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STRENGTHENING SECURITY AWARENESS IN
EDUCATIONAL MEDIA USING MULTI-METHOD APPROACHES:
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Establishing and strengthening the principles and rules of public order – whether traditional, such as security, public health, and public tranquility, or modern, which have expanded to include the preservation of morals and public decency, human dignity, the aesthetic appearance of cities, environmental protection, and the safeguarding of political and economic public order – is a societal necessity and a key objective for ensuring cohesion and interaction within a climate of security. This climate encompasses a range of values and standards that collectively ensure stability and continuity, including a sense of citizenship, governance, rationalization, awareness, and individual self-regulation.

Traditionally, fostering these objectives was the primary responsibility of the family, followed by educational institutions across all levels, both of which sought to instill a sense of security within individuals. However, with the advent of mass media and, more recently, modern communication technologies,

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it has become imperative for media actors to assert their role by adopting and reinforcing security awareness within the framework of educational media. This urgency arises because the media play a pivotal role in embedding moral and social values through awareness-raising initiatives, education, and cultural dissemination.

Within this context, a substantial body of academic literature has emerged. Notable among these are quantitative studies pioneered by American experimental researchers, whose foundational work catalyzed the development of the media effects tradition. This paradigm encompasses diverse theoretical frameworks, ranging from those examining detrimental societal impacts and prosocial audience outcomes, to interactive audience dynamics and the media's overarching power in shaping public opinion. Consequently, these approaches collectively conceptualize educational media through the dual mechanisms of stimulus and response.

Similarly, the functional approach has examined the sense of security through the perspectives of uses and gratifications and media dependency. The professional practice approach, on the other hand, has addressed this issue through role theory and the theory of moral responsibility in media practice.

Conversely, qualitative approaches have explored educational media through systems analysis, linking the sense of security to theories of freedom, social responsibility, development, democratic participation, as well as critical approaches such as cultural theory and political economy theory.

Moreover, the new media approach has addressed the sense of security within educational media using quantitative perspectives, including the digital transformation theory, the social presence theory, the social capital theory, and the public sphere theory.

Finally, the integrative approach emerges by addressing the pivotal question: **What do the media do to society, and how do individuals utilize them?** From this perspective, educational media are examined through hybrid frameworks, such as the media system dependency theory and the two-step flow of communication model. These frameworks successfully synthesize elements from disparate media effects traditions into a cohesive analytical lens.

Our previous study¹ addressed this topic; however, the present study differs in terms of methodology and analytical scope, as it seeks to extend the inves-

¹ Said FAREK and Souad BRAKTIA, "Ta'ziz al-Wa'i al-Amni fi al-I'lam al-Tarbawi: Ru'yah min al-Muqarabāt al-Nazariyah al-Kamiyah, al-Kawfiyah, wa-al-Takamuliyah," *Majallat Bawwabat al-'Ulum* 7, no. 2 (2026): 204–16, <https://doi.org/10.51247/pdlc.v7i2.734>.

tigation and provide new findings that go beyond those reported in the earlier study.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that security awareness in educational media represents a fundamental component in protecting audiences and guiding media messages toward the promotion of preventive values and responsible behaviors within society. Moreover, the rapid development of digital media and the increasing diversity of information sources require a reconsideration of how security awareness is constructed through more comprehensive and integrative methodological approaches.

Accordingly, this study aims to address a research gap characterized by the limited number of studies that combine quantitative, qualitative, and integrative approaches in analyzing the phenomenon of security awareness within educational media.

1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

In light of rapid communication shifts and the expanding influx of information through educational and media outlets, the educational media sector faces mounting challenges. These stem from weak security awareness within educational institutions and the absence of a comprehensive methodological framework for enhancing security awareness when interacting with media content. Moreover, relying on a single methodological paradigm (purely quantitative or qualitative) may not fully grasp the complexity of the phenomenon, thereby limiting the effectiveness of programs and policies aimed at protecting the educational environment from informational and behavioral risks. Therefore, the research problem is defined by the following question:

How can **quantitative**, **qualitative**, and **integrative** theoretical approaches be employed to effectively and systematically enhance security awareness in the field of educational media?

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This research aims to develop a comprehensive scientific framework to enhance security awareness within educational media by employing integrated quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical methodologies. Such an approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the phenomenon's multidimensional na-

ture, identifies its underlying determinants, and proposes actionable mechanisms and strategies. Ultimately, this serves to foster security awareness among various stakeholders in the educational environment while elevating the quality of media practices to guarantee a safe and sustainable learning environment.

3. KEY TERMS

3.1 REINFORCEMENT

Reinforcing the sense of security involves nurturing, developing, and consolidating essential civic and psychological attributes within individuals, in line with the needs of both society and requirements of public order. Media institutions also play a vital role in disseminating educational media messages that enhance this sense of security among their audiences and society at large.

3.2 SENSE OF SECURITY

This concept denotes a psychological state characterized by a profound sense of safety and reassurance. It encompasses an individual's capacity to anticipate potential threats or criminal activities to preempt them, as well as the ability to identify and apprehend perpetrators. Furthermore, it entails a heightened awareness and sensitivity to any factors capable of jeopardizing security or inciting fear.”²

3.3 EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

This term refers to a structured system of communication channels, tools, and digital or audiovisual materials systematically utilized within the pedagogical framework to facilitate knowledge acquisition, develop critical skills,

² Ali Bin Fayez AL-JAHNI, *Lamahat fi Tatwir al-Hiss al-Amni* (Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2006), 4.

and cultivate core values among learners, thereby aligning public communication with broader educational objectives.³

4. ACADEMIC THEORIZATION OF THE SENSE OF SECURITY IN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

4.1 QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES

These perspectives are represented by numerous American experimental researchers whose foundational studies led to the development of several key theories. Certain frameworks fall under the behavioral effects rubric, which is further categorized into theories of negative societal impacts, prosocial outcomes, interactive audience dynamics, and media power. Additionally, alternative frameworks are classified under the functionalist category, whereas the remaining theories are situated within the domain of professional practice.

4.1.1 The behavioral influences approach

This approach addresses educational media through processes of influence and response. It is further divided into several theories, such as the mass society theory and the stimulus–response theory. However, the focus of this study will be on the **magic bullet theory** (also known as the hypodermic needle model). In the main, it posits that individuals receive information directly from the media without any intermediaries, and that the individual’s response is isolated and does not depend on the influence of others.

Harold Lasswell, whose foundational research focused heavily on the mechanisms of propaganda during the World War era, conceptualized the direct and unmediated impact of mass media as being analogous to a bullet.⁴ Wilbur Schramm also evaluated the historical conceptualization of the media as a “magic bullet,” noting that early communication frameworks operated on

³ UNESCO, *Media and Information Literacy: Policy and Strategy Guidelines* (Paris: UNESCO, 2021), 38.

⁴ Harold D. LASSWELL, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), 4–5.

the assumption that the public functions merely as a passive recipient of unmediated messages.⁵

Accordingly, the theory is also referred to as the hypodermic syringe model. The recipient's reaction to educational media messages is considered an individual experience rather than a collective one. Its key takeaways are:

- Educational media messages reach all members of society uniformly, provoking their direct and immediate responses.
- Educational media deliver their messages to individuals who are largely isolated from one another.
- Media effects are strong and direct due to the weakness of social control mechanisms such as shared traditions and customs. Consequently, there is often a gap between media messages and societal norms.
- Individuals receive information independently and without intermediaries; therefore, their reactions are also individual, with no mutual influence among recipients.
- The media messages act as “missiles” or “bullets” that directly impact every recipient. Consequently, the sender retains absolute control over the communication process, constructing the message's form, style, and content.

This theory was influenced by the stimulus–response theory, the psychoanalytic theory, psychological individualism, and the mass society theory in sociology, all of which emphasize the decline of personal relationships and the growing dominance of media influence.

The theory was later challenged by the results of field studies conducted by social psychology researchers. These studies indicated that the media's influence is conditioned by various intervening factors, such as the family, individual attitudes, opinion leaders, political parties, and other social variables. As Hadley Cantril⁶ stated, individuals are neither passive nor as naïve as previously assumed.

Furthermore, the theory failed to adequately explain certain historical outcomes, such as Franklin D. Roosevelt's electoral success, which demonstrated the limited direct power of media influence.

⁵ Wilbur SCHRAMM, *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1954), 115.

⁶ Hadley Cantril (1906–1969) was an American social psychologist and a pioneer in public opinion and mass communication research at Princeton University, best known for his classic study on the psychological panic induced by the 1938 War of the Worlds radio broadcast. For his analysis on audience psychological traits, see Hadley CANTRIL, *The Invasion from Mars: A Study in the Psychology of Panic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940), 110–15.

Consequently, the theory faced significant criticism, particularly for its excessive reliance on psychological, social-psychological, and sociological assumptions. This heavy reliance led the theory to focus narrowly on the psychological dimension while neglecting other crucial factors, such as political, economic, and cultural influences. It also ignored the social and environmental context in which individuals receive and interpret media messages.

Therefore, educational media should not be viewed as an instrument of indoctrination, nor is the audience automatically or directly influenced by all messages they receive. Instead, multiple intervening factors affect reception and interpretation, either enhancing or limiting the achievement of educational media objectives, particularly in relation to security awareness.⁷

4.1.2 Positive audience theories

They are also known as limited-effects theories, focusing on two main approaches that can be applied to educational media in relation to its limited impact on the audience: the two-step flow of the communication theory, which emphasizes the role of opinion leaders, and the diffusion of innovations theory.

The **two-step theory** posits that information from the media does not reach the general public directly, but rather moves in two distinct stages. First, opinion leaders who are active media consumers receive and decode the messages. Second, these leaders transmit their own interpretations, along with the original content, to less active individuals in society. In the context of educational media, these opinion leaders – such as teachers and parents – act as the primary vehicle for shaping security awareness.

This theory rests on two main assumptions:

- Information disseminated by educational media is transmitted to the audience in two stages: first, it reaches opinion leaders who are frequently exposed to media content; then, these opinion leaders pass it on to the wider audience through informal communication channels.
- The theory emphasizes that interpersonal relationships function as channels of communication and also exert social pressure on individuals to conform to group norms and collective thinking.

This perspective was reinforced by Katz and Lazarsfeld in their seminal 1955 work, *Personal Influence*, which highlighted the pivotal role of opinion

⁷ Majed AL-HASHEMI, *Teknolojia al-Ittisal al-Jamahiri* (Amman: Osama Publishing House, 2004), 78–79.

leaders in shaping and mediating mass media effects.⁸ Essentially, leaders belong to the social groups they influence. Moreover, the roles of opinion leaders and followers may interchange under different circumstances, depending on competencies, specializations, and individuals' orientations toward media messages. In addition, opinion leaders are often the most exposed to media messages related to their fields of interest.

Collectively, these synthesized theoretical frameworks – specifically those merging structural functionalism with audience-centered dynamics – reflect the core mechanisms of the educational process. This reflection is particularly evident in terms of media specialization, audience exposure levels, individual inclinations, and the strategic capacity to influence opinion leaders within educational media contexts.

The two-step flow theory is closely aligned with other critical communication frameworks, most notably Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur's (1976) media dependency theory. This perspective suggests that individuals embedded within active interpersonal communication environments are dynamically influenced by media exposure. Consequently, this influence is selectively filtered and subsequently transmitted to the wider audience through social networks.⁹

The **diffusion of innovations theory**, developed by Everett Rogers – a pioneer in rural sociology and development communication – draws significantly upon the aforementioned two-step flow of the communication theory. In his research focusing on the mechanisms of adopting innovations and the modernization of rural American society, Rogers posited that the dissemination of information within rural settings relies heavily on interpersonal communication with opinion leaders whose attributes align with those identified by Katz and Lazarsfeld. However, this theory expands the framework by delineating unique personality traits of these leaders, emphasizing that message transmission is a multi-stage process, and integrating the gatekeeping paradigm, which highlights how information filters through strategic institutional control points.¹⁰

The main objective of the diffusion of innovation theory is to spread information about new innovations among members of a society or a specific social group in order to achieve development. The theory emerged from the social

⁸ Elihu KATZ and Paul F. LAZARSELD, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955), 32.

⁹ Falah Nidal AL-DALAEEN ET AL., *Nazariat al-Ittisal wa-al-i'lam al-Jamahiri* (Amman: Dar al-i'sar al-Ilmi li-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi, 2016), 102–8.

¹⁰ EVERETT M. ROGERS, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 2003), 300.

influence model, which emphasizes the role of the environment in shaping the flow and acceptance of information. Rogers defined innovation as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a social system.”¹¹

He also emphasized the concept of adoption, defined as “the decision to implement an innovation”¹² Rogers identified four key elements governing diffusion: innovation, communication channels, time, and the social system.

Rogers and Shoemaker described the diffusion process using the Berlo communication model as follows:

- source: innovators and scientists, as well as opinion leaders;
- message: the new innovation;
- channel: mass media and interpersonal communication;
- receiver: members of the social system;
- effect: changes in ideas, attitudes, and behavior.¹³

Rogers also identified stages of the change process: innovation (creation), diffusion, outcome. In addition, he outlined the stages of the adoption process: awareness, interest, decision, trial, adoption.¹⁴

He further proposed the innovation-decision model: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, confirmation (reinforcement), within a time framework. Adopters of innovations were classified into innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, laggards.¹⁵

Rogers also identified several critical factors influencing the adoption and diffusion of innovations, which can be categorized into perceived attributes of the innovation and contextual variables:

- *relative advantage*: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as better than the idea it supersedes;
- *compatibility*: consistency with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters;
- *complexity*: the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use;
- *trialability*: the degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis;

¹¹ ROGERS, 5.

¹² ROGERS, 177.

¹³ Everett M. ROGERS and F. Floyd SHOEMAKER, *Communication of Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1971), 12–14.

¹⁴ ROGERS, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 168, 282.

¹⁵ ROGERS, 168, 282.

– *observability*: the distinctiveness with which the results of an innovation are visible to others;

– *contextual factors*: the nature of society, cost, educational and social levels, as well as the prevailing cultural context, customs, and traditions.

Across all these stages, the role of media in education and awareness is evident, particularly in relation to the sense of security associated with new innovations, where safety and security of use represent key elements of relative advantage.

One of the main strengths of this theory is its ability to explain how innovative ideas spread and are adopted, as well as the motivations behind adoption. However, studies have also identified several limitations. These include the widening of the social class gap, where elites in developing societies tend to adopt innovations more quickly than lower-income groups. Moreover, despite its developmental aim, the theory has not fully achieved its objectives due to social and economic inequalities in developing contexts.

In addition, some critics align the diffusion framework with the magic bullet perspective, pointing to its implicit assumption of overriding media effects and a one-way flow of information from authorities to the public. Furthermore, this perspective shares commonalities with elite-controlled theories that emphasize the dominance of communication channels by powerful groups.

Finally, the theory has been criticized for its rigid stage model of diffusion and adoption. Empirical studies have shown that these stages are not always sequential, as individuals may skip steps depending on their context, openness, and personal circumstances.¹⁶

4.1.3 *Active and interactive audience theories*

The paradigm of active and interactive audience, pioneered by the communication scholar Frank Biocca and others, marks a significant shift beyond linear and limited-effects frameworks. This evolving perspective rejects the notion of a passive recipient, emphasizing instead that audiences are selective, motivated and interactive participants in the communication process. In the context of contemporary educational media, this theoretical framework is crucial for understanding how individuals actively seek, interpret, and engage

¹⁶ Mohammed Abdel HAMID, *Nazariyat al-Ittisal wa-Ittijahat al-Ta'thir*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: 'Alam al-Kutub, 2004), 237–38.

with safety and security awareness campaigns, effectively turning the communication process into a dynamic, two-way interaction.

4.1.4 *The cultivation theory*

The cultivation theory, representing a pivotal approach to cultural development, is a foundational communication framework developed by George Gerbner in the 1970s to examine the long-term, cumulative cultural effects of television exposure on mass audiences. Rather than focusing on immediate or short-term behavioral shifts, the core concept of this theory refers to the gradual cultivation and convergence of viewers' perceptions of social reality. Over time, continuous and heavy exposure to television content systematically shapes individuals' beliefs about the world, aligning their worldview with the mediated reality depicted on screen. While originally rooted in broadcast television, this paradigm remains essential for analyzing how sustained institutional narratives build long-term security awareness.¹⁷

This theory is based on the assumption of media "cumulativeness", which measures the long-term influence of media – particularly television – on audiences exposed to consistent content over extended periods. The theory is associated with the researcher George Gerbner, who conducted a major study in 1968 to test its assumptions. He classified television viewers into three categories: light viewers (less than 2 hours per day), medium viewers (2–4 hours per day), heavy viewers (more than 4 hours per day).¹⁸

The findings showed that heavy viewers tend to adopt beliefs and perceptions similar to those portrayed on television rather than those reflecting real-world conditions. This indicates a strong and cumulative media influence, suggesting that television constructs a symbolic reality for its audience over time. As viewers become more engaged with television content, they may begin to accept this constructed reality as factual.

Gerbner argued that individuals in modern societies are increasingly influenced by this mediated reality, which may differ significantly from actual social reality, leading to perceptual distortions shaped by media exposure.

The cultivation theory is classified among the moderate media effects paradigms, as it neither exaggerates nor minimizes media influence. Instead, it em-

¹⁷ George GERBNER and Larry GROSS, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," *Journal of Communication* 26, no. 2 (1976): 173–75.

¹⁸ George GERBNER ET AL., "The 'Mainstreaming' of America: Violence Profile No. 11," *Journal of Communication* 30, no. 3 (1980): 14–15.

phasizes the long-term, evolutionary relationship between media exposure and the formation of public attitudes and perceptions. Television, in this context, functions as a primary agent of socialization, standardizing social roles and behaviors, while actively contributing to the reinforcement of social norms.

Thus, the theory extends the role of media within the socialization process, recognizing that both media exposure and socialization represent continuous learning pathways driven by the interaction between individuals and cultural-educational content. The shared objective of these processes is to systematically shape constructive attitudes and behaviors, thereby enabling individuals to adapt to their social roles and integrate effectively into society.

This theory emphasizes an influence that is cumulative rather than immediate. In this context, television potentially creates a “dominant trend” in viewers’ perceptions – particularly among heavy viewers, who tend to construct more homogeneous meanings compared to light viewers.

Gerbner addresses the issue of the sense of security by arguing that television has become the primary source of information in contemporary societies, shaping audiences’ perceptions of social reality and, consequently, their overall cultural understanding. Individuals who watch television for four hours or more per day are classified by Gerbner as heavy viewers, in contrast to light viewers.

He further argues that heavy viewers are more exposed to televised violence and are therefore more likely to develop what he calls the “mean world syndrome”, meaning the belief that the world is more dangerous and violent than it actually is. According to this perspective, excessive television consumption contributes to the formation of a more homogeneous and fearful public, whereas light viewers tend to have a more realistic perception of social reality due to their exposure to more diverse informational sources.

Television scholars also distinguish between first-order effects, which relate to general beliefs and perceptions about reality (particularly regarding the prevalence of violence), and second-order effects, which concern more specific attitudes, such as views on law, order, and personal safety.

Gerbner clearly supports the idea of a strong and inevitable media influence on audiences. Although he later refined his theory by incorporating individual differences, personal experiences, and value systems – such as defining what constitutes violence and assigning quantitative measures to viewing levels – the assumption of inevitable media effects and the categorization of heavy viewers remain open to debate. These classifications require further empirical validation and expert consensus, as they remain relatively subjective.

Moreover, social environments characterized by high crime rates, as well as individual psychological traits, may exert a stronger influence on deviant behavior than television exposure alone. Some critics also argue that the simple dichotomy between heavy and light viewers is insufficient, proposing additional categories such as non-viewers and television addicts to better reflect audience diversity.

The cultivation theory has been critiqued by numerous researchers who have demonstrated that cultivation effects are significantly more pronounced when measured in relation to specific genres of television content, rather than overall media exposure and its subsequent impact on viewers' behavioral tendencies.

In a 2006 study, viewers' perceptions of both the television world and real-world reality were classified into five distinct ideological and perceptual groups:¹⁹

- *the over-cultivation group*: viewers who believe that the television world is identical to the real world, thereby overestimating the extent of television reality;
- *the simple cultivation group*: viewers who perceive the television world as similar to real life and provide relatively accurate estimates of television reality;
- *the double distortion group*: viewers who overestimate both the television world and the real world, leading to deeply mismatched perceptions.
- *the non-cultivation (moderate) group*: viewers who provide highly accurate and balanced estimates of both television and real-world realities;
- *the distorted non-cultivation group*: viewers who accurately perceive the real world but consistently misjudge the parameters of the television world.

The study also found that heavy viewers tend to fall under the category of over-cultivation, whereas light viewers are more likely to experience no cultivation or distorted perceptions.

Additionally, studies conducted in 2005²⁰ indicated that cultivation effects are not limited to television but also extend to newspapers. This suggests that there is no longer a clear basis for comparing the influence of newspapers and television in shaping individuals' perceptions of social reality. The findings

¹⁹ L. J. SHRUM, "Culture as Context: The Role of Media in the Cultivation of Values and Social Reality Perceptions," *Human Communication Research* 32, no. 4 (2006): 480–82.

²⁰ Michael MORGAN and James SHANAHAN, "The State of Cultivation," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 49, no. 4 (2005): 451–53.

also confirmed that individuals' understanding of the external world is significantly shaped by their daily exposure to various media sources.

In 2007, researchers Shrum and Bischak further scrutinized the directional mechanics of cultivation effects regarding individuals' perceptions of social reality. Their empirical insights highlighted the critical role of contextual factors, such as source prioritization and psychological motivation, in how audiences process information and form subsequent judgments about reality. Notably, their findings revealed that cultivation effects were not consistently observed when empirical data were collected through mail questionnaires, contrasting sharply with telephone surveys. This discrepancy strongly indicated that variance in measurement methodologies can fundamentally influence research outcomes.²¹

The **knowledge gap theory** is widely recognized as one of the most seminal paradigms in mass communication and media sociology. The scholars Herbert Hyman and Paul Sheatsley were among the first to empirically demonstrate that socio-economic status and social class disparities significantly contribute to the systemic failure of information campaigns. They argued that extensive media coverage alone cannot guarantee effective information transmission across all audience segments, identifying a psychological and structural core of "chronic know-nothings" who remain unaccessible despite pervasive psychological and informational dissemination.²²

In a 1967 study, Robinson concluded that a knowledge gap exists between well-educated individuals who actively follow the media and less-educated individuals with lower levels of media exposure and knowledge.²³ Later, in a 1970 study by Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien, researchers further emphasized the relationship between knowledge differences and the flow of information through mass media.²⁴

The theoretical assumptions of the knowledge gap theory are as follows:

- The flow of information through the social system leads individuals with higher socioeconomic status to acquire information at a faster rate than

²¹ L. J. SHRUM and Connie BISCHAK, "Mainstreaming, Cognitive Processes, and Methodological Artifacts: A Deconstruction of Cultivation Effects," *Mass Communication and Society* 10, no. 1 (2007): 24–26.

²² Herbert H. HYMAN and Paul B. SHEATSLEY, "Some Reasons Why Information Campaigns Fail," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 11, no. 3 (1947): 413–15.

²³ John P. ROBINSON, "World Affairs Information and Mass Media Exposure," *Journalism Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1967): 25.

²⁴ Phillip J. TICHENOR, George A. DONOHUE, and Clarice N. OLIEN, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1970): 161.

those with lower socioeconomic status. As a result, the knowledge gap tends to widen rather than narrow over time.

- Information acquisition is not evenly distributed across individuals and social groups. Different groups may possess varying levels of knowledge about specific issues, and these gaps differ according to the subject matter.

Given its inherent complexity, security awareness requires a precise, in-depth understanding from target audiences. Consequently, the efficacy of educational media campaigns in this domain hinges upon the sender's competence in designing and presenting information. Furthermore, the analysis of this framework's core assumptions is intrinsically linked to the temporal dimension, specifically media exposure and coverage longevity.

A related concept known as “**communication effects gaps**” emerged from a study conducted among physicians in the United States.²⁵ The study found that doctors who had stronger professional networks were faster to adopt medical innovations and new discoveries. This can be interpreted as a form of preventive and therapeutic security awareness in the field of public health.

The theory identifies several factors influencing knowledge acquisition from media, including:

- communication skills and personal characteristics (such as social status and social structure),
- size of prior knowledge and knowledge background,
- selective exposure and perception processes,
- nature of the media system,
- social interaction and communication with others,
- selective information behavior.

Variables utilized in empirical studies within this framework encompass socioeconomic status, educational background, personal motivation levels, and media exposure frequency. Additionally, they include the temporal duration and intensity of media coverage, geographic scope, specific media channels, and the distinct measurement scales utilized during the analytical phase. Concurrently, all these methodological and demographic variables synthetically dictate how target audiences absorb educational media messages. This interaction is particularly vital in shaping security awareness initiatives that encompass public safety, public health, environmental protection, and overall societal stability.

²⁵ James S. COLEMAN, Elihu KATZ, and Herbert MENZEL, *Medical Innovation: A Diffusion Study* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), 115.

However, the theory has been criticized for being rooted primarily in Western social contexts and for its limited generalizability across different societies. It also focuses mainly on explaining the causes of knowledge gaps without offering effective mechanisms to reduce them. Moreover, it underestimates the role of freely accessible communication technologies that allow wider public participation, and it overlooks the significant influence of interpersonal communication in shaping knowledge acquisition.²⁶

Furthermore, the theories of the power of media in shaping public opinion encompass the technological determinism theory, the spiral of silence theory, and various sociological paradigms related to the transcendence of traditional society. Jointly, these foundational frameworks and intellectual models provide a multi-dimensional perspective for assessing how mass communication shapes collective consciousness and modern institutional security awareness.

4.1.5 *The role of empathy*

The theories of transcending traditional society encompass three pivotal perspectives: the empathy inference theory, the role-taking theory of empathy, and Daniel Lerner's Modernization Paradigm regarding the role of media in fostering psychological adaptability. Fundamentally, within this theoretical framework, empathy is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional skill that integrates reflection, projection, sympathy, and emotional participation. George H. Mead, a foundational scholar in this domain, argued that when individuals anticipate the actions of others and construct reciprocal behavioral meanings, they develop cognitive empathy – a competency representing the cognitive ability to imaginatively project oneself into the distinct social circumstances of others.²⁷

Accordingly, interacting with others requires individuals to take on their roles. Some scholars define empathy as balanced emotional participation and interaction. From this definition, communication and interaction between individuals involve:

- intellectual (cognitive) communication, based on the exchange of ideas and information;
- emotional communication, based on the exchange of feelings and emotions;

²⁶ ALAA, "Nazariat al-Fajwah al-Ma'rifiyah," *Al-Marsal*, February 13, 2020, accessed December 27, 2021, <https://www.almarsal.com/post/893347>.

²⁷ George H. MEAD, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 254.

– integrated cognitive-emotional communication, often observed in humanitarian assistance contexts, which is closely linked to security awareness.

The **empathy inference theory** is based on the assumption that individuals possess first-order knowledge about themselves and second-order knowledge about others. Specifically, this theory suggests that individuals understand themselves by analyzing their own behavior and then infer the behavior of others based on similarities between their own actions and those of others.

The core epistemological tenets of this framework can be synthesized as follows:

- Humans simultaneously possess first-order (self-related) and second-order (others-related) cognitive knowledge.
- Individuals project internal emotional states through observable behaviors, which exhibit cross-individual universality across diverse social groups.
- An individual cannot fully decode or comprehend the socio-emotional meanings of others' actions without having personally experienced analogous psychological states.

Consequently, the internal construction of security awareness is synthesized only through empirical, personal exposure to both stable and volatile contexts. This experiential baseline ultimately allows target audiences to effectively decode, interpret, and empathize with the security-related experiences of others.

Within the framework of **role-taking theory in empathy**, the cognitive development of role-taking progression unfolds across three core sequential stages, originally conceptualized within social psychology:

- The *imitation* stage: this initial phase marks the inception of self-development. The child imitates the roles of significant others before achieving cognitive comprehension, selectively adopting encouraged behaviors and rejecting socially unaccepted ones.
- The *play* stage: in this subsequent phase, the child begins to perform the roles of others with a foundational degree of understanding, while still perceiving the self as the primary egocentric reference point. For instance, the child may adopt a parental role by mimicking observable everyday actions.
- The *game* stage: at this advanced level of cognitive maturity, the individual assumes complex, institutionalized roles. Utilizing shared linguistic symbols, they internalize the collective expectations of others, enabling them to symbolically project themselves into diverse social circumstances without relying on physical mimicry.

According to Daniel Lerner's theory on the role of media in developing empathy, empathy is conceptualized as an essential characteristic for the transition from traditional to modern society, a perspective Lerner strongly advocates by drawing on his rich background in sociology.²⁸

In earlier periods, empathy was primarily developed through physical mobility – individuals moving from one place to another and engaging in direct social interaction. However, in the twentieth century and beyond, this role has increasingly been assumed by mass media and communication technologies, which bring the outside world directly into individuals' homes.

Lerner links the development of empathy to a macro-historical and social transformation process, particularly the decline of traditional agrarian systems. Within this modernization paradigm, he operationally describes urban expansion as the "city absorbing surrounding villages".²⁹ This structural dynamic triggers geographical mobility that fundamentally shifts individuals' cognitive structures and highlights the development of Western democracies through a gradual process of urbanization characterized by broadly universal patterns across societies.

This process involves several interconnected stages: (i) an increase in institutional education levels systematically leads to greater literacy and heightened media exposure; (ii) this increased media exposure fundamentally contributes to higher rates of economic mobilization and political participation; (iii) this participation results in higher national income and broader social development.

Throughout these stages, a key psychological trait emerges: the ability of individuals to imagine themselves in the situations of others, which Lerner defines as empathy.

Thus, empathy is considered a fundamental skill for societal development. In this context, media play an important role as a facilitator and multiplier of empathy, enabling individuals to psychologically transition between different social perspectives.

From this perspective, the media's role in education becomes clear, particularly in enhancing empathy, awareness, and the individual's sense of security within educational and social contexts.³⁰

²⁸ Daniel LERNER, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958), 47.

²⁹ LERNER, 61.

³⁰ Ahmed Jihan RASHTI, *The Scientific Foundations of Media Theories* (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1978), 397–415.

4.1.6 The functional approach

This approach addresses the construction of security awareness through two primary theoretical lenses. On one hand, the **uses and gratifications theory** posits that audiences actively select and consume media content to satisfy specific latent needs and psychological desires, placing the individual as an active agent. Conversely, the **media dependency theory** – which constitutes the primary analytical focus of this study – suggests that audience reliance on media increases during periods of societal ambiguity and structural instability.

The media dependency theory is based on the premise that individuals' use of media is closely linked to the social context in which they live. The influence of media increases when it provides information in a distinctive, intensive, and indispensable manner. This perspective was notably developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in their 1976 study.³¹

Similarly, the same authors examined the structural relationship between social elites and mass media as a reciprocal, dual dynamic. This interdependence operates on two distinct levels: first, the elite's requisite access to systemic information, education, and entertainment; and second, the direct or indirect influence exerted by these elites on media institutions and organizational communication processes.³²

The main characteristics of the media dependency theory are as follows:

- it is considered an ecological theory, as it views society as an organic system and seeks to explain the behavior of its components in terms of their interrelationships;
- it falls within the broader framework of interdependence between media systems and social systems;
- it is regarded as an integrative theory for several reasons: it incorporates elements from sociology alongside concepts from psychology; it explains causal relationships, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of system integration; it combines elements of the uses and gratifications theory with traditional media effects theories, while accounting for variations in the strength and direction of media influence (direct and indirect);
- it offers a philosophical perspective that balances attention between media content and its effects on audiences.

³¹ Sandra BALL-ROKEACH and Melvin DEFLEUR, "A Dependency Model of Mass-Media Effects," *Communication Research* 3, no. 1 (1976): 5.

³² Melvin L. DEFLEUR and Sandra BALL-ROKEACH, *Theories of Mass Communication*, 5th ed. (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1989), 302–5.

The core propositions of the theory are:

- The influence of media varies in strength depending on circumstances and individuals' prior experiences.
- The media system is an integral part of the broader social system and is therefore interconnected with other societal subsystems.
- The social system significantly influences the public's patterns of media and communication use.
- Individuals' use of media is shaped by their experiences, knowledge, and the socialization processes through which they acquire values and norms.
- Periods of social change and crisis increase the public's need for information, thereby intensifying their reliance on media and communication systems. This, in turn, necessitates the development and adaptation of media to meet the evolving needs of society.
- Audience heterogeneity leads to differences in media reliance; elites (the upper strata of society) depend on different media sources compared to the general public, and vice versa.

The framework rests on two pillars:

- The more effectively media perform their core functions (information, education, and entertainment), the greater the public's dependence on them.
- Increased instability and transformation within the social system lead to a heightened demand for information, thereby reinforcing media dependency.³³

4.1.7 The professional practice approach

The issue of security awareness in educational media is addressed through the role of the communicator. Scholarly interest in this field emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, leading to diverse definitions. Some scholars define the **communicator** in terms of their ability to influence the **recipient** (the learner, in the context of this study), while others conceptualize the communicator as a media professional engaged in shaping ideas and public opinion.

Within the domain of educational media, the communicator encompasses multiple professional designations, including those of mediator, editor, publisher, media owner, and correspondent. Critically, each distinct role is structurally linked to specialized functions, informative sources, and strategic ob-

³³ Abdel Hamid MOHAMMED, *Nazariyat al-Ittisal wa-Ittijahat al-Ta'thir*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: 'Alam al-Kutub, 2004), 298–307.

jectives. Furthermore, the communicator's efficacy in fostering security awareness is dynamic; it is shaped by an intersection of intrinsic personal characteristics, institutional and professional pressures, socio-political relationships, the directives of foreign or external policies, and the basic expectations of the target audience.

According to the **professional practice approach**, the communicator in educational media possesses key persuasive attributes that contribute to enhancing the audience's sense of security. These include credibility, attractiveness, and power (influence). In addition, the communicator relies on several essential conditions to effectively achieve the goals of educational media, namely: communication skills, positive attitudes toward oneself, the subject matter, and the audience, as well as a sufficient level of knowledge in educational content, and an appropriate position within the social system.

The theoretical framework of this study draws on prior research addressing behavioral, functional, professional, and social dimensions. In his seminal 1955 study, Warren Breed hypothesized that mass media contribute to achieving sociocultural consensus by systematically omitting or downplaying conflict-laden content that might trigger social division. Breed concluded that a network of institutional variables exerts social control over newspaper editors, particularly regarding their functional alignment with elite groups. Furthermore, in a subsequent analysis, he observed that major elite newspapers significantly dictate the editorial agendas of smaller regional publications when processing critical issues.³⁴

The protective intercessor concept suggests that the communicator (sender) believes in the necessity of maintaining source confidentiality. Obtaining information that incriminates a perpetrator does not necessarily oblige the communicator to cooperate with the state; rather, their role is comparable to that of a defense lawyer. At the same time, the communicator may provide information that state agencies consider confidential, within the boundaries of professional ethics.

As part of audience influence studies, Charles Horton Cooley examined the challenges faced by communicators, particularly in relation to audience interaction.³⁵ In a similar vein, Raymond Bauer argued that audiences influence how communicators organize information, especially in shaping message

³⁴ Warren BREED, "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," *Social Forces* 33, no. 4 (1955): 326–35, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2573002>.

³⁵ Charles H. COOLEY, *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 82.

content and ensuring effective access to the target audience. This is particularly relevant in educational media, where the audience consists of learners.³⁶

In 1937, the work of Leo C. Rosten laid the groundwork for the **gatekeeping theory**.³⁷ He conducted a study on Washington correspondents, and later, David Manning White in 1950 became one of the pioneers of the theory through his study on *Milwaukee Journal*.³⁸

The theory suggests that media messages pass through several stages as they move from the source to the receiver, during which they are subject to deletion, modification, and alteration according to the will of those through whom they pass. Thus, the gatekeeper is anyone who has the privilege and authority to control the media message, becoming the decision-maker in whether to transmit it or not.

Kurt Lewin argues that “the long journey that media content undergoes before reaching the target audience passes through points or gates.”³⁹

In the field of security awareness within educational media, the gatekeeper assumes a role similar to that of a security guard, ensuring the achievement of public order objectives such as security, stability, and social and environmental well-being.

Studies also support this point. A 1956 study by Walter Gieber of foreign news editors at sixteen Wisconsin newspapers concluded that editors often played a passive role, relying heavily on news agency reports. As a result, they may lack a clear understanding of their audience, limiting their ability to tailor media content to the audience’s needs.⁴⁰

A 1952 study by Charles E. Swanson highlighted the influence of the communicator’s personal values on the selection of media content, emphasizing the importance of value-based considerations in educational media and security awareness.⁴¹

³⁶ Raymond A. BAUER, “The Obstinate Audience: The Influence of Mass Communication on General Behavior,” *American Psychologist* 19, no. 5 (1964): 320, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0043994>.

³⁷ Leo C. ROSTEN, *The Washington Correspondents* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), 45.

³⁸ David M. WHITE, “The ‘Gate Keeper’: A Case Study in the Selection of News,” *Journalism Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (1950): 384, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905002700403>.

³⁹ Kurt LEWIN, “Frontiers in Group Dynamics: II. Channels of Group Life; Social Planning and Action Research,” *Human Relations* 1, no. 2 (1947): 145, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100201>.

⁴⁰ Walter GIEBER, “Across the Desk: A Study of 16 Telegraph Editors,” *Journalism Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1956): 423–32.

⁴¹ CHARLES E. SWANSON, “The Mid-City Daily: The News and the Staff,” *Journalism Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1952): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/107769905202900104>.

David Manning White also demonstrated, through functional analysis, how newsroom control mechanisms and personal perceptions influence the selection and presentation of news content.

Several key criteria influencing the gatekeeper dictate how information is filtered and shaped. These include societal norms and traditions, along with the communicator's personal values and the audience's expectations – especially in educational media, where learners' values significantly shape content selection. Furthermore, professional standards play a decisive role, encompassing institutional policies, news sources, work relationships, and organizational pressures.⁴²

Grounded in four fundamental principles, the **theory of moral duty in media practice**, developed by the Algerian researcher Azzi Abdel Rahman, offers a framework where these core tenets and their subsidiary dimensions are adaptable to the evolving nature of media practice. Ultimately, this theoretical approach contributes to the advancement of both individuals and society from cognitive, cultural, and educational perspectives.

1. *Preventing harm to others.* This principle emphasizes that media professionals must refrain from causing harm in any form. It represents the highest level of ethical responsibility and includes avoiding defamation, insults, verbal abuse, violations of privacy, plagiarism, marginalization, exclusion, dissemination of false information, misinformation, manipulative propaganda, and appeals to base instincts. This principle stems from an internalized value system and ethical awareness, transcending social, ethnic, and religious affiliations. In this regard, Azzi Abdel Rahman underscores a value-based approach centered on adherence to ethical norms by avoiding actions that contradict them.

2. *Adding value to the recipient.* This principle reflects the core mission of media in contributing to societal development through educational and cultural content. It implies that media messages should embody ethical standards across multiple dimensions – informational, cognitive, cultural, social, economic, political, and even aesthetic. Accordingly, value becomes a central driver of media practice, enhancing the recipient's capacity to develop a sense of security, social responsibility, and value awareness within their environment.

3. *Providing aid and support to those in need.* This principle entails responsiveness to individuals and groups facing hardship, including the vulnerable, marginalized, and those seeking assistance. It applies in both

⁴² Hassan Imad MAKKAWI and Adly Atef AL-ABD, *Nazariyat al-i'lam* (Cairo: Public Opinion Research Center, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, 2007), 295–304.

stable conditions and times of crisis, emergencies, and exceptional circumstances, reinforcing the humanitarian role of media.

4. *Promoting constructive criticism and guidance.* This principle relates to the practice of constructive criticism, guidance, and reform in a responsible and ethical manner. Constructive criticism is thus viewed as a fundamental responsibility of educational media, given its role in promoting values such as citizenship, good governance, rationalization, equality, justice, peaceful coexistence, solidarity, tolerance, and cooperation. The ultimate goal is to foster a positive, value-oriented media environment in which all stakeholders benefit. Consequently, a sense of security is naturally reinforced and translated into social reality, without reliance on coercive measures such as deterrence or punishment.⁴³

The theory of job satisfaction and the theory of media ownership were also classified within the professional practice approach. However, their hypotheses are not sufficiently close to the field of educational media, especially with regard to the sense of security.

4.2 QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

Educational media have been examined through several qualitative approaches, including the systems analysis approach, the critical approach, and the new media approach. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to address all these approaches. Therefore, the focus will be placed on the approach most closely related to educational media in the context of fostering a sense of security.

4.2.1 Systems analysis

This section mentions several theoretical perspectives, including the theory of freedom, the development theory, and democratic participation theory. Nevertheless, the present study focuses primarily on the **social responsibility theory**.

Originally associated with media and journalism, particularly in the United States, the theory emerged significantly following the publication of the 1947 report by the Hutchins Commission. This foundational theory sought to estab-

⁴³ Abdelrahman AZZI, *The Theory of Moral Duty in Media Practice* (Tunis: Al-Dar al-Mutawassitiah li-al-Nashr, 2016), 59–65.

lish ethical standards for journalism and to reconcile press freedom with social responsibility within liberal societies.

This commitment to society is reflected in adherence to professional standards such as honesty, objectivity, and balance, as well as in avoiding content that may promote crime, violence, or social disorder.

Following extensive criticism of the classical libertarian (freedom) theory, it became necessary for a more balanced theoretical framework to emerge in the field of media, one that integrates freedom with responsibility toward society.⁴⁴

Following World War II, the theory emerged as a response to the limitations of absolute media freedom, advocating a model of responsible and regulated media practice. This shift led to the establishment of legal and ethical frameworks, as well as the growing role of public opinion as a watchdog over professional conduct.

This development was largely driven by the misuse of media for sensationalism, particularly in the coverage of sex and crime, which contributed to a distortion of the concept of press freedom and highlighted the need for a more balanced approach that integrates freedom with responsibility.⁴⁵

Proponents of the social responsibility theory contend that freedom entails not only rights but also duties and responsibilities. Consequently, the media must assume explicit obligations toward society through the development and observance of professional and ethical standards – an aspect insufficiently addressed in the classical libertarian theory. Within this framework, media institutions are expected to exercise self-regulation in accordance with established legal and institutional norms, thereby maintaining a balance between press freedom and social responsibility.

This theory posits that media pluralism reflects the diversity of opinions and ideas within society, ensuring broad opportunities for participation in publishing and expression. It also emphasizes that the public is entitled to expect high standards of media performance. In this context, regulatory intervention in media activities may be deemed legitimate when it is necessary to protect and promote the public interest.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Souad Said JABR, *Sajolojiat al-Ittisal al-Jamahiri* (Amman: ‘Alam al-Kutub al-Hadith wa-Jidara li-al-Kitab al-’Alami, 2008), 85.

⁴⁵ Denis MCQUAIL, *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 1987), 112.

⁴⁶ Mohammed bin Saud AL-BISHR, *Al-Mas’uliyah al-Ijtima’iyah fi al-i’lam: Al-Nazariyah wa-al-Tatbiq* (Riyadh: Dar Alam al-Kutub, 1996), 17–19.

This theory seeks to elevate public discourse to a level of objective and emotionally neutral discussion. In addition to providing information and entertainment, media institutions are also expected to pursue profit while contributing to broader social objectives.

Media outlets are prohibited from publishing or broadcasting content that promotes crime, violence, or that may have a harmful impact on minority groups within society. They are also expected to respect individual privacy and avoid undue intrusion into personal lives.

Ownership of media organizations may be held by both the public and private sectors; however, the theory places greater emphasis on encouraging private sector participation.⁴⁷

The theoretical framework of the social responsibility theory has expanded and been reinforced in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, where it became closely associated with remote communication technologies. As a result, it has gained a central position within the communication strategies and programs of media organizations, introducing new responsibilities related to the multidimensional fulfillment of societal roles.

This development seeks to achieve integration between economic and human dimensions on the one hand, while reinforcing the principles of social responsibility on the other, within an interconnected, three-dimensional framework. For instance, an industrial institution is expected not only to perform its productive function and provide economic value to its community or region, but also to ensure a positive humanitarian and environmental impact, rather than a harmful one. In this sense, community-based initiatives must be understood as integrated within broader social and environmental systems.

Moreover, such initiatives contribute to transforming crises into learning opportunities for individuals, institutions, and society as a whole, just as much as stable conditions do. Crisis situations, in particular, often serve as resilience-building experiences that enhance individuals' confidence in their abilities and capacities, enabling them to utilize these resources more effectively.

Within this context, educational media play a significant role in supporting these objectives by strengthening individuals' and society's sense of security through the dissemination of educational and ethical messages. Its content

⁴⁷ Hossam El-Din MOHAMMED, *Al-Mas'uliyah al-Ijtima'iyah li-l-Sahafah* (Cairo: The Egyptian-Lebanese House, 2003), 60.

contributes to raising awareness of the importance of maintaining public order and promoting the various dimensions of social responsibility.⁴⁸

4.2.2 *The critical approach*

The critical approach encompasses several theories that can be applied to enhancing security awareness in educational media, including the **political economy theory** and the **cultural theory**, which will be addressed below.

Framed within the cultural theory, the concept of culture refers to domains of symbolic and intellectual production. Throughout history, political authorities have utilized these cultural frameworks to promote specific ideologies and values, encouraging individuals to internalize and reproduce them.

This theory is particularly prominent in British academic traditions, with Stuart Hall being one of its leading figures. It focuses on cultural analysis to examine the extent to which media content reflects and relates to people's lived experiences.

Within this perspective, hegemony is considered a central analytical concept, frequently employed to explain the relationship between dominant and subordinate social groups. Hall argues that the media function as a mechanism that reinforces the dominance of ruling powers, thereby maintaining their social and ideological position, including perceptions of security and stability. In contrast, the general public may be exposed to dominant discourses that contribute to the reproduction of inequality and exclusion.

From this standpoint, the cultural theory critically challenges purely economic interpretations rooted in Marxist analysis, arguing that the relationship between economic power and ideological formation is not strictly deterministic, but rather culturally mediated and complex.⁴⁹

In the British academic context, this theory offers a critical perspective on the media, arguing that it contributes to the reproduction of social divisions and class structures, particularly the distinction between elite and working-class groups, thereby reinforcing existing power relations within society.

The theoretical orientation seeks to understand the meaning of mass culture and its role in shaping the everyday lives of different social groups. It also emphasizes the cultural dimension in explaining how mass culture can func-

⁴⁸ Asim bin Salem AL-SHAIDI, "Corona... wa-Darurat al-Mas'uliyah al-Fardiyyah," *Jaridat 'Oman*, September 27, 2021, retrieved August 13, 2021, <https://www.omandaily.om>.

⁴⁹ Hassan MAKKAWI and Laila EL-SAYED, *Al-Ittisal wa-Nazariyatuhu al-Mu'asirah* (Cairo: Egyptian-Lebanese House, 2017), 121.

tion in both integrating and managing tensions among opposing and conflicting social forces within society.

The theory is largely grounded in neo-Marxist thought, which holds that modern societies are characterized by inequalities and forms of symbolic domination exercised through media control. Accordingly, it highlights the role of media institutions in reproducing structures of dominance rather than neutral information dissemination.

Furthermore, the theory stresses the importance of cultural pluralism, suggesting that societies characterized by diverse and balanced lifestyles tend to be more resilient, less vulnerable to social and political shocks, and better able to adapt to new circumstances. This is particularly relevant to security awareness and the maintenance of public order within societies.⁵⁰

4.2.3 *The new media approach*

Through this approach, the sense of security can be addressed as a key issue within educational media, drawing on several theoretical perspectives, including the **social presence theory** and the **public sphere theory**. The present discussion focuses primarily on the **digital transformation theory** and the **social capital theory**.

1. The **digital transformation theory**, also referred to as the theory of “organic formation,” is a seminal framework developed by Joshua Meyrowitz and other scholars within the media ecology tradition. This theory conceptualizes media development not as isolated events, but as an integrated and continuous process of transformation shaped by ongoing technological change.

According to this perspective, human communication systems demonstrate that new media do not emerge independently or abruptly; rather, they evolve gradually through an “organic transformation” process. Media systems, like living organisms, respond to external pressures by reorganizing themselves in order to adapt to a changing environment.

This theory draws on three key principles: co-evolution, convergence, and complexity. Accordingly, communication forms are interdependent within a broader communication ecosystem and cannot exist in isolation.

When a new communication form emerges, it influences existing media over time, leading to mutual adaptation rather than replacement. Thus, media

⁵⁰ Issam AL-MOUSSA, *Muqaddimah fi al-Ittisal al-Jamahiri*, 4th ed. (Amman: Maktabat Al-Kattani) 1998), 47.

evolution is characterized by co-existence and co-evolution rather than substitution. New media do not eliminate older media; instead, they develop alongside them, drawing on their functions while simultaneously reshaping them.

Historically, this pattern is evident in the coexistence of technologies such as AM and FM radio, as well as the parallel development of television and radio broadcasting after World War II.

In contemporary contexts, this theory is further supported by the increasing convergence between traditional and digital media. Traditional media institutions have become hybrid platforms, integrating digital technologies into their operations. Newspapers, for instance, now maintain interactive websites and social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, X/Twitter, YouTube, Instagram), as well as mobile applications that extend their reach and functionality.

The clearest illustration of this transformation is the smartphone, particularly in its advanced generations, which combines communication, information access, and media production functions. It enables users not only to communicate but also to browse the internet, access social networks, capture and share multimedia content, and perform financial and logistical operations such as payments, banking, and travel bookings.⁵¹

These rapidly evolving digital processes, despite their positive contributions, have also generated a range of challenges, particularly in the field of security awareness and educational media. Individuals, both young and old, are increasingly exposed to various forms of intellectual and material manipulation and fraud.

Moreover, electronic threats are no longer confined to the media sector alone, but extend to broader domains of cultural, educational, scientific, and ideological formation. This expansion has facilitated the dissemination of misleading or distorted content by certain media actors or groups, which may influence individuals' perceptions, values, and behavior.

In this context, some media environments may target human vulnerabilities – such as emotions, desires, and aggressive tendencies – potentially without sufficient individual or societal awareness or critical monitoring mechanisms. This situation highlights the importance of strengthening media literacy and

⁵¹ Mohamed Nasr HOSNI, “Al-Itijahat fi al-Bahth wa-al-Tanzir fi al-i’lam al-Jadid: Dirasah Tahliliyah li-l-Intaj al-’Ilmi al-Manshur fi al-Majallat al-Muhakkamah” (paper presented at the Social Media Conference: Applications and Methodological Issues, Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Riyadh, 2015), 30–33.

security awareness in order to preserve public order, ethical standards, and social stability.

2. As one of the prominent theoretical perspectives emerging within the broader framework of new media studies, the **social capital theory** refers to the resources individuals can access through their interactions within wide and diverse communication networks. Under this framework, individuals who are embedded in larger and more heterogeneous networks are generally more likely to possess higher levels of social capital than those with limited and homogeneous networks.

The internet has contributed to the emergence of new forms of social organization, particularly in the fields of educational media and distance learning. As a result, the educational process has shifted from physical interaction to virtual interaction, where communication transcends geographical boundaries and is structured through dense and dynamic online networks.

Within this context, social capital can be developed and strengthened in virtual environments. Similarly, educational social capital – closely linked to the sense of security – can also be formed within virtual communities. This process has been facilitated by the availability of digital infrastructures that support interaction, collaboration, and the reinforcement of social and educational ties.⁵²

4.3 THE INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

The integrative approach emerged within the broader framework of the question: “What do the media do to society?” It addresses educational media by drawing on dual theoretical models.

As a model of functional use and reliability: the dependency theory is classified among functionalist approaches, as is the uses and gratifications theory. Accordingly, both theories overlap in several aspects, which has led many researchers to integrate them into a unified framework known as the Use-Dependency Model.

This model is based on understanding the complementary relationship between media systems and audiences, particularly in relation to how media institutions employ various technologies to shape and reinforce audience de-

⁵² Mohammed Ali AL-QA’ARI, “Al-Muqarabāt al-Nazariyah li-Dirasat al-i’lam al-Raqmi,” *Majallat ‘Ulum al-Ittisal*, no. 6, (2020): 24.

pendency within educational media, including its role in fostering a sense of security.

Interest in the Use-Dependency Model has gradually increased as an extension of functionalist theories. It is now considered a scientific approach that focuses on the audience in order to understand the motivations behind media use and the outcomes of this relationship. This has enhanced its applicability to educational media, particularly in the field of security awareness, as well as in other related domains.⁵³

The two-step flow model of information, which was formulated through a synthesis combining multiple influence theories.

5. A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE, AND INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES

Comparing these approaches within the framework of enhancing security awareness in educational media is not simply a matter of preference, but rather an analytical process aimed at revealing the strengths and limitations of each approach, as well as their respective explanatory power and practical relevance within the complex dynamics of educational media systems.

The **quantitative approach** relies on the statistical measurement of levels of security awareness and related behaviors, using tools such as questionnaires and numerical indicators. Its strength lies in its precision and generalizability, which makes it suitable for monitoring the spread of phenomena and identifying general trends, such as the level of awareness of digital risks among students or teachers.

However, from a critical perspective, this approach tends to reduce the phenomenon of security awareness to numerical representations, thereby neglecting the cultural and psychological contexts that shape media-related behaviors. Moreover, security awareness is not merely a measurable indicator; rather, it is a complex structure of values, perceptions, and lived experiences. This limitation reduces the explanatory power of the quantitative approach when applied in isolation.

The **qualitative approach** focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and perceptions of security awareness through methods such as interviews, observation, and discourse analysis. It enables

⁵³ AL-QA'ARI, "Theoretical Approaches," 18–19.

the exploration of underlying dimensions such as risk perception, media use culture, and the influence of social and educational environments.

However, this approach has been criticized for its limited generalizability, the potential for researcher bias in interpreting findings, and the difficulty of translating its results into measurable and scalable policy recommendations. Therefore, despite its explanatory depth, it remains insufficient on its own to provide a comprehensive and fully accurate understanding without quantitative support.

The **mixed/integrative approach** seeks to combine quantitative and qualitative methods in order to achieve a comprehensive and balanced understanding of the phenomenon. In the context of educational media, it is considered the most appropriate approach, as it integrates the measurement of security awareness levels (quantitative dimension) with an in-depth understanding of its contexts and underlying meanings (qualitative dimension).

From a critical perspective, despite its methodological advantages, this approach faces several practical challenges, including the complexity of research design, the need for interdisciplinary expertise, and the difficulty of integrating findings into a coherent and systematic framework. Moreover, weak integration may lead to fragmented rather than unified results.

Accordingly, the comparison indicates that each approach reflects a distinct perspective on security awareness in educational media:

- the quantitative approach answers “what is happening”;
- the qualitative approach explains “why and how it is happening”;
- the integrative approach links both dimensions to provide a more comprehensive and applicable understanding.

Therefore, reliance on a single methodological approach may produce partial knowledge, whereas the integrative approach represents the most scientifically robust option, provided it is applied through a rigorous methodology that ensures genuine integration rather than a superficial combination of methods.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the process of enhancing security awareness within educational media has been actively pursued by media institutions and modern communication technologies through the dissemination of purposeful and value-oriented messages. This is reflected in their capacity to address and reinforce issues of security awareness, even if to

a relative extent, by promoting cognitive, moral, and awareness-raising values among different segments of society, despite individual and social differences.

This role is further reinforced through the functions of education and culture, which are embodied in values and standards that support social stability, continuity, and the protection of public order. From these foundations emerge key concepts such as citizenship, governance, rationalization, awareness, and self-regulation at the individual level.

All of this operates within the framework of quantitative, qualitative, and integrative theoretical approaches, from which various analytical perspectives have developed, including the behavioral influence theory, the professional practice theory, systems analysis, critical approaches, new media approaches, and integrative approaches.

Accordingly, academic research in this field has increasingly addressed issues of security awareness within educational media through in-depth studies based on applied and multi-methodological approaches.

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STRENGTHENING SECURITY AWARENESS IN EDUCATIONAL MEDIA
USING MULTI-METHOD APPROACHES: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

SUMMARY

This research paper aims to identify and strengthen security awareness within the framework of educational media. Security awareness refers to the knowledge, attitudes, and practices that contribute to maintaining social stability, continuity, and the protection of public order, including responsible citizenship, awareness, and self-regulation in dealing with media content. Mass media and modern communication technologies play an important role in promoting security awareness by encouraging responsible communication practices and fostering educational and cultural values related to safe media use. The study adopts quantitative and qualitative research approaches to analyze the phenomenon. It also draws on a new media perspective and employs an integrative methodological framework to provide a comprehensive understanding of security awareness in educational media.

Keywords: strengthening; security awareness; educational media

PODNOSENIE ŚWIADOMOŚCI BEZPIECZEŃSTWA W MEDIACH EDUKACYJNYCH
PRZY UŻYCIU RÓŻNORODNYCH METOD: STUDIUM ANALITYCZNE

STRESZCZENIE

Celem niniejszego artykułu badawczego jest identyfikacja oraz kształtowanie świadomości bezpieczeństwa w obszarze mediów edukacyjnych. Świadomość bezpieczeństwa w tym kontekście odnosi się do wiedzy, postaw i działań jednostek w zakresie zapewnienia stabilności społecznej, ciągłości, a także utrzymania porządku publicznego, a także odpowiedzialności obywatelskiej, świadomości i samoregulacji w trakcie korzystania z mediów. Media i nowoczesne środki przekazu odgrywają ważną rolę w edukacji na temat zagrożeń, zachęcając do bezpiecznego korzystania ze środków komunikacji i promując różne wartości edukacyjne i kulturowe wśród użytkowników mediów. W artykule wykorzystano metody ilościowe i jakościowe w analizie zjawiska. Praca wykorzystuje także perspektywę nowych mediów, stosując różną metodologię badań, co pozwala na kompleksowe ujęcie bezpiecznego wykorzystania mediów edukacyjnych.

Słowa kluczowe: wzmacnianie; świadomość bezpieczeństwa; media edukacyjne