



## Ibero-American references in Media Information Literacy (MIL)

### *Referentes iberoamericanos en la Alfabetización Mediática Informativa (AMI)*

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### Abstract

This review article presents the theoretical basis of contributions, lines of research and approaches that exist from the Ibero-American point of view, with the aim of showing quantitatively the main Ibero-American exponents on Media and Information Literacy [MIL], the results are the product of a search in the WoS, in the category Arts & Humanities Citation Index [AHCI], using Media Literacy and Media and Information Literacy filters; the results are stored in a database that is debugged and then analyzed in the VOSviewer bibliometric software; the types of analysis are co-authored, with the Association Strength and Ling/Long Modularity methods; the information is presented in tables and bibliometric networks; visualizing the level of association and density given by author and country. The results show Spain with the largest number of researchers with publications in high-impact journals, showing different approaches to MIL and its impact on contemporary society from the educational, political, economic and technological fields; its contribution combines criteria on the need to implement teaching-learning processes supported in ICT to innovate the educational field since digital media do not cause changes by themselves is necessary government collaboration in Latin America; the Ibero-American referents of the MIL are Ignacio Aguaded, Luis Miguel Romero Rodríguez, Rosa García Ruiz, Amor Pérez Rodríguez.

**Keywords:** MIL, media literacy, VOSviewer, educommunication, bibliometrics, references.

### Resumen

Este artículo de revisión muestra el fundamento teórico de aportes, líneas de investigación y enfoques que existen desde el punto de vista Iberoamericano, con el objetivo de mostrar cuantitativamente los principales exponentes iberoamericanos sobre Alfabetización Mediática e Informativa [AMI], los resultados son producto de una búsqueda en la WoS, en la categoría *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* [AHCI], con el uso de filtros *Media Literacy* y *Alfabetización Mediática e Informativa*, los resultados se almacenan en una base de datos que se depura y luego se analiza en el software bibliométrico *VOSviewer*. Los tipos de análisis son coautoría, con los métodos *Association Strength* y *Ling/Long Modularity*, la información se presenta en tablas y redes bibliométricas; y se visualiza el nivel de asociación y densidad que existe por autor y país. Los resultados muestran a España con el mayor número de investigadores con publicaciones en revistas de alto impacto con diferentes enfoques sobre la AMI y la incidencia en la sociedad contemporánea desde el ámbito educativo, político, económico y tecnológico; su contribución aúna criterios sobre la necesidad de implementar procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje con soporte en TIC para innovar el ámbito educativo, ya que los medios digitales no suscitan cambios por sí mismos, es necesaria la colaboración gubernamental en América Latina; los referentes iberoamericanos de la AMI son Ignacio Aguaded, Luis Miguel Romero Rodríguez, Rosa García Ruiz, Amor Pérez Rodríguez.

**Palabras clave:** AMI, alfabetización mediática, VOSviewer, educación, bibliometría, referencias.

## 1. Introduction

Currently the term Media and Information Literacy [MIL] is in debate, as they are a set of practices that encompass the training of users to use information and communication technologies [ICT], as well as government proposals that standardize access to these elements and use them to create judgments about media and social reality (Garro-Rojas, 2020). The MIL paradigm or “Educommunication” is adopted in Latin America in the 70s, but there are substantial changes that drive their research towards the cultural and ideological power that occurs in the mass media. Different approaches and modalities are adopted that lead to an innovative apex that questions theories and models regarding communication (Castro Lara, 2016).

For this reason, considering digital and media literacy as a broader concept of literacy, it is synthesized in the management of five skills that are related to each other: access, analyze, evaluate, create-collaborate, reflect-act on media (García-Ruiz et al., 2020).

In addition, UNESCO presents documents that define media literacy as:

- A process that allows the acquisition of knowledge about the media managed in society and the operation process, including the use of tools that contribute to the use of these media for effective communication (Fedorov, 2011).
- A process that allows to enhance skills and capabilities in the use of different media, including manipulating writing, graphics and figures, audio, static and animated images through different types of technology; allowing users to expand in current media, produce content and understand the information received in a more critical way (Hinostroza, 2017).

There are researches on media and information literacy that have shown precedents of processes in the field of educommunication in the early sixties -mid-twentieth century- in Latin America, particularly in processes of influence in the so-called communication and development, disintegrating in different facets and political, ideological and cultural aspects on the field of media literacy (Gumucio-

Dagron & Tufte, 2008; Trejo-Quintana, 2016; Aguaded et al., 2018; Garro Rojas, 2020).

### 1.1 Media and Information Literacy

A concept descended to contemporary society mentions that MIL is:

... a new conceptual paradigm concerning the capabilities that enable the critical, autonomous, and creative use - by individuals and communities - of any means of information and communication and expression and their specific languages; these capabilities are considered to range from the simplest technical skills for the use of media to the most cognitive skills used in information processing and in the use of languages and reasoning. (Perez, 2015, p. 4)

MIL is a concept not yet formed that refers to the forms of training for users to be able to use ICT, also the proposals of educators who strive to make it a right of the entire population and thus contribute critically and responsibly on the media and social reality in which they exercise citizenship (Garro-Rojas, 2020).

Latin America has made considerable leaps, taking into account the particular case of governments based on genuine democratic processes, since they have instituted the creation of agencies to make decisions on science and technology, which implies new forms of knowledge generation in interaction, conceiving the relationship between science, technology and society, which leads to formulating policies for strengthening collective capacities (Casas, 2020).

Education and communication have generated interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary mergers, being a process based on human and political rights of humanity. Although no government standards are established, the rapid growth and reach of ICTs make this task an urgent challenge for all Latin America (Guerrero & Castillo, 2018).

For many researchers, access to MIL is a matter of justice, since classical literacy standardized by comprehension of written texts is no longer enough in a digitized era. To keep pace with technological progress and take advantage of the opportunities of this new reality, it is necessary to identify the theoretical and practical dimensions of two historically separate teachings [education and communication]

that merge today to provide competitive advantages in all social aspects (López Mondéjar et al., 2016; Torres-Lima, 2017; Garro-Rojas, 2020).

It is necessary to emphasize that MIL emerged worldwide, however, the Anglo-Saxon world has not distinguished the Latin American contributions since many of the emblematic investigations have not been translated, so they have not impacted worldwide. The English language has been conceived as the banner to study education-communication according to powerful organizations of science and knowledge, added to the globalization that has contributed to standardize and expose the Anglo-Saxon model as the ideal to face the subject (Castro-Lara, 2016); currently, there are spaces in Spanish as “Revista Comunicar” that has gained great relevance in Europe and the USA, thanks to its high impact on the MIL world, being a reference for researchers in Latin America.

The concept MIL is relatively new. It arises as a need to respond critically and consciously to digital information available to users in new, novel and globalized media and information channels, evidencing the need for critical thinking as a necessary skill to interpret and analyze the information and increasing disinformation (Duque-Méndez & Sánchez-Obando, 2022).

## 1.2 Reflections on the MIL

Since its origins, UNESCO has developed different attempts to specify communication and information policies, which allow the merging of these two great fields. Some of these policies have been regulated to the educational environment; for this reason, terms such as educommunication or media literacy respond to the imminent need to update the pedagogy, socio-cultural changes and the hegemony of large media groups (Castro Lara, 2016).

As with the dissemination of new terms such as anglicisms, the words media literacy, educommunication, among others, has had an impact and use; however, in the present century it has been considered as a new expression and as a driving force of the process of change for contemporary society. In 2012, UNESCO published the book *Media and Information Literacy. Curriculum for teachers* showing the correlation between television, radio, Internet, books, print media, digital archives and libraries in a single data warehouse “digital platform”; presented in a

holistic way and designed specifically for teachers to initiate an integration process between the formal education system and digital media, which allows reaching thousands of young people and enhancing their abilities (Wilson, 2012).

The EU initiated a series of studies, communications and initiatives that have warned the need to implement ICT in a methodical and adaptive way, presenting itself as a tool developed to improve the digital competences of citizens “DigComp”; later “DigCompEdu” is organized, which is aimed at teachers from the different levels of education from basic to higher education, including adults, considering general and professional training, in addition to training for special needs and non-formal learning contexts (Punie & Brecko, 2014; Redecker, 2017).

ICT is the most significant change that society has experienced since the end of the 20th century, and has also generated significant evolutionary processes in other sectors such as industry, communication and education. It is evident the universality of multimedia devices in contemporary society, reflected in the young generations known as “digital natives” that are interested in new forms and new means of approximation to information, through different options of the interconnected world (López Carballo, 2020).

The premise of media literacy is to teach critical thinking about the media without diminishing its value, but it must always question what they produce. We live in a society run by the *mass media*, therefore, the processes involved in the MIL continue to be unknown in education and in many other segments of society, being Latin America and the Caribbean the most affected. However, there are traces of public policies implemented in this region for their addition in the curricular management of educational systems, but no convincing success has been achieved due to the cultural, economic and digital gap between the different social classes (Lugo & Ithurburu, 2019).

It is necessary to address the issue of educational systems and also consider a curricular restructuring, with emphasis on the analysis of visual culture, and educate in processes of use, adaptation and manipulation of technology, as well as in discerning and interpreting processes of the different media and audiovisual platforms of the hyperconnected society. This level of connectivity has deep social, political

and economic consequences in our lives, from automobile technology, health systems, labor exchanges, governance systems and any social process sensitive to automation (Martínez Sanz et al., 2016; Reis et al., 2019; Mateus et al., 2002).

Paredes (2009) promulgated the ideas of involving pedagogical actions in education that use technological means for communication, commit the system to enhance not only skills in use, but to guide processes to rebuild knowledge, and modify the curriculum towards a distribution of social justice and equality. The implementation of educational methodologies based on training in media is a reality, and the aim will always be for students to recode and understand their position in the daily use of such media, to develop processes that enhance skills to interpret, create and actively participate in the information and communication society in which they are involved, interacting with different forms of communication and technological media (Pallarés Piquer, 2014).

The 21st century caused a dizzying rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which led the different social, economic, political and productive sectors to rethink new strategies and techniques in processes that influence each of their areas of incidence; hence, the Internet and online teaching have become the pioneers in offering digitized resources online, created for various activities that allow to promote education (Quirós-Meneses, 2009).

It is important to consider that—not because they are digital natives—students possess the basic digital competencies and are also not prepared in the best way to elucidate in the digital context of the 21st century. This new environment offers mechanisms, processes and conditions that could lead to real digital and media literacy; however, it is necessary to relate that training is conceived in different spaces and chronological ages, therefore it is necessary the continuity and coherence in learning, either in the school environment and / or family context (Bonilla-del-Río & Aguaded, 2018). For this reason, training in an integral way in the use of media, with the construction of competencies aligned to the curriculum is the challenge of contemporary education, allowing transversal skills to be enhanced in the coexistence of the family and the school, through inter and multidisciplinary collaborations.

If considering the concept of digital competence defined by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport of the Spanish Government “...it is the

creative, critical and safe use of information and communication technologies to achieve the objectives related to work, employability, learning, the use of free time, inclusion and participation in society” (O. ECD/65; 2015, p. 6994); this leads to deduce that it is not only the fact of knowing the use of technological and digital applications, but “it requires the development of various skills related to access to information, processing and use for communication, content creation, security and problem-solving” (O. ECD/65; 2015, p. 6996).

In the second decade of the 21st century, there are several researchers on digital literacy in education. Cabero-Almenara and Fernández-Robles (2018, p. 2), state the following:

- Multiple Literacies
- Information literacy
- Digital Literacies
- Media literacy
- Transmedia literacy

Likewise, similarities and differences between information literacy and media literacy have been considered, which as for Lee and So (2014) are two fields that are linked and complement each other, since at the beginning of the 21st century, neither information literacy nor media literacy were sufficient to cope with the huge volume of media messages and the abundance of information on platforms that already showed an impressive upturn.

This led to studies on digital literacy, considering it an essential skill for effective performance in society; also, Matamala (2018), states that digital literacy is concretized in the analysis of how to use the information hosted in the “cloud” in precise realities and structures, and achieve explicit educational purposes, depending on the context in which the subject works.

It is important to know that UNESCO is the international organization that leads the momentum for MIL, and recognize that there is a direct relationship with critical thinking and MIL, since the latter consolidates the knowledge, skills, and ethical values of the 21st century for all citizens and all people who actively seek participation in society. On the other hand, the world is conditioned by ICT, that is why online communication, personal expression, quality education and economic development, and of course

the fight against disinformation, are factors that affect the daily life. Therefore, MIL is the instrument that can achieve social cohesion in individual and collective contexts (Perilla-Granados, 2018; Campal-García, 2019).

It is now a decade since UNESCO promotes awareness of media and information literacy [*Media and Information Literacy-MIL*] through World MIL Week. The last six versions were:

- 2018, Lithuania (Kaunas) Media and information literacy cities: voices, powers and change makers.
- 2019, Sweden (Göteborg) Media and information literacy: informed, engaged, empowered.
- 2020, South Korea Resist Disinfodemia: Media and Information Literacy for all.
- 2021, South Africa Media and information literacy for the public good.
- 2022, Nigeria (Abuja) Building Trust: An Imperative of Media and Information Literacy.
- 2023, Jordan (Dead Sea) Media and information literacy in digital spaces: a Collective Global Agenda.

### 1.3 Ibero-American contributions to MIL

International organizations such as UNESCO, UN, UNICEF, Council of Europe, European Parliament, have expressed concern due to the changes induced by emerging media, due to their interactive ownership in the population; for this reason they have developed guidelines and recommendations to be implemented in different nations, however, is a pending task for Latin American governments, since there are poor results in legislative and public policy projects (López Mondéjar et al., 2016; Hinostroza, 2017; Aguaded et al., 2018; Campal-García, 2019). Paulo Freire [1921-1997] has been one of the most significant pedagogues of the current era, whose theories are so far objects of learning throughout the world: the pedagogy of hope, banking education, the liberating dialogue, literacy as a path of liberation, have cemented in Latin America a benchmark in educational processes.

Spain has been the pioneer in seeking the possibility of adhering to the MIL in teaching and learning processes, since the eighties contributed

with their models of *Media Literacy* through educational organizations (Borg & Lauri, 2009); in 2011 and 2014, research was developed to include the concept of media competence in the training plans of communication professionals in their different areas; the main idea was to incorporate new contents and didactic methodologies in specific subjects, and this as a complement to the research of Joan Ferrés (Buitrago et al., 2015). At present, Spain is the country with the highest scientific production concerning MIL at the Hispanic American level.

In Mexico there are academic communities interested in promoting media and digital literacy, but the relationship with the media and its users has been related with tension and subordination (Aguirre Aguilar, 2019); however, the development of technology has facilitated that the actors of the communication process have a different role, generating emerging groups that use media content and the possibilities of the digital world in critical and creative ways (Guerrero & Castillo, 2018).

In Colombia, education for the media in terms of public policies is not so rooted, defined and expedited; but, the importance of the media in the training process has been considered in the basic standards of language from the Ministry of Education, with its amplified and dynamized conception, where the media are used either in the structure of non-verbal language or in the field of the pedagogy of symbolic systems (Aguaded et al., 2016).

A precursor of media training in Brazil is Ismar de Oliveira Soares, leader of the educational research movement in Latin America, with diverse perspectives and approaches. In his works, the author mentions the importance of communication in society after modernism; in addition, he was a precursor in the formation of networks, dynamics and relations with educommunication; with his investigations he has induced different ways of thinking, living, acting and deciding. In addition, the premise considers that educommunication is a possible field from the academia and desirable from the political, being a social need the one that allows the educational space to form communicational and computerized societies, which facilitate the management of horizontal and dialogic knowledge (Oliveira ira Soares, 2012).

In Argentina, there is a democracy expressed as an alternative in power, as well as freedom of the press. Thanks to this, an “Ombudsman’s Office”

was created to attend and regularize the claims of mass hearings and also produce training materials (Cortés-Montalvo et al., 2016; Garro-Rojas, 2020).

Among the research carried out in Chile, the Chilean Ministry of Education (Mineduc) identifies five areas of action: 1. Teaching skills; 2. Leadership; 3. Curriculum and evaluation; 4. Internet and digital resources; 5. Institutional coordination, which shows traces of a resurgence of media education in Chile (Andrada Sola, 2018), which allows MIL to merge with education.

In Ecuador, groups have been organized, and the results of these research networks is *White Paper, Media Competencies in Ecuador* (Rivera-Rogel et al., 2019); in addition, there are several regional and international findings where the behavior of media education in Ecuador is mentioned, which agree that it should work collaboratively in innovative and impactful programs for the training of children and young people to exercise a critical analysis against the media that synchronizes with the political, cultural and social events demanded by society (Torres-Toukoumidis & Mendoza-Zambrano, 2019).

It is clear that some countries converge in lines of research or projects, also, it is true that each country focuses on different aspects of the MIL, and regional cohesion has not been forged due to the particularities of each nation (Trejo-Quintana, 2016); however, efforts have been unified to generate research projects, but the knowledge generated in educational institutions does not affect the public life of the countries. The MIL has been integrating in Latin America and the Caribbean, among its maxims are to provide citizens with basic knowledge about media and technology, so that in some way they can critically evaluate the quality of the content that is transmitted in different media (UNESCO, 2013). When MIL is investigated as an emancipatory process in Latin America there are scenarios of media and information manipulation, which are aimed at conditioning behaviors in time of elections, or merging with the judiciary, serving hegemonic groups, where there is a "late neoliberalism" that tries to manipulate the communicational sense, marketing, change of assumptions and information common society through the media (Pini, 2018).

Nowadays, researchers and organizations are looking for a way to demonstrate the importance of MIL in contemporary society, and they also consider

it essential to generate the critical thinking required by today's hyperconnected society. As a final aspect, it is highlighted that digital media do not promote changes or revolutions per se, that is why it is necessary to include them in the teaching-educational process for teaching, even ICT should be used to support pedagogies that promote innovation in the educational field (Howard & Thompson, 2015; Martínez-Olvera and Esquivel-Gámez, 2017; Franco Moreno, 2017; Claro et al., 2018; Cabero-Almenara et al., 2020).

## 2. Methodology

This article is a mixed research conducted to present a model that allows to spread media literacy and digital competence in higher education in Latin America. The Web of Science [WoS], owned by the company Clarivate Analytics, was used since it is one of the most important collections of databases of bibliographic references and citations of journals in the field of research, made up by the Core Collection, which includes indices in Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (*Arts and Humanities*). This platform has instruments that allow to develop analysis and evaluation processes on the citation index of different publications, including the JCR.

The databases are refined and worked on the *VOSviewer* bibliometric software [Bibliometric Software] that allows to analyze and visualize the different relationships between the scientific literature; the analyzes developed are co-authored with unit of analysis by author and the *Association Strength* method, as well as the type of co-authorship analysis with unit of analysis by country and the *Ling/Long Modularity*. The information obtained is presented in organized and graphical tables called maps or bibliometric networks.

## 3. Results

The main articles found are selected in the database WoS, the category *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (AHCI) is filtered, with the keywords *Media Literacy*, *Media and Information Literacy*, *Education Communication*, *Media Skills*, *Digital Literacy*. The result yields a database with 9982 authors; then a debugging of the database, called data cleaning or *scrubbing*, process where incorrect and / or incomplete data, incorrect format or dupli-

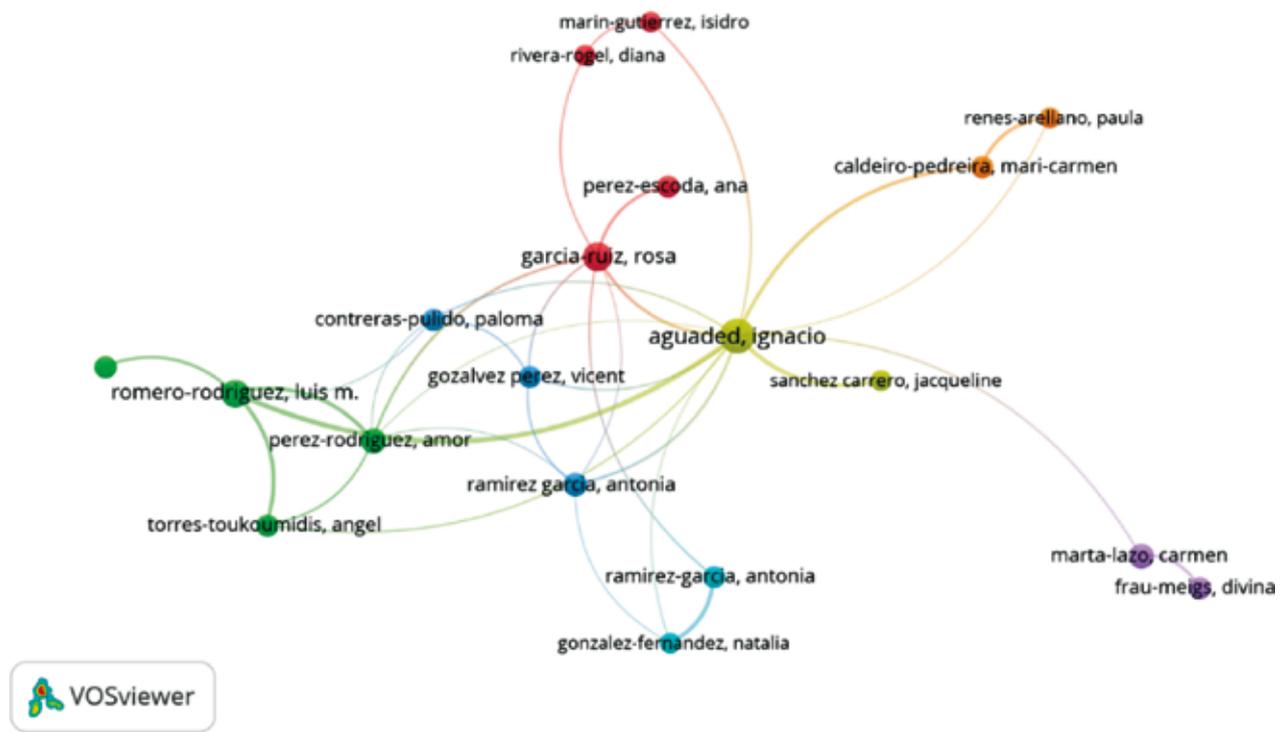
cation of them, is modified and / or deleted, with search and replacement tools.

For the presentation of the results, the graphs generated by VOSviewer called bibliometric networks are used. The types of analyzes performed are co-authored, which is one of the most sensitive analyzes and with well-documented scientific foundation, since researchers contribute to obtain visibility, notoriety, complementary skills and access to resources (Olivera Batista et al., 2018).

The first unit of analysis is by author and the *Association Strength* method; the result shows 139 authors who build and visualize bibliometric networks. Figure 1 shows this existing relationship.

It is noted that among the 20 authors with the most documents, citations and co-authorizations are prestigious researchers from Spain, such as Ignacio Aguaded (1); Luis Miguel Romero Rodríguez (6); Rosa García Ruiz (8); Amor Pérez Rodríguez (14). The number of citations, documents, and co-authoring link relationships are shown in Table 1.

**Figure 1.** Analysis of bibliometric networks of co-authorship



Note. The author from VOSviewer.

**Table 1.** Authors with more documents, quotes and co-authorship

Author	Documents	Quotes	Total Link Force
Aguaded, Ignacio	28	239	19
Tully, Melissa	16	332	14
Vraga, Emily K	14	333	14
Scharrer, Erika	12	95	14
Hudders, Liselot	17	452	13
Romero-Rodríguez, Luis M.	14	155	12

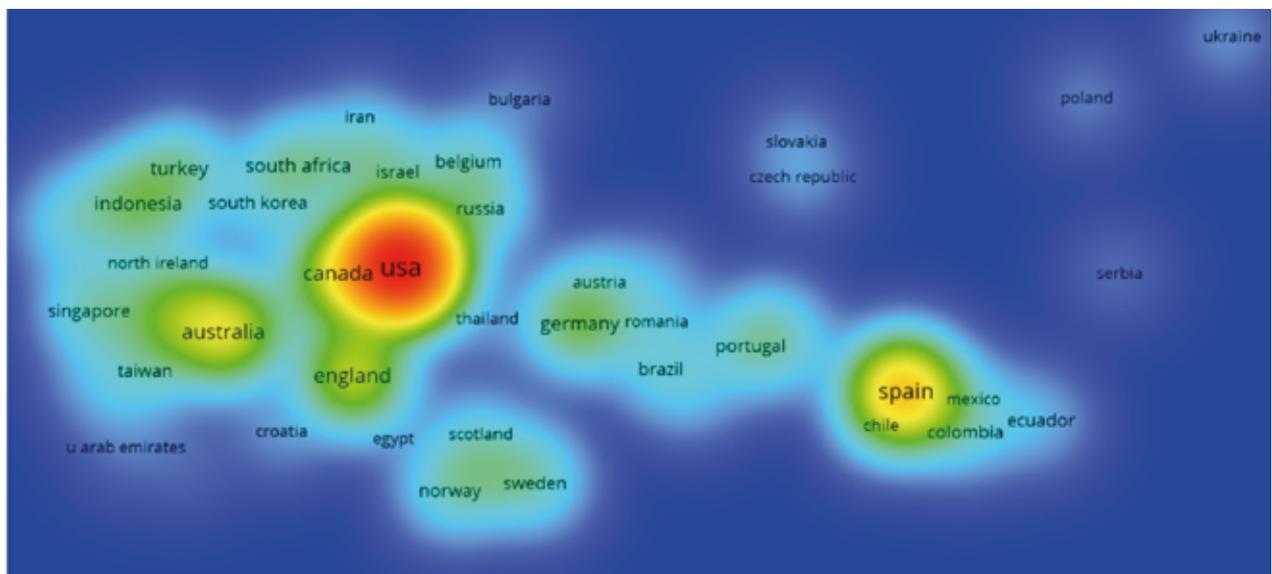
Author	Documents	Quotes	Total Link Force
Cauberghe, Veroline	10	331	10
Garcia-Ruíz, Rosa	15	161	9
Greene, Kathryn	10	152	9
Austin, Erica	12	406	8
De Jans, Steffi	8	188	8
Merchant, Guy	15	306	7
Levistkaya, Anastasia	11	104	7
Perez-Rodriguez, Love	10	115	7
Burner, Cathy	8	183	7
Federov, Alexander	8	101	7
Kupersmidt, Janis B.	7	193	7
Banerjee, Smita C.	7	121	7
Hecht, Michael L.	7	40	7
Jones, Sandra C.	7	38	7

Note. The author from VOSviewer.

The second unit of analysis carried out in the database is by countries with the largest number of publications on the related topics “Media Literacy”; “Media and Information Literacy”; “Education Communication”. The search method is “Ling/Long Modularity”. The search results are 54 countries with

more than ten related publications in the last seven years [2015-2022]. Figure 2 shows the information, where it is evident that networks with stronger links are main cluster headlines seen in the United States, Spain and Australia.

Figure 2. Countries with the highest number of publications in MIL

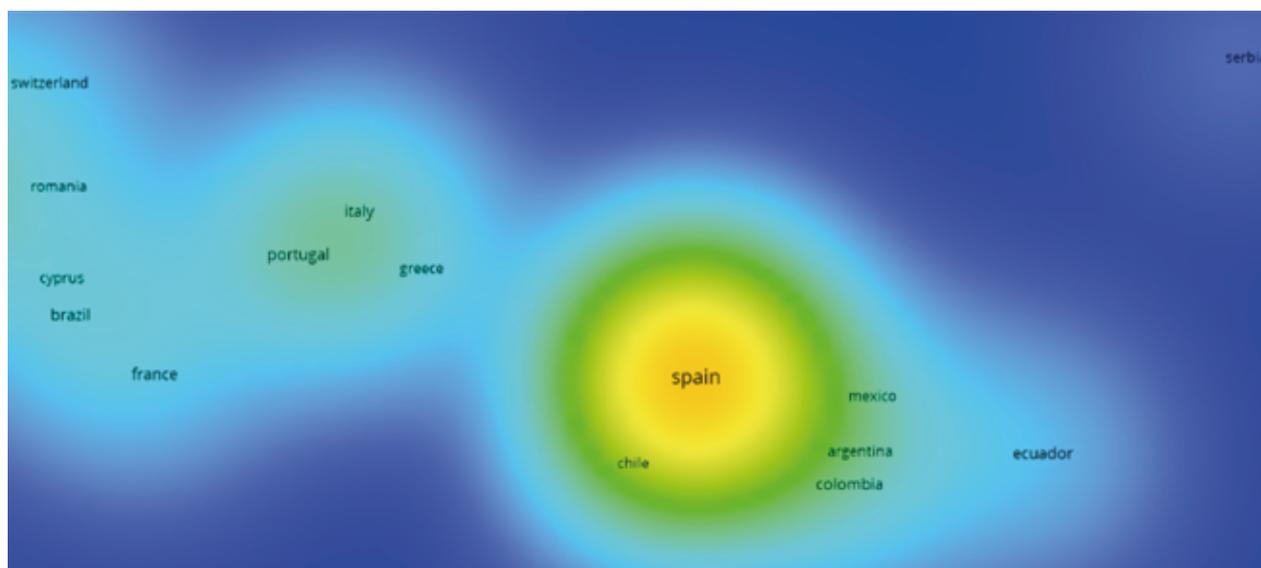


Note. The author from VOSviewer.

When reviewing the Ibero-American context, the analysis is deepened in the cluster “Spain”. It is observed that bibliometric networks are generated with countries such as Chile, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Greece, Italy, Portugal, France

and Brazil. Figure 3 shows the density of the relationship between the mentioned countries, with greater scientific production when the country is located closer to the cluster head.

**Figure 3.** MIL Publications Country Networks with Spain



Nota. The author from VOSviewer.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this article is to show the main Ibero-American exponents in Media Information Literacy in a quantitative way, in addition to considering the number of contributions, co-authorships and indexes worldwide of their scientific production.

The search was conducted using articles generated from 2015 to 2022 in the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index* (AHCI), showing that the progress of Ibero-America is outstanding, and Spain is the country with the largest number of researchers with publications in high impact journals with different approaches to study MIL.

UNESCO has strengthened processes and policies that regulate the educational environment, including terminologies such as educommunication or media literacy as part of pedagogical modernization within the current socio-cultural transformations.

Digital media do not produce changes by themselves, it is necessary to include them in teaching-learning processes with ICT support to generate innovation in education.

At the Ibero-American level, names such as Ignacio Aguaded, Luis Miguel Romero Rodríguez, Rosa García Ruiz and Amor Pérez Rodríguez stand out, who have based most of their research in the field of Information Media Literacy and its impact on contemporary society from the educational, political, economic and technological fields.

As other research, this work presents certain limitations, which can be considered opportunities for future research, since only the WoS database is used, which has quality guidelines so that the content is reliable for the scientific community. Comparative studies could be done with databases such as *Scopus* and *PubMed*.

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