to have easy access to media literacy resources and self-teaching material, whether produced locally, or derived from international platforms (such as UNESCO). These groups should also involve parents as a main target in need of these resources to be able to transfer this knowledge to their households.

- Offering professional development/capacity building workshops for opinion leaders and other stakeholders who can, in turn, relay the acquired skills to those around them. This can be done through partnerships with media training or high education institutions with the needed expertise and resources to offer such trainings.

- Hold nationwide competitions and knowledge exchange opportunities among students from different school districts to increase their level of engagement and interest in the topic.

- Start discussions with policy and decision makers on needed media laws and policy documents for formal and informal (mandatory or elective) media literacy programs. Involvement from experts from different relevant ministries will be needed to draft well-rounded policies that cater to the complex Egyptian educational system in different governorates.

- International knowledge and experience exchange, and promoting intercultural dialogue – based on conducted research, it is evident that several existing models of media education integration in formal schooling are present and operational. Egyptian experts can gain considerably from international dialogue. This is in addition to partnerships and collaborative efforts with international organizations such as UNESCO that has been holding continuous activities and programs on media education, and has addressed many of the challenges faced

in developing countries, Egypt being one of them, both nationally and internationally. These dialogues and exchanges have to be sustained, and not in the form of one-time conferences or lectures (Frau-Meigs, 2007).

Moving Forward

For more than two decades, educators have been debating the ideal methods to support students' critical thinking, creative communication and production skills through connecting the classroom with present-day society, media and popular culture. The debate mainly questions whether media literacy should be incorporated in present subjects or if it should be taught as a separate stand-alone course. As for the outlook towards media, should educators focus on highlighting how to protect oneself against undesirable or adverse media influence, or should they instead focus on harnessing the power of media and technology to develop personally or socially? Furthermore, should activities related to creativity and media production be a vital pedagogy or rather focus on critical analysis skills and competencies? (Hobbs & Tuzel, 2015).

Despite the availability of ample resources for media literacy education as evident from the international and regional models discussed earlier, the main challenge remains in adopting local versions of resources and learning material. Furthermore, as evident from the research conducted and responses from the interviewees, there is a need for proper media literacy education in Egypt. Ideally, media education should be incorporated in both formal school or university education as a mandatory curriculum, as well as out-of-school informal education or activities. Composing a well-rounded media literacy program needs four elements: "the facilitators, the learners, the pedagogy, and the curriculum. These four elements are directly involved in the learning process, both in the formal and informal out-of-school education"

(Nupairoj, 2016). These approaches combined ought to eventually yield a more media literate society that in turn evolves into a way of life. Through cohesive learning approaches, at home, at school, and on opinion leader levels, learners become exposed to media literacy constituents in every step of their daily lives (Nupairoj, 2016). Despite the fact that the state, the private sector and civil society should work together on nationwide approaches, it remains the main task of civic organizations and NGO's to implement smaller scale projects in hopes of creating a ripple effect. Culture and bureaucratic barriers as well as lack of technological resources and equal Internet penetration remain the main challenges to adopting media literacy programs on any levels. There is little research done on the Arab region's specific needs for media education and thus, the researcher believes that this is the main future prospect for research in this area, in order to be able to come up with well-rounded models that can be applied, replicated and evaluated.

Several challenges that face media literacy education in Egypt were deduced from the Expert Group interviews; namely that the idea of creating media literacy among school children is not currently a government or cabinet priority. This is in addition to congested school curricula together with shortage in needed resources to train teachers. Furthermore, a clear lack of synchronization among different government bodies involved. Finally, school teachers themselves lack the enthusiasm and conviction of the importance and timeliness of this matter.

Adding to the above, governments may perceive media literacy education either positively or negatively, for example, teacher training on media literacy can actually back long term policies adopted by governments that are prompted by irrelevant pressures in the education system. On the other hand, the level of local education in a given government can scale media

literacy down. For example, in African countries, inadequate financial resources result in very limited teacher ICT training, if it exists at all. In fact, some African countries suffer from a shortage in teachers given high costs of training (Moore, 2008). Moreover, discrepancies between the training setting and the actual teaching setting may result in a lack of proper transfer of the skills acquired to the classroom.

Despite the above challenges, it was agreed by the Expert Group interviewed that media literacy education in schools becomes a shared responsibility, and that all possible partners that need to collaborate together have to be identified. For instance, when not enough resources for an independent media literacy curriculum can be allocated, developers of other subjects' curricula become essential partners to work collectively for enriching their respective disciplines with media literacy competencies. One other approach might be to involve media professionals and practitioners in the training and teaching phase. The interviewed Expert Group agreed that media literacy may not, yet, be sufficiently developed to be offered as a separate subject. They agreed that the related competencies can be integrated through curriculum enrichment tools and resources that enhance existing curricula.

Schools need to engage their students in more e-learning projects, given constant advances in Internet technology. In fact, Information Technology (IT) can be integrated in media education, allowing students to use more of laptops, iPads and other technological tools rather than learning through the traditional methods (Lee, 2016). Moreover, Lee (2016), proposes the concept of a 'student-centred instruction' that replaces the typical 'teacher-centred instruction,' and emphasizes an understanding of surroundings rather than copying content as is. In that approach, students observe the world and work to bridge the gap between what they learn and

what they observe (Lee, 2016). In addition to a student-centred instruction, a media literacy environment endorses 'open-ended learning' and promotes inquiry-based and problem-based learning (Lee, 2016).

According to Lee (2016), a student with media literacy enjoys these competences: Critical understanding of the influence that media exert on individuals; Realize how the media industry operates and its characteristics; Possess analytical skills; Be able to learn through media; Be able to creatively express oneself; Be able to practice media ethics; and positively apply what has been learned to daily life (Lee, 2016).

UNESCO's Teacher Training Curricula for Media and Information Literacy outlines several short and long term strategic recommendations to introducing media literacy curricula which include:

- Aligning media literacy education content and learning outcomes with existing UNESCO initiatives (such as Teacher Education, Curriculum Development Community of Practice, Literacy decade and others).

- Raising more awareness of the importance and positive impact of media literacy through collaborating with all stakeholders.

- Including media literacy in constitutional documents on the national level.

- Sustaining research-based practice and using scientific methodology to keep policy makers and other stakeholders informed and updated.

More practical short term recommendations presented in the report include:

- Packaging media literacy curriculum constituents in an appealing manner that motivates teachers, decision and policy makers and the entire community.

- Introducing media literacy in an 8-12-page pamphlet acknowledging the discipline's application to teaching.

- Starting with small phases that mainly focus on needed initial training followed by more advanced professional development.

- Targeting trainees who express interest and readiness to engage in the first instance.

- Exploring the possibility to target teachers at three developmental stages across school grades: 5-7, 10-12 and 16-18 years (i.e. the points where students change school levels- primary to preparatory to secondary).

- Adopting an affirmative action attitude towards building on existing success stories or models for curricula and training programs.

- Introducing incentives like media literacy certificates for school groups or individual schools and teachers who successfully achieve pre-determined standards or KPIs for including media literacy in teaching.

Implications for Implementation and Policy

Professional development programs need to evaluate teachers' motivations for digital learning to be able to cater professional learning experiences to develop teachers' values and attitudes, as well as their conceptual themes (Hobbs & Tuzel, 2015).

Based on the above, at the introductory phase of media literacy in Egyptian schools, curricula chosen by experts and decision makers need to allow for 'pick and mix' of elements to be implemented in the curriculum to take what can be applied in the initial stages, and leave out elements that are more difficult to implement. Furthermore, continuous revision of implemented

media literacy elements is needed to address the dynamic nature of national education (Moore, 2008).

Web Platform

As an assessment and sharing tool, I suggest creating a website that provides localized frameworks and curricula frameworks for each grade level and that includes learning outcomes, examples of assignments, implementation strategies…etc., all in the Arabic language and catered to the Egyptian society. The website can include infoturials or audio-visual presentations of key media literacy components that help teachers deliver the message according to the age group or subject material they teach. The website can offer periodic webinars that are free of charge for teachers from different geographic locations to discuss and bring their success stories or challenges to others to learn from. On the production level, teachers can upload their students' key work as examples of success. Students from different schools or districts can be asked to go back home to complete online assignments about the media literacy component they learnt about that day. They can discuss issues related to media credibility and fake news with their fellow students. The Web platform can attract them to explore the media around them on their own, promoting interactive and dynamic learning or self-teaching. With many students already having access to tablets or smart phones at home, these new technologies are no strangers to them. For those who do not enjoy such access, learning to use these tools at school can open new horizons to them and get them connected to others outside their community (Lee, 2016).

To avoid unwarranted outside influences, this platform should be under the jurisdiction and regulation of the ministry of education that can, in turn, outsource consultants and professional training institutions to provide needed support and content, and to localize

international content to fit Egyptian schools. The ministry can also partner with international organizations such as UNESCO that has produced several key documents and reports on media literacy in schools. The website can be used as a tool for post-evaluation of the success/failure of media literacy education trials in sample schools selected for the initiative. Teachers can be asked to report on their experience via surveys or questionnaires conducted on this platform. In short, this interactive and dynamic platform can serve as a tool that brings together educators, trainees, policy and decision makers from all over Egypt.

Even though it can be said that audiences and media consumers engage in some form of critical interaction with media messages or other information, even without exposure to media literacy, there still are missing competencies that can equip them with what they need (Buckingham, 2006). This is why introducing media literacy in different areas of a society, and formally through school curricula, should become a government priority. Children should be able to freely benefit from these competencies at school and at home. Countries such as Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and others are already adopting this direction (Buckingham, 2006). One primary step in that direction is providing ample training to "practitioners, policy makers, parents, community leaders, government officials, teachers… etc." (UNESCO, 2013).

UNESCO has identified six elements for developing a media literacy policy; starting with a vision for the policy, its role and objective; moving to gaining consensus on that vision by "identifying incentives and opportunities for partnerships and collaborations;" then recognizing the possible challenges; pinpointing incentive-based policy directions for media and information literacy; detecting the resources, attitudes and skills needed for implementing media and

information literacy; assigning the needed resources for implementation; and providing a

directive for an action plan, monitoring, and evaluation of the adopted policies. Derived policies

should be reinforced by the conviction that media and information literacy is pivotal for utilizing

the "democratic, social, educational, economic, cultural, health and sustainability opportunities

provided by media" or information providers such as those on the Internet (UNESCO, 2013).

Media Education in Formal Education in Egypt - Challenges

At the formal education (school) level, availability of resources is a significant challenge

for media literacy policy or decision makers. This is why while new and more advanced

resources are required, there needs to be a solid reliance on utilizing existing resources for the

best benefit. For example, existing ICTs, if any, in Egyptian schools can be arranged to connect

teachers, librarians, or professionals with relevant media literacy technologies and tools. In

schools, computer labs, computer programs, cameras, audio recorders or arts supplies that are

available and that have not been previously used specifically for media education can be

reallocated to include that new utilization. If none of these tools is available, it might be required

to purchase new equipment even if in small quantities and to be shared (UNESCO, 2013).

Additional resources such as human resources, administration, budgets for operation,

educational resources (verbal, visual, print or digital) as well as consultant fees are also needed

resources. Human resources are mainly those who lead the agenda at schools and the community.

These 'leaders' are typically 'early adopters' who adapt the objectives of media literacy in the

local context. They, then, teach others and pass knowledge. Administrative and technical support

is essential in delivering such programs. Administrative support is usually to organize, promote

and apply school or university-based curricula, as well as other media literacy community

programs such as clubs or associations. Educational materials and handouts are also needed. These include printed materials or books as well as online resources such as infoturials, audio-visual packages, podcasts, or digital games. Expertise will be needed for purposes such as developing professional development programs, curricula, evaluation tools or technical consultation (UNESCO, 2013).

Learning about, with or through media literacy requires a pedagogical method that differs from conventional ones in some countries, i.e. "student- rather than teacher-centred and resource-based rather than centred on set texts" (Moore, 2008). Training teachers on these pedagogical approaches is vital to modern-day education. In fact, as students learn to find media exciting and appealing, a media literacy syllabus motivates teacher retention as well, especially in countries where teaching can be considered a step towards career shifts into other occupations (given lower salaries in Egypt, it can be said that this is the case for some teachers). Moreover, the analysis and problem solving skills key to media literacy are not only applied inside the classroom, but they can also be used to incorporate subjects together as well as develop competencies in a way that streamline the whole learning process (Moore, 2008).

On the other hand, according to some of the Expert Group responses some resistance to developing media literacy courses may exist among conventional teachers or even teacher-trainers. This is because media literacy still receives minimal attention, if any, in teacher training programs or in schools due to teachers' lack of engagement with students' lives outside the classroom. This is in addition to low awareness of the changing media and media tool availability. Furthermore, school curricula are already overloaded; making it important to strategize how media literacy can be adapted and implemented by decision-makers, perhaps

through integrating media education into existing programs rather than develop stand-alone additions (Moore, 2008).

Other difficulties can include technical challenges of using tools such as tablets or applications, since students in some districts may not be familiar with their functions. Teachers and educators will need to provide clear instructions and guidance for step by step use of these tools. Furthermore, Lee (2016) identifies a "dual teacher" issue, where traditional class teachers can be accompanied by computers or smart tables as second teachers; both guide students and educate them. This creates an attention challenge, since students can lose their concentration to the class teacher and focus on the more alluring technical tool. Thirdly, as discussed before, teacher professional development and capacity building is crucial for effectively using IT inside the classroom for media literacy purposes. Teachers need to be well prepared before starting the curriculum, meaning that they need to be media literate themselves. Teachers need to receive personal media literacy training as audiences or creators of content in addition to receiving competencies that help them in teaching media literacy to others.

In that regard, some questions regarding these basic competencies include:

- What skills are relevant to media literacy and therefore, differentiate between teaching methods of media literate teachers from others?

- Which competencies are not related to media specifically but can be consolidated because of media literacy, i.e. what does media literacy as a discipline add?

- Which media literacy competencies are best developed during specialized teacher training, and which others are better developed during school-based professional development?

Competencies in media literacy can be easily taught using print media like newspapers, magazines, advertising billboards, in addition to more 'conventional' media such as radio or television. Media literacy, therefore, is not only restricted to those who have access to 'newer' or more advanced channels such as digital tools or even the Internet. Consequently, introducing a media literacy curriculum in a developing country like Egypt, where educational use of technologies may be limited or non-existent in public schools, becomes reliant on what is available (Moore, 2008).

UNESCO has been widely engaged in efforts to encourage all countries to introduce and advance media and information literacy policies and strategies on national levels. Through policies and strategies, governments can safeguard the integration of media literacy with other nationwide policies and laws related to information access, media and education.
The fundamental justifications for a need for media and information literacy in the Arab region include:

• Promotion of freedom of the press and a better understanding of news,

• Media's deep influence on daily lives of youth,

• Digital competencies are needed, especially by journalists, to compete with news and information inflow from outside,

• Empower youth to harness social networks for uses other than entertainment,

• Promote media ethics,

• Enable young people to critically consider world views presented in the media, acknowledging their tendency for secular, religious or political inclinations,

• Form a well-rounded base for citizen journalism that consequently drives media diversity (UNESCO, 2013).

Nfissi from Morocco identified some challenges that face Arab nations in introducing media and information literacy in their communities, namely the need to adapt media and information literacy models and conducted research to Arab contexts in order to better serve the needs of Arab youth. Secondly, with high illiteracy rates in the region, many people are restricted from taking full advantage from media and information literacy programs. Furthermore, the lack of references and resources in Arabic, in addition to people's weak mastery of foreign languages also constitute a real challenge. Even libraries in many parts of the Arab region still operate in conventional non digital ways. Finally, despite increasing Internet penetration, online users do not make the most benefit from the Internet and other digital tools since many people are not media literate (Nfissi, 2013).

According to Lee (2016), general results of receiving a media literacy program include;

- An awareness of the possible influence media exert on audiences on a daily basis;

- An appreciation that media messages are not essentially true;

- A basic understanding of the process of producing news;

- The skill to differentiate fact from opinion;

- A basic overview of how each medium works;

- Recognizing that every channel or medium has its specific editorial position;

- Acknowledging that information available online may not be reliable;

- A basic understanding of media responsibilities and ethics.

According to Moore (2008), these subjects detail the material needed to enhance teachers' and educators' personal media literacy prior to having them teach media literacy.

Media and Democracy

- Media's diversity and pluralism, ideas of freedom of expression

- Media ownership schemes and economic drives

- Media as a democracy platform

- Media professionalism and standards – ideals of fact verification and ethical considerations

Media Analysis

- Examining how media messages are constructed

- Understanding the different languages of media – What codes or structures?

- Realizing different media representations – stereotypes, gender or religious roles…etc.

Media Functions

- Understanding the purposes behind media messages - verification, persuasion, propaganda, entertainment…etc.

- Ability to evaluate the authenticity of sources and information accuracy

Media Audiences

- Understanding who the media target and why

- Differentiate between active and passive audiences – interpreting media messages according to audience characteristics, degree of access, utilization…etc.

Media and Production

- Develop individuals' capacities vis à vis the media

- Create and communicate messages produced by oneself

- Ability to use ICTs in education and outside

To facilitate this new teaching for teachers, framework for media education needs to include:

Pedagogical Design

- Establishing curricular components that are appropriate to media education

- Adapting and enhancing school digital/technological and ICT resources for media education purposes

- Incorporating problem-solving and inquiry-based teaching tools

- Developing applicable assessment and evaluation rubrics to measure effectiveness of the media education instruction

Implementing these changes to the education sector in Egypt will result in an overall institutional change to be more student-centred, changing the role and authority of teachers of media literacy to be more of facilitators and mentors, who accept more than one right answer to real-world challenges. It has to be noted, though, that these curricula and pedagogical developments mainly depend on the available resources and training capabilities of each school or school district; i.e., modifications can be tailored to local needs.

On the other hand, UNESCO identifies these school level specific learning outcomes:

For lower school (basic knowledge);

- Available communication resources

- Typical media structures

- Basic principles of freedom of expression and information

- Ability to engage in basic research processes

For middle school (learning to use tools);

- Recognize an information need

- Ability to search for needed sources

- Ability to evaluate and analyze these sources

- Ability to read with a critical outlook

- Problem-solving skills

For high school (adjusting behavior or attitudes);

- Respect for others' opinions or pluralism

- Tolerance for others

- Respect of copyright and ownership

- Social responsibility

Teachers who will receive specialized training or professional development should exhibit, at varying levels according to different grades' educational needs (5 to 18 years old), advanced understanding of:

- The importance of and need for media literacy education

- Main media literacy ideas such as production, content (language, message, tone…etc.) and audience, all as they apply to available media and communication platforms

- Teaching design (study plan, developing and evaluating used material) based on media literacy tools

- Teaching design based on the learning process itself (course plan and teaching material to educate students on issues of autonomy in applying critical and analytical learning)

- Basic concepts pertinent to ethical considerations within the media field

- Knowledge of assessment and evaluation tools that are typically employed in media systems

- Adaptation of teaching strategies and mechanisms that allow students to develop critical thinking specific to media literacy

- Utilizing evidence-based teaching, develop learning evaluation tools relevant to media literacy and related to ethical learning activities

Future Research and Limitations. Promoting and advocating public policies on media literacy in Egypt is not enough, since this alone can simply result in adding more technology to the classroom, which is not the intended approach or mindset. What is needed, however, is a transfer of philosophy that embraces media literacy in formal and informal education across all scopes, empowering communication subjects to be inherent in media education (Caprino & Martínez-Cerdá, 2016). What is needed as well is solid, academic research on the importance and usefulness of media education, if the Egyptian government is to be swayed to adopt new nationwide policies. Providing international success stories and models would help local experts to draw on them, and enhance the weight of media education lobby in Egypt. Moreover, this localized research is needed to reach an authoritative definition for media education in terms of objectives and conceptual framework. This is because media education or literacy experts can be very clear on the definition, but they can be less effective in delivering this vital need to politicians or decision makers; resulting in a dilution in the subject matter.

The research methodology had some limitations, primarily the inability to generalize the results to the overall school population in Egypt. This is given the use of a purposive, non-

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random, convenient sample of accessible teachers and qualified experts due to the difficulties explained earlier. It can be argued that one limitation is that the criteria for participant selection were not exhaustive or inclusive enough, and were based on the researcher's definition. One further limitation is the geographic selection of participating schools for the teacher surveys. Since the schools are located in relatively better off districts in Cairo, responses might not reflect the situation on the ground in other less advantaged areas and schools. One further limitation during data analysis was clear in the need for better training of the research assistants whose help was solicited to collect surveys.

More research is needed prior to the implementation of concrete education policies on media literacy in Egyptian schools. Research can dwell deeper into the applicability of media literacy curricula in public as well as private schools, since these schools have varying resources and teacher caliber. It can also be researched how to cater to schools in provinces, rural areas and the variation with urban schools. Moreover, pre- and post- surveys should be administered to provide evidence to the effectiveness of applied media literacy curricula. Finally, more research is needed in the area of offering informal media literacy to illiterate school age children as well as adults who have not received any formal education.

CHAPTER X
CONCLUSION

"All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can

vulgarize that society. We can brutalize it. Or we can help lift it onto a higher level"

(Bernbach, 2006).

Being a media literate citizen means we can uphold media accountable and force them to

reach higher and better standards. Possessing these skills for "reading" all types of media paves

the way for us to demand what information we need, not only that, but information that is both

independent, and accurate (Mihailidis, 2008).

For a developing country like Egypt, policymakers tend to give priorities to other

pressing societal, political or economic issues. Creating an "ecosystem of media literacy" that

includes relevant stakeholders and an adopted policy to achieve the ultimate goal of a media

literate society becomes the most pivotal approach to secure such a nationwide collaboration.

That is also why the future of media literacy in Egypt depends heavily on the civic sector,

emphasizing the idea that media literacy education becomes initiated by the people themselves

rather than the government (Pungente, n.d.). Furthermore, the civic sectors, whether private or

NGOs, need to collaborate together, transferring knowledge and sharing success stories to the

betterment of media literacy projects. Finally, lobbying with policy makers to reach a media

literacy nationwide policy should also be investigated (Nupairoj, 2016).

Teachers in Egypt are in need of assistance and intervention to bring basic concepts of

media literacy to their classrooms. Students also need the experiences that will enable them to

develop much needed critical analysis competencies and skills in order to be truly 'literate' in the

twenty-first century. Choices should not be limited to providing professional development or capacity building through a national program or an independent initiative; or whether to target a single school or to provide freely available resources to all teachers. The answer should be to implement all feasible options. Teachers need all available solutions as well as sustainable development of pedagogical resources that can evolve over time as students' media use evolves (Culver, 2013). Available opportunities for educating teachers about media literacy are still limited. This needs to change in order for students to obtain a critical outlook on media, "the critical thinking skills of the teacher who will effectively guide students' conceptualization" become vital (Karaduman, 2013). By educating students about media literacy skills, teachers can better adapt to changes in their role as the classroom becomes less teacher-centred (Moore, 2008).

Over the past five decades, societies have evolved from an era of linguistic literacy to that of electronic and digital literacy. This is why media literacy is not a luxury or a benefit anymore, but rather a necessity. It becomes an essential tool for anyone to become an active and functioning participant in any democratic society, one who is not easily manipulated by or gullible to the media. It can be said that the future of any democratic society is at stake. Media literacy enables each person to consume the media their 'own' way, meaning that there is not "one way" to watch television or read a newspaper, but rather a way particular to each person's benefit. Moreover, this idea of educating the audience does not only imply an ability to choose among options, but also to "create their own version of reality (democratization of media), if and when the available mediated representations do not reflect their experience of the world" (UNESCO, 1990).

A media literate individual is not merely one with a particular level of knowledge about media content, or someone who with the ability to critically analyze content or media messages. These competencies are mechanisms within the broader media literacy. The desired outcome, however, of learning about media literacy is to empower individuals who are knowledgeable about "Access, Core skills, Subsidiary skills, Evaluation/Understanding," to be able to make their own decisions as well as become better engaged in life. These become citizens who have evolved beyond reliance on 'knowledge brokers,' to become 'knowledge builders' (UNESCO, 2013).

It is, however, safe to say that the degree of what establishes sufficient or 'satisfactory' levels of media literacy will evolve over time. This is given continuous changes in technological and digital tools and channels that require new literacy and professional development capacity. This constant evolution makes media literacy a dynamic discipline, subject to change and modification. It also means the dialogue has to be kept open in that regard.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of Interviewees

No	Interviewee Name & Code	Title/Organization	Interview Type	Action
1	Adel Iskandar	Associate Professor, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Canada	Email	No Answer
2	Ahmed Ahmed Zarea "**A**"	Associate Professor, School of Mass Communication, Azhar University, Egypt	Email	Replied
3	Azza Abdel-Azim Mohamed Ahmed	Associate Professor, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, Egypt and MC Program Coordinator, Abu-Dhabi University, the United Arab Emirates	Email	No Answer
4	Dina Ibrahim	Associate Professor of Broadcast & Electronic Communication Arts, San Francisco State University, The United States	Email	No Answer
5	Eslam Abdel Raouf "**B**"	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Mass Communication, Azhar University, Egypt	Email	Replied
6	Hanan Badr	Post-doctoral researcher, Department of Political and Social Science, Frei University Berlin, involved in the DFG-project "Media functions in Transitions."	Email	No Answer
7	Hassan Ali	Professor and Dean of School of Communication, Suez University, Egypt	Telephone	No Answer
8	Hassan Emad Mekkawi	Professor and Dean of School of Communication, Misr University for Science and Technology, Egypt	Telephone	No Answer
9	Howaida Mostafa	Professor, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, Egypt	Telephone	No Answer
10	Hussein Amin "**C**"	Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication The American University in Cairo, Egypt	In person	Replied
11	Jad Melki "**D**"	Associate Professor of Journalism and Media Studies and Chairperson of the Department of Communication Arts, the Lebanese American University (LAU), and Director of the Institute of Media Research and Training, Lebanon	Email	Replied
12	Kai Hafez	Professor and Chairperson of International and Comparative Communication Studies, University of	Email	Declined

		Erfurt, Germany		
13	Laila Abdel Megeed	Professor and Former Dean of Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, Egypt	Telephone	Declined
14	Magda Abu Fadil	Director, Media Unlimited, Lebanon	Email	Declined
15	Maggie El Halawani "**E**"	Dean of the International Academy for Media Sciences, Egypt	Telephone	Replied
16	Marwan Kraidy	Director, Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication, the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, The United States	Email	Declined
17	Mohamed Fouad El Dahrawy "**F**"	Assistant Professor, School of Mass Communication, Azhar University, Egypt	Email	Replied
18	Mohamed Showman	Professor and Dean, Faculty of Mass Communication, British University in Egypt	Telephone	Declined
19	Mona El Hadidi "**G**"	Assistant Professor, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, Egypt	Telephone	Replied
20	Naomi Sakr	Professor of Media Policy and a former Director of the CAMRI Arab Media Centre, University of Westminster, UK	Email	No Answer
21	Noha El Nahass	Head of Communication and Media Program, the Danish Egyptian Dialogue Institute – DEDI, Egypt	Email	No Answer
22	Rasha Kamhawy "**H**"	Professor, Journalism Department, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, the United States	Email	Replied
23	Rasha Abdulla	Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, the American University in Cairo, Egypt	Email	No Answer
24	Sahar Khamis "**I**"	Associate Professor, University of Maryland, the United States	Email	Replied
25	Salma Ghanem "**J**"	Professor and Dean, College of Communication, DePaul University, Chicago, the United States	Email	Replied

26	Samy El Sherif	Professor and Dean, Faculty of Mass Communication, Modern University for Technology and Information, Egypt	Email	No Answer
27	Samy Tayie	Professor, Cairo University, Egypt	Email	No Answer
28	Sarah Mallat "**M**"	Professor, the American University of Beirut; the Lebanese American University	Email	Replied
29	Shahira Fahmy	Professor, School of Journalism, University of Arizona, the United States	Email	No Answer
30	Sherif El Labban "**K**"	Vice Dean of Faculty of Mass Communication, for Community Service and Environment Development Affairs, Cairo University, Egypt	Telephone	Replied
31	Suzan Killini	Professor and Chair of the Department of Mass Communication, Ain Shams University, Egypt	Telephone	Declined
32	Tarek Shawki	Egyptian Minister of Education and Senior Strategic Advisor for Education and Outreach, the American University in Cairo	Email	No Answer
33	Ted Purinton "**L**"	Dean, Graduate School of Education, The American University in Cairo, Egypt	Email	Replied
34	William Youmans George	Professor, George Washington University, the United States	Email	No Answer

Appendix B – Interview Questions for Experts

Demographic Data:

- Name
- Date
- Title
- Institution
- Experience

1- How would you define "media literacy"?

2- What do you think are the main constituents of a quality media education program/practice? For example, is media education aiming to protect students from media influence; to empower students as critical consumers; to enable students to produce their own media?

3- In what areas of the curriculum, and at what ages, should students be taught about the media (receive media education)?
   How can we best reach this age group?

4- Is there a conceptual framework for the media education curriculum - that is, a set of 'key concepts' students should address? If so, what are the main aspects? How long should this curriculum or course be?

5- Do media educators specify the skills and competencies students should develop? If so, how can they do this?

6- How can students' understanding or competence assessed? How can progression in students' media literacy learning be documented?

7- What role does media production by students play in the media education curriculum?

8- What would you say are the main challenges to introducing media literacy courses and education across Egyptian schools and universities?

9- What would you see as the main needs of media educators in Egypt - for example, in terms of training, resources or information?

10- In terms of implementation, who has the greater responsibility to introduce media literacy to the Egyptian society at large and to Egyptian students in specific?

11- What are the main channels to spread media literacy in Egypt?
   Top-down approaches?
   Bottom-up approaches?
   Other methods? Please elaborate on your chosen answer

12- Do you know of any success stories/models that can be mimicked in Egypt?

What would be the main take-aways and the main obstacles to adopting this model?

Appendix C – Survey Questions for Teachers

Demographic Data:

- Date:
- Gender: Male   Female
- School type: Public   Private   Other
- Subject Taught:
- Grade/ Level:
- Years of teaching experience: 0-5   6-11   12-18   19-25   More than 25 years
- Education Level (BA, MA, PhD, Other)

Media Education Indicators

1- Receiving a media education[15] curriculum will help students avoid being affected by negative media messages:
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

2- Students in your class can know how to distinguish fact from opinion:
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

3- You believe your students can acknowledge that media channels have their own editorial stance
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree

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[15]The process learning about media through acquiring general skills in production and reception practices of the field. It is not restricted to printed material but includes other symbolic representations such as images and sounds. It enables individuals to analyze media messages in ways to understand their hidden and spoken meanings as well as evaluate their values. The process also includes critical and creative thinking. It empowers young people to be informed media consumers as well as media producers themselves.

4- School age students can recognize that online information is not reliable without being taught
   - Strongly agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly disagree

5- What are some possible threats that students can be exposed to from the media around them?
   (Check all that apply)
   - Misleading information
   - Radicalization
   - Negative body image
   - Stereotypes
   - Racial or ethnic discrimination
   - Gender discrimination
   - Commercial exploitation
   - Political mobilization
   - Other, please elaborate………………………

6- Do you think these threats can be avoided if children learn about them at school?
   - Yes
   - No
   - Don't know

7- Please describe how you would teach your students to utilize the media around them for their benefit.
   (Check all that apply)
   - Be selective in choosing which media and which programming to consume on a daily basis
   - Question media intentions
   - Become aware of present media biases and motivations
   - Become aware of media's negative effects (stereotyping, violence, fundamentalism, commercialism…etc.)
   - Other, please elaborate

8- Are children in schools receiving any form of formal education about any of the below:
   (Check all that apply)
- Media languages (what is being said, how, why, by whom…etc.)
- Media ownership schemes (media conglomerates, political or economic affiliations, ideology…etc.)
- Media intentions (propagate certain messages, commercial purposes, PR…etc.)
- Advertising effects (negative or positive effects, consumerism, creating a need…etc.)
- Internet safety (cyber-bullying, Internet pornography/pedophiles, fundamentalism, and recruitment to religious groups or cults…etc.)

- Privacy issues online (hacking, fake identities, fake accounts…etc.)
- Audio-visual content creation (producing videos, podcasts, blogs…etc.)
- Media audiences
- Critical analysis of media representations (body image messaging, stereotypes, propaganda, political recruitment, economic or business motivations, voter swaying, gender or religious representations…etc.)
- Other, please elaborate……………………………………………………..

9- What do you think is school's role in teaching kids about the media?
- Media is bad for you, as it has negative effects and is misleading
- Media is good for you, as you can use it for seeking information and sharing your opinion
- Other, please elaborate…………………………………

10- If a dedicated course is offered to students as part of their formal school education, do you think this course:
  - Should be graded and part of the overall student evaluation/GPA
  - Should not be graded, but rather pass or fail (such as PE or Art classes)
  - Should be offered as an elective course that students may or may not attend
  - Other, please specify

11- Do you think teachers need specialized training to be able to incorporate learning through[16] media in your classroom?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know

12- Do you think teachers need specialized training to be able to incorporate learning about[17] media in your classroom?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Don't know

13- Do you typically incorporate any digital/technological tools in your teaching?
- Yes
- No

If yes, is this:
- An initiative you are volunteering with

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[16] Learning through media means using media tools such as television, videos, newspapers, the Internet…etc.

[17] Learning about media means learning about media messages, roles, responsibilities, effects…etc.

- The School directive to integrate technology in the classroom
- Other, please specify

Media Education Implementation:

14- When do you think media education in terms of learning through media can be introduced to school children?
- Kindergarten (4-5 years)
- Lower Primary (5-7)
- Higher Primary (8-10)
- Preparatory (11-14)
- Secondary (15-18 years)

15- When do you think media education in terms of learning about media can be introduced to school children?
- Kindergarten (4-5 years)
- Lower Primary (5-7)
- Higher Primary (8-10)
- Preparatory (11-14)
- Secondary (15-18 years)

16- Students should be exposed to media education (learning about media):
- Integrated as part of a core course
- A dedicated course on its own to be added
- Other arrangement. Please elaborate…………………………………………………

17- Do you think school children and young adults can be engaged in active learning[18]?
- Yes
- No
- Don't know

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[18] Learning by doing rather than just receiving lessons from their teachers. Active learning involves research, creative writing and production of content to be shared with others. It is a form of student-centered instruction emphasizes understanding the world rather than mimicking content. Understanding the world requires students to actively process and manipulate information. They have to observe the world and strive to reduce discrepancies between what they know and what they observe.

18- If you answered yes, when do you think school children and young adults can be engaged in active learning?
Kindergarten (4-5 years)
Lower Primary (5-7)
Higher Primary (8-10)
Preparatory (11-14)
Secondary (15-18 years)

19- If you have chosen to integrate media education as part of another subject, which subject do you think should that be?
(Check all that apply)
- Science
- Art
- Math
- English/Arabic (first language subject)
- Social Science
- Computer
- Other, please specify……………………………..

20- Students should be taught about media or engage in media related learning:
- During regular school time (formal education)
- After school hours (as an extra-curricular activity, club or boost session) (informal education)
- Other arrangement. Please elaborate……………………………………………….

21- When do you think can children start producing/creating content on their own for sharing with others?
- Kindergarten (4-5 years)
- Lower Primary (5-7)
- Higher Primary (8-10)
- Preparatory (11-14)
- Secondary (15-18 years)

Challenges of Media Literacy in Schools

22- What are the main challenges do you think your school is facing/will face in introducing education about and through media to different grades?
(Check all that you think apply)
- Lack of needed media tools (TV, radio, CD-DVD, overhead projectors, etc.)
- Lack of computer-based resources (smart boards, computers, projectors, etc.)
- Lack of media production tools (tablets, cameras, video cameras, smartphones, document cameras, audio recorders, etc.)
- Lack of trained teachers or educators for teaching the subject matter
- Lack of motivation on part of the teachers to incorporate teaching with and about media in their daily syllabi
- Lack of motivation or engagement on part of the students

- Lack of a school directive to embrace media education inside the classroom
- Lack of instructional/teaching material or curricula models to follow
- Lack of time to teach media education skills or tools
- Lack of evaluation or assessment rubrics
- School curricula are overcrowded
- Other, please elaborate……………………………………………………….

Appendix D – Consent Forms

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: The Challenges and The Policies of Media Literacy in Egyptian Schools
Principal Investigator: Salma Sherif El Ghetany

*You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is examine the challenges and hurdles faced by school teachers in Egypt in teaching their students about the media around them, i.e. media literacy, and the findings may be published and presented. The expected duration of your participation is 20-30 minutes.

The procedures of the research will be as follows; you will be briefed about the purpose of this research verbally or via email, followed by the interview/survey questions. Interviews will be audio recorded, if conducted in person or via phone. Upon completion of this research, results may be shared with you, if you request so.

*There will not be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research.

*There will be benefits to you from this research, in that it will provide you with well researched policy recommendations for better application of media literacy educational activities inside the classroom and on the school level, in the absence of media laws in Egypt, Media Literacy becomes a final frontier to guard for the values, customs and traditions of the society.

*The information you provide for purposes of this research is not confidential and not anonymous.

*Questions about the research, my rights, or results should be directed to Ms. Salma El Ghetany at 0122-2357470 or via email at s.elghetany@aucegypt.edu

*Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or the loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Please select one of the below:

☐ I agree to participate and have my my name mentioned in this thesis as an interviewee	☐ I agree to participate but do not agree to have my name mentioned in this thesis as an interviewee

Signature & Date _____   Signature & Date _____

_____

Printed Name _____   Printed Name _____

الجـامـعـة الأمـريكيـة بالقـاهـرة

استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

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عنوان البحث : تحديات و سياسات التربية الإعلامية في مدارس جمهورية مصر العربية

الباحث الرئيسي: سلمى شريف الغيطاني
البريد الالكتروني: s.elghetany@aucegypt.edu
الهاتف: 01222357470

انت مدعو للمشاركة فى دراسة بحثية عن التحديات التي تواجهها التربية الإعلامية في المدارس المصرية: توصيات لسياسات التربية الإعلامية في جمهورية مصر العربية.

تهدف الدراسة إلبحث عن المشاكل و التحديات الراهنة و الخاصة بموضوعات التربية و التعليم الإعلامي في المدارس المصرية ،و المقدمة للأطفال و المراهقين في المراحل الدراسية المختلفة منذ الحضانة و حتى ما قبل الجامعة. يهتم هذا البحث بالنظر في البرامج المقدمة حالياً -إن وجدت- و كيفية النهوض بها من ناحية المحتوى و الوسائل التكنولوجية أو التقنية على حد سواء،ولذلك يهدف هذا البحث في نهايته لعرض بعض السياسات المقترحة في مجال التربية الإعلامية والتي من شأنها إملاء الفراغ الحالي في القوانين الخاصة بالإعلام الفضائي و الإلكتروني الوافد و تنظيمه و محتواه لحماية المشاهد.

نتائج البحث ستنشر فى دوريه متخصصه أو مؤتمر علمي .

المدة المتوقعة للمشاركة فى هذا البحث 20-30 دقيقة

اجراءات الدراسة تشتمل على شرح مبسط لأهداف هذا البحث يتبعه طرح الأسئلة أو الأستبيان والذي سيتم تسجيله بالصوت فقط**في حالة أن تتم مقابلة شخصيةأو من خلال التليفون.** إن طلب، سيتم مشاركة نتائج هذا البحث عند نشره.

المخاطر المتوقعة من المشاركة فى هذه الدراسة: لا يوجد

الاستفادة المتوقعة من المشاركة في البحث**:** هذا البحث قد يقدم إفادة كبيرة للأطراف المعنية و هم المعلمين داخل المدارس من خلال تقديم طرق و وسائل مقترحة مرتكزة على المقابلات مع الخبراء و المعلمين إلى جانب الأبحاث الأولية التي تستمد من تجارب دول و حكومات أخرى لتقديم محتوى التربية الإعلامية المناسب للأعمار المختلفة داخل الفصول.

السرية واحترام الخصوصية: المعلومات التى ستدلى بها فى هذا البحث لن تكون سريةوليست مجهولة الهوية.

أي أسئلة متعلقة بهذه الدراسة أو حقوق المشاركين فيها أونتائجها يجب ان توجه الى الأستاذة سلمى الغيطاني 01222357470 أو عبر البريد الإليكتروني s.elghetany@aucegypt.edu

ان المشاركة فى هذه الدراسة ماهى الا عمل تطوعى, حيث أن الامتناع عن المشاركة لايتضمن أى عقوبات أو فقدان أى مزايا تحق لك. ويمكنك أيضا التوقف عن المشاركة فى أى وقت من دون عقوبة أو فقدان لهذه المزايا.
برجاء اختيارأحدى الخيارات التالية:

أوافق على المشاركة و لكن بدون ذكراسمي ☐   ☐ أوافق على المشاركة و ذكر اسمي في هذه
الرسالة كخبيرتم إجراء مقابلة معه   في هذه الرسالة كخبيرتم إجراء مقابلة معه

الامضاء و التاريخ : ....   الامضاء و التاريخ : ....

اسم المشارك : ....   اسم المشارك : ....

Appendix E – Email Interview Request

Dear ….,

My name is Salma El Ghetany. I am a graduate student working on my Master's Degree in Journalism and Mass Communication at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

Dr. Hussein Amin is my advisor. My thesis research that I am engaged in, addresses the challenges and policies of media literacy in Egyptian schools. Your name was highly recommended by my advisor as an expert in the field.

I, therefore, kindly request that you take a few minutes to answer the attached questionnaire.

I am certain that your input and insights will enrich my research.

NB: attached please find a consent form for participating in this questionnaire.
Kindly sign and send me back.

I thank you in advance for your assistance and input.

Best Regards,

Salma S. El Ghetany

MA candidate, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

The American University in Cairo, Egypt