MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT: *The study examined media literacy skills for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State. Three research questions guided the study. The study anchored on information literacy theory. The survey research design was adopted using a sample of 167 respondents drawn from a population of 278 lecturers in the four departments of Communication, film and media studies using proportionate sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire which was validated by experts and used for data gathering. The reliability of the instrument was established at 0.82 using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMC). The study found amongst others that critical and analytical thinking, digital literacy, environmental literacy, cultural and social awareness, and collaborative communication are media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development. The study concluded that media literacy and education can potentially empower the citizens to be able to critically analyze and evaluate media messages, be better informed, engage, and be proactive in addressing both local and global issues that can bring about sustainable development in Rivers State. Media literacy skills were essential for the citizens to be well informed on the various types of media outlets and their roles in promoting sustainable development in Rivers State-Nigeria. The study recommended amongst others that Policymakers and curriculum planners begin to think along the lines of integrating media literacy into the school curriculum. This will help students develop a holistic understanding of media and its impact on society.*

KEYWORDS: Media, Media literacy, media literacy skills, sustainable development.

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INTRODUCTION

Media literacy skills increasingly becoming very relevant for people to function well in today's digital age, as individuals in society are confronted on a daily basis with information from various sources. With the rise in fake news, misinformation, and propaganda, it is crucial for individuals to be able to critically analyze and evaluate the information they consume. This is especially important in the context of sustainable development, where accurate and reliable information is essential for making informed decisions that will have a positive impact on the environment and society.

Media literacy is seen as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms (Hobbs (2010). It involves not only understanding how media messages are constructed and disseminated but also being able to critically assess their credibility and relevance. By developing media literacy skills, individuals can become more discerning consumers of media content, better equipped to navigate the complex media landscape and make informed choices. Promoting media literacy skills for sustainable development is therefore crucial for several reasons. First, media literacy can help individuals become more aware of the environmental and social issues facing the world today. By critically analyzing media messages, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of social problems and proffer meaningful solutions. Medial literacy can empower individuals to take action and become advocates for positive change in their communities.

Media literacy has the potential to help individuals become more responsible consumers and producers of media content. By understanding how media messages are constructed and disseminated, individuals can make more informed choices about the media they consume and create. This can help promote accurate and reliable information, combat misinformation and fake news, and foster a more informed and engaged citizenry.

Despite the importance of media literacy for sustainable development, there is a low level of awareness and understanding of media literacy in many communities. UNESCO (2016), sources confirm that only 26% of countries worldwide have integrated media literacy into their national education policies. This informs the need for greater efforts at promoting media literacy skills, particularly within the context of promoting sustainable development. This study therefore examines ways media literacy can be adopted as a means of promoting sustainable development in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Media literacy skills are essential for individuals to critically analyze and evaluate the information they consume through various media platforms. In today's digital age, where information is readily available and easily accessible, the ability to discern between credible and misleading sources is crucial for making informed decisions and participating actively in society. However, there is a growing concern that many individuals lack the necessary media literacy skills to navigate the complex media landscape effectively.

The lack of media literacy skills poses a significant challenge to sustainable development efforts. Without the ability to critically evaluate information, individuals may be vulnerable to misinformation, propaganda, and manipulation, which can have far-reaching consequences on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. This can hinder efforts to promote social cohesion,

democratic participation, and environmental sustainability, all of which are essential for achieving sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, the rapid evolution of media technologies and the proliferation of fake news and disinformation online have made it even more demanding for individuals to be able to distinguish between fact and fiction. This situation presents a pressing need for comprehensive media literacy education programs that can equip individuals with skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

Lack of emphasis on media literacy education in formal education systems and limited resources in promoting media literacy at the community level has resulted in a noticeable gap in media literacy skills among individuals, particularly marginalized communities and the illiterate population.

Based on the above treatise, the problem elements of this study bother the need to promote media literacy skills for sustainable development in Rivers of Nigeria. Hence, it has become expedient to empirically ascertain the ways individuals' literacy skills can be enhanced so they can develop the ability to critically analyse and evaluate media content, make informed decisions, engage in meaningful dialogue, and contribute positively to societal development. The result of this exercise will be to raise engaged citizens who are more informed and better equipped to address the complex development challenges facing Rivers State.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State?

2. What are the roles of education in inculcating media literacy for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State?

3. What are the relevance of media literacy skills in promoting sustainable development in Rivers State?

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Media Literacy

Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms, particularly in digital and traditional media. Koltay (2011) define media literacy as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and communicate information in various forms, particularly through digital, print, and broadcast media. Woody (2013) defines media literacy as an informed, critical understanding of the prevalent mass media, and it involves examining the techniques, technologies and institutions involved in media production; being able to critically analyze media messages; and recognizing the role audiences play in making meaning from those messages. It is a kind of expanded information and communication skill that is responsive to the changing nature of information in society. It involves an understanding of the role of media in society, recognizing the techniques used to shape perspectives, and critically

thinking about the messages presented. In addition to analyzing media messages, media literacy also involves the ability to create media. This includes anything from writing a blog post to producing a video. By being able to create media, individuals can actively participate in the conversation and contribute their perspectives to the media landscape.

Media literacy skills are becoming increasingly important in today's world, where media is prevalent and influential in shaping public opinion, culture, and knowledge. Media literacy also helps individuals navigate the complexities of media, understand its influence, and use it responsibly. In order to navigate the vast amount of information available to us, it is essential to be media literate. Savolainen (2016) opined that media literacy is especially important in today's society, where misinformation and fake news are rampant. By being media literate, individuals can better discern fact from fiction and make informed decisions about the information they consume. This is particularly important in the age of social media, where information spreads rapidly and can easily be manipulated.

Media literacy also entails the competencies citizens must have as they consume information and the reading abilities the public must have to understand the 21st-century challenges of the global economy. Like traditional literacy, it includes the ability to both read (comprehend) and write (create, design, produce). Furthermore, goes beyond merely recognizing and comprehending information to higher-order critical thinking skills implicit in questioning, analyzing and evaluating information (Mandušić and Blašković, 2013). Media literacy equally involves the ability to sift through and analyze the messages that inform, entertain and sell to us every day. It is the ability to bring critical thinking skills to bear on all media- from music videos and Web environments to product placement in films.

It is about asking important questions about what is contained in the media message, and noticing what is not there. This means that media literacy comes down to having enough understanding of facts from fiction and discernment to comprehend media messages. The critical understanding of mass media also helps to properly understand the techniques, technologies, individuals and institutions involved in media. This understanding acts like a strong tool to check against the wishes and vagaries of media bosses and owners who sometimes become part of the power brokerage system and poison public minds for the sake of hidden agendas. Hobbs (2010) asserts that one of the key aspects of media literacy is the ability to critically analyze media messages. This involves questioning the motives behind the message, the credibility of the source, and the potential biases present. By being able to deconstruct media messages, individuals can better understand the intended meaning and make informed decisions about the information they consume. Media literacy therefore is essential in the digital age, where media shapes perceptions, influences behavior, and impacts society at large. By developing media literacy skills—accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating, reflecting, and acting responsibly—individuals become more informed, critical, and ethical participants in the media landscape.

Media Literacy Skills

Media literacy skills are essential in today's digital age, UNESCO (2016) stated that media literacy skills refer to the abilities that enable individuals to critically engage with media content. These skills involve accessing, analyzing, evaluating, creating, and reflecting on media messages in various forms such as news, advertisements, social media posts, videos, and more. They also include skills that help the individual become a more discerning consumer and responsible creator of media, allowing him to access complex information effectively.

Significance of Media Literacy Skills for Sustainable Development

Promoting media literacy skills is particularly important for sustainable development. In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, it is essential for individuals to have access to accurate and reliable information. Media literacy skills can help individuals understand complex issues such as climate change, poverty, and inequality, and empower them to take action towards sustainable development. Also, media literacy skills can help raise awareness about development issues and mobilize public support for community initiatives aimed at addressing development challenges. Teaching individuals how to critically analyze media messages and identify biases, can help create a more informed and engaged citizenry that is committed to promoting sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

The study anchored on the information literacy theory propounded by Pal G. Zurowski in 1974. The theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals can effectively navigate and evaluate information to make informed decisions. The theory also highlights the role of technology in information literacy. With the proliferation of digital information sources, individuals must be able to navigate online databases, search engines, and social media platforms effectively. Koltay (2011) argues that digital literacy is a key component of information literacy, as individuals must be able to use technology to access, evaluate, and communicate information. The above theoretical postulation is further reinforced by Bruce (1997), who reiterated that information literacy helps in developing in the individual the ability to recognize, locate, evaluate, and use effectively needed information. This highlights the importance of not only being able to find information but also being able to critically assess its credibility and relevance.

A major aspect of the information literacy theory is the concept of information-seeking behaviour. Wilson (1999) describes information-seeking behaviour as the process individuals go through to find information to meet their needs. This process involves identifying the information needed, searching for relevant sources, evaluating the credibility of those sources, and using the information effectively. Another important component of the information literacy theory is the idea of information evaluation. Savolainen (2016) emphasizes the importance of critically evaluating information to determine its reliability, accuracy, and relevance. This involves considering the source of the information, the context in which it was produced, and any potential biases that may be present.

Mandušić and Blašković (2013), further expanded the tenets of the media literacy theory to include several principles:

1. The purpose of information literacy is to know how to recognize the nature and extent of information, to know how to formulate the question that demands an answer, and to know the different sources of information and the ways in which information can be processed.

2. To know how to access needed information, which means that we have to know the organizational system of published information and be able to determine which information will give us the quickest response to our inquiry.

3. To know the system, i.e. bibliographic databases, scientific journals, search engines, portals, libraries etc. Founded information needs to be stored for later use.

4. To evaluate the information. You need to know how to read the text and how to extract the necessary from it. We should be able to recognize if the information is the one that we need.

5. To learn to use the information independently and know how to use it in teamwork to perform a specific task.

6. To understand the legal, economic and ethical use of information. We should recognize how the use of certain information was effective, but also whether the use of information respected certain rules.

The foregoing shows that Information literacy involves the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. According to Bruce (2008), information literacy skills are essential for navigating the vast amount of information available on the internet. By applying information literacy principles to social media, individuals can better discern the accuracy and relevance of information shared on these platforms. It therefore means that promoting media literacy among the younger generation through education (formal and informal) will provide a valuable framework for understanding how individuals can develop the skills needed to effectively navigate and evaluate information in today's digital age. By recognizing the importance of information-seeking behaviour, information evaluation, and digital literacy, individuals can become more informed and critical consumers of information. This will to a great extent result in having well-informed citizens with a critical mindset, who can make informed decisions that may lead to sustainable development in the society they find themselves.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a survey design. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from 167 respondents, purposively selected from a population of 278 lecturers in the four departments of the faculty of communication, film and media studies using a proportionate sampling technique. The test-retest reliability method was adopted for the study and the Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula was used to test the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability index of 0.82. Data analysis was done using mean statistics.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean statistics of media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development in Rivers state

Media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development in Rivers state

s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	$\bar{X}$
1.	Critical and analytic thinking skills	55	86	20	6	167	3.14
		220	258	40	6	524	
2.	Digital literacy skills	72	58	23	14	167	3.13
		288	174	46	14	522	
3.	Environmental literacy skills	58	74	19	16	167	3.04
		232	222	38	16	508	
4.	Cultural and social awareness skills	44	97	16	10	167	3.05
		176	291	32	10	509	
5.	Collaborative communication skills	61	71	26	9	167	3.10
		244	213	52	9	518	
	Total						3.09

Table 1 indicates that critical and analytical thinking, digital literacy, environmental literacy, cultural and social awareness, and collaborative communication are media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development

Table 2: Mean statistics of Roles of education in inculcating media literacy for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State

Roles of education in inculcating media literacy for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State

s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	$\bar{X}$
1	By teaching students how to critically evaluate media sources	62	83	15	7	167	3.19
		248	249	30	7	534	
2	By teaching students how to create media that promotes sustainable development.	33	102	17	15	167	2.92
		132	306	34	15	487	
3	By helping students develop the skills needed to engage in constructive dialogue and debate about media and its impact on society	58	94	15	0	167	3.26
		232	282	30	0	544	
4	Training teachers on how to incorporate media literacy into lessons focused on sustainable development	62	77	18	10	167	3.14
		248	231	36	10	525	
5	Involving students in media-based projects	75	68	12	12	167	3.23
		300	204	24	12	540	
	Total						

Table 2 indicates that education plays a pivotal role in inculcating media literacy to promote sustainable development by teaching students how to critically evaluate media sources; create

media; develop skills needed to engage in constructive dialogue and debate about media and its impact on society; how to incorporate media literacy into lessons; and involving students in media-based projects.

Table 3: Mean statistics of the relevance of media literacy skills in promoting sustainable development in Rivers state

Relevance of media literacy skills in promoting sustainable development in Rivers State

s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	$\bar{X}$
1	Media literacy skills equip individuals with the tools to critically analyze media content	73	62	32	0	167	3.25
		292	186	64	0	542	
2	Media literacy skills help individuals navigate the complex digital world and protect themselves from misinformation, disinformation and manipulation	88	62	12	5	167	3.39
		352	186	24	5	567	
3	Media literacy skills empower individuals to become active participants in the media landscape.	52	88	19	8	167	3.10
		208	264	38	8	518	
4	Media literacy skills help **advance education and capacity building**	79	79	9	0	167	3.43
		318	237	18	0	573	
5	Media literacy skills encourage transparency and accountability	32	92	36	7	167	2.89
		128	276	72	7	483	
	Total						3.21

Table 3 reveals that media literacy skills are relevant for promoting sustainable development by equipping individuals with the tools to critically analyze media content, create their own messages, protect themselves from misinformation**,** advance education and capacity building and encourage transparency and accountability

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first finding of the study revealed that critical and analytical thinking, digital literacy, environmental literacy, cultural and social awareness, and collaborative communication are media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development in Rivers State. This finding is supported by the Hobbs (2010) study which found that educating individuals to develop digital skills is essential to attaining sustainable development. Media literacy skills play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development in Rivers State, where addressing issues like environmental degradation, social inequality, and economic growth is vital. These skills empower individuals and communities to critically analyze media messages, understand the role of media in shaping perceptions, and use media as a tool for advocating sustainable development goals (SDGs). This is in agreement with UNESCO (2013) which revealed that media and information literacy skills are key for knowledgeable societies and a global priority for sustainable development.

Developing critical and analytical thinking skills will help media users especially the younger generation who are exposed to social media and are overwhelmed by the influx of messages

saturated on the various platforms understand media bias and agenda. This is because, when people possess the ability to identify biases or underlying agendas in media content related to environmental issues, governance, and economic policies the society is better off. Secondly, this skill will enable media users to evaluate sources of information, by determining the credibility of information, especially when it pertains to sustainable practices, environmental news, and developmental projects. Finally, it will help them in fact-checking. For instance, in Rivers state where there are several political issues and development, ensuring that news or reports about politics or developmental programs are accurate and fact-based, is paramount to prevent the spread of misinformation. In a world where misinformation and fake news are rampant, individuals need to be able to discern fact from fiction. By developing critical thinking skills, individuals can better assess the credibility and reliability of the information they encounter, particularly when it comes to issues related to sustainability and the environment. Digital literacy skills will enable media users to navigate digital platforms. Considering the increasing role of social media and online news platforms in shaping public opinion, individuals should know how to access, share, and analyze content related to sustainability issues online. Digital literacy skills can also be useful in advocacy programs. Developing these skills will help in creating digital content (such as blogs, social media campaigns, and videos) to raise awareness and galvanize support for politics, environmental protection, poverty alleviation, community health and many other societal issues.

Media literacy should also involve an understanding of the specific cultural, social, and environmental issues in Rivers State. Therefore inculcating cultural and social awareness skills in individuals will help them analyze media messages and understand their impact on society. Media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion and influencing behaviour, particularly when it comes to issues like climate change and environmental conservation. For instance, issues like oil pollution in the Niger Delta, the impact on local fisheries, and socio-economic inequalities are central to sustainability conversations. By being able to deconstruct media messages and understand their underlying biases and agendas, individuals can better navigate the complex landscape of sustainability issues and make more informed decisions. Furthermore, media literacy skills also include the ability to create and share media content that promotes sustainable development. In today's digital age, individuals have the power to amplify their voices and advocate for positive change through social media and other online platforms. By developing skills in media production and storytelling, individuals can effectively communicate their message and inspire others to take action towards a more sustainable future. Media should be used to address social inequalities by giving voice to marginalized groups, including women, youth, and rural communities, in discussions on development.

Again, Media-literate citizens should be able to communicate effectively with diverse groups, including government agencies, non-profits, corporations, and international organizations working on sustainable development. People should be empowered to use media to lobby for policy changes, mobilize community action, and create partnerships for sustainability.

Media literacy skills are crucial for promoting sustainable development in today's interconnected world. By developing critical thinking, environmental literacy, and digital fluency, individuals can play a key role in raising awareness and driving positive change towards a more sustainable future. It is essential for educators, policymakers, and media professionals to prioritize media literacy education and empower individuals to become

informed, hold stakeholders accountable, promote long-term socio-economic and environmental benefits and engage citizens in the pursuit of sustainable development.

The second finding of the study reveals that education plays a critical role in inculcating media literacy for sustainable development by teaching students how to critically evaluate media sources, create media that promotes sustainable development, engage in constructive dialogue about media, training teachers on how to incorporate media literacy into lessons focused on sustainable development and Involving students in media-based projects. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Ferreira and Serpa (2018) which found that education plays a pivotal role in inculcating media literacy to promote sustainable development, especially in places where development challenges are often intertwined with environmental, social, and economic issues.

Education plays a crucial role in inculcating media literacy for sustainable development. Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media in a variety of forms. In this digital era, where information is readily available at our fingertips, it is essential for individuals to be able to critically assess the credibility and reliability of the media they consume. This is particularly important for sustainable development, as media literacy can empower individuals to make informed decisions that contribute to the well-being of society and the environment.

One of the key roles of education in promoting media literacy for sustainable development is to teach students how to critically evaluate media sources. This includes understanding the different types of media bias, recognizing misinformation and disinformation, and discerning between fact and opinion. By equipping students with these critical thinking skills, education can help them become more discerning consumers of media and better able to navigate the complex media landscape. Integrate sustainable development topics (such as climate change, waste management, and renewable energy) into subjects like geography, social studies, and science. Media literacy skills can be embedded in these lessons to teach students how to critically assess information related to sustainability. Also, combining media literacy with environmental education, civics, and ethics can help students understand the connection between media, information, and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Furthermore, education can also play a role in teaching students how to create media that promotes sustainable development. This includes teaching students how to use digital tools and platforms to create content that raises awareness about environmental issues, social justice, and other important causes. By empowering students to create their media, education can help them become active participants in shaping the narrative around sustainable development.

In addition, education can also help students develop the skills needed to engage in constructive dialogue and debate about media and its impact on society. By fostering a culture of critical inquiry and open discussion, education can help students develop the ability to engage with diverse perspectives and challenge their own assumptions. This can lead to a more informed and engaged citizenry that is better equipped to advocate for sustainable development.

The finding equally revealed that education plays an important role in training teachers in media literacy for sustainability. Providing teachers with training on how to incorporate media literacy into lessons focused on sustainable development. This ensures that educators can guide students in critical analysis of media while promoting eco-friendly practices and sustainable

goals. It will also equip teachers with strategies to teach media literacy in practical ways, such as using case studies, debates, and simulations on environmental topics that require students to assess media narratives. Training teachers on best practices and innovative approaches to media literacy education helps develop effective strategies for fostering these skills in students. This is supported by the findings of Kellner and Share (2007) which stated that critical media literacy can be effectively achieved when teachers are trained on the importance of media literacy and how to incorporate it into their lessons. According to Livingstone and Sefton-Green (2016), promoting media literacy skills in educational settings requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between educators, policymakers, and media professionals.

Finally, involving students in media-based projects that focus on sustainability can help promote sustainable development. For instance, students can create documentaries, social media campaigns, or blogs that promote green living, conservation efforts, or community-driven solutions to environmental issues. Also, encouraging students to participate in local environmental initiatives (like tree planting, recycling drives, or water conservation projects) and use media to document and promote their activities. This ties media literacy to real-world actions that can efficiently promote sustainable development.

The third finding of the study revealed that media literacy skills are essential for promoting sustainable development by equipping individuals with the tools to critically analyze media content, create their own messages, protect themselves from misinformation, advance education and capacity building and encourage transparency and accountability. Media literacy skills play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development in this technologically advanced era. With the rapid advancement of technology and the proliferation of media platforms, individuals are constantly bombarded with information from various sources. In order to make informed decisions and take action towards sustainable development, it is essential for individuals to possess media literacy skills. Media literacy skills enable individuals to critically analyze and evaluate the information they consume. This includes being able to identify bias, misinformation, and propaganda in media content. By developing these skills, individuals can make more informed choices about the products they consume, the policies they support, and the actions they take towards sustainable development. This is supported by Bouzguenda, Alalouch and Fava's (2019) study which found that media literacy equips individuals with the critical thinking skills to distinguish fact from misinformation, especially in matters that directly affect them. This ensures that the public can make informed decisions and engage in constructive dialogues on sustainable development.

Again, media literacy skills empower individuals to become active participants in the media landscape. By understanding how media messages are constructed and disseminated, individuals can create their own content that promotes sustainable development. This could include sharing information about environmental issues, advocating for social justice, or raising awareness about sustainable practices. This agrees with Mandušić and Blašković (2013) who found that Media literacy enables individuals to access, evaluate, and share information about local governance, policies, and environmental efforts. Informed citizens are more likely to participate in community-based sustainable development programs or advocacy, contributing to effective policy implementation on issues like pollution control, waste management, and renewable energy initiatives.

Also, media literacy skills help individuals navigate the complex digital world and protect themselves from misinformation and manipulation. In an era of fake news and online scams, it is more important than ever for individuals to be able to discern credible sources from unreliable ones. By honing their media literacy skills, individuals can safeguard themselves and others from falling victim to false information that may hinder sustainable development efforts. Furthermore, Media literacy advances education and capacity building which fosters lifelong learning, which is key to sustainable development. When individuals can access and interpret media, they can also educate themselves on sustainable farming practices, environmental conservation, and sustainable business practices. This knowledge builds capacity, especially among the youth, enabling them to engage in sustainable entrepreneurship or community projects that support long-term economic and environmental health. In addition, media literacy skills encourage transparency and accountability**.** Media-literate citizens are more likely to demand transparency and accountability from industries and policymakers (Ferreira, 2019). For instance, in a state where oil exploitation has caused significant environmental degradation, media literacy can help the public track environmental compliance by companies and assess the effectiveness of government policies related to sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated Media Literacy Skills for promoting Sustainable Development in Rivers State, to this end, the study found that critical and analytical thinking, digital literacy, environmental literacy, cultural and social awareness, and collaborative communication are media literacy skills needed for promoting sustainable development. The study also found that education plays a pivotal role in inculcating media literacy to promote sustainable development and that media literacy skills are relevant for promoting sustainable development by equipping individuals with the tools to critically analyze media content, create their own messages, and protect themselves from misinformation**,** advance education and capacity building and encourage transparency and accountability.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that promoting media literacy skills is essential for sustainable development by empowering individuals to critically analyze and evaluate media messages, they will be informed, engaged, and proactive in addressing both local and global challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Policymakers and curriculum planners should integrate media literacy education into the curriculum. Schools should incorporate media literacy education as a subject offering. This will help students develop a holistic understanding of media and its impact on society.

2. School managers should organize training for media educators on how to teach media literacy effectively. This will help keep them abreast with up-to-date information on the

latest media trends and technologies, as well as strategies for teaching critical thinking skills.

3. Government and school managers should foster partnerships with media organizations. Schools can collaborate with media outlets to provide students with real-world examples of media literacy in action. This can include guest speakers, field trips, and internships to give students first-hand experience in analyzing media content.

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