Media and Information Literacy Education in Asia

Exploration of policies and practices in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

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Foreword

The global crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic underlines how crucial it is for our societies to have access to quality information and navigate the news and internet environment in order to strengthen our resilience in the face of the multiple challenges facing humanity.

Through Media and Information Literacy – abbreviated as MIL – we develop the ability to access, understand, analyse and create information and media content. MIL is an essential skill that shapes our perceptions, beliefs and attitudes towards the world. We make important decisions based on information. We form ideas about people, a country, a religion and a situation by obtaining information. If the news or information we access is invented, false, exaggerated or distorted, we won't get an accurate view of the world.

As the United Nations Agency specifically mandated to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the press, UNESCO has been leading a global programme to promote MIL for more than a decade. Our strategy includes establishing policy and strategy for Media and Information Literacy and promoting MIL education through teacher training all over the world.

The MIL programmes in education have been traditionally designed to enhance people's knowledge about media and information, develop their capacity to use ICT, and create and analyse media contents. The recent trends relating to the rise of hate speech and information disorder have added the issue of prevention of violence, discrimination and conflict into the MIL agenda. More and more MIL is cited to protect people from propaganda and content promoting violence, but also to maximize the benefits of freedom of expression in a view to enhance their participation as a global citizen. Our 2018 handbook *Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation* is one of our education resources that take into account the issue of disinformation, and increase media and information literacy. The handbook is now available in many languages in Asia, including Indonesian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Malaysian, Tajik, Tetum, Thai and Vietnamese.

To support the Member States in formulating education policies on MIL that respond to the current trends and challenges, UNESCO proposes in this publication to critically review the MIL education policies and practices in place in formal, informal and non-formal settings in Asia. Researchers from five countries – Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand – explore how these policies and practices could address the emerging and pressing issues such as political extremism, false news, online harassment and discrimination.

UUNESCO thanks the authors and editors. I hope that this work, in its modest way, can contribute to fostering peace, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding by promoting MIL as part of the critical transversal competencies.

Shigeru Aoyagi
Director
UNESCO Bangkok
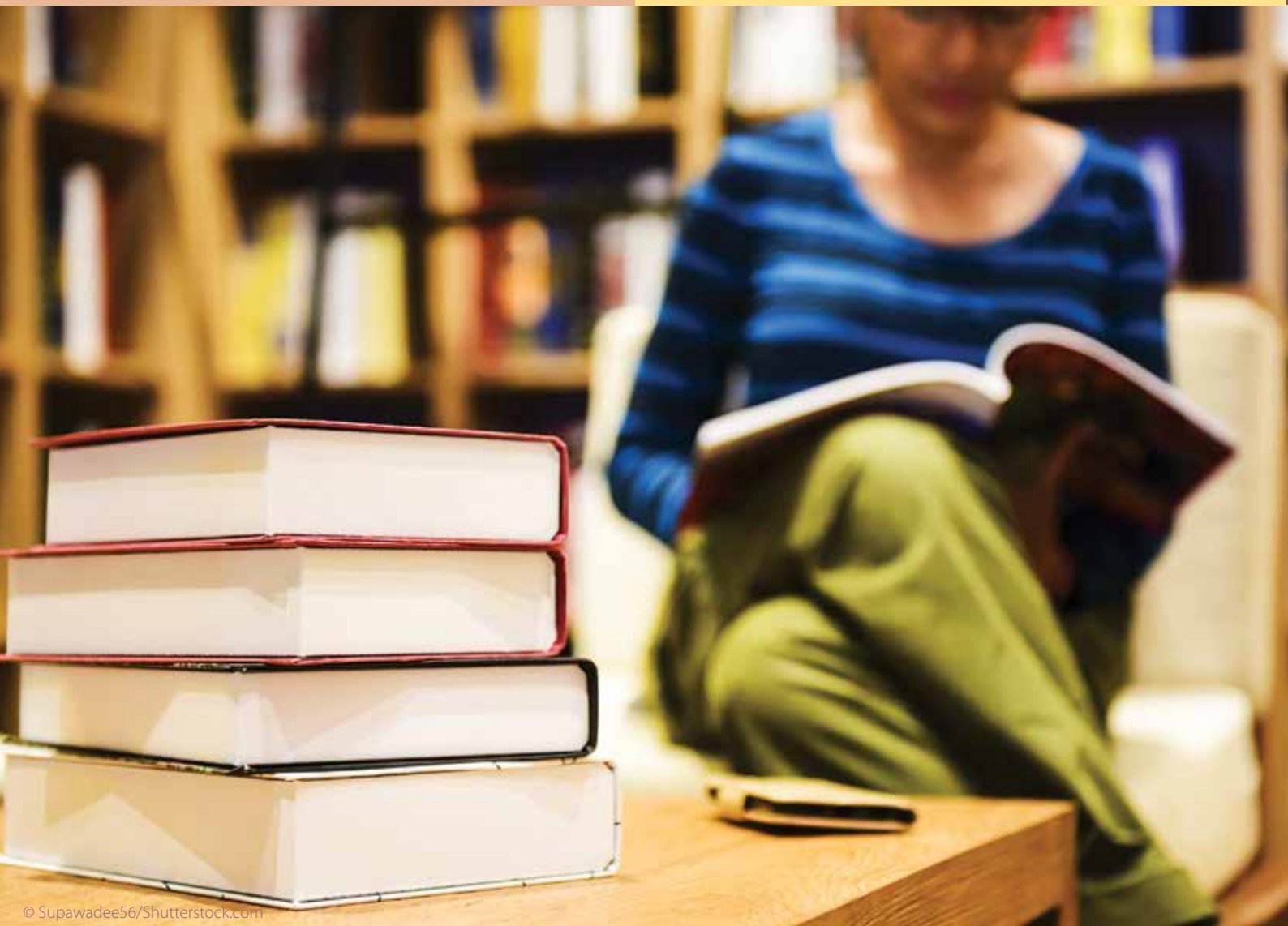
Introduction

UNESCO regards Media and Information Literacy (MIL) education as one of the central domains in fostering critical thinking, respect for cultural diversity, and open dialogue. The UNESCO MIL and Intercultural Dialogue Yearbook 2016 suggests that such education could 'help overcome disinformation, stereotypes and intolerance conveyed through some media and in online spaces.'[1]

Inclusive MIL education is seen by UNESCO as sustainable mitigation strategies to pervasive misinformation, hate speech and other divisive socio-political issues. These social challenges become more widespread with more people having access to digital technologies and online communication. The information disorder in the 'post-truth' era affects everyone, especially vulnerable groups and minorities;[2] MIL is believed to address this challenge of modern societies that are prone to public sentiment manipulation and opinion polarization.

In this booklet, researchers from five Asian countries looked at the current media and information literacy education policies and teaching practices in formal and informal settings. It explores how MIL could address emerging and pressing problems such as political extremism, false news, online harassment and discrimination in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

This booklet comprises of five chapters for each country report structured in the following template:

Overview:	A brief summary of the report that describes overall trends in the country and its core findings.
Key stakeholders:	This section discusses the MIL education landscape in relation to the issues arising from the information disorder. It explains who the key stakeholders are and what they do, from governmental agencies to academics to civil society. It also delves into the description and analysis of their policies, projects and activities.

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1   Singh, J., Kerr, P. and Hamburger, E. (eds) (2016). *Media and Information Literacy: Reinforcing Human Rights, Countering Radicalization and Extremism*. Paris: UNESCO, p.7.

2   UNESCO (2017). *Preventing Violent Extremism through Education: A Guide for Policy-Makers*. Available at: https://unesdoc. unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247764. (Accessed 8 July 2020.)

Definitions:	MIL education covers a wide range of competencies from cognitive proficiency to practical digital skills. It is necessary to scope competencies while consider a common core when putting MIL training into practice. As Law 5 of the UNESCO Five Laws of MIL notes, 'Media and information literacy is not acquired at once. It is a lived and dynamic experience and process. It is complete when it includes knowledge, skills and attitudes, when it covers access, evaluation/assessment, use, production and communication of information, media and technology content.' In this section, each author looks into how various stakeholders define MIL and explores what is actually being taught under varying circumstances. Some country reports also review existing research in the country and describe the main socio-political issues and concerns expressed by MIL educators.
Challenges:	The penultimate section outlines the main challenges faced by the country. It examines the problems and difficulties that particular initiatives and teachers have encountered. This section also dovetails the micro-level challenges with the macro-level - structural and socio-political context in the country that are affecting the ways in which MIL teaching and learning is taking place.
Discussion:	Each author concludes the report with a discussion on the possible courses of actions each country can take, based on the findings. It is worth noting that the ideas and recommendations at the end of the report are country-specific. Some of them could be deemed controversial or unrealistic in other countries.

This booklet further attempts to synthesize the current MIL policies and practices in Asia, in light of the global concerns over eroding democratic values and the rise of populism. This region comprises countries with diverse political mechanisms, media landscapes, religious beliefs, languages, ideologies, and educational systems. The five countries examined here are by no means representative of the entire Asian region. But the authors believe it is a worthwhile first step to form a basis to facilitate dialogues among MIL stakeholders beyond national boundaries.

It is clear that at this stage what MIL education entails in each country is not aligned. Even inside one country, there are sometimes contradicting ideas about what needs to be taught and how by different parties. As might be expected, this observation is not a new or unique phenomenon only in Asia.

In the United States, for instance, media literacy scholar W. James Potter pointed out that this field is made up of a 'large complex patchwork of ideas' created by divergent stakeholders.[3] In Europe, a research report for the European Commission found that there is no 'universally accepted definition of media literacy' and some concepts are taught inconsistently.[4]

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3   Potter, W. J. (2010). *The State of Media Literacy*. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 54 (4), p. 675. Available at: doi: 10.1080/08838151.2011.521462. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

4   Council of Europe (2017). *Mapping of Media Literacy Practices and Actions in EU-28*. Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory.

The country reports in this booklet have similar findings. This underlying challenge of a fragment approach to how MIL is treated is one of the obstacles to growth and country take-up in this field. The UNESCO strategy calls for a harmonization of information, media and digital technology competencies, under the umbrella term media and information literacy.

The editors envisage that publication can draw the attention of more stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region to a holistic approach to empowering people with information, digital and media competencies for overall greater impact on people's lives. The authors hope that the following discussions could contribute to the broader, international conversations on MIL education to advance the ongoing efforts for harmonization as well as prompt new and more sustainable initiatives.

Executive Summary

Many intertwined factors affect how MIL is discussed and taught in different countries. Culture, religion, history, politics, economy, legal framework, media landscape, digital adoption, infrastructure – there are myriads of elements that encompass the implementation of MIL education.

Every country is truly unique in this sense. At the same time, there are some common characteristics and challenges shared by all five countries. A summary of the key findings in this booklet follows:

Political and cultural sensitivity of MIL

▼ With restrictive laws and regulations that essentially curtail speech, coupled with limited press freedom, it is not easy for teachers in Malaysia and Thailand to discuss how to critically evaluate information and media content and talk about citizens' active engagement in politics and social matters in classrooms.

▼ In contrast, free speech is by and large well protected in Japan. However, discussion of such topics as race and ethnicity can be seen as culturally inappropriate in Japanese primary and secondary schools. In the Philippines, the polarizing nature of the current political climate and ongoing attacks on journalists discourage conversations surrounding certain social issues.

▼ Applying critical thinking skills to decode the meaning of information and media messages could result in questioning or challenging authoritative voices in some cases, including those of teachers, which can be considered disrespectful in all countries, making it difficult to create a safe learning environment that encourages open dialogues with different ideas and viewpoints – one of the essential processes in MIL pedagogy.

Emphasis on technical side of ICT competency

▼ Technical aspects of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are given more emphasis, time and resources in all five countries. Hands-on skills such as computer programming and related digital competencies are considered essential for future economic growth.

▼ On the other hand, ethical and psychosocial impacts of technologies are often neglected in the same curricula. Information search and media production are often believed 'safer' topics to deal with in formal education rather than assessing and evaluating media content, especially with younger pupils.

▼ The digital divide is still an issue in all countries reviewed in this study, except for Japan. Access to the internet, availability of digital devices and school policies about the usage of mobile tools vary widely within each country. Thus, this makes it difficult to develop a standardised curriculum with an appropriate learning environment that matches students' real-life experience with the devices, technology and tools outside of school.

Definitional problems and different approaches

▼ There is no consensus among main stakeholders in the studied countries on what media literacy education should entail. UNESCO's model of MIL education is one of the known resources available but there are other approaches adopted by different academics and teachers.

▼ In Malaysia and Thailand, many media literacy educators seem to embrace a protectionist approach to the information disorder, which is in line with a heavy-handed strategy by the government to control the flow of information. Protection from harmful media content and inappropriate usage of the internet defined by authorities are stressed along with personal safety and sometimes national security. Meanwhile, critical evaluations of media narratives and underlying messages that encourage active citizenship seem to lag behind in the MIL instruction in the two countries.

▼ The same trend can be observed in the other three countries as well. Although stakeholders in Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines discuss the value of proactive citizenry to some extent, our findings suggest that in the actual classroom, it is not discussed in the ways that UNESCO talks about social inclusion, tolerance and citizen empowerment through MIL education.

Lack of adequate trainings for teachers

▼ In the Philippines, MIL has been integrated into the K to 12 (Kindergarten and 12 years) formal education programme; it is a core subject in senior high school now. In Japan, various forms of media literacy teaching and learning materials have been used in formal education for decades; the newly revised national curriculum guideline for the 2020 textbooks and onwards has even more emphasis on ICT and media literacy, while it's not based on the UNESCO's conception of the field. In the other three countries, MIL education is not fully part of nationwide school curricula.

▼ In all five countries, researchers observed that one of the biggest hurdles to properly implement MIL education at scale is the lack of teacher training. Even in Japan and the Philippines where teachers are expected to teach related subjects, MIL is not a compulsory component of teacher certification at the moment. Self-teaching and short workshops are the common ways for interested educators to familiarize themselves with the pedagogy. It often creates extra burden on their workload.

Lack of coordination and empirical impact assessment

▼ Governmental agencies, academics, civil societies, publishers, broadcasters, news organizations, schools and other stakeholders are actively introducing different initiatives and trying to engage in MIL education in one way or another in all countries.

▼ However, they do not work together to create a cohesive approach and direction. Although diverse modes of teaching and learning strategies could potentially enhance the dynamism of the field, our findings indicate that those various efforts are often short-term and fragmented. Lack of coordination among key stakeholders make it hard to evaluate the overall effectiveness and impact of MIL education.

▼ Evaluations of MIL education models in all five countries heavily rely on descriptive accounts of particular instructions, ethnographic interviews with teachers and learners, collection of anecdotal evidence, focus group, self-reporting surveys, small case studies and other research methods that evaluate specific circumstances.

There is little or no nation-wide initiative that aims to inform policymaking or to gauge the real impact of MIL in addressing societal issues. The difficulty of assessment is a known problem in this field globally, but there seems to be very little concern among stakeholders over the lack of empirical measurement to analyse pedagogical models' efficacy and long-term impact.

Our findings suggest that the lofty aspiration of citizen empowerment through education to mitigate polarisation, inequality, radicalization and other pressing concerns of our time, is marred by political conditions, cultural norms, structures of education sectors and other factors.

The focus of media and information literacy education in the five countries tends to be about teaching individuals how to be discerning media users and communicators with adequate digital skills without being holistic about its impact on society.

The following section aims to shed light on the salient factors affecting the overall policies and practices of each country by looking into the environment in which educators, practitioners and other relevant parties prioritize MIL pedagogical models, which helps identify the gaps between UNESCO's conception of MIL and each country's implementation.

JAPAN

By Masato Kajimoto

Overview

Various forms of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) education that resemble some aspects of modern-day conception of the field have been around for several decades in Japan.[5] Especially since the late 1990s, a broader community of scholars in the country has formed a vibrant arena of research and discussion in this area, drawing on the curricula and theoretical underpinnings developed in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.[6]

For the last 20 years, hundreds of books and audio-visual materials on media literacy have been made available for those who are interested in teaching, learning, or researching the subject, targeting a wide variety of audience from schoolteachers to university students to ordinary media consumers.

Textbooks used by many schools (from elementary to high schools) have some elements of media literacy incorporated in such subjects as the Japanese Language, Social Studies and Civics.[7] Authors of those publications include not only academics but also media outlets, journalists, governmental agencies and citizen groups.

However, like in many other countries, there seems not to be a definite consensus among different sectors and stakeholders engaged in MIL education as to what exactly needs to be taught and how. The ambiguity over what it should entail has led to varying degrees of emphases and diverse goals among different initiatives and projects.[8]

UNESCO's model of MIL teaching and learning, which encompasses fairly expansive skillsets dubbed as a composite of '21st century competencies'[9] has not been widely implemented in Japan. It is not a popular concept among the stakeholders because it seems hard for the educators in the country under the current working and social conditions to fully embrace UNESCO's aspiration to promote ethical, responsible

5   Murakami, K. (2014). *A Brief Mapping of Media and Information Literacy Education in Japan*. In S. H. Culver and P. Kerr. *Global Citizenship in a Digital World*. Göteborg: NORDICOM/UNESCO, pp. 271–288.

6   Nakamura, S. (2015). *Kyokasho Kyozaishi Kara Mieru Jissen to Kongo No Tenbo* [Teaching Practice and Future Development Drawn On the History of Textbook Materials]. In J. Hammamoto and K. Okuizumi. *Media Literacy No Kyoiku* [Teaching Media Literacy]. Hiroshima: Keisuisha, pp.29-38. (In Japanese.); Mizukoshi, S. (2017). *Media Literacy and Digital Storytelling in Contemporary Japan*. Leiden, Netherlands: International Institute for Asian Studies. Available at: https://iias.asia/the-newsletter/article/media-literacy-digital-storytelling-contemporary-japan. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.); (2000). *Akiko Sugaya, Media literacy: Sekai no genba kara* [Media Literacy: From the World's Frontline]. Tokyo: Iwanami. (In Japanese.)

7   Murakami. *A Brief Mapping of Media and Information Literacy Education in Japan*; Nakamura, *Kyokasho Kyozaishi Kara Mieru Jissen to Kongo No Tenbo* [Teaching Practice and Future Development Drawn On the History of Textbook Materials] (In Japanese.); Nakahashi, Y. (2015). *Media Katsuyo to Literacy No Ikusei* [Practical Use of the Media and Development of Literacy] (In Japanese.); *Hoso Media Kenkyu* [Broadcast Media Studies]: pp. 125–148. (In Japanese.); Mizukoshi, *Media Literacy and Digital Storytelling in Contemporary Japan*.

8   Nakahashi. *Media Katsuyo to Literacy No Ikusei* [Practical Use of the Media and Development of Literacy].

9   Lee, A. et al. *Conceptual Relationship of Information Literacy and Media Literacy in Knowledge Societies*.

citizenship that encourages active engagement in politics and society that enables 'diversity, dialogue and tolerance.'[10]

Topics such as race, religion and immigration are often deemed culturally too sensitive or too political in both formal and informal MIL educations for school children. Nevertheless, amid the global concern over the influence of 'fake news' in the 'post-truth' era, the need of MIL education in combating the spread of misinformation and other harmful content has gained renewed public attention and interest in Japan lately.

In the following sections, this report aims to map the current MIL policies and practices in Japan in order to identify key stakeholders. It tries to shed light on their challenges by exploring whether the MIL initiatives and educational interventions could address the societal issues surrounding 'equality, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, peace, freedom of expression and access to information' as proposed by UNESCO.[11]

Key Stakeholders

Media experts[12] agree for the most part that Japan has not felt any nation-wide impact of false news, disinformation campaigns, or other manipulative content to the extent that fraudulent information has observably affected the results of major elections or instigated mass violence. However, the country's internet is rife with racial slurs, misogynous messages, jingoistic rhetoric, hateful jokes, xenophobia and spiteful mockeries that sometimes get shared widely.[13]

There are many reported cases of individuals in distress, from public figures to ordinary citizens, who have been targeted and bullied by internet users. Among the topics that tend to instigate rancorous messages and commentaries are gender equality, nationalism, sexual orientation and ethnocentrism. In particular, online verbal abuse against permanent Japanese residents of Korean origin can be considered as extremely resentful, sometimes containing even death threats.[14]

Japan's hate speech law, which took effect in June 2016, however, does not criminalize or penalize any production or dissemination of hateful expressions. The law simply sets public sector guidelines for

10   Grizzle, A. and Torras, M., (eds) (2013). *Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines*, Paris: UNESCO, pp. 17–18.

11   UNESCO (2016). *Media and Information Literacy*.UNESCO. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

12   The author of this report has spoken to scores of media literacy researchers, journalists and other stakeholders in the country for this report. Their names and affiliations are mentioned in the report when it discusses their specific projects and initiatives.

13   Kajimoto, M. and Stanley, S. (2018). *Information Disorder in Asia and the Pacific: Overview of Misinformation Ecosystem in Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Viet Nam*. Available at: doi:10.2139/ssrn.3134581; Kajimoto, M. (2017). *A Snap Election (and Global Worries over Fake News) Spur Fact-Checking Collaborations in Japan*. Nieman Lab. Available at: https://www.niemanlab.org/2017/10/a-snap-election-and-global-worries-over-fake-news-spur-fact-checking-collaborations-in-japan/. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

14   Kajimoto. *Information Disorder in Asia*.

reducing and mitigating hate speech in order to promote preventive measures. While there are calls for stricter applications or new legislation, deciding what constitutes harmful content is a controversial topic in the country.

Banning or penalizing any speech is feared to lead to an infringement of people's rights to freedom of expression by many,[15] and civil cases involving hateful commentaries are often dealt by other existing laws such as defamation. Currently, there is no serious public discussion on creating new regulatory frameworks to restrict online content in Japan.

Instead, educational efforts are seen as one of the pre-emptive actions to counter hate speech, disinformation, and other types of manipulative content. Some MIL programmes touch upon online safety, ethics, morality, and empathy in a variety of forms, which in theory is in line with UNESCO's conceptions of MIL education but, as will be discussed in later sections of this article, is not easy to address such issues in classrooms.

Government

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) is one of the two governmental ministries that are actively promoting MIL education. MEXT, which sets the national curriculum guidelines that all primary and secondary-level schools need to adhere,[16] has introduced its revised guidelines in 2017; among the forthcoming changes is an emphasis on fostering students' abilities to use information and communication technologies, ranging from computer programming to media literacy skills.[17]

The newly revised guidelines will be implemented incrementally, starting from the elementary school in 2020 and be completed by 2022 with high schools. As of 2017, there are at least 124 Japanese language school textbooks that incorporate media literacy teaching and learning materials, according to a study conducted by media literacy scholar Sumiko Nakamura.[18]

Although different textbooks come with varying definitions and scopes of MIL, from analyses of newspaper articles to production of advertisement posters to debate over media's roles in forming public opinions,[19] MEXT's renewed embracement of the field seems to ensure further discussions and expansions of the MIL in formal education as it is also MEXT that examines and approves those textbooks submitted by publishers based on the curriculum standards it lays down.

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC) is the other governmental unit that has been actively producing media literacy materials designed for both formal and informal settings, from extracurricular activities to public workshops to self-learning. MIC is the ministry in charge of developing the nation's information and communication technology and its usage from the policy side. Lesson plans, activity

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15   Kyodo News Agency (2019). *Three Years after Enactment of Japan's Hate Speech Law, Politicians Call for Increased Efforts to Eradicate Discrimination*. The Japan Times. Available at: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/05/31/national/three-years-enactment-hate-speech-law-politicians-call-increased-efforts-eradicate-discrimination/. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

16   This includes both public and private elementary, junior high, senior high schools as well as schools for students with special needs.

17   Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (2020). *New Curriculum Standards*. Tokyo: Japan. Available at: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/1384661.htm. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

18   Dr. Nakamura is an associate professor at Tokyo Gakugei University. The research data was shared with the author personally.

19   Nakahashi. *Media Katsuyo to Literacy No Ikusei* [Practical Use of the Media and Development of Literacy]. (In Japanese.)

sheets, video clips, interactive websites, and other relevant items have been developed by commissioned media professionals and academics; many of them are easily accessible online.[20]

MIC has also formed a study group in October 2018 to research internet governance in relation to platforms and their services. Within a year, they have convened more than 20 meetings with experts in wide-ranging fields from cybersecurity to 'fake news' to media literacy.[21] Following the global trend in the 'post-truth' era, the Japanese government also seems to be exploring different approaches to curb the issues associated with the information disorder and weighing the potentials of MIL education along with other measures.

Media Industry

The Japan Internet Media Association (JIMA), a self-governing body composed of 28 companies in the industry launched in April 2019, also aims at tackling the 'emerging challenges of the internet media,'[22] and among their key strategies is media literacy. Led by Kenichi Shimomura, a former journalist who has penned many media literacy books and become one of the most well-known experts in this field, JIMA offers workshops for media audiences every three months, convenes study groups for media organizations, and works closely with advertising industry groups, according to the announcement in June 2019.[23]

Unlike JIMA, trade associations of legacy media outlets such as Nihon Shimbun Kyokai (Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association) and Broadcasting Ethics and Programme Improvement Organization (BPO) do not seem to engage directly with MIL activities.[24] However, the print industry in Japan has always been very active in publishing newspapers for elementary school children and promoting Newspaper In Education (NIE) programmes to schools. Some of the instructional designs, which can be described as journalism appreciation approach to identify quality news reports, are closely in line with the MIL teachings and learning practices.[25] The Japan Newspaper Museum in Yokohama, known as News Park, also offers a variety of activities for visitors and schools to learn the process of news production and dissemination.[26]

For decades, broadcasters in the country have also been producing a considerable amount of MIL-related TV shows and accompanying materials. Notably, the public broadcaster Japan Broadcasting Corporation, popularly known as NHK, has been offering a robust array of content for teachers and students from lesson

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20   See, for example, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (2006). *Nobaso [Enhance] ICT Media Literacy*. Tokyo Japan. Available at: http://www.soumu.go.jp/ict-media/ (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.); Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. (2005). *Hoso Bunya Ni Okeru Media Literacy* [Media Literacy in Broadcasting]. Tokyo: Japan. Available at: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/joho_tsusin/top/hoso/kyouzai.html. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

21   Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. (2018). *Platform service ni kansuru kenkyukai* [Platform service study group]. Tokyo: Japan. Available at: http://www.soumu.go.jp/main_sosiki/kenkyu/platform_service/index.html. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

22   JIMA Office. (2019). *JIMA setsuritsu ni kansuru press release* [Press Release: Establishment of Japan Internet Media Association]. Available at: https://jima.media/pressrelease20190416/. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

23   JIMA Office (2019).*Media no shinraisei toha? Sozosei ya tayosei wo sasaeru niha?* [What is media trust? How to sustain creativity and pluralism?]. Available at: https://jima.media/symposium-2019-06-08/. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

24   For more information, see Nihon Shimbun Kyokai (https://www.pressnet.or.jp) and Broadcasting Ethics & Program Improvement Organisation (https://www.bpo.gr.jp).

25   For more information, see https://nie.jp

26   For more information, see https://newspark.jp

plans to video clips through its 'NHK for School' programme.[27] They have also seen major updates in light of the emerging concerns over the new communication models driven by the internet in recent years.

A case in point is a show titled 'The Media Times,' which first aired in June 2017 and has been re-running since.[28] The drama-style, 20-episode series features four main protagonists looking into various aspects of media production from the viewpoints of both practitioners and the audience. With a 10-minute length of each episode, it covers a wide-ranging of topics from news photography to online reviews to opinion polls to disinformation to copyrights.

The MIL-focused programme was made with the help of eight school teachers and university academics, including Yu Nakahashi, one of the leading scholars in media literacy education.[29] Its website features a couple of case studies written by teachers who incorporated a particular episode into their teaching. They showcase how the TV show can be adopted in the real classrooms and demonstrate how other teachers can follow the same approach.[30]

Academics and Schools

Naturally, people in the educational sectors such as university academics, schoolteachers, and librarians, are taking on particularly vital roles in the development of MIL, along with governmental agencies and media practitioners. There are quite a number of research groups, educators' networks, and collaborative initiatives in the country.

The FCT Japan Media Literacy Institute, which was founded in 1977 by media literacy pioneer Midori Suzuki, is one such example.[31] Another example is the Japan Society of Educational Technology, which is a nationwide educators' association, that has a special interest subgroup called 'Media Literacy and Media Education,' whose membership includes some of Japan's leading media literacy researchers.[32]

However, as observed by Kyoko Murakami in a 2014 UNESCO publication diverse stakeholders have different goals, emphasis, and target learners.[33] Together, their concerns may address some of the global social issues identified by UNESCO, but alleviation of such problems through MIL are seldom mentioned as primary objectives in their pedagogical models or research designs.

For example, some groups focus on information and communication technology skills for schoolchildren; other educators specialize in critical methods of media analyses for university students; and other initiatives organize community-based workshops on the internet and social media usage. Some are well-structured, while others are haphazard.

A wide breadth of stakeholders engaged in the MIL space in both public and private sectors indicate the maturity of the field, nonetheless. With the implementation of the newly revised national curriculum

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27   Murakami. *A Brief Mapping of Media and Information Literacy Education in Japan*.

28   NHK (2019).*The Media Times*. NHK for School. Available at: https//www.nhk.or.jp/sougou/times/. (Accessed 25 August 2019.)

29   Dr. Nakahashi is a professor at Musashi University.

30   A case in a junior high school, see https://www.nhk.or.jp/sougou/times/origin/column03.html; in an elementary school, see https://www.nhk.or.jp/sougou/times/origin/column02.html

31   http://www.mlpj.org/index.shtml

32   https://www.jset.gr.jp/sig/sig08.html

33   Murakami. *A Brief Mapping of Media and Information Literacy Education in Japan*.

guidelines by MEXT in 2020, it is likely that MIL teaching and learning materials will be integrated into even more school textbooks in a variety of academic subjects.

At the same time, educational initiatives led by media outlets and industry associations show the sign of being revitalized. The media audience has an easy access, if they so desire, to a variety of popular books on media literacy that are readily available in physical and online bookstores all over the country.

Definitions

Although the term 'media literacy' has become part of everyday lexicon in Japan, people have varying degrees of understandings and expectations of what it actually teaches. Even among the key stakeholders, there seems no consensus.

In the academic world, debate over its definition could be seen as an important intellectual exercise among scholars to identify underpinning theoretical frameworks of their specialized sub-areas within the discipline. But in the actual classroom, ambiguity over the definition has significant implications for what is being taught, as each instructor's grasp of MIL directly influences learners' experiences.[34]

For example, some researchers interviewed for this report expressed concerns that the governmental agencies such as MEXT and MIC tend to down play the importance of 'critical thinking' in media analysis and reflection in their guidelines and publications, even though many renowned MIL scholars around the world agree it is one of the core values media literacy education could provide.[35]

The 'critical' evaluation of media messages, which could connote negative finger-pointing in the Japanese language, is often replaced with a more positive-sounding word meaning 'with independent thinking.' While those who teach media literacy at the university level see no need for following the guidelines, teachers in elementary and middle schools are forming their instructions based on the textbooks and activities built upon such definition.

The nuanced difference between the two expressions may appear subtle on the surface, but the former perspective teaches rational reasoning and encourages logical argument whereas the latter could favour one's personal interpretation of media content and neglect applications of objective assessment.

The definitional variance could, therefore, result in a drastically different teaching methods in actual classrooms. Although the modern definitions of media literacy in the country draw on internationally

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34   Nakahashi. *Media Katsuyo to Literacy No Ikusei* [Practical Use of the Media and Development of Literacy], pp. 137–138. (In Japanese.)

35   See, for example, Grizzle et al. *Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines*, pp. 84–86.

recognized classic conceptions of this field developed in Europe and North America,[36] in practice they manifest in different ways, resulting in varying learning objectives and outcomes.

Cultural and Political Sensitivity

Broadly speaking, research papers, college-level textbooks, and other academic publications have a commonality in describing what media literacy skills are. They are the competencies to access, analyse, evaluate, and create media messages in all forms of communication (especially digital forms under the current circumstances). Another leading, influential scholar in Japan's media literacy, Shin Mizukoshi,[37] sees it as 'a synthesis of three communication activities: technological operation, critical reception, and active expression.'[38] In recent years, he has proposed to expand the sphere of MIL to go beyond media practice and ecology in order to include working knowledge about internet platforms and technological infrastructure, which gives another dimension to the instructional design.[39]

What is conspicuously controversial, or rather, culturally sensitive, is not so much the primary definitions of MIL, as it is the goals and objectives of what MIL education should achieve. UNESCO's modelling of MIL competencies is laden with ideological value propositions – democracy, empowerment of active citizenship, promotion of pluralistic media environment, gender equality and inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and so on.[40]

Such values are also widely upheld in Japan, but even so, it is often very difficult for educators, especially schoolteachers, to bring what may be deemed ideological or political activism into their classroom. As mentioned earlier, the revised nation-wide curriculum guidelines by MEXT address those issues more than before. In fact, civic duties, media's roles in society, importance of information veracity, and other core concepts are discussed in a variety of textbooks.

There are a group of media literacy experts, such as Jun Sakamoto,[41] a member of the team that translated UNESCO's teacher guide *Media and information literacy curriculum for teachers* into Japanese in 2014, who embrace political and ideological aspects of MIL activities.[42] But there are also others who believe depoliticization of pedagogy is necessary, especially when targeting younger students in formal education, for the curriculum to be widely adopted.

More than a few academics told the author that Japanese elementary and middle school instructors who are teaching media literacy prefer to put more emphasis on production of media content 'to play it safe.' They prefer to avoid potentially sensitive social or political topics such as hate speech and discrimination

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36   See, for instance, Masterman, L. (1994). *Teaching the Media/ Comedia*. London: Routledge; Hobbs, R. and Jensen, A. (2009). *The Past, Present, and Future of Media Literacy Education*. Journal of Media Literacy Education, 11; Potter, W. J. (2020). *Media Literacy*, Ninth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

37   Dr. Mizukoshi is a professor at Tokyo University.

38   Mizukoshi. *Media Literacy and Digital Storytelling in Contemporary Japan*.

39   Mizukoshi calls his new conception and project 'The New Literacy for Media Infrastructure.'

40   Singh, J., Kerr, P., and Hamburger, E., (eds) (2016). *Media and Information Literacy: Reinforcing Human Rights, Countering Radicalization and Extremism*. Paris: UNESCO.

41   Dr. Sakamoto teaches at Hosei University.

42   See, for instance, Sakamoto, J. and Murakami, K. (2013). *The 'Culture Quest' Project: Media and Information Literacy & Cross Cultural Understanding*. In U. Carlsson and S. H. Culver (eds). *Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue*. Göteborg: University of Gothenburg, pp. 387–397.

against Japanese residents of Korean origin altogether, often following the conservative attitudes of the school itself towards education.

In contrast, university-level media literacy programmes tend not to shy away from socio-culturally controversial subject matters; nurturing 'critical' civic mindset among students can be seen as one of the learning goals in such programmes.[43] In Japan, the tertiary education seems to provide safe learning environment where students are encouraged to exchange views and ideas freely in most part.

The socio-cultural receptiveness of the teachers, students, and parents on the types of MIL education is closely linked to the definitions of the field and actual practices. The lack of definitional consensus among different stakeholders does not necessarily have negative effects on pedagogical models per se because different learners have different needs.

However, it is also indicative of diverse understanding of the core missions of MIL on a fundamental level, which could become a hindrance in advancing and standardizing the instructions nationwide, especially in the actual classrooms in formal education before college, which is one of the challenges often mentioned by the experts interviewed for this paper.

Challenges

Although MIL education is becoming a recognized component of national curricula across academic subjects before college, it is unclear at this point how committed schools and teachers could be besides using the ready-made textbooks, which are made somewhat palatable to all.

In a culture where soft-pedalling on the political and ideological aspiration of MIL are considered appropriate by many parents and teachers, it is not easy to make the connection between skills-based competencies and social consciousness of the problems surrounding 'diversity, dialogue, and tolerance' in the country.[44]

The rapid pace of technological advancement, and the complexity it brings to the patterns of communication and media consumption, is another big challenge. In order to reflect and respond to the changes, schools and educators need to be constantly reviewing policies and adjusting the curricula, as well as retraining themselves to be able to address continually emerging or morphing issues. However, an attempt to cope with changes would often create other concerns.

For example, to teach how to navigate through social media in an ethical manner effectively, teachers would need students to bring in their own smartphones to school, which requires a discussion over school's policy on the usage of mobile devices on campus. Not only that, the models of such devices could indicate economic status of students' family in a noticeable way and create anxiety among some pupils.

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43   The author looked at scores of relevant books used in media literacy education in various universities and interviewed five university instructors.

44   As defined by Grizzle et al. *Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines.*

Any deviation from the old-fashioned models of textbook-based instruction would potentially necessitate jumping through hoops for many schools and teachers.

Another challenge, which could arguably be the most pressing point of discussion in the education sector in Japan lately, is the working conditions in elementary and middle schools. Experts believe that many teachers could benefit from more systematic, regular training and workshops on teaching media literacy, but most schoolteachers simply could not find time to join such activities because they work extremely long hours.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Teaching and Learning International Survey, for instance, junior high school teachers in Japan work the longest hours among 48 countries and regions surveyed in 2018. Together with elementary schools, Japanese teachers' statutory working hours were over 200 hours more than the OECD average.

Another worrying trend found in the study is that despite the long hours, teaching time is actually much lower than the OECD average at all educational levels 'due to the fact that teachers in Japan accomplish a variety of other mandatory tasks such as student counselling, participation in school management, engagement in extracurricular activities and participation in mentoring programmes.'[45]

The dismal conditions schoolteachers are facing is a well-known problem in the Japanese education system and many media reports depict their predicament.[46] Given the current circumstances, researchers say, few schools could make MIL education part of institutional strategies as such policy would impose more workload.

The country's education ministry MEXT is planning 'major working reforms' coinciding with the implementation of the new curriculum guidelines and standards in 2020, which strives to revitalize the whole education sector from the management to local communities.[47] But it would take some years for such reforms and adjustments to see the positive results. Since the governance of schools is relatively decentralized and managed at the regional levels in Japan, the changes proposed by MEXT may not be fully implemented anytime soon.

 The MIL-related sectors in Japan are also facing some global challenges.[48] Sectionalism among the stakeholders is one such example, which makes it hard for the MIL communities to take cohesive actions together, although intra-collegiality within a community seems strong in Japan. There are many study groups, workshops, symposiums, and other activities constantly organized across the country even on weekday evenings and weekends - so that busy educators could also attend - by different stakeholders. However, they tend to zero in on some specific areas of MIL and the cumulative knowledge is not systematically shared with other communities.

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45   OECD (2019). *Education at a Glance 2018: Country Note - Japan* [pdf]. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Available at: https://www.oecd.emb-japan.go.jp/files/000398873.pdf. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

46   See, for example, NHK. (2019). *Kore Sensei No Shigoto?* [Are These Supposed to Be Teacher's Duties?]. NHK News. Available at: https://www3.nhk.or.jp/news/html/20190322/k10011856881000.html. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 16 April 2019.); Hugkum (2019). *Shogakko kyoyu ga denju: Shogakko no tannin ha doredake isogashi?* [Report from an elementary school teacher: How busy is an elementary school homeroom teacher?]. Shogakkan Hagkum. Available at: https://hugkum.sho.jp/49791. (In Japanese.) (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

47   MEXT. *New Curriculum Standards.*

48   See, for instance, Huguet, A. et al. (2019). *Exploring Media Literacy Education as a Tool for Mitigating Truth Decay.* Santa Monica: RAND, p. 163; Hobbs, R. (1998). *The Seven Great Debates in the Media Literacy Movement.* Journal of Communication, 48 (1), pp. 16–32. Available at: doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.1998.tb02734.x. (Accessed 19 May 2020.); Council of Europe. *Mapping of Media Literacy Practices and Actions in EU-28.*

Lack of measuring methods that look into the real-life impacts of MIL education is another difficulty. Inherently, eliminating a diverse array of variables that affect learners' experience and subsequent behaviours is exceedingly complicated, if not impossible. But presumably due to that limitation, empirical media literacy assessments in Japan tend to rely on descriptive accounts of specific instructions, anecdotal evidence, ethnographic analyses of learners, and other types of self-reporting case studies.[49]

Although educators could draw some insights from small-scale qualitative studies and theoretical writings, such research cannot meaningfully gauge the actual efficacy of pedagogical models because the circumstances under which the teaching and learning activities can be employed vary greatly; formal or informal setting, durations, teachers' academic background – there are myriads of factors to be taken into consideration. In Japan, such gaps do not seem to get scholarly attention.

Discussion

Not many stakeholders in Japan would directly regard MIL as one of the mitigating strategies on hate speech, disinformation, discrimination or other associated social and political issues, which can be culturally too sensitive or controversial to discuss publicly, except in the tertiary-level education. Nonetheless, Japan does have vibrant communities of manifold stakeholders, covering a broad spectrum of MIL with ranging diversity in terms of target learners, thematic focuses, modes of instructions, and scale.

Formal or informal, practitioners and policymakers aim to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary in the contemporary digital society to be discerning media consumers, competent operators of available information resources, and effective producers of media messages, using a variety of communication tools and media format.

Through interviews and desk reviews, this report has tried to map the MIL policies and practices in Japan in order to investigate current approaches and identify the possible ways forward. Certain challenges raised in the previous section are hard to overcome, especially if they are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural customs and dispositions such as taboos and working conditions, as changes would demand long-term willingness, commitment, and systemic transformations of the Japanese society, including the relevant regulatory frameworks surrounding the media and education.

The dynamic MIL discourses and activities observed in the country could potentially bring positive changes as a whole. However a lack of coordination and impact assessment makes it difficult to predict how significant their contributions will be in the long run for the kind of social impacts UNESCO aspires to achieve through MIL initiatives.

Moving forward, one suggested model the country could consider would be the establishment of a coordinating body that acts as a go-between among all sectors of media and information education.

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49   See, for example, Hamamoto, J. and Okuizumi, K., (eds) (2015). *Kyokasho Kyozaishi Kara Mieru Jissen to Kongo No Tenbo* [Teaching Practice and Future Development Drawn On the History of Textbook Materials]. Hiroshima: Keisuisha. (In Japanese.)

It could be housed within a governmental agency, like the Centre de liaison de l'enseignement et des médias d'information (CLEMI) in France, which fosters and facilitates collaborations between the media industry and educational sectors.[50] Or it could be a third sector financed by public funds, grants, donations, and other means.

The proposed entity must be structured in such a way that it retains its autonomous decision-making authority and must be free from any commercial interests or governmental pressure. It must have the capacity to take up the role to align and synchronize the existing MIL-related activities and initiatives by industry associations such as JIMA, newspaper companies' NIE programmes, audio-visual materials produced by broadcasters like NHK, teaching materials created by academic groups with different focuses, curriculum standards set by MEXT and internet governance policies being studied by MIC. And there are many others this report could not include.

Obviously, creation of a new institution with a capacity of this magnitude sounds far-fetched and unrealistic, especially when it is not certain how effectively it would work. Therefore, as a start, a working group can be formed to lead a nation-wide research about the efficacy and significance of current MIL educations and initiatives. It could be modelled after a number of similar endeavours in Europe – for example, an extensive stakeholder surveys in 28 EU countries;[51] an analytical study on European schools conducted by a network of experts titled "Teaching media literacy in Europe: Evidence of effective school practices in primary and secondary education;"[52] and the "media literacy index" created by Open Society Institute – Sofia, that combines existing indices and other factors.[53]

The European Commission[54] and the House of Commons of the United Kingdom[55] both publicly announced in their recent reports that they are exploring a possibility to make media literacy a part of OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test with other academic subjects such as mathematics. In the United States, quite a few states have passed so-called 'media literacy legislation' since 2016, making formal integration of media literacy education into the K-12 school systems a mandate in one way or another.[56]

Internationally, governmental bodies are investigating ways to standardize the evaluation of MIL competencies in a structured manner in one way or another. The intricate nature of powerplay over information and media messages at all levels, from personal communications to public relations to governmental or special interests' propaganda, inevitably makes MIL education politicized. The proposed nation-wide, cross-sectional study should delve into the characteristics of Japan's MIL landscape without shying away from the potentially controversial topics to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses. It could then possibly become the first step to build policy-level strategies that encompass all aspects of media and information literacy education.

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50   For more information, see https://www.clemi.fr/

51   Council of Europe. *Mapping of Media Literacy Practices and Actions in EU-28*.

52   McDougall, J. et al. (2018) *Teaching Media Literacy in Europe: Evidence of Effective School Practices in Primary and Secondary Education*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: https://nesetweb.eu/en/resources/library/teaching-media-literacy-in-europe-evidence-of-effective-school-practices-in-primary-and-secondary-education/. (Accessed 15 May 2020.)

53   Lessenski, M. (2018). *Common Sense Wanted. Resilience to 'Post-Truth' and Its Predictors in the New Media Literacy Index 2018*. RCMedia Freedom. Available at: https://www.rcmediafreedom.eu/Publications/Reports/Common-sense-wanted.-Resilience-to-post-truth-and-its-predictors-in-the-new-Media-Literacy-Index-2018. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

54   European Commission (2018). *Report on the Implementation of the Communication 'Tackling Online Disinformation: A European Approach'*. Brussels: European Commission.

55   The House of Commons of the United Kingdom (2019). *Disinformation and 'Fake News': Final Report*.

56   Media Literacy Now (2019). *Legislative Activity Across the Country*.Media Literacy Now (blog). Available at: https://medialiteracynow.org/your-state-legislation/. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

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THAILAND

By Phansasiri Kularb

Overview

The concept and practice of media literacy has been introduced and implemented in Thailand since 1979, with civil society organizations (CSOs), the religious and health advocacy sectors, and parenting and children education groups at the forefront of the movement[57]. From the 1980s to 2000s, these organizations provided media literacy trainings and reading materials for parents, children, and teachers and partnered with relevant state agencies.

Mostly, the common objective of media literacy education in Thailand has been to protect children from the risks and harms of mass media consumption and internet usages, such as pornography, media violence, exploitation from advertising and inappropriate use. In the late 2000s, some groups started campaigning for quality media content and programming for children, youth and Thai citizens in general as a means to educate the public and strengthen their critical thinking skills. This was in line with the Media Reform movement at the time, which called for media policy and regulation that protected freedom of expression and freedom of the press, while upholding media ethical standards[58].

From 2012 to 2020, as the use of the internet and digital media became omnipresent in the education sector, academic and public policy discussions pertaining to media literacy expanded to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and digital literacies, particularly based on the findings that both Thai children and teachers possessed low levels of technology readiness and ICT skills[59].

Following UNESCO's promotion of MIL education and its dialogue with the Ministry of Education in 2003, media literacy was incorporated into the core curriculum of primary and secondary schools and in some higher education institutions[60]. Nevertheless, the lack of educators, in terms of expertise and number, as well as insufficient trainings for existing teachers, have since hindered the development and implementation of effective lessons on media literacy in schools[61].

As for the higher education level, a 2017 survey found that among 112 institutions in Thailand, six universities offered eight media literacy courses, with titles such as 'Media Literacy', 'Media Literacy and Information Use' and 'News Literacy'[62]. Meanwhile, 68 universities, all with communication arts or communication science schools, offered courses that combined the concept of media literacy with other disciplines. Some

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57 Kleebpung, N. (2017). *The Challenge of Media Literacy Education in Thailand*. In B. S. De Abreau, P. Mihailidis, A. Lee, J. Melki and J. McDougall (eds). *International Handbook of Media Literacy Education*. New York: Routledge, pp. 43–53.

58 Ibid., p. 43.

59 Ibid., p. 44.

60 Ibid., p. 45.

61 (2015). *รายงานสรุปการสัมมนาว่าด้วยการรู้เท่าทันสื่อและสารสนเทศในยุคดิจิตอล* [Summary Report of the Seminar on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Era]. Available at: http://202.125.84.219/uploads/items/attachments/45645a27c4f1adc8a7a835976064a86d/_a4ca3ce89880d7e3d6b06912d23f2f68.pdf (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

62 Kaurchit, W., and Kongdee, C. (2017). *The Survey of Media Literacy Education in Higher Education in Thailand* [pdf]. Bangkok: Sripatum University and the Children and Youth Media Institute.

of these courses included General Education, for example, 'Information Technology and Learning' and 'Communication Technology in a Changing World[63].'

It is also worth mentioning that the study found no courses concerning media literacy specifically in the curriculum of education schools but only courses that integrated media literacy concepts into other disciplines[64].

Notwithstanding slow progress in the formal education system, the non-formal and life-long learning spaces for MIL education are considered vibrant. Academic and public interest in MIL, particularly digital literacy during the late 2010s, has given rise to a number of research projects, handbooks and online lessons produced by various stakeholders.

A 2019 study mapped out at least 19 players working directly on promoting MIL education and policy, with state agencies and civil society organization in the lead, and a handful of private and media sectors having clear policy or projects on the topic[65].

Nonetheless, when it comes to understanding disinformation, or 'fake news'[66], there is still a limited body of knowledge to explore its ramifications[67], let alone the study of MIL education and policy to tackle the problem, both in terms of empirical research and intervention designs.

Academics, educators, media professionals and civil society have encouraged joint efforts to tackle the problem. Authorities, on the other hand, have deployed hard-line approaches to suppress what they consider to be 'fake news', specifically inaccurate, distorted, hateful and harmful content against the establishments and national security, and to take legal actions against those behind the dissemination of false information. It is also worth noting that these state authorities tend to view 'fake news' as political interest groups' attempt to tarnish the government's reputation and as a profit-gaining strategy for online media operators who earn revenue from the volume of page views and audience engagement.

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63 Ibid., pp. 29–31.

64 Ibid., pp. 25–26.

65 Anunthavorasakul, A., Kularb, P., Ruangnapakul, N., and Wirunrapun, K. (2019). *The Complete Report on the Development of Social Indicators and Policy Recommendations to Promote Media, Information, and Digital Literacy to Protect Children and Youth Project*. Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund.

66 The fact-checking *Sure Khon Share* [Sure and Share] Center of MCOT's Thai News Agency reports that, in 2016, it found around 300 false stories circulated online, mostly concerning health issues, which received some hundred-thousand likes or shares on Facebook. Similarly, the National Health Commission Office, a state public health advocacy agency, found more than 50 per cent of health-related content shared via online platforms were distorted and false – some even opposite of the truth. The agency also found information of which sources are unidentified. (See Panyalimpanun, T. (2017). *ข่าวปลอมในไทย: คุณควรวรกังวลแค่ไหน?* [Fake news in Thailand: How concerned should you be?]. BBC Thai. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/thai/thailand-41438401. (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.); and Thai Health Foundation. (2016). *รู้ทันภัยข้อมูลสุขภาพออนไลน์* [Knowing risks of health online information]. Thai Health Foundation. Available at: https://www.thaihealth.or.th/Content/33263-*รู้ทันภัยข้อมูลสุขภาพออนไลน์*.html (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.) It should also be clarified here that academic community often discourages the use "fake news" as an encompassing term in reference to disinformation and misinformation because the word has been defined variously and cannot clearly addressed the complexity of the phenomenon (see, for example, Wardle & Derakhshan, (2017); Tandoc, Law, & Lim, (2018); and Egelhofer & Lecheler (2019). Regardless, the use of "fake news" in this article is deliberate in order to reflect how Thai authorities and the public in general see and refer to the situation, and the implications of this vague interpretation of disinformation, which will be later discussed.

67 See, for example, Noosom, N. and Suttisima, V. (2019). *The Analysis of Fake News and The Level of Media Literacy of Users in Bangkok*. Journal of Communication Arts, 37 (1), pp. 37–45; Tsukamoto, P. (2017). *Rumors on Twitter: flows of news and information under Thailand's socio-political transition*. Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, 32, (6) pp. 41–63; and Thongsuk, W. (2016). *The Analysis of Click-bait Style News on Websites*. Master's thesis. Bangkok: Thammasart University. Available at: http://ethesisarchive.library.tu.ac.th/thesis/2016/TU_2016_5707010400_4890_3781.pdf (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

The military set up the Army Cyber Center, formerly called the Military Technology Center, in 2016 to counter and suppress online 'distorted' information considered to be national security threats, including ones that criticize the government, or defamation against the monarchy[68]. Similarly, in 2018 the National Police Office's Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD)'s newly established Anti-Fake News Information Operation task force started to handle an increasing number of police reports on 'fake news', particularly the ones about politics and national security which could have interfered with the general election scheduled in 2019[69].

The TCSD and the Digital Economy and Society Ministry also announced the results of its joint operation in September 2019, in which both agencies arrested several individuals involved in nine separate cases of spreading false information online, ranging from financial scams to disseminating politically-motivated information[70].

In 2019 the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society launched the Anti-Fake News Center to monitor and verify what they judge as 'fake news' that affects people's livelihood, such as health crises and concerns, disasters, economy, as well as information that causes social division and misunderstandings and destroys the country's image[71].

Key Stakeholders

Government

The state sector rolls out educational and fact-checking approaches to tackle disinformation. The Digital Economy and Society Ministry launched the Digital Literacy (DL) Project in 2016 by commissioning Mahidol University and using digital citizenship as an underpinning framework. The project's website currently provides reading materials[72], as well as the Digital Literacy Curriculum, which touches upon key digital competencies and lesson plans for classroom settings and self-learning[73].

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68   Mokkhasen, S. (2016). *Army opens cyber center to fight 112, 'distorted' info.* Khaosod English. Available at: http://www. khaosodenglish.com/politics/2016/11/02/army-opens-cyber-center-fight-112-distorted-info/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

69   BenarNews (2018). ตำรวจ ปอท.จัดตั้งศูนย์ IO รับมือข่าวลวงแบบ "ตาต่อตา ฟันต่อฟัน" [TCSD Police sets up IO center to handle fake news in the "an-eye-for-an-eye" style]. BenarNews. Available at: https://www.benarnews.org/thai/news/TH-fake-news-09062018163757.html (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

70   The Nation (2019). *Nine arrested in Thailand for posting election 'fake news'.* The Nation. Available at: https://www.nationthailand.com/politics/30366708 (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

71   The Standard (2019). *เปิดตัวศูนย์ต่อต้านข่าวปลอม ติดตามตรวจสอบข้อมูลสื่อออนไลน์ ตรวจเช็กข่าวปลอมได้ทันทีใน 2 ชั่วโมง* [Opening the Anti-Fake News Center to monitor and examine online information; verify fake news within 2 hours]. The Standard. Available at: https://thestandard.co/anti-fake-news-center-2/ (In Thai.) (Accessed 10 November 2019.)

72   http://www.dlthailand.org (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

73   http://www.dlthailand.org/dl-curriculum/curriculum/ (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

The curriculum discusses nine topics under three main themes: 1) Protection of one's self and others: 1.1 digital health, 1.2 digital safety, 1.3 rights and responsibilities; 2) Education about one's self and society: 2.1 digital commerce, 2.2 understanding digital media, 2.3 accessing digital media; and 3) Respecting one's self and others: 3.1 digital law, 3.2 digital community etiquette, 3.3 communication in the digital era. The subject of 'fake news' or disinformation is not highlighted in the curriculum, while there are a few discussions on the problems of fake online avatars and false information in the online etiquette section, and fraudulent sites and online products under the digital commerce topic.

Similarly, the Electronics Transactions Development Agency (ETDA), a governmental think-tank agency, published the second edition of the digital literacy handbooks for youth and elderly[74] in September 2019, which presents a concise fact-checking guideline for online news. The handbooks also cover how to use digital media and protect privacy online in communication, e-commerce and e-banking. Additionally, the agency published infographics on how to detect fake news on its online platforms[75].

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC) also sponsors research and activities concerning media literacy and media education, as stipulated in its organic law[76]. Other efforts include providing research funding and organizing activities such as public seminars and award contests to raise concerns about disinformation and promote MIL.

One of the most publicized events in 2019 was the International Conference on Fake News in June, where international practitioners and experts shared their experiences and thoughts on anti-disinformation initiatives. The Thai Media Fund and its academic, media and civil society partners who hosted the event officially pledged to combat fake news together, partly by promoting MIL education[77].

The Government Public Relations Department (PRD) counters fake news by presenting the 'correct' narrative of events, for example, using the *Khao Jing Pratet Thai* [Real News Thailand] website, Facebook page and official LINE account[78], and identifying what is believed to be fake news on its online platforms.

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74 ETDA (2019). *วัยใส วัยเก๋า ฉลาดรู้เน็ต 2* [Youth and Elderly's Smart Internet Volume 2] [pdf]. Bangkok: ETDA, pp. 54–55. Available at: https://www.etda.or.th/documents-for-download.html (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

75 https://www.facebook.com/ETDA.Thailand/posts/1847136568633244/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

76 Under Chapter IV of the Organisation to Assign Radio Frequency and to Regulate the Broadcasting and Telecommunications Services Act (B.E. 2553) (2010), the NBTC must set up a Broadcasting and Telecommunications Research And Development Fund for the Public Interest to provide financial support to "promote and support communication resources development, research and development in the broadcasting and telecommunications sector, as well as to increase people's capabilities in keeping pace with the media's technology in the aspect of spectrum utilisation, information technology, facilities for the disabled, elderly, or underprivileged as well as telecommunications industries and related industries" (Section 52, (2)), and to "support, promote and protect the broadcasting, television and telecommunication services consumers" (Section 52, (4)). The agency not only serves as an online resource for knowledge in broadcast and telecommunication regulations, as well as media literacy, by publishing its sponsored and commissioned research reports on its website, but also a funding resource for media literacy-related projects.

77 Thailand Plus (2019). *ลงนามผนึกพลังความร่วมมือและประกาศปฏิญญา* 'International Conference on Fake News' [Endorsement of partnership and declaration 'International Conference on Fake News']. Thailand Plus. Available at: https://www.thailandplus.tv/archives/65882. (In Thai.) (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

78 Launched in July 2018, the PRD uses the *Khao Jing Pratet Thai* or Real News Thailand online platforms as another media outlet to distribute public service announcements, press release from the government and state agencies, as well as news reports concerning the government's activities and responses to counter criticism against the administration's policies and actions. The website version (Available at: http://realnewsthailand.prd.go.th/index.php) (Accessed 2 February 2020.) also hosts a section called '*Sure Rue Mua Nim* [Certain or Guessing]', that posts video clips from the fact-checking-esque programme produced by the PRD's television unit, the National Broadcasting Services of Thailand (NBT). The content is generally governmental agencies' announcements and reactions to what they consider false information. The number of website and Facebook page followers remain relatively small (approximately 27,000 Facebook followers as of 2 February 2020), compared with the MCOT's *Sure Khon Share* platforms (approximately 230,000 followers). Meanwhile, the PRD director claimed around 220,000 subscribers to the unit's official LINE account in August 2018. *โฆษกรัฐบาล เชิญชวนผู้สนใจร่วมเป็นสมาชิกไลน์ "ข่าวจริงประเทศไทย".* National News Bureau of Thailand. Available at: http://thainews.prd.go.th/th/website_th/news/news_detail/TNPBH6108020010002 (In Thai.) (Accessed 2 February 2020.)

The PRD also organized the 'anti-fake news campaign and declaration to suppress harmful media and expand good media' with its state agency partners[79]. Furthermore, in cooperation with UNESCO, PRD adopted and launched UNESCO's *Handbook on 'Journalism, "Fake News" and Disinformation'* in Thai at the Youth Camp on Media and Information Literacy organized in Bangkok in 2020.[80] Students majoring in journalism and communication from ten universities across the country, relevant government departments as well as professionals working with internet search engine and social media participated in the event.

Higher Education Institutions

As mentioned in the overview, many universities offer media literacy courses, seminars and public talks about the implications of disinformation, and in some events, show case studies and best practices on how to combat disinformation[81]. Some universities offer Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on media literacy and digital literacy[82].

Besides the usual format of building and imparting knowledge, higher education institutions also produce educational media content as a way to correct false information. For example, Chulalongkorn University's fact-checking '*So Chiaw* [Very Skillful]' programme[83] airs on public service broadcaster Thai PBS. The programme selected viral online content to be verified and clarified whether it is false or factual by faculty media organizations

Media organizations' distinct use of MIL education to counter disinformation is their fact-checking initiatives. Among the most prominent projects was the state enterprise broadcaster MCOT's '*Sure Khon Share* [Sure and Share] *Center*', which has been producing a TV programme since 2015 to correct false information,

79   National News Bureau of Thailand (2019). *กรมประชาสัมพันธ์ร่วมกับภาคีเครือข่าย จัดกิจกรรม 'รณรงค์ต่อต้าน* Fake News *และประกาศเจตนารมณ์ ปรามสื่อร้าย ขยายสื่อดี* [Public Relations Department, together with its partners, organizes an activity 'Campaign on Anti-Fake News and Declaration to Suppress Harmful Media and Expand Good Media']. National News Bureau of Thailand. Available at: http://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/detail/TCATG190307114746797. (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

80   UNESCO (2020). *Thailand adopts and launches UNESCO's 'Handbook on Journalism, 'Fake News' and Disinformation' for youth*. Available at: https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/thailand-adopts-and-launches-unescos-handbook-journalism-education-and-training-thai. (Accessed 1 April 2020.)

81   For example, UNESCO's special session titled 'New Civilizational Dimensions of Media and Information Literacy' at the Asian Media Information and Communication Center (AMIC)'s annual conference in June 2019, where speakers urged academics and policy-makers to push forward MIL and Digital Literacy as a national agenda and be a mandatory curriculum; and the International Conference on Fake News and Election in Asia in July 2019, where scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers from the Asia Pacific nations raised examples and lessons learned from the information disorder phenomenon in their countries during critical times such as election.

82   See, for example, Media Literacy MOOCs operated by Chiang Mai University (Available at: https://thaimooc.org/courses/course-v1:CMU-MOOC+cmu010+2019_T2/about) (Accessed 15 July 2020.), and Chulalongkorn University's Digital Intelligence and Research Unit (Available at: http://www.thaidigitalyouth.net) (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

83   A combination of English word 'so' and Thai word '*chiaw*', which means skillful or being an expert of something, the programme title "*So Chiaw*" has a similar pronunciation with the word 'social', as in social media. The university and Thai PBS together produced more than 80 3-minute video content to be aired on the digital TV channel and online platforms. For some episode archive, see https://www.chula.ac.th/news-and-knowledge/social-fake-or-fact/ (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

mostly health and science-related contents that were circulated online, and organizing fact-checking training workshops for students[84].

Similarly, the Online News Providers Association runs the '*Sure Laew Share Dai* [Already Checked. Can be Shared]*'* section on its website, where users can look up content deemed suspicious to see if it has been verified[85].

In 2018, representatives of the Thai press, along with their ASEAN counterparts, recommended a regional collaborative effort of journalists to combat disinformation. They agreed that MIL education is an essential and sustainable means to handle information disorder. At the same time they also called for members of the press to 'strengthen their professionalism through objective and factual reporting' and warned against the so-called 'anti-fake news' laws and regulations as they can also curtail freedom of speech and freedom of the press[86].

Private Sector

Major Thailand-based telecom providers offer digital literacy education trainings to the targeted public, as well as filtering services for parents[87]. Yet, the reference to the private sector, particularly technology and telecommunication companies, in public discussions on disinformation remains sporadic[88]. A recent call came from the regulator NBTC, which asked the internet and digital service providers operating in Southeast Asian countries to set up specific a task force to curtail misinformation, including 'fake news' and fake accounts[89].

Recent initiatives to involve telco firms in the movement against disinformation and harmful content include DTAC's 'Safe Internet' online curriculum, which is based on its commissioned research project on

84 iT24Hrs. (2017). *สำนักข่าวไทย อสมท. เปิดตัวศูนย์ชัวร์ก่อนแชร์ ตรวจสอบข้อมูลออนไลน์แก่ประชาชน* [Thai News Agency MCOT opens the Sure and Share center to examine online information for the public]. iT24Hrs. Available at: https://www.it24hrs.com/2017/sure-and-share-check-news/ (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.);
MCOT (2019). *ศูนย์ชัวร์ก่อนแชร์" ปั้นคนรุ่นใหม่ เฝ้าระวังข่าวปลอมบนโลกออนไลน์ ในโครงการ 'นักสืบสายชัวร์ ศูนย์ชัวร์ก่อนแชร์ เยาวชน'* ['*Sure Khon Share* Center' builds a new generation to monitor fake news online in the project titled 'Sure Detective *Sure Khon Share* Youth Center']. MCOT.net. Available at: https://www.mcot.net/view/5cc02fbfe3f8e40ac690722d (In Thai.) (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

85 Available at: http://www.sonp.or.th (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

86 Thai PBS (2018). *ASEAN journalists call for joint efforts to battle fake news*. Thai PBS. Available at: https://www.thaipbsworld.com/asean-journalists-call-for-joint-efforts-to-battle-fake-news/ (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

87 See, for example, Dtac's NetArsa project, which offers digital competencies trainings, particularly e-commerce skills, in seven pilot provinces (Available at: https://เน็ตอาสา.com/#aboutus) (Access 12 October 2019.); AIS' online public health volunteer application and digital training for public health volunteers in rural areas (Available at: https://www.ais.co.th/aorsormor/news-news45.html) (Accessed 14 October 2019.); and ITPC (2019). *เปิดวงรับมือภัยดิจิทัล 'Bullying & Fake News' ชวนรู้เท่าทันเนื้อหาร้าย "รมว.ดีอี" ขอ 2 สัปดาห์ ฟันกลุ่มปั่นเฟคนิวส์* [ITPC's forum on how to handle digital risks 'Bullying & Fake News,' and be aware of malicious content. 'DE minister' asks for two weeks to tackle fake news disseminators]. Siam Rath. Available at: https://siamrath.co.th/n/98484 (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

88 Charoenmukkayanant, S. (2019). *ภาคประชาสังคมจี้ Social Media เปิดพื้นที่ร่วมตรวจสอบข่าวลวง ลดความเกลียดชังและด้าน มืดออนไลน์* [Civil society sector calls for Social Media to open space for co-examination of fake news to minimise hate and dark side of online space]. 77kaoded. Available at: https://www.77kaoded.com/content/644240 (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

89 Tanakasempipat, P. (2019). *Thailand asks tech firms to set up centers against 'fake news' in Southeast Asia*. Reuters. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-asean-fakenews/thailand-asks-tech-firms-to-set-up-centers-against-fake-news-in-southeast-asia-idUSKCN1V917J (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

cyberbullying in Thailand with local behavioural economists and designed by UK-based Parent Zone[90]. The website offers reading and teaching materials, exercises, and games pertaining to the subject of cyberbullying, online risks, and necessary digital competencies[91]. Another notable initiative is the Digital Economy and Society Ministry and LINE corporation's 'Stop Fake News Seminar' in September 2019, which promoted online media literacy among communication and journalism student participants[92].

Civil Society

The Foundation for Consumers and the Children and Youth Media Institute (CYMI)[93] and its partners serve as an extensive resource for teaching and reading materials on media and digital literacy, especially for children, adolescent audience and parents. The organization's website showcases a variety of downloadable books on Media, Information and Digital Literacy (MIDL) and factsheets on MIDL activities, as well as a summary of seminars and trainings with its partners[94]. The group is also active in organising public forums and trainings to discuss the repercussions of 'fake news' as a way to educate and raise public awareness on the issue.

Nevertheless, other forms to fight against disinformation using MIL education are less discernible. The author's search finds only the CYMI's online resource, offering an infographic published in January 2018, with a definition of fake news that is less comprehensive than that of the ETDA's infographic[95], and a booklet on hate speech, published in October 2018[96].

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90   Brand Buffet (2019). *จะแก้ปัญหา 'Cyberbullying' ต้องรู้จักหน้าที่พลเมืองดิจิทัล "ดีแทค" ดันหลักสูตร Safe Internet ใช้ชีวิตบน ออนไลน์อย่างสร้างสรรค์* [To solve 'Cyberbullying' problem, one must know civic duty. 'Dtac' pushes forward the Safe Internet curriculum, for creative online livelihood.]. Brand Buffet. Available at: https://www.brandbuffet.in.th/2019/07/dtac-safe-internet-cyberbully-2019/ (In Thai.) (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

91   http://digiworld-th.parentzone.org.uk (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

92   National News Bureau of Thailand (2019). *Digital Ministry, LINE launches Stop Fake News seminar.* National News Bureau of Thailand. Available at: http://thainews.prd.go.th/en/news/detail/TCATG190917091347731 (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

93   Established in 2006 by two state-funded civil society organisations, the CYMI's works include creating and campaigning for quality and creative media content for children and youth, and developing a network of media literacy advocates, particularly with civil society organisations and educators in the regions. The agency also works with academic and policy-making partners to generate new knowledge and push forward research-based policies concerning MIDL education and media monitoring mechanisms.

94   http://cclickthailand.com (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

95   https://www.healthymediahub.com/media/detail/FAKE-News (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

96   https://www.healthymediahub.com/media/detail/การสื่อสารที่สร้างความเกลียดชัง-(Hate-Speech) (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

Definitions

The conceptual definition and meaning of MIL in Thai society have been the subject of important debates among stakeholders in Thailand due to the continuous efforts of civil society groups and the academic literature on media, information and digital literacies made available. Many theses and research projects were published on these subjects during the past few decades. Based on the media literacy frameworks initiated by Western scholars, these local studies often discuss MIL curricula and lessons designed for students, mostly at secondary school and university levels. Some studies pay specific attention to the level of media and information literacy and media use among particular age and social groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities and members of the clergy, and provide intervention designs for them.

A handful of studies explore the complementary features between MIL and other literacies, such as health literacy[97]. It is also worth mentioning the recommendations from researchers to integrate local values into the western-designed MIL conceptual framework and modules to make them more culturally relevant. The notions of morality, ethics, reflective thinking[98], contemplative education[99] as well as Buddhist principles[100] have been introduced into the discussion about media literacy education with an aim for learners to be more mindful, conscientious and introspective in their use of traditional and new media.

In the late 2010s, Thai Civic Education, a network of academics, educators and activists specializing in education, human rights and politics, teamed up with the CYMI to develop a curriculum framework, entitled *Media, Information, and Digital Literacy (MIDL) for Democratic Citizenship Education*. Recognising that media, information and digital literacies are fundamental to the notion of democratic citizenship in

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97   See for example Tanapek, S. (2019). *Effects of Health Education Program to Promote Media Literacy of Health and Beauty Products among Secondary School Students in Sukhothai Province.* Journal of Disease and Health Risk DPC.3, 13 (1), pp. 1–16; and Thepsud, K. and Korcharoen, M. (2019). *Behavior Using Online Social Media regarding Health and Media Literacy among the Elderly with Diabetes Mellitus in Bangkok.* Payap University Journal, 29 (1), pp. 67–78.

98   Nupairoj, N. (2016). *The Ecosystem of Media Literacy: A Holistic Approach to Media Education.* Communicar, 49 (24), pp. 29–37.

99   Pan-in, P., Pathumcharoenwattana, W., and Rukspollmuang, C. (2014). *Research and Development on Learning Process for Promoting the Media Literacy for Thai Youth Based on Contemplative Education.* Journal of Education Studies, 42 (2), pp. 32–44.

100   Ratanangam, S. (2014). *The Buddhist Way of Media Literacy for Life Development: A Case Study of Television and Facebook.* Liberal Arts Review, 9 (18), pp. 63–73; Kraesang, T., and Arunpirojana, R. (2018). *The Effects of a Learner Development Program based on Yonisomanasikarn Approach on the Media Literacy of Mathayomsuksa 3 Students, Horwang School, Bangkok Metropolitan.* Journal of Graduate Studies. Valaya Alongkorn Rajabhat University, 9 (3), pp. 109–121; Nontasruang. *The Challenge of Media Literacy Education in Thailand;* and Chaisuwan, B. and Warotwatthananont, B. (2018). *The Development of Asoke's Media Literacy Model.* Veridian E-Journal, Silpakorn University, 11 (1), pp. 2900–2914; and Chompu, U. and Sainampueng, R. (2018). *The Buddhist Way of the New Media Literacy for the Youth in Bangkok.* Journal of MCU Peace Studies, 6 (2), pp. 460–473.

general and especially vital to the Thai context, the group agreed to the notion of 'Media, Information and Digital Literacy (MIDL)'[101].

Notwithstanding a common interpretation of what MIL is in theory, stakeholders tend to focus on different aspects of MIL as well as approaches when it comes to implementing the concept. The emphasis on the protectionist approach against potential media and digital risks, as well as on technical skills, downplays the importance of other aspects of MIL policy, namely the use of media, information and digital technology to enhance people's participation in society, creativity and citizenship awareness[102].

Challenges

Critics argue that the discussions and implementation of MIL education and policy in Thailand remain rather idealistic, fragmented and largely focused on students in the formal education system. Meanwhile, key approaches to combat 'fake news' tend to focus on suppression and verification of online disinformation.

The efforts to use MIL education and policy in general, and to understand information disorder and deal with disinformation in particular, is likely to require a multi-stakeholder approach.

Given the heavy reliance on digital media of Thai people in daily lives, particularly the younger generation, most initiatives focus on digital literacy competencies such as online safety and privacy, as well as fact-checking and verification skills (for example, questioning sources' credibility and verifying content's authenticity). Discussions on integrating MIL education with other literacies, such as health, political, or financial literacy, are implicit, but not fully emphasised. The discussions are usually considered as a way to confirm the content's accuracy or falsehood and individual perspectives on why and how disinformation is proliferated.

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101   The Children and Youth Media Institute and Thai Civic Education (2016) *กรอบแนวคิดในการพัฒนาหลักสูตรการรู้เท่าทันสื่อ สารสนเทศและดิจิทัลเพื่อสร้างพลเมืองประชาธิปไตย* [The conceptual framework for developing Media, Information, and Digital Literacy for Democratic Citizenship curriculum], presented at the round-table conference on the Development of Conceptual Framework for Media, Information, and Digital Literacy Curriculum at Mandarin Hotel, Bangkok, organised by the CMYI on 22 June 2016. This work, however, has yet to be integrated into the national curriculum design or policy making.

With its academic partners, the group also produced a series of research on MIDL for democratic citizenship for different age groups and for policy-makers. See, for example, Chuachai, S. (2018). *Development of a Curriculum Promoting Media, Information and Digital Literacy for Undergraduate Students in Information Technology for Elementary Teacher Course.* Silapakorn Educational Research Journal, 10 (2), pp. 65–79; Chainan, P., Suttisima, V., and Yuwakosol, S. (2019). *Indicators of Media Information and Digital Literacy in Working Age for Democratic Citizen.* Journal of Social Communication Innovation, 7 (1), pp. 194–202; Oranop Na Ayutthaya, C., Thisapak, P. and Pathumcharoenwattana, W. (2019). *Media, Information, and Digital Literacy Indicators for Advocating Democratic Citizenship of Thai Elderly.* Journal of Mass Communication, 7 (1), pp. 147–190; and Wirunrapun et al. *The Complete Report on the Development of Social Indicators.*

102   Wirunrapun et al. *The Complete Report on the Development of Social Indicators*, pp. 236–237.

Thus, MIL education and policy to tackle information disorder focus on learners' ability to separate factual content from false ones, using various tools and techniques, but do not sufficiently highlight the rationale and factors behind the connection between disinformation and socio-political contexts.

MIL education and policy, including ones designed to counter disinformation, primarily target students in the formal education system at the secondary school and university levels. Senior citizens became the second target group, followed by the general public. Interventions focusing on marginalized and special needs groups receive little attention. There is still a lack of MIL intervention and studies concerning marginalized children and youth, such as those living under the poverty line and ethnic minorities and children without legal immigration status or citizenship[103].

Those advocating for MIL education and policy also point to factors hindering their works. For example, policy-makers' inconsistent attention and lack of understanding on MIL; relevant laws and regulations' tendency to be more restrictive than encouraging; cultural values, particularly seniority and social hierarchy, which limit the culture of critical thinking, scrutiny and participation; lack of MIL awareness and competencies on the part of parents, children's caretakers and educators; and insufficient, and sometimes challenging collaboration among stakeholders[104].

Because implications of disinformation span across every segment of society, and require efforts from different groups of stakeholders, using MIL education and policy to navigate through information disorder requires a holistic approach to create a favourable ecosystem. This includes the 'Learning Schema, the Society, and the Policy'[105] as well as an interdisciplinary approach with other forms of literacies[106] to effectively share resources, constantly evaluate past and existing projects, and keep pace with the dynamic changes in the socio-political culture and technology[107].

It is also worth noting that a majority of media reports, public forums and even academic conferences, still refer to this phenomenon as 'fake news' (mostly with quotation marks), even though stakeholders may have different definitions for the term. The widespread and common use of the terms 'fake news' also signals a limited understanding of the issue and hinders in-depth discussion on the political characters and complexity of the phenomenon[108];hence, enabling the terms to be instrumentalized by interest groups[109]

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103 Wirunrapun et al. *The Complete Report on the Development of Social Indicators*, p. 242.

104 Ibid., pp. 117–124.

105 Nupairoj, N. *The Ecosystem of Media Literacy.*

106 Ireton, C. and Posetti, J. (2018). *Journalism, 'Fake News', and Disinformation*. Paris: UNESCO.

107 McDougall, J. and Pereira, L. (2017). *Digital Literacy and Education: Grid Report by Country* [pdf]. Brussels:ELN. Available at: https://www.is1401eln.eu/fotos/editor2/meetings/uk_report.pdf (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

108 See, for example, Derekhshan, H. and Wardle, C. (2017). *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe [pdf]. Available at: https://edoc.coe.int/en/media/7495-information-disorder-toward-an-interdisciplinary-framework-for-research-and-policy-making.html (Accessed 25 January 2020.); Lim, Z., Ling, R., and Tandoc Jr., E. (2018). *Defining 'Fake News': A typology of scholarly definitions.* Digital Journalism, 6 (2), pp. 137–153; and Egelhofer, J. L. and Lecheler, S. (2019). *Fake news as a two-dimensional phenomenon: a framework and research agenda.* Annals of the International Communication Association, 43 (2), pp. 97–116.

109 Brummette, J., DiStaso, M., Messner, M., and Vafeiadis, M. (2018). *Read All About It: The Politicization of 'Fake News' on Twitter.* Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 95 (2), pp. 497–517; and Sombatpoonsiri, J. (2019). *'Fake News' and Thailand's Information Wars. How politicizing 'fake news' consolidates Thailand's authoritarian rule.* The Diplomat. Available at: https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/fake-news-and-thailands-information-wars/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

and heavily focused on surveillance and prosecutorial approaches[110].

Similar to what happens to MIL education and policy, proponents' diverse interpretations of the concept 'fake news' lead to divergent analyses of the problem, its root causes and different emphases in the solutions.

As a result, certain aspects of MIL education and policy are emphasized to enhance the military state's 20-year strategic plan of economic growth and conformity[111], for example, digital skills, internet safety and media production. Meanwhile, the aspects that may be considered less productive or disruptive by authorities, such as creativity, expression and critical thinking, might be undermined. Such is the case in Singapore, where media literacy is heavily promoted to create IT-savvy future workers to strengthen the country's nation-building and economic growth[112]. Moreover, the primary stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society, play a key role in shaping the direction of MIL education and policy, similar to what happens in the United Kingdom, where formal education is not fully supported because the key conductor of MIL policy is communication agencies[113].

It is a rather moot point to encourage people, particularly the younger generations, to be critical of any information they receive and create, and be analytical about the surrounding settings. When the political structure and social norms constantly demand them to be deferential to authoritative figures and discourage them from questioning, they should still think rationally and be critical.

Discussion

MIL education and policy, as well as other forms of measures to combat disinformation, are not implemented out of a socio-political vacuum. This remark should be taken into consideration, given Thailand's volatile and

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110 Laungaramsri, P. (2016). *Mass Surveillance and the Militarization of Cyberspace in Post-Coup Thailand.* Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies, 9 (2), pp. 195–214;

Achawanantakul, S. (2018). "คน" ต้องมาก่อน "เทคโนโลยี" (13) *การคุกคามโดยรัฐภายใต้ข้ออ้าง "ข่าวปลอม"* ['People' must come before 'Technology' (13) Intimidation by the state under the 'fake news' claims]. Thai Publica. Available at: https://thaipublica.org/2018/12/fake-news-as-slapp/ (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.); Janjira. *'Fake News' and Thailand's Information Wars;* and Buabmee, S. and Rojanaphruk, P. (2019). *Interview: Military surveillance turning Thailand into '1984'.* Khoasod English. Available at: http://www.khaosodenglish.com/ politics/2019/10/09/interview-military-surveillance-turning-thailand-into-1984/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

111 See Thailand's National Strategy 2018–2037, available at: http://nscr.nesdb.go.th/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/National-Strategy-Eng-Final-25-OCT-2019.pdf (Accessed 8 July 2020.), and criticism towards the plan by iLaw, available at https://ilaw.or.th/node/4570 (Accessed 8 July 2020.)

112 Weninger, C. (2017). *Media literacy education in Singapore: Connecting theory, policy and practice.* In K. Chan, A.Y.L. Lee and K. Zhang (eds). *Multidisciplinary approaches to media literacy.* Beijing: Communication University of China Press, pp. 399–416, Available at: http://www.academia.edu/27323564/ Media_literacy_education_in_Singapore_Connecting_theory_policy_and_practice (Accessed 14 October 2019.)

113 Buckingham, D. and Wallis, R. (2016). *Media literacy: the UK's undead cultural policy.* International Journal of Cultural Policy, 11 (1), pp. 156–183.

polarized political environment[114], where freedom of information, freedom of expression and press freedom are restricted[115]. Moreover, media professionals and industry face a decline in public trust and economic instability[116], whilst the popularity of digital devices and social media among consumers is on the rise[117].

As proposed by media literacy researchers, MIL is not a mere set of tools or techniques. Stakeholders should recognize the concept's underlying principles of active citizenship and democratic society, especially diversity and tolerance, in line with UNESCO's recommendations.

Scholars and MIL advocates, therefore, are urging for more consolidated, research-based, dynamic and participatory approaches among stakeholders in order to form an effective 'Ecosystem of Media Literacy'[118]. Shared visions, clear and tangible priorities and roadmaps, as well as constant data collection and project assessment, are needed to determine what MIL is and should be in Thailand's transitioning socio-political conditions. For example, what MIL type of education and policy can facilitate the needs of different segments of society? How can MIL education and policy be carried out in achieving the common goals?[119]

While case studies of MIL education and policy illustrated in this article have their merits, it is also essential to explore how to cultivate and maintain a media and information literate citizenry and society through democratic values.

Media education scholar Jiraporn Wittayasakpan suggests that being a media and information literate person and a citizen who is aware of their civic rights and duties are closely connected and vital to combat disinformation. Therefore, she asserts the government must enhance the sense of democratic citizenship among the public and foster a participatory atmosphere for citizens to take part in the policy

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114 For more discussion on the political upheaval in Thailand during the past two decades, see, for example, Kongkirati, P. (2014). *The Rise and Fall of Electoral Violence in Thailand: Changing Rules, Structures and Power Landscapes, 1997–2011.* Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs, 36 (3), pp. 386–416; and Chong, T., Heng Shu Xun, M., and Montesano, M., (eds) (2019). *After the Coup: The National Council for Peace and Order Era and the Future of Thailand.* Singapore: ISEAS.

115 Freedom House (2019). *Freedom in the World 2019 Report.* Available at: https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/thailand (Accessed 12 October 2019.); Reporters without Borders (2019). *World Press Freedom Index.* Available at: https://rsf.org/en/thailand (Accessed 12 October 2019.); and Civicus Monitor (2019). *Thailand situation report 2019.* Available at: https://monitor.civicus.org/country/thailand/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

116 Banchanont, P. (2019) *The Nation ปิด! โพสต์ทูเดย์ ปิด! Report, M2F ปิด! หนังสือพิมพ์ไทยจะเหลือรอดกี่ฉบับ* [The Nation closed! Post Today closed! M2F closed! How many Thai newspapers will survive?]. The Matter. Available at: https://thematter.co/pulse/how-can-thai-newspaper-survive/77130 (In Thai.) (Access 12 October 2019.);

and The Momentum (2019). *เคาะแล้ว 7 ช่องทีวีดิจิทัลขอคืนคลื่น อวสานของช่องเด็กและครอบครัว* [It's final. Seven TV digital channels want to return the spectrum license. The demise of Children and Family channels]. The Momentum. Available at: https://themomentum.co/voicetv-springnews-return-digital-tv-license/ (In Thai.) (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

117 Electronics Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) (2019). *Thailand Internet User Profile 2018* [pdf]. Bangkok: EDTA, pp. 22–23. Available at: https://www.etda.or.th/publishing-detail/thailand-internet-user-profile-2018.html (Accessed 12 October 2019.); E.Z.,Doan. (2019). *Number of Facebook users in Thailand from 2017 to 2023 (in millions).* Statista. Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/490467/number-of-thailand-facebook-users/ (Accessed 12 October 2019.); and Hootsuite and We Are Social (2019). *Digital 2019: Thailand report.* Available at: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2019-thailand (Accessed 12 October 2019.)

118 Nupairoj, N. *The Ecosystem of Media Literacy.*

119 Nupairoj, N. *The Ecosystem of Media Literacy;* Wirunrapun et al. *The Complete Report on the Development of Social Indicators.*

and development of the country. Without measures or mechanism to strengthen citizenship and public participation, countering disinformation will be a tremendous challenge[120].

Following this path, to critically analyze and understand information disorder and the impact of disinformation, the examination into political systems and cultural values that weaken democratic society is equally essential, so that core competencies of MIL education such as critical thinking, questioning hegemony in forms of media ownership, state propaganda and digital surveillance, and recognizing freedom of expression and freedom of the press, can work to full effect.

In Thailand's deeply polarized and protracted conflict, largely mobilized by the conservative, pro-establishment and the more liberal anti-coup/pro-democracy camps, distinguishing facts from fabrication may not be sufficient in some cases, because of the different political and social 'realities' people experience and believe in. While 'fake news' should not be politicized by individuals and interest groups, this article argues, it should not be de-politicized to be devoid of socio-political contexts, either.

Instead of merely educating the public to distinguish false from factual information, MIL education and policy should strive to facilitate societal members to creatively communicate on their disparate socio-political views and visions, while trying to find common grounds and shared goals for the country's better future – similar to what political scientist Janjira Sombatpoonsiri proposes.

As she puts it, to overcome the social divide and political polarization, 'participatory imagination is more important to the future than political truths'[121]. As such, advocates of MIL education and policy should perhaps explore such opportunities to make the knowledge more contextually relevant and conflict-sensitive, in order to tackle the ramifications of disinformation in times of political and social polarisation beyond what is at the surface.

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121 Janjira. *'Fake News' and Thailand's Information Wars.*

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INDONESIA

By Bobi Guntarto

Overview

Indonesia is a democratic country that has experienced rapid technological and media developments. Its current media landscape is linked to the development of press freedom in the country.

During the administration of President Soeharto (1966–1998), the media was tightly censored by the government and if it was critical of it in any way, the government would not hesitate to ban the media. Since the fall of the 'New Order' in 1998, official 'censorship, prohibition or restriction' to the press is not permitted under Article 4 of the Indonesian Press Law 1999. However, other laws such as the Criminal Code or the Information and Electronik Transaction Law continue to constrain, to varying degree, freedom of expression. Nevertheless, almost anyone can establish and run a media outlet. The Indonesian Press Council once estimated in 2017 that the number of media outlets in the country had reached 47,000 with the vast majority online,[122] but only a small percentage are verified by the press council.

In Indonesia, there is a concentration of media ownership, especially of the legacy media. A total of 60 television channels, 66 radios, 317 print media and 9 online media outlets are owned by only 12 media conglomerates. The three largest media groups are Global Mediacom (MNC), Jawa Pos Group, Kompas Gramedia Group (KKG). MNC has 20 television channels, 20 radios, 7 print media and 1 online media. Jawa Pos Group has 20 television channels, 171 print media and one online media. And the KKG has 10 television channels, 12 radios, 88 print media and 2 online media[123]. This media concentration tends to cause the uniformity of information and perspectives across various media platforms.

Although the development of information and communication technology has had a major impact on the media landscape in Indonesia, data from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kemenkoninfo) in 2015 stated that 89.6% of the Indonesian population still watched television for both entertainment and information. Television is predicted to remain a primary source of media accessed by the public in the next few years.

Radio has also remained popular. PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates that there will be radio growth of 4.6% in the 2016–2021 period in Indonesia compared to the average global growth of 2.1%. With the internet, radio has actually found a new platform to reach a wider audience through online broadcasting[124].

The greatest impact from the rise of the internet has been on the print media. There has been a steady decline in print media's readership, which in turn has led to the emergence of electronic versions of news stories, or e-newspapers. In addition to cheaper subscription prices due to the lack of printing and distribution costs, the electronic versions of print media are also more accessible.

In Indonesia, the number of internet users has experienced a significant growth. Indonesia has the eighth largest number of internet users in the world. A survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service

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122 TEMPO.CO (2018). *Indonesia Holds World`s Highest Number of Mass Media*. Available at: https://en.tempo.co/read/915635/indonesia-holds-worlds-highest-number-ofmass-media (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

123 Nugroho et al. (2019). *Indonesia*. In Eriyanto and N. Mutmainnah. *Media Landscape*, p. 2. Available at: https://medialandscapes.org/country/indonesia (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

124 Ibid., p.4.

Providers Association (APJII) showed that in 2016, 51.8% of Indonesia's population of 256.2 million were internet users[125]; in 2017, it was 54.68% of a population of 262 million[126]; by 2018, internet penetration in Indonesia had increased to 64.8% of a population of 264 million[127].

Within the country, more than half of the population of internet users (55.7%) reside in Java, Indonesia's most populated island and the centre of the Indonesian economy. In terms of behavior, more than 33% of Indonesian internet users access more than 3 hours of internet per day. Meanwhile, in 2018 the most visited social media sites by Indonesian internet users are Facebook 50.7%, Instagram 17.8% and YouTube 15.1%[128].

In dealing with information disorder issues in society, the Indonesian government tends to emphasize a legal approach, rather than enhancing awareness or educating the public extensively, particularly through the formal school system. Some initiatives to educate the public about media and information literacy exist, but they are sporadic and unstructured. Thus, their impact cannot yet be measured. Moreover, in Indonesia there is no agreed upon measurement model that can be used to appropriately assess the public's media and information literacy.

UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has brought forth a number of instruments that could help MIL education, such as the 'Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework' and 'Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers'. But in reality, the concept is not commonly found in studies or related activities in Indonesia. Thus, it can be said that the UNESCO's MIL is not yet well known among most policy makers, activists, academics, or community groups in Indonesia.

Key Stakeholders

National authorities

Government agencies that have been involved in dealing with information disorder include the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), and the Indonesian National Police (Polri). In addition, Indonesia also has a National Cyber and Code Body to carry out the task of cyber security effectively and efficiently. So far, however, its concrete performance has not been widely discussed. From the civil society side, there are educational institutions and several literacy-related activist non-governmental organizations.

While in terms of raw numbers, internet penetration in Indonesia is fairly high, it does not strongly correlate with a developed critical mindset and attitude amongst Indonesians, as the Indonesian people in general

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125 https://apjii.or.id/downfile/file/surveipenetrasiinternet2016.pdf (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

126 https://apjii.or.id/survei2017 (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

127 https://apjii.or.id/survei2018s (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

128 https://apjii.or.id/survei2018s (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

are still vulnerable to the negative impacts of media messages.[129] These negative impacts can be seen from the extent of the spread of information disorder such as hoaxes, provocative issues, hate speech and propaganda in recent years. Misinformation and disinformation occur in various groups and levels regardless of age, gender and education. In Indonesia, information disorder is often no longer viewed as a new problem, but a regular recurrence in the daily lives of the society.

The Ministry of Communication and Informatics identified at least 60 hoaxes circulating on social media related to elections from August to December 2018.[130] Both sets of presidential/vice-presidential candidates at that time, Joko Widodo (Jokowi)/K.H. Ma'aruf Amin and Prabowo Subianto/Sandiaga Uno, were mentioned in various widely circulated hoaxes. According to a newspaper article, social media ahead of the elections was not only used to promote the candidates' programmes, but also to share harmful false information about the candidates.[131]

To fight against such information disorder, the Indonesian National Police (Polri) have taken a number of actions. Arrests carried out by the police against the perpetrators spreading fake news and provocative issues effectively began in 2017 with the blasphemy case of the former Jakarta Governor Candidate Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. That year, the police succeeded in dismantling a group called Saracen that actively produced and shared fake news and hate speech. In the following year, the police arrested five members of The Family Muslim Cyber Army (TFMCA) who were allegedly involved in the spreading of hoax content and hate speech that offended ethnicities and religions. In October 2018, the police also arrested an activist, Ratna Sarumpaet, who spread false information by claiming that she was persecuted. The news of the persecution was even confirmed by a number of high level politicians. In June 2019, suspects involved in spreading false information in a WhatsApp chat group regarding threats to President Joko Widodo, as well as threats to blow up the Police Mobile Brigade dormitory in Kelapa Dua, Depok, West Java were arrested by the police.

Such hoaxes have been dubbed 'emergency hoaxes' and the public is generally tolerant of the polices' handling of them. However, for the long term, the government needs more democratic instruments in dealing with such cases[132]. According to the Director of Indonesia New Media Watch Agus Sudibyo, emergency handling by the police cannot be carried out in the long term, because if it is done continuously, it will reduce the level of press freedom in the country, and Indonesia will be considered an authoritarian state by the international community.

The Ministry of Communication and Informatics has long sought to combat information disorders through the use of *Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik (ITE)* and requiring the registration of prepaid cellular (SIM) cards. It also created *SiBerkreasi*, a national digital literacy movement that encompasses various communities and organizations related to digital literacy activities.

Article 28 Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the ITE Law is relevant in the handling information disorder, particularly under the 'Prohibited Actions' section[133]. While Paragraph 1 discusses the act of intentionally spreading fake news, and Paragraph 2 discusses the act of disseminating information with the aim of causing hatred or hostility based on ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup. The perpetrators of prohibited acts under

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129 Sarwono et al. (2014). *Buku Ajar Pendidikan Literasi Media dan Gaya Hidup*. Depok: FISIP Universitas Indonesia, p. 3. (In Indonesian.)

130 Sugihartati, R. and Provokatif, P. (2018). KOMPAS, p.6.

131 Ibid.

132 Sudibyo, Lee, A. and Werdiono, D. (2018). *RI Darurat Hoaks* KOMPAS, p. 4. (In Indonesian.)

133 Pemerintah Indonesia (2008). *Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Tahun 2008 Tentang Informasi dan Transaksi Elektronik (UU ITE)*. Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun, 58, p. 7. (In Indonesian.)

the two articles can be sentenced to imprisonment for a maximum of six years and/or a fine of at most Rp1,000,000,000.00 (around US$ 70,000) as stated in Article 45 Paragraph 2.[134]

Another article in the ITE Law that is relevant to information disorder is Article 35, which deals with the act of manipulating, creating, changing, removing or destroying information or electronic documents with the aim of being considered authentic data[135]. The Criminal provisions of doing so are listed in Article 51 Paragraph 1. Specifically, the offender can be sentenced to a maximum of twelve years imprisonment and/or a maximum fine of Rp12,000,000,000.00 (or around US$ 828,000).[136]

Furthermore, the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 14 of 2017 concerning Telecommunications Services Customer Registration requires users of prepaid cellular numbers to register their numbers and validate them with population data. The government is able to block a cellular number that has not been registered and verified according to the population and civil registration data of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In an article published in the online news media TEMPO.CO on 13 October 2017[137], then Minister of Communication and Informatics, Rudiantara explained that this regulation was made with the aim of minimizing the misuse of prepaid customer numbers which have often been used to commit fraud, spread negative content, or hate speech.

In terms of strategies more related to MIL, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (MCI) has launched the aforementioned *SiBerkreasi*. This movement was born from joint initiatives from various groups, including caring communities, private sectors, academia, civil society, government and the media. *SiBerkreasi* encompasses various communities and institutions related to digital literacy in Indonesia which aims to overcome negative content by disseminating digital literacy to various sectors and encouraging people to actively participate in spreading positive content and becoming more productive in the digital world.

The activities carried out by the MCI are focused on two main elements. The first is to disseminate ways to understand and evaluate media through *SiBerkreasi* activities. The second is monitoring media content. However, this second element is mainly through the application of the ITE Law and not from the strengthening of users' competency or participation.

Violators of the ITE Law will be investigated by the police as part of their law enforcement. Together with the National Cyber and Code Body, the police also conduct cyber patrols. This is done to anticipate the spread of hoaxes on social media. According to the authorities, this cyber patrol does not mean the continuous monitoring of people's activities in digital media. The police guarantee the privacy of the public to be maintained because the patrol team does not supervise closed social media content such as personal or group chats. Rather, search and investigation into chat rooms will only be carried out if there is evidence that a violation of law has occurred through content that is disseminated.[138]

Other ministries that have tried to combat information disorder include the Ministry of Education and Culture. At the time of this writing, the Ministry of Education has not included media and information literacy in the formal national education curriculum. However, the Ministry of Education has organized the National Literacy Movement, which is divided into the Family Literacy Movement, the School Literacy Movement and the Community Literacy Movement. The National Literacy Movement adheres to the six

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134 Ibid., p. 10.

135 Ibid., p. 8.

136 Ibid., p. 11.

137 Luciana, A. (2017). *Masyarakat Wajib Untuk Registrasi Kartu Prabayar, Ini Alasannya*. TEMPO.CO. Available at: https://bisnis. tempo.co/read/1024423/masyarakat-wajib-untuk-registrasi-kartu-prabayar-ini-alasannya/full&view=ok (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

138 Mahar, op. cit.

basic literacies of the World Economic Forum 2015, namely basic literacy, numeracy literacy, scientific literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy, and cultural and citizenship literacy.

So far, the efforts made by the National Literacy Movement have been limited to increasing the reading interest of the Indonesian people. For example, the School Literacy Movement advocates reading for 15 minutes before the school lessons begin. In addition, the National Literacy Movement has produced numerous publications, ranging from storybooks to books on traditional homes and Indonesian cuisine. However, this National Literacy Movement has not been very resonant among media and information literacy activists.

Therefore, the MIL-related activities carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture are actually more general in nature, starting from increasing the public's reading interest as an initial step to mastering basic literacy, which is only one part of UNESCO's conceptualization of MIL.

The focus of the two ministries is also different. The Ministry of Education and Culture prioritizes access through acquiring basic reading skills while the Ministry of Communication and Informatics can be said to have more focus on the understanding, evaluation and monitoring components of the MIL. Regardless, the collaboration between the two ministries is still very minimal. Thus, the impact of MIL-related activities carried out by government ministries on the society is still not visible and it is difficult to measure the level of success.

Civil Society and Academia

MIL activities that are carried out by civil society in Indonesia consist largely of socialization and awareness-raising workshops, training and seminars. According to the research from the Network of Digital Literacy Activists *Jaringan Penggiat Literasi Digital* (Japelidi), MIL activities in Indonesia are dominated by universities, which are then followed by the government and non-governmental organizations.[139]

The awareness-raising workshops or trainings held in the last few years mostly discussed the dangers of hoaxes and how to prevent them. For example, the Alliance of Independent Journalists of Indonesia (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen,* AJI), launched many trainings such as 'Hoax Busting and Digital Hygiene'[140], 'Media Literacy: Critical in Media Use, Creating Peaceful and Ethical Elections without Hoax', or the seminar entitled 'Hoax Alert: Wisely Dealing with Information in the Digital Age' with Maranatha Christian University, Bandung.

Some non-governmental organizations have also actively developed MIL materials for use in schools, such as the Children's Media Development Foundation *Yayasan Pengembangan Media Anak* (YPMA). YPMA compiled and developed the material with qualitative studies, then supplemented it with data-related to the development of the media and technology to find out problems that exist in the society. The steps taken by YPMA in developing MIL-related material for schools include focus group discussions consisting of teachers, parents and students.[141]

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139 Jaringan Pegiat Literasi Digital (2017). *Peta Gerakan Literasi Digital di Indonesia*, presentasi disajikan dalam Konferensi Literasi Digital di Yogyakarta-Indonesia. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_1Am7ak3rlKWmEwcGdkelh6V3M/view (In Indonesian.) (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

140 See https://aji.or.id/read/press-release/953/halfday-basic-workshop-hoax-busting-digital-hygiene.html

141 Sarwono, et.al., op. cit., p.7.

Definitions

As mentioned before, the Media and Information Literacy (MIL) concept developed by UNESCO has three broad components[142]. The first component recognizes the demand for, is able to search for, accesses and retrieves information and media content. Second, understands, assesses and evaluates information and media. And third, creates, utilizes and monitors information and media content.

This UNESCO MIL model is indeed very systematic, but in Indonesia, it has not been fully implemented. There have been many communities and institutions that have moved to intensify media and information literacy education in Indonesia. It is noteworthy that most of the media and information literacy activities carried out in Indonesia have not closely followed the definition of MIL as proposed by UNESCO. Instead, various institutions and communities have helped fight information disorder through their own respective efforts and also their own perspectives.

Of the three broad MIL components comprising access, understanding and evaluation, monitoring and creation, the majority of formal education institutions in Indonesia are still too focused on the access element. Indeed, there are educational initiatives about the production element, but it is still limited to technical aspects and not content. This can be seen through subjects in schools such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) lessons that educate students to access digital devices and create blogs, but not educating the students on how to understand, analyze and evaluate accessed content. ICT lessons also educate students on using existing digital devices, but do not teach them how to communicate through creative, ethical, legal and effective works, or to observe the impact of works made if published.

In order for MIL to be fully applied in schools in Indonesia, there are still a number of steps that need to be done. One important step is the training of teaching staff and the mainstreaming of MIL in the current curriculum, where the concept is integrated into every subject.

Challenges

Various stakeholders, both organization from in and outside the government, have their own understanding of or emphasis in regard to MIL, both conceptually and practically. The Network of Digital Literacy Activists *Jaringan Pegiat Literasi Digital* (Japelidi) focuses on insights from renowned experts such as W. James Potter

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142 UNESCO (2013). *Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework: Country Readiness and Competencies.* Paris, UNESCO, pp.129–136.

and Sonia Livingstone, as well as MIL concepts from UNESCO in their collaborative research programmes with member across the country.

Activities are often carried based on the main objectives and interests or focus of the institution. For example, the Ministry of Education and Culture focuses on basic literacy and increasing reading interest. The Indonesian Press Council, the Alliance of Independent Journalists and the Indonesian Journalists Association focus on practicing journalists and their media companies. The Indonesia Anti-Defamation Society *Mafindo* focuses on hoaxes and disinformation online. Elsewhere, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission focuses on the broadcasting sector, so that media literacy in their objectives is limited to television programmes.

It can be said that the socialization and implementation of MIL education in Indonesia is unstructured and sporadic. This is one of the main challenges for MIL education in the country. There are no figures on the level of media and information literacy of the Indonesian population because there is no research on the right indicators to measure media literacy at the national level. In fact, if there are clear and agreed upon indicators, the level of MIL of the society should be measurable and if MIL can be measured with agreed indicators, then activists or related parties will have a good basis for further developing MIL education that is appropriate to the needs of each community group.

Discussion

There are at least three main findings related to MIL in Indonesia. First, there are many internet users in Indonesia who do not yet have adequate MIL knowledge and skills, resulting in the 'emergency hoax' phenomenon. Political campaigns involving hoaxes, provocative issues, hate speech and propaganda that have often emerged before general elections further compound the problem. The impact of information disorder is also evident by the number of community groups who are easily provoked, each firmly believing in their world view within their echo chambers.

It can be extrapolated that the competencies that are now urgently needed by the Indonesian people are UNESCO's MIL competencies, especially on how to understand, assess and evaluate media content. These competencies are needed to balance the society's relatively high ability to access. They are needed so that the Indonesian people have the ability to filter the information obtained in this era of information saturation and can critically assess which is right and which is not, and in turn help to reduce the spread of disinformation and misinformation.

Secondly, formal education in Indonesia has not been optimally developed to incorporate MIL learning. The information and communication technology (ICT) lessons that have been integrated in the national curriculum are still focused on access and technical ability. It does not educate the students on how to understand, critically assess, and evaluate content, and to a lesser extent how to produce quality media content in terms of substance.

There are limited number of institutions that can develop MIL materials to be applied in the school curriculums. Furthermore, there is also a limited number of teaching staff who are well-trained in MIL

education. Even though MIL teaching materials could probably be incorporated in the primary and secondary education curriculum in Indonesia, training needs to be done in advance to increase the number of MIL-trained teachers. If MIL teaching is integrated into formal education in Indonesia, a lot of material could be delivered in a more structured and systematic way, and the acquisition of students' knowledge and skills would be more measurable.

The third important finding is the heap of non-formal community-based MIL activities that have been carried out by the government, community organizations and non-governmental organizations in various regions in Indonesia. In fact, there have been quite a lot of MIL-related activities conducted over the years. However, these activities have not been utilized optimally nor are they fully in line with UNESCO's conceptual framework of MIL, as each organization attempts to carry out MIL-related activities guided by their own understanding and institutional objectives.

These non-formal MIL-related activities such as social campaigns, seminars and workshops have a relative strength in educating audiences from a practical point of view. Providing quick tips on how to identify hoaxes, accompanying children in using the internet and basic ethics in the digital age are all examples of these strengths. In addition, these activities have the flexibility to focus on specific problems in their area or community, which may not be feasible at a national level.

However, these ad-hoc activities are usually short term and not sustainable without continued external funding. Such activities are also not structured, so the baseline knowledge and skills of the audience cannot be mapped properly to allow us to know its effectiveness.

Proposed Solutions

The application of MIL in Indonesia certainly has its own challenges. From the data about internet users in Indonesia, it can be seen that internet penetration and usage time in the country are quite high. To a lesser extent, there is arguably a diversity of content that can be accessed by the public. However, most internet users in Indonesia are physically located in Java, the country's most populated island and its economic centre. In other words, Indonesia is experiencing a digital divide not only with other nations, but also internally, which may be one of the reasons for the overall slowness in MIL development in the country.

In order to increase the level of MIL in Indonesia, especially in remote areas, it will be more appropriate if MIL education is integrated in the national curriculum. However, the implementation must be adjusted to the condition of the area. For example, in rural areas with minimum internet connectivity, emphasis could be placed on print or broadcast media, which can be done by reading newspapers, listening to radio programmes, rewriting newspaper articles, or analyzing advertisements in magazines.

One of the things that is considered to be the main challenge in MIL teaching is the government's response on information disorder which seems to be too cautious and slow in dealing with it. The government does not seem to consider strongly that the amount of information disorder that has occurred is an issue that needs to be addressed through long-term nationwide education. Up to now, there hasn't been any national action taken to prevent the adverse effects of information disorder through education and teaching in schools. Thus far, in dealing with information disorder that occurs, government actions tend to take the reactive legal approach, while is still lacking in proactive preventive efforts. From the civil society and academic side, there seems to be a lack of accessible scientific and academic fora that discusses issues about information disorder and the application of MIL as an effort to overcome the information disorder.

Efforts to deal with information disorders that have been carried out by various parties have so far not been commensurate with the extent and scale of the problems. There needs to be a distinct programme at the

national scale, carried out in a structured, systematic and sustainable manner. This solution is directed at two parties that have been mentioned, namely the government, and the civil society elements inclusive of activists and academics.

The government should continue to find various ways to prevent information disorder and its effects, including developing MIL education at various levels of school. This would include developing curricula and teaching materials, as well as preparing reliable teaching staffs.

The solution that can be proposed for activists and academics is the provision of fora that discuss information and MIL disruption issues academically so that the scale of the information disruption can be clearly measured. Through that, we also need to know how big the impact is and how important and urgent MIL is needed by the society Indonesia. It should be noted that the MIL concept of UNESCO is not well known in Indonesia beyond academia and certain literacy groups. Therefore, it has not been widely used in the country.

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MALAYSIA

By Sabariah Mohamed Salleh

Overview

According to the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), in 2018, 28.7 million Malaysians were reported to be internet users, compared to 24.5 million in 2016. The number represented 87.4% of its population at that time.

Malaysia boasts a broad spectrum of users, from highly skilled content developers and producer, to those who are just beginning to learn how to use a computer and the internet.

To satisfy the needs of everyone, a common curriculum which focuses on computer literacy is taught in schools. Basically, students are taught about the different parts of a computer, how to use basic computer applications and create various documents with the applications. This is evident in the local school curriculum, via subjects such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) taught in all primary schools across Malaysia, Introduction to Computer Science and Computer Science taught in selected secondary schools.

Teaching the technical aspects of information technology is also deemed important when compared to Arts and Social Sciences as it is thought to help develop a strong foundation, which can help boost the country's digital economy.[143] This priority is reflected from the Government's continuous efforts in building relevant infrastructures. In line with this, the MCMC took the initiative to empower the public to be smart users. One of the commission's focuses is on creating awareness among members of the public on safety, security and responsibility when using the internet, especially through its signature programme, Click Wisely (*Klik Dengan Bijak*[144]).

However, the modules do not emphasize inculcating critical thinking skills in discerning between credible information and misinformation or disinformation. There are, however, advertisements on radio and television, which advise consumers to 'think before you share' and MCMC also designed a website, *sebenarnya.my,* which helps to debunk fake information that has been spread on social media.

In addition, there are also programmes such as the Malaysia ICT Volunteer. The programme promotes trainings of the general public by volunteers at local internet centres to develop soft skills useful in small businesses. These skills include communication, basic photography, video making and online marketing. This is one of the examples of how the Malaysian government is empowering its citizens.

MIL education is an important element in creating awareness on how media, especially social media, can be used as an effective medium for freedom of expression.

While social media is a good platform for one to express their opinion and to be heard, there is a need for the public to know how to be critical and ethical users. For instance, according to Baboo, Malaysian children

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143   This formal accreditation tar R.AGE. g time bomb in The Star. Available in Global Studies of Childhood Bank Education, Kylasapathy, T., Hwa, T.B. and Zukki, A. (2018) *Unlocking Malaysia's Digital Future: Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Responses.* Bank Negara Malaysia. Available at: http://www.bnm.gov.my/index.php?ch=en_publication&pg=en_work_papers&ac=59&bb=file [(Accessed 19 January 2019.)

144   http://www.klikdenganbijak.my/Utama.aspx

are quite well versed in accessing new media technologies. Scholars[145] noted that children know how to search for the information that they require but they were not critical in analyzing the content and were lack of awareness regarding the ethical use of information. This means, they often accept what they read online passively and blindly share information and leave comments as they please.

Issues pertaining to hate speech or inter-religious dialogues and intercultural media dialogues are mostly tackled through Malaysia's legal system[146]. In 2018, the government introduced the Anti Fake-News Act, which stipulated that those found guilty of spreading information which authorities deemed as 'fake news' could be sent to jail or fined. The Act, however, was repealed by the new government in 2019.

Currently, people who spread disinformation, misinformation and mal-information can be prosecuted under the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998. If convicted, they could face a maximum fine of RM50,000 or serve a prison sentence of not more than a year or both.[147]

This report, based on in-depth interviews with five key informants,[148] seeks to map out media and information literacy policies and practices in Malaysia. The report also references data from secondary resources such as academic journals, data collected by MCMC, as well as news articles. In particular, challenges in the planning and implementation of MIL policies and practices will be highlighted. The researcher will also provide suggestions and recommendations on how to best tackle this issue.

Key Stakeholders

Schools, Universities and Colleges

Computer literacy is included in the Malaysian school curriculum. In primary schools, children start learning about computers through subjects such as *Dunia Sains and Teknologi* (The World of Science and Technology) and *Teknologi Maklumat and Komunikasi* (Information and Communication Technology). In secondary

145 Baboo, S. (2013). *Media Literacy in the Lifeworlds of Malaysian Children*. Global Studies of Childhood, 3 (1), pp. 72–85; Yu, H., Ismail, S., Izhar, T., Hussin, N. and Amran, N. (2017). *Information Literacy Education (ILE) through School Project Work: Stories From Developing Country Teachers*. Journal of Informatics and Mathematical Sciences, 9 (4), pp. 1029–1040; Shariman, T., Razak, Mohd, N. (2012). *Digital Literacy Competence for Academic Needs: An Analysis of Malaysian Students in Three Universities*. Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences, 69, pp. 1489–1496.

146 Examples of regulations are Sedition Act 1948, Communication and Multimedia Act 1998 and Defamation Act 1957.

147 In 2020, four people were arrested for spreading "fake news" on coronavirus. See https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/01/29/four-arrested-for-spreading-fake-news-on-coronavirus (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

148 They are 1) Prof Dr Shanthi Balraj, Professor in New Media Literacy, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris; 2) Dr Madeline Berma, Deputy Director of Malaysian Education Policy Research Committee; 3) Dr Saidatul Akmar Ismail, expert in Information Literacy, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia; 4) Dr Murni Wan Mohd Nor, expert in Hate Speech with interest in Media Representation; 5) Puan Eneng Faridah Iskandar, Senior Director of Strategic Communications of Malaysian Communication & Multimedia Commission.

schools, students have the option to learn about computers through subjects such as Introduction to Computer Science, which is taught in lower secondary levels, and Computer Science, which is taught in upper secondary levels.

These subjects are very technical and include lessons on how to create word documents, make PowerPoint presentations, simple coding, computer programming. The concept of privacy, cyberbullying, hacking and ethics are lightly discussed in the chapter *Komputer dan Impak* (Computer and its Impact)[149] of the high schools' Computer Science syllabus. However, topics on how to be a responsible citizen in an online community, knowing the consequences and repercussions of their actions are not discussed in any of the school subjects in primary or secondary schools. Ethics is discussed but not extensively.

While there is no specific subject which discusses MIL, it can be seen to be slightly embedded in history. In this subject, the basic idea of obtaining credible and trustworthy resources are inculcated through projects which require them to seek information and do proper citation and referencing.

However, the research by Halida Yu et al. on embedding Information Literacy (IL) through the history school projects in Malaysia found that 'students used information mainly from the Internet resources that directly answered their project questions and did not evaluate or filter information as suggested by IL models.' They also were found to have serious problems concerning the 'ethical use of information.' This was said to have happened due to the fact that knowledge on IL was 'not adequately delivered and integrated by teachers in classrooms.'[150]

When compared to the 'Big 6 Model of Information Literacy', it can be deduced that students' skills are mostly still at the first level which is task definition.[151] Therefore, critical thinking skills are aptitude which still needs to be developed among Malaysian students.

Interestingly, there is an effort by the government to encourage students to think outside the box. This could be seen from the introduction of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) questions in school exams and exercises. The HOTS questions aim to train and test students' ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate the subject matter. However, the fact that it is used in school exams encourages students to merely think along with the answer schemes, instead of being critical and honing their analysis and evaluating skills.

Basic computer literacy is also taught in universities to non-computer science, software engineering and information technology majors. However, the syllabus will benefit more if it is updated to fit the current needs of university and college students. Currently, most syllabi cover basic skills such as preparing presentation and simple coding languages and do not discuss the idea of MIL.

Moreover, there are media literacy programmes conducted by academics at universities who successfully obtained grants from MCMC, E-Science Fund and The National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (FINAS).[152] [153] These programmes, however, are not sustainable as it ends when the grants expire. Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) *Klik Dengan Bijak* (KDB), or 'click wisely' was launched

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149 Norlini, R., Paridah, D., Noor Azma, I., Noor Lees, I. and Abd Halim, B. (2017). *Sains Komputer Tingkatan 5*. Shah Alam: Oxford Fajar Sdn Bhd.

150 Yu, H., Ismail, S., Izhar, T., Hussin, N. and Amran, N. (2017). *Information Literacy Education (ILE) through School Project Work: Stories From Developing Country Teachers*. Journal of Informatics and Mathematical Sciences, 9 (4), p. 1029.

151 Eisenberg, M., Johnson, D. and Berkowitz, B. (2010). *Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) Skills Curriculum Based on the Big6 Skills Approach to Information Problem-Solving*. Library Media Connection, 28 (6), pp. 24–27.

152 Balraj, S., Beng, L., and Prasad, N.V. (2016). *Developing Media Literacy and Knowledge: Opportunities and Challenges Using Digital Video Production*. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 21 (1), pp. 95–99.

153 Pandian A. and Baboo, S.B. (2015). *Digital Lifeworlds and Designers of Literacy Practices in Malaysian Schools*. In B. Cope and M. Kolantzis (eds). *A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies*. Palgrave Macmillan: London.

in July 2011 with the focus on safety, security and responsibility, with basic premises of *Rukunegara*, the Malaysian declaration of National philosophy. Security concerns, particularly in respect to how people are using the internet in terms of issues of trust and information that they share, personal information, private information, awareness of potential risks and harm, general safety and the possible danger were highlighted in the programme.

In particular, its objectives are to:

▼ Generate literate users of technology and new media content.

▼ Create a sense of responsibility among internet users to be ethical and sensitive to other users.

▼ Educate internet users about the importance of self-regulation.

▼ Create a safe environment for users of the internet.

The programme is largely based on invitation and sees MCMC going to schools to give customized talks and organizing games and exhibitions at carnivals. The commission also leveraged the 850 Internet Centers they have around Malaysia. Managers and assistant managers at the Centers were trained so that they will be able to conduct the KDB sessions as well.

There are eight topics in the KDB module: Cyberbullying, Hacking and Online Grooming, Online Fraud, Oversharing, Phishing, Rights and Responsibilities of Online Citizens, and Spam.

The topics were delivered through YouTube videos, lectures, exhibitions and dissemination of reading materials such as brochures, bookmarks, booklets, stickers and postcards. Moniza et Al. (2019) discovered that the most effective teaching materials are YouTube videos while the least effective ones are the KDB reading materials and online quizzes. The content of the modules is refreshed every year, to ensure that the issues discussed are up-to-date.

The KDB programme was also implemented in collaboration with the Malaysian Scouts Association, through a camp which has benefitted some 800-1,000 participants. The unique camp incorporates learning about information literacy and internet safety together with team building and outdoor activities.

According to Moniza et al. (2019), participants significantly increased their knowledge through the module on Hacking. However, there was no significant difference in the level of participants' knowledge through the other modules. Therefore, Moniza et al. (2019) concluded that the KDB programme was ineffective.

MCMC also spearheaded the Malaysia Internet Volunteer Programme. It was developed to encourage digital and media literate citizens to participate effectively, ethically and responsibly, while simultaneously promoting digital inclusiveness. Volunteers are selected by the Internet Centres to undergo a two-day training which focuses on soft skills, communication, video production, marketing and advocating messages.

These volunteers would then impart their knowledge to the community they live in. The programme aims at empowering internet users by sharing on how to best utilise it, especially in creating entrepreneurs. However, issues like critical thinking and ethics are not taught in the programme.

In 2017, MCMC also developed a fact-checking website, *sebenarnya.my*, which enables users to cross-check and validate the information that they find suspicious and dubious on the internet.

Additionally, MCMC provide inputs to the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN) who organizes advocacy events such as Cyber Parenting and KDB With Teen Café. Both programmes touch about security issues parents may face with their children and cybercrimes. MCMC also funded research on

the excessive use of the internet and produced a module on intervention programmes which were used to train school counsellors.

Definitions

In Malaysia, MIL still remains a technical concept. While the definition of MIL according to UNESCO includes the ability to be critical in evaluating, using and contributing information and media content wisely and knowing one's rights and the etiquette[154] in Malaysia, it is often linked to providing access and the concern of bridging the digital divide. This may due to the fact that when MCMC was first established in 1998, one of its main tasks was to increase internet penetration throughout Malaysia.

The digital divide is pertinent across different parts of Malaysia. Internet penetration in Malaysia significantly increased from 15% in 2010 to 86% in 2019 (Nielsen). Malaysia's economy went through the transition from agriculture-based, to industrial-based and eventually to providing services, which made communication, especially the usage of computer and internet, increasingly important.[155]

The concept of MIL during that transition refers to computer literacy, especially how to use the computer, and focuses on security, safety and also awareness of potential risks and harm. Very little was said about ethical concerns and ways to efficiently manage information. It was then realized that while infrastructure services had been continuously rolled out, people were not taught how to use them in a way that benefitted them, both in terms of productivity and ethics.

Also, Malaysia's varied development of access to information technology has resulted in internet access divide across the categories of cities, urban, rural and interior. Those living in cities and urban areas have a very high access to the internet compared to those living in interior and remote places. According to MCMC's Internet Users Survey 2018, urban users made up for 70% of Internet users while only 30% were rural users. The significance of the internet to users' life also differs among people living in different districts.

Meanwhile, in schools, information literacy is closely related to library skills[156]. The idea of information literacy became salient when Malaysia introduced information and communication technology (ICT) in the school curriculum.[157]

154 Wilson, C., Grizzle, A., Tuazon, R., Akyempong, K. and Cheung, C.K. (2011). *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers.* Paris: UNESCO. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000192971 (Accessed 11 July 2019.)

155 Hwa, T., Kylasapathy, P., and Zukki, A. (2018). *Unlocking Malaysia's Digital Future: Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Responses.* Bank Negara Malaysia. Available at: http://www.bnm.gov.my/index.php?ch=en_publication&pg=en_work_papers&ac=59&bb=file (Accessed 19 June 2019.)

156 Ismail, S., Dorner, D. and Oliver, G. (2011). *Issues Related To Information Literacy Education in Malaysian Schools.* In Conference Proceeding at 2011 International Conference on Sociality and Economics Development IPEDR, Vol. 10. Singapore: IACSIT Press.

157 Lee, M. and Soon, S. T. (2016). *Building and sustaining national ICT/ education agencies: Lessons from Malaysia.* World Bank Education, Technology & Innovation: SABER-ICT Technical Paper Series (#04). Washington, DC: The World Bank. Available at: http://saber.worldbank.org (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

In the recent recommendation by the Malaysian Education Policy Research Committee, the implementation of infrastructure and info-structure were identified as important elements in an education system. But this merely means that technical access is still considered a priority compared to soft skills like critical thinking and empowering oneself by using the media.

However, as issues about media and internet usage such as sharing of unverified information on the dangers of vaccines,[158] hate speech,[159] and child predators and sexual grooming[160] crop up, there is a realization that users need to be more critical in their media engagement.

Challenges

In Malaysia, ICT can be seen more as a tool that can promote the growth of the economy. Therefore, priorities are given in rolling out infrastructures and relevant trainings which can help its citizen to efficiently utilize technology to upgrade their skills and be efficient in their work with the intention to generate economic growth.

However, little attention is given to other aspects of MIL education, especially the one that focuses on critically evaluating information and being discerning when engaged with visuals, texts and audiovisuals they encounter on the media. Issues related to hate speech, misinformation and disinformation are usually tackled by using rules and regulations.

There seems to be an invisible line which separates media literacy and information literacy. Experts are actually working towards a common goal, which is to create MIL, but they are working in silos of one another.

Different geographic areas like urban, rural, interior have different issues, which needs to be addressed, in particular in relation to digital divide. In 2014, it was reported that social and cultural factors affect the implementation of Information Literacy Education in primary schools.[161] Lack of openness to new ideas, weak governance and monitoring system and lack of two-way interaction, according to Saidatul, hampered the effort to implement Information Literacy Education. Lessons related to critical thinking skills, therefore, may be difficult to implement in schools.

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158 Satibi, Z. (2019). *Tolak Vaksin Ancam Kesihatan Global* [Vaccine Refusal Threatens Global Health]. Harian Metro. Available at: https://www.hmetro.com.my/sihat/2019/02/424051/tolak-vaksin-ancam-kesihatan-global (In Malay.) (Accessed 31 August 2019.)

159 Aqilah, I. (2019). *Perak Sultan says hate speech a ticking time bomb.* The Star. Available at: https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/09/01/perak-sultan-says-hate-speech-a-ticking-time-bomb (Accessed 3 September 2019.)

160 *Predator in My Phone.* The Star R.AGE. Available at: https://www.rage.com.my/predator/ (Accessed 20 June 2019.)

161 Ismail, S. (2014). *Factors Affecting the Implementation of Information Literacy Education in Primary Schools.* PhD Thesis. Victoria: University of Wellington.

The responsibility, ethics and professional standards of media organizations or media producers that write, edit and produce information and news should also be considered. There is a need for a greater professionalization of journalism through training on ethics and laws and regulations with regards to media.

The expertise and skills of library teachers in schools should be fully utilized to benefit the teaching faculty and students. Also, their skills should be constantly updated so they can efficiently help with more than basic information seeking.

Discussion

Suggested courses of action that can be discussed are:

▼ Greater professionalization of media practitioners with regard to ethical media practices. Training will ensure that they are aware of the relevant ethics and standard professional practices of media practitioners.

▼ Educate society on how to fully utilize media and information technology to benefit and empower them. As it is, the government has made some initiative in empowering the society, but the effort is geared towards enhancing the digital economy. There are many aspects in which one can be empowered and this include their right to genuine and credible information and freedom of expression. It would be beneficial if this is inculcated from young.

▼ A formal structure needs to be built to make MIL initiatives and efforts sustainable. Academics and practitioners are working in silos to create awareness on MIL. Having a formal structure, with proper funding and government support, will help to curate these experts and ensure that MIL is a sustainable effort.

▼ Create a space for students/ young people to talk and share their opinion. It may be a challenge to embed MIL in the school curriculum, but the first step can be done through school clubs which incorporates MIL as one of its activities. The formal structure as discussed above can help organize and design modules and activities which can be used by the clubs.

▼ Relevant courses for educators with regards to MIL should be organized so that they can share their knowledge with students and other teaching faculties.

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Kylasapathy, P., Hwa, T. and Zukki, A. (2018). *Unlocking Malaysia's Digital Future: Opportunities, Challenges and Policy Responses.* Bank Negara Malaysia. Available at: http://www.bnm.gov.my/index.php?ch=en_publication&pg=en_work_papers&ac=59&bb=file (Accessed 19 June 2019.)

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THE PHILIPPINES

By Ramon R. Tuazon, Therese Patricia S. Torres, and Guillian Mae C. Palcone

Overview

While the spread of misinformation and disinformation is not new in the Philippines, the reach of false information is now amplified through the rapidly increasing internet and social media use among Filipinos and the rise of cyber trolls. Information disorder in the country is largely attributed to politically motivated disinformation operations that keep troll armies in business,[162] and a digital information ecosystem that poses threats to individuals who are ill-equipped in detecting deception.

The youth is among the most vulnerable sectors, not only as recipients but also as propagators of false information, driven by inadequate MIL, degradation of values and rising consumerism.

Online, the nation appears to be more distinctly divided by political lines, with trolls magnifying black and white narratives, compelling citizens to remain in echo chambers and discouraging them from engaging in civil dialogue and elevating the discourse on various issues. Cyberbullying and other forms of online attacks suppress dissent among citizens and threats to the media pose the risk of a chilling effect on journalists.

In view of socio-political and human rights issues and threats brought about by information disorder, the need to improve MIL education and sustain other MIL initiatives in the country has become more pressing.

In the Philippines, the government has integrated MIL as a core course in senior high schools. Young people also benefit from efforts from the media and NGOs through programmes that aim to enrich their MIL education. Challenges remain, however, such as the misconception about the MIL course as educational technology-related subject and the lack of training for MIL teachers.

The country urgently needs to address these issues as MIL can help increase understanding about the role of media in democracy, improve skills in identifying reliable sources of information and managing one's own biases and enhance openness to diverse views.

Key Stakeholders

In the Philippines, the key stakeholders in the MIL education ecosystem are the government, the academia, media organizations, and non-profits and international organizations.

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162 Cabañes, J. and Ong, J. (2018). *Architects of networked disinformation: Behind the scenes of troll accounts and fake news production in the Philippines*. The Newton Tech4Dev Network, 2018. Available at: https://newtontechfordev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ARCHITECTS-OF-NETWORKED-DISINFORMATION-FULL-REPORT.pdf. (Accessed 10 July 2020.)

Government: Role in the Integration of MIL in Basic and Higher Education

The Department of Education integrated MIL as a core course in the senior high school curriculum in 2013. Its regular offering in schools started in school year 2017–2018.

The Philippines is one of the few countries worldwide, and perhaps the first in the ASEAN region, to officially integrate MIL in its formal basic education curriculum. The integration indicates that the government recognizes the importance of providing a distinct course on MIL, though some schools had already been covering MIL-related topics in relevant courses as early as the 1970s.

MIL is offered in Grade 11 or 12, depending on the school's readiness and availability of resources. Senior high school students range from 16 to 18 years old.

MIL education continues beyond senior high school. In higher education, MIL is reflected in the General Education (GE)[163] curriculum for college students and in the curriculum of specific programmes of study such as Communication and Development Communication. The new GE curriculum, which took effect in 2018, enumerates MIL-aligned competencies.[164]

In terms of specific disciplines or programmes of study, the Commission of Higher Education of the Philippines (CHED) Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSG) for the Communication and Development Communication programmes include MIL competencies among the core competencies graduates of the two programmes should demonstrate.[165]

There are Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) offering communication programmes that have included in their curriculum a distinct course on media literacy or MIL as a composite concept.

The Academia: Key Role in Teaching MIL

Educators, especially MIL teachers, must recognize their important role in empowering students not by mere knowledge transfer but by teaching them how to critically evaluate information, and by inspiring and instilling values and ethics. This is urgently needed in the Philippines, as young people have been found to dominate troll armies, which operate and manage the disinformation cyber highway.

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163 The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) defines General Education as the portion of the curriculum common to all undergraduate students regardless of their major or area of specialization. GE aims to expose undergraduate students to various domains of knowledge and ways of comprehending social and natural realities, developing in the process intellectual competencies and civic capacities. CHED Memorandum Order 20, series of 2013, Available at: https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-No.20-s2013.pdf. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

164 The GE curriculum is composed of 36 units distributed as follows: 24 units of core courses, 9 units of elective courses, and 3 units on the life and works of national hero Jose Rizal. Of the eight core courses, three are MIL-related: Purposive Communication; Science, Technology and Society; and Ethics.

165 Commission on Higher Education (2017). *Memorandum Order No. 35, series of 2017, Revised Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Bachelor of Arts in Communication Program*. Manila: Philippines. Available at: https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-35-s-2017.pdf (Accessed 19 May 2020.);

Commission on Higher Education (2017). *Memorandum Order No. 36, series of 2017, Policies, Standard, Guidelines for Bachelor of Science in Development Communication*. Manila: Philippines. Available at: https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CMO-36-s-2017.pdf (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

The Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC) is another institution engaged in MIL research in the Philippines, with studies on how MIL is taught in the face of post-truth[166], and the extent to which the subject of 'cognitive biases' is covered in MIL teaching-learning resources.[167] Together with Google, Love Frankie and the University of Hong Kong, AIJC has also conducted capacity-building sessions on news literacy and produced teaching-learning materials for senior high school MIL teachers.

The Philippine Association for Media and Information Literacy (PAMIL), which is a professional association of MIL educators, trainers and practitioners, conducts studies on MIL teaching practices. Its 2019 study revealed for example that among the MIL teachers interviewed, analysis and evaluation of media texts was the most popular among class activities. The PAMIL study also found that in one school, librarians take part in developing the MIL curriculum to ensure that the MIL course covers library research with the help of librarians.

Media and Non-Profits: Indispensable Role in Promoting MIL

The media took on the challenge of averting the spread of disinformation by finding creative ways to educate the youth and the general public and help them become more discerning media consumers. Among the efforts of media organizations include MIL-related campaigns and fact-checking initiatives.

ABS-CBN Corporation and GMA Network, Inc., two of the largest media companies in the country, both have a citizen journalism arm that observes the journalistic process of verification, independence and accountability. ABS-CBN's *Bayan Mo, iPatrol Mo* (Your Town, You Patrol) provides citizen journalism and news literacy training, primarily in basic and higher education schools, covering topics such as the roles and responsibilities of a citizen journalist, ethical and responsible use of social media, how to take photos and videos for citizen reports, definition of news and news literacy, and misinformation and disinformation.

Apart from its citizen journalism arm, *YouScoop*, GMA has had a number of pioneering and innovative media campaigns promoting responsible and ethical use of social media and addressing information disorder: from *Think Before You Click* in 2011, which encouraged social media users to think twice before posting content online, the *Heart Over Hate* video campaign against cyberbullying in 2016, and the anti-hoax #*HindiTama* (Not Right)[168] project in 2018[169], to the most recent online programmes like the fact-checking show *Fact or Fake with Joseph Morong*[170] and the online newscast *Stand for Truth*, which features mobile journalism by millennial reporters.

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166 Torres, T. and Tuazon, R. (2019). *Teaching media and information literacy to the youth in the face of post-truth: Testing cognitive biases, detecting disinformation and misinformation.* Presented at the Second International Conference, Tangible and Intangible Impact of Information and Communication in the Digital Age, 9-12 June 2019, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, Yugorskaya Dolina Hotel Complex, Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation.

167 San Diego, T. and Tuazon, R. (2018). *Inclusion of 'cognitive biases' in media and information literacy (MIL) teaching-learning resources.* Presented at the International Conference, Tangible and Intangible Impact of Information and Communication in the Digital Age, 3-8 June 2018, Russian Committee of the UNESCO Information for All Programme, Ugra Chess Academy, Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation.

168 GMA News Online (2016). *Introducing the #HindiTama project.* GMA News Online. Available at: http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/586806/hashtag/introducing-the-hinditama-project (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

169 GMA News Online. *Introducing the #HindiTama project.*

170 GMA News. (2019). *Fact or Fake: Fake news peddlers, huhulihin na?* GMA News. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEgSoZ-ICNY&list=PLCpdvYcv59AjzImIKA19fqNshO7Swokuk&index=2&t=0s&fbclid=IwAR3WY2PkPV4SH9BQvBqRDu9Wk5Fc9NiTvtOhzjWzR80ZhATh-9rImHsWVnU. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

It must be noted that media organizations have produced campaigns and materials that may serve as useful resources in MIL classes, but these are focused on selected components of MIL and not MIL as a whole. This should be emphasized in MIL training for teachers, to avoid feeding misconceptions about the MIL course as mass media-centred.

There are also fact-checking programmes by nonprofit online news organization VERA Files and online news website Rappler, which provide current and relevant teaching-learning resources to MIL teachers. VERA Files[171] is a signatory to the code of principles of the International Fact-Checking Network.[172] It regularly publishes results of its fact-checking, such as false claims, flip-flops, misleading articles and 'fake news'. To popularize the complex process of verification, VERA Files published a do-it-yourself (DIY) guide to fact-checking and fighting 'fake news'.[173]

Rappler, the media outlet in the country that appears to have received the most threats and challenges[174] in recent years, has continued to hold the line, report the truth, debunk falsehoods and expose disinformation not only about itself[175] but also on other issues in the public interest. It is noted to be one of the few well-established fact-checkers in the country in addition to VERA Files.[176] It has adopted an internal correction policy[177] and also employs internal accountability mechanisms and multilevel verification processes similar to what investigative journalism entities use[178], following a three-step workflow for external fact-checking.[179]

Another notable group is the Consortium for Democracy and Disinformation, composed of journalists, bloggers, scholars and communication and journalism teachers committed to fighting disinformation, improving media literacy and protecting press freedom. It organizes forums[180] that provide platforms for discussing MIL, the role of the media, the impact of disinformation on democracy and what the public can do to be part of the solution. Digital disinformation research[181] is now one of its priorities. In 2016, a multi-stakeholder and multi-agency initiative to craft a MIL policy framework for the Philippines was initiated by a coalition led by AIJC with support from UNESCO. The framework sought to set the principles

171 VERA Files (2019). *About VERA Files*. VERA Files. Available at: https://verafiles.org/about. [accessed 19 May 2020]

172 Funke, D. (2019). *Safety in numbers: Philippine fact-checkers team up to debunk election misinformation*. Poynter. Available at: https://www.poynter.org/fact-checking/2019/safety-in-numbers-philippine-fact-checkers-team-up-to-debunk-election-misinformation/ (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

173 VERA Files (2018). *VERAfied: A DIY guide to fact checking and fighting fake news*. VERA Files. Available at: https://verafiles.org/articles/verafied-diy-guide-fact-checking-and-fighting-fake-news (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

174 Fonbuena, C. (2018). *SEC revokes Rappler's registration*. Rappler. Available at: https://www.rappler.com/nation/193687-rappler-registration-revoked. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

175 Rappler (2018). *Debunking lies about Rappler*. Available at: https://www.rappler.com/about-rappler/about-us/160301-rappler-debunks-lies. (Accessed 15 July 2020.)

176 Rappler. *Fact Check*. Available at: https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check.

177 Rappler. *Correction*. Available at: https://www.rappler.com/bulletin-board/41751-corrections.

178 Rappler's fact checking is built on the experience of Newsbreak, an award-winning investigative news organisation established in 2001 and Rappler's forerunner.

179 Rappler (2018). *How do we do our fact-check*. Available at: https://www.rappler.com/about-rappler/about-us/174766-fact-check-methodology. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

180 It convened its second national conference, Disinformation and Democratic Decay on 22 April 2019. It has released two statements, *Harassment of Maria Ressa* (15 February 2019) and *Malicious False Accusations against Journalists and News Organisations* (29 April 2019). It has convened seven regional conferences or roadshows throughout the country – Cebu, Angeles, Cagayan de Oro, Baguio, Iloilo, Metro Manila, and Davao.

181 Four universities will serve as multiregional hubs for disinformation research including the Holy Angel University in Angeles City, Asian Center for Journalism at the Ateneo de Manila University, University of the Philippines – Visayas, and Mindanao State University. Each hub will convene its own counter-disinformation forums and conduct scholarly research. The Consortium will also launch a research grants competition on disinformation research for junior faculty.

and norms upon which the practice, including teaching of MIL, can be built and set parameters for actions and decisions.

Definitions

In the Philippines, there is a need to clarify the definition of MIL especially in the basic education programme.

The course description in the Department of Education MIL curriculum guide[182] for senior high school is aligned with the UNESCO definition of MIL: 'The course introduces the learners to basic understanding of media and information as channels of communication and tools for the development of individuals and societies. It also aims to develop students to be creative and critical thinkers as well as responsible users and competent producers of media and information.' It must be noted, however, that the content of the curriculum guide is more focused on technology as teaching-learning tools. Moreover, the concept of media in the curriculum guide is mass media-centric, with some references to new media. These portions differ from UNESCO's broader definition of MIL. As previously discussed, these inconsistencies with the composite concept of MIL contribute to the misconceptions about the course as education technology-related and mass media-centred.

Challenges

A challenge in the Philippines is that MIL has not yet been integrated into the curriculum of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). Currently, senior high school teachers do not have adequate pre-service and in-service training to effectively teach MIL. There is a tendency among some teacher education experts to equate the MIL course with the Education Technology course offered in many TEIs. A qualitative study on MIL teachers from public and private schools in the Philippines found that the teachers' understanding of the course appears to be limited to basic concepts of production, media use and the use of technology in accessing information.[183] Some teachers have also expressed concerns on the dominance of media

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182 Department of Education (2019). *K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum Senior High School – Core Subject*. Manila: Philippines. Available at: https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SHS-Core_Media-and-Information-Literacy-CG.pdf (Accessed 10 July 2020.)

183 Bautista. *Media and information literacy in practice: Experiential and content analysis of the views from selected Senior High School Teachers.*

production teaching over the critical analysis of the media messages. In interviews, several teachers noted that students should learn to 'understand first the media messages before jumping into the activity of making a video, a documentary or short film'.[184]

There is also a misconception that the MIL course should focuses on mass media. This could be attributed to the technology-focused and mass media-centric MIL curriculum guide in the senior high school programme, which the academia should address together with the Department of Education. This is different from UNESCO's broader definition of MIL as a 'set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, evaluate and use, create as well as share information and media content in all formats, using various tools, in a critical, ethical and effective way, in order to participate and engage in personal, professional and societal activities.'[185]

In addition to the educational technology-focused and mass media-centric qualities of the MIL curriculum guide for senior high school, another challenge is that the content of the curriculum guide appears to be inadequate in increasing students' knowledge and skills in dealing with information disorder. Among the important discussion areas are as follows: (1) MIL and democracy, including freedom of expression and access to information, (2) intercultural dialogue, including media, hate speech and radicalism, (3) psychosocial impact of media, and (4) journalism and news literacy.

This must be emphasized in MIL training for teachers in the Philippines, as the advanced digital skills of the youth caught the attention of disinformation architects[186], who have capitalized on their knowledge and employed them as fake account operators during the 2016 and 2019 national and local elections. Young people are attracted to the job due to the convenience of working 'in windowless rooms full of computers, or in an internet café' to earn extra money.[187] The money is used to satisfy a certain lifestyle and to augment their educational fund. Fake account operators receive a rate of US$ 20 per day, or a US$ 235 per month salary.[188] The disinformation production chain poses threats to the youth as it downgrades critical thinking and promotes unethical practices.

In addition, the country has emerged as one of the biggest and fastest-growing hubs for content moderation because of its English-speaking workforce and two-decade success with the call centre industry.[189] Young workers are hired by sub-contracting companies to evaluate images, videos and posts uploaded in social media platforms from all over the world, and content includes harmful contents such as excessive sex and violence, and even disinformation.

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184 Tuazon and Torres. *Teaching media and information literacy to the youth in the face of post-truth: Testing cognitive biases, detecting disinformation and misinformation*.

185 UNESCO (2013). *UNESCO global media and information literacy assessment framework: Country readiness and competencies*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/global-media-and-information-literacy-assessment-framework-country-readiness-and-competencies-2013-en.pdf. (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

186 Ong and Cabañes. *Architects of networked disinformation: Behind the scenes of troll accounts and fake news production in the Philippines*.

187 Ong, Tapsell, and Curato. *Tracking Digital Disinformation in the 2019 Philippine Midterm Election,* p. 19.

188 Ibid., p. 14.

189 Cabatom, R., Dwoskin, E., and Whalen, J. (2019). *Content moderators at YouTube, Facebook and Twitter; see the worst of the web – and suffer silently*. The Washington Post. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/07/25/social-media-companies-are-outsourcing-their-dirty-work-philippines-generation-workers-is-paying-price/ (Accessed 19 May 2020.)

Discussion

The MIL curriculum guide should be reviewed and updated regularly with the involvement of MIL experts and teachers, to ensure that its content continues to be relevant and timely. For instance, as of this writing, the world is facing unprecedented challenges due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). MIL educators must be quick to equip students with competencies in fact-checking health information, but first, teachers must upgrade their own competencies in teaching MIL through distance learning strategies that are appropriate to their students' needs.

The adoption of a competency and issue-based curriculum guide should be considered in order to address the challenges outlined earlier, such as the mass media-centric and compartmentalized view of media and information in the current guide. In addition to the topics recommended above which are (1) MIL and democracy, including freedom of expression and access to information, (2) intercultural dialogue, including media, hate speech and radicalism, (3) psychosocial impact of media, and (4) journalism and news literacy, the feasibility of incorporating the following in the curriculum guide should be examined:

▼ Cyber wellness such as balanced online and offline life, privacy, online relationships,

▼ Disinformation strategies and tools through the understanding of algorithms, artificial intelligence, machine learning,

▼ Community standards of internet intermediaries,

▼ Information ethics which is a distinct discussion from media ethics,

▼ Persuasive communication, including cognitive biases.

How can these topics be included in what seems to be an overloaded MIL curriculum guide? The key is rationalizing the guide to facilitate the inclusion of important topics and deletion of non-essentials. With the increasing number of MIL teaching-learning materials being produced by various organizations, there is a need to curate the materials into an open, shared online platform for easier access by all stakeholders, especially MIL teachers and students. However, the materials need vetting and quality control before they are uploaded. UNESCO MIL CLICKS programme in the Philippines initiated by AIJC can be revived for this purpose.

Teacher education institutions should consider offering MIL as a pre-service subject or a specialization to adequately prepare senior high school teachers to handle the course. The updated UNESCO MIL Curriculum for Teachers can be a useful resource for this.

The Department of Education should examine the feasibility of integrating MIL in preschool and elementary school as MIL competencies or skill sets that need to be acquired in the early years of learning. MIL may be introduced as a stand-alone or cross-disciplinary course, or integrated in relevant subjects across year levels. As attention spans continue to shrink and as internet and social media activities evolve, there might come a time when starting MIL education in high school would be too late.

Given the profound scale of information disorder in the Philippines, MIL champions must stand their ground. In the face of strong opposition, they must continue to be proactive in coming up with innovative measures for empowering the youth and all citizens, getting ahead of the adversary.

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Glossary

Digital Literacy:	The ability to define, access, manage, integrate, communicate, evaluate and create information safely and appropriately through digital technologies and networked devices for participation in economic and social life.
Disinformation:	Information that is false, and the person who is disseminating it knows it is false. It is commonly referred to as 'fake news' and falls under the phenomenon of 'information disorder.'
Fact-Checking:	The act of *checking* factual information in non-fictional text in order to determine the veracity and correctness of the factual statements in the text
Media and Information Literacy:	A set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies and practices that allow effectively access, analyze, critically evaluate, interpret, use, create and disseminate information and media products with the use of existing means and tools on a creative, legal and ethical basis. It is an integral part of so-called '21st century skills' or 'transversal competencies.' It is often synonymous with the term 'media literacy' and covers all competencies related to information literacy and media literacy that also include digital or technological literacy.
Misinformation:	Information that is false, but the person who is disseminating it believes it to be true. It is a part of the 'information disorder' phenomenon, and is also commonly referred to as 'fake news.'