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Exploring Factors Affecting Media Information Literacy: A Mediation Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to investigate the determinants of media information literacy by examining the skills of students belonging to the University of Jammu in July 2022. The focal point of the study is to identify the predictors of MIL, by knowing the student's familiarity with the various concepts of MIL, and their level of MIL skills. MIL is studied through a scale having four parameters, with a 0.741 interclass correlation and a total reliability of.81. The majority of respondents assessed poor MIL skills and distinct from the self-reported MIL (W= 2386.5, $p<0.001$, and rB = 0.8). It was found that information literacy, computer literacy, and freedom of expression are indirectly affecting the MIL, and is mediated by the capacities to create and evaluate information.Nevertheless, it is directly affected by information literacy.

Keywords: Media information literacy; Media literacy; UNESCO's MIL ecology; Information literacy; Digital literacy; Freedom of expression; University of Jammu

1. INTRODUCTION

Media literacy is influenced by the application of technology in day-to-day life and helps people to analyze information, and become critical thinkers, decision-makers, successful communicators, and informed citizens.[1] As a gateway to encourage media users of all age groups, the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) proposed the six Core Principles of Media Literacy Education. Consequently, determine the purpose, social-political impact, and authenticity of the information media tools that serve as potent agents influencing the ideas, emotions, values, behavioral attitudes, and social interactions. Information literacy enables an individual to understand and investigate the formats and context of information to act appropriately.[2] However, for persuasive communication skills, user-generated information, 'media literacy,' and 'information literacy' merged and evolved as "Media and Information Literacy".[3]

UNESCO identified two schools; media literacy and information literacy, and the international expert group stated the various terminologies used by stakeholders and called it 'The Ecology of MIL: Notionsof MIL'. According to the expert group, MIL is "a composite set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and practices that allow one to effectively access, analysis, critically evaluate, interpret, use, create, and disseminate information and media products with the use of existing means and tools on a creative, legal, and ethical basis".[4]

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The relevance and significance of media and literacy (information) in the lives of learners were emphasised, including preschool children, students, researchers, academicians, librarians, policymakers, experts, etc. The researchers suggested introducing MIL skills through libraries in the formative stages of life[5] and the teaching-learning process[6] would help students in their development as critical information users, and creators and the formation of a media-literate society. This would foster the habit to evaluate and use technologically generated information to modify and share it ethical and appropriate manner. Additionally, defend against the spread of disinformation through media messages and treacherous conspiracies. Using digital tools and classroom media-literate learners become more competent and can apply their knowledge and competencies into practice.[7] An investigation in Portugal[8] and Norway[9] reported the significance of school libraries in fostering student's media literacy skills and their ability to critically analyse information from media tools.

The researchers focused on the importance of a media literacy society that uses digital technologies. The study also examined how information or library professionals can help to buildstudents' subject-based and other MIL abilities.In this regard, a multidisciplinary approach to

research and learning MILskills was described[10] and many models from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the USA were developed, including the e-ARTISTS MIL model.[11]

Researchers examined the media and information literacy skills of students and teachers concerning various factors like gender, socioeconomic status, institution, education, etc. It is identified as a crucial set of skills that can be utilised and have influenced the individuals' critical thinking, behavior, attitude, and understanding of the credibility, reliability, and timeliness of information sources.[12] It is also acknowledged as a tool for information processing by accessing and recognising validity, authenticity, and critical thinking.[13] Due to the heterogeneous nature of information resources, students and users must focus on the skills of evaluating and locating relevantcontent.[14] Oo & Nyunt[15] studied the MIL capabilities in terms of understanding, accessibility, analysis, creation, reflection, and action, and depicted how it is related to socioeconomic background and status. Furthermore, Geraee,[16] *et al.* analysed the effect of media literacy training on awareness, and behavioral changes in adopting the evaluation criteria while using media. Tibaldo (2021), reported the average MIL skills of Language and Communication stream students in the Philippines and a critical need for its inclusion in every area of the curriculum.[17] Similar findings were made by Ashrafi-rizi,[18] *et al.,* and Alipour, Farsadhabibi, and Karimi[19] regarding the moderate level of MIL skills among the students of Isfahan University (X=3.34±0.44) and Zahedan University of Medical Sciences (X=3.80±0.50) respectively. Various studies suggested that priority be given to strengthening students' MIL skills to prevent the detrimental impact of mass media on future generations and concluded that a structured education program of MIL in teaching and learning is necessary to implement in various fields such as Social Work[20], Library, and Information Science[21], etc. Previous researchers have used various categories of skills to examine media information literacy and are incorporated in the MIL scale in this study.[22-27]

This study would lay the foundation for understanding the MIL of students and academics by examining the numerous aspects and attaining the concept that influences their abilities. This fulfills the research gap that has been identified in the field of MIL.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study aims to assess the level of MIL and its relationship with socio-demographic variables and associated notions and to determine the best predictors of MIL through a survey of 300 students of the University of Jammu in July 2022. The twenty-four questions cover demographic information, self-assessed MIL skills, familiarity with MIL concepts, and a 19-item scale about their abilities in both a theoretical and practical context, i.e., locating, evaluating, and creating information, and understanding their impact on society. The strength of this work is the examination and identification of variables in predicting and attaining the MIL.Emphasising theoretical perspectives, a hypothesised model was designed in Figure 1, aiming to explore the association between MIL and its notion by introducing its dimensions as mediators.

In consideration ofthe theoretical framework following objectives and hypotheseswere framed:

Objectives:

1. To study the association between Demographic factors, Self-reported MIL (S-MIL), and calculated MIL (C-MIL).
2. To study the respondents' familiarity with the various notions of MIL.

Hypotheses:

H1: Demographic factors are associated with various concepts of MIL.

H2: Skills are the mediators in the relationship between the notions and level of MIL(C-MIL).

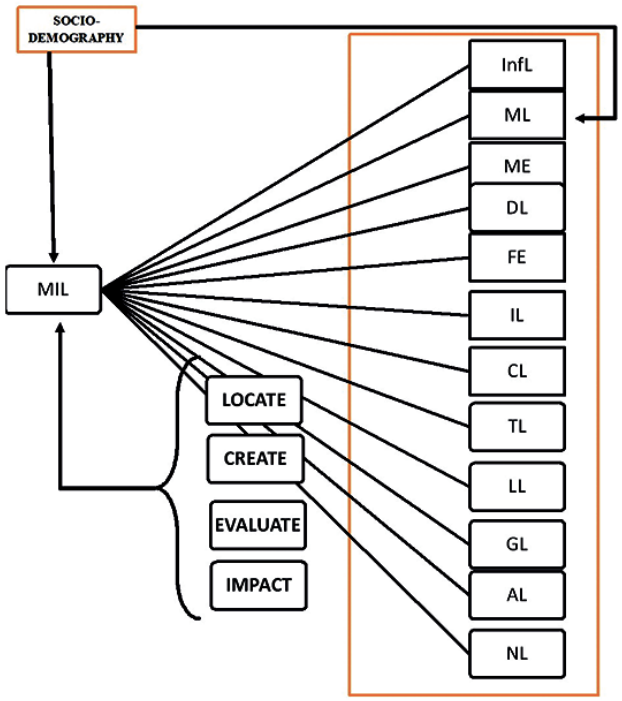

Figure 1. Hypothesised model of MIL.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Respondents' Profile

Figure 2 shows the demographics of the respondents from the eight departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences and illustrates that the maximum number of respondents were female respondents, residing in rural areas enrolled in the P.G. Department of Political Science.

4.2 Media Information Literacy of Students

MIL skills were examined using criteria derived from the literature review in four different dimensions. The dimensions of locating, evaluating, and creating MI resources have a set of five skills, and understanding the impact of information on society has a set of four skillsand is scaled with yes or no replies. Cronbach's alpha reliability for each dimension was tested, and

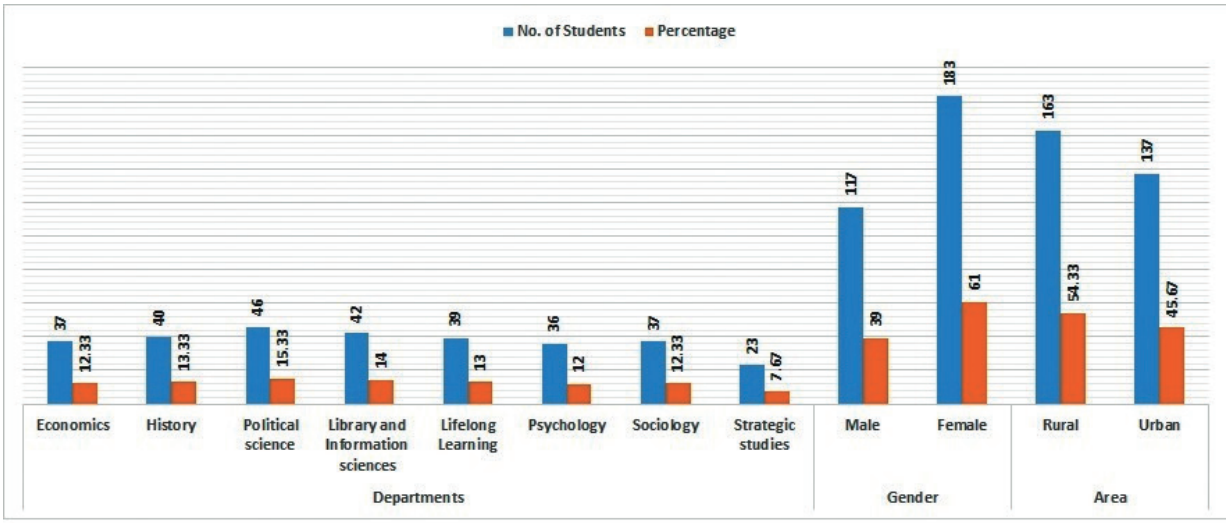

Figure 2. Respondents' profile.

Table 1. Parameters and dimensions of MIL skills

Dimensions	Parameter of MIL	N	Percent	Cronbach's alpha
Locating media resources	Finding Information onMediaContent	210	70	.7
	Determine the forms of MI resources	202	67.33	
	Finding the authentic resources	104	34.67	
	Preferring Information based on source authenticity	200	66.67	
	Referring variety of social MI resources	204	68.00	
Evaluating media resources	Considering the authorship	188	62.67	.7
	Considering the media coverage	174	58.00	
	Connecting information from different MI sources	204	68.00	
	Paying attention to the media administrator	150	50.00	
	Understanding the purpose of information sharing	188	62.67	
Creating information for media	Generating new information by combining current information and own ideas	174	58.00	.72
	Considering the Socio-cultural aspects of MI	192	64.00	
	Quoting other's content	181	60.33	
	Discussing for getting other's opinion	202	67.33	
	Arranging talks for MIL	180	60.00	
Understanding the Impact of information on the society	Effect on behavior	186	62.00	.77
	Affect emotions	186	62.00	
	Media as a source of misinformation	199	66.33	
	Using MI before knowing the credibility	138	46.00	
MIL				.81

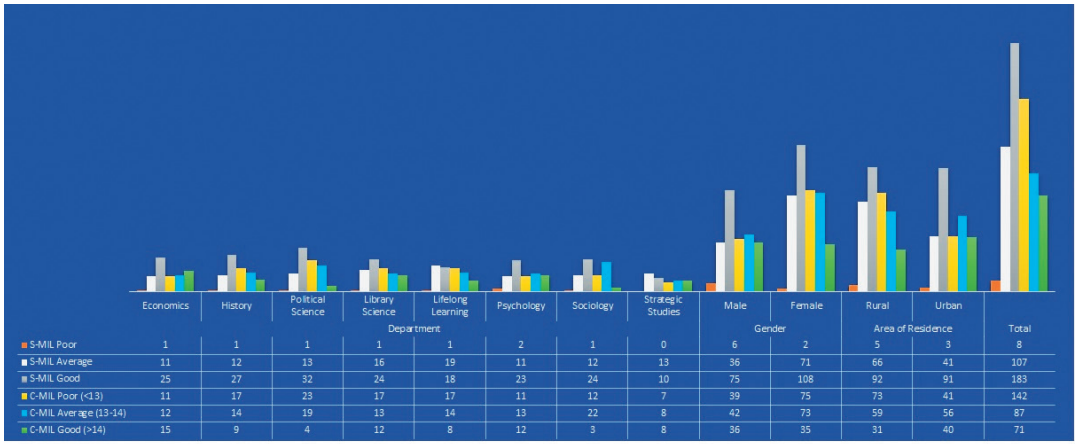

Figure 3. Media information literacy.

Table 2. Variables affecting media information literacy level

Calculated (C-MIL)	Variables	Department	Gender	Area of Residence	Significance *p
	χ^2 (df)	26.16* (14)	5.48(2)	8.01*(2)	< .05
Paired Samples T-Test (Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test)	Measure 1	Measure 2	W	p	Rank-Biserial Correlation
	S-MIL	C-MIL	2386.5	< .001	-0.807

results ranged from 7 to 77 for individual items and 81 for the scale. Because all subjects are not generalised to a wider population, the interclass correlation with 300 subjects and four raters for MIL skills has been calculated at a 95 % confidence interval for an average rating of the fixed set of rates[28] and is moderate[29] [ICC 3, k = 0.741(CI 0.69, 0.786)]. The frequencies for each parameter defining the skills are shown in Table 1.

4.3 Association between Demographic Factors, Self-Reported MIL (S-MIL), and Calculated MIL (C-MIL)

Figure 3 displays the self-assessment and calculated media skills of the students. Respondents were asked to rate their skills on a scale of poor, average, and good. The majority of respondents rated their skills as excellent, while the calculated level of skills shows that the maximum of them have poor MIL skills.

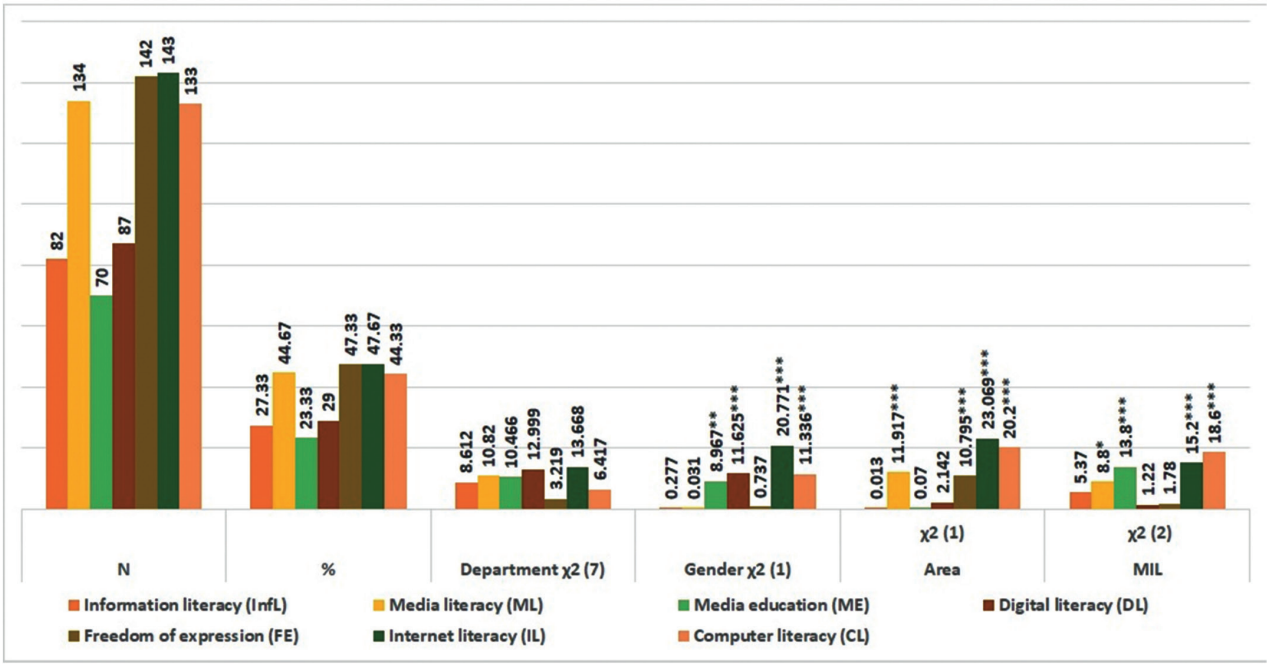

Figure 4. Respondents' familiarity with the notions of MIL.

Table 3. Associations among MIL sub dimensions and C-MIL mediated by parameters of MIL

Type Effect	Estimate	SE	95% C.I.	β	z	p	
			Lower	Upper			
InfL⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.03	0.02	-0.01	0.08	0.02	1.38	0.167
InfL⇒ Evaluate ⇒ MIL	0.06	0.03	0.00	0.13	0.04	1.86	0.063
InfL⇒ Create ⇒ MIL	0.06	0.04	-0.01	0.13	0.04	1.58	0.113
InfL⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	0.00	0.04	-0.07	0.07	0.00	-0.09	0.93
ML ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.06	0.02	0.87	0.382
ML ⇒ Evaluate ⇒ MIL	-0.04	0.03	-0.10	0.01	-0.04	-1.54	0.123
ML ⇒ Create ⇒ MIL	-0.07	0.03	-0.13	-0.01	-0.06	-2.39	0.017
ML ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	-0.09	0.03	-0.15	-0.02	-0.07	-2.65	0.008
ME ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.00	0.02	-0.04	0.05	0.00	0.16	0.877
ME ⇒ Evaluate ⇒ MIL	-0.07	0.03	-0.13	-0.01	-0.05	-2.16	0.031
ME ⇒ Create ⇒ MIL	-0.02	0.04	-0.09	0.06	-0.01	-0.49	0.622
ME ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	-0.06	0.04	-0.13	0.01	-0.04	-1.75	0.079
DL ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.09	0.03	1.63	0.102
DL ⇒ Evaluate ⇒ MIL	0.01	0.03	-0.05	0.06	0.00	0.18	0.858
DL ⇒ Create ⇒ MIL	-0.04	0.04	-0.11	0.03	-0.03	-1.05	0.292
DL ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	-0.07	0.04	-0.15	-8.2	-0.05	-1.99	0.046
FE ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	-0.02	0.02	-0.06	0.02	-0.02	-0.93	0.353
FE ⇒Evaluate ⇒MIL	**0.06**	**0.03**	**0.00**	**0.12**	**0.05**	**2.01**	**0.044**
FE ⇒ Create ⇒ MIL	-0.01	0.03	-0.07	0.06	0.00	-0.19	0.846
FE ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	0.01	0.03	-0.06	0.07	0.01	0.23	0.818
IL ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.07	0.02	1.02	0.307
IL ⇒ Evaluate ⇒ MIL	0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.08	0.02	1.01	0.315
IL ⇒Create ⇒ MIL	**0.07**	**0.03**	**0.00**	**0.14**	**0.06**	**2.10**	**0.036**
IL ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	0.04	0.03	-0.02	0.11	0.04	1.39	0.165
CL ⇒ Locate ⇒ MIL	0.02	0.02	-0.02	0.07	0.02	0.94	0.349
CL ⇒ Evaluate ⇒MIL	**0.07**	**0.03**	**0.01**	**0.13**	**0.06**	**2.32**	**0.021**
CL ⇒ Create ⇒MIL	**0.10**	**0.04**	**0.03**	**0.17**	**0.08**	**2.86**	**0.004**
CL ⇒ Impact ⇒ MIL	0.05	0.03	-0.01	0.11	0.04	1.62	0.105
IL⇒ Locate	0.25	0.17	-0.09	0.59	0.09	1.45	0.148
Locate ⇒ MIL	**0.13**	**0.02**	**0.09**	**0.18**	**0.27**	**5.57**	**<.001**
InfL⇒ Evaluate	**0.38**	**0.19**	**0.00**	**0.74**	**0.13**	**2.00**	**0.046**
Evaluate ⇒ MIL	**0.17**	**0.02**	**0.12**	**0.21**	**0.35**	**7.73**	**<.001**
InfL⇒ Create	0.32	0.20	-0.07	0.70	0.10	1.61	0.107
Create ⇒ MIL	**0.18**	**0.02**	**0.14**	**0.21**	**0.40**	**9.01**	**<.001**
InfL⇒ Impact	-0.02	0.20	-0.40	0.38	-0.01	-0.09	0.929
Impact ⇒ MIL	**0.18**	**0.02**	**0.13**	**0.22**	**0.37**	**7.60**	**<.001**
ML ⇒ Locate	0.14	0.16	-0.17	0.47	0.06	0.89	0.372
ML ⇒ Evaluate	-0.26	0.17	-0.58	0.07	-0.10	-1.59	0.113
ML ⇒ Create	-0.42	0.16	-0.73	-0.09	-0.15	-2.57	0.01
ML ⇒ Impact	-0.50	0.17	-0.82	-0.17	-0.19	-3.01	0.003

ME ⇒ Locate	0.03	0.18	-0.32	0.38	0.01	0.16	0.875
ME ⇒ Evaluate	-0.41	0.19	-0.78	-0.04	-0.13	-2.16	0.031
ME ⇒ Create	-0.11	0.22	-0.53	0.32	-0.03	-0.49	0.624
ME ⇒ Impact	-0.35	0.19	-0.72	0.02	-0.11	-1.87	0.062
DL ⇒ Locate	0.33	0.19	-0.04	0.70	0.11	1.74	0.083
DL ⇒ Evaluate	0.03	0.18	-0.31	0.38	0.01	0.18	0.857
DL ⇒ Create	-0.22	0.21	-0.63	0.18	-0.07	-1.07	0.286
DL ⇒ Impact	-0.42	0.20	-0.82	-0.02	-0.15	-2.07	0.038
FE ⇒ Locate	-0.14	0.15	-0.44	0.15	-0.06	-0.96	0.337
FE ⇒ Evaluate	**0.36**	**0.17**	**0.03**	**0.69**	**0.14**	**2.13**	**0.033**
FE ⇒ Create	-0.03	0.18	-0.38	0.31	-0.01	-0.20	0.842
FE ⇒ Impact	0.04	0.18	-0.32	0.40	0.02	0.23	0.815
IL ⇒ Locate	0.18	0.17	-0.16	0.51	0.07	1.04	0.298
IL ⇒ Evaluate	0.17	0.16	-0.15	0.48	0.06	1.04	0.297
IL ⇒ Create	**0.41**	**0.19**	**0.05**	**0.78**	**0.15**	**2.21**	**0.027**
IL ⇒ Impact	0.25	0.17	-0.07	0.59	0.10	1.49	0.135
CL ⇒ Locate	0.17	0.18	-0.18	0.53	0.07	0.94	0.349
CL ⇒ Evaluate	**0.42**	**0.17**	**0.08**	**0.76**	**0.16**	**2.40**	**0.016**
CL ⇒ Create	**0.57**	**0.19**	**0.21**	**0.94**	**0.20**	**3.01**	**0.003**
CL ⇒ Impact	0.29	0.18	-0.06	0.65	0.11	1.63	0.104
InfL⇒ MIL	**0.12**	**0.06**	**0.01**	**0.23**	**0.08**	**2.07**	**0.039**
ML ⇒ MIL	0.05	0.06	-0.06	0.16	0.04	0.94	0.345
ME ⇒ MIL	-0.12	0.06	-0.23	-0.01	-0.08	-2.11	0.035
DL ⇒ MIL	-0.13	0.06	-0.25	-0.01	-0.10	-2.17	0.03
FE ⇒ MIL	0.05	0.05	-0.06	0.15	0.04	0.87	0.382
IL ⇒ MIL	0.06	0.05	-0.05	0.17	0.05	1.08	0.28
CL ⇒ MIL	0.03	0.06	-0.08	0.14	0.02	0.52	0.601
InfL⇒ MIL	**0.27**	**0.11**	**0.05**	**0.49**	**0.15**	**2.38**	**0.017**
ML ⇒ MIL	-0.13	0.09	-0.32	0.05	-0.09	-1.42	0.156
ME ⇒ MIL	-0.27	0.11	-0.48	-0.06	-0.15	-2.49	0.013
DL ⇒ MIL	-0.20	0.11	-0.41	0.02	-0.12	-1.78	0.075
FE ⇒ MIL	0.09	0.10	-0.10	0.28	0.06	0.95	0.344
IL ⇒ MIL	**0.23**	**0.10**	**0.03**	**0.42**	**0.15**	**2.24**	**0.025**
CL ⇒ MIL	**0.27**	**0.10**	**0.07**	**0.48**	**0.18**	**2.62**	**0.009**
CL ⇒ MIL	**0.27**	**0.10**	**0.07**	**0.48**	**0.18**	**2.62**	**0.009**

InfL=Information Literacy, S-AM=Self-Assessed MIL, MIL= MIL Calculated, ML=Media Literacy, ME=Media Education, DL= Digital Literacy, FE=Freedom of Expression, IL=Internet Literacy, CL=Computer Literacy, Locate = location information, Evaluate= evaluation of information, create= Creation of information, Impact= understanding the impact on society Variables in bold are positively predicting MIL

Even though explicitly, we find no significant difference in MIL levels of respondents based on gender, there is a difference based on area, indicating that respondents from the urban area have a higher level of MIL than those from rural areas [$\chi^2(2, 300) = 8.01$, p=0.018]. MIL skills and respondents' department [$\chi^2(14, 300) = 26.164$, $p = 0.025$], have a significant relationship indicating the area of education may influence the MIL level. The findings alsoshow that there was probably no relationship between students' gender and MIL skills. The respondents' MIL skills scores ranged from 1 to 19, with 19 being the highest. The population's MIL is poor, in contrast to their self-reported skills, as shown by the mean score of 11.5 in this study. The Wilcoxon test also shows a significant difference between self-assessed and calculated literacy skills, is significant (W=2386.5), p<0.001, and rB=0.8, which indicates a large effect size and is independent of each other.

4.4 Respondents' Familiarity with the Notions of MIL

Figure 4 represents the awareness of the terms covered in the ecology of Media and Information Literacy by UNESCO. Except for Digital literacy (DL), Information literacy (InfL), and Media Education(ME), the majority of respondents reported knowledge of media literacy (ML), freedom of expression (FE), internet literacy (IL), and computer literacy (CL).Television literacy, gaming literacy, library literacy, advertising literacy, new literacy, cinema literacy, etcwere not mentioned by any respondents.

According to the chi-square (χ^2) results in Figure 4, respondents, irrespective of the department, are conversant with MIL-related concepts. Therespondents' familiarity with the notion of ME [(χ^2 (1,300) = 8.97, p = 0.003)], DL [(χ^2 (1, 300) = 11.62, p < 0.001)], IL [(χ^2 (1, 300) = 20.77, p < 0.001)], and CL [(χ^2 (1, 300) = 11.34, p < 0.001)] differs significantly with gender. In addition, familiarity with ML [$\chi^2(1, 300) = 11.92$, p < 0.001)], FE [($\chi^2(1, 300) = 10.79$, p = 0.001)], IL [($\chi^2(1, 300) = 23.07$, p < .001)] and CL [($\chi^2(1, 300) = 20.2$, p < .001)] substantially different with area of residence. Explicitly, we find male respondents have a greater familiarity with ME, DL, IL, and CL,whereas urban respondents have familiarity with ML, FE, IL, and CL, and no significant difference was found with the departments. Hence, H1 is Partially Accepted

4.5 Mediation Analyses

The mediation modelinvestigatedthe MIL parameters as a mediator in the association between the MIL and its notions. Since data isnot normally distributed, confidence intervals are bootstrapped.

It was hypothesised that MIL would be positively predicted by terminology usage in MIL ecology and that MIL skills would act as a mediator in this relationship.

To put these hypotheses to the test, a series of analyses were carried out. We obtained a mediator model and full models show the direct, indirect, and total effects ofthese dimensions on MIL as mediated by its parameter illustrated in Table 3. The ability to create information indirectly influences CL [β=0.08, z= 2.86, p= 0.004 (95 % CI, 0.03 to0.17) and IL [β=0.06, z=2.10, p=0.036, (95% CI, 0.00 to 0.14), the ability to evaluate the information influence FE [β =0.04, z= 2.01, p= 0.044 (95 % CI, 0.00 to 0.12)] and CL [β=0.05, z=2.31, p= 0.021(95 % CI, 0.01 to 0.13)] to predict MIL.

However, InfLhas a direct effect on MIL [β= 0.08, z= 2.06, p= 0.039 (95 % CI, 0.01 to 0.23)]. In Total InfL [β= 0.15, z= 2.38,p= 0.017(95 % CI, 0.05 to 0.48)], IL[β= 0.15, z= 2.24, p= 0.025 (95 % CI, 0.03 to 0.42)] and CL[β= 0.17, z=2.62, p= 0.009 (95 % CI, 0.07 to 0.47)] influences MIL with the mediation of skills independently. However, no effect was seen on digital literacy. As positive mediators, alter how MIL and its

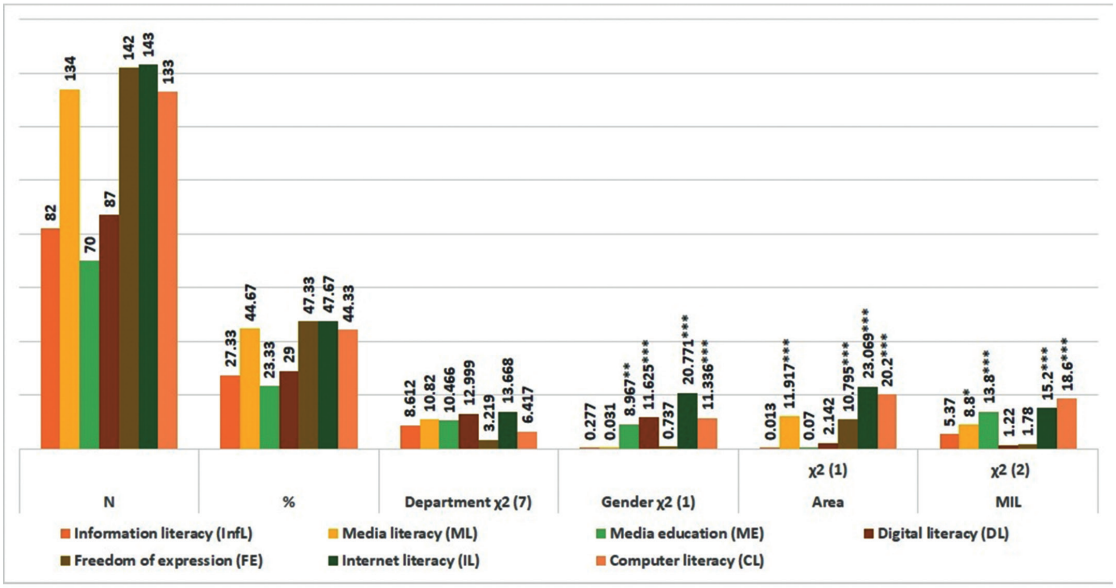

Figure 4. Respondents' familiarity with the notions of MIL.

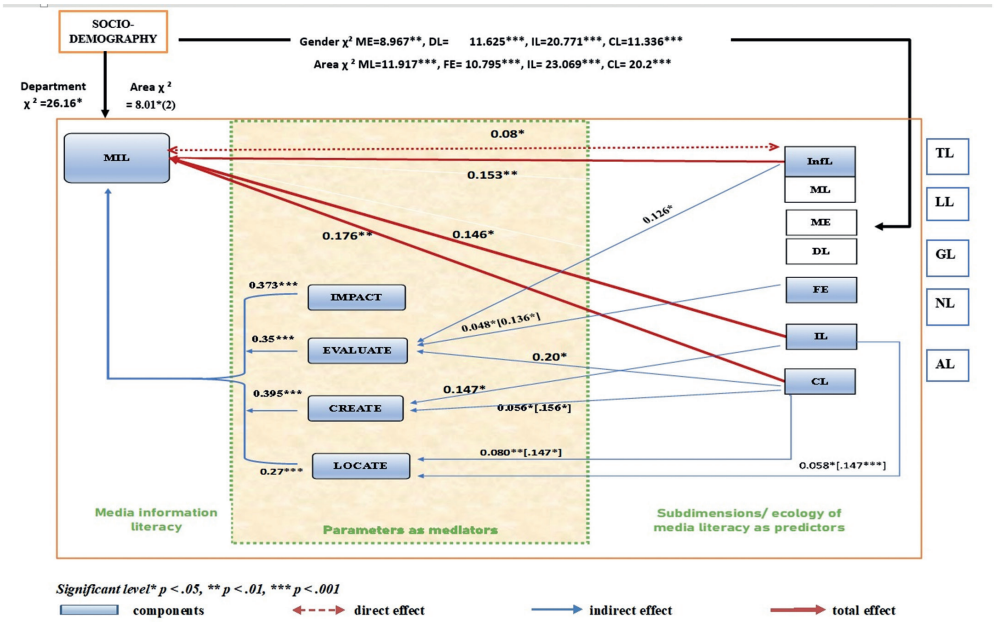

Figure 5. Model of factors affecting MIL.

dimensions are related. Only three notions: Information literacy, Internet literacy, and Computer literacy have a total effect on MIL. However, H2 is partially accepted.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results in Figure 5, represent the model of factors affecting MIL. A theoretical and practical foundation for MIL is provided by an examination of the variables and their role in predicting and achieving the MIL.Except for gender, the determined MIL is highly associated with other demographic variables.Although, the statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between MIL and Media Education, Internet Literacy, andComputer Literacy, the skills to create and evaluate show an indirect impact of computer literacy and freedom of expression on MIL.The mediation models, however, demonstrate the direct and indirect influence of information literacy skills on internet literacy and computer literacy to predict MIL when skills are mediated. There is no direct, indirect, or total effect was noticed on digital literacy to predict MIL.

This leads us to the conclusion that becoming acquainted with computer literacy, internet literacy,freedom of expression, and information literacy can assist in enhancing and predicting MIL of students by introducing skills of location, evaluation, creation, and understanding of information.

We find no significant relationship between MIL andmedia literacy, digital literacy, or media education. This may be because the study is confined to students of the University of Jammu, and it is recommended that a large-scale study be conducted with a diverse group of respondents to examine the applicability of the notion of MIL in the Indian context. For mankind to understand the true significance, MIL is a cutting-edge idea that was shaped in a radical technological, diplomatic, economic, social, and cultural environment.[11,30] For example, recently, the COVID-19 crisis was accompanied by infodemics, and the need for MIL was extensively recognised by the media's stakeholders in personal, professional, and societal activities. Media information literate individuals regardless of their ethnicity or demography can manage information and media content in all formats even in information overload by using a variety of techniques such as accessing, evaluating, creating, and sharing information.[11,30] Crowdsourced information on Web 2.0 technologies is presenting new opportunities for collaboration as well as creativity and innovation,where society will be safeguarded and watched for misinformation by media literate persons. Thus, the stakeholders must understand the importance of MIL for the citizens, democracy, and good governance.[5,30]

Henceforth, we conclude that the University of Jammu authorities must regularly organize digital/information literacy and MIL programs like workshops, seminars, or training courses as integrated courses in the curriculum in all subject areas. This would help students to be responsible citizens and produce and use e-media resources and information more appropriately and ethically. Ascritical thinkers,they would support compassion, pacifism, and local, national, and international cooperation irrespective of their linguistic and cultural diversity.[30] They would stand up for their fundamental rights like freedom of expression and would be aware of the power and influence of the government, media organisations, and information providers in the economic, social, and political contexts and resulting in a media-literate society.

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