

# Media Literacy and Its Role in Countering Misleading Political Propaganda: An Analytical Study

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## Abstract

This study examines the role of media literacy in countering misleading political propaganda within the Syrian context, using a descriptive-analytical approach based on in-depth interviews with experts in media and psychology.

The findings revealed a complex and dynamic relationship between digital media and misleading propaganda, whereby propaganda exploits the speed, reach, and algorithmic nature of digital platforms to enhance its psychological and social impact. The study also found that misleading propaganda relies on advanced mechanisms, including emotional manipulation, repetition, and the exploitation of collective awareness. Furthermore, the study revealed that media literacy programs in Syria remain limited in effectiveness due to weak systematic integration, an excessive focus on theoretical aspects, a shortage of qualified personnel, and a lack of institutional coordination.

The study concluded that media literacy has become a necessity for cognitive security in the age of artificial intelligence and deepfakes, rather than merely an additional skill. The study recommends integrating media literacy into educational curricula from the early stages of education, training teachers, establishing fact-checking units, supporting civil society initiatives, and developing specialized teams that bring together expertise in media, education, and psychology to address the growing digital challenges.

**Keywords:** Media Literacy, Misleading Political Propaganda, Syria, Digital Media, Political Communication.

## Introduction

In the era of digital dominance, the media has gone beyond its traditional function of transmitting information to become a space for producing meaning and shaping beliefs, amid the challenges posed by the information explosion and the blurring of the boundaries between truth, rumors, and systematic propaganda. The significance of this study lies in examining the ability of media literacy to protect societies from the risks of misleading propaganda, particularly in contexts of crises and parallel media wars. In the Syrian context, the problem is further complicated by a fierce media war that accompanied the conflict, in which disinformation tools have been used to deepen divisions. This raises questions about whether young people possess the critical tools necessary to engage consciously with media content. The research problem stems from the extent to which media literacy can serve as a preventive approach to countering misleading propaganda through both digital and traditional media. The study aims to identify the mechanisms involved and assess the current state of media literacy programs in Syria.

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical methodology based on in-depth interviews, within defined temporal (2025) and geographical (Syria) boundaries, with the aim of providing a scientific contribution and practical recommendations for policymakers and institutions to help build an informed generation capable of confronting the challenges of the information disorder.

## Introduction:

### Study Outline

#### First: Research Problem:

In light of the widespread dissemination of organized media disinformation and the complexity of its mechanisms, coupled with the limited awareness of this phenomenon among broad segments of the Syrian public, the following main research question arises:

“To what extent is media literacy an effective preventive approach for empowering individuals and communities to confront the flow of misleading political propaganda through digital and traditional media?”

This main question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

1. What is the nature of misleading political propaganda, what are its mechanisms of dissemination, and what impact does it have on the contemporary media environment?
2. To what extent do current media literacy programs have the capacity to build critical resilience against political disinformation techniques?

**Second: Objectives of the Study:**

The study aims to introduce the role of media literacy as one of the proactive and effective solutions to addressing the phenomenon of misleading political propaganda disseminated through media and communication platforms, whose prevalence and influence have increased with the digital revolution and social media.

**Third: Significance of the Study:**

The study examines how individuals can be empowered by acquiring critical skills and expertise, as well as knowledge of media tools and production mechanisms, enabling them to analyze political content effectively and distinguish between reliable information and news, propaganda, and disinformation.

**Fourth: Scope of the Study:**

The scope of the study was defined in terms of time and place as follows: its temporal scope was limited to the year 2025, while its geographical scope was confined to the Syrian territories.

**Fifth: Methodology of the Study:**

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach as the most appropriate method for achieving its objectives. This approach enables the phenomenon to be described as it exists in reality and its components to be analyzed in depth. The approach was employed to answer the research questions through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in accordance with rigorous scientific frameworks.

**Sixth: Study Population and Sample:**

The study population consisted of experts and specialists in the fields of education and psychology, given the relevance of these two fields to the core of media literacy, which is based on understanding the mechanisms of psychological and social influence and methods of developing critical thinking among learners. The sample was selected using purposive sampling and included four experts with extensive experience in academic and fieldwork. Diversity in expertise and specialized fields was taken into consideration when selecting the participants to ensure comprehensive coverage of the various dimensions of the research problem.

**Seventh: Study Instrument – Interview:**

The study relied on in-depth interviews as the primary tool for data collection, given their ability to explore experts' views and experiences in depth and to uncover the dimensions of the complex relationship between media literacy and misleading propaganda from a specialized perspective.

A semi-structured interview guide was designed to strike a balance between standardizing the core questions for comparison among participants and allowing sufficient space to explore new and in-depth ideas during the interviews.

**Eighth: Key Terms of the Study:**

**Media Literacy:** The skill of obtaining and communicating information effectively, including the skills of sorting, analyzing, and selecting information to address information-related challenges (Al-Saeed & Abada, 2018, p. 57).

**Misleading Propaganda:** An organized communication activity carried out by official or unofficial entities with the aim of influencing public opinion by disseminating distorted, incomplete, decontextualized, or entirely fabricated information to create false perceptions of reality.

### **Ninth: Previous Studies**

The study reviewed a number of previous studies to determine its position within the existing body of knowledge, establish its theoretical framework, and avoid duplication. The following is a review of the two most relevant studies:

**First Study:** Al-Ibrahim and Sabira's (2022) study, entitled "The Role of Media Literacy in Developing Awareness of False and Misleading Content on Social Media Sites," aimed to highlight the role of media literacy as an effective mechanism for addressing misleading content in the digital space. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach through a review of the literature. It concluded that media literacy is a crucial proactive tool for empowering individuals to think critically and verify information, particularly in light of complex mechanisms such as "echo chambers" and "media amplification." The study recommended integrating media literacy into all educational curricula, training teachers and media professionals, and adopting national strategies to combat disinformation.

**Second Study:** Al-Badrani's (2016) study, entitled "Media and Digital Literacy and the Achievement of the Knowledge Society," sought to shed light on the concept of digital media literacy as a fundamental approach to achieving a knowledge society, highlight the importance of integrating it into curricula, and examine the differences between traditional and digital media. The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach and drew on previous literature and field studies, including a UAE-based study involving 388 young people. The findings emphasized that media literacy is not merely about receiving information, but rather a way of thinking critically and deconstructing messages. The study also highlighted the exposure of Arab audiences to systematic disinformation during the "Arab Spring" and the Arab society's difficulties in analyzing text and images, underscoring the need to promote critical awareness.

Similarities, Differences, and Contributions of the Current Study Compared with the Two Previous Studies:

The current study benefits from the two previous studies by strengthening its theoretical framework concerning the concepts of media literacy and the mechanisms of misleading propaganda. It also supports the premise that media literacy constitutes a barrier against disinformation, in addition to drawing on their recommendations regarding the integration of media literacy into educational curricula and the training of personnel, in ways that align with the Syrian context.

However, the current study differs from them in several fundamental respects. It focuses specifically on misleading political propaganda rather than general false content and examines both digital and traditional media within the Syrian context, whereas the first study focused exclusively on social media platforms and the second addressed broader digital and knowledge-related aspects. The current study is also distinguished by its use of more in-depth methodological tools, including in-depth interviews with media and psychology experts and critical discourse analysis, whereas the two previous studies relied primarily on a descriptive approach and reviews of existing literature and previous studies.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

#### **Section One: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Media Literacy and Misleading Political Propaganda**

Media literacy and misleading political propaganda constitute a decisive dichotomy in the digital age, where the spread of rumors, fake news, and targeted content is accelerating. This section therefore establishes the conceptual and theoretical framework through which these interconnected phenomena can be understood.

**First: Media Literacy (Concepts, Objectives, Skills)**

Media and digital literacy did not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they developed in response to the demands of the digital age, in which media has become a tool in the hands of the majority of people, making it a focus of scientific research aimed at studying human behavior (Al-Badrani, 2016, p. 142).

**First: Definitions and Basic Concepts:**

The Vienna Conference (1999) defined it as: “Engaging with all forms of communication media, including images, words, and graphics, and enabling individuals to understand and produce messages and select appropriate media.” The Media Literacy for Youth Conference (2002) defined it as: “Identifying the sources of content and its political, social, and cultural objectives, including critical analysis, the production of materials, and their interpretation.” It has also been defined as: “Critical thinking, participation, and the production of ideas; rereading news, films, and images; and ensuring that citizens have the right to participate” (Al-Badrani, 2016, p. 135). UNESCO emphasizes its importance in preparing young people for a world governed by the power of images, sound, and words, given the influence of media on values, beliefs, and practices (Al-Hawari, 2022, p. 234).

### **Second: Objectives of Media Literacy:**

It represents an awareness-raising approach aimed at empowering individuals to engage critically with content and understand its mechanisms of production and effects, enabling them to distinguish facts from misleading content. A specialized study called for teaching social networks and online safety in schools from an early age to fulfill young people’s intellectual aspirations, prevent intellectual and behavioral violations, and engage them in educational programs that enhance awareness and help them avoid mistakes (Al-Badrani, 2016, p. 142).

Media literacy seeks to achieve objectives that include: providing recipients with constructive values and attitudes; disseminating educational heritage; strengthening social cohesion and social control; promoting educational awareness within society and the family; emphasizing that the new generation is a genuine asset; coordinating between educational and media institutions; covering the educational process and addressing its issues; highlighting the role of schools; and establishing channels for continuing education and for people with special needs (Al-Saeed & Abada, 2018, p. 60).

#### **Means of Countering Propaganda:**

These include raising public awareness of propagandistic objectives, fostering trust, developing awareness through seminars and media, and systematically refuting propaganda through logical arguments and evidence (Mazaash & Tabshoush, 2021, p. 1040). Developing countries rely on their human resources to establish mechanisms for protecting individuals from propaganda and rumors and to prepare generations that are difficult to manipulate (Madfouni, 2018, p. 166).

Media literacy also plays an important role in combating extremism by developing critical thinking and self-assessment, which helps individuals distinguish accurate information from misleading information (Al-Atoum, 2023, p. 114). It also contributes to media-related socialization through the role of parents and teachers in managing children’s exposure to screens, as digital content provides learning opportunities while also presenting challenges related to violent or inappropriate content (Todino & Di Tore, 2025, p. 6).

### **Second: Misleading Political Propaganda (Concept, Mechanisms, and Impact):**

#### **First: The Concept of Misleading Political Propaganda**

Western Definitions: Harold Lasswell defined it as “an attempt to control or influence the attitudes of groups through the use of significant symbols.” Michael Shocks defined it as “the controlled promotion of ideas that are deliberately distorted to induce an individual to engage in behavior sought by special interest groups for predetermined objectives.” Antonio Miotto viewed it as “an artistic means of social pressure that tends to form psychological or social groups with a unified structure in the influential and mental states of the targeted individuals” (Al-Abd, 2007, p. 20).

Arabic Definitions: Mokhtar Al-Tihami defined it as “that which drives the receiving person or group toward a particular behavior; if its effect ends with passive reception, this is failure in its purest form.” Abdul Qader Hatem defined it as “the art of persuading others to adopt a particular behavior that they would not have adopted without it” (Al-Abd, 2007, p. 21).

#### **Second: Mechanisms of Misleading Political Propaganda**

Propaganda employs a range of techniques to influence and shape public opinion, particularly with the development of media, which has led to the blurring of the concepts of media, propaganda, truth, and falsehood, as well as the presentation of half-truths and falsehoods in targeted content. The main mechanisms include:

**Repetition:** Repeating certain paragraphs or sentences can lead people to believe them. Lies become more acceptable through repetition because most of what we know is accepted from a trusted source rather than from our own experiences (Hussein, 2021, p. 71).

**Religious Approach:** This approach has been used throughout human history, as exemplified by the Crusades and the role played by religious orators in supporting Saladin (Jeradat, 2022, p. 16).

**The Technique of Lying:** This technique is used to achieve objectives when success through honesty is unlikely. It is considered one of the worst forms of propaganda and requires precision and skill to conceal the lie (Sabti & Hassan, 2024, p. 247).

**Appeal to Vulnerability and Sympathy:** This technique is used to influence people's emotions and has been employed by Zionist propaganda in its campaigns against Arab states through emotionally charged expressions such as "Give us a chance to live" (Jeradat, 2022, p. 16).

- **Fragmentation and Context Reconstruction:** This can be seen in war-related headlines, where a conflict may be referred to as the " Hamas War " rather than the " Palestinian Resistance , " or simply as the " War on Gaza , " while erasing the historical context of the conflict (Al-Tuwaisi, 2023, p. 8).

- **Information Overload and Media Focus:** This involves exaggerating and magnifying specific issues through large and concentrated doses of media coverage within a particular period (Al-Tuwaisi, 2023, p. 8).

- **Speaking in the Language of Ordinary People:** This involves addressing the audience using their language, dialect, and level of cultural understanding to ensure comprehension and persuasion. This brings the propagandist closer to the public and increases their influence (Hussein, 2021, p. 76).

- **Moral Panic:** This is a highly focused propaganda technique and an extension of "scapegoating" or "witch-hunting" techniques used to serve political and religious interests (Al-Tuwaisi, 2023, p. 9).

### **Third: The Impact of Misleading Political Propaganda**

Political propaganda has become more effective through the use of new techniques, and it plays an important role in crises, military conflicts, and diplomatic activities. The study of military warfare cannot be complete without considering media warfare (Eid, 2021, pp. 2–3). Previous studies have not reached a specific classification of propaganda techniques because the nature of different situations requires the development of appropriate methods. As Goebbels stated: "Propaganda has no basic method, but one goal: to conquer the masses, and every means that serves this goal is acceptable" (Al-Masdar, 2016, p. 107).

Propaganda techniques work to influence people's attitudes, opinions, and behavior by disseminating information, facts, and sometimes half-truths or lies in accordance with a particular orientation, in an organized attempt to influence public opinion (Al-Tijani, 2024, p. 171). They also employ psychological stimulation to manipulate reasoning and produce a response that would not have occurred without such stimulation. They disseminate ideas and beliefs to influence public opinion and social behavior without requiring audiences to consider the reasons for adopting them or their logical basis. Propaganda also uses general or popular media images to influence minds and emotions for military, economic, or political purposes (Al-Tijani, 2024, p. 172).

Conspiracy-oriented media, as an explanatory factor for political unrest, carries a post-Marxist and postmodern aura. The 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the analysis of conspiracy theory concepts in academic studies. Such theories are associated with the disinformation that fuels them and with concepts of elite conspiracies against the general public (Anderson, 2021, p. 3).

### **Section Two: Strategies and Mechanisms for Countering Misleading Propaganda**

Misleading propaganda represents a serious threat to the social fabric, necessitating effective tools and strategies to counter it. These range from technological solutions, such as artificial intelligence, to legislative frameworks and institutional efforts. However, awareness-raising remains the fundamental pillar, through building a generation

capable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood.

#### **First: Media Literacy Tools for Detecting Misleading Propaganda**

David Berlo argues that children are exposed to a constant flow of media content and need tools to make sound decisions. They become like sponges, absorbing everything to which they are exposed. This necessitates activating the role of institutions in promoting media literacy that develops critical thinking and inquiry. There is no room for communication illiteracy; generations must be equipped with the skills needed to engage with media in order to confront the disinformation practiced by local and global institutions, particularly against children and young people. Disinformation has become a reality affecting societies (Madfouni, 2018, p. 166).

Media literacy is considered a tool for transforming passive consumers into active individuals capable of consciously participating in public debate and raising awareness of the risks of fake news. It serves as a barrier that protects individuals and strengthens the security of societies (Hala Al-Alfi, Middle Ocean University website). A specialized study called for teaching social networks and online safety in schools from an early age to fulfill the intellectual aspirations of young people, prevent intellectual violations, and engage them in educational programs that distinguish positive from negative content and help them avoid mistakes (Al-Badrani, 2016, p. 142).

The need for such efforts becomes increasingly urgent with the widespread dissemination of images and sound through various media. Contemporary culture can be described as a culture of reading and writing through media, which is gradually encroaching upon the role of printed writing. The digital age is expected to bring about a revolution in education by enabling students to become more active and independent and by establishing new knowledge communities for collaboration and learning, while also creating strong connections between work and learning through activities such as programming and construction (Al-Badrani, 2016, p. 145).

In contrast, social media platforms play a negative role in amplifying political disinformation through the rapid distribution of content with limited editorial oversight, unlike traditional media, which applies gatekeeping mechanisms. Platforms such as Facebook, X, and YouTube rely on algorithms that prioritize engagement and promote sensational or polarizing content, thereby hindering the role of media literacy in countering propaganda (Ogunlana & Umashe, 2024, p. 364).

#### **Second: Mechanisms for Developing Media Literacy to Counter Political Propaganda**

The Media Culture Center identified several strategies for teaching media literacy, most notably integrating it into the curriculum or offering it as a complete course, employing the inductive model, teaching critical thinking, analyzing the media environment, and examining different perspectives. It also proposes the use of an active learning model (awareness, analysis, reflection, and response) that generates practical experience (Al-Hamdani, 2015, p. 116).

The content of media materials in newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet should be developed, along with improving the critical thinking skills of audiences, establishing principles for using multimedia content, supporting the teaching of media literacy principles in school curricula, and strengthening the role of families and schools in promoting its concepts. Learning these principles helps citizens engage optimally with media content. Media literacy focuses on teaching the effects and forms of media, as well as how to evaluate and influence media messages. It is an important means of protecting children, adolescents, and society from negative influences (Al-Hamdani, 2015, p. 110).

When engaging with media content, critical questions should be raised: What are the sender's motives? What is the relationship between the news and the interests of the institution? Who benefits and who is harmed? These questions reflect a need for critical scrutiny, particularly in the Arab context, where many people still believe in the objectivity of the media. A 2013 survey involving 10,000 Arabs revealed that television was considered one of the most credible sources according to public perceptions (Madfouni, 2018, p. 167).

Artificial intelligence represents an important innovation for developing media literacy, as its extensive analytical capabilities provide enhanced understanding of content and guide users toward consuming reliable information through natural language processing technologies capable of analyzing millions of texts and producing accurate

summaries. It can also develop algorithms to identify fake news and manipulated content and alert users to unreliable sources. Furthermore, it can provide a personalized learning experience based on users' levels of knowledge and needs, thereby enhancing media literacy (Hala Al-Alfi, Middle Ocean University website, 2026).

### **Section Three: Applied Framework: Expert Interviews**

The importance of in-depth interviews lies in capturing the lived experiences of media and psychology specialists in order to understand the mechanisms of disinformation and ways of countering it within the complex Syrian context, beyond quantitative data. The questions were designed to cover three levels: a diagnostic level to explore the nature and mechanisms of propaganda; an evaluative level to assess the effectiveness of current media literacy programs and their ability to build critical resilience among young people; and a developmental level to anticipate the future and provide practical recommendations. Selecting experts from the fields of media and psychology enhances the integration of perspectives: the former analyzes the structure of the message, while the latter examines its psychological impact and how it can be deconstructed. This serves to answer the fundamental question: How can media literacy protect Syrians and empower them to retain control over their awareness in an era of information disorder?

#### **Extraction of Interview Findings:**

Based on an analysis of the responses of the four experts (Hassan Ibrahim, Mohammad Al-Fares, Nour Shahwan, and Hussein Haj Ahmad), the following findings can be drawn, representing the main conclusions of the study and answering its key questions:

#### **First: The Nature of the Relationship Between Digital Media and Misleading Propaganda:**

**A Complex and Dynamic Relationship:** The experts unanimously agreed that the relationship is not one-sided but mutually influential. Digital media provides a fertile environment for misleading propaganda through its rapid dissemination, low production costs, lack of professional regulation, and algorithms that favor controversial content (Hassan Ibrahim, Hussein Haj Ahmad).

**Organized Direction:** Some experts pointed out that this relationship has become guided by scientific methods based on soft power and the exploitation of collective unconsciousness, with certain entities investing in influencers and applications to disseminate propaganda in exchange for financial support (Nour Shahwan, Mohammad Al-Fares).

**Deep Psychological and Social Effects:** Misleading propaganda contributes to reinforcing confirmation bias, creating psychological and social polarization, weakening trust in official institutions, and artificially reshaping public opinion (Hussein Haj Ahmad, Hassan Ibrahim).

#### **Second: Key Psychological and Media Mechanisms and Techniques of Misleading Propaganda:**

**Provoking Strong Emotions:** Such as fear and anger, to increase engagement and disrupt critical thinking (Hussein Haj Ahmad).

**The Illusion of Truth Through Repetition:** Repeating information in different forms reinforces it in the mind as fact (Hussein Haj Ahmad, Hassan Ibrahim).

**Exploiting Collective Awareness and Emotional Moments:** Disseminating simple details during times of crisis to achieve a rapid impact (Mohammad Al-Fares).

**Advanced Psychological Techniques:** Such as justification (providing rationales), displacement (transferring negative attributes to the opponent), projection, rationalization, and exploiting echo chambers to reinforce pre-existing beliefs (Nour Shahwan, Hassan Ibrahim).

#### **Third: Evaluation of Media Literacy Programs and Initiatives in Syria – Limited and Insufficient Capacity:**

The experts unanimously agreed that current initiatives, both official and civil society-based, lack the capacity to build stable “critical resilience” among individuals.

### **Reasons for Weakness:**

Weak integration into educational curricula in a systematic manner and a focus on theoretical aspects without practical training (Hussein Haj Ahmad).

A shortage of qualified personnel and a lack of integration between educational and media institutions (Hussein Haj Ahmad, Nour Shahwan).

Insufficient outreach and weak integration with official institutions (Hassan Ibrahim).

Limited Positive Indicators: Nevertheless, there are civil society initiatives, such as the Syrian Media Literacy Lab, and an increase in public awareness. However, these efforts remain fragile and are not yet widespread (Hassan Ibrahim, Hussein Haj Ahmad).

### **Fourth: How to Develop Media Literacy and Transform It into Tangible Daily Practices:**

At the Individual Level: Training individuals to ask basic critical questions (Who is the source? What is the purpose? What is the evidence?), learning digital verification skills, and distinguishing between news and propaganda and between description and evaluation (Hussein Haj Ahmad, Hassan Ibrahim).

At the Educational Level: Integrating media literacy as a core subject in curricula from the early stages of education (Hassan Ibrahim, Hussein Haj Ahmad).

Training teachers in critical thinking skills, using practical exercises based on real-world platforms (Facebook and YouTube), and analyzing disinformation campaigns in the classroom (Hussein Haj Ahmad).

At the Media Level: Rebuilding trust in official media through reliable channels and a spokesperson who continuously clarifies facts (Mohammad Al-Fares).

Establishing specialized media teams (psychological, educational, and digital) to produce simple and engaging awareness content targeting all age groups (Nour Shahwan, Hussein Haj Ahmad).

Adopting source-transparency standards and establishing fact-checking units (Hassan Ibrahim, Hussein Haj Ahmad).

At the Civil Society Level: Launching continuous awareness campaigns and using engaging tools, such as competitions, reels, and financial incentives, to ensure broader outreach (Nour Shahwan).

### **Fifth: Future Vision and Strategic Recommendations:**

Media Literacy as a Cognitive Security Necessity: The approach should shift from viewing media literacy as an additional skill to treating it as an integrated national policy and a proactive tool for countering disinformation, particularly with the development of artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies (Hussein Haj Ahmad, Hassan Ibrahim).

#### **First: Final Research Findings:**

1. Media literacy in Syria is still in its early stages and currently lacks sufficient effectiveness as a preventive tool. However, it represents an indispensable strategic option and can become effective if it is transformed from fragmented theoretical initiatives into a comprehensive national policy integrated into education, responsive to technological developments, and built on genuine partnerships among educational institutions, media organizations, and civil society.

2. A complex and dynamic relationship exists between digital media and misleading propaganda: digital media—with its speed, algorithms, and low costs—provides a fertile environment for the spread of misleading propaganda, while propaganda exploits these characteristics to enhance its psychological and social impact, creating an evolving reciprocal relationship.

3. Misleading propaganda relies on advanced psychological and media mechanisms, most notably emotional manipulation (fear and anger), the illusion of truth through repetition, the exploitation of collective awareness and emotional moments, as well as advanced techniques such as oversimplification, justification, and psychological

projection.

4. Media literacy programs in Syria have limited effectiveness and lack sufficient capacity to build “critical resilience” among individuals due to weak integration into educational curricula, a focus on theoretical aspects without practical training, a shortage of qualified personnel, a lack of integration between educational and media institutions, limited outreach, and the absence of comprehensive national policies.

5. Developing media literacy requires transforming it into daily practices. It is not sufficient to present it as a theoretical subject; rather, it must be translated into everyday skills by training individuals to ask critical questions (source, purpose, evidence), incorporating practical exercises into education (analyzing real content from Facebook and YouTube), producing engaging awareness content in cooperation with influencers, and rebuilding trust in official media through transparency and official spokespersons.

6. Media literacy is a necessity for cognitive security rather than an additional skill. With the development of artificial intelligence and deepfake technologies, media literacy is no longer a luxury but has become a proactive tool for protecting intellectual and social security.

### Research Recommendations

Integrate media literacy into school curricula beginning at early educational stages (such as seventh grade), and develop interactive curricula based on analyzing real content from social media platforms and simulating disinformation campaigns. Teachers should also be trained in critical thinking skills and practical activities, and sufficient financial and human resources should be allocated to national digital literacy programs.

Establish specialized fact-checking units and train their personnel while adhering to standards of transparency and professionalism. Produce awareness-raising content in simple and engaging language to visually expose disinformation techniques, and designate a regular official spokesperson to clarify facts.

Expand civil society initiatives to engage young people through national competitions and specialized teams that bring together media, education, and psychology to design and implement high-quality initiatives that strengthen community resilience against disinformation.

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