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A Study on the Application of "Media Literacy" in Japan: Definitions and Insights from a Survey

Ryoga Okawa
Kansai University Graduate School, Japan
K818976@kansai-u.ac.jp

This study explores the application of media literacy by defining its conceptual framework and examining its practical implementation. Media literacy has become increasingly important in today's complex media environment, where misinformation and personalized content pose threats to democratic decision-making. While previous research has extensively focused on defining media literacy competencies, limited attention has been given to how individuals apply these skills in everyday contexts. This study addresses this gap through a two-part investigation. First, a critical review of existing definitions and components of media literacy in Japanese educational research highlights the lack of explicit discussion regarding its application. Second, a survey examines how media literacy is applied in real-life contexts and investigates its application through a survey. Findings reveal that the application of media literacy varies depending on these factors. High interest and trust in information sources promote active media literacy behaviors, whereas low levels inhibit application. These results emphasize the need to incorporate application-focused elements into media literacy frameworks to better reflect real-world practices. This study provides insights into enhancing media literacy education by bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, offering directions for future research on its development.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Application, Definition, Components, Survey

Introduction

In recent years, the media environment surrounding individuals has become increasingly complex and dynamic. Notably, new forms of media have emerged annually, significantly influencing people's lives. Additionally, the dissemination of numerous unverified pieces of information has caused widespread confusion, as seen in the spread of misinformation regarding COVID-19 and vaccines in 2020, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and the Israel-Gaza conflict in 2023. Furthermore, the issue of information personalization—where users are presented with content tailored to their computer and smartphone usage history—poses a major challenge. These circumstances threaten the foundation of democratic society, where citizens rely on information to make decisions and engage in political activities. In contemporary society, the question arises as to whether citizens possess the knowledge and discernment necessary to critically evaluate information—a vital skill for protecting the societies to which they belong. In this context, fostering the ability to independently verify the authenticity of information and accurately evaluate it—central to media literacy education—has become increasingly important. Media literacy is an essential competency in a society characterized by diverse media and information sources.

Despite the recognized importance of media literacy, questions remain about the extent to which individuals utilize it in their daily lives. This raises concerns that media literacy may lose its significance if it is not actively applied in everyday interactions with media.

Previous studies have extensively discussed the concept and components of media literacy (Mizukoshi, 1999; Nakahashi, 2021). However, the application of media literacy in real-life contexts has not been adequately addressed. While numerous researchers have examined the importance of media literacy from various perspectives—resulting in a substantial body of research and educational practices—most studies have focused on what competencies media literacy entails and how to engage with society, including media. Little attention has been given to how individuals autonomously apply and regulate the media literacy they acquire through education in their daily lives.

Examining the theme of applying media literacy as a competency is, therefore, crucial for advancing research and education in this field, as it addresses the gap between acquiring media literacy and its practical application in everyday life.

This study aims to define the application of media literacy and elucidate its aspects through an exploratory investigation. The objectives are twofold:

1. To critically review media literacy research focused on education in Japan, organize and analyze definitions, and clarify research tasks related to the application of media literacy.
2. To explore how media literacy is applied in real-life contexts and investigate its application through a survey.

Definition and Components of Media Literacy

As Nakahashi (2013) argues, the way media literacy is discussed varies depending on the context. Therefore, this chapter provides an overview of how media literacy has been defined in Japan. In this study, the definitions and components of media literacy were classified based on two dimensions: background and elements. The classification focused on the situations in which the definitions were formulated (background) and the elements identified by researchers within those definitions (elements), using similarities as analytical criteria (Figure 1). Specifically, the elements constituting each definition of media literacy were extracted, grouped based on conceptual similarities, and labeled accordingly. As a result, seven elements were identified: media operation ability, understanding of media structure, critical reading, creation/expression, social engagement, independence, and design. The classification was then conducted based on these seven elements.

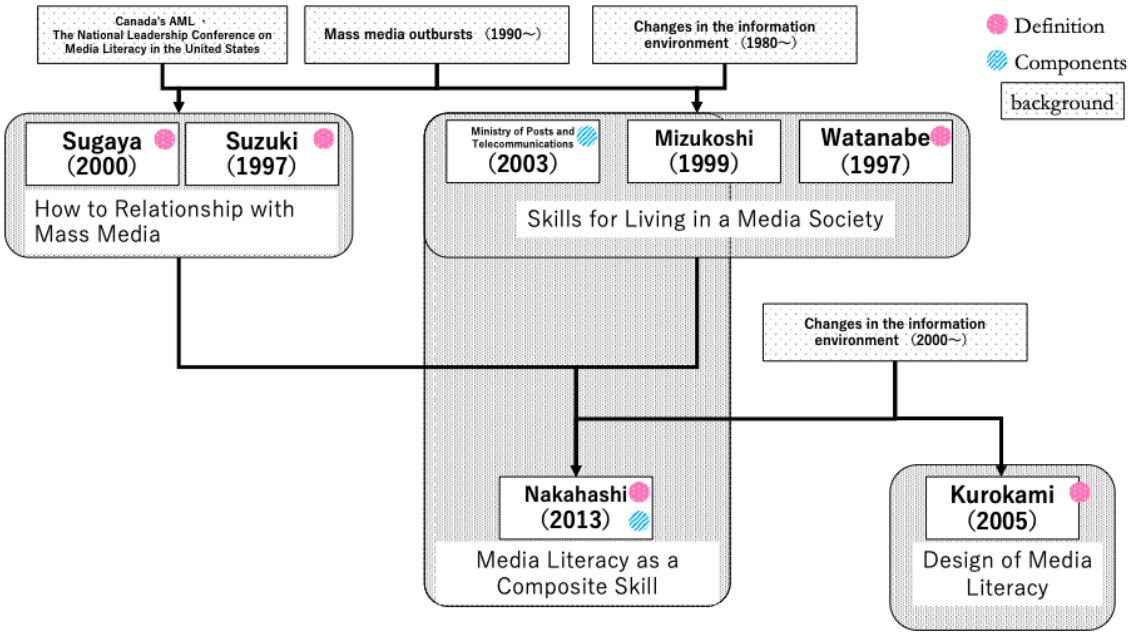

Figure 1. Diagram of Relationships between Definitions and Components

Representative Definitions of Media Literacy

In this section, frequently referenced definitions of media literacy in Japan are classified. To understand the trends in media literacy research in Japan and organize its definitions and components, this study selected literature based on the following criteria:

First, research on the definitions and educational approaches to media literacy was extracted from key academic journals, particularly those published by the Japan Association for Educational Media Study (JAEMS), as well as relevant policy documents.

Second, priority was given to literature that has been frequently cited and recognized as representative studies, considering their influence and impact on the field.

These definitions are categorized into four groups based on their background and focus: *"How to Engage with Mass Media," "Skills for Living in a Media Society," "Media Literacy as a Composite Skill,"* and *"Personalized Media Literacy"* (Figure 1).

How to Relationship with Mass Media.

Suzuki (1997) defines media literacy as follows:
"Media literacy refers to the ability of citizens to critically analyze and evaluate media in social contexts, access media, and create communication in various forms. The efforts to acquire such abilities are also referred to as media literacy."

This definition draws upon Canada's AML initiatives and the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy in the United States. It emphasizes critical analysis and evaluation of media, communication within media society, access to media for this purpose, and active engagement with the mass media environment. Overall, it provides a behavioral framework for interacting with mass media. Based on this social background and definition, Suzuki's concept of media literacy encompasses the following elements: understanding media structure, critical reading, expression, media operation ability, and social engagement.

Next, Sugaya (2000) defines media literacy as:
"The ability to critically interpret the 'reality' constructed by media, as well as the ability to express oneself using media. Additionally, it is the comprehensive ability to understand the characteristics and social significance of media, constructively 'criticize' the information disseminated by media as 'constructed,' express one's own thoughts using media, and effectively communicate with society, thereby actively engaging with the media society."

Sugaya's definition similarly includes the elements of understanding media structure, critical reading, expression, media operation ability, and social engagement, but places greater emphasis on critical reading and interpretation of media content. Given their focus on critical analysis and active engagement, the definitions proposed by Midori Suzuki and Akiko Sugaya can be classified under "How to Engage with Mass Media." Both definitions highlight the importance of critical thinking and critical interaction with mass media, underscoring the key aspect of how individuals relate to mass media.

Skills for Living in a Media Society

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (2000) defines media literacy as a composite ability composed of three interconnected elements, without specifying a singular, unified definition. This approach reflects the subtle variations in how media literacy is defined across different contexts, as well as the polysemous nature of the terms "media" and "literacy." Consequently, the Ministry concluded that the term media literacy alone could not fully capture the entirety of its concept.

The Ministry described media literacy as a composite ability consisting of three elements (Table 1), stating that these elements are complementary and organically interconnected (Figure 2).
From this perspective, media literacy is considered a general-purpose skill essential for navigating a media-saturated society. It encompasses a variety of abilities, including media operation ability, understanding media structure, critical reading, expression, social engagement, and independence. This interpretation aligns with the Ministry's view of media literacy as a set of skills for living effectively in a complex media society.

Table 1

Components of Media Literacy by the Ministry

1. The ability to interpret media independently : (a) The ability to understand the characteristics unique to each medium that transmits information. (b) The ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and scrutinize the information disseminated by the media within a social context, and to actively select such information.
2. The ability to access and utilize media: The ability to choose, operate, and actively utilize media (devices).
3. The ability to create communication through media: Particularly, the interactive communication ability to engage with the readers of the information.

Posts and Telecommunications (2000) (Translated by the author)

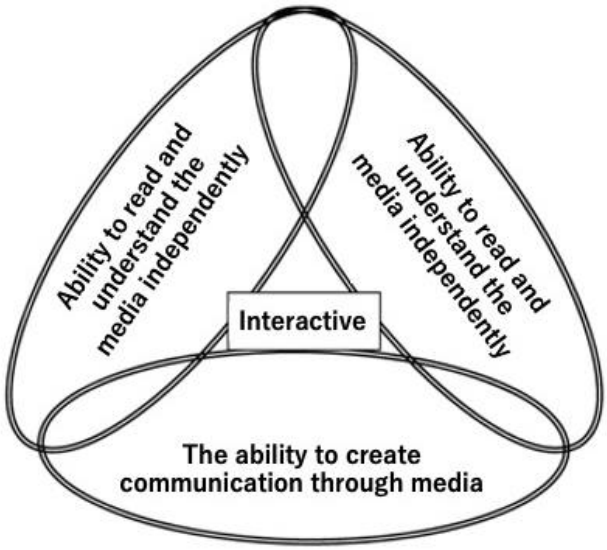

Figure 2. Components of Media Literacy by the Ministry. Translated by the author from the original Japanese source. Posts and Telecommunications (2000)

Mizukoshi (1999) defines media literacy as "a composite ability that involves critically accepting and interpreting information mediated by media as constructed, while constructively expressing one's thoughts and opinions through media and creating communication circuits." This definition reflects the increasing complexity of media and the growing distrust in mass media from the 1980s to the 1990s. It incorporates perspectives from mass media criticism, school education, and the production-consumption mechanisms of the information industry.

Furthermore, Mizukoshi conceptualized media literacy as "composite media literacy" and organized it into three hierarchically interrelated abilities (Figure 3).

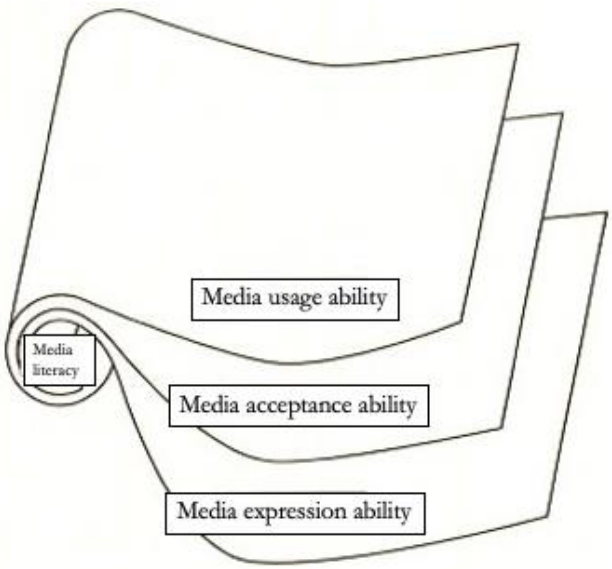

Figure 3. the components of complex media literacy defined by Mizukoshi. Translated by the author from the original Japanese source. Data source: Mizukoshi (1999, p. 93).

According to Mizukoshi's definition, "media usage ability" refers to the ability to operate media equipment and software. "Media acceptance ability" refers to the ability to critically analyze and interpret media based on its characteristics and context. "Media expression ability" encompasses both creating information through media and influencing society by using it. These three abilities are not hierarchical or central; rather, they are interrelated and collectively constitute media literacy.

Mizukoshi's definition and its components align with the seven elements, particularly understanding media structure, critical reading, expression, media operation ability, and social engagement. Mizukoshi perceives media literacy not merely as a set of isolated abilities but as an ongoing project involving the reorganization of media to make it personally usable, the creation of new communication spaces, and the potential transformation of society. This perspective is encapsulated in the phrase "creating communication circuits." Therefore, Mizukoshi places significant emphasis on social engagement as a core component of media literacy.

Next, Watanabe (1997) defines media literacy as "the ability to use media and interpret the information provided by media." This ability includes "becoming proficient in using everyday media equipment such as personal computers, video cameras, and televisions, understanding their advantages and limitations, independently interpreting the information they transmit, and using it as a foundation for social activities." Watanabe highlights the importance of individuals consciously determining how to interact with media within a diversified media society. His definition incorporates the elements of independence, media operation ability, critical reading, expression, and social engagement.

Media Literacy as a Composite Skill

Nakahashi consolidated the commonalities and differences in media literacy definitions proposed by prominent Japanese researchers such as Suzuki and Mizukoshi. He defined media literacy as "the ability to interpret information as a receiver and to express and transmit information as a sender, while considering and acting on the nature of media." Additionally, Nakahashi developed the "Elements of Media Literacy in the Age of Social Media" based on his previous research and the components identified by Meyrowitz, Mizukoshi, and the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (Table 2).

Nakahashi's definition and framework place particular emphasis on social engagement and independence. This reflects the emergence of new ways users interact with media in the context of social media. Furthermore, building on earlier definitions of media literacy, his framework incorporates elements such as understanding media characteristics, critical reading, and expression.

Table 2

Components of Media Literacy by Nakahashi

1. Ability to Utilize Media
a. Understand the functions and characteristics of information devices.
b. Operate information devices.
c. Differentiate and combine information devices according to the purpose.
2. Ability to Understand Media Characteristics
a. Understand the relationship between media and social, cultural, political, and economic contexts.
b. Understand that information content is constructed based on the sender's intentions.
c. Understand that media shapes people's perceptions of reality and values.
3. Ability to Read, Interpret, and Appreciate Media
a. Understand the system of signs including vocabulary, grammar, and expression techniques.
b. Use the system of signs to comprehend information content.
c. Read, interpret, and appreciate the underlying contexts and apply imagination to the information content.
4. Ability to Critically Evaluate Media
a. Judge the credibility of information content.
b. Recognize that media representations of "reality" are constructed images.
c. Understand the sender's intentions, thoughts, and standpoint without being constrained by one's own values.
5. Ability to Express Ideas through Media
a. Express oneself using information means and methods of expression, keeping the audience and purpose in mind.
b. Embrace others' ideas while creating new thoughts and cultures.
c. Understand the responsibility and ethics of being a sender in a society with diverse values.
6. Ability to Communicate and Engage in Dialogue through Media
a. Understand that one's intentions may not be conveyed as intended due to the recipient's interpretation.
b. Communicate information in response to the recipient's reactions.
c. Foster communication that deepens the relationship with the recipient.
7. Ability to Propose New Forms of Media
a. Innovate new uses for information devices or create new information devices.
b. Propose rules and agreements within communities.
c. Evaluate and adjust the nature of media.

Nakahashi (2013) (Translated by the author)

Design of Media Literacy

Kurokami (2005) defines media literacy as comprising three levels and three layers: "Instrumental skills," "Interactive values and attitudes," and "Critical thinking skills" (Figure 4). He conceptualizes media literacy as "the ability to design the interface between oneself and media." Kurokami emphasizes the importance of individual intentions in media literacy, asserting that individuals can deliberately adjust how they apply media literacy based on different situations. Furthermore, he posits that adopting this flexible perspective allows for diverse ways of engaging with media.

Kurokami also argues that media literacy education should aim to expand the scope of each level and make learners consciously aware of how they apply their abilities.

From these points, Kurokami's definition places significant emphasis on design as a core concept. Additionally, his framework highlights the element of independence."

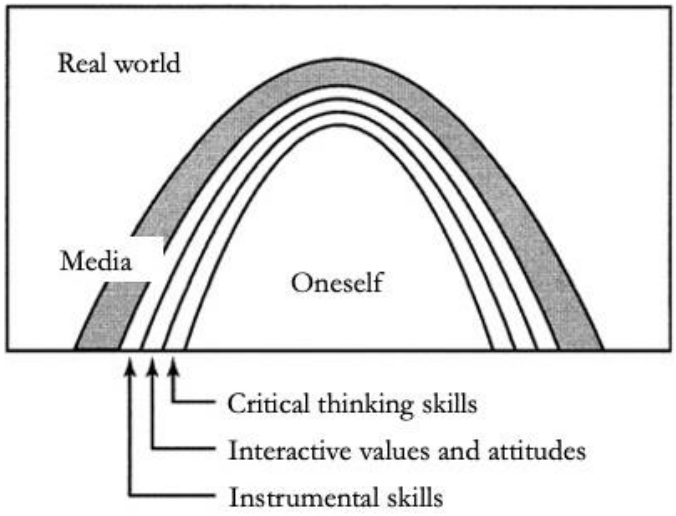

Figure 4. Three Layers of Media Literacy. This figure illustrates the three layers of media literacy as defined by Kurokami (2005, p. 5). Note. Translated by the author from the original Japanese source. Data source: Kurokami (2005, p. 5).

Summary

Table 3 summarizes the elements included in the definitions and components proposed by the seven researchers. Black circles (●) indicate elements corresponding to the seven items, while double circles (◎) highlight the author's emphasis. This comparison reveals both the similarities and differences among these definitions. It is important to note that these seven items do not exist independently within each definition or component but rather overlap with other abilities, collectively forming media literacy.

Thus far, we have analyzed seven definitions and components in relation to the seven elements and their respective backgrounds. It has become clear what media literacy entails as a concept, what components it includes, and how it has developed as a distinct ability. These studies contribute to forming an image of media literacy, thereby influencing educational goals and methods. However, the application of media literacy was not clearly included in the definitions or components. Nonetheless, Kurokami highlighted the application of media literacy from the perspective of educational methods. This involves raising learners' awareness of the intention behind applying media literacy and how to manifest it to varying degrees based on the situation.

Table 3

Classification of Media Literacy

	Suzuki(1997)	Watanabe(1997)	Mizukoshi(1999)	Sugaya(2000)	Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (2003)	Kurokami(2005)	Nakahashi(2013)
Media operation ability		●	●		●	●	●
Understanding of media structure	●		●	●	●		●
Critical reading	◎	●	●	◎	●	●	●
Creation/Expression	●	●	●	●	●		●
Social engagement	●	●	◎	●	●		◎
Independence		◎	●	●	●	●	●
Design						◎	

Research issue

Thus far, we have summarized the definitions and components of media literacy and examined how its application has been addressed. However, as stated in the research questions, there is no explicit mention of its application within the definitions, except for Kurokami (2005), who highlighted it as an educational method. In other words, the discussion lacks specificity and does not provide concrete examples of when and how media literacy is applied.

To address this gap, this study introduces application as a critical perspective in media literacy research. While existing studies have primarily focused on defining media literacy competencies, little attention has been given to how these competencies are actively applied across diverse media environments. By framing media literacy as an ongoing process of application rather than merely a static set of abilities, this study offers a more dynamic and comprehensive framework that reflects its real-world enactment.

Investigating how media literacy is applied in everyday contexts can refine existing definitions and components, offering a more nuanced understanding of its practical implementation and adaptability across different media landscapes.

Survey: Actual Conditions of Media Literacy Application

Purpose of the Survey

The purpose of this survey is to elucidate the presence or absence of media literacy application and the factors influencing its application. Specifically, it examines the impact of the type of information, the type of media through which the information was received, trust in the media, and interest in information on subsequent actions. In other words, this survey aims to clarify how media literacy is applied in daily media interactions.

In the previous chapter, it became evident that the application of media literacy as a daily competency was not explicitly included in its definitions. Consequently, many aspects of its practical application remain unclear. Moreover, no surveys or studies have addressed how or whether media literacy is applied in everyday contexts. It also remains uncertain whether the application itself constitutes an essential element of media literacy. Therefore, investigating the relationship between media literacy and its application, as well as examining how media literacy is applied, holds significant value.

Furthermore, there are many unresolved questions regarding the factors influencing the application of media literacy. To address this, four potential factors were selected to examine their relationship with the presence or absence of media literacy application.

Survey Methods

Survey Subjects

To investigate the current state of media literacy application in society, a broad range of subjects was required. Therefore, individuals aged 15 to 99 were targeted. The survey was conducted using the internet survey platform "Freeasy," which has been utilized at Kansai University. Participants were recruited to ensure a balance in age and gender.

A total of 504 individuals responded, with 479 valid responses collected. The average age of respondents was 45.9 years (SD = 19.1), ranging from 15 to 86. The number and proportion of responses by age group and gender are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Age and Gender Distribution of Survey Participants

	Female	Male	Sum
10's	36	30	66
	(7.5)	(6.3)	(13.8)
20's	30	32	62
	(6.3)	(6.7)	(12.9)
30'S	36	34	70
	(7.5)	(7.1)	(14.6)
40's	34	35	69
	(7.1)	(7.3)	(14.4)
50's	36	35	71
	(7.5)	(7.3)	(14.8)
60's	36	36	72
	(7.5)	(7.5)	(15.0)
Over 70's	36	33	69
	(7.5)	(6.9)	(14.4)
Sum	244	235	479
	(50.9)	(49.1)	(100.0)

Survey Period and Methods
The survey was conducted on October 27, 2023, using the internet survey platform "Freeasy." Responses were collected anonymously to ensure participant privacy and data integrity.
Survey Items
Based on the premise of investigating the application of media literacy, seven survey items were developed. These questions were categorized into four elements according to their content: media usage, information and media-related behavior, interest in information, and trust in media

Questions 1 and 2 were designed based on the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' Information and Communication Policy Research Institute's *"Survey on the Usage Time of Information and Communication Media and Information Behavior in FY2022"* (2023). These questions inquired about the information sources (media) used to obtain various types of information over the past month. The seven types of information included current news, sports news, weather information/forecasts, gourmet information, shopping, travel/tourism information, and entertainment information. The eleven sources of information included TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, internet news sites, specialized information sites, social media, video distribution/sharing sites, blogs/other sites, conversations with friends, acquaintances, family members, or no need for such information. Responses were recorded in a matrix table format. Additionally, Question 2 asked respondents to identify the most frequently used media from their answers to Question 1.

Questions 3, 4, and 5 aimed to clarify differences in actions based on the type of information and media. These questions employed three hypothetical news scenarios to measure variations in behavior. Scenario A focused on a societal issue involving taxation, where the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications considers introducing a new tax, the "Radio Wave Usage Tax," for infrastructure development and research. This scenario addressed topics that participants are likely to perceive as personally relevant. Scenario B examined political policy issues, specifically the government's consideration of expanding acceptance of foreign workers as part of a new immigration policy. This scenario aimed to measure differences in responses based on levels of interest and trust. Scenario C explored accidents and incidents by presenting a case where three men and women were severely injured in an accident while climbing Mount Fuji. This scenario focused on events that are more likely to be perceived as unrelated to personal circumstances. These scenarios were intentionally designed to examine how variations in information types influence interest levels and trust, and how these differences affect the *application* of media literacy behaviors.
The six types of media considered were TV, radio, internet news sites, social media, video distribution/sharing sites, and conversations with friends, acquaintances, or family members. The corresponding actions consisted of eight

categories: checking the source or origin of information, confirming information from reliable sources, checking TV/radio reports, collecting information via the internet (search engines, social media, video sharing sites, news sites), consulting books/newspapers, asking people, or doing nothing. These scenarios and response categories were adapted from Okawa (2022).

Question 6 assessed interest in each of the hypothetical news scenarios (A, B, and C) using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "very interested" to (5) "not at all interested."

Question 7 examined trust in the six media types mentioned in Questions 3, 4, and 5, also using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "completely trust" to (5) "not at all trust."

Analysis Methods

The analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 29. Exploratory cross-tabulation, chi-square tests, and residual analysis were employed to examine actions in relation to information type, media type, interest level, and trust level.

For Question 6, responses were categorized into three groups based on interest levels: high, medium, and low. Similarly, for Question 7, responses were categorized into three groups based on trust levels: high, medium, and low.

Results

Types of Information

Using distinct stimuli for Information A, B, and C, we examined the rates of various actions across different media. As shown in Table 5, there is a significant association between the level of interest in Information A, B, and C and whether subsequent actions were taken. Groups with high interest in the information tended to exhibit "action taken," while those with low interest were more likely to exhibit "no action taken."

Table 5
Differences in Behavior by Information Type and Receive Media

N=479	Information A		Information B		Information C	
	Action Taken	No Action Taken	Action Taken	No Action Taken	Action Taken	No Action Taken
TV	248	231	221	258	213	266
Radio	142	337	145	334	133	346
Internet news sites	248	231	214	265	194	285
Social media	180	299	165	314	146	333
Video distribution/sharing sites	178	301	160	319	136	343
Conversations with others	192	287	172	307	148	331

Interest in Information

To explore whether the degree of interest in information and the medium through which it is received influence actions, we analyzed the levels of interest in Information A, B, and C, along with the subsequent actions taken across various media. To examine the relationship between interest and actions, the five-point scale responses were categorized into three groups: high, medium, and low interest.

The distribution of these groups by information type is presented in Table 6. Both Information A and B had the highest proportions in the high-interest group, while Information C showed the highest proportion in the low-interest group.

Table 6
Frequency Distribution by Interest Groups for Each Type of Information

Information	Group	Frequency	Percentage
A	High	200	41.80%
	Middle	113	23.60%
	Low	166	34.70%
B	High	201	42.00%
	Middle	110	23.00%
	Low	168	35.10%
C	High	151	31.50%
	Middle	116	24.20%
	Low	212	44.30%

These results indicate that the degree of interest in information significantly influences subsequent actions taken in response to media (Table 7). Specifically, individuals with high interest were significantly more likely to exhibit "Action Taken," while those with low interest were more likely to exhibit "No Action Taken." Furthermore, the level of interest varied depending on the type of information.

Table 7

Differences in Behavior by Interest in Information and Reception Media

			Receiving Media																					
			TV				Radio				Internet news sites				Social media				Video distribution/sharing sites				Conversations with others			
		Interest in Information	Action Taken (N=248)	No Action Taken (N=231)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken (N=142)	No Action Taken (N=337)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken (N=248)	No Action Taken (N=231)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken (N=180)	No Action Taken (N=299)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken (N=178)	No Action Taken (N=301)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken (N=192)	No Action Taken (N=287)	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value
Type of Information	A	High	149	51		***	97	103		***	161	39		***	116	84		***	115	85		***	121	79		***
		Middle	54	59	<0.01		25	88	<0.01		50	63	<0.01		38	75	<0.01		39	74	<0.01		37	76	<0.01	
		Low	45	121		***	20	146		***	37	129		***	26	140		***	24	142		***	34	132		***
	B	High	138	63		***	91	110		***	152	49		***	114	87		***	117	84		***	118	83		***
		Middle	56	54	<0.01		28	82	<0.01		52	58	<0.01		40	70	<0.01		40	70	<0.01		41	69	<0.01	
		Low	54	114		***	23	145		***	44	124		***	26	142		***	21	147		***	33	135		***
	C	High	106	45		***	69	82		***	111	40		***	85	66		***	80	71		***	83	68		***
		Middle	60	56	<0.01		32	84	<0.01		54	62	<0.01		41	75	<0.01		43	73	<0.01		48	68	<0.01	
		Low	82	130		***	41	171		***	83	129		***	54	158		***	55	157		***	61	151		***

Trust in Media

The question, "*How does trust in media affect subsequent actions?*" explored the relationship between trust in various media and actions taken when receiving information through them.

For each of the seven media types (*TV, radio, internet news sites, specialized information sites, social media, video distribution/sharing sites, conversations with friends, acquaintances, family members*), trust was rated on a five-point scale ranging from "*completely trust*" to "*not at all trust.*" Responses were then categorized into three groups: high trust (*completely trust and mostly trust*), medium trust (*about half*), and low trust (*only partially trust and not at all trust*). The distribution of these trust groups by media type is presented in Table 8.

(1) Trust in Television and Actions
The high trust group for television accounts for 49.5%, indicating a higher level of trust compared to other media. Cross-tabulation analysis (Table 8) shows that this group is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from television. Conversely, the low trust group is significantly less likely to take action. Additionally, individuals in the high trust group for television are more likely to take action when receiving information from "internet news sites" and "conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family."

(2) Trust in Radio and Actions
Cross-tabulation analysis for trust in radio (Table 8) reveals that the high trust group for radio is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from "television," "radio," "internet news sites," "social media," "video distribution and sharing sites," and "conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family."

(3) Trust in Internet News Sites and Actions
According to cross-tabulation analysis for trust in internet news sites (Table 8), the high trust group for internet news sites is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from "television," "radio," "internet news sites," "social media," and "video distribution and sharing sites." Conversely, the low trust group is significantly less likely to take action when receiving information from "television," "radio," and "internet news sites."

(4) Trust in Social Media and Actions
Cross-tabulation analysis for trust in social media (Table 8) indicates that the high trust group for social media is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from "television," "radio," "internet news sites," "social media," "video distribution and sharing sites," and "conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family." Conversely, the low trust group is significantly less likely to take action when receiving information from these media, except for "television."

(5) Trust in Video Distribution and Sharing Sites and Actions
Cross-tabulation analysis for trust in video distribution and sharing sites (Table 8) shows that the high trust group for these sites is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from "television," "radio," "internet news sites," "social media," "video distribution and sharing sites," and "conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family." Conversely, the low trust group is significantly less likely to take action when receiving information from these media, except for "television."

(6) Trust in Conversations with Friends, Acquaintances, and Family and Actions
Cross-tabulation analysis for trust in conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family (Table 8) reveals that the high trust group for these conversations is significantly more likely to take action when receiving information from "radio," "internet news sites," "social media," "video distribution and sharing sites," and "conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family." Conversely, the low trust group is significantly less likely to take action when receiving information from these media.

Table 8

Trust in Various Media and Differences in Behavior by Information Receive Media

		Receiving Media																					
		TV				Radio				Internet news sites				Social media				Video distribution/sharing sites				Conversations with others			
	Trust Level	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value	Action Taken	No Action Taken	χ^2 test p-value	Residual Analysis p-value
		(N=248)	(N=231)			(N=142)	(N=337)			(N=248)	(N=231)			(N=180)	(N=299)			(N=178)	(N=301)			(N=192)	(N=287)		
Trust Target	TV	High	148	89		***	83	154		*	138	99		**	99	138			96	141			111	126		**
		Middle	71	81	<0.01		36	116	<0.05		72	80	<0.01		47	105	0.098		50	102	0.298		49	103	<0.05	
		Low	29	61		***	23	67			38	52		*	34	56			32	58			32	58		
	Radio	High	123	70		***	82	111		***	120	73		***	93	100		***	90	103		***	98	95		***
		Middle	100	100	<0.01		49	151	<0.01	*	98	102	<0.01		66	134	<0.01		68	132	<0.01		70	130	<0.01	
		Low	25	61		***	11	75		***	30	56		***	21	65		**	20	66		**	24	62		*
	Internet news sites	High	67	36		**	42	61		**	67	36		**	52	51		**	52	51		**	50	53		
		Middle	123	117	<0.01		61	179	<0.05	*	126	114	<0.01		84	156	<0.01		81	159	<0.01		89	151	0.133	
		Low	58	78		*	39	97			55	81		**	44	92			45	91			53	83		
	Social media	High	31	11		**	26	16		***	30	12		**	30	12		***	29	13		***	28	14		***
		Middle	93	86	<0.01		55	124	<0.01		100	79	<0.01		81	98	<0.01	**	77	102	<0.01	*	77	102	<0.01	
		Low	124	134			61	197		**	118	140		**	69	189		***	72	186		***	87	171		**
	Video distribution/ sharing sites	High	39	12		**	31	20		***	38	13		***	36	15		***	35	16		***	34	17		***
		Middle	95	95	<0.01		56	134	<0.01		102	88	<0.01		80	110	<0.01		79	111	<0.01		74	116	<0.01	
		Low	114	124			55	183		**	108	130		**	64	174		***	64	174		***	84	154		*
	Conversations with others	High	80	57			53	84		**	83	54		*	64	73		**	66	71		**	72	65		***
		Middle	119	114	0.106		65	168	<0.05		121	112	<0.01		91	142	<0.01		88	145	<0.01		95	138	<0.01	
		Low	49	60			24	85		*	44	65		**	25	84		***	24	85		***	25	84		***

Summary of Results

The results indicate that the application of media literacy varies based on factors such as "types of information" (Table 5), "types of media through which information is received" (Table 5), "interest in information" (Tables 6–7), and "trust in media" (Table 8).

Regarding "types of information," differences were observed in the number of responses with and without actions among information types A, B, and C. The rate of responses with actions was highest for information A, followed by information B, and lowest for information C. These results reveal that the type of information affects the application of actions.

Interest in Information

For "interest in information" (Tables 6–7), all types of information—A, B, and C—exhibited a significant correlation between the level of interest in each type of information and the presence or absence of subsequent actions. High-interest groups tended to demonstrate "action present," while low-interest groups tended to demonstrate "no action." This trend was consistent regardless of the type of information or the medium through which it was received.

These results indicate that "interest in information" is a significant factor influencing the application of media literacy. However, these findings also suggest that media literacy is a capability that is not activated without a prerequisite "interest." In other words, media literacy can be applied with information of interest but not with information lacking interest.

Trust in Media

Regarding "trust in media" (Table 8), it was found that the presence or absence of subsequent actions varies depending on the level of trust. Except for the TV trust group concerning "social media," "video distribution/sharing sites," and conversations with friends, acquaintances, and family members, as well as the trust group regarding "TV," high-trust groups for each medium showed a significantly higher tendency for "action present," while low-trust groups showed a significantly higher tendency for "no action."

These results indicate that "trust in media" is a factor influencing the application of media literacy. Furthermore, the findings suggest that trust in media promotes rather than inhibits the application of media literacy. Additionally, a lack of trust in media was found to suppress the application of media literacy. Hence, it was demonstrated that one can "trust the media while applying media literacy" and "not trust the media and fail to apply media literacy."

Discussion

This study aimed to define the concept of "applying media literacy" and elucidate its aspects through investigation. The results demonstrated that the application of media literacy is significantly influenced by factors such as the "types of information," "level of interest in information," and "degree of trust in media." These findings highlight that existing definitions and components of media literacy do not sufficiently account for situational and interest-dependent aspects of its application.

The Relationship Between Applying Media Literacy, Interest, and Trust

The survey results clearly indicated that a high level of interest in information promotes the application of media literacy. Conversely, when the level of interest is low, a lack of action becomes noticeable, making it difficult to apply media literacy. This suggests that the application of media literacy is closely related to the perceived importance and relevance of information to the individual.

Additionally, trust in media was identified as another important factor influencing its application. Higher trust in specific media encouraged active behavior, whereas lower trust tended to suppress such behavior. These findings suggest that trust in media can serve as a key factor in promoting or inhibiting the application of media literacy.

Comparison with Existing Definitions

Previous studies have predominantly emphasized the “content” and “educational” aspects of media literacy, while discussions on its practical dimension—specifically how it is applied—have been limited. For example, although Kurogami (2005) addressed the application of media literacy from an educational perspective, there was insufficient examination of the mechanisms by which it is applied and its adaptability to specific situations.

This study complements prior discussions by proposing the incorporation of application elements into the framework of media literacy as a new perspective.

Conclusion

This study aimed to define the application of media literacy and elucidate its aspects through an exploratory investigation.

Key Findings
A critical review of media literacy research in Japanese education revealed that the application of media literacy in real-life contexts has not been adequately addressed.

The survey results identified three key factors influencing the application of media literacy: "type of information," "interest in information," and "trust in media." Specifically, higher interest in information was associated with more active application, whereas lower interest resulted in fewer actions. Similarly, higher trust in media promoted application, while lower trust suppressed it.

Significance of Incorporating 'Application' into Media Literacy Definitions
The findings of this study underscore the importance of considering application as an essential element within the frameworks of media literacy. Recognizing these factors provides a more comprehensive understanding of media literacy in real-life contexts.

Limitations and Future Issues
This study represents an initial step in understanding the application of media literacy. While it identified factors influencing its application, the causal mechanisms underlying these relationships remain unclear. Future research should adopt experimental designs or longitudinal studies to determine causality and explore more complex relationships.

Additionally, the validity and reliability of the survey instruments used in this study remain areas for future consideration. Ensuring robust and replicable methodologies will be essential for advancing research in this field.

Moreover, the survey design in this study did not allow for detailed comparisons of behavioral patterns across different types of information. Addressing this limitation will require refining survey methods and expanding datasets to enhance analytical precision.

Future research should aim to uncover additional factors and investigate their specific impacts. Expanding the range of identified application factors can offer deeper insights into how media literacy can be utilized in real-life contexts and inform the development of instructional methods in education. Ultimately, such research could enable more individuals to engage with media while effectively applying media literacy in diverse settings.

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