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Literacy Education to Promote Responsible Social Media Use

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media usage has created both opportunities and challenges for communities, particularly in relation to misinformation, privacy protection, cyber threats, and responsible online behavior. This community service program aimed to improve digital literacy and promote responsible social media use among learners at PKBM Nuansa Alam, Ciomas District, Serang Regency, Banten, Indonesia. The program employed a participatory educational approach involving 20 participants through lectures, interactive discussions, case-based learning, and practical exercises. Educational materials focused on digital literacy fundamentals, misinformation identification, digital ethics, cybersecurity awareness, digital footprints, and responsible social media practices. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and participant evaluations and analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods. The findings indicated that participants demonstrated increased knowledge and awareness regarding information verification, personal data protection, ethical online communication, and cyber risk prevention. Active engagement throughout the program also reflected the effectiveness of participatory learning methods in fostering critical thinking and responsible digital citizenship. The program highlights the strategic role of Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) in strengthening community digital literacy and supporting lifelong learning. Continuous mentoring and follow-up activities are recommended to ensure sustainable improvements in digital literacy competencies and responsible social media behavior.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has significantly transformed how people access information, communicate, and participate in social interactions. The widespread adoption of the internet and social media has reshaped everyday life, enabling users to exchange information instantly without geographical limitations. Social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, have evolved beyond communication tools to become essential media for learning, collaboration, business promotion, and civic participation. Despite these benefits, the increasing use of digital platforms has also intensified challenges such as misinformation, disinformation, cyberbullying, online fraud, privacy violations, and the spread of harmful digital content. Consequently, digital literacy has emerged as a fundamental competency that enables individuals not only to access digital technologies but also to critically evaluate, create, and responsibly disseminate information in digital environments (Audrin & Audrin, 2022; Tinmaz et al., 2022).

Digital literacy extends beyond technical proficiency in operating digital devices. Contemporary literature defines digital literacy as

a multidimensional competency encompassing information literacy, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital ethics, online safety, and responsible participation in digital society. Individuals with strong digital literacy skills are more capable of assessing the credibility of online information, recognizing misinformation, protecting personal data, and engaging ethically on social media. Conversely, inadequate digital literacy increases vulnerability to manipulation, misinformation, privacy breaches, and irresponsible online behavior, particularly among young people who spend considerable time using digital platforms (Polanco-Levicán & Salvo-Garrido, 2022; Valle et al., 2024).

Indonesia has experienced substantial growth in internet and social media usage during the last decade. While this digital transformation has expanded educational and economic opportunities, it has simultaneously exposed persistent challenges related to digital literacy. Several studies indicate that many Indonesian internet users continue to experience difficulties in evaluating the credibility of online information, identifying misinformation, protecting personal data, and practicing responsible digital communication. These conditions demonstrate that improving digital access alone is insufficient without

strengthening digital literacy competencies among community members. Recent studies also emphasize that educational interventions focusing on digital literacy significantly improve individuals' ability to evaluate online information critically and promote more responsible social media behavior (Ratri & Aviyanti, 2025; Tinmaz et al., 2022).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Community Partner

This community service program was conducted at PKBM Nuansa Alam, located in Ciomas District, Serang Regency, Banten Province, Indonesia. PKBM (Community Learning Activity Center) is a non-formal educational institution that provides educational services for community members from diverse educational, social, and age backgrounds. The participants consisted of 20 learners who actively use smartphones and social media in their daily activities but have limited knowledge regarding digital literacy, online ethics, information verification, and personal data protection. These conditions were identified through preliminary observations and discussions with the PKBM management before implementing the program.

2.2 Community Service Design

This activity adopted a participatory educational approach that emphasizes active interaction between facilitators and participants. The program was designed to improve participants' knowledge and awareness regarding responsible social media use through digital literacy education. The implementation consisted of four sequential stages: (1) preliminary observation and needs assessment, (2) preparation of educational materials and learning media, (3) implementation of educational activities through lectures, interactive discussions, and practical case studies, and (4) evaluation of participants' understanding and reflection on the overall program.

The educational materials focused on fundamental concepts of digital literacy, identifying misinformation and hoaxes, digital ethics, cyber security awareness, digital footprints, and responsible social media behavior. The learning process encouraged participants to discuss real-life situations and analyze examples of digital content commonly encountered in everyday life.

2.3 Implementation Procedure

The implementation began with field observations and coordination meetings with PKBM administrators to identify participants' needs and determine the learning schedule. Subsequently, educational materials were prepared based on current issues related to digital literacy and social media use.

During the implementation stage, facilitators delivered the materials through interactive presentations followed by question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, and case-based learning activities. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences regarding social media usage, identify misinformation from sample cases, and discuss appropriate responses to various digital situations. This participatory approach was intended to increase participant engagement while promoting critical thinking and collaborative learning.

Finally, an evaluation session was conducted to assess participants' understanding of the educational materials and obtain feedback regarding the implementation of the community service program.

2.4 Data Collection

Data were collected using observation, documentation, and participant evaluation. Observation was conducted before and during the activity to identify participants' characteristics, learning needs, and level of participation. Documentation included photographs of the activities, attendance records, and supporting documents related to the implementation process. At the end of the program, participants completed an evaluation questionnaire to measure their perceptions regarding the

usefulness of the training and their understanding of digital literacy concepts.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. Observation notes, participant responses, and documentation were systematically reviewed to describe the implementation process and evaluate the outcomes of the educational program. Quantitative data obtained from participant evaluations were summarized using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to illustrate participants' responses toward the effectiveness of the community service activities.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Initial Condition of the Community Partner

Prior to the implementation of the community service program, an initial observation and needs assessment were conducted in collaboration with the management of PKBM Nuansa Alam, Ciomas District, Serang Regency. The assessment revealed that most participants actively used smartphones and various social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, as part of their daily communication and information-seeking activities. However, their understanding of responsible social media practices remained limited. Most participants were unfamiliar with methods for verifying online information, recognizing misinformation and hoaxes, protecting personal data, and understanding the long-term consequences of digital footprints.

Discussions with the PKBM management further indicated that digital literacy had not previously been incorporated into the institution's learning activities. Although participants frequently accessed digital information, they rarely received structured education regarding digital ethics, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible online communication. Consequently, they were more vulnerable to misinformation, online fraud, and inappropriate social media behavior. These findings confirmed the necessity of implementing a community-based digital literacy education program tailored to the characteristics of adult learners in non-formal education settings.

The needs assessment also served as the basis for determining the educational materials, learning strategies, and implementation methods. The program was designed to provide practical knowledge that participants could immediately apply in their daily digital interactions.

3.2 Implementation of the Community Service Program

The community service program was implemented through an interactive educational approach that combined presentations, discussions, case-based learning, and question-and-answer sessions. The activity began with an opening session introducing the objectives of the program and emphasizing the importance of digital literacy in contemporary society. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences regarding social media use, allowing facilitators to identify common digital issues encountered in everyday life.

The educational session introduced fundamental concepts of digital literacy, including digital ethics, digital footprints, information verification, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible social media behavior. Real examples of misinformation circulating on social media were presented to illustrate the importance of verifying information before sharing it. Participants also learned practical techniques for evaluating the credibility of online sources and recognizing common characteristics of misleading digital content.

Interactive discussions became one of the most engaging components of the program. Participants actively expressed their opinions, shared personal experiences, and discussed various digital challenges within their communities. This participatory learning approach encouraged knowledge exchange between facilitators and participants while creating a more meaningful

learning experience. Rather than acting solely as passive recipients of information, participants became actively involved in analyzing digital issues and proposing appropriate solutions.



Figure 1. Delivery of Digital Literacy Education at PKBM Nuansa Alam.

The implementation process proceeded smoothly with strong support from the PKBM management. Effective collaboration between facilitators and the community partner contributed to creating a conducive learning environment, enabling participants to engage actively throughout the educational sessions.

3.3 Outcomes of the Community Service Program

The implementation of the digital literacy education program produced positive outcomes in terms of participant engagement, knowledge acquisition, and awareness of responsible social media use. Throughout the activity, participants demonstrated high enthusiasm by actively participating in discussions, asking questions, and responding to case studies presented by the facilitators. The interactive learning environment enabled participants to connect theoretical concepts with real-life experiences encountered in their daily digital activities.

Participants demonstrated improved understanding of several essential digital literacy concepts, including identifying misinformation, protecting personal information, maintaining ethical online communication, and recognizing potential cyber threats. During the discussion sessions, participants were increasingly able to distinguish between reliable and unreliable information sources and demonstrated greater awareness of the importance of verifying digital content before sharing it through social media platforms.

To provide a clearer overview of the changes observed during the community service program, the participants' initial conditions and learning outcomes were summarized based on observations, interactive discussions, and evaluation activities conducted throughout the program. The comparison of participants' digital literacy competencies before and after the educational intervention is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Participants' Digital Literacy Competencies Before and After the Community Service Program

Indicator	Before Program	After Program
Understanding of Digital Literacy	Participants had limited understanding of digital literacy concepts and their relevance to everyday social media use.	Participants demonstrated a better understanding of digital literacy concepts and recognized their importance for responsible social media use.
Ability to Identify Misinformation	Most participants tended to trust and share online information without verifying its credibility.	Participants were able to identify common characteristics of misinformation and understood basic information verification techniques before sharing digital content.
Digital Ethics Awareness	Participants had limited awareness of ethical communication and responsible online interaction.	Participants demonstrated greater awareness of digital ethics and recognized the importance of respectful and responsible communication on social media.
Personal Data Protection	Participants had limited knowledge regarding online privacy, password security, and personal data protection.	Participants understood the importance of protecting personal information, strengthening account security, and preventing potential cyber threats.
Responsible Social Media Behavior	Social media was primarily used for communication and entertainment with limited awareness of potential digital risks.	Participants expressed greater confidence and commitment to applying responsible, ethical, and safe social media practices in their daily lives.

As presented in Table 1, the educational intervention resulted in positive improvements across all assessed aspects of digital literacy. Participants demonstrated better conceptual understanding, improved ability to evaluate online information, and greater awareness of digital ethics and cybersecurity. These findings indicate that the participatory learning approach effectively enhanced participants' knowledge and encouraged more responsible behavior in using social media.

In addition to cognitive improvement, the program also promoted positive attitudes toward responsible digital citizenship. Participants acknowledged that social media should not only be used for entertainment but also as a platform for learning, collaboration, and productive communication. Many participants expressed their commitment to applying the knowledge gained during the program by becoming more cautious when consuming and disseminating online information.



Figure 2. Interactive Discussion and Participant Engagement during the Community Service Program.

Feedback collected at the end of the activity indicated that participants considered the educational materials relevant to their daily needs. They appreciated the use of practical examples and interactive discussions, which made complex digital literacy concepts easier to understand. The participants also expressed interest in participating in similar educational activities focusing on other aspects of digital technology and online safety.

3.4 Discussion

The findings of this community service program demonstrate that participatory digital literacy education can effectively improve community awareness regarding responsible social media use. Active participation throughout the educational sessions indicates that interactive learning methods encourage greater engagement than conventional one-way lectures. By integrating presentations with discussions and real-life case analyses, participants were able to understand not only theoretical concepts but also practical strategies for addressing digital challenges encountered in everyday life.

The increased awareness observed during the program is consistent with previous studies reporting that digital literacy education enhances individuals' critical thinking skills, information evaluation abilities, and responsible online behavior. Interactive educational approaches enable participants to construct knowledge through experience and collaborative learning, making the learning outcomes more meaningful and sustainable. This finding supports the argument that digital literacy should emphasize critical analysis, ethical awareness, and informed decision-making rather than merely improving technical skills.

Another important outcome of the program was participants' increased awareness of digital ethics and cybersecurity. Discussions regarding misinformation, privacy protection, digital footprints, and cyber risks encouraged participants to reflect on their own online behavior. This reflective learning process is particularly important in non-formal education settings because adult learners generally possess diverse experiences that can enrich collaborative discussions and promote mutual learning. The successful implementation of this program also highlights the strategic role of Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) in promoting digital literacy at the community level. As non-formal educational institutions, PKBM can serve as effective platforms for delivering lifelong learning programs that respond to emerging societal challenges, including digital transformation. Integrating digital literacy into community education programs may therefore contribute to strengthening digital resilience and promoting responsible digital citizenship.

Despite these positive outcomes, this community service program had several limitations. The number of participants was relatively small, and the educational intervention was conducted within a limited time frame. Consequently, the long-term impact on participants' digital behavior could not be comprehensively

evaluated. Future community service initiatives are recommended to incorporate continuous mentoring, follow-up evaluations, and collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure sustainable improvements in digital literacy competencies.



Figure 3. Group Photo of Facilitators and Participants after the Community Service Program.

4. CONCLUSION

The community service program on digital literacy education at PKBM Nuansa Alam successfully enhanced participants' awareness and understanding of responsible social media use. Through an interactive learning approach combining presentations, discussions, and case-based learning, participants gained essential knowledge related to digital literacy, including information verification, digital ethics, personal data protection, cybersecurity awareness, and responsible online communication. The active participation and positive responses demonstrated throughout the program indicate that participatory educational methods are effective in promoting digital literacy among learners in non-formal education settings. Furthermore, this program highlights the strategic role of Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) in fostering digital citizenship and supporting lifelong learning within local communities. To maximize long-term impact, future community service initiatives are recommended to include continuous mentoring, periodic evaluation, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of digital literacy practices among community members.

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