

Submitted:
5 Mei 2025
Revised:
20 Mei 2025
Published:
30 Mei 2025

CONTACT

Correspondence Email:
fatmifauzani@gmail.com

Address:
Jl. H. Agus Salim No.6,
Kp. Baru, Kec. Pariaman
Tengah, Kota Pariaman,
Sumatera Barat, Kode
Pos: 25512

KEYWORDS

Digital Literacy,
Character Education,
History Learning
Awareness

DIGITAL LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY: FOSTERING HISTORICAL AWARENESS AND CHARACTER BUILDING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION STUDENTS AT ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

FATMI FAUZANI DUSKI¹, AULIA RAHMI PUTRI², NURBAITI³,
NADYATUL FITRIA SIREGAR⁴, IRFAN FATHURRAHMAN⁵

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Syekh Burhanuddin Pariaman

² Universitas Negeri Padang

^{3,4,5} Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang

ABSTRACT

The digital era brings new challenges and opportunities in education, especially in character development and digital literacy of students. This study aims to determine the level of digital literacy of students of Social Studies Education Study Program in Islamic Universities and analyze its influence on students' character development in the digital era. The results of the study show that the level of digital literacy of students is still classified as low to moderate. Although some students have used technology for academic needs, only a small number are able to optimally integrate technology in the learning process and character development. Factors that influence low digital literacy include limited access to digital devices and the Internet, as well as limited understanding of how to use technology effectively. This study highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy into the curriculum, teacher training, and institutional support to create digitally literate students with strong character. The implications of these findings provide a basis for developing strategies to strengthen digital literacy based on character education in Islamic higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

Digitalization in this realm doesn't just demand technological proficiency; it highlights the critical need for deep digital education literacy. This literacy involves students' ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce digital information critically and ethically. A 2023 UNESCO report indicates that digital literacy in developing nations, including Indonesia, stands at 48%, below the

global average of 56%. This underscores an urgent need to boost digital literacy, especially in higher education. However, rapid technological advancements also pose serious challenges to historical awareness among today's youth. The Digital 2023 report shows that Indonesian students spend over 8 hours daily online, yet less than 15% access educational content, including national history. This situation is concerning, as it risks eroding historical values, nationalism, and cultural identity.

Social Studies Education (IPS), particularly in Islamic Higher Education institutions, plays a strategic role in integrating digital education literacy, historical awareness, and character building. Students in IPS programs at these institutions are expected to become not only professional educators but also agents of social change capable of disseminating Islamic, national, and humanitarian values through digital literacy. This competency is increasingly relevant amidst Indonesia's dynamic social, cultural, and economic landscape, marked by diversity, globalization challenges, and socioeconomic disparities. Another phenomenon highlighting the urgency of this research is the high incidence of intolerance, disinformation, and social polarization in the digital space. A 2023 Kominfo report indicates that approximately 29% of Indonesian university students have been exposed to hoaxes related to history or religion on social media. This signifies that historical awareness and critical literacy grounded in strong character are essential to protect the younger generation from the negative influence of global information. Previous literature reviews show that digital literacy significantly impacts character education.

Research by Anam and Widiastuti (2021) highlights that integrating digital learning into history education can boost students' critical awareness of historical values. However, their study didn't specifically examine this in the context of Social Studies Education (IPS) students at Islamic Higher Education institutions, particularly concerning the internalization of Islamic character values and nationalism. Similarly, Sari et al.'s (2022) research on general student digital literacy hasn't extensively linked this literacy to strengthening historical awareness and national character from an Islamic Higher Education perspective. This gap points to a crucial area for further study: how to build synergy among digital education literacy, historical awareness, and character education, specifically within the context of IPS students at Islamic Higher Education institutions.

In a socio-cultural context, students at Islamic Higher Education institutions face significant challenges in upholding national identity and Islamic values amidst a pragmatic and liberal global environment. Economically, they also need to adapt to a digital-based workforce that demands creativity, honesty, and a strong work ethic—all intrinsically linked to character development during their education. Furthermore, character education in an Islamic context doesn't just focus on shaping moral behavior. It also strives to instill spiritual and social values like trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice, and compassion. By grounding itself in national history and Islamic teachings, digital literacy is expected to transcend mere technical skills. Instead, it aims to be a means of fostering noble character (*akhlak mulia*) and promoting heightened social awareness.

Government initiatives like the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program, launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek), offer vast opportunities for innovation in technology-based learning. Unfortunately, the implementation of digital literacy that incorporates historical and character values in Islamic Higher Education institutions hasn't yet reached its full potential. This indicates a disparity between available opportunities and students' academic readiness.

Therefore, this research is crucial to address this gap, develop a digital literacy-based history learning model, and strengthen Islamic character education and nationalistic spirit among Social Studies Education students at Islamic Higher Education institutions. Based on the background outlined above, this research is titled: "Digital Education and Technology Literacy Through Historical Learning Awareness and Character Building of Social Studies Program Students at Islamic Higher Education Institutions."

II. METHODS

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach to delve into the meaning and gain a comprehensive understanding of digital education literacy, historical awareness, and character education among Social Studies Education students at Islamic Higher Education institutions. The specific qualitative research approach chosen was a case study. According to Iskandar (2009), a case study approach is characterized by its specific and in-depth focus on the research process; it involves a cyclical process within the entire sample, utilizes a limited and rigorously selected sample size, and its findings are not intended for generalization to the broader population. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The digital era is characterized by a society proficient in using the internet, where digital technology enables easy and rapid connection with people worldwide through the internet network. This era has given birth to a generation that has grown amidst the rapid development of digital technology (Alfikri, 2021). In the context of accelerating globalization and digitalization, university students, as the younger generation, are expected to possess high skills and competencies while still remembering the importance of character values such as integrity, hard work, honesty, and love for the nation and country (Widiatmaka et al., 2022). In addition, university students must be able to avoid actions that can cause character degradation such as plagiarism, corruption, and intolerance. These actions can damage character values and the nation's image in the eyes of the international community.

University students face significant challenges in character formation in this digital age. These challenges stem from advancements in technology and the profound impact of the digital

era on the behavior and values developed by the younger generation, particularly university students. Various factors can contribute to a character crisis among university students in the digital age, including the influence of social media and technology. Currently, university students are highly exposed to social media and technology, which has the potential to influence the values they uphold.

The inappropriate use of social media and the consumption of unhelpful content can lead university students to adopt detrimental attitudes, harming both themselves and others. Currently, the character education provided in higher education institutions is insufficient, meaning students aren't fully trained to uphold character values (Widiatmaka et al., 2022). The immense flow of information highlights the crucial importance of mastering digital literacy. With the ongoing digital transformation, an increasing amount of false information is spreading across the internet.

Possessing digital capability is essential for educators, particularly lecturers at Islamic universities, and for students to support education and digital literacy. Digital tools fundamentally alter how knowledge is understood by enabling more creative, active, and collaborative methods of digitally constructing and sharing knowledge. One of the challenges Indonesia faces in navigating digital technological advancements is the gap in information access. Uneven levels of technology adoption are also evident among students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, including those in the Social Sciences Education Study Program. Some students still lack proficiency in using technology and exhibit limited awareness in seeking and extracting valid information, even in History learning, where digital technology is only utilized as a communication tool.

Based on interviews with several lecturers, the majority of students in the Social Sciences Education Study Program at Islamic higher education institutions still exhibit low to moderate levels of digital literacy. One lecturer even mentioned that a significant number of students use historical content from social media as their primary source without verifying its accuracy. This indicates a weakness in critical literacy and historical awareness among these students.

In the digital era, lecturers are expected to keep pace with technological advancements in the learning process. Sharman (2017), as cited by Anggeraini et al. (2019), identifies five crucial skills for educators in implementing digital learning: networking skills, communication, critical thinking, nurturing abilities, and knowledge management. Teachers, as facilitators of learning, must continuously develop themselves to adapt to the progress of the times. This ensures that the role of teachers isn't just as content deliverers, but also as effective mentors in the learning process, capable of adaptively guiding students amidst rapid technological changes.

Ideally, digital technology should enrich history learning with creative and reflective approaches. However, the reality in the field indicates that students tend to access historical material superficially, without depth or critical engagement. This is truly regrettable, considering Indonesia's rich history is imbued with nationalistic and tolerance values that should form the

foundation of character development. In this context, history learning isn't merely the transmission of facts, but also the instilling of values through appropriate digital media.

Paul Gilster was the first to introduce the concept of digital literacy in his 1997 book, *Digital Literacy*. The Kemendikbud (2017) publication, *Materi Pendukung Literasi Digital*, defines digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information from a wide range of sources accessed via computer devices. This concept emphasizes the importance of an individual's capacity to effectively process and utilize digital information. With rapid technological advancements, society must adapt to avoid being left behind, especially in the realm of education. Digital technology is now an inseparable part of the learning process, making digital literacy a crucial competency for every educator and student. Today, the use of the internet as a connecting medium between lecturers and students is commonplace. Online learning, involving activities such as reading, observing, discussing, teaching, and completing assignments with the aid of digital technology, demands a high level of digital literacy. Therefore, mastering digital literacy isn't just a need; it's a fundamental requirement for navigating the challenges of an evolving digital education era.

Literacy, also known as "keberaksaraan" or "melekaksara" (being literate), has broadened its meaning beyond just reading and writing. It now encompasses computer literacy, media literacy, information literacy, and even statistical literacy. In the realm of education, information and communication technology has transformed the structure of educational systems, making literacy culture a primary focus for developing high-quality human resources. Eskicumah (2015), cited by Munir (2017), states that the integration of technology in education can be a driving force for the transformation of learning systems. Therefore, fostering a culture of literacy becomes a crucial strategy for meeting the demands of the times.

According to the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey, Indonesia's education quality ranks 72nd out of 77 surveyed countries. This is a low position, significantly trailing neighboring countries like Malaysia and Brunei. These results indicate that Indonesia's education quality lags behind the average for developing nations. The PISA survey itself measures three main aspects: reading comprehension (literacy), mathematics, and science. In response to these findings, the Indonesian government has promptly taken responsive steps, focusing specifically on two crucial, previously underemphasized aspects: student literacy and numeracy. As part of education reform, the government decided to replace the National Examination (UN) system with the National Assessment (AN). A key component of the AN is the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), designed to measure students' fundamental abilities in literacy and numeracy. The AKM isn't based on rote memorization of subject matter; instead, it tests conceptual understanding through problems that integrate various subjects. This initiative aims to improve national education quality and better prepare students to face 21st-century challenges.

The low literacy culture in Indonesia stems from a general lack of reading interest among the populace. Data indicates that most provinces in Indonesia still show low levels of literacy activity. In response, the government has intensified the Digital Literacy Movement since 2015. This program aims to boost reading interest, especially among students in schools. By integrating technology into the learning process, it's hoped that students will become more engaged in reading and actively accessing information, thereby fostering a thriving literacy culture that keeps pace with modern advancements.

To effectively implement digital literacy, an integrated curriculum program is essential. Students need to be trained in their digital literacy skills, teachers require training to boost their creativity, and school leadership must support and facilitate the digital literacy movement within the school. There are five key strategies that can be applied in a school's digital literacy movement: At its core, the government-backed digital literacy program aims to prepare for the advent of Society 5.0, an era that demands individuals possess skills in critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creation/initiation.

Based on interviews with several Social Sciences Education lecturers, the digital literacy level among Social Sciences Education students at Islamic higher education institutions remains at a relatively low to moderate stage. While some students do access technology for academic purposes, only a small number optimally utilize digital technology to enhance their learning quality. The primary factors contributing to this low digital literacy include limited access to adequate devices and internet connections, as well as a lack of understanding regarding the effective use of technology in digital-based learning. Approximately 50% to 60% of students might claim to be proficient in using digital tools (such as learning applications, social media, and e-learning platforms), but only around 30% genuinely integrate this technology into developing their academic skills.

In Indonesia, particularly within Islamic higher education institutions, digital technology is still largely viewed as a supplementary tool rather than an integral part of learning that can enrich the quality of character education. A 2023 survey by the Center for Educational Research at the University of Indonesia revealed that only about 50% of students in Islamic universities possess adequate digital literacy skills. This highlights a significant gap in the utilization of digital technology in education. On the other hand, historical awareness and character education are also crucial aspects in shaping students who are not only intellectually capable but also possess moral depth relevant to Indonesia's social, cultural, and economic demands.

The importance of character education through educational literacy in the context of history learning becomes increasingly clear with the rising global challenges concerning morality and understanding national identity. Indonesia's rich history, imbued with nationalistic and tolerance values, must serve as the foundation for instilling strong character. Furthermore,

students, especially in Islamic higher education institutions, need to be made aware of the significance of technology in responding to global social and economic dynamics. These institutions often face challenges in effectively integrating technology-based curricula.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research indicates that the digital literacy levels among Social Sciences Education students in Islamic higher education institutions are still relatively low to moderate. While some students use technology for academic purposes, only a small fraction can optimally integrate digital technology into the learning process, particularly in understanding historical material and developing character. This limited digital literacy is exacerbated by a lack of historical awareness and insufficient character education relevant to the digital era. The digital era presents serious challenges to the formation of student character and historical awareness, amid the overwhelming flow of information and the prevalence of disinformation. Many students still struggle to differentiate between valid information and hoaxes, especially in the context of history, which is rich in values and ideologies. This highlights the need for strengthening critical and contextual digital historical literacy. Nevertheless, the digital era also opens up significant opportunities for innovation in history learning that incorporates Islamic and national character values. Technology can be leveraged to create more active, reflective, and meaningful learning experiences. Digital literacy serves not just as a technical skill, but as a strategic medium for shaping a young generation that is integrated, tolerant, historically aware, and capable of critical thinking. Therefore, a systemic effort is needed from Islamic higher education institutions to integrate digital literacy, character education, and historical awareness into their curricula and learning practices. This includes lecturer training, the development of technology-based learning media, improvements in digital infrastructure, and student mentorship in the ethical and responsible use of technology. Only through such synergy can Islamic higher education institutions produce graduates who are not only digitally competent but also possess noble character and a strong understanding of history as the foundation for national character.

REFERENCES

- Akbar, M. F., & Anggaraeni, F. D. (2017). Teknologi dalam pendidikan: Literasi digital dan self-directed learning pada mahasiswa skripsi. *Indigenous: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 2(1).
- Anggito, A., & Setiawan, J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher).
- Dinata, K. B. (2021). Analisis kemampuan literasi digital mahasiswa. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 19(1), 105-119.
- Hildawati, H., Haryani, H., Umar, N., Suprayitno, D., Mukhlis, I. R., Sulistyowati, D. I. D., ... & Judijanto, L. (2024). *Literasi Digital: Membangun Wawasan Cerdas dalam Era Digital terkini*. PT. Green Pustaka Indonesia.

- Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2017). *Materi pendukung literasi digital*. TIM GLN Kemendikbud
- Kirani, A. P., & Najicha, F. U. (2022). Pentingnya Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan sebagai Pedoman dalam Menghadapi Era Society 5.0 Mendatang. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 8(2), 767-773.
- Koyuncu, Ilhan, And Tahsin Firat. "Investigating Reading Literacy In Pisa 2018 Assessment." *International Electronic Journal Of Elementary Education* 13, No. 2 (2020): 263-75.
- Lickona, T. (2016). *Educating for Character = Mendidik untuk Membentuk Karakter: Bagaimana Sekolah Dapat Mengajarkan Sikap Hormat dan Tanggung Jawab* (U. Wahyudin (ed.); 5th ed.). Bumi Aksara.
- Maulani, Umasih, & Rochalina, C. I. (2021). Integration of Character Value in History Learning. *ICHELSS: International Conference on Humanities, Education, Law, and Social Sciences*. 1(1), 579-583
- Mohamad, S., Kulap, M., & Hamdiyah, L. M. (2018). Historical Education in The Process of Nation Character Building of Indonesia. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 5(5), 312-316.
- Muyassaroh, I., Arsanti, M., & Hasanudin, C. (2022). Urgensi literasi digital bagi mahasiswa di era society 5.0. *Protasis: Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Budaya, dan Pengajarannya*, 1(2)
- Palupi, M. T. (2020). Hoax: Pemanfaatannya sebagai bahan edukasi di era literasi digital dalam pembentukan karakter generasi muda. *Jurnal Skripta*, 6(1).
- Prasetyo, B., & Handayani, D. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Sejarah di Perguruan Tinggi Islam: Tantangan dan Peluang. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 15(1), 85-97.
- Pusat Penelitian Pendidikan Universitas Indonesia. (2023). *Laporan Survei Literasi Digital Mahasiswa Perguruan Tinggi Islam*. Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia.
- Ririen, D., & Daryanes, F. (2022). Analisis literasi digital mahasiswa. *Research and Development Journal of Education*, 8(1), 210.
- Selegi, S. F., & Aryaningrum, K. (2022). Literasi digital untuk meningkatkan kreativitas mahasiswa melalui pembuatan video tutorial alat peraga edukasi. *Jurnal Sinestesia*, 12(1), 77-89.
- Sestiani, R. A., Septiana, A. C., Setiawan, X. P. P., & Muhid, A. (2022). Edukasi Literasi Digital untuk Meningkatkan Self Regulated Learning pada Mahasiswa. *Philanthropy: Journal of Psychology*, 6(2), 202-211.
- Sujana, A., & Rachmatin, D. (2019). Literasi digital abad 21 bagi mahasiswa PGSD: apa, mengapa, dan bagaimana. In *Current Research in Education: Conference Series Journal* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 003-013).
- Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Syabaruddin, A., & Imamudin, I. (2022). Implementasi Literasi Digital Di Kalangan Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Eduscience*, 9(3), 942-950.
- Tim Gerakan Literasi Nasional, 2017. *Materi Pendukung Literasi Digital, Gerakan Literasi Nasional*, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Jakarta.

- Umar, Tubagus, 2017. *Membangun Literasi Sejarah Lokal di Kalangan Siswa Melalui Pembelajaran Sejarah Berbasis Keunikan Toponimi Kawasan Banten Lama*, The 1st Internasional Conference on Language, Literature and Theacing.
- Vachruddin, Vrisko Putra, And Abd Rachman Assegaf. “Desain Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Spin Microsoft Powerpoint Berbasis Literasi Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum (Akm) Pada Materi Thaharah Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan,” N.D.
- Widiatmaka, P., & Shofa, A. M. A. (2022). Strategi Mata Kuliah Pendidikan Pancasila Dalam Membentuk Karakter Nasionalisme Mahasiswa di Era Society 5.0. *Jurnal Civic Hukum*, 7(2).
- Yuniarto, B., & Yudha, R. P. (2021). Literasi digital sebagai penguatan pendidikan karakter menuju era society 5.0. *Edueksos: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Ekonomi*, 10(2).