



Enhancing Community Literacy Through Instagram @babasalmombasa in Luwuk District

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ABSTRACT

Low community participation in literacy activities, particularly among social media users, remains a challenge in promoting a sustainable reading culture. Instagram provides an opportunity to disseminate literacy content through interactive and accessible digital communication. This study aims to examine the contribution of the Instagram account @babasalmombasa to literacy development in Luwuk District, Banggai Regency. The study contributes to the literature by focusing on a specific local Instagram account within a semi-urban community and by integrating quantitative evidence with practical insights into social media-based literacy initiatives. Data were collected from 92 respondents selected from 1.154 followers using Slovin's formula. Data collection involved observation, questionnaires, and documentation, followed by simple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that Instagram usage has a significant positive contribution to literacy development, with an Adjusted R^2 of 0.410, indicating that 41.0% of the variation in literacy development can be explained by engagement with the @babasalmombasa account. These findings support the Uses and Gratifications perspective by demonstrating the potential of social media to integrate digital communication with community literacy activities. Practically, the findings suggest that strategically designed Instagram content can strengthen community engagement and support local literacy initiatives. The study concludes that Instagram can serve as an effective complementary medium for promoting literacy development in semi-urban communities.

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1. Introduction

One of the main indicators of a country's development is literacy, as it provides the foundation for individual engagement with the outside world, education, and social contribution (Ati & Widiyanto, 2020). Literacy is not limited to reading and writing skills, but also includes speaking, listening, and critical thinking (Bu'ulolo, 2021). At the global level, low literacy ability remains a serious challenge. In Indonesia, despite various efforts by the government and civil society organizations, reading interest remains low. UNESCO reported that only 0.001% of Indonesians have a genuine interest in reading, placing the country 100th out of 208 nations. A study by OECD (2023) also ranked Indonesia low in reading, mathematics, and science proficiency.



This global pattern is also evident in countries with low to moderate literacy levels, where governments face multiple challenges that hamper media literacy initiatives (Ramadhan et al., 2024). At the regional level, the reading interest score of Central Sulawesi was 56.86, ranking 30th out of 34 provinces. Banggai Regency recorded the lowest Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM) in the province (BPS, 2023). The lack of library services, limited collections, and minimal community participation highlight a serious literacy gap. Pitri & Sofia (2022) suggest that improving literacy in Indonesia requires higher reading literacy standards and adequate supporting facilities. In addition, media also plays an important role in shaping young generations by transmitting imagination, values, and significant impacts through continuous exposure across different channels (Tirocchi, 2023).

Amid this condition, Yayasan Babasal Mombasa in Luwuk has initiated local-based literacy movements since 2015, including mini libraries, literacy training, and cultural programs. Various activities have been organized, such as literary festivals, writing classes, poetry nights, and literacy discussions. Instagram, as one of the most popular social media platforms widely used by various groups in Ulfa & Lubis (2025) has been strategically utilized to extend the reach of this literacy movement. The Instagram account @babasalmombasa presents book reviews, educational information, and documentation of community activities. Its uniqueness lies in integrating local community approaches with interactive digital features such as Stories, Reels, and IG Live. Videos, images, and storytelling formats are frequently used to capture attention (Chen & Wang, 2021). This strategy enables literacy content to be packaged visually and dynamically, reaching wider audiences, even though some users still primarily use Instagram for entertainment.

Previous research has also shown that social media can enhance student motivation and participation in language learning (Alharthi et al., 2020). Furthermore, studies by Azra et al. (2024) and Febrianti et al. (2021) revealed that literacy community accounts on social media influence reading habits, especially among Generation Z. This study is relevant because most previous research on digital literacy has focused on formal environments such as schools or universities and has been largely qualitative in nature. However, these studies were limited to urban settings, focused on formal education environments, and were predominantly qualitative in nature.

Based on this gap, the present study offers novelty by examining the use of the Instagram account @babasalmombasa as a community-based digital literacy instrument in a semi-urban context. This research is urgent to identify effective strategies for improving literacy amidst the dominance of social media as an entertainment space. By employing a quantitative approach with simple linear regression analysis, the study aims to provide empirical evidence of Instagram's role in promoting literacy, which can serve as a reference for communities, educational institutions, and policymakers.

2. Theoretical Framework

Traditional Literacy

Originally, literacy referred only to the ability to read and write. However, its meaning has expanded over time by being integrated with other concepts, such as media literacy and digital literacy (Saptiyono, 2024).

Literacy as a Social Process

Literacy improvement is a methodical process aimed at enhancing reading, writing, critical thinking skills, and individual understanding in social life. According to Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, individuals process information and choose behaviors based on observations of

their environment, including interactions within literacy communities. In this context, literacy is not only related to reading and writing skills but also to analytical thinking abilities and active participation in literacy activities (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022).

Digital Literacy

Literacy has also evolved into the digital realm. Gilster (1997) defines digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources effectively and efficiently. Hasanah et al. (2024) argue that literacy can serve as a tool to help individuals face the challenges of the 21st century, as it contributes to the enhancement of cognitive abilities. In this context, digital literacy becomes crucial. Sari et al. (2022) emphasize that individuals with strong digital literacy are not only competent in operating digital tools but also responsible in their use. Yudiana et al., (2023) further note that in this study, community literacy is examined through three indicators: reading interest, literacy comprehension, and engagement in literacy activities.

Social Media as a Medium for Digital Literacy

Instagram, as one of the most popular social media platforms, allows users to interact, share content, and reach a wide audience quickly. According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz et al. (1973), individuals use media to fulfill specific needs, including information and educational purposes (Karunia et al., 2021). Therefore, the use of Instagram by the account @babasalmombasa can be seen as a digital literacy medium that provides an interactive and informative space for improving community literacy.

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using simple linear regression to examine the effect of Instagram usage on community literacy development in Luwuk District, Banggai Regency. The design focused on testing the empirical relationship between the independent variable (Instagram usage) and the dependent variable (literacy development). The population consisted of all residents of Luwuk who follow or have accessed the Instagram account @babasalmombasa. A representative sample of 92 active respondents was selected using Slovin's formula. This formula was chosen to determine a manageable sample size from the finite population of 1.154 followers while maintaining statistical representativeness. Respondents were selected based on their active use of Instagram and familiarity with the account.

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire based on the study's variables. The independent variable (X: Instagram usage) consisted of three indicators, namely content interaction, the use of Instagram features such as Stories, Reels, and IG Live, as well as information search and evaluation. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y: literacy development) included three indicators, namely reading interest, literacy comprehension, and participation in literacy activities. All items were measured using a Likert scale (1–5). A concise table with key indicators and example items summarizes the questionnaire. The following Table 1 presents the operational definition of each variable.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS software. The analysis procedures included: (1) validity and reliability tests to ensure the quality of the instrument; (2) a normality test to assess the data distribution; and (3) simple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of variable X on variable Y. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the contribution of variable X to variable Y as a percentage. In contrast, the t-test was used to test the significance of that effect. The research workflow is shown in Fig. 1.

Table 1. The operational definition of each variable

Variable	Indicator	Statement / Example Item	Measurement Scale
Instagram Usage (X)	Interaction with content	1. I often see and read posts from @babasalmombasa. 2. I am interested in literacy content shared by @babasalmombasa. 3. I actively comment or discuss on posts from @babasalmombasa. 4. I feel helped by literacy information from @babasalmombasa.	Likert 1–5
	Use of Instagram features	5. I often like posts from @babasalmombasa. 6. I often share posts from @babasalmombasa with friends or on other social media. 7. I often watch IG Live or Instagram Stories created by @babasalmombasa.	Likert 1–5
	Information search & evaluation	8. I can distinguish credible literacy information from non-credible information on @babasalmombasa. 9. I seek additional information from other sources after seeing posts from @babasalmombasa. 10. I understand the importance of evaluating information before sharing it on social media.	Likert 1–5
Literacy Development (Y)	Reading interest	1. I read books more often after following @babasalmombasa. 2. I am interested in books reviewed by @babasalmombasa. 3. I receive interesting reading recommendations from @babasalmombasa.	Likert 1–5
	Literacy comprehension	4. I understand literacy concepts better after following @babasalmombasa. 5. I become more accustomed to reading articles or book reviews after seeing content from @babasalmombasa. 6. I feel more critical in understanding information after following @babasalmombasa.	Likert 1–5
	Participation in literacy activities	7. I am interested in participating in literacy discussions organized by @babasalmombasa. 8. I have participated in offline activities (book discussions, film screenings, literacy festivals) informed by @babasalmombasa. 9. I discuss literacy more frequently with friends or communities after following @babasalmombasa.	Likert 1–5

All respondents provided informed consent, and their anonymity and data confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study. The quantitative approach cannot deeply explore respondents' subjective experiences, such as personal motivations, challenges, or perceptions

related to digital literacy. While a mixed-methods approach could provide richer qualitative insights, it was not used because this study focuses on empirical testing of relationships between variables, rather than narrative exploration.

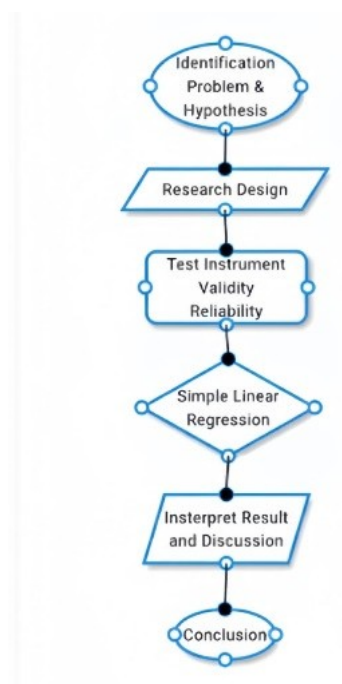


Fig. 1. Research Flowchart

4. Result and Discussion

Table 2. Percentage of respondent characteristics (92 respondent)

Variable	Result
Gender	
Male	41
Female	51
Age	
< 18	2
18-24	51
25-34	33
>34	5
Education	
Junior High School	-
Senior High School/Vocational High School	37
Diplo3**/%*ma/Bachelor	54
Postgraduate	1
I've been following the Instagram account @babasalmombasa for a long time.	
Less than 3 Months	8
3-6 Months	5
More than 6 Months	79

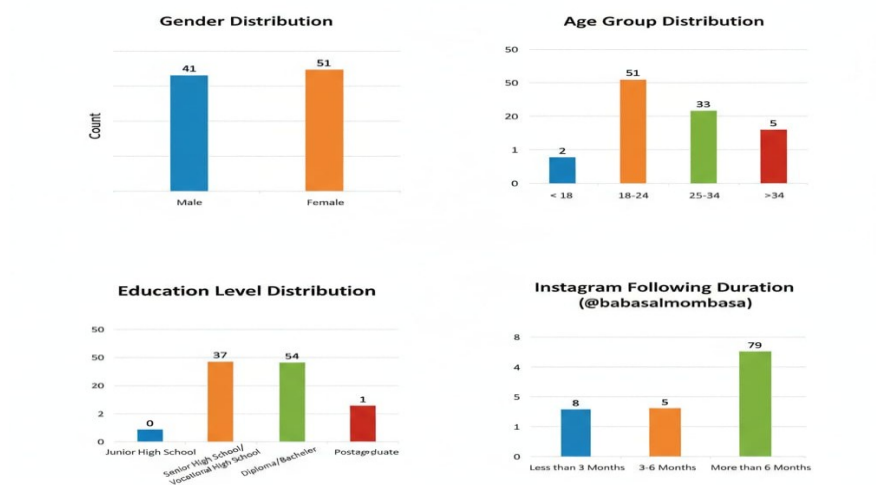


Fig. 2. Histogram of of respondent characteristics

Based on the distribution of respondent characteristics, the majority of respondents in this study were female. The most represented age range was the 18–24 year group in Table 2 and Fig. 2. In terms of education level, most respondents were graduates of Diploma/Bachelor programs. Meanwhile, based on the duration of following the Instagram account @babasalmombasa, the largest number of respondents had been following the account for more than 6 months. The validity Test Variables X and Y in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Results of Validity Test for Variable X: Instagram Usage

Item	r Count	r Table	Conclusion
X01	.450	0.207	Valid
X02	.561	0.207	Valid
X03	.623	0.207	Valid
X04	.699	0.207	Valid
X05	.642	0.207	Valid
X06	.674	0.207	Valid
X07	.606	0.207	Valid
X08	.453	0.207	Valid
X09	.434	0.207	Valid
X10	.444	0.207	Valid

Table 4. Results of Validity Test for Variable Y: Improvement of Literacy

Item	r Count	r Table	Conclusion
Y01	.538	0.207	Valid
Y02	.745	0.207	Valid
Y03	.629	0.207	Valid
Y04	.606	0.207	Valid
Y05	.733	0.207	Valid
Y06	.561	0.207	Valid
Y07	.636	0.207	Valid
Y08	.629	0.207	Valid
Y09	.639	0.207	Valid

All items in variables X and Y had calculated r values greater than the r table, as shown in the Table 3 and Table 4. Therefore, it could be concluded that every item in the questionnaire was valid and suitable for use in this research.

Table 5. Results Of Reliability Test for Variable X

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.757	10

Table 6. Results Of Reliability Test for Variable Y

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.816	9

The results of the reliability test indicated that the Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable was greater than 0.60 in Table 5 and Table 6. Therefore, it could be concluded that the research instrument was reliable and able to collect data consistently.

Table 7. Results of Normality Test using Kolmogorov-Smirnov

No	Variable	N	Sig. (Asymp. Sig.)	Description
1.	Residual	92	0.055	Data is normally distributed

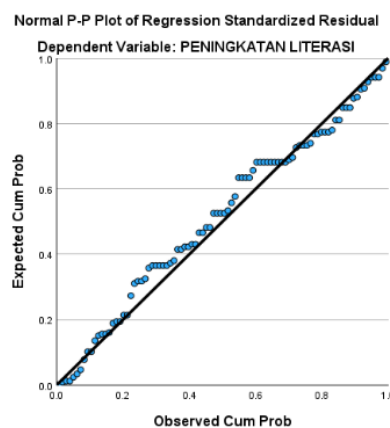


Fig. 3. Scatterplot

Table 7 showed the results of the normality test on the residual data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method. Based on the test results, the significance value (Asymp. Sig.) was 0.055, which exceeded the significance threshold of 0.05 in Fig. 3. The data from the Scatterplot further substantiates this. This indicated that the residual data were normally distributed, meaning the assumption of normality was met and the data were suitable for further analysis using simple linear regression.

Table 8. Results of the Heteroscedasticity test

Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	6.291	2.245		2.802	0.006
The use of Instagram @babasalmombasa	-0.104	0.053	-0.203	-1.966	0.052

The significance value for the Instagram usage variable was 0.053 (> 0.05), according to the findings of the heteroscedasticity test conducted using the Glejser technique in Table 8. This indicated that the residual variance could be considered constant, as the regression model did not exhibit heteroscedasticity issues. Consequently, this regression model was suitable for further analysis, and the homoscedasticity assumption was met.

Table 9. Results of the T test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	11.788	3.661		3.220	0.002
The use of Instagram @babasalmombasa	0.683	0.086	0.640	7.912	< 0.001

The Instagram usage variable @babasalmombasa had a calculated t value of 7.912 with a significance value (Sig.) < 0.001 , according to the t-test findings in Table 9. The Instagram usage variable had a significant effect on literacy improvement, as indicated by the significance value being less than 0.05. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between Instagram usage and literacy advancement, as reflected by a regression coefficient (B) value of 0.683. This indicated that the level of literacy improvement experienced by the respondents increased with the intensity of their Instagram usage at @babasalmombasa.

Table 10. Test results of R2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.640	0.410	0.404	2.44717

To clarify the contribution of the Instagram Usage variable to literacy improvement, the results of the coefficient of determination test were illustrated in Fig. 4 below.

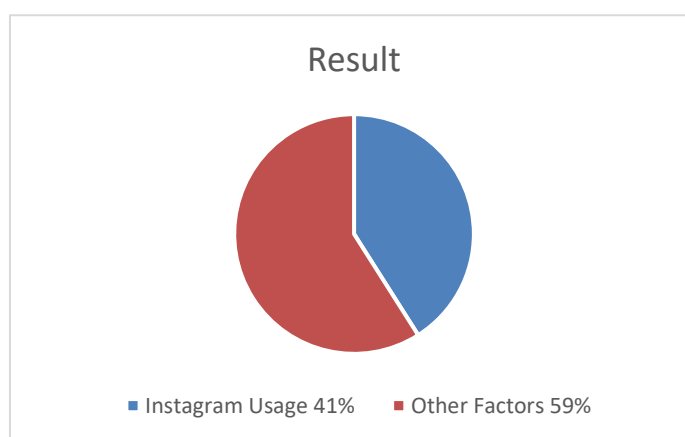


Fig. 4. Result of the coefficient of determination

According to the findings of the coefficient of determination test in the Model Summary Table and figure, the R Square value was 0.410 in Table 10. This indicated that 41.0% of the variation in the Literacy Improvement variable could be explained by the Instagram usage variable @babasalmombasa, while the remaining 59.0% was influenced by other factors not included in this research model in Fig. 4.

Discussion

Based on the descriptive analysis, the majority of respondents were women aged 18–24 with a diploma or bachelor's degree who had followed the @babasalmombasa Instagram account for more than six months. This demographic pattern reflects broader digital trends in Indonesia, where young women are among the most active users of Instagram and more responsive to digital literacy content. This demographic trend also reflects broader patterns in which social media platforms are increasingly used not only for entertainment but also for educational and self-development purposes, as highlighted in recent studies on edu-influencers and their audiences (Sun et al., 2025).

In addition to dominating the overall population in Indonesia, young people also dominate internet use, particularly the use of social media. The positive aspect is that young people have the ability to access and disseminate information, seek entertainment, and learn through the internet (Sari & Prasetya, 2022). Young people, often referred to as Generation Z, tend to use Instagram as a tool to build their digital identity, personal branding, and as a space to express themselves. They also enjoy entertaining content, engage in social action, and personalize their digital identities through this platform. This is consistent with Lu & Lin (2022), who found that Instagram's interactive features such as Stories and Reels enable Gen Z to actively construct and practice their self-representation online.

This aligns with Azra et al. (2024), who found that youth, particularly women, frequently use social media for information seeking and social identity formation. The implication is that digital literacy strategies must be tailored to this demographic, positioning them as the primary audience for community-based literacy initiatives. This supports the argument that literacy initiatives should be designed in accordance with users' specific gratifications, such as seeking information, social interaction, and entertainment, as demonstrated in Bhatiasevi (2024) international study on social media use. Most members of Generation Z are information literate, meaning they are able to distinguish between true and false information. This is due to the rapid development of technology, which they are able to operate effectively (Sikumbang et al., 2024).

Social media can also be used to influence behavior, as the development of information technology has brought significant change within society. Schillinger et al. (2020) Similar evidence from BookTok shows that social media communities can spark new reading interests and reshape young people's reading habits, demonstrating the potential of digital platforms to influence literacy behavior (Dera, 2024). Before conducting regression analysis, the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were confirmed, ensuring that the variables of Instagram usage and literacy improvement were measured accurately. This step strengthens the robustness of the regression results.

The regression analysis demonstrated that Instagram usage significantly influenced literacy improvement, with a regression coefficient (β) of 0.683 and a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This finding supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Kasirye, 2022; E Katz et al., 2020; Elihu Katz et al., 1973), which posits that media users actively select platforms to meet specific needs, including education and information. Comparable findings were also reported by Jin et al. (2023), who showed that informational, social, and entertainment gratifications significantly influenced users' psychological responses and their intention to continue using Instagram, which further validates the explanatory power of the Uses and Gratifications framework (Jin et al., 2023). Social media transforms communication into interactive dialogue, which effectively supports social interaction. (Sahata Sitanggang et al., 2024). In this case, Instagram functioned not merely as entertainment but also as an interactive medium for literacy development.

The t-value (7.912) further confirmed the significance of this relationship, consistent with the study of [Febrianti et al. \(2021\)](#) who found that literacy-focused Instagram communities enhance reading interest and engagement, especially among Generation Z. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.410 indicates that 41% of literacy improvement can be explained by Instagram usage. This value is moderately high compared to similar studies on social media literacy interventions, it suggests that Instagram is a significant, though not exclusive, factor in enhancing literacy. This also theoretically supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory, demonstrating that media can meet users' educational needs while recognizing that other factors contribute to literacy development.

While there are references to previous studies ([Azra et al., 2024](#); [Febrianti et al., 2021](#)) the current findings extend these studies by quantitatively demonstrating the extent of Instagram's influence in a semi-urban context, unlike prior research that focused on urban areas or qualitative methods. Explicit comparison shows that the magnitude of Instagram's effect on literacy (41%) aligns with prior findings on social media's role in reading habits but provides new empirical evidence on the relative contribution of a single platform in community-based literacy. This critical comparison emphasizes the novelty of the present study and the practical implications for designing targeted digital literacy initiatives.

Practically, the results show that Instagram accounts managed with an educational and interactive focus, through book reviews, literary quotes, reading recommendations, and event promotions, can effectively engage the public. In practice, studies on educational influencers highlight that creators on Instagram effectively use narrative and visual strategies to facilitate informal learning and sustain audience engagement ([Gil-Quintana & Vida de León, 2021](#)). When digital technology is used to improve quality of life, it becomes highly beneficial for society ([Wahyuni et al., 2024](#)).

Respondents reported being motivated to read books reviewed on the platform and to participate in offline literacy events, demonstrating the bridging role of social media between digital and social spaces in literacy movements. Content that has credibility as shown in Instagram posts positively affects message credibility and audience attitude towards what it promotes. [Lee & Kim, \(2020\)](#) International findings also emphasize that visual and emotional elements embedded in social media posts affect perceptions of credibility, underscoring the importance of designing literacy content with both informational and affective appeal ([Rani et al., 2023](#)). Theoretically, the study extends the application of Uses and Gratifications and digital literacy theories within a semi-urban community context. From a practical perspective, it emphasizes Instagram's potential as a strategic educational channel when managed creatively and responsively to audience needs. At a broader level, these practical insights point to policy initiative, Policy-wise, highlighting the importance of collaboration between literacy communities, social media managers, educational institutions, and government agencies to build a digital ecosystem that promotes reading culture, especially in regions with limited access to conventional literacy facilities.

5. Conclusion

The analysis shows that the Instagram account @babasalmombasa significantly improves literacy in Luwuk District, Banggai Regency. Community interaction with its literacy content has enhanced reading interest, critical thinking, and participation in literacy activities. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.410$) indicates that while Instagram makes a substantial contribution, other factors such as family, educational institutions, and local literacy communities also play a role.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the Uses and Gratifications theory and digital literacy, demonstrating that social media can serve educational as well as entertainment purposes.

Practically, it highlights the effectiveness of consistent, creative, and audience-oriented social media management in promoting literacy. Policy implications call for collaboration among literacy communities, educational institutions, local governments, and social media managers to build a supportive digital ecosystem. Future studies are encouraged to explore other platforms such as TikTok and YouTube and to conduct cross-regional comparisons (urban, semi-urban, rural) for a more comprehensive understanding of social media's role in literacy development.

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