

DIGITAL LITERACY ON CURRENT ISSUES IN SOCIAL MEDIA: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

The digital age has shifted human information access to technological-based media. A smartphone, for example, is a technological product that provides quick access to the current information or news available virtually so that all Smartphone users can immediately get the information or news. The advancement of this technology-based communication allows internet users to receive promptly, send a comment, and share news with other users through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Since social media, as part of internet media, provides the latest hot news, this study highlighted the use of social media in disseminating recent issues. The data were taken from the written news or information on WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram, and the questionnaires were distributed to internet users via social media. More particular research problems are what recent issues are disseminated on social media and how the digital literacy of internet users is related to the current issues posted on social media. Based on the result of the data analysis, it is found that 90.03 per cent of internet users access information through social media, and 81 per cent spend time searching for information on social media. Concerning the percentage of users of each social media, the findings denote that 38.4 per cent of users access Facebook, 20.2 per cent access WhatsApp, 18.4 per cent access YouTube, 8.3 per cent access Twitter, and 8.3 per cent access Tiktok. News of covid-19 vaccination and religious intolerance are the current issues that social media users access. However, the digital literacy of internet users is the main issue that hoax news about Covid-19 vaccination and religious intolerance are disseminated through social media.

Keywords: *Social Media, The Gate Of Information, Recent Issues, Digital Literacy*

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet, which stands for Interconnection-networking, is a global system of computer networks connecting people everywhere using the standard Internet Protocol Suite (Gani, 2020), starting in the 1960s. Thus, the development of information technology was initiated by the emergence of the internet when the United States the Department of Defense launched the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET) program to observe problems, monitor nuclear attacks, or control various information (Heywood, 1996). In this case, the internet was created for The United States military to communicate with those in various regions.

During the last ten years, digital literacy has engaged the younger generation in media communication to empower them to feel possession as creators and provide dynamic reports of how content material is evolved and disseminated (Bulger & Davison, 2018). Thus, the advancement of information technology facilitates smooth long-distance communication through the internet as a communication medium. As an information technology product, the internet in this modern world provides information on many current issues with just one click away from getting that information (Purwaningsih et al., 2020). The internet can even provide access to information in cyberspace. As a result, communicating remotely with family, friends, or coworkers is critical in

modern life. These advantages encourage an increase in internet usage. In addition, digital literacy also dramatically impacts the educational part of fulfilling the teacher and student's needs by applying online learning (Anggrawan et al., 2019).

The number of people using the internet and other social media worldwide is growing. It is an indication that the cyber population has emerged. People interact and communicate with anyone in any country without regard for time or geography. It is as easy as immediately identifying global problems worldwide from the internet (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). It means that the internet is seen as a hub for global communicative interaction (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019), encouraging the increase in the number of people using the internet. The number of Indonesians using the internet to communicate has surpassed 50% of the total Indonesian. In 2020, Indonesia's total number of people was approximately 272.1 million. Compared to 2018, internet users have increased by 8.9 per cent (23.5 million people). The most popular internet application in Indonesia, with over 160 million users, is social media apps: Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram (Jayani, 2020).

The internet undeniably stimulates people to interact and communicate virtually, primarily through social media. The existence of social media makes it possible to send text messages efficiently and practically without meeting the person (Hasjim et al., 2020). However, virtual interactions can also cause many problems in social life. Ayun (2015) research revealed that the internet tends to affect users' habits. For example, uploading personal activities on Facebook, which sometimes gets an unpleasant response; users tend to experience dependence on the internet so that most of their time is spent with internet access, even having an impact on the quality of rest (sleep) so that it affects health (Wolniczak et al., 2013) such as users experiencing depression and worries (Pantic et al., 2012). Social life also impacts internet users' habits, where they become careless with their environment's society (Arafah et al., 2021). The cultural changes in human behaviour expunge the locality of a region with sociocultural values where the society performs good attitudes (Arifin et al., 2022). There are many factors to be the cause, such as the influence of the environment or the person himself. It is essential to create positive energy to have a positive impact on others rather than a lousy impact (Arafah et al., 2020). The destructive impact of the internet can occur on women as users. For example, they tend to be more viable than men in accessing the internet, which may result in a change in lifestyle (Duggan &

Brenner, 2013). In the past, women were presented as inferior and needed to be protected by men; nowadays, women can get the same chance to access and decide every aspect of their life (Afiah et al., 2022; Asriyanti et al., 2022).

The internet or social media also harms the younger generation, such as growing up in digital culture, having aloof behaviour, and spending more time with social media (Ibrahim, 2011). The spread of hoaxes, cyber hate, and cyber-bulling is increasing, especially for girls (William & Pearson, 2016; Shafi et al., 2021), and very easy to find in online media (Virga & Andriadi, 2019). Consequently, the number of science abuse increases along with the advancement of science and technology by people who use it to harm others (Suhadi et al., 2022). These people will likely express dissatisfaction by finding others' faults and then complaining or criticizing wrongly (Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019). To change our generation's character, their moral visions and personal qualities are essential to shaping to avoid unstable emotions, especially for teenagers and will make it possible to create a positive environment (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022; Sunardi et al., 2018).

Internet and social media must have positive and negative effects on users, but it all depends on the digital literacy of internet users (Khan et al., 2014). In this case, users need to have the ability to understand and respond to information disseminated via the internet, including verbal and non-verbal language skills, as part of the process of thinking and interpreting virtual information. The language used on the internet has a specific purpose and needs to be understood according to the situation's background (Takwa et al., 2022). Since language is integral to social life, it is formed by cultural background with many meaningful perceptions (Arafah et al., 2023). The influence of this cultural background reflects how people in a society adopt social manners in how they use language (Yudith et al., 2023). Later on, the language used in writing describes how someone behaves because how people speak and write depends on the depth of their cultural knowledge (Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). A person can communicate in a different pattern that later ends up causing misinterpretation (Yulianti et al., 2022). Gilster (1997) mentions four aspects of digital literacy that internet users can perform: internet searching, hypertextual navigation, content evaluation, and knowledge assembly. Understanding the four aspects of literacy can lead to positive changes in internet users. Therefore, knowledge and skills are needed to utilize information and communication technology so that users can find,

evaluate, use, create information, and utilize the internet to maintain the continuity of communication and interaction in everyday life (Nasrullah et al., 2017). Thus, issues of understanding information messages in digital media today are exciting topics to discuss, including misinformation, copyright, plagiarism, information credibility, and bullying (Bulger & Davison, 2018).

This paper discusses digital literacy on Current Issues in Social Media. The discussion is directed at answering how to represent digital literacy on current issues in Indonesia. The semiotic approach is used to answer the research problems. The semiotic concept is used by interpreting the text, the context of the situation, and the context of culture (Arafah et al., 2020) to determine how people communicate to obtain meaning from their environment (Hasyim et al., 2020). The environment is taking part in this field since it greatly influences human life (Siwi et al., 2022). When the environment changes, it can affect the system of society, such as how they communicate from one way to another, so the language used shifts in meaning (Takwa et al., 2022).

2. DIGITAL LITERACY

Literacy has developed since prehistoric times by reading natural signs as part of human activities to maintain their lives. Literacy at that time was used by people for hunting, self-defence, and making artefacts, as seen on cave walls today. The artefact is a way to express success, for example, in hunting for survival. It indicates that people in prehistoric times lived from hunting.

The ability of humans to read and write in a foreign language or code contributes to the advancement of literacy. Human interaction through media such as pigeon posts to information technology such as printing machines, cameras, telegrams, and telephones is a process of literacy development. With the advancement of information technology and the availability of the internet, digital literacy has emerged as a medium for communication among individuals, groups, and the general public (Bawden in Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).

The foundation of digital literacy is computer and information literacy (Yustika & Iswati, 2020). Computer literacy began in the 1980s, as more people and organizations began to use computer technology in business and society. Meanwhile, information literacy began to grow in the 1990s, owing to advances in information technology. Digital technology based on the internet, such as

notebooks, tablets, and smartphones, is a widely used digital media. Through digital literacy, internet users can improve their academic or vocational skills by reading, understanding, and evaluating various information provided by virtual media. This technology makes it easier for people to access and disseminate information via the internet. Even this virtual world offers companies many marketing opportunities (advertising/communication, virtual product selling/v-Commerce, marketing research), human resource management and internal processes (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Digital literacy is needed to interact with people around the world. It is even as important as reading, writing, arithmetic, and other disciplines (Hargittai, 2005). As well as writing in literature, digital literacy similarly consists of social institutions of a society used in communicating by using language to deliver messages from their mind (Fadillah et al., 2022). The delivered messages reflected the phenomenon or social behaviour of human life in a community because language is influenced by the environment (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). The various ways of expressing messages, such as metaphor or analogy, can be displayed beautifully but remain multiple meanings to be interpreted (Baa et al., 2023). If an error in the language system occurs, it can cause a failure in writing that can affect the language to be misunderstood (Iksora et al., 2022). The active younger generation in internet access will create a mindset that may be different from the previous generation because it can encourage changes in their social behaviour and social perspectives due to the effect of foreign cultures. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each internet user to filter the information and the social behaviour in line with their culture and take advantage of internet access as a forum for interaction with society and the environment, especially in interacting virtually with family and friends in daily life.

The internet's function as a communication medium is widely misused now. The virtual world is covered with hoax news for the benefit of a particular group of people. The hoax here means unprovable news intended to attack or bring down other people. It can even be considered to damage the current digital ecosystem. Furthermore, the world of the internet is even used to express hate speech, radicalism, and criminal acts that can create community unrest. This condition can only be cured by building self-awareness in each individual to pay attention to communication ethics, especially virtually. Digital literacy means processing various kinds of information, understanding both expressed and implied messages, and communicating

effectively with others in various forms but still in the right corridor. The form in question is creating warmth, building collaboration, communicating the correct information, working under the proper ethics, understanding when and how technology should be used to achieve specific goals, and expressing awareness and critical thinking about the negative impact of untrue information disseminated through the internet. However, the younger generation's involvement in digital literacy contributes positively to creating a society with a critical and creative mindset and view in responding to various kinds of information (Hasjim et al., 2020). By empowering with digital literacy, young people cannot be affected by provocative issues, victims of hoax information, or victims of fraud in cyberspace. Nevertheless, the parent's role is still highly required to control any actions and interactions of young people through social media (Sunyoto et al., 2022). Building a digital literacy culture in the community is an achievement in education and culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method is descriptive-analytic, starting with research problems without basic assumptions or propositions (Hasyim et al., 2020). Surveys and a search of documented events on social media are conducted to collect the data (Bungin, 2008). Other data were taken by distributing questionnaires to social media users using WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The literature used stemmed from information on the latest internet and social media issues. The characteristics of social media are that everyone can become a newsmaker by sharing with others and being critical by commenting on the news or information obtained (Georgetown University, 2010). The data from social media is related to the characteristics of social media.

In online questionnaires, 500 respondents answered the questionnaires: 66.6 per cent males and 33.4 per cent females. The respondents of social media users aged 20 to 60 were 68.2 per cent, 11-19 years were 31.2 per cent, and over 60 years were 0.6 per cent. The respondents' education: SMA 58.2 per cent, Bachelor's degree 18.6%, Master's degree 15.4 per cent, Doctoral degree 5.7 per cent, and Junior High School 1.2 per cent. Respondents' occupations: students 69.8 per cent, civil servants 10.9 per cent, employees 6.5 per cent, entrepreneurs and lecturers 3.5 per cent, and others 5.8 per cent.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Social Media as Gate of Information

Information technology, especially the internet, contributes significantly to social change (Karman, 2014). Social media is an application with the most users by which people can easily interact and communicate virtually without limited time and place, thereby triggering the acceleration of social change in society. People not only access the internet to get information for a particular need, the news is currently hot in society, global events, or information, but also for the individual, business, and political interests (Hasyim et al., 2019).

New patterns of interaction and communication are formed, such as auction, conversation, consultation, and registration (McQuail, 2010). Auction is the simultaneous dissemination of information to other people or social media groups. The conversation is communicating and interacting with other people or social media groups simultaneously to show equality among participants; for example, through Facebook, a person can make friends with artists, athletes, or presidential officials. Consultation is a communication pattern where a person can get the required information from another person, for example, WhatsApp, to consult about health. Meanwhile, the registration pattern shows the communication pattern between information sources and other internet users, such as institutions, for a particular purpose. For example, the government distributes a questionnaire to get information about the level of Covid-19 vaccination services by health workers to the public.

Concerning social media users in Indonesia, in 2020, the active users of social media were more than 50 per cent of the Indonesian population. Of the Indonesian population of 274.9 million, 170 million, or 61.8 per cent, already use social media. The active users of social media grew by 10 million people (6.3 per cent), while the active internet users grew from 27 million people (15.5 per cent) to 202.6 million (Data portal, 2021).

Based on the results of data analysis regarding the use of social media applications by the 500 respondents, information was obtained that the most widely used applications in Indonesia were Instagram (38.4 per cent), WhatsApp (20.2 per cent), YouTube (18.4 per cent), Tweeter (8.3 per cent), TikTok (6.1 per cent), and Facebook (2.2 per cent).

The results of the data analysis show that the highest percentage level is social media users (62 per cent). Meanwhile, the online news media users were 32.9 per cent. In this case, the most widely used media in accessing information is social media, with

90.3 per cent of active netizens. As a gate of information, social media is a medium to access and share information, comment on and forward information, and criticize incorrect information. Thus, internet users can act as disseminators of information, journalists, and resource persons (Jenkins, 2006). In addition, they also act as actors of criminals and cyberbullying fraud perpetrators and hoax spreaders. Therefore, internet users have two roles, namely, a positive or a negative role in disseminating information to the public.

4.2 Digital Literacy of Current Issues on Social Media

The way people communicate today has changed due to the effect of the internet. They do not need to meet face-to-face or send letters to communicate, but they can do it virtually via the internet. It takes little time to spread information or news. Pratika suggests that people can quickly access news via the internet or internet-based information media. The internet-based social media has replicated human social activities (Pratika et al., 2018).

Based on the research results, the issues that appear the most on social media are information about Covid-19 vaccination (60.6 per cent of respondents), victims of covid-19 (43 per cent of respondents), and religious intolerance (40.2 per cent respondents), rapid tests (Swab) (25.1 per cent respondents). In this case, the most prevalent issue is the implementation of covid-19 vaccination for the people of Indonesia. The issue of religious intolerance only occupies the third position, mainly published on social media. Concerning disseminating information through social media, the study results show that 77 per cent of respondents tend to read the news thoroughly before spreading it. Of course, they have the freedom to disseminate information. However, the results of this study show that there is 32.7 per cent of respondents stated that they "rarely" disseminated information, 26.1 per cent said that they "sometimes" disseminated information, 20.2 per cent said "very rarely", 17.4 per cent said "often", and 3.5 per cent said, "very often".

The ability of social media users to understand the information in social media and their awareness to disseminate or not disseminate the information through social media depicts the digital literacy of the social media users. The research results showed that 88.3 per cent of respondents stated that they "listened" and "understood" the news content very well before sharing it with others.

Apakah anda menyimak dan memahami dengan baik informasi yang anda terima sebelum dibagikan ke orang lain?
303 responses

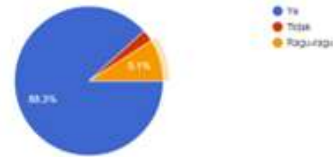


Figure 1. Percentage Of Social Media Users' Attitudes Towards The Information Received

The digital literacy of social media users has shown a wise attitude in evaluating the information received on social media. They wait to disseminate the information but study, verify, and understand it first. It reflects social media users' awareness of the nature of information dissemination to others through social media. Such an attitude supports the creation of peace in society, avoiding things that can create fidgetiness.

4.3 Digital literacy of hoax information

Hoax information means doubtful information not based on facts. Dissemination of hoax information uses social media so that every social media user has the potential to read or hear it. In Indonesia, no hoax information is spread through social media. This condition certainly makes social media users have difficulty distinguishing which information is accurate and which is not valid or a hoax. The survey results of Mastel (2019) show that cyber society receives more than one hoax news daily. Social media is most widely used as a medium for spreading hoax news.

With hoax communication, the results of this study show that out of 500 respondents, there was 44 per cent of respondents stated that they "often" received hoax news, 22.2 per cent stated "very often", 22 per cent said "on average", 10 per cent said "rarely", and 1.6 per cent said, "very rarely".

Menurut Anda, seberapa sering anda menerima berita Hoax di media sosial?
505 responses

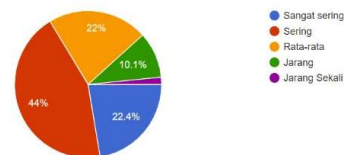


Figure 2. Percentage Of Hoax News Received On Social Media.

The picture above indicates that people always get hoaxed news through social media. The topic of

hoax news is mostly about Covid-19 vaccination, covid-19 victims, religious intelligence, and rapid tests (Swab). The research results on the digital literacy of social media users towards hoax news indicated that 75 per cent of respondents could distinguish between hoax news and non-hoax news, and 79 per cent of respondents stated that they verified the truth of the information. It is because 98.4 per cent of respondents can understand the hoax news. Internet users are mainly with a critical attitude toward hoax news. They know the nature of hoax news: it starts with provocative and exciting words, often uses the names of famous figures or institutions, sounds unreasonable, frequently with untruth research results, and does not appear in official online media.

1. [HOAKS] Pembatalan Ibadah Haji Tahun 2021 karena Alasan Keuangan



Figure 3. Example Of Hoax News.
Source: Kominfo.Com

Clarification

There is information in an article stating that the 2021 hajj journey was cancelled. The cancellation is due to the funds of the hajj journey being spent on financing the infrastructure projects. However, the Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) argued the abovementioned information. It confirmed that the 2021 hajj journey was cancelled because of the pilgrims' health, safety, and security, not the financial reason, supported by the decision of the Minister of Religion through KMA No. 660 of 2021. The Financial Statements of BPKH until the Financial Statements in 2020 do not show any record of debt in the obligation of BPKH to Saudi Arabian journey service providers. BPKH disagreed with the information about allocating hajj funds in infrastructure buildings. The funds were allocated with a low-moderate risk profile. BPKH invests ninety per cent of the fund in state sharia securities and corporate tribes. On the Instagram page of BPKH @bpkh, it is quoted that the balance of hajj funds was managed in sharia in a trustworthy and accountable manner, and 2019 hajj funds increased by 11 per cent compared to 2018, which reached Rp. 124.32 trillion. In 2020, it increased by 16 per cent and reached the amount of Rp. 144.78 trillion. The balance of the hajj fund increased by 3 per cent to

become Rp. 149.15 trillion in March 2021 (Kominfo, 2021a).

1. [HOAKS] Akun Facebook Mengatasnamakan Wakil Gubernur NTB



Figure 4. Example Of Hoax News

Clarification

A Facebook account uses the name of the Deputy Governor of NTB (West Nusa Tenggara), Sitti Rohmi Djalilah. It even uses her photo as a profile, and Sitti's photo with the Governor of NTB, Zulkieflimansyah, as a cover photo. On the official website of the Office of Communication, Informatics and Statistics of the Province of NTB, the Head of the NTB Province of Communication and Information Technology, Najamuddin Amy, stated that the account was fake, not Sitti's. It was informed to the public that the Deputy Governor of NTB never had a social media account (Kominfo, 2021b).

5. CONCLUSION

Technology products that provide internet access for virtual interaction and communication are a gate of information or news worldwide. Information about various events at the national and international levels is accessible through social media. Social media users also disseminate information or news through this channel, which is connected to all other social media users worldwide. Because social media is a gate to information, private content can become public news.

As a gate of information, the survey results revealed that 64 per cent of information was obtained through social media, and most of the information was sought by users through internet media and the highest percentage who access information on the internet are students (69,8%). In addition, social media is also used to disseminate hoax news by individuals or groups with the aim of particular interests (such as politics). The dissemination of hoax news can take place in a short time and straightforwardly because everyone, as an internet user, is the potential to create hoax news and disseminate it.

Good digital literacy is needed to understand and respond to the issues disseminated through social media. Having good digital literacy knowledge, internet users as a cyber society can read, comprehend, examine, and criticize various information, particularly those that lead to hoaxes. Knowing how to tell the difference between hoax news and real news is part of digital literacy activities that should be improved and promoted in the community so that no one becomes a victim of false information.

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