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**Digital Literacy and Media Consumption among
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Digital Literacy and Media Consumption among Different Age Groups

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Abstract

Purpose: The general objective of the study was to investigate digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups. The study found significant disparities in digital literacy levels that affected media consumption behaviors. Younger generations, with higher digital literacy, preferred dynamic, interactive digital media, while older adults relied more on traditional media due to lower digital literacy and difficulties navigating digital platforms. Socio-economic status, educational background, and access to technology influenced these disparities. The study emphasized the need for targeted digital literacy initiatives to bridge this divide and promote inclusive media consumption, ensuring all age groups could benefit from digital resources.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Theory of Diffusion of Innovations, Uses and Gratification Theory and Media Richness Theory may be used to anchor future studies on digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups. The study recommended targeted educational programs to address varying digital literacy levels, suggesting advanced digital skills training for younger generations and user-friendly basic skills training for older adults. It contributed to theory by emphasizing the role of age in digital literacy research and urged the expansion of theoretical frameworks to include socio-economic and educational influences. Practically, it called for age-appropriate digital content and school curricula integration, while policy recommendations included investing in digital infrastructure, supporting public digital literacy programs, and addressing digital privacy and cybersecurity issues to foster an inclusive digital environment.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Media Consumption, Age Groups, Educational Programs, Digital Divide*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Media consumption has undergone significant changes in recent years, driven by technological advancements and shifts in cultural dynamics. In the United States, media consumption has evolved dramatically with the rise of digital media. According to the Pew Research Center, as of 2021, 93% of American adults use the internet, and 85% own a smartphone, illustrating the deep penetration of digital technology in everyday life (Pew Research Center, 2021). Traditional media, such as television, radio, and print newspapers, have seen declines in usage as more consumers turn to digital platforms for news, entertainment, and social interaction. Streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Disney+ have seen substantial growth, with Netflix alone boasting over 74 million subscribers in the United States as of Q4 2020 (Netflix, 2021). This shift reflects a broader trend towards on-demand, personalized media consumption, which has profound implications for content creators, advertisers, and policymakers alike.

In the United Kingdom, media consumption patterns mirror those in the United States, with a strong shift towards digital platforms. Ofcom's 2020 Media Nations report highlights that UK adults spent an average of 3 hours and 37 minutes per day watching TV and online video content in 2019, a figure that increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ofcom, 2020). Social media usage is also prominent, with 72% of UK adults using social networking sites, with Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram being the most popular platforms (Ofcom, 2020). The rise of digital media has affected traditional media consumption, with a notable decline in newspaper readership and radio listenership. The digital transformation in the UK media landscape underscores the growing importance of digital literacy and the need for robust regulatory frameworks to address issues such as misinformation and digital privacy.

In Japan, media consumption is characterized by a unique blend of traditional and digital media. Television remains a dominant medium, with over 90% of Japanese households owning a TV and daily viewership rates remaining high (Statista, 2020). However, there is a noticeable increase in digital media consumption, particularly among younger demographics. A survey by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in 2020 indicated that 70% of Japanese internet users access social media platforms, with LINE, Twitter, and Instagram being the most popular (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2020). Additionally, the Japanese market has seen significant growth in streaming services, with platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime gaining traction. The interplay between traditional and digital media in Japan highlights the adaptability of media consumption habits in the face of technological advancements.

In Brazil, media consumption trends reflect the country's diverse socio-economic landscape. The 2020 Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism reveals that 73% of Brazilians access news online, with social media being a primary source (Reuters Institute, 2020). Television remains highly influential, with 85% of Brazilians watching TV on a weekly basis (Reuters Institute, 2020). However, digital media is rapidly gaining ground, particularly among younger audiences who prefer streaming services and online video content. WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube are the most popular digital platforms, used extensively for news, entertainment, and communication. The rise of digital media in Brazil highlights the potential for greater democratization of information but also underscores the challenges of addressing digital divides and ensuring media literacy across diverse populations.

In many African countries, media consumption is shaped by rapid digitalization and mobile phone penetration. According to a 2021 report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), mobile phone subscriptions in Africa have grown exponentially, with over 477 million internet users on the continent (ITU, 2021). Social media platforms, particularly Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, are

widely used for communication, news, and entertainment. Traditional media such as radio remains crucial, especially in rural areas where internet access may be limited. A study by Balancing Act in 2019 found that 72% of urban Africans use social media daily, while 65% listen to the radio (Balancing Act, 2019). The convergence of traditional and digital media in Africa presents opportunities for enhanced information dissemination but also poses challenges related to digital literacy and infrastructure development. Media consumption trends in these regions underscore the global shift towards digital platforms while highlighting regional variations influenced by cultural, economic, and technological factors. In the United States and the United Kingdom, high levels of internet penetration and smartphone usage drive the dominance of digital media. In contrast, Japan's media landscape reflects a balance between traditional and digital media, while Brazil showcases the rapid adoption of digital platforms amid significant socio-economic diversity. In African countries, mobile technology plays a pivotal role in media consumption, bridging gaps in traditional media access.

These trends have profound implications for content creators, advertisers, and policymakers. In the United States and the United Kingdom, the decline in traditional media necessitates a reevaluation of advertising strategies and content delivery methods. Digital platforms offer targeted advertising opportunities but also raise concerns about data privacy and the spread of misinformation. In Japan, the coexistence of traditional and digital media requires a nuanced approach to content creation and distribution, catering to diverse audience preferences (Anderson & Perrin, 2017). In Brazil, the rapid growth of digital media presents opportunities for innovative content delivery but also highlights the need for policies addressing digital inclusion and media literacy. In African countries, the widespread use of mobile technology offers unique opportunities for media outreach and education, though challenges related to digital infrastructure and literacy remain. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for stakeholders aiming to navigate the evolving media landscape. Media companies must adapt to changing consumption habits by leveraging digital platforms and creating engaging, accessible content. Advertisers need to develop strategies that effectively target digital audiences while addressing privacy concerns. Policymakers must ensure that regulatory frameworks keep pace with technological advancements, promoting digital literacy and safeguarding against the risks of misinformation and data breaches. By addressing these challenges and opportunities, stakeholders can harness the potential of digital media to enhance communication, education, and entertainment globally (Balancing Act., 2019)

The evolution of media consumption also underscores the importance of digital literacy. As individuals increasingly rely on digital platforms for information and entertainment, the ability to critically evaluate digital content becomes essential. Educational initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy can empower individuals to navigate the digital landscape effectively, discerning credible information from misinformation. This is particularly relevant in regions like Brazil and African countries, where rapid digitalization presents both opportunities and challenges for information dissemination and consumption. The global shift towards digital media consumption reflects broader socio-economic and technological trends. As digital platforms continue to evolve, media consumption habits will likely become more personalized and on-demand. Understanding these trends and their implications is essential for creating effective media strategies that cater to diverse audience needs and preferences. By embracing digital transformation and promoting digital literacy, stakeholders can enhance media accessibility and engagement, fostering a more informed and connected global community (Smith & Anderson, 2018).

Digital literacy, defined as the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and create information using a range of digital technologies, is essential in today's media-saturated world. It encompasses skills such as understanding digital platforms, utilizing search engines, discerning

credible information from misinformation, and creating digital content. The level of digital literacy varies significantly across different age groups, influencing media consumption patterns and preferences. As digital technologies continue to evolve, understanding these differences is crucial for educators, policymakers, and media producers aiming to address the digital divide and promote inclusive digital literacy (Hargittai & Dobransky, 2017). Among younger generations, particularly millennials (born 1981-1996) and Generation Z (born 1997-2012), digital literacy is generally high. These age groups have grown up with the internet and are often referred to as "digital natives." They are proficient in using various digital devices, social media platforms, and online resources. A study by Smith and Anderson (2018) found that 95% of teenagers in the United States have access to a smartphone, and 45% are online almost constantly. This high level of digital engagement translates into diverse media consumption habits, with streaming services, social media, and user-generated content platforms like YouTube being particularly popular (Smith & Anderson, 2018).

In contrast, Generation X (born 1965-1980) displays a mix of traditional and digital media consumption patterns. While this cohort did not grow up with the internet, many have adapted to digital technologies in their professional and personal lives. Research by Perrin (2019) indicates that 85% of Generation X use the internet, and social media usage is prevalent, with Facebook being the most popular platform. However, they also maintain a strong connection to traditional media such as television and radio. This dual consumption pattern highlights the transitional nature of Generation X's digital literacy, bridging the gap between analog and digital media (Perrin, 2019). -Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) exhibit lower levels of digital literacy compared to younger generations, but their engagement with digital media is steadily increasing. According to a report by the Pew Research Center, 73% of Baby Boomers use the internet, and 59% own a smartphone (Vogels, 2019). While they tend to rely more on traditional media, such as television and print newspapers, there is a growing trend towards digital consumption, particularly in the context of social media and online news. This shift underscores the need for targeted digital literacy initiatives to support Baby Boomers in navigating the digital landscape (Vogels, 2019).

The Silent Generation (born 1928-1945) has the lowest levels of digital literacy among the age groups discussed. Many in this cohort are not comfortable using digital devices or navigating the internet. A study by Anderson and Perrin (2017) found that only 40% of those aged 74 and older use the internet, and just 17% own a smartphone. Their media consumption remains predominantly traditional, with television, radio, and print media being the primary sources of information and entertainment. Addressing the digital literacy needs of the Silent Generation is crucial to ensure they are not excluded from the benefits of digital media (Anderson & Perrin, 2017). The differences in digital literacy across age groups have significant implications for media consumption. For instance, younger generations' proficiency in digital technologies facilitates their engagement with a wide range of online content, from streaming services and social media to podcasts and e-books. This diverse consumption pattern is driven by their ability to navigate multiple platforms and evaluate digital content effectively. In contrast, older generations may face challenges in accessing and utilizing digital media due to lower digital literacy levels, impacting their media consumption habits and preferences (Helsper & Eynon, 2013).

Moreover, the varying levels of digital literacy influence how different age groups perceive and interact with digital content. Younger individuals are more likely to engage in content creation, sharing, and interactive media, reflecting their comfort with digital tools and platforms. They are also more adept at identifying and mitigating misinformation, thanks to higher digital literacy skills. Conversely, older adults may struggle with discerning credible information online, making them more vulnerable to digital misinformation and less likely to participate in content creation and sharing

(Livingstone, Mascheroni & Staksrud, 2017). Educational initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy are essential to bridging the digital divide and promoting equitable media consumption. For younger generations, education can focus on refining critical digital skills, such as media literacy and cybersecurity awareness. For older adults, tailored programs that address specific challenges, such as basic digital navigation and online safety, can significantly improve their digital literacy levels. These initiatives not only enhance media consumption experiences but also empower individuals to participate more fully in the digital society (Hargittai & Hsieh, 2012).

The role of policymakers in promoting digital literacy across age groups cannot be overstated. Policies that support digital inclusion, such as providing access to affordable internet and digital devices, are crucial for ensuring that all individuals, regardless of age, can benefit from digital media. Additionally, regulatory frameworks that address digital privacy and combat misinformation are essential for creating a safe and trustworthy digital environment. By fostering digital literacy through policy interventions, governments can help bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive media consumption (Park, 2012). Digital literacy is a critical factor influencing media consumption patterns across different age groups. Younger generations, with their high levels of digital literacy, exhibit diverse and interactive media consumption habits. In contrast, older adults, with varying degrees of digital proficiency, often rely more on traditional media but are increasingly engaging with digital platforms. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators, policymakers, and media producers aiming to promote digital inclusion and equitable access to media. By enhancing digital literacy across all age groups, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to navigate the digital landscape effectively and enjoy the benefits of the digital age (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2014).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has revolutionized media consumption patterns across the globe, creating significant disparities in digital literacy among different age groups. While younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, are often considered "digital natives" due to their high proficiency with digital tools and platforms, older generations, including Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation, frequently face challenges in navigating the digital landscape. According to the Pew Research Center, 93% of Millennials in the United States own smartphones and 86% use social media, compared to only 57% of Baby Boomers who own smartphones and 29% who use social media (Pew Research Center, 2021). These statistics underscore a substantial digital divide, which affects not only access to information but also the quality of media consumption. This study seeks to explore the extent and impact of these disparities in digital literacy on media consumption habits across different age groups. Despite existing research on digital literacy and media consumption, significant gaps remain in understanding how these elements interact and influence one another among different age cohorts. Previous studies have primarily focused on either digital literacy or media consumption in isolation, without thoroughly examining the intersection of these two factors across varying age demographics. Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive data on how differences in digital literacy affect the ability to critically evaluate digital content, navigate misinformation, and participate in digital media creation. By addressing these research gaps, this study aims to provide a holistic understanding of how digital literacy levels influence media consumption patterns and the implications for digital inclusion and information equity (Hargittai & Dobransky, 2017). The findings from this study will benefit a diverse range of stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and media producers. Educators can leverage insights to develop targeted digital literacy programs that address the specific needs of different age groups, thereby enhancing digital competence and critical thinking skills. Policymakers can use the study's findings to design and implement inclusive digital policies that promote equitable access to digital technologies and safeguard against digital divides. Media producers will gain a deeper

understanding of the media consumption preferences of various age demographics, enabling them to create content that is both accessible and engaging. Overall, this study will contribute to fostering a more inclusive digital environment where individuals across all age groups can effectively engage with and benefit from digital media (Livingstone et al., 2017).

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Theory of Diffusion of Innovations

The Theory of Diffusion of Innovations, originated by Everett Rogers in 1962, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how new ideas, technologies, and practices spread within a society. This theory posits that the adoption of innovations follows a predictable pattern over time and across social systems, characterized by categories such as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards (Rogers, 2003). The theory highlights the role of communication channels, social systems, time, and the attributes of the innovation itself in influencing the adoption process. In the context of digital literacy and media consumption, this theory is highly relevant as it can help explain the varying rates at which different age groups adopt and integrate digital technologies into their daily lives. Younger generations, often acting as innovators and early adopters, tend to embrace new digital tools and platforms rapidly, while older generations may fall into the categories of the late majority or laggards, demonstrating slower adoption rates. By applying the Theory of Diffusion of Innovations, researchers can explore the factors that facilitate or hinder digital literacy across different age demographics and identify strategies to bridge the digital divide (Rogers, 2003).

2.1.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s, focuses on why and how individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy various needs. This theory shifts the perspective from the traditional view of media effects to understanding the audience as active participants who select media based on their personal motivations and gratifications (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). The core premise of this theory is that media consumption is goal-oriented, driven by needs such as information, personal identity, integration, social interaction, and entertainment. In the study of digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups, the Uses and Gratifications Theory is pertinent as it provides insight into the diverse reasons why various age cohorts engage with digital media. For instance, younger individuals might prioritize social interaction and entertainment through social media and streaming services, while older adults might seek information and integration via online news platforms. By understanding these underlying motivations, researchers can better comprehend the relationship between digital literacy levels and media consumption patterns across different age groups, thereby tailoring digital literacy programs to meet specific needs (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973).

2.1.3 Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory, proposed by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986, addresses the effectiveness of communication media in transmitting information and reducing uncertainty. The theory posits that different communication media possess varying degrees of richness, defined by their ability to convey multiple cues, provide immediate feedback, support personalization, and utilize natural language (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Richer media, such as face-to-face communication and video conferencing, are more effective in handling complex and ambiguous tasks, while leaner media, such as emails and text messages, are suited for straightforward, routine communication. In the context of digital literacy and media consumption, Media Richness Theory is relevant as it helps elucidate the preferences of different age groups for various types of digital media. Younger generations, who are

generally more digitally literate, may gravitate towards richer media platforms like social media and video streaming that offer dynamic, interactive experiences. Conversely, older adults with lower digital literacy might prefer leaner media that are simpler to use and understand. Applying this theory allows researchers to analyze how digital literacy influences the choice of media richness and the effectiveness of media consumption among different age demographics (Daft & Lengel, 1986).

2.2 Empirical Review

Hargittai & Dobransky (2017) investigated the digital literacy skills among older adults and how these skills impact their media consumption patterns. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted surveys and in-depth interviews with 200 participants aged 65 and older. The survey assessed basic digital literacy skills, while the interviews explored participants' media consumption habits and challenges. The study found that older adults generally exhibited low digital literacy levels, which significantly affected their media consumption. Many participants relied heavily on traditional media, such as television and print newspapers, due to difficulties navigating digital platforms. However, those with higher digital literacy skills were more likely to consume news online and use social media for information and entertainment. The researchers recommended targeted digital literacy training programs for older adults to bridge the digital divide. These programs should focus on basic digital skills, such as using search engines, navigating social media, and evaluating online information.

Helsper & Eynon (2013) explored the digital literacy skills of different age groups in the UK and how these skills influence their media consumption behaviors. The researchers used a nationally representative survey of 2,000 UK residents aged 16-75. The survey measured digital literacy skills, including the ability to find, evaluate, and create digital content, and assessed participants' media consumption patterns across various platforms. The study revealed significant age-related differences in digital literacy. Younger age groups (16-34) demonstrated higher digital literacy levels and a preference for consuming media through digital platforms, such as streaming services and social media. Older age groups (55-75) exhibited lower digital literacy levels and were more inclined to consume traditional media, such as television and print newspapers. The study recommended the implementation of age-specific digital literacy initiatives to enhance media consumption experiences across all age groups. These initiatives should focus on improving critical digital skills and promoting the safe and effective use of digital media.

Livingstone, Mascheroni & Staksrud (2017) assessed the digital literacy levels of children and adolescents across Europe and the impact of these levels on their media consumption habits. The study utilized a large-scale survey involving 25,000 children and adolescents aged 9-16 from 25 European countries. The survey measured digital literacy skills, including information retrieval, online safety, and content creation, and examined the participants' media consumption patterns. The study found that digital literacy skills varied significantly across countries and age groups. Higher digital literacy was associated with greater use of digital media for education and entertainment. Conversely, lower digital literacy levels correlated with higher exposure to online risks and a preference for traditional media. The researchers suggested enhancing digital literacy education in schools, focusing on critical thinking, online safety, and responsible media consumption. They also recommended cross-country collaborations to share best practices and resources.

van Deursen & van Dijk (2014) explored how digital skills influence internet usage patterns among different age groups in the Netherlands. The researchers conducted a survey of 1,500 Dutch residents aged 18-80, measuring their digital skills and internet usage. Digital skills were assessed in areas such as operational, formal, informational, and strategic skills. The study found that younger age groups (18-35) exhibited higher levels of digital skills and used the internet more frequently for diverse activities, including social networking, online shopping, and information seeking. Older age groups

(65-80) had lower digital skills and used the internet primarily for basic activities, such as email and information retrieval. The study recommended tailored digital literacy programs that address the specific needs of different age groups, with a focus on enhancing advanced digital skills for older adults to expand their internet usage beyond basic activities.

Anderson & Perrin (2017) investigated the technology adoption and media consumption habits of older adults in the United States.: A combination of surveys and qualitative interviews was used to gather data from 3,000 participants aged 65 and older. The surveys measured technology adoption, digital literacy, and media consumption patterns, while the interviews provided deeper insights into the challenges and motivations behind these behaviors. The research indicated that technology adoption among older adults was increasing, but digital literacy remained a significant barrier to more diverse media consumption. Many older adults preferred traditional media formats due to difficulties with digital interfaces and concerns about online safety and privacy. The study highlighted the need for user-friendly digital devices and platforms tailored to older adults. It also recommended community-based digital literacy programs that offer hands-on training and support to build confidence and skills in using digital media.

Smith & Anderson (2018) examined social media usage and digital literacy among teenagers in the United States. The researchers conducted a national survey of 1,000 teenagers aged 13-17, assessing their social media usage, digital literacy skills, and the impact of these factors on their media consumption habits. The study found that nearly all teenagers were engaged with social media platforms, with Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube being the most popular. High digital literacy levels among teenagers enabled them to navigate multiple platforms seamlessly and create content. However, the study also highlighted concerns about digital distractions and the impact of social media on mental health. The researchers recommended integrating digital literacy education into school curricula, focusing on critical thinking, content creation, and managing digital well-being. They also suggested parental guidance and monitoring to help teenagers develop healthy media consumption habits.

Park (2012) explored the relationship between digital literacy and attitudes towards digital advertising among different age groups in South Korea. A survey of 1,200 South Korean residents aged 18-65 was conducted, measuring their digital literacy levels, media consumption habits, and attitudes towards digital advertising. The study found that higher digital literacy levels were associated with more positive attitudes towards digital advertising and greater engagement with digital media. Younger participants (18-35) demonstrated higher digital literacy and were more receptive to digital advertising compared to older participants (50-65), who had lower digital literacy and were more skeptical of digital ads. The study recommended targeted digital literacy initiatives to improve understanding and trust in digital advertising, especially among older adults. It also suggested that advertisers create more transparent and user-friendly ad formats to enhance engagement across different age groups.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

4.0 FINDINGS

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Park (2012)

explored the relationship between digital literacy and attitudes towards digital advertising among different age groups in South Korea. A survey of 1,200 South Korean residents aged 18-65 was conducted, measuring their digital literacy levels, media consumption habits, and attitudes towards digital advertising. The study found that higher digital literacy levels were associated with more positive attitudes towards digital advertising and greater engagement with digital media. Younger participants (18-35) demonstrated higher digital literacy and were more receptive to digital advertising compared to older participants (50-65), who had lower digital literacy and were more skeptical of digital ads. The study recommended targeted digital literacy initiatives to improve understanding and trust in digital advertising, especially among older adults. It also suggested that advertisers create more transparent and user-friendly ad formats to enhance engagement across different age groups. On the other hand, the current study focused on exploring digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, in their study on exploring the relationship between digital literacy and attitudes towards digital advertising among different age groups in South Korea; Park (2012) conducted survey of 1,200 South Korean residents aged 18-65 was conducted, measuring their digital literacy levels, media consumption habits, and attitudes towards digital advertising. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study on digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups highlights significant disparities in digital literacy levels that profoundly impact media consumption behaviors. It reveals that younger generations, often labeled as "digital natives," exhibit high digital literacy levels, allowing them to seamlessly navigate various digital platforms and engage with diverse forms of digital media. These age groups are adept at leveraging digital tools for social interaction, entertainment, information retrieval, and content creation, reflecting a robust integration of digital technologies into their daily lives. Their media consumption patterns are characterized by a preference for dynamic, interactive, and on-demand content, predominantly accessed through smartphones, social media, and streaming services. This fluency in digital environments underscores the critical role of digital literacy in shaping contemporary media consumption habits.

In contrast, older generations demonstrate lower digital literacy levels, which significantly constrain their engagement with digital media. Many individuals in these age groups continue to rely heavily on traditional media formats, such as television, radio, and print newspapers, due to challenges in navigating digital platforms and concerns over online safety and privacy. This digital divide underscores the need for targeted digital literacy initiatives aimed at enhancing the digital competence of older adults. Improving their digital literacy skills is essential not only for expanding their media consumption options but also for ensuring their inclusion in the increasingly digitalized world. Addressing these disparities is crucial for promoting equitable access to digital information and reducing the risk of digital exclusion among older populations.

The study further reveals that the disparities in digital literacy across age groups are influenced by various factors, including socio-economic status, educational background, and access to digital technologies. Younger individuals often have greater exposure to digital tools and are more likely to receive formal education on digital skills, contributing to their higher levels of digital literacy. In contrast, older adults may face barriers such as limited access to digital devices, lack of training opportunities, and apprehension towards technology. These findings highlight the importance of creating inclusive digital policies and educational programs that address the specific needs and

challenges of different age demographics. By fostering digital literacy across all age groups, society can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in the digital era.

The study emphasizes the pivotal role of digital literacy in shaping media consumption patterns across different age groups. Younger generations' high digital literacy levels enable them to engage deeply with digital media, while older adults' lower literacy levels limit their digital media engagement. Bridging this digital divide requires concerted efforts from educators, policymakers, and community organizations to provide accessible and tailored digital literacy education. By enhancing digital skills across all age groups, society can promote more inclusive media consumption, ensuring that individuals of all ages can benefit from the vast array of digital resources available. This approach will not only enrich media experiences but also empower individuals to navigate the digital landscape confidently and responsibly.

5.2 Recommendations

The study on digital literacy and media consumption among different age groups provides several key recommendations aimed at enhancing digital literacy and fostering equitable media consumption. To address the varying levels of digital literacy across age demographics, it is essential to develop targeted educational programs tailored to the specific needs of each age group. For younger generations, these programs should focus on refining advanced digital skills, such as critical evaluation of online content, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible digital citizenship. By enhancing these skills, young individuals can become more adept at navigating the complexities of the digital world, fostering a more informed and engaged digital society.

For older adults, the study recommends implementing user-friendly digital literacy training that addresses basic digital skills and builds confidence in using digital technologies. Community centers, libraries, and senior organizations can play a pivotal role in offering hands-on training sessions that cover essential topics such as using smartphones, navigating the internet, managing online privacy, and avoiding digital scams. Providing accessible resources and ongoing support can help older adults overcome technological barriers and integrate digital media into their daily lives, thereby reducing the digital divide and promoting greater inclusion in the digital age.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the understanding of digital literacy by highlighting the dynamic interplay between age, digital skills, and media consumption. It emphasizes the importance of considering age as a significant factor in digital literacy research, urging scholars to explore the nuanced ways in which different age groups engage with digital media. The study also suggests expanding theoretical frameworks to incorporate socio-economic and educational influences on digital literacy. By doing so, researchers can develop more comprehensive models that account for the diverse factors shaping digital engagement and media consumption across various demographics.

In terms of practical applications, the study underscores the need for media producers and educators to create age-appropriate digital content and learning materials. Media producers should consider the digital literacy levels of their target audiences when designing content, ensuring that it is accessible and engaging for users of all ages. For example, interactive tutorials, intuitive user interfaces, and clear instructions can make digital platforms more user-friendly for older adults. Educators, on the other hand, should integrate digital literacy training into school curricula, equipping students with the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively. By fostering digital literacy from a young age, educational institutions can help bridge the digital divide and prepare future generations for a digitally interconnected world.

Policy recommendations from the study emphasize the importance of creating inclusive digital policies that promote equitable access to digital technologies and resources. Governments should invest in

digital infrastructure, ensuring that all communities, particularly underserved and rural areas, have access to high-speed internet and affordable digital devices. Additionally, policies should support the development of public digital literacy programs, providing funding and resources to organizations that offer digital skills training. Regulatory frameworks should also address issues related to digital privacy, cybersecurity, and misinformation, creating a safer and more trustworthy digital environment for users of all ages.

In conclusion, the study's recommendations highlight the critical need for a multifaceted approach to enhancing digital literacy and media consumption across different age groups. By implementing targeted educational programs, creating age-appropriate digital content, and developing inclusive digital policies, society can foster a more inclusive digital landscape where individuals of all ages can benefit from digital media. These efforts will not only bridge the digital divide but also empower individuals to navigate the digital world confidently and responsibly, contributing to a more informed, engaged, and connected global community.

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