



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of Media Literacy on the Academic Behavior of Kabul University Students: A Case Study of Master's Degree Students, 2026

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital media and online information has increased the importance of media literacy in higher education, particularly in relation to students' academic practices and behavior. This study examined the relationship between media literacy and academic behavior among master's students at Kabul University. The study adopted a quantitative, applied research approach using a survey design. The statistical population consisted of 647 master's students enrolled at Kabul University during the academic year 1405. A sample of 242 students was selected using Cochran's formula. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman correlation analysis. The findings indicated that the overall level of media literacy among respondents was high, with a mean score of 4.1767. The strongest relationship was observed between media literacy and evaluation of media content, including assessing source credibility, identifying potentially unreliable information, and selecting appropriate information for academic purposes. Overall, the findings indicate that higher levels of media literacy are associated with stronger academic media practices, including critical evaluation of information, purposeful use of media resources, and effective management of media-related activities. The study recommends strengthening media literacy education, critical information evaluation skills, purposeful media use, and time-management practices among university students.

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Introduction

The development of communication technologies and digital media has fundamentally changed the ways in which people access information, communicate, learn, and participate in society. The Internet, smartphones, social networking platforms, digital communication tools, and online educational resources have become important parts of everyday life (d'Haenens & Joris, 2025). These changes have also transformed the educational environment, particularly at the university level, where students increasingly use digital media and online information resources for academic research, learning, communication, and access to educational materials. As the amount of information available through media

continues to increase, students require not only access to information but also the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, analyze, evaluate, and use that information appropriately (Potter, 2004).

In the contemporary information environment, access to media and information technologies alone is not sufficient for effective learning and academic engagement (Bulger & Davison, 2018). Students are exposed to large quantities of information from different sources, and these sources may differ considerably in terms of accuracy, credibility, purpose, relevance, and quality. Consequently, university students need the ability to distinguish reliable information from unreliable information, identify the purpose and characteristics of media messages, evaluate

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the credibility of sources, and use information responsibly (Safi et al., 2023). These abilities constitute important elements of media literacy (Potter, 2004). The development of digital media has further expanded the meaning of media literacy because individuals are no longer simply consumers of information; they can also create, publish, share, and disseminate content through digital platforms (Eserol, 2025).

Media literacy has therefore developed from a concept primarily associated with understanding and evaluating traditional media such as television, radio, newspapers, and cinema into a broader set of skills relevant to digital communication and online information environments (Han et al., 2024). Potter (2004) conceptualizes media literacy in terms of the perspectives and skills that enable individuals to understand, analyze, and evaluate media messages. In the digital environment, this perspective becomes particularly significant because students encounter information through multiple platforms and formats. Eserol (2025) argues that the changing media environment requires media literacy to include the ability to work with digital tools, assess information available on the Internet, and participate actively in the new media environment. Thus, contemporary media literacy involves not only technical access but also critical and purposeful engagement with information.

Despite the growing body of research on media literacy, previous studies have largely focused on defining media literacy and its components, examining its relationship with critical thinking, addressing misinformation, identifying media bias, and emphasizing the importance of media literacy education. Studies by Kiss (2024), Spinde et al. (2024), Raji et al. (2025), Rojas-Estrada et al. (2024), and Ziapour et al. (2024) demonstrate the relevance of media literacy to critical evaluation, responsible information use, and educational contexts. However, according to the literature reviewed in this study, comparatively limited attention has been given to the specific relationship between media literacy and academic behavior among university students, particularly in the context of Kabul University.

This research therefore addresses an important area by examining media literacy and its relationship with academic behavior among master's students at Kabul University. Understanding this relationship is relevant because students' academic activities increasingly involve searching for, accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and sharing information through media and digital resources. Examining these relationships can provide a clearer

understanding of the role of media literacy in students' academic practices and information-use behaviors.

Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between media literacy and academic behavior among Kabul University students. The study also seeks to determine the level of media literacy among the students and to examine the relationships between different aspects of media literacy and students' academic behavior. The research particularly considers dimensions related to access, analysis, evaluation, purposeful media use, and media use and time management.

Introduction the correlation of media literacy and students' academic behavior can also be recognized in the context of some relevant perspectives of theory. The first theoretical foundation of this study is Potter's approach to media literacy, which is explaining audiences as active participants who may use knowledge and skill to access and understand, analyze and interpret messages in media (Potter, 2004).emphasizes that compared to passive receiving and acceptance of messages in media, media literacy offers to audiences the skill to generate meaning in media content.

Media literacy could be relevant in this respect, because students who are aware of their needs in accessing media content may make deliberate decisions in accessing media contents (Katz et al, 1974). A brief review of the previous studies on media literacy Despite an expanding literature on media literacy, the past empirical studies regarding media literacy and its individual components have mainly concentrated in defining media literacy. Its components, its relationship with critical thinking, effective response to misinformation, recognizing the signs of media bias, and raising awareness about the value of media literacy education. Some of the research conducted by Kiss (2024), Spinde et al (2024), Raji et al (2025), Rojas-Estrada et al (2024) and Ziapour et al (2024) indicated the significance of media literacy for critical evaluation, effective use of media and its relevance to educational settings.

However, as seen from the literature reviewed for this study, research about the specific link between media literacy and students' academic behavior appears to have received little attention among university students especially in the situation of Kabul University.

Therefore, this study ventures into such an important dimension in investigating the connection between media literacy and student's academic behaviors. Such investigation is relevant in the sense that students'

academic behaviors are increasingly documented to involve more searching for, accessing, analyzing, evaluating and sharing information through media and other new digital resources. In the present study, these relationships are expected to give more insight into the role of media literacy in university students' academic practice and information utilization behaviors. Objective of the Study:

To determine the relationship between media literacy and academic behavior of Kabul University students.

To find the level of media literacy among Kabul University students.

To evaluate the relationship between aspects of media literacy (access, analysis, evaluation, and content creation) and students' academic behavior.

Literature Review

As the digital media continues to grow and the Internet along with the social networks has taken a central role in our lives, the concept of media literacy has become one of the most interesting themes within the scientific communities of communication and education. Several researchers have shown that media literacy goes far beyond being able to use the media tools; it also includes message analysis, judgment of sources, critical thinking, detection of false information, and the conscious use of media. In recent years, this ability has been one of the main subjects of study among university students.

One of the base texts in this domain is [Potter \(2004\)](#), which refers to media literacy as the set of perspectives and skills that helps to understand, analyze, evaluate media messages. As such, the media audience is not considered passive. For students, this is important because we find in the digital environment large quantities of both academic and non-academic information and for students to stand out among the context, they must be able to grasp and choose the appropriate information.

The definition of media literacy itself has changed in response to changes of media environment. Using the example of the paper called "From Media Literacy to New Media Literacy. [Eserol \(2025\)](#) shows how the new technologies, the new digital media changed the traditional media literacy that, according to the new view. Media literacy-beyond traditional media-praxis should include the ability to work with digital tools, to assess the information available on the internet, and to be active participants of new media environment. The second idea is of great importance to this paper, because the majority

of communication and information activities of the students are carried out through digital media.

In terms of the connection between media literacy and critical thinking, [Kiss \(2024\)](#) notes that media literacy contributes to the development of an ability to analyze information. The study findings show that media literacy can build critical thinking skills and inhibit the consumption of messages without analyzing them. This is a crucial aspect when it comes to academic activities, which require students to consume information from different sources and identify which is reliable and which is not.

In addition, media literacy's dimension of critical evaluation of media messages by [Spinde et al. \(2024\)](#) centered on media bias detection and correction. Their study indicates that with adequate training and the right set of tools, people's capability to identify media bias can be improved. This reinforces the notion that media literacy can contribute to the development of critical information evaluation, a skill of high relevance to students in their pursuit of educational resources and information use.

One important dimension of media literacy is the ability to access information effectively. In an academic environment, access involves more than having an Internet connection or being able to operate an electronic device. It includes knowing what information is required, identifying appropriate information resources, conducting purposeful searches, and locating sources that are relevant to academic needs. University students regularly encounter both academic and non-academic information, making the ability to identify appropriate sources an important component of effective information use. [Rojas-Estrada et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize the importance of targeted information searching and the ability to identify appropriate sources within media and information literacy. Therefore, students' ability to access and locate suitable information represents an important foundation for their academic activities.

A second important component is the analysis of media messages. Media messages are not simply collections of neutral information; they may contain particular structures, language, images, perspectives, purposes, and intended meanings. Media-literate individuals are expected to move beyond the surface meaning of a message and consider who produced the message, why it was produced, what evidence supports it, and how the message has been constructed ([Potter, 2004](#)). For university students, this analytical ability is relevant because academic work requires engagement with information from different sources. Students who analyze information carefully may be better able to understand the

context and purpose of the information they encounter before incorporating it into their academic activities.

Critical evaluation represents another central dimension of media literacy. The rapid production and circulation of information through social media and websites means that information can be shared widely without necessarily undergoing rigorous scientific or editorial validation. Consequently, students need to evaluate the reliability and credibility of information before accepting or using it. Such evaluation may involve considering the source, evidence, publication date, author expertise, and possible bias of the information. [Kiss \(2024\)](#) highlights the relationship between media literacy and critical thinking, noting that media literacy can support the ability to analyze information rather than consume messages without critical consideration. This ability is particularly important in higher education, where the quality and credibility of information can affect students' research, assignments, academic discussions, and learning processes ([Sádaba & Tomé, 2024](#)).

The importance of critical evaluation is also demonstrated in research concerning media bias and misinformation. [Spinde et al. \(2024\)](#) examined critical evaluation of media messages with particular attention to the identification and correction of media bias. Their findings indicate that appropriate training and suitable tools can improve individuals' ability to identify bias in media content. Similarly, [Ziapour et al. \(2024\)](#), in their systematic review of social media literacy in the context of misinformation, emphasize the importance of media literacy for identifying reliable sources and addressing misinformation. Although these studies focus on broader information and misinformation contexts, their findings are relevant to university education because students also need to distinguish credible academic and informational sources from unreliable content.

Media literacy is also increasingly considered an important educational competency. [Raji et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that students in the digital world require critical thinking skills that enable them to identify, analyze, and critically evaluate new media content, as well as skills for using media appropriately. Likewise, [Rojas-Estrada et al. \(2024\)](#), through a systematic review of media and information literacy in educational contexts, highlight the relationship between media and information literacy, learning, and educational behavior. These perspectives suggest that media literacy is not simply a communication skill; it is also relevant to how students interact with information and educational resources.

Academic behavior constitutes another important concept in the present study. Academic behavior refers to a collection of learning- and education-related activities and habits that characterize students' engagement with their academic responsibilities. These behaviors include regular study, management of study time, self-discipline, academic responsibility, educational involvement, and the appropriate use of academic information resources. A student demonstrating positive academic behavior may establish regular study practices, manage time effectively, complete academic responsibilities, participate in educational activities, and make appropriate use of information resources. In this sense, academic behavior encompasses both students' learning habits and their engagement with academic activities.

The relationship between media use and academic behavior has become increasingly relevant because digital media can serve both educational and non-educational purposes. Digital platforms provide students with access to educational materials, research resources, communication channels, and learning opportunities ([Wahid, 2025](#)). At the same time, media can also become a source of distraction or unplanned use of time. [Raji et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that media can support students' access to learning materials while also creating opportunities for aimless or distracting use. Therefore, the way students understand, evaluate, and use media may be relevant to their academic practices, particularly their information use and management of time.

The relationship between media literacy and academic behavior can also be understood through relevant theoretical perspectives. The first theoretical foundation of this study is Potter's media literacy framework. [Potter \(2004\)](#) views audiences as active participants who can use knowledge and skills to access, understand, interpret, and analyze media messages. From this perspective, media literacy provides individuals with the ability to construct meaning from media content rather than simply accepting messages passively. In the context of the present study, this framework provides a basis for examining how students' abilities to access, analyze, evaluate, and use media may be associated with their academic practices.

In education [Raji et al. \(2025\)](#) -study on media literacy in curriculum preparation of students for the digital world-emphasizes that media literacy is a critical skill for today's student. Their research emphasizes the critical thinking skills (identify, analyze and critically evaluate to new media content) and sound media usage skills (utilize media in an

appropriate manner). In the same vein, a systematic review of media and information literacy ([Rojas-Estrada et al. A 2024](#)) integrated into curriculum proposes that training individuals and media and information literacy is associated with learning and educational behavior.

In another recent study, [Ziapour et al. \(2024\)](#) have systematically reviewed the role of social media literacy in the context of misinformation. The authors conclude that media literacy helps to the identification of reliable sources and thus, becomes an effective tool to combat misinformation. Though this research was conducted in the context of misinformation management, the findings are conceptually meaningful for the learning and research environment, as students are also required to recognize the reliable sources and utilize them mindfully ([Gao, 2024](#)).

In general, review of previous studies demonstrated that the previous studies have mostly been concentrated in defining media literacy and its components, media literacy and critical thinking, the distinction of the misinformation and the importance of media literacy education.

Even, some of previous studies have found that by increasing media literacy, the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals can be influenced but little attention was paid to the relationship between media literacy and university students' academic behavior (especially in the Afghanistan in Kabul University). Therefore, this is one of the signs of prevailing of this research and its research necessity is required and investigate it to find out how the media literacy influences the academic behavior of the students of Kabul University in Afghanistan. This research provide understand to know that how the media literacy influences the studying, time management, using information resources, and other behaviors of the students' in the academic activities.

Theoretical Framework

The framework of media literacy is built on the assumption that audiences are not passive receivers of media messages; rather, when they have the knowledge and skills, audiences can actively access, understand, interpret and analyze the media messages ([Potter, 2004](#)). Media literacy, as [Potter \(2004\)](#) argued, is the ability to construct and understand meaning in media messages, which consists of a number of perspectives and skills. With the development of digital media, this concept has extended to evaluate information on Internet to identify disinformation, find biases, and use media responsibly ([Eserol, 2025](#)). Based on this framework, we hypothesize that a higher level of media literacy should be associated with the ability to choose and use information effectively and purposely. In the current

study, this framework suggests that in terms of information seeking, the source evaluation and media literacy of students will be able to actively critically assess the source and information of media, which in turn, will affect their media use and academic behavior ([Raji et al., 2025](#); [Rojas-Estrada et al., 2024](#)).

The main theory used to describe the process of the development of human behavior is the social learning theory of Bandura. Humans develop most of their behavior not only in the direct way but also in the way of the modelling and imitating other people ([Bandura, 1977](#)). Bandura's belief is based on the concept that people have an ability to acquire new behaviors in result of observing the behavior of someone else and the consequences of this behavior and thus have an ability to implement this behavior in appropriate situations. Here media may be an important source of the this behavior modelling ([Bandura, 1977](#)). In this digital age through social networks, educational videos and other sources students are acquainted with the different patterns of behavior associated with studying, learning and using technology. Because of this media literacy can enable students to reasonably and critically evaluate patterns of media messages and choose patterns that will be appropriate in studying. In this way, the theory of social learning influences how the primary mechanism of impact is through conscious or subconscious exposure to media.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory. [Bandura \(1977\)](#) explains that behavior can be learned through mimicking and modeling observation as well as the decisions regarding the consequences of the behavior that has been observed. Media can serve the audience to get models of behavior through educational videotapes and social networks and other mass media contents. For university students, different patterns of learning, studying, using technology, and communication may have served as models of behavior. ([Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022](#))

Bandura's Social Learning Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding the relationship between media literacy and students' academic behavior because students may acquire learning strategies, study habits, and patterns of information use by observing and interacting with media content and digital environments. In this study, media literacy dimensions, including access, analysis, evaluation, purposeful media use, and media time management, are relevant to how students select information, critically assess media messages, and use media resources for academic purposes.

Media literacy could be relevant to this process because students that think critically about media contents

and information should be able to identify and apply only media content that is reliable and recommended for their use (Bandura, 1977).

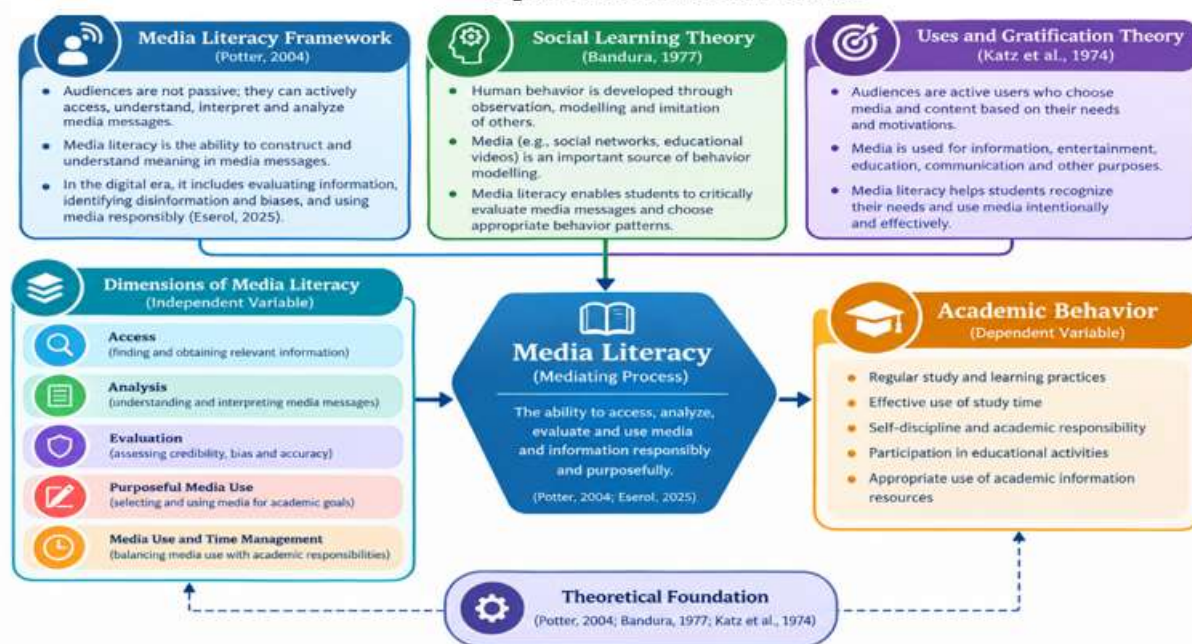
Based on the Uses and Gratification theory, which represents active users of different media, the audience reaches information and content based on their needs. Unlike the media exposure perspective, this perspective believes that humans have chosen certain types of media and specific content based on their needs and their urge for certain content (Katz et al., 1974). Uses and Gratifications Theory advanced by Katz, et al (1974) who suggest that

Humans use the media for getting information, entertainment, education, and communication with other people, and for satisfying their needs (Sichach, 2024). This perspective can be particularly useful and interesting for this research, as students of higher education based on different motivation and needs are active users of media. For example, one student might use the internet and social networks to find information or media content to support his/her studies; but another student can use the same media for entertainment and spending his/her free time.

media audiences are active in the sense that they choose media and content according to their needs and motivation. Individuals may use media for purposes of information, education, entertainment, and communication and not limited to other reasons. The theory is particularly relevant to university students because the same media may have different use, for example, a student might be searching the internet for academic researches or acquiring academic information, and another student might be for entertainment or relaxation purposes.

Moreover, according to the Uses and Gratification model, media literacy can contribute to the intentional use of media and on the way of using them. In this sense, a student who has a higher level of media literacy will be able to recognize his/her information needs and pick up media content to fulfill these needs. This way, Using and Gratification theory can be useful for explaining how the motivation of media use is related to the way students are using media and making effective media behavior.

Figure 1: theoretical framework



Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach and is applied in nature. Regarding its execution, the research utilizes a survey method. Data were collected via a questionnaire and analyzed to examine the relationships and effects among the research variables. The quantitative approach enables the measurement of media literacy levels and the assessment of their relationship with students' academic behavior based on numerical data.

The statistical population for this study consists of all students enrolled in Kabul University's master's degree programs during the 1405 academic year, totaling 647 individuals. Due to time and logistical constraints, a sample was selected from the population rather than surveying every member. Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size, resulting in a required sample of 242 individuals. Consequently, the necessary research

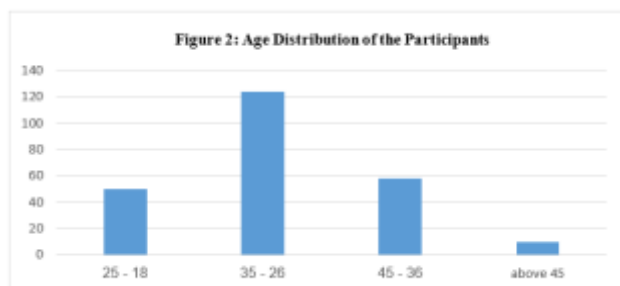
data are collected from these 242 master's students at Kabul University.

The primary data collection instrument is a questionnaire. Designed based on the study's objectives, research questions, and key variables, the questionnaire includes items to measure students' media literacy and academic behavior. Responses are structured using a Likert scale, allowing for the quantitative measurement and analysis of the respondents' views and behaviors.

Following data collection, the data will be coded, entered into appropriate statistical software, and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The descriptive statistics section examines the general characteristics of the respondents and the status of the research variables, while the inferential statistics section tests the relationship and the extent of the impact of media literacy on students' academic behavior. Thus, the selected quantitative survey method provides a suitable framework for addressing the research questions.

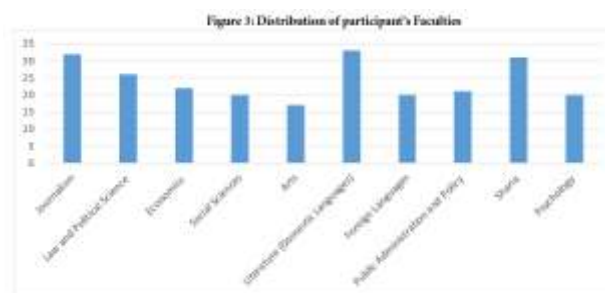
Findings

This section presents the findings derived from the analysis of data collected from students in Kabul University, master's programs. Following data collection via questionnaires, the information was analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Initially, descriptive findings regarding the research variables are presented; subsequently, inferential statistical tests are employed to examine the relationship between media literacy and academic behavior and its various dimensions. The results are presented here in the form of tables accompanied by analytical explanations.

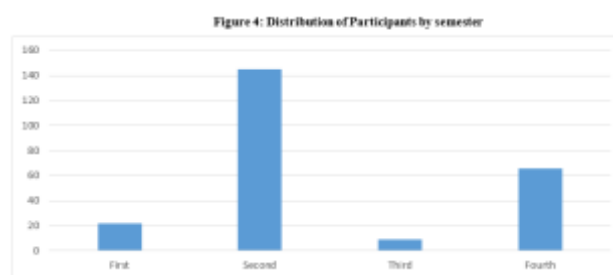


According to the table, out of a total of 242 respondents, 50 (20.7%) fall into the 18–25 age group. Additionally, 124 respondents (51.2%) belong to the 26–35 age group, representing the highest frequency among the participants. 58 respondents (24.0%) in the 36–45 age

group follow this, and finally, 10 respondents (4.1%) are over the age of 45.



Based on the findings presented in the table, the study sample consisted of 242 students from various master's degree programs at Kabul University. The results indicate that the largest group of respondents came from the Faculty of Literature (Domestic Languages), comprising 33 individuals (13.6%). The Faculty of Journalism followed this, with 32 respondents (13.2%) and the Faculty of Sharia with 31 respondents (12.8%). Additionally, the Faculty of Law and Political Science follows with 26 respondents (10.7%), the Faculty of Economics with 22 (9.1%), and the Faculty of Public Administration and Policy with 21 (8.7%). The number of respondents from the faculties of Social Sciences, Foreign Languages, and Psychology was 20 (8.3%) for each. The lowest number of respondents was from the Faculty of Arts, with 17 individuals (7%).



In the table above, in the sample of the research, 242 students are included. According to this group, 22 people (9.1 percent) in the first semester and 145 people (59.9 percent) in the second semester. 9 people (3.7 percent) in the third semester and 66 people (27.3 percent) in the fourth semester of master's degree programs were found, the second semester students have the highest share and they make up almost three fifths of the total sample (59.9 percent). Then, the students of the fourth semester are ranked second with 27.3 percentage points.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of media literacy components

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have access to electronic devices (mobile phone, laptop, and the Internet).	242	1.00	5.00	4.3099	.89664
I can find reliable academic sources on the Internet.	242	2.00	5.00	4.3182	.69527
I understand the difference between educational and non-educational content.	242	1.00	5.00	4.1157	.71371
I can identify the main purpose of media messages.	242	1.00	5.00	4.0579	.86708
Before accepting information from the media, I pay attention to its source.	242	1.00	5.00	4.1694	.82506
The credibility of the author or media outlet is very important to me.	242	1.00	5.00	4.1901	.86244
I share useful academic materials with others.	242	1.00	5.00	4.1818	.78365
When sharing content with others, I consider its accuracy and credibility.	242	1.00	5.00	4.0702	.89212

The results of media literacy evaluation show that Kabul University has a high level of media literacy master's programs for public students. In terms of the literacy of Auto component and accounting, the average general literacy (Mean=4.1767) and standard deviation (SD=0.52435) were obtained. 5-degree Likert-based scale, this average is in the high-level range. This result shows that the sample includes students who generally access electronic media, find scientific sources, analyze media messages, evaluate media information, and have an appropriate level of responsible use of scientific content.

Table 2: Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Analysis

		Media literacy	Analysis vs Behavior	Evaluation Behavior	Purposeful Media Use	Media Time Management
Media literacy	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.272**	.615**	.388**	.364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	242	242	242	242	242
Analysis vs Behavior	Correlation Coefficient	.272**	1.000	.395**	.402**	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	242	242	242	242	242
Evaluation Behavior	Correlation Coefficient	.615**	.395**	1.000	.459**	.345**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	242	242	242	242	242
Purposeful Media Use	Correlation Coefficient	.388**	.402**	.459**	1.000	.333**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	242	242	242	242	242
Media Time Management	Correlation Coefficient	.364**	.262**	.345**	.333**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	242	242	242	242	242

Relationship between media literacy and academic behavior regarding the analysis of media messages

Spearman's correlation results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between media literacy and academic behavior related to the analysis of media messages:

$$\rho = 0.272, p < .001, N = 242$$

The positive coefficient of 0.272 indicates that as the level of media literacy increases, academic behavior related to the analysis of media messages also tends to improve. Although the strength of this relationship is relatively lower compared to the other three dimensions, it is noteworthy in terms of statistical significance.

This result suggests that students who possess a high capacity for analyzing media content, identifying the underlying purpose of messages, and critically evaluating sources of media information demonstrate relatively desirable academic behaviors, specifically regarding the selection of appropriate information sources and the avoidance of misinformation.

Interpretation of the second sub-dimension: Relationship between media literacy and academic behavior regarding the evaluation of media content

The analysis results show a positive and relatively strong, statistically significant relationship between media literacy and academic behavior related to the evaluation of media content:

$$\rho = 0.615, p < .001, N = 242$$

This represents the highest correlation among all four sub-dimensions. This finding indicates a relatively strong relationship between media literacy and the evaluation of media content. In other words, students who possess high levels of media knowledge and competence regarding the credibility of information and sources—as well as the ability to identify incorrect or fake information—demonstrate relatively better practices in their academic activities when it comes to evaluating information sources and utilizing reliable academic materials.

This result is particularly significant for university education, as students encounter vast amounts of

information via the internet and other media sources; the ability to distinguish between credible academic sources and unreliable ones can directly impact the quality of their academic work.

Interpretation of the third sub-section: The relationship between media literacy and academic behavior regarding purposeful media use Spearman's correlation results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between media literacy and academic behavior related to purposeful media use:

$$\rho = 0.388, p < .001, N = 242$$

The coefficient of 0.388 indicates that as the level of media literacy increases, academic behavior regarding purposeful media use generally improves as well. This finding indicates that media literacy helps students avoid using media solely for entertainment or non-academic purposes; instead, it enables them to utilize media purposefully for learning, academic advancement, better comprehension of course materials, and the discovery of scholarly resources.

The statistical significance of this relationship further demonstrates that the observed association cannot be attributed to random variation and that a substantial link exists between the two variables within the study sample.

Interpretation of the Fourth Sub-section: The Relationship Between Media Literacy and Media Usage/Time Management Spearman correlation results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between media literacy and media usage/time management:

$$\rho = 0.364, p < .001, N = 242$$

This result suggests that as levels of media literacy rise, students' academic behaviors regarding media usage and time management generally improve.

Based on this finding, students possessing high levels of knowledge and skill regarding media usage are likely to manage their time effectively—balancing social media and other media activities—while minimizing unnecessary media consumption and dedicating sufficient time to studying, seminars, assignments, and other academic pursuits.

Table 3: results of sub-dimensions of media literacy vs academic behavior

Sub-dimension	ρ	Sig.	Result
Analysis of media messages and academic behavior	0.272	< .001	Positive and significant
Evaluation of media content and academic behavior	0.615	< .001	Positive and significant
Purposeful media use and academic behavior	0.388	< .001	Positive and significant
Media and time management	0.364	< .001	Positive and significant

Discussion

Based on the study's theoretical framework, media literacy empowers students to critically analyze and evaluate media messages, assess the credibility of information, identify reliable academic sources, and use media in a responsible and purposeful manner. [Potter \(2004\)](#) SPSS results indicated the existence of a positive and statistically significant relationship between media literacy and academic behavior. Spearman's correlation coefficient was $\rho=0.533$ with a significance level of $p<0.001$, based on a study sample of 242 individuals.

This result indicates that as students' media literacy increases, their academic behavior also tends to improve. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework of media literacy. According to this framework, individuals capable of analyzing and evaluating media information and determining the credibility of sources can utilize information with greater insight and caution. The study's theoretical background also establishes that high media literacy is linked to the informed selection of information, the choice of academic resources, purposeful media usage, and the shaping of academic behavior.

Overall, the statistical findings of this study show that there is a positive and significant relationship between media literacy and academic behavior among master's students of Kabul University.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between media literacy and academic behavior among master's students at Kabul University. Based on data collected from (242) respondents, the findings indicate that the overall level of media literacy among the students was high, with a mean score of (4.1767) on a five-point Likert scale. The results further demonstrate positive and statistically significant

relationships between media literacy and all examined dimensions of academic behavior.

Specifically, media literacy had a positive relationship with the analysis of media messages ($\rho = 0.272$, $p < .001$), evaluation of media content ($\rho = 0.615$, $p < .001$), purposeful media use ($\rho = 0.388$, $p < .001$), and media use and time management ($\rho = 0.364$, $p < .001$). Among these dimensions, evaluation of media content showed the strongest relationship. Overall, the findings suggest that students with higher media literacy tend to demonstrate more purposeful information use, stronger evaluation of sources, and more effective academic media practices. Therefore, developing media literacy skills may be an important consideration for strengthening students' academic practices and responsible use of digital information.

Recommendations

1. Strengthening media literacy education: Kabul University should consider incorporating media literacy training into academic programs, with particular emphasis on critical analysis, source evaluation, identification of unreliable information, and responsible use of digital media for academic purposes.
2. Promoting purposeful media use: University instructors should guide students toward using digital media and online resources primarily for academic research, learning, information gathering.
3. Improving media-use and time-management practices: Students should be encouraged to develop effective time-management strategies when using digital media, including setting study schedules, limiting non-academic media use.

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