The Role of Digital Literacy in Social Media

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The increasing spread of false information (hoaxes) in the post-truth era highlights the urgent need to enhance digital literacy. Digital literacy aims to empower audiences to critically interpret the vast array of messages circulating in digital media. This study explores the significance of digital literacy, its impact, and strategies for improving digital literacy skills to combat hoaxes. This research employs a library research method with a descriptive qualitative approach, analyzing a variety of relevant literature, including journals, books, and reports. The study focuses on the evolving media ecology and introduces novel insights into digital literacy, particularly in the Indonesian context. Findings reveal that the low level of digital literacy in Indonesia evidenced by a limited ability to critically analyze information contributes significantly to the widespread dissemination of hoaxes via social media. The study identifies five essential components of digital literacy: technical proficiency, critical thinking, visual literacy, social awareness, and adaptive skills. These components play a crucial role in enabling users to detect fake news, verify information, and minimize misinformation. Moreover, the research highlights the role of digital literacy as a sustainable solution for reducing hoaxes by fostering self-regulation and informed behavior. Recommendations include integrating digital literacy into educational curricula, conducting public awareness campaigns, and encouraging collaborative efforts between government and technology platforms. By addressing these challenges, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of digital literacy as a vital tool for navigating the complexities of the digital age and fostering a more informed society.

I N F O   A R T I K E L

A B S T R A K

Meningkatnya penyebaran informasi palsu (hoax) di era pasca kebenaran menyoroti kebutuhan mendesak untuk meningkatkan literasi digital. Literasi digital bertujuan untuk memberdayakan khalayak agar dapat menafsirkan secara kritis beragam pesan yang beredar di media digital. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pentingnya literasi digital, dampaknya, dan strategi untuk meningkatkan kemampuan literasi digital untuk memerangi hoaks. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, dengan menganalisis berbagai literatur yang relevan, termasuk jurnal, buku, dan laporan. Penelitian ini berfokus pada ekologi media yang terus berkembang dan memperkenalkan wawasan baru tentang literasi digital, khususnya dalam konteks Indonesia. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa rendahnya tingkat literasi digital di Indonesia-yang ditunjukkan dengan terbatasnya kemampuan untuk menganalisis informasi secara kritis-berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap penyebaran hoaks yang meluas melalui media sosial. Studi ini mengidentifikasi lima komponen penting dalam literasi digital: kemahiran teknis, pemikiran kritis, literasi visual, kesadaran sosial, dan keterampilan adaptif. Komponen-komponen ini memainkan peran penting dalam memungkinkan pengguna untuk mendeteksi berita palsu, memverifikasi informasi, dan meminimalkan informasi yang salah. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyoroti peran literasi digital sebagai solusi berkelanjutan untuk mengurangi hoaks dengan mendorong pengaturan diri dan perilaku yang terinformasi. Rekomendasi yang diberikan termasuk mengintegrasikan literasi digital ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan, melakukan kampanye kesadaran publik, dan mendorong upaya kolaboratif antara pemerintah dan platform teknologi. Dengan menjawab tantangan-tantangan tersebut, studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang literasi digital sebagai alat penting untuk menavigasi kompleksitas era digital dan mendorong masyarakat yang lebih terinformasi.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, the importance of digital literacy is increasingly prominent and must be maintained by cultivating the habit of reading information. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) in 2022, Indonesia's Digital Literacy Index was at a score of 3.54 on a scale of 5, indicating a level of digital literacy that still needs to be improved Ditjen Aptika (Pratiwi Agustini, 2023). In addition, Kominfo identified 12,547 hoax contents during the period August 2018 to December 2023, with the health category being the largest (Muhamad, 2024). This data confirms the urgency of improving digital literacy to protect individuals from the spread of false information and empower them to analyze and interpret various content available on digital media.

Several cases highlight the relationship between digital literacy and misinformation. For example, the prevalence of online loan scams in Indonesia is largely attributed to the lack of digital literacy (Wahyuni, 2023). According to Kompas.com, this situation arises due to significant advancements in information technology, which have made it easier for people to access digital platforms (Nurhaeni, Kurniawan, Nugroho, & Putri, 2022). Another case involves a hoax titled "Alleged Sexual Threat at UNY Turns Out to Be False, Police Explain the Cause of the Injury." Tempo.co reports that a student from Yogyakarta State University (UNY) was arrested for spreading false news about sexual harassment. The hoax, which spread via Twitter, caught public attention. It was later revealed that the perpetrator acted out of frustration after being rejected from joining the university's student executive board (BEM). These scenarios illustrate how quickly false information can spread. If not addressed, it can harm public perceptions and create challenges in distinguishing between truth and falsehood. Perpetrators exploit this vulnerability to deceive the public (Gunadi & Lubis, 2023).

The habit of reading digital content is particularly challenging in Indonesia due to a lack of commitment to reading and inadequate education. Consequently, it is essential to develop digital intelligence starting at an individual level (Cong et al., 2021). Gradual dissemination of accurate information and the effective use of social media to combat misinformation can help. For instance, creating educational content about fake advertisements and real frauds can raise awareness. Although this process may take time, it has the potential to gradually attract more people to adopt such practices. Furthermore, educational content addressing scams and frauds disseminated through digital platforms can be highly effective (Arafah, 2023).

The evolution of information technology has profoundly influenced communication patterns, particularly among digital communities. The advancement of communication tools and applications in this digital age presents unique challenges for society to utilize technology wisely in simplifying daily activities (Arafah, 2023). One critical skill required in this era is literacy. Individuals with strong literacy skills can solve problems or seek solutions to issues wisely. Literate individuals think critically, drawing upon their knowledge to analyze, integrate, and apply information for the benefit of themselves and others (Apuke, 2023).

According to Arham (2022), literacy is the ability to utilize various types of information to develop knowledge that benefits society. This definition underscores the importance of literacy for every individual. However, literacy levels in Indonesia remain alarmingly low. The lack of literacy skills limits critical thinking and increases susceptibility to hoaxes (Informasi, 2022).

A survey conducted by the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and SiBerkreasi in 2020 revealed that 30% to 60% of Indonesians are exposed to hoaxes (Center, 2020).

According to the online Indonesian dictionary (KBBI), a hoax is defined as false news (Nisa, 2024). Recently, numerous hoaxes have spread within society, causing unrest and confusion. Based on data, 92.40% of hoaxes are disseminated through social media, facilitated by easy internet access. The spread of hoaxes can trigger excessive or abnormal anxiety due to exaggerated information from certain sources (Saputra, Wijaya, & Anggreainy, 2023). This anxiety may manifest as fear, worry, or heightened vigilance, ultimately becoming a societal threat, it can also lead individuals to engage in harmful behaviors. Thus, verifying the accuracy of received information and ensuring sufficient literacy are crucial for filtering information and combating hoaxes (Kurniasih & Damayani, 2024).

This study offers a novel approach by exploring the relationship between digital literacy levels and the public's ability to detect and counter hoaxes (Maisaroh, 2023). The primary focus is on identifying the role of technology-based education in improving digital literacy in a practical and sustainable manner among Indonesians (Mahendra, Jundi, & Wulandari, 2024). Previous research often focused solely on assessing literacy levels without providing practical solutions to address the lack of digital literacy. This study addresses this gap by developing a content-based educational approach that is widely accessible through social media and digital platforms (Chase & Laufenberg, 2011).

The study's scope is limited to Indonesian citizens who actively use social media, focusing specifically on the dissemination of information through these platforms. Traditional communication mediums such as newspapers or television broadcasts are excluded. Based on this, the researchers aim to examine the factors contributing to the widespread dissemination of hoaxes through social media and the necessity of digital literacy. The research objectives are to: (1) Analyze the factors influencing the low level of digital literacy among Indonesians. (2) Identify the impact of digital literacy on the public's ability to detect hoaxes. (3) Provide policy recommendations to enhance digital literacy awareness as a means to counter hoaxes in the digital era.

Despite the challenges highlighted, there is an urgent need to instill a culture of critical thinking and media literacy in Indonesian society. The digital age offers unprecedented access to information, but this access is a double-edged sword. While it provides numerous benefits, it also creates vulnerabilities, particularly for individuals who lack the skills to navigate the digital landscape effectively (Widodo, Endrawati, & Sulistio, 2022). This research underscores the importance of collaborative efforts among government bodies, educational institutions, and technology companies to promote digital literacy (Jones & Hafner, 2021). Initiatives such as public awareness campaigns, workshops, and digital education programs tailored to diverse demographic groups can play a pivotal role in fostering a more informed society. Additionally, encouraging a reading culture through community-based programs and integrating digital literacy into the school curriculum can provide a foundational framework for combating misinformation. The implementation of such measures, though complex, is critical for building resilience against the pervasive spread of fake information and ensuring the responsible use of

digital platforms. By addressing the root causes of low digital literacy and its consequences, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding and formulation of effective strategies to equip Indonesians with the tools or information needed to thrive in a digital world.

METHODS

This study employs a library research method, utilizing various literature sources, including books, journals, articles, and reports related to digital literacy and misinformation (Assyakurrohim, Ikhram, Sirodj, & Afgani, 2022). The selection process was guided by specific criteria: relevance, currency and credibility. Only studies focusing on digital literacy, the spread of hoaxes and related topics were included, with a priority on studies published in the last five years to ensure the most recent data and findings (Given, 2012). Sources were drawn from peer-reviewed journals, reputable publishers and official reports.

Literature searches were conducted through academic databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, Mendeley references, and publish or perish app using keywords such as "digital literacy", "hoax", "misinformation", "post-truth" and "social media". Articles with high citation counts and frequently referenced in related research were prioritized. This research uses library research methods to build its foundation by using various types of literature, including books, journals, magazines, and other works related to the topic of the article (Nisa, 2024). This research incorporates adjustments to the changing media ecology, thus encouraging novelty from previous studies.

Inclusion criteria included empirical data, frameworks or theoretical discussions relevant to the research objectives, while outdated, irrelevant or methodologically weak studies were excluded. The selected literature was thematically categorized, focusing on factors influencing digital literacy, the role of social media in the spread of hoaxes and interventions to combat misinformation. Triangulation was applied by comparing findings from different sources to ensure consistency and validity. This structured approach ensured a comprehensive and credible foundation to examine the relationship between digital literacy and misinformation (Phippen, 2024).

Data were collected qualitatively with reference to techniques such as online participatory observation, social media content analysis, and literature review of references, which are commonly used techniques in qualitative research as they focus on in-depth exploration of non-numerical data (Srivastava, Pandey, Fatima, & Pandey, 2024). Data analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify key patterns and themes, such as public perceptions of hoaxes and the importance of digital literacy (Fadli, 2021).

This research also uses a contextual approach that focuses on social phenomena, such as digital culture and interactions on social media, to gain a deep understanding of context and individual experiences. With this approach, this research emphasizes its qualitative characteristics through a comprehensive literature review and is grounded in social context (Mokhtar, Xuan, & Lokman, 2023).

Time and Location of Research, this research does not have a specific time and location, as it is conducted directly through social media platforms. The research can be carried out at any time or place, depending on the context and availability of information. Target/Research

Subjects, population in this study is social media itself. Observations are made by carefully scrutinizing and analyzing the information available on these platforms.

Procedure, Problem Identification: Conduct preliminary research to determine the level of digital literacy among the target audience. Focus on understanding public awareness regarding hoaxes and their impact on social media (Serrano-Puche, 2021). Context and Urgency, Highlight the importance of digital literacy, especially in avoiding hoaxes that can influence public perception. Present relevant data, such as the prevalence of hoaxes, their impact on public perception, or the negative behaviors resulting from misinformation (Gautam, Katiyar, & Sharma, 2023).

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, this research focuses on qualitative data which includes: (1) Perceptions of Hoaxes: Respondents' perceptions and understanding of hoaxes, their characteristics, and methods for identifying them. (2) Opinions on the Importance of Digital Literacy: Insights into respondents' views on the significance of digital literacy, particularly in using social media to prevent harassment and missinformation (Balt, 2023).

Data Analysis Methods, to refine and strengthen the research findings, the following methods were used: (1) Thematic Analysis: This approach analyzes qualitative data from literature sources and other information from social media related to hoaxes on social media, identifying key themes related to the understanding of hoaxes and digital literacy. (2) Triangulation, Triangulation involves integrating multiple data sources (e.g. indirect observation, social media analysis and information from articles on digital literacy and hoaxes) to gain a comprehensive understanding of digital culture in the context of social media. Below is an example of its application:

Table 1. EXAMPLE OF DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

No.	Data	Analysis
1	Prediction of an apocalypse on July 29, 2024, made by an Indian astrologer.	The prediction of an apocalypse on July 29, 2024, did not occur, as humanity continues to exist without experiencing such an event.
2	The ex-wife of Baim Wong allegedly filed for divorce first, citing domestic violence endured for a year.	Upon analysis of Paula's (Baim Wong's ex-wife) clarification, it was revealed that Paula did not file for divorce. Instead, a rift in the relationship caused discomfort for Baim Wong. Paula has since adopted wearing a hijab to focus on self-improvement.

This combination of thematic analysis and triangulation ensures that the research findings are robust, multidimensional, and accurately represent the complexities of digital literacy and its role in addressing misinformation. Researchers also strengthen the content of research data with previous research studies that researchers find, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the progress in research related to digital literacy and its role in combating hoaxes, the following table summarizes five key studies conducted over the last five years. These studies explore various dimensions of digital literacy, including its impacts on individuals' ability to critically assess information, the effectiveness of interventions designed to curb the spread of misinformation, and the broader societal implications of promoting digital literacy. By examining these works, readers can gain valuable insights into how digital literacy has been conceptualized and operationalized across different contexts. Furthermore, these studies shed light on the dynamic challenges posed by misinformation, highlighting the critical need for

targeted educational initiatives and innovative strategies to address its pervasive influence. Ultimately, the practical applications of digital literacy emphasized in these studies underscore its importance in fostering a more informed and resilient society in the face of evolving digital and social landscapes.

Table 2. SUMMARIZES FIVE KEY STUDIES CONDUCTED OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

No	Researchers and Year	Title of Study	Findings and Discussion	Strengths	Research Methodology
1	Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral (2018)	The spread of true and false news online	Hoaxes spread faster, broader, and deeper compared to truths on social media. Digital literacy should focus on educating people to detect fake news.	Large-scale data analysis using a quantitative approach to show patterns of hoax dissemination.	Secondary data analysis from Twitter
2	Tandoc (2020)	Defining "Fake News"	Fake news has various dimensions, including satirical news, propaganda, and intentionally false news. Digital literacy should address these categories.	Provides detailed definitions and categorizations of fake news, offering a clear theoretical framework.	Literature review and qualitative approach
3	Pillai & Fazio (2021)	The Implied Truth Effect: Attaching Warnings to False Information	Adding warnings to false information effectively reduces its spread, but it must be balanced with critical literacy.	Controlled experiments to directly test the effectiveness of hoax mitigation strategies.	Experiments with participants
4	Cinelli & Morales (2021)	The echo chamber effect on social media	The "echo chamber" effect exacerbates hoax dissemination as users are only exposed to views that align with their beliefs. Solution: enhancing digital literacy through diversification of information sources.	Interdisciplinary study combining social sciences and data science.	Social network analysis
5	Guess & Munger (2023)	The impact of digital literacy training on misinformation belief	Digital literacy training programs significantly reduce belief in misinformation among young adults.	Longitudinal study demonstrating the long-term impact of digital literacy training.	Longitudinal experiment

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result

Based on data from the Katadata Insight Center (2020), only 30% to 60% of people have adequate digital literacy, leading to high vulnerability to hoaxes. Around 92.4% of hoaxes are spread through social media, with the dominant categories being health, politics and social. Social media, which is accessed by 97.4% of internet users in Indonesia, has become the main channel for spreading false information due to users' lack of ability to verify and analyze content. One case of concern is the spread of fake news by UNY students related to sexual threats, which reflects the speed at which fake information spreads and its impact on public opinion.

This research also identifies that the spread of fake news is influenced by the low interest in reading and the lack of a culture of information verification in society. In addition, the "echo chamber" phenomenon on social media amplifies the spread of hoaxes by only exposing users to information that matches their beliefs. As a solution, this research highlights five key components of digital literacy that can improve people's ability to deal with hoaxes. Technical proficiency helps users understand how digital platforms and information verification tools, such as fact-checking apps, work. Critical thinking is needed to evaluate the validity of news sources and recognize information bias. Visual literacy allows users to analyze and understand hidden messages in multimedia content, such as edited images and videos. Social awareness teaches digital etiquette, such as responsibility in sharing information, while adaptive skills help individuals keep up with new technologies to stay relevant in the digital age.

In addition, digital literacy was found to play an important role in reducing the negative impact of hoaxes by building self-awareness and social control. The research also highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy into the formal education system, collaborative public awareness campaigns and technology regulations that support a healthy digital ecosystem. With this approach, people can become more critical, selective and responsible in using digital media, thus breaking the chain of harmful hoaxes.

In 2023, a student of Yogyakarta State University (UNY) spread false information about alleged sexual harassment committed by a member of the Student Executive Board (BEM) of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMIPA). The student with the initials RAN (19) claimed to be a victim of sexual harassment through social media posts that quickly attracted public attention. However, after an investigation by the police, the claim proved to be untrue. RAN admitted that she spread the fake news out of frustration after failing to be accepted into the organization. The case caused unrest among students, created a negative image of the institution, and led to widespread debate on social media regarding ethics and trust between individuals in an academic environment.

In addition, a similar case also occurred in 2020, where a voice message circulated through the WhatsApp application claiming that a group of students were spreading the AIDS virus by taking blood samples. This hoax caused great unrest in the community, even though there was no evidence to support the claim. The message even influenced public opinion, reduced trust in students' social activities, and disrupted health education programs in the community. Another case that reflects the speed at which hoaxes spread is the threat of a bomb on campus in 2022. Although there was no real evidence of the threat, this information caused mass panic, cancellation of campus activities, and disruption of the teaching-learning process.

Research conducted at Tanjungpura University revealed that hoax news spread on social media, especially through platforms such as YouTube, had a significant influence on student opinions on the 2019 Presidential and VicePresidential Elections of the Republic of Indonesia. Students, who are the main consumers of digital information, were affected by the false information, which affected their perspective on the election (Zulaikha & Firmonasari, 2023). Some of them are even influenced in determining their political choices, whereas decisions should be made based on accurate and objective information. The impact of the spread of political hoaxes that can change students' political preferences, which should be obtained

through a deeper understanding and based on reliable sources, shows the importance of digital literacy to avoid manipulation of information that can harm the democratic process.

These four cases show how hoaxes, especially when spread by university students, can significantly affect social stability, create unrest and shape public opinion. This reinforces the importance of strengthening digital literacy among students to prevent the negative impacts of spreading false information.

Discussion

The Digital Literacy: A Crucial Asset in Life and Communication

Digital culture plays a vital role in communication for three main reasons. First, there is the increasing reliance on digital media, including the Internet and social media, which has become an indispensable tool in daily life. Applications are now fundamental instruments for reliable communication and information retrieval (Saputra et al., 2023). The rapid growth of digital advertising, coupled with the continuous production and dissemination of information and content, transcends spatial and temporal limitations. Information updates occur within seconds, sourced from a multitude of platforms and channels (Rodricks, Dsa, & Gupta, 2023).

Second, society's dependence on search engines (such as Google, Yahoo, or Bing) and social media platforms for information retrieval has significantly increased. The Internet has evolved as a dominant medium, offering unparalleled speed and quality in delivering information (Rodrigues, 2024). Similarly, social media has become an essential channel for accessing diverse information. However, the availability of information from various sources necessitates specific skills and competencies. A strong foundation in digital culture is required to navigate and evaluate the vast array of content available (Dewi, 2021). With these competencies, individuals can effectively manage the flow of information, enabling them to select accurate and relevant content. Digital literacy, therefore, refers to the ability to critically interpret complex visual and auditory content in addition to traditional word-for-word textual analysis (Arafah, 2023; Chase & Laufenberg, 2011). Historically, literacy involved reading printed materials, where ideas and words were presented in a singular form. In contrast, digital culture represents a paradigm shift, utilizing digital codes to create sound, images, and text. This shift necessitates new interpretative frameworks and competencies to navigate the digital landscape.
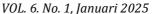
Lanham (1995) posits that digital literacy enhances our capacity to adapt media to convey information effectively to the public. Chase & Laufenberg (2011) supports this by highlighting that digital reading methods encompass real multitexts, employing flexible and coded tools to analyze and understand content contributed by multiple users on the same topic. Potter, Lohr, Ciske, & Sanders (2001) argues that individuals with limited educational exposure are more likely to passively accept media-driven information without critical evaluation. Such individuals tend to possess shallow and poorly organized knowledge systems, making them ill-equipped to interpret social media's meaning effectively (Alda, Boholano, & Dayagbil, 2020). This lack of digital literacy hampers their ability to assess information accuracy, resolve conflicts, recognize satire, and develop broader perspectives. Consequently, fostering digital literacy is essential for empowering individuals to critically engage with the digital media landscape and navigate the complexities of modern communication.

Table 3. Components of Digital Literacy

Component	Description	Contribution to Communication

Technical Proficiency	Ability to use digital tools and platforms effectively.	Facilitates navigation and interaction with digital content and applications.
Critical Thinking	Ability to evaluate the credibility and relevance of digital information.	Helps users discern reliable information and avoid misinformation.
Visual Literacy	Ability to interpret and analyze visual content, such as images and videos.	Enhances comprehension of multimedia communication.
Social Awareness	Understanding of online etiquette, privacy, and ethical behavior in digital interactions.	Promotes responsible and respectful use of digital platforms.
Adaptive Skills	Capacity to adjust to evolving technologies and new digital formats.	Ensures continuous learning and effective participation in the dynamic digital environment.

Explanation of Table 3. The table outlines the essential components of digital literacy, highlighting how each contributes to enhancing individuals' ability to engage with digital communication effectively. For instance, technical proficiency ensures users can navigate platforms, while critical thinking aids in identifying trustworthy information. Visual literacy is increasingly important as communication relies heavily on multimedia. Social awareness fosters a respectful and ethical digital culture, and adaptive skills enable users to stay relevant in the rapidly changing technological landscape. This structured overview supports the argument that fostering digital literacy is key to empowering individuals in the digital age.

The Urgency of Digital Literacy Among Social Media Users

Digital culture is inseparable from the world of social media, with 97.4% of Indonesians accessing social media accounts when using the internet. However, not all individuals use social media responsibly, as many assume they possess adequate critical thinking skills. This has led to issues surrounding freedom of expression and speech on social networks.

Data collected by the research firm We Are Social reveals a continuous increase in social media usage. The number of internet users in Indonesia has contributed significantly to the rise in social media users. From 79 million in 2016, this figure grew to 106 million the following year. The number of active users accessing social media via mobile devices also increased, from 66 million to 92 million. Indonesia currently ranks third globally in terms of social media users, surpassing countries such as Brazil and the United States, with only China and India ahead. Specifically, regarding Facebook usage, Indonesia ranks fourth globally in terms of user numbers, with approximately 160 million active users. This places Indonesia behind the United States, India, and Brazil (Pertiwi & Lestari, 2024).

Digital Literacy: Combating Hoaxes in the Era of Post-Truth Information

The terms "post-truth" and "post-fact" are relatively new additions to public discourse, having gained prominence only in the past few years despite their origins. Coined by Steve Tesich in 1992, the concept of "post-truth" was first explored in Ralph Keyes' 2004 publication (Keyes, 2004). However, it was not until 2016 that the issue gained significant attention, leading the Oxford Dictionary to declare "post-truth" as its Word of the Year (Keyes, 2004). This coincided with events such as the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (Brexit) and the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States. The Oxford Dictionary defines "post-truth" as a state where objective facts hold less influence in shaping

public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal beliefs. In this context, hoax information often has a greater impact than truth. During the 2016 U.S. presidential election, for instance, fact-checking company PolitiFact found that 70% of Donald Trump's statements were false (Keyes, 2004).

In contrast, Hillary Clinton's rate of falsehoods was significantly lower, at 26%. Despite this disparity, Donald Trump won the election. This outcome reflects the diminished importance of content accuracy in campaign messaging and highlights how emotionally charged false information can attract more voters (Novitasari, Natalia, & Pebrianto, 2023). From a freedom-of-expression perspective, falsehoods were employed as a strategic campaign tool (Yates, 2024). Fake news, often defined as information disseminated through media to benefit specific social actors, has been shown to yield misleadingly positive results (Domenico, Sit, Ishizaka, & Nunan, 2021). The spread of falsehoods on social networks gains momentum when propagated by accounts with significant influence, such as those of celebrities with large followings. These fake news stories quickly go viral due to the sharing strategies employed on social media platforms (Singh, 2024). Thus, the pervasive nature of false information underscores the urgent need for digital literacy, particularly in fostering the critical skills required to identify and combat misinformation in the digital age (Gautam et al., 2023; López-González, Sosa, & Sánchez, 2023).

Digital Literacy to Enhance Internet Users' Self-Control

Hoaxes represent a form of criminal behavior that arises from a lack of self-control. The concept of self-control is closely linked to criminal behavior, rooted in the notion that individuals differ in their propensity to engage in criminal acts depending on their level of self-regulation (Hastoto & Irhandayaningsih, 2024). Those with a high level of self-control are less likely to participate in criminal activities. Conversely, individuals with low self-control, especially when placed in enabling situations, are more prone to commit crimes. Behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, drug use, promiscuity, and other socially deviant acts are manifestations of low self-control. These behaviors often result from inadequate self-regulation and ineffective social interactions (Saputra et al., 2023). Low levels of self-control are further exacerbated by the influence of social media environments, which frequently expose users to inappropriate content. Individuals with poor self-regulation often fail to perceive any significant issue in "participating" in the creation or dissemination of fake news (Kunmei, Indira, Soeria Soemantri, & Lupi Ardiati, 2022). This is largely due to the blurred boundaries between fact and opinion, even when confronted with efforts to differentiate truth. Despite the existence of various guidelines and recommendations to prevent the spread of false information, such measures often prove ineffective in curbing occurrences. These rules frequently target only severe offenders, such as perpetrators of violent crimes, rather than functioning as broader deterrents (Novitasari et al., 2023).

Digital literacy can play a pivotal role in fostering manual filtering practices for disseminated information across social networks. When digital systems and algorithms fail to ensure a conducive climate for the flow of accurate information, human-managed accounts and community-driven initiatives may offer a more effective solution. For instance, every social

media account could take responsibility for reporting instances of fake news they encounter. This process would enable social media platforms to act upon such reports by blocking the associated accounts or disabling links to harmful content. At a higher level, citizens can also utilize official reporting services provided by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, such as submitting complaints to the email address aduankonten@mail.kominfo.go.id. When implemented effectively, such measures have the potential to gradually improve the overall media environment. By fostering greater self-awareness and responsibility through digital literacy initiatives, individuals can develop the critical skills necessary to navigate the complex media landscape and mitigate the detrimental effects of low self-control in the digital realm.

This study employs a library research method, enabling an in-depth analysis of various literatures relevant to the theme of digital literacy and the dissemination of hoaxes. Through this approach, the research not only relies on limited empirical data but also integrates theories from diverse sources to provide a more comprehensive insight. Data triangulation using multiple information-gathering techniques, such as interviews, social media observations, and content analysis, strengthens the validity of this study's findings.

The Urgency of Digital Literacy, Digital literacy is one of the most essential skills in the digital era, as described by (Pradana, Agustini, & Dantes, 2024), which involves the ability to critically and constructively utilize information for societal well-being. The findings of this study indicate that the low level of digital literacy among the Indonesian population is one of the main factors contributing to the high prevalence of hoaxes. Data from the Katadata Insight (Kominfo & Center, 2020), revealing that 30–60% of Indonesians are exposed to hoaxes, further underscores the importance of enhancing digital literacy skills.

The Post-Truth Era Context, the concept of the post-truth era, as explained by Keyes, (2004), serves as an essential framework for understanding the dissemination of hoaxes on social media. This study finds that public opinion is often influenced more by emotions and personal beliefs than by objective facts. This is evident in viral cases on social media, where false information spreads rapidly due to a lack of verification mechanisms at the user level.

Digital Literacy as a Solution, in response to the challenges of the post-truth era, digital literacy offers a concrete solution. Lanham (1995) emphasizes the importance of individuals' ability to comprehend multi-textual information, including images, sounds, and text, which often constitute the primary forms of digital communication. The findings of this study reveal that digital literacy not only enhances critical thinking skills but also aids social media users in identifying hoax characteristics, verifying information, and breaking the chain of fake news dissemination (Prasetya, 2024).

Enhancing Self-Control through Digital Literacy, Furthermore, this study supports the self-control theory posited by Mahendra et al., (2024), which suggests that low self-control contributes to deviant behaviors, including the spread of hoaxes. Digital literacy can help individuals develop self-control by providing a more critical and structured framework for

evaluating information. In the context of social media, this becomes particularly vital to minimizing the negative impacts of false information.

Integration of Theory and Empirical Data, using a library research method, this study successfully links the phenomenon of hoax dissemination with theories of digital literacy, self-control, and post-truth communication. Empirical data analyzed, such as the rate of social media usage in Indonesia, provides a concrete illustration of how low digital literacy contributes to the spread of hoaxes. Thus, this study not only makes a theoretical contribution but also offers practical recommendations for improving digital literacy within society.

The findings and discussion presented underscore the significance of digital literacy as a primary strategy to address informational challenges in the digital era. With adequate literacy skills, individuals can be more selective in managing information, thereby fostering a healthier and hoax-free social media ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

The enhancement of digital literacy as a form of self-regulation is becoming an essential solution to avoid and prevent the proliferation of false information (hoaxes), which continues to multiply. Cases of deceptive advertisements (hoaxes) have repeatedly escalated and proliferated. Digital education can serve as an effective means of combating fake information after such incidents by introducing signals of false news into the information trust system. Information tracking may also fall within the category of hoaxes. After the truth is revealed, the line between truth and falsehood becomes clear, distinguishing between honesty and dishonesty, fiction and nonfiction. This presents a significant challenge for social media users. Digital literacy emphasizes the power of individuals' use of digital media, including social media, based on information processing. It encompasses technical, intellectual, and social skills. In this regard, it is necessary to ensure that internet users feel more comfortable in seeking information by developing the skills to differentiate between true and false information.

To promote digital culture at the individual level, various efforts can be made. First, it is crucial to build awareness of information exposure by selecting reliable sources. Second, one should continuously enrich oneself with knowledge, as the more knowledge we acquire, the stronger our cognitive system becomes. Third, comparing one message from one media outlet to another can help generate diverse ideas. Fourth, it is important to reflect on your own thoughts, ensuring that the ideas align with the sources of all the information we have. Finally, promoting a culture of acceptance and correction of spreading false information is vital. Digital learning efforts have now become the best way to combat fraud, such as unemployment and the freedom of thought. It requires global interaction to establish social connections, fostering intelligent and selective internet users in managing information for a healthier social media environment.

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