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سعادة أ. د. رئيس تحرير المجلة المصرية للدراسات المتخصصة المحترم  
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تحية طيبة وبعد،،،

يسر معاميل التأثير والاستشهادات المرجعية للمجلات العلمية العربية (ارسييف - ARCIF)، أحد مبادرات قاعدة بيانات "معرفة" للإنتاج والمحتوى العلمي، إعلامكم بأنه قد أطلق التقرير السنوي الثامن للمجلات للعام 2023.

ويسرنا تهنئكم وإعلامكم بأن المجلة المصرية للدراسات المتخصصة الصادرة عن جامعة عين شمس، كلية التربية النوعية، القاهرة، مصر، قد نجحت في تحقيق معايير اعتماد معاميل "Arcif" المتوافقة مع المعايير العالمية، والتي يبلغ عددها (32) معياراً، وللاطلاع على هذه المعايير يمكنكم الدخول إلى الرابط التالي:

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وكان معاميل "ارسييف Arcif" العام لمجلتكم لسنة 2023 (0.3881).

كما صنفت مجلتكم في تخصص العلوم التربوية من إجمالي عدد المجلات (126) على المستوى العربي ضمن الفئة (Q3) وهي الفئة الوسطى، مع العلم أن متوسط معاميل ارسييف لهذا التخصص كان (0.511).

وبإمكانكم الإعلان عن هذه النتيجة سواء على موقعكم الإلكتروني، أو على مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي، وكذلك الإشارة في النسخة الورقية لمجلتكم إلى معاميل "ارسييف Arcif" الخاص بمجلتكم.

ختاماً، نرجو في حال رغبتكم الحصول على شهادة رسمية إلكترونية خاصة بنجاحكم في معاميل "ارسييف"، التواصل معنا مشكورين.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير

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رئيس مبادرة معاميل التأثير  
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ثانياً : بحوث علمية محكمة باللغة الإنجليزية :

- Media Education to Counter Disinformation: A Qualitative Study on a Sample of Egyptian Youth

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**A.Prof. Sally Samy Tayie**

**Media Education to Counter  
Disinformation:  
A Qualitative Study on a  
Sample of Egyptian Youth**

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**A.Prof. Sally Samy Tayie <sup>(1)</sup>**

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## Media Education to Counter Disinformation: A Qualitative Study on a Sample of Egyptian Youth

A.Prof . Sally Samy Tayie

### Abstract

This study aims to identify the role that media education plays in confronting extremist ideas and misleading information, and its contribution to creating media awareness and media literacy among university students through understanding media education and acquiring its skills. This study is a qualitative study that relied on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. In-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of eight media experts and specialists and focus group discussions were conducted with a sample of students from Cairo University, Misr International University and the American University in Cairo. Among the most important findings of the study is that there is a consensus among experts on the need to pay attention to the acquisition of pedagogical skills for young people. At the same time, the results showed that students' digital media usage habits are significant compared to traditional media

**Keywords:** media education, media literacy, youth, disinformation, digital media

### ملخص:

**العنوان :** دور التربية الإعلامية في مواجهة المعلومات المضللة: دراسة كيفية على عينة من الشباب المصري

**المؤلفون :** سالي سامي طابع

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على الدور الذي تلعبه التربية الإعلامية في مواجهة الأفكار المتطرفة والمعلومات المضللة، ومساهمتها في خلق الوعي الإعلامي والتنقيف الإعلامي لدى الطالب الجامعي من خلال فهم التربية الإعلامية واكتساب مهاراتها. وتعتبر هذه الدراسة من الدراسات الكيفية التي أتمت على المقابلات المتعمقة والمناقشات الجماعية المركزة، حيث أجريت المقابلات المتعمقة مع عينة عمدية قوامها ثمانية من الخبراء والإعلاميين والمتخصصين وأجريت المناقشات الجماعية المركزة على عينة من طلاب جامعة القاهرة وجامعة مصر الدولية والجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة. من أهم النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة وجود إجماع لدى الخبراء على ضرورة الاهتمام بإكساب الشباب مهارات التربية وفي نفس الوقت أظهرت النتائج أن عادات استخدام الطلاب لوسائل الإعلام الرقمي كبيرة مقترنة بالوسائل التقليدية

**الكلمات الدالة :** التربية الإعلامية، الثقافة الإعلامية، الشباب، المعلومات المضللة، وسائل الاعلام الرقمية

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## Introduction

The world today is besieged by a huge number of media messages considering the spread of digital media that have become carrying cultures and values that often conflict with the values and cultures of Arab societies. The growing awareness of the danger of misinformation and disinformation has made media and information Literacy a central issue on the table of national dialogues, especially in relation to social media. Privacy issues and searching for data, which has led to an increase in voices that demand that citizens need to be media literate so that they can face false and misleading information that comes to them.

We live nowadays in the era of modern media and the tremendous development of means of communication which made the media an essential part of the daily life of peoples. Now we live in a world where information comes to us around the clock in all formats, audible, readable and visual, information and messages that carry the ideas, values and trends of those who prepared them or transferred them from other sources to achieve certain goals. In this new media reality, the individual is surrounded by a huge number of media messages that provide contents and information that may negatively affect the system of educational and moral values, especially among young people.

The media is no longer the traditional activity concerned with transmitting messages from a sender to a receiver in what was called linear communication. Media has become a broad and influential activity on the recipient and directing his behavior, so it has as circular communication, and this transformation was also reflected in the technical form and content of media messages. The media audience is no longer a passive audience that receives messages and takes them for granted but has become a positive and interactive audience that participates in the production of the message and shares it with many individuals and audiences. The audience has become “prosumers”, who produce and consumes at the same time (Tayie, 2012). In this context, new concepts have emerged, most notably: public leadership of the media and citizen

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journalism, which is a radical intellectual shift in research and media studies in the twenty-first century.

The present study aims to identify the role that media education can play in confronting extremist ideas and false information and its contribution to creating media awareness and literacy among university students by understanding media education and acquiring its skills. Media education contributes to the educational and media institutions themselves by making the recipient more aware and alert in terms of acquiring the ability to think analytically and critically about what he receives, watches, listens or reads. Media education also help the individual to have self-controls that enable him to positively receive media materials and messages and become a recipient capable of distinguishing between interpretation and analysis (Hobbs, 2016).

Media education has attracted remarkable attention from decision and policy makers in developed countries. For example, the British Minister of Culture stated about the critical importance of media education by saying: “Familiarity with the standards of education in the current century has become a necessary skill as important as mastering the skill of mathematics or science”. There is also a close link between citizenship rights and media education standards. One of the most prominent citizenship rights is to arm the citizen with media and information literacy that empowers and protects him from media blackmail and its harmful effects and enables him to deal with the media properly. Media education also encourage the citizen to access diverse sources of information and not rely on a single source (Carlsson et al., 2008, pp.37-38).

Martens (2010) and Buckingham (2022, p. 85) indicated that the concept of media education is mostly in terms of the knowledge and skills that individuals need to analyze, evaluate or produce media messages. These knowledge and skills are mainly related to four main aspects of the media phenomenon, namely media industries, media messages, media audiences, and media effects, after that, media literate evaluates what is empirically

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known about the effectiveness of media education practices. Media education is also important because it educates children, adolescents and youth and members of society in general and immunizes them against the harmful effects of the media on the one hand. On the other hand, because there is agreement on the importance of media education as it is not a controversial issue but is supported by media organizations and public health advocates (Hobbs et al., 2013; Jamal, 2015, p. 77).

### **Statement of the Study Problem**

With the development of problems within society, the media must educate citizens and urge them to confront these problems through the role of media education in combating fake news, hate speech and false and misleading information. Media education also aims to bring about change at the general societal level or persuade legislative and executive bodies at the state level to participate in change by issuing laws and imposing penalties that allow the dissemination of desired behavior.

The current study mainly aims to identify the roles which media education can play in reducing intellectual extremism among young people in societies, and in highlighting the educational aspect based on creating analytical and critical skills for the components of technical and aesthetic media messages. Considering the increasing problems that result from the excessive and unhealthy use of digital media and social media, the role of media education comes as one of the most reliable tools to change negative public attitudes and combat social issues. In short, the study problem can be defined in the following question: What role can media literacy education play in combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech?

### **Significance of the study**

It is very difficult for governments and educational systems to control the volume of messages that are disseminated through the media and social networking sites or to examine and evaluate them. This process requires the existence of educational methods

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and curricula that play the role of “a gatekeeper” and are based on conscious censorship based on understanding and analysis by the receiving audience of those messages, especially young people and youth in school stages who represent the future generation. Significance of the study can be incorporated in the following:

1- The media have become tools for spreading many contents that have special goals and ideologies that sometimes do not serve the interests of young people and may negatively affect their beliefs and their knowledge and cultural backgrounds which necessitates empowering them with media education skills.

2- Considering the tremendous development and media momentum of all kinds of media outlets, as well as the means of communication technology and technical media in the information society, the need has become an urgent necessity to protect children, adolescents and youth from undesired and negative effects of media.

3- Media education is a fruitful means of achieving effective communication between all parties (youth - media - contents) to achieve conscious understanding and sound perception.

4- Media education, like educational institutions, teaches us to read, to observe and to listen carefully and cautiously.

5- We need media education because it develops young people's critical thinking and creativity to recognize their different personalities and explore what is inside them.

6- Media education provides young people with the skills and expertise needed to make important decisions in their lives to benefit from them in the present and pass them on to the future.

7- Media education plays an important role in countering disinformation, fake news and hate speech.

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## Objectives of the study

1- To Monitor the extent of Egyptian youth's awareness of media education.

2- To Identify the role of media education in countering misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.

3- To examine the extent to which young people - the study sample - adopt new behaviors because of countering misinformation and hate speech.

4- To find out the feasibility of media education in confronting extremist ideology among university youth.

## Previous studies

Quite a few studies were carried out about the importance of media education specially for young people. This section deals with previous studies related to the importance of media education. The concentration will be on the most recent studies as well as those carried out in the Arab societies.

Hajar (2024) conducted a survey study on a sample of young respondents to examine the role of media education to strengthen positive values and modify or change negative values. Findings of the study have shown that most of the respondents believe that media education achieves the building of a healthy human personality, and that media education achieves the awareness of the individual of his rights and duties. It was also found that the integration of media and education contributes to the formation of individuals and democratic societies that are open-minded. Media education also helps to create the good citizen who has good feelings towards the others. The study recommends that attention should be paid to raise awareness about media education.

Another study (Al-Muqaddam, 2023) showed that media literacy is an important strategy for empowerment and protection against fake videos, misinformation and disinformation. Media literacy education can effectively increase resistance to

misleading messages. Similarly, Asmaa Rabea (2023) conducted a study on exposure of young people to social networking sites and its relationship with their media awareness. The results showed a correlation between the degree of knowledge and awareness of youth of media literacy and their dealing with social networking sites in a correct and useful way for them. The study recommended the importance of introducing students to the ethics of dealing with social networking sites and observing the rules of electronic publishing through training courses within universities and through acquiring media education skills to increase students' media awareness. Abdul Jalil (2023) in his study aimed at identifying the role of social media in shaping religious concepts among university youth in the United Arab Emirates, found that university students use social media on a daily basis and that there is also a correlation between exposure to social media and the formation of religious concepts. This correlation necessitates the need to raise awareness and educate young people about the media. Similarly, results of Asmaa Ahmed's study (2023) on a sample of young people from Egypt showed that there are security risks from exposure to social media on young people, the most important of which are the spread of the phenomenon of cyberbullying, the spread of rumors and false news, and the increase in cyber extortion crimes. The most prominent security awareness mechanisms to reduce these risks were the publication of penalties that were used to deter any misuse of social media. The study recommended the necessity of media awareness to reduce the security risks resulting from the misuse of social media.

Khalid Al-Omari et al (2021) conducted a study which aimed at revealing the degree of availability of media education skills of female students of practical education, specifically classroom teachers at Yarmouk University (Jordan). The study relied on the questionnaire as a tool to collect data from a purposive sample of (115) students. The results of the study indicated that the degree of students' possession of media

education skills was moderate. The study recommended the need to propose a national plan for media education that includes Jordanian universities and schools.

Eman Al-Sayed (2020) conducted a study on a sample of (200) individuals from the academic elite in the faculties of media faculties in Egyptian public and private universities. Results have shown that the best way to teach media education to students is 'workshops', 'discussion and dialogue', 'exchange of views between students and the teacher', and 'actual experience through the production of media materials in which students participate'. 'Lectures delivered by the teacher to students' came last. The results also indicated that the most common risks perceived by the academic elite for students' unconscious engagement with the media includes stimulation of sexual instincts, stimulation of aggressive tendencies, isolation of students from social issues, academic delays, and the destruction of social and religious values.

Gezmen et al (2020) in their study aimed at identifying the impact of digital media education on the ability of university students to critically analyze media messages, understand fiction, and develop awareness of media literacy. The study adopted a qualitative approach using focus group discussions as a tool to collect data from a sample consisting of two groups of 19–22-year-old female and male students of Midpol University in Istanbul. One group of whom studied a course in media education and the other did not study this course. The study found that the group that studied media education were more able to understand, analyze and evaluate media messages and their contents than the other group that did not study the course in media education. Those results match results of another study (Amira, 2019) which aims to assess the impact of media education on the level of analytical skills of university students for new media, their ability to criticize, analyze and evaluate the meaning and purpose of circulating media messages. The study also examines the level of media education skills among university youth. Results of the

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study confirmed that media education is an important factor in building strategies for reacting to media messages through the ability to choose in exposure and then think critically about the content, and not to deal with this content in a passive recipient manner. It was also found that the level of knowledge among the sampled students was moderate.

In the study of Sahar Umm Al-Ratum (2016) on the role of media education in confronting unconscious violence against women with a review of the topic of media education and its importance in confronting unconscious symbolic violence practiced by young people against women through various social networks, found that there is a lack of awareness among social network users and that their posts and virtual interactions would generate symbolic violence against women. The study recommended the need to adopt and equip youth with media education skills and methods to create a new generation capable of dealing with media as receivers and producers at the same time, “prosumers” (Tayie, 2012).

Scharrer and Ramasubramanian (2015) carried out a study on the role of media education in research on the possibilities of teaching media education to intervene in the media's influence on racial and ethnic stereotypes. The study explores the theoretical concepts that underlie attempts to influence. Findings of the analysis have shown that the quantitative research describes the impact of media education in reducing racial/ethnic treatment. The study concluded that media education can shape knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Park's study (2017) on online activities of Korean adolescent and media education aimed to find the link between media education, media and youth perception of social capital. The results revealed that individual interaction on the internet is higher for adolescents who frequently participated in online activities and had a greater amount of digital media knowledge. This emphasizes the importance of having media education skills specially for young people. This aligns with what Willinsky (2024) and Aziz (2017) indicated that media education

is important in awareness of media contents and in enhancing the capabilities of university students to understand and analyze what they present (Couldry, 2015). According to Karim Belkasi (2017), when facing the local or foreign media materials coming from the East or West, this situation “is not to be faced by isolating and isolating the media, ignoring the technological advancement, deaf ears and blocking the eyes of social media sites and their carriers from smart phones and tablets”. From the perspective that “they are all evil, or hiding behind fortifications and walls, the only way to survive is through positive interaction, media awareness and critical thinking emphasized by media education. In the same direction, Daif (2018) in her study pointed out that the individual is free in what he publishes and circulates through the social networks. Awareness and the acquisition of media education skills to deal with the media is very crucial. This matter requires the individual to be aware, to influence and not be negatively affected by this use. This simply represents the goal of media education, which is what necessitated the orientation towards media education that considers the issue of cultural and social difference, in societies that have fragmented their specificities and cultural references.

**From review of previous studies, one may conclude the following:**

- Findings of previous studies have shown that media education is becoming very important for youth and people in general.
- Findings of all previous studies have shown that acquiring media education skills is very important for all people especially for youth who often use social media more than others.
- Critical thinking which is the basis of media education skills is represented by an analytical understanding of the technical and aesthetic components of media content, and an understanding of the structure of media organizations and their economic and social background.



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- Studies have also emphasized the importance of exposing the public to media education to create a generation capable of differentiating between truth and misinformation in media content.
  - Previous studies also urged that media education should not be linked to any specific political or ideological agenda. Media education is a goal, and always seeks to develop critical thinking skills when analyzing media content.
  - The studies urged the need for students to acquire media education skills in the era of communication technology.
  - Media education has become a necessity to better meet the challenges of the information revolution.
  - Finally, it was noticed that most of the studies are concerned with youth who are the most affected audience by media contents. It was also observed that most of the previous studies relied on the qualitative techniques such as the in-depth interview and focus group discussions.

## **Theoretical framework**

As a theoretical framework, the study relied on Media Literacy Theory (Potter, 2022; 2010; 2004). According to Potter media literacy, is an essential element of our time. It enables individuals to better understand the world around them, interact with others more effectively, and build more just and equal societies. Media literacy empowers individuals by helping them make informed decisions, resist media manipulation, protect themselves from misinformation, and promote democracy. Media literacy contributes to building democratic societies by encouraging free dialogue and debate and helps individuals understand and appreciate other cultures, thereby promoting social cohesion. The basic assumption of James Potter's media literacy theory is that audiences are not just passive recipients of information provided by the media but are active participants in the process of meaning production and identity formation. In



other words, Potter argues that the audience is not a passive audience that is directly influenced by the media, but an active audience that interacts with media content in a variety of ways, interpreting and evaluating it based on their cultural, social and cognitive backgrounds. (Potter, 2022, p.29). In short, it can be said that the basic assumption of Potter's theory is that the relationship between media and audience is a dynamic interactive relationship, and that the audience is an active partner in the process of constructing meaning and shaping public opinion. According to Potter, media literacy is based on:

- Critical understanding of media content. This includes the ability to analyze and decode media messages, assess their validity and objectivity, and identify advertising techniques and subliminal influences.

- The ability to evaluate information logically and skeptically, distinguish between facts and opinions, and avoid bias. Media literacy is not limited to consumption, but includes the ability to produce media content, whether through sharing content on social media or producing original content.

- Encouragement of individuals to participate in public debates on media issues, express their opinions, and interact with others.

- Awareness of the social and cultural impacts of media and understanding how media influences society, values and ethics, and how it can be used for social change. (Carlsson et al., 2013, p.25).

## **The study questions**

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the habits of media use of Egyptian youth?
- 2) What are the levels of awareness of youth of media education?

- 3) What is their understanding of the role that media education play in combating misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.
- 4) What are the types and patterns of university youth's use of media education to counter fake news and hate speech?
- 5) What is the impact of media education on young people's selective access to information sources?
- 6) What do they propose to counter misinformation on media?

## Methodology

The present study is a qualitative study which relies on two qualitative techniques, i.e. in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions. In-depth interviews were conducted on a purposive sample of 8 experts, media professionals and educationalists. Some of these interviews were carried out on a face-face basis or through phone calls. Focus group discussions is one of the most prominent methods of qualitative research where the researcher conducts the interview with a focused group of respondents ranging from 6-12 individuals. According to this method, the group members discuss the topic of the study with the help of a moderator who guides the group in a free discussion (Tayie, 2017, p. 204). Focus group discussions were carried out on a purposive sample of fourteen groups of university youth in the age range of 18-22 years old. The respondents were males and females selected from an Egyptian public university (Cairo University), a private university (Misr International University), and an international university (the American University in Cairo). Each focus group discussion lasted on average for 45 minutes and the seating was arranged in a circular or rectangular manner according to the comfort of the participants. All discussions took place in the building of each university or through online interviews using the “Zoon Link”. All in-depth interviews and focus-group discussions were carried out during the months of February and March 2024 and were audio-recorded after obtaining the consent of the participants. Upon completion

of data collection, the interviews and discussions were transcribed and then analyzed.

## Findings and discussion

Findings of the **in-depth interviews** have shown that the interviewed experts agreed on the importance of integrating media literacy education at universities and schools. They have also indicated that there is a need for having awareness programs for parents about their children's use of digital media and the risks they may be exposed to and ways to deal with them. All the interviewees agreed that media messages are largely full of misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. They also stressed that the digital media are becoming platform flooded with hate speech, misleading information. Bullying, infringing on the freedom of others, or other issues and challenges were among the important issues on digital media. Most of the interviewees have also agreed that the Western media embodies the policy of Sarkozy, Macron, George Bush and Trump in showing hatred against the other, which is, in most cases, Arabs and Muslims who are still portrayed in a negative way in most of the western media. All interviewees agreed that there are urgent and necessary requirements for people in general and youth in particular to deal digitally with technological means in the digital age so that they can preserve their identity, security and privacy. The most important of these requirements is digital media literacy so that people and youth can deal with digital media safely, and through it they can preserve their privacy. Some interviewees also called for media to sponsor some awareness programs about the healthy use of media for both youth and people in general.

Dealing with findings of the **focus-group discussions**, they were categorized into 4 main sections, i.e. students' use of media in general, awareness about media education among university students, awareness about misleading information and combating it, and finally students' suggestions to raise awareness about media education skills.

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Findings will be dealt with, in detail, in the following pages.

### **Habits of media use**

Findings have shown that all the students rely on digital media as their main sources of information. Newspapers and other traditional media were hardly mentioned. Television was mentioned only by 4 students (females) from Cairo University. They indicated that they like watching some serials and soap operas on television. The reasons for heavily using the digital media according to the students, was mainly the convenience of accessing their digital media devices easily. When asked about their media use and the habits of media use, findings have shown that they have all the freedom in their use of media. The most used mentioned medium was the mobile phone. Nearly all students mentioned that they have the-state-of-the-art smart phone, mainly iPhones. Surprisingly, some of the students mentioned that they have more than one mobile number (they were students from the private university and the international university). When asked why they have more than one number, it was mentioned that it was for the sake of privacy. The subscription to the mobile phones, are mainly paid by the parents. Students from Cairo University, which is a public university were, to some extent, reasonable with their habits of use. Some of them (mainly girls) indicated that they were mainly using mobile phone to be on contact with their families and for any emergency circumstances and all of them (Cairo University students) have only one mobile number. Most of the other students mentioned that they use their mobile to be in contact with their friends and for entertainment.

Facebook was mentioned by nearly all students as the most used social media. WhatsApp was also a commonly used application by all students, mainly to chat with their friends. Findings have also shown that the gender variable plays a role in student's media use preferences. Boys and girls differed in their use of digital media, as the discussions showed that girls prefer

entertainment and comedy videos on TikTok and YouTube, while boys prefer games on WhatsApp, TikTok and Instagram. It was also found that TikTok was popular among girls and boys.

When asked about any parents' interference in their use of mobile or the internet or any social media use, the answers were mainly negative. "Our parents never interfere with what we do with our mobile phones" as mentioned by most students. This lack of interference of course led to the unlimited use, mainly of the mobile phones and here lies the danger of media misuse. When asked about the discussion with their parents and other family members of what they are exposed to, the answer was No for student from the private and international universities. Some girls from Cairo university mentioned that they like to discuss what they are exposed to with their mothers and fathers who encourage them to do so. It was also clear from the discussion that the respondents who practice any kind of activities such as sports or others use digital media less than others. It was also clear that the use of the digital media has changed the lifestyle of these young people. They spend most of their time in the virtual world chatting to their colleagues and exposing themselves to other digital contents.

### **Awareness about "media education"**

Some students in some groups started by asking whether media education is concerned with the audience or the media itself. The meaning and objectives of media education were explained to them in all sessions of discussions. Findings of the focus-group discussions have shown that there is a lack of awareness of digital literacy among most of the students. At the same time, and by contrast, their knowledge about the basics of using the digital media was great. Findings from the discussions have also shown that the students also have low knowledge about the dangers of technology and the negatives which it may have on them and their behavior in real life. Some students (Cairo University/American University) have indicated that they know about media education and its importance as they have studied

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about it in their academic disciplines. Only students who have media education as part of their academic curriculum were aware of its conception, for other students, the term “media education” was vague.

### **Awareness about the misleading information and dealing with it**

When the respondents were asked about their understanding and knowledge of “misinformation and disinformation”, it was clear that the students have little ideas about these concepts. At the same time, some of them indicated that they have trust on digital media more than the traditional media and that they consider digital media as their main sources of information. Here lies the danger. However, the students who have some courses and knowledge about media education were more careful indicating that they question whatever they watch on digital media. And when asked how, they indicated that they check with other sources of digital media, family members and friends. According to the students’ images about the others, Spanish, Greek and Italians have very positive images among the sampled students. The most negative images were about the USA and Israel. That is, of course, because of the “Israeli aggression on Gaza and abuse of human rights of the Palestinians in Gaza and Western Bank”. The USA is supporting Israel for this “unhuman aggression of killing of innocents women and children”, they added.

### **Suggestions of students to raise awareness about media education**

When students were asked about how to counter the misleading information which they are exposed to, some students indicated that they suggest some kind of ‘interventions’ of certain organizations. Some also suggested that governmental organizations should take legal action against creators of these misleading information, especially hate speech against religion. They also indicated that there is a need to raise awareness among

people in general and youth in particular about the kind of misleading information. They also mentioned that there is a need to raise awareness about media education through new media or television through effective visual aids (animations and videos). In the end, it was clear that the students agreed, especially those with no knowledge about media education, that it is important to understand more about media education.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

It was clear from findings of the study that awareness about media education among Egyptian youth is still not enough and needs to be increased. At the same time, there is a real need to introduce a course of media literacy education, not only for media students but for all students in the university. That was an important recommendation of the interviewed experts and media professionals. This course could be introduced as a university requirement and a cross-cutting course for students from different academic disciplines. At the same time, the family has a role to play in this respect. Parents should encourage their children to discuss with them whatever they are exposed too in digital media. It is also advisable that parents may share their children's exposure to media. In other words, parents should not leave their children in the 'virtual world', they should exert some efforts to bring them to the real world. For instance, parents need to provide alternatives to fill their children's free time, in accordance with their inclinations, hobbies and passions, and guide them to use digital media to develop these talents and learn new information about them. Parents may also encourage their children to develop their digital literacy to ensure the safe coexistence of children considering the effects of digital media and the challenges of the knowledge society.

Media education is not only a defense project that aims to protect, but also an empowerment project that aims to prepare members of the public to understand and analyze media messages and contents that surround them. Media education empowers youth and people in general to select and choose from media



messages, to learn how to deal with them, and to participate in it in an effective and influential manner. Media education is also about creating an audience who can be producers as well as consumers. Media education is the most important license that can drive us in the digital world. Media education skills have become essential skills for individuals of all ages. UNESCO has recognized the importance of media education: ‘We must prepare young people to live in a world of power, image, sound and word’ (Grizzle, 2016). This indicates that the media has an influential authority on values, beliefs, attitudes and practices in various aspects, economically, socially and culturally. Thus, the need for media education emerged and became an urgent requirement for the development of conscious, responsible and effective citizenship and active participation in making the national presence because it contains a set of skills such as critical, creative and scientific thinking, which enables the recipient to build independent judgements about media contents and their production (Jastremski, 2020, pp.232-236). It is difficult to counter disinformation and hate speech in all forms of media, especially social media, but with some awareness, it is possible to verify the authenticity of news by searching for more than one source of news and educating the public on these methods to prevent the spread of disinformation.

Media organization also have a role to play. Media professionals and digital media influencers should be held responsible for any misleading information which may not align with the culture of society. At the same time, it is recommended that media organizations may set some ethics and codes of conduct for all media professionals to abide by. It is also recommended to make links between news organization and the university.

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