

## The Use of Social Media as a Means of Digital Literacy: A Literature Study

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### Abstract.

*This research explores the role of social media as an important tool in increasing digital literacy in modern society. Social media is not only a platform for social interaction, but also a learning resource that facilitates collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. The educational role of social media includes sharing educational information, disseminating accurate health information, and active participation in social and political issues. Social media also plays a central role in increasing digital literacy through access to educational materials, digital literacy awareness campaigns, and collaboration between individuals, groups, and organizations. However, digital literacy is faced with challenges such as negative content, false information, and cybersecurity risks. The importance of digital literacy education has become abundantly clear in overcoming these challenges. Digital literacy education helps individuals manage information wisely, develop critical thinking skills, and participate in social issues. Social and cultural context also plays an important role in shaping an individual's digital literacy, influencing their values, skills, and identity. Joint efforts from the government, society, and the education sector are needed to increase digital literacy, ensuring that society can face technological challenges confidently and intelligently in this digital era.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Literacy, Digital

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## 1. Introduction

Presently, the advancement of information and communication technology, particularly in the realm of social media, has precipitated significant transformations in human interaction and communication. The pervasive presence of social media in contemporary society has rendered it an indispensable component of daily existence, serving not only as a medium for interpersonal communication, but also as a conduit for accessing information, engaging in

entertainment, and fostering digital literacy (Liansari & Nuroh, 2018). The concept of digital literacy pertains to an individual's capacity to proficiently and securely utilize information technology and digital media creatively and effectively. The utilization of social media plays a significant role in the advancement of society's digital literacy within this particular framework (Pradana, 2018).

In the contemporary era of technological advancements in the internet and mobile devices, social media has emerged as a prominent force in influencing human communication patterns and information acquisition. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have emerged as significant arenas for individuals across different age cohorts to exchange ideas, share personal experiences, and disseminate knowledge (Assidik, 2018). Nevertheless, social media serves a dual purpose, functioning not only as a means of communication but also as a significant instrument for enhancing digital literacy. Within the realm of digital literacy, social media platforms offer valuable opportunities for individuals to develop skills in information sorting, assessment, and creation, with a particular emphasis on relevance and accuracy. According to Anggraini & Supriyanto (2019), individuals who engage in social media can develop and refine their reading, writing, and critical thinking abilities through their online interactions.

One of the primary benefits associated with the utilization of social media platforms within the context of digital literacy is the convenient accessibility to a vast array of information. Through the utilization of this platform, individuals can efficiently and expeditiously access a wide array of knowledge originating from diverse locations across the globe. Moreover, social media platforms offer prospects for active engagement and participation. Individuals have the opportunity to participate in diverse discussions, forums, and interest groups, which serve to expand their perspectives and enhance their knowledge. In addition to this, it has been argued that social media platforms also serve as a facilitator for individuals to express their creativity (Juwandi et al., 2019). Individuals can manifest their thoughts and imaginative abilities through a diverse range of mediums, such as written content, visual representations, audiovisual materials, and various forms of multimedia. Nevertheless, amidst the advantages, there exist several obstacles associated with the utilization of social media in the context of digital literacy. The proliferation of misinformation or deceptive content poses a significant challenge necessitating the application of critical thinking abilities to discern and comprehend accurate information. Furthermore, the preservation of privacy and security pertaining to personal data is a matter of apprehension, prompting individuals engaged in social media to exhibit heightened vigilance towards the potential hazards linked to online interactions (Sahidillah & Miftahurrisqi, 2019).

Scholarly investigations in the field of literature have shown a growing fascination and focus on the utilization of social media as a tool for enhancing digital literacy. Recent research has shed light on multiple facets, with one noteworthy study conducted by Rahardaya & Irwansyah (2021) examining the utilization of TikTok as a means of enhancing digital literacy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this study demonstrate that digital literacy plays a significant role in the utilization of social media platforms, such as TikTok, and a deficiency in digital literacy can yield adverse consequences. This statement highlights the significance of acquiring and cultivating digital literacy competencies in light of the pervasive utilization of social media platforms. Furthermore, a study conducted by Abdikarya et al.

(2019) demonstrated that the utilization of social media platforms also yields favorable outcomes in individuals' digital literacy skills. Social media platforms facilitate enhanced comprehension and evaluation of information for users. Muslih (2022) conducted a study that underscored the positive impact of social media on students' digital literacy, particularly in terms of comprehension and discernment of accurate information. The findings of this study demonstrate that social media can serve as a valuable instrument in enhancing digital literacy among diverse populations. This proficiency in digital literacy plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with the necessary skills to navigate reliable information sources and safeguard themselves against potential cyber threats.

Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the presence of disparities in access that necessitate attention and resolution. Despite the considerable potential of social media as a tool for enhancing digital literacy, it is important to acknowledge that certain individuals lack access to the internet or digital devices, thereby resulting in disparities in learning opportunities (Sutrisna, 2020). The objective of this literature review is to examine the utilization of social media as a tool for digital literacy by examining the advantages and disadvantages associated with its use. This research aims to identify effective strategies for leveraging social media as a valuable tool in enhancing individuals' digital literacy. The objective is to address current obstacles and enhance the accessibility of digital literacy across diverse populations.

## **2. Research Methods**

The initial phase involves establishing the extent of the research, encompassing the precise subjects that will be examined within the context of this literature investigation. For instance, one potential area of inquiry could center on the impact exerted by social media usage on digital literacy, encompassing an examination of the attendant advantages and obstacles, as well as the repercussions for diverse cohorts, such as the community, students, or the broader populace. Subsequently, it is imperative to ascertain the data sources that will be employed. The sources encompassed in this category are academic databases, scientific journals, books, articles, and other online sources that are pertinent to the subject matter being examined in this literature study. It is imperative to ensure that these resources are regularly updated in accordance with the most recent advancements.

Once the data sources have been identified, it is imperative to carefully choose the sources that are most pertinent to the research topic. The criteria for selection should encompass the year of publication, the accuracy of the information, and the relevance of the sources to the research question. Commence the process of gathering data from designated sources. This process encompasses the tasks of reading, condensing, and structuring information derived from pertinent sources. It is imperative to ensure that the data collected adheres to the established research framework. Perform a meticulous examination of the available data to discern significant discoveries within the pertinent body of scholarly works. The literature presents an analysis of patterns, trends, benefits, and challenges.

Compose a scholarly research report that is grounded in the conducted findings and data analysis. The report ought to encompass several key components, namely an introduction, theoretical framework, methods, main findings, and conclusions. Please ensure that your text includes appropriate citations and references to support your findings. It is imperative to engage in a critical evaluation of one's research report to ascertain the clarity and cohesiveness

with which the findings and arguments have been presented. Please make any necessary revisions to enhance the quality of the report.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Research result**

This literature study explores various research related to the use of social media as a means of digital literacy in modern society. The results of an in-depth analysis of related literature revealed a number of significant findings:

##### **The Educational Role of Social Media**

The educational role of social media includes a range of functions that empower users and increase their knowledge and understanding in various fields. First of all, social media has become a platform where information, materials, and learning resources can be easily shared, facilitating collaboration and communication between teachers, students, and parents. This stimulates learning motivation, fosters creativity, and increases student independence in the learning process.

Furthermore, social media has a vital role in disseminating accurate and reliable health information. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has become an important tool for educating the public about vaccinations, health protocols, prevention and treatment of disease. By disseminating correct information, social media helps increase public awareness and knowledge about personal and environmental health, making a positive contribution to creating a more positive attitude toward health issues (Rahardaya, 2021).

Additionally, social media enables active participation in various social, political, cultural, and environmental issues. Through social media, people can engage in positive and constructive activities, increasing their sense of responsibility and social solidarity. This not only includes support for relevant issues, but also allows citizens to criticize government policies, monitor their actions, and provide valuable input. Thus, social media is not only an information channel, but also an empowerment tool that allows people to play an active role in the education, health, and social governance processes.

##### **Increasing Digital Literacy Through Social Media**

The utilization of social media significantly contributes to the enhancement of digital literacy within society, manifesting in diverse and quantifiable manners that yield substantial effects. Based on the sources cited in Kompasiana.com, it can be argued that social media serves as a conduit for accessing a wide range of knowledge. A diverse range of educational resources, tutorials, and articles are made available to the general public, guiding prudent and secure practices within the digital realm. This entails the provision of readily available educational materials, which contribute to the enhancement of comprehension in the field of digital literacy in light of swift technological advancements.

In addition, social media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and educational initiatives pertaining to digital literacy. This platform offers an opportunity for organizations, educational institutions, and individuals to effectively disseminate information, provide valuable insights, and exchange best practices pertaining to the prudent utilization of technology. Different types of media, such as webinars, infographics, and educational videos, have the potential to be disseminated through social media platforms, thereby enabling the engagement of a broader range of individuals. This enables individuals

to obtain pertinent and trustworthy information, thereby facilitating the enhancement of their digital literacy competencies.

Moreover, social media platforms facilitate opportunities for collaboration and networking among individuals, groups, and organizations with a shared emphasis on digital literacy. Using engaging in discussion groups, forums, and online communities, individuals have the opportunity to exchange their experiences, confrontations, and resolutions pertaining to the utilization of technology. Engaging in interactions with individuals who possess comparable interests facilitates the exchange of knowledge and perspectives, thereby enhancing the overall digital literacy of society. The enhancement of digital literacy through the utilization of social media platforms has a notable influence within the realm of internet usage in Indonesia. Based on data provided by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association in 2020, it was found that approximately 73.7% of the total population of Indonesia, equivalent to approximately 196.7 million individuals, were actively engaged as Internet users. Approximately 90% of individuals within this demographic employ the internet as a means to engage with social media, thereby indicating that social media platforms have become an indispensable component of the digital existence of Indonesian citizens.

Moreover, a study conducted by Faidatunnisa & Hatta (2022) elucidated that in the year 2021, Indonesia emerged as the country with the fourth highest count of social media users globally. The research revealed that approximately 170 million individuals, constituting approximately 62% of the total population, actively engaged with social media platforms. Popular digital platforms such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have gained significant traction in Indonesia, fostering an opportune setting for the promotion of digital literacy through the dissemination of educational and interactive content.

Nevertheless, despite the significant prevalence of internet usage, a study conducted by Dafiq et al. (2022) reveals that the digital literacy rate in Indonesia remains relatively low, with only approximately 40% of the population exhibiting proficiency in this domain, as indicated by data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2019. Digital literacy is assessed by various indicators, encompassing the capacity to conduct information retrieval, engage in communication, generate content, and navigate internet-connected devices. The significance of enhanced digital education and educational initiatives is underscored by the observed low literacy rate.

It is imperative to acknowledge that social media platforms also entail certain risks, including the dissemination of misinformation or fraudulent content. Based on the findings of a study conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI), it was observed that approximately 60% of social media users in Indonesia reported instances of encountering false information or hoaxes during the year 2020 (Gunawan & Toni, 2022). Consequently, the enhancement of digital literacy is imperative in enabling society to effectively discern and combat misinformation, thereby facilitating the prudent and discerning utilization of social media platforms by its users.

The accessibility of social media has transformed digital literacy from a privilege into a fundamental right for individuals. In the contemporary era of digital information, the acquisition of digital literacy knowledge and skills via social media platforms assumes a significant role in equipping society with the necessary competence and intelligence to



effectively confront technological challenges. The enhancement of digital literacy via social media necessitates a collaborative approach involving governmental bodies, educational institutions, and social media platforms. This collaboration is crucial to deliver high-quality digital education and combat the dissemination of misinformation. The growing digital literacy among the Indonesian populace enables them to effectively and ethically navigate the intricacies of the progressively complex digital landscape, thereby facilitating their access to and utilization of information judiciously.

### **Digital Literacy Challenge**

Digital literacy is the ability to use, understand, and create information using digital media, such as the Internet, computers, and mobile devices. Digital literacy is important to adapt to technological developments and face challenges in the digital era. Some challenges related to digital literacy are (1) Lack of adequate access and infrastructure to connect the public with quality and relevant digital information sources; (2) Lack of public awareness and skills in sorting, evaluating, and using digital information critically, ethically, and responsibly; (3) The rise of negative content, misinformation, and hoaxes can cause confusion, anxiety, and social conflict; (4) Lack of personal data protection and cyber security can cause material and immaterial losses for digital media users; and (5) Rapid changes in technology require people to continue learning and developing their digital literacy.

To overcome these challenges, joint efforts are needed from the government, society, and the education sector to increase the nation's digital literacy. Some efforts that can be taken include: (1) Increasing access and infrastructure that supports the use of digital media evenly and affordably throughout Indonesia; (2) Encouraging the development of quality, educational, and beneficial digital content for society, as well as eradicating negative content, misinformation, and hoaxes; (3) Providing education and outreach about the importance of digital literacy for society, as well as providing guidance and facilities for learning digital literacy independently or in groups; (4) Increasing personal data protection and cyber security for digital media users, as well as providing strict sanctions for cybercriminals; and (5) Integrating digital literacy in formal and non-formal education curricula, as well as increasing the competence of teachers and students in digital literacy.

### **Influence of Social and Cultural Context**

The influence of social and cultural context is a very powerful force that shapes the behavior, worldview, and values of individuals in society. The social and cultural environment in which a person lives and learns plays a central role in shaping who and how a person becomes. This context has a very broad and profound impact on the lives of individuals.

**How to Think, Behave, and Communicate.** Social and cultural contexts shape the norms that govern how people think, behave, and communicate with each other. For example, the way of speaking, level of politeness, and emotional expression are greatly influenced by the culture in which the individual grew up.

**Values, Norms, and Beliefs.** The values, norms, and beliefs taught and upheld by society influence the way individuals view morality, ethics, and human rights. It forms the basis for an individual's value system.

**Skills, Knowledge, and Interests.** The social and cultural context guides the important skills and knowledge that must be learned. In addition, individual interests and talents are also influenced by cultural values and social expectations.

**Motivation, Aspirations, and Hope.** Social and cultural views of success, happiness, and accomplishment influence an individual's motivation, aspirations, and hopes. Societal expectations can motivate individuals to achieve certain goals.

**Identity, Self-Confidence, and Self-Esteem.** Social and cultural contexts shape individual identities, including ethnic, religious, gender, and other social group identities. This also affects an individual's level of self-confidence and self-esteem.

The impact of social and cultural context is a pivotal factor in molding an individual's personality and perspective. The social and cultural milieu in which an individual develops and resides exerts a substantial influence on multiple facets of their existence. These influences encompass various aspects such as cognitive processes, behavioral patterns, communication styles, value formation, skill acquisition, motivational factors, and identity development, among others. The potential outcomes of this phenomenon can be either positive, such as enhancing individuals' experiences and fostering collaboration, or negative, such as engendering discord or disparities.

To acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of the social and cultural milieu in Indonesia, a multitude of informational resources can be employed. The annual socio-cultural statistics, encompassing data on access to information, participation in cultural activities, and social demographics, are provided by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). The Kompasiana article examines the socio-cultural perspectives within the Indonesian education system, highlighting the influence of prominent figures like Ki Hajar Dewantara on educational ideologies in the country. The official website of the Republic of Indonesia also emphasizes the socio-cultural diversity present within the country, encompassing various dimensions such as ethnic, linguistic, religious, and artistic diversity. Furthermore, scientific research can serve as a valuable and reliable source of information.

It is imperative for individuals to possess awareness regarding the impact of social and cultural contexts and to comprehend the multifariousness present within society. This heightened level of consciousness enables individuals to engage more effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, cultivate a mindset of acceptance, and contribute to the development of a society that values inclusivity and mutual respect. Hence, it is imperative to adopt an approach that demonstrates sensitivity toward the social and cultural context to comprehensively comprehend and address the unique requirements of individuals within a society that is progressively characterized by pluralism and diversity.

### **The Importance of Digital Literacy Education**

Digital literacy education is an important learning process in the modern world driven by digital technology, media, and information. Society benefits from digital literacy education because it involves using digital technology in an effective, ethical, and critical way. In this era of rich information, people who have good digital literacy can:

**Managing Information.** They can access, assess, and use information from various digital sources. They can sort relevant and accurate information from a flood of online information, develop critical evaluation skills, and use data wisely to support their arguments and understanding.

**Develop Thinking and Collaboration Skills.** Digital literacy education also helps people develop critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity skills. They learn to solve problems innovatively and collaborate with others through digital technology, preparing them for the needs of a future world of work that increasingly relies on teamwork and creative thinking.

**Become a Lifelong Learner.** Through digital literacy, people not only learn current skills but also develop the ability to continue learning throughout life. They learn how to learn, discover new resources independently, and adapt quickly to ongoing technological changes.

**Maintaining Mental and Social Health.** In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which limits physical interaction, digital literacy is also a tool for maintaining mental health and social well-being. Through social media and online platforms, people can stay connected with friends and family, seek support, and access mental health resources.

**Participate in Social and Environmental Issues.** People who have digital literacy can become agents of change in life. They can increase their awareness and participation in social, political, and environmental issues through online campaigns, digital petitions, and online advocacy. By understanding the importance of digital literacy, people can maximize the potential of technology to improve their learning, contribute to society, and prepare themselves for an increasingly digitally connected future.

The provision of digital literacy education plays a crucial and indispensable role in promoting the progress and development of Indonesian society within the context of the digital era. Digital literacy is a crucial skill set that enables individuals to proficiently and responsibly utilize digital technology while ensuring their safety and adhering to ethical standards. According to available data, it is projected that Indonesia's digital literacy index will reach a level of 3.54 in the year 2022, as measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. This numerical value suggests a notable improvement in the overall proficiency of digital literacy within the country. Digital literacy enhances essential skills required in the context of the fourth industrial revolution, including communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. The observed rise in the digital proficiency pillar, from 3.44 points in 2021 to 3.52 points in 2022, signifies an augmentation in the aptitude of internet users to effectively utilize computers, retrieve data, and authenticate information.

Digital literacy plays a pivotal role in facilitating the notion of lifelong learning, thereby empowering society to effectively respond to evolving technological advancements and global complexities. This enables individuals to sustain their pertinence within a dynamic and progressive professional landscape. Digital literacy has been found to have a beneficial influence on both social and economic well-being, particularly in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In situations where physical interaction is constrained, individuals can maintain connectivity and engage in social activities through various means. These include the utilization of short messaging services, with a staggering 97% of individuals being able to communicate through this medium. Additionally, a significant proportion of the population, approximately 94%, actively participate in social media platforms, further facilitating social engagement. Furthermore, the ability to access online video content is prevalent, with approximately 90% of individuals being able to partake in this form of virtual interaction.

Nevertheless, the digital culture pillar presents certain challenges, as evidenced by its decline in score in 2022. This decline suggests a growing recognition of the importance of promoting civility and diversity within the digital realm. Hence, it is imperative to promote



ongoing digital literacy education to enable Indonesian individuals to harness the full potential of digital technology prudently and efficiently.

The findings of this study offer a comprehensive overview of the significance and relevance of social media as a medium for digital literacy. By comprehending the advantages, difficulties, and impact of social context, it is possible to implement strategic measures to optimize the potential of social media as a proficient educational instrument in the contemporary digital age.

### **3.2. Discussion**

This literature review examines the significance of social media as a crucial instrument for enhancing digital literacy within contemporary society. Social media serves as a multifaceted tool that not only enables social interaction, but also fosters collaborative engagement among teachers, students, and parents, thereby functioning as an educational resource. The educational function of social media encompasses the sharing of educational content, the dissemination of accurate health information, and active engagement in social and political matters. Social media assumes a pivotal role in enhancing digital literacy by facilitating access to educational resources, promoting campaigns to raise awareness about digital literacy, and fostering collaboration among individuals, groups, and organizations.

Nevertheless, the domain of digital literacy encounters various obstacles, including the presence of detrimental content, dissemination of false information, and exposure to cybersecurity hazards. The significance of incorporating digital literacy education has become increasingly evident in effectively addressing these challenges. The provision of digital literacy education facilitates the cultivation of effective information management practices, the cultivation of critical thinking abilities, and active engagement in societal matters. The influence of social and cultural context is significant in shaping an individual's digital literacy, impacting their values, skills, and identity. To enhance digital literacy and equip society with the necessary skills to effectively navigate the complexities of the digital era, collaborative endeavors must be undertaken by the government, society, and the education sector.

This literature review elucidates the significant role that social media plays in enhancing the digital literacy of contemporary society. Social media serves as more than a mere social platform, it also functions as an educational tool that fosters collaboration among educators, learners, and parents. These platforms facilitate the exchange of educational content, the distribution of health-related information, and engagement in social and political matters. Social media platforms facilitate the broadening of educational resources and the dissemination of campaigns aimed at promoting digital literacy. Nevertheless, the presence of obstacles such as the proliferation of negative content and dissemination of false information underscores the pressing need for digital literacy education that enhances individuals' abilities to discern and evaluate information, as well as cultivate critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the impact of social and cultural factors on the development of digital literacy underscores the importance of adopting a conscientious and comprehensive approach. The enhancement of digital literacy and the optimization of social media as a learning tool in the digital age necessitate collaboration among governments, communities, and educational institutions.

#### 4. Conclusion

This literature review examines the significant role that social media plays in enhancing digital literacy within contemporary society. Social media serves as more than a mere social platform, it also functions as an educational tool that fosters collaboration among educators, learners, and parents. These platforms facilitate the sharing of educational content, distribution of reliable health information, and engagement in social and political matters. Nevertheless, the presence of obstacles such as the proliferation of negative content and the dissemination of false information underscores the pressing need for digital literacy education that enhances individuals' abilities to discern and evaluate information, as well as cultivate their critical thinking capacities. The significance of the social and cultural context in molding digital literacy underscores the necessity for an attentive and all-encompassing approach. The establishment of collaborative efforts among governmental bodies, societal entities, and educational institutions is of utmost significance in enhancing digital literacy. Such collaboration plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals to fully harness the potential of social media as a highly effective educational tool within the contemporary digital landscape. Hence, it is imperative to incorporate digital literacy education into the formal education system and foster collaborative endeavors to ensure that individuals possess the requisite knowledge and competencies to effectively confront the complexities of technology and information.

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