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Media Literacy Educational Concerns in Algeria: What Does the National Curriculum Offer to Shield and Empower Digital Native Generation?

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Abstract:

The increasing exposure to new media outlets has led to a significant increase in screen time among digital native children; this heightened exposure potentially poses detrimental effects on their health and well-being. Despite ongoing global debates on media literacy, several countries considerably fall short in addressing the issue seriously. In Algeria, media literacy education significantly lags behind. This paper aims to revisit and review the Algerian national education curricula across primary, middle, and secondary education, using a qualitative approach to examine the extent to which media literacy is incorporated in the national curriculum. The main result reveals a significant gap and limitations of media literacy education throughout the different schooling stages, highlighting the need for comprehensive development of media literacy skills to navigate the contemporary media landscape.

Keywords: *Algeria, Digital Native, Educational Concerns, Media Literacy, National Curriculum*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, our children live in a world of overwhelming 24/7 media influx; besides, the conventional exposure to traditional forms of mainstream media, over the last decade, new media have pushed the boundaries of what was once thought to be impossible. The amount of time children and youth spend engaging with new media has experienced a drastic increase. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2020), digital native children ages 2 to 8 spend an average of two hours of screen time per day. As for children between 8 and 12, they spend four to six hours. In the case of teens over 12 years old, they spend an average of seven to nine hours per day watching or using screens, including smartphones, tablets, gaming consoles, TVs, and computers. The inexorable ubiquity and pervasiveness of media have firmly established themselves as indispensable and inextricable facets of our day-to-day lives.

Subsequently, as children devote extensive amounts of time to online activities and in front of screens, they are inherently exposed to messages and information that can potentially have a detrimental impact on their health and overall well-being. This exposure may also hinder their development as empowered and engaged citizens. Many countries around the world have taken this issue seriously since the 1920s, bringing it to the forefront of academic debates; despite, the absence of a complementary approach between the protectionists who consider media as inherently harmful, believing that we need to shield our children from its influence and seek solutions and alternatives that exclude these mediums, often overlooking the fact that they are already deeply integrated into our everyday lives; instead, its presence is only going to increase by the minute.

On the other hand, some perceive media as posing insurmountable challenges that will overwhelm and engulf us, leaving us with no option except surrendering. More pragmatically grounded, the third part has suggested numerous approaches and theories on how to tackle and address this matter, with the objective of generating methods, programs, and curricula for the implementation of media literacy both within schools and beyond (Zhang, zhang, wang,2020:58). This process goes in parallel with ongoing updates in media technologies developments. However, in some other parts of the world, even though they fully acknowledge the potential threats of new media's repercussions on children, they are still lagging behind in approaching the phenomenon and in some other contexts, they are acting haphazardly without a clear vision of what, when, where, and how to handle it.

Regarding Algeria case, media literacy education is markedly behind even in comparison to some Arab countries, not to mention the more developed parts of the world. Algerians nonetheless are ill-equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern media landscape, and there is a noticeable absence of clear and concrete vision concerning media literacy policies. Support and funding for media literacy education initiatives have received minimal attention from the government, and media literacy programs are almost nonexistent in our compulsory education system. This situation may be attributed to the Algerian educational system's lax approach to children's media education in general and media information literacy in particular. Throughout this paper, we attempt to revisit and review the Algerian national education curricula across its three stages: primary, middle, and secondary education, and examine to what extent media literacy education is incorporated into these curricula, and raise concerns about the emergency of taking this issue in hand.

1. Conceptual Framework

For more in-depth insight, the conceptual framework highlights the most recurrent keywords related to media literacy education, providing essential definitions that are central to the topic.

1.1 Media literacy education

Media literacy education is highly regarded as a cross-disciplinary field that educates people on how to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication. This definition is more liberal since it encompasses media beyond text and promotes

inquisitiveness about the media we consume and create (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2023) Media literacy education as well, equips people and provides tools that help individuals develop receptive media capabilities, enabling them to analyze messages critically; it presents opportunities for learners to enhance their media experience, assisting them in developing generative media competences, likely to boost their creative skills in producing their own compelling media messages .

The core principles of media literacy education include active inquiry and critical thinking about the messages we receive and create, expanding the concept of literacy to comprise all forms of media, and affirming that people use their skills, beliefs, and experiences to construct their meanings from media messages (United States media literacy week, 2023).

1.2. Media literacy

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate thoughtfully and actively with media and within media cultures in a more equitable, humane, ecologically resilient, and just world (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2023). The Center for Media Literacy (CML) defines media literacy as “a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet.” CML also notes that media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy (Center for media literacy, 2023). It is based on the following key concepts: Media comprise global infrastructures with material impacts (environmental and human) while also producing sensory experiences and constructions of reality with unique forms and conventions. Media express ideologies and values but are also the source of pleasure and emotional substance. Media can be interpreted as being embedded with economic, social, and political significance that contribute to the shaping of our societies and cultures. Individuals and groups negotiate the meaning of media based on multiple facts.

1.3. National curriculum

The national curriculum is outlined by the Ministry of National Education as a set of subjects and standards used by primary, middle and secondary schools to ensure that children learn the same things. It covers what subjects are taught and the Standards and levels that children are expected to reach in each subject, depending on their age (*what is the national curriculum?* 2023, viewed on 11/07/2023, <https://www.twinkl.com>).

A national curriculum is a set of educational standards devised by a central government to be implemented in government-funded schools (Ellis, 2023), full and statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils up to the age of 16. It determines the content of what will be taught and sets attainment targets for learning. It also determines how performance will be assessed and reported. An effective National Curriculum gives teachers, pupils, parents, employers and the wider community a clear and shared understanding of the skills and knowledge that young people will gain at school (Department for Education and Skills, 2004:04).

The overarching purpose of a curriculum is to provide planned learning experiences for all children. The curriculum is the vital link between education and learning, between teacher and student; the more comprehensive the curriculum and the curriculum planning process are the more the curriculum achieves its purpose as the vital link in education (Aliyeva, 2016:13).

1.4. Digital native

The digital native concept has been widely used and debated in academic and media studies, a major study from the University of Barcelona points out that the digital native label does not really exist due to the term's absence of evidence of a better use of technology to support learning. The debate has to go beyond the characteristics of the new generation and focus on the implications of being a learner in a digitized world (Creighton, 2018:133). Digital natives are today's young people who were born into the digital era and are growing up exposed to the continuous flow of digital information surrounded by digital technologies and for whom computers and internet are natural components of their lives. They do not need to familiarize themselves with the technology by comparing it to something else. On the contrary, they propose new ways of thinking about how technology can be effectively used .

Digital Natives perceive the world through different eyes: what is a novelty for digital immigrants is something ordinary for digital natives and ultimately an integral part of their lives. Nevertheless, there are individuals who fall within a grey area, although they were not born in a digital environment, they still manage to integrate into this digital environment. These individuals are also affecting the way organizations operate today due to their ease in using the technology at hand (Dingli, Seychell, 2015:09) to distinguish between the two terms ‘digital natives’ are the new generation of young people born into the digital age, while ‘digital immigrants’ are those who learnt to use computers at some stage during their adult life. Whereas digital natives are assumed to be inherently technology savvy, digital immigrants are usually assumed to have some difficulty with information technology (Wang, Com, Meyers and Sundaram, 2013).

Historically, the term ‘digital native’ was coined in 2001 by the US author Marc Prensky. In his article ‘Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants’, Prensky defined ‘digital natives’ as young people who grew up surrounded by and using computers, cell phones and other tools of the digital age. The author claimed that a digital environment dramatically changes the way that young people think and process information – it possibly even changes their brain structures. Prensky opposed ‘digital natives’ to ‘digital immigrants’, i.e. people who were born before the widespread use of digital technology and who adopted it to some extent later in life. According to Prensky, in the USA, all people born after 1980 are ‘digital natives’. In later years, Prensky revised his approach to ‘digital natives’ by adding a concept of ‘digital wisdom’. A ‘digitally wise’ person not only knows how to use digital technologies but also can critically evaluate them and make ethical choices and more pragmatic decisions; by changing his stand about ‘digital natives’, Prensky acknowledged the fact that in order to use digital technologies critically and effectively, young people need to acquire digital skills (ECDL foundation, 2014).

3. Literature Review

In this section, we review several studies that have explored media education in Algeria and related topics. It is important to mention that these studies are limited both in number and scope compared to media literacy and education universal literature overflow. Henceforth, Algerian studies can be categorized into four main directions: media education in school curriculums, media education at the university, the influence of new media on children, and the theoretical framework for addressing media education challenges.

The first category primarily highlighted the absence of media education as a separate subject (174-165: 2017، صبطي، فلاك)، and the inadequate media-related content in civic education, leading to confusion (68-56 :2020، بن شراد)، these issues pose significant setbacks to its implementation due to insufficient curriculum content and a lack of specialized staff. In the second category, studies mainly focused on negative internet usage and dangers. They emphasized the necessity of effective media education for children and highlighted the role of socialization institutes in ensuring safe internet use (280-256 :2020، شواف، ضيف). These researches also explored the Consumption of technological means by Algerian children and its adverse effects on identity, values, and mental and physical health. The research calls for increased efforts to educate children, parents, and educators about digital culture and media literacy (51-40: 2022، بايوسف) to achieve educational goals within the context of media educational policy. Moreover, these studies pinpoint the necessity to equip media professionals with educational and scientific skills aligned with community values and objectives. Besides, Experts believe media analysis should be included in syllabuses, as messages are produced within economic, political, historical, and social contexts (28-265 :2017، فوعيش). In a similar vein, another study emphasized the importance of free information outflow and its procedures. It explored the role of communication in implementing Media Literacy, employing social responsibility and value media determinism theories (44-26: 2021، بن دالي). It is important to note that some studies examined the topic of media education in Algeria in a more exhaustive range, exploring Algeria's educational and media landscape and challenges in adapting to modern technology and media developments, young people's interest in media and information cultures. These studies highlighted the recurring issue that the Algerian education system is lagging, and collaboration and continuity between universities, media institutions, and organizations are essential (77-57 :2019، أبو القاسم، شايب، ثي). At the university level, studies on

media literacy education showed the requirement for more efforts in integrating media literacy concepts into academic courses (204-183: 2019, مزلاح, حافظي). This integration is crucial to hone students' critical thinking skills and bridge the gap between students' understanding and coping with technological progress. It also underlined the need for universities to adapt to global informational challenges and address their curricula's shortcomings. At the level of university professors' in digital information literacy, studies found that while there is an acceptable level of digital information literacy, continuous development is necessary through quality academic training programs, learning skills, self-formation, and lifelong learning (197-181: 2022, بن زينب). Many other scientific interventions had only dealt with the theoretical dimension of media education and its terminology; they emphasized the need to align media education inputs and outputs with the digital environment and platforms (180-171: 2018, منصر). These studies focused on the definition, emergence, development, and characteristics of media education but noted confusion between media literacy and educative media. The content lacked a field study or implementation approach in the Algerian context (164-154: 2021, بن عيسى).

Additionally, some studies showcased pioneering media education experiments in Western and Arab countries and developed a model for Algerian development. They focused on developing individuals' skills in handling media content (80-2020:68, سيدهم, قوجيل). Another venue of studies investigated bullying, gaming addiction, and cybercrime (عيساوي, شكاردة, 2020) (84-72: as significant challenges for countries, governments, parents, and educators, indicating that these issues affect social stability and the fact of controlling a large number of users of virtual interaction platforms is challenging, which calls for policies and training mechanisms to reduce electronic crime risks and contain them on the internet.

Reviewing these studies reveals several similarities, and offers valuable insights into common trends within the field, which sheds light on the overlaps and crossings, contributing to a thorough understanding of the topic.

1. **Requirement for media education:** Numerous studies emphasize the necessity of media education in Algerian educational institutions, highlighting the lack of proper content and specialized staff.
2. **Inadequate representation:** Many studies point out inadequacy and insufficient presence of media education in the curriculum and educational manuals, leading to confusion and challenges in implementation.
3. **Call for collaboration and joint efforts:** Collaboration between universities, media institutions, and organizations is persistently stressed as essential for enhancing media education in Algeria.
4. **Advocacy for integration:** There is a general consensus for the implementation and integration of media education concepts and practices into academic curricula, aimed at promoting and fostering critical thinking skills among students and educators.

In considering the differences observed throughout the research works, the following aspects may be taken into account:

1. **Focus Areas:** The studies encompass a broad spectrum of media education, such as media education in educational institutions, media literacy and internet safety, technological consumption by children, information literacy, digital information culture skills, and combating cybercrime through media education.
2. **Methods and Approaches:** The studies implemented different methods, including field studies, surveys, theoretical analyses, and exploratory approaches to address their specific research questions.
3. **Specific Challenges:** Each study showcased specific challenges encountered within its context, namely confusion between media education and civic education, lack of practical implementation and semantic pressures in modern media education.
4. **Solutions and recommendations:** Some of these studies suggest developing media literacy based on international experiences, while others focus on integrating media education into schools or advocate for the necessity of information literacy in Algerian universities.

II. Methods and materials:

This study employs a qualitative approach in order to study the nature of the media literacy education phenomenon, including its quality, different manifestations and the context in

which they appear, which is, in this case, the Algerian national educational curricula of the three educational stages (Elementary, Middle and secondary school) of the late reforms that goes back to 2018 downloaded from the ministry of Algerian national education website ,represented by the General Reference Educational Programs for Curricula (<https://www.education.gov.dz/> وزارة التربية الوطنية، 2018، البرامج التعليمية), which have been amended in accordance with the directional education law num:08-04, stipulated on January 23, 2008 to refer to the educational levels from preschool through the 12th grade. In the Algerian education system, it represents the full range of primary and secondary education, covering the ages of approximately 5 to 18. Here is a breakdown of the different stages:

- preschool (typically for 5-year-olds)
- Grades 1-5: Elementary school (usually ages 6-11)
- Grades 1-1: *Middle* school (typically ages 12-15)
- Grades 1-3: secondary school (usually ages 16-18)

III. Results and discussion:

A comprehensive analysis of the Algerian national education curriculum across all three educational levels yields the following key findings:

3.1. Preschool

During this developmental stage, children are introduced to fundamental skills such as writing, speaking, and mathematics, albeit at a foundational level. Additionally, they are exposed to basic scientific concepts encompassing technology, physics, and biology. As for media literacy education in early childhood children are expected, as reported by the Erikson Institute for Technology in early childhood: "Media Literacy in early childhood is the emerging ability to access, engage, explore, comprehend, critically inquire, evaluate, and create with developmentally appropriate media" (Herdzina, Lauricella, 2020: 7). However, media literacy integration in early childhood education in Algeria is relatively a new field to the educational system, its gradual implementation is due to the succession of the new educational reform policies, which is regarded as firsthand experience for Algerian children in a formal educational context, yet this learning experience is confined to limited content related to media and digital media tools definitions merely presented at the 20th week of the school year, over which children are introduced to the topic of the means of communication within the framework of civic education. Notably, a parallel presentation of this content occurs in the science subject during the 21st week, limiting media-related instruction to only two sessions throughout the entire school year, which primarily consists of defining media and briefly introducing traditional and new media to preschoolers, the whole process is insufficient and falls far short of what is needed, which necessitates strong regulative measures to prioritize media literacy and incorporate it prominently into the curriculum, given the fact that media is more present in children's lives at a very early age than in the past, they start engaging with digital technologies, screens and social media around the age of two.

According to a report by the Pew Research Center, (80%) of parents say their children aged between 5 and 11 constantly use or interact with a tablet or a computer, while (63%) say the same about smartphones. For parents of children under the age of 5 years old, the numbers are also notable (48%) and (55%) respectively. At the same time, roughly one-third of parents of children of 11 or younger (36%) say their child all the time uses or interacts with a voice-activated assistant, like Apple's Siri or Amazon Alexa. However, there are wide age gaps: parents who have an older child, between the ages of 5 and 11 (46%), are more likely than parents with a child aged 3 to 4 (30%), two or younger (14%) to say their child uses or interacts with this type of technology (Auxier, Perrin and Turner 2020). Consequently, too much television or use of electronic devices adversely affects children's behaviour, health, and achievements. Young children are less able to focus on an active, hands-on play while the television is on, and background TV can negatively affect cognitive and language development as well as be linked to attention problems later in childhood (Lang, Cone, Loalada, Overstreet, Lally, Valentine-french and Skow, 2022).

3.2. Elementary School

In the first year of elementary school Algerian national curriculum lacks explicit

incorporation of media literacy or related topics. Signifying a potential oversight in addressing crucial aspects of contemporary education. The absence extends to subjects such as science and technology, as well as civic education. In the second year, limited exposure to media literacy is observed, primarily through reading materials in the Arabic language subject. These materials address traditional media forms like television, radio, newspapers, and internet usage, including basic internet search skills. However, the curriculum lacks active engagement in skill-building activities. This content is only introduced during the 26th week of the school year.

As in the case of the 3rd and the 4th year of elementary school, the curriculum does not include any media literacy-related topics or reading materials. This pattern continues, albeit with an exception in the fifth elementary year. While there is still no standalone subject dedicated to media literacy education, civic education allocates a noteworthy fifteen hours to teaching topics related to media literacy, and these topics encompass describing various means of communication and their relevance to citizens' daily life. Students are encouraged to participate in practical tasks, such as producing TV segments, radio broadcasts, or school newspapers, including institutional ones. They are also taught to distinguish between different media forms. However, despite these efforts, the curriculum's impact remains limited and does not significantly advance students' skills and knowledge beyond the basics of traditional media.

Many studies infer that fundamental actions in media literacy education during childhood (Herdzina , Lauricella, 2020:8) aim to enhance media literacy skills among young children. These actions are designed to support children to:

- Access: to effectively locate, use, and select media;
- Engage and Explore: to intentionally use media for purpose and enjoyment;
- Comprehend: to understand media messages and practices and transfer that knowledge appropriately;
- Critically Inquire: to question and analyze media messages;
- Evaluate: to ask, "is this media right for me or my task?"
- Create: to make media with intention.

The Erektion Institute report highlighted current barriers to children's media literacy that range from lack of trained personnel to lack of resources and policies, insufficient funding, lack of research, and low value placed on media literacy and childhood development (Herdzina, Lauricella, 2020:33-34).

Overall, it is crucial to consider teaching ICTs and media literacy from early childhood through early adolescence to ensure that their use is developmentally appropriate, supports children's learning and development, and deconstructs the common belief that being a digital native does not, by default, means they are media literate. Contrary to the common belief that digital native children are digitally savvy, research has consistently shown that too much television or use of electronic devices adversely affects children's behaviour, health, and achievement. Young children are less able to focus on an active, hands-on play while the television is on, and background TV can negatively affect cognitive and language development as well as be linked to attention problems later in childhood (Lang, Cone, Loalada, Overstreet, Lally, Valentine-french and Skow, 2022).

3.3. Middle school

During this phase, students are expected to achieve literacy in the broadest sense of the term. In this phase of Algerian middle school students are introduced to an expanded array of subjects, including history, geography, Islamic education, civic education, natural sciences and life sciences, physics and technology, as well as foreign languages like French and English, in addition to national languages, Arabic and Amazigh. Despite the comprehensive nature of the national curriculum, it's noteworthy that the inclusion of media education is notably absent. The sole and only encounter with media-related content takes place within the civic education curriculum, which allocates a total of 28 hours to this topic during the school year.

Throughout this framework, ten hours are dedicated to diverse topics concerning media, emphasizing the cultivation of citizen awareness, freedom of expression, and the right to information. In other lessons, students are instructed on the constructive use of social media, as well as the potential risks associated with violating individuals' public privacy or how to mitigate the downsides of these platforms.

Furthermore, the curriculum also suggests organizing field trips to media companies or

facilitating the production of journalistic work as an alternative learning experience. The concluding session is dedicated to assessments and identifying students' learning shortcomings. While the content is undeniably rich in media literacy, and the activities are engaging, it is essential to acknowledge that many schools, particularly those in rural areas, face challenges such as their remoteness and resources' constraints, including issues related to student transportation and schools' understaffing. Consequently, they even find it difficult to level up to ordinary schooling standards. In the subsequent grades, particularly the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of the middle school, there is a notable absence of media literacy education or any related activities within the curriculum. This absence appears peculiar, considering the fact that media literacy is an ongoing process intrinsically related to the constant advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). These advancements necessitate regular updates to the curriculum to align with the evolving landscape of media and technology throughout the learning process.

By the time children reach middle school, it is acknowledged that they already have a well-established relationship with the media. Ignoring the significance of media in the lives of adolescents creates a gap between their in-school and out-of-school worlds. According to Beane James (2003), middle school curricula need to be relevant to students. Therefore, educators should make time to address the forceful array of commercial interests that are aimed at early adolescents, including those that aim to influence their tastes in fashion, music, leisure activities, and entertainment (Smith, 2005:17). Moreover it is also noteworthy to specify that research that documents the lack of learners' media literacy competencies has been an effective policy lever in public education. Interest in media literacy gained salience among parents and school leaders after Stanford University researchers showed that 80% of middle school students did not recognize an ad that was masquerading as a news story (Hobbs, Moen, Tang and Steager, 2022), despite being labelled as sponsored content.

3.4. Secondary school

Media literacy education, as an independent subject, is conspicuously absent from the diverse range of subjects encompassed by the Algerian secondary school curriculum spanning the three years of secondary education, which is designed to prepare students for university, with one exception in the form of a subject referred to as "informatics," which is offered to both first-year common branch of science and technology, as well as of literature.

During this year, students engage in 50 hours course that covers a multitude of topics. At the outset of the course, an exploration of a multitude of definitions related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), then an introduction to the various components of computers, where students learn practical skills such as installing and uninstalling computer programs and software, including anti-malware programs. Besides, they gain proficiency in controlling various computer operations and settings, and the course goes further into offering the students the opportunity to construct local networks, develop plans, and work with specific software applications.

Within the 50 hours' curriculum, four hours are dedicated to training in Microsoft Office applications, covering word processing, email communication, and creating PowerPoint presentations. Additionally, students receive instructions on fundamental principles in Excel; the last eight hours of the course are allocated to the study of algorithms and their fundamental instructions.

While the curriculum may seem comprehensive, a closer examination reveals many limitations, mostly in media literacy education, since only the digital aspect is taken into consideration in the course, discarding at the same time the other dimensions, for instance only one hour is allocated to addressing social media platforms, their utilization, and their positive and negative impacts. Moreover, the curriculum briefly touches upon internet ethics within this one-hour timeframe, which raises concerns about the feasibility of adequately covering these diverse and complex topics within such a limited timeframe. A media literate person does not exclusively mean a digital literate person, because it encompasses more than that and extends to mastering the principles of authorship, format, audience, content, and purpose to question media messages actively. Access to information alone is not sufficient; one must also have skills to analyze and interpret the messages (Ciurel, 2016:19). These messages involve paradigmatic choices, syntagmatic combinations, persuasion techniques, bias, propaganda, manipulation,

misinformation, disinformation, and sceptically examining these often-conflicting media messages is based on user's own experiences, abilities, beliefs, and values (Ciurel, 2016:19-20). Media Literacy aims to help students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of mass media, how they work, the techniques they use and the impact of these techniques. They will learn in denouement that realities are constructed and mirror ideas or values of media-content makers, how to spot a stereotype and distinguish facts from opinions (Ciurel, 2016:57); media literacy education also aims to foster students' ability to produce and distribute media content; students cannot only use media but also actively create media message and communicate with others through media (Ciurel, 2016:58). Furthermore, media literacy is able to strengthen the public interest to improve socio-political conditions, is able to enable citizens to participate actively in public discussions and deliberations to affect change, as well as, it is able to empower citizens to fulfil their rights and obligations (Zhang, Zhang, Wang, 2020: 58). It is considered as an extremely important factor for active citizenship in the information society. In this context, media literacy is viewed as one of the major tools in the development of citizens' responsibilities; developing students' citizenship is an essential objective of media literacy education.

IV. Conclusion:

On a global scale, media literacy education is an integral part of any given national curriculum; in countries like the United States and the European Union, media literacy education is the focus of an interdisciplinary global community of media scholars and educators. For decades, television has been under scrutiny, particularly as the "plug-in drug" responsible for luring youth away from reality. It has been accused of contributing to delinquency, amorality, violence, acts of aggression, social alienation, declining literacy skills, obesity, and desensitization to crime and violence. Although these accusations have not been lifted yet, the focus of research has shifted towards new media and their effects, exploring the best ways to mitigate their impact and enable people to remain steadfast. As a result, it has been argued that the best way would be introducing media literacy education to children starting from their early stages of schooling, which could lead later on to a remarkable increase in young people's resilience to misinformation and misleading content on the media policy spectrum. Within this spectrum, we come across two main categories. The first category revolves around governments focusing on prevention strategies, tasking the information providers with content censorship and improved management of algorithms that determine what users are exposed to on social media. The second category centers on empowering the audience and enhancing their media awareness. This venue encourages people to critically analyze content (Khaled, 2023). However, in some other parts of the world, like the case of Algeria, media literacy education has not yet reached the full attention of policymakers and education experts, as exposed in the aforementioned Algerian studies, this is why media literacy skills are not widely imparted to Algerian children and young people, despite its preponderance to navigate the intricate saturated, and ever-changing media landscape, imperatively all school and socialization institutions should engage and incorporate media literacy into their curriculum to empower students to engage critically with information and amplify their voices as creators and digital authors.

VI. Recommendations:

Given the current status of media literacy in Algeria, it is highly advisable to reconsider the following recommendations:

- Educating policymakers and public officials, informing them about the importance of media literacy education in early childhood and as a lifelong learning process;
- Shaping legislation, standards, and regulations;
- Engaging teachers, educators and parents by involving them in the process of raising awareness toward media literacy;
- Connecting and assisting advocates, providing tools and resources, education, and training;
- Building public awareness and garnering grassroots support for media literacy education;
- Supporting implementation in schools and educational institutions.

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