

## **DIGITAL LITERACY STUDY: KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG TEENAGERS**

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### **Abstract**

Digital literacy encompasses the ability to access, understand and use digital information effectively, which is becoming increasingly important in an era of rapidly evolving technology. This study uses the literature method. The results showed that most teenagers have good access to digital devices such as smartphones and computers. However, there are variations in their level of digital knowledge and skills, especially when it comes to using technology for productive purposes. Formal education that supports digital literacy proved to be important, along with the significant role of support from family and peers in directing the wise use of technology. Thus, improving digital literacy and communication skills among adolescents requires synergy between adequate technological infrastructure, relevant education, and support from the social environment. Thus, adolescents can be better prepared to face challenges in the digital era and utilise technology optimally and responsibly.

**Keywords:** Digital Literacy, Knowledge, Communication Skills, Teenagers

### **Introduction**

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the way we communicate, learn and work. Since then, the emergence of digital communication tools that enable instant messaging, social media and video calling have become an integral part of everyday life (Gündüzalp, 2021). Communication that used to take a long time, such as traditional letters and phone calls, has now been replaced by emails, instant messaging applications, and video conferencing platforms that allow real-time interaction without geographical restrictions. Social media has enabled faster and wider sharing of information and interactions, while technological advances such as VoIP, chatbots and virtual assistants provide more efficient ways to communicate and access information (Ganesan & Gunasekaran, 2022).

The digital era forces people to adapt and develop new skills, one of which is digital literacy. Digital literacy is not only the ability to use technology, but also includes an



understanding of the information obtained, the ability to communicate effectively in the digital world, and awareness of ethics and safety on the internet (Vyas & Chak, 2022) .

Digital literacy is a very important ability in the modern technological era because it enables individuals to effectively navigate, understand, and utilise various aspects of digital technology and information. With digital literacy, one can assess the credibility of information sources, avoid cyber security threats, and participate productively in the digital environment (Kanyika et al., 2024) . In addition, digital literacy also helps in understanding the ethical use of social media, recognising and preventing the spread of false information, and utilising technology for learning and professional purposes. Overall, digital literacy empowers individuals to be smart, critical and wise users of technology in facing challenges and opportunities in the digital world (Muzaki et al., 2022) .

Teenagers are one of the groups most affected by the development of digital technology. They grow and develop amidst the widespread use of gadgets, the internet and social media. With almost unlimited access to information and various digital communication platforms, adolescents are expected to have adequate digital literacy in order to utilise technology wisely and productively. However, increased access to technology is not always accompanied by a balanced increase in digital literacy (Hashish & Alnajjar, 2024) .

Several studies have shown that while adolescents frequently use digital technologies, many of them lack adequate digital literacy skills. Teenagers are often skilled in the technical use of devices, but lack critical understanding of the information they access and share. In addition, their digital communication skills are often not accompanied by ethical awareness and a sense of responsibility, which can lead to issues such as the spread of false information, cyberbullying and privacy violations (Masai et al., 2024) .

The factors that influence adolescents' digital literacy are diverse, ranging from educational background, socio-economic background, to parental support and the surrounding environment. Therefore, an in-depth study on the level of digital literacy, especially communication knowledge and skills among teenagers, is very important. This research is expected to provide a clear picture of the current state of adolescents' digital literacy and its influencing factors, as well as provide relevant recommendations for efforts to improve digital literacy.

## **Research Methods**

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is an approach used to collect, analyse, and interpret information that has been published on a particular topic. This method involves a systematic search of relevant literature, both from books, scientific journals, articles, and other written sources (Hidayat, 2009) ; (Afiyanti, 2008) . The main purpose of literature research is to understand recent developments in a particular research area, identify gaps or inconsistencies in the existing literature, and form a conceptual basis for further research. This approach not only provides a strong theoretical background, but also assists researchers in formulating

hypotheses, establishing methodology, and developing a comprehensive analytical framework. By reviewing existing literature, researchers can ensure that their study is innovative and contributes meaningfully to existing knowledge (Syahrizal & Jailani, 2023).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Digital Literacy Level Among Teenagers**

The level of digital literacy among teenagers today has become a major focus in this era of rapidly evolving technology. Many teenagers have grown up with easy access to digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers, as well as the internet. Their ability to operate these devices and communicate through various digital platforms indicates that they have a good foundation of digital literacy. Teenagers usually adapt easily to new technologies, download apps and utilise social media to interact with their friends. However, although adolescents tend to be skilled in the use of digital tools, digital literacy is not only limited to technical ability (Sulehri et al., 2024).

Beyond technical skills, digital literacy also includes the ability to think critically in assessing information found online. Many teenagers are able to use search engines and access various sources of information, but they often face challenges in determining the reliability and credibility of the information. This ability is especially important in this era of disinformation and fake news. Adolescents need to be equipped with the skills to critically evaluate information sources, understand bias, and distinguish between fact and opinion (Kanyika et al., 2024).

In addition, digital literacy also includes an understanding of the ethical use of technology. Adolescents need to understand the potential impact of their digital footprint, such as social media posts that may affect their reputation in the future or the safe and responsible use of personal information. This education on digital ethics is crucial to prevent behaviours such as cyberbullying and to encourage more positive and constructive use of technology (khan & Gul, 2022).

Therefore, improving digital literacy among adolescents requires a comprehensive approach, involving not only technical training but also critical and ethical education. Schools, families and communities should work together to provide the necessary resources and education to develop holistic digital literacy. With this approach, adolescents can become technology users who are not only technically proficient, but also thoughtful, critical and ethical in their interactions in the digital world (Coninck et al., 2023).

Measures to improve digital literacy among adolescents should include specially designed formal and informal education programmes. Schools can take a leading role by incorporating a digital literacy curriculum that covers various aspects ranging from basic technical skills to critical thinking and digital ethics. In addition, there is a need for training for teachers so that they can help students develop these abilities effectively (Abraham,

2023). Beyond the school environment, parents should also be involved in this process by providing proper guidance and setting positive examples in the use of technology.

In addition to educational interventions, governments and non-profit organisations can play an important role in providing wider and more equitable access to digital resources. This is particularly important given the digital divide in many regions, where some youth may not have equal access to technology and information. Programmes that provide free or low-cost internet access, as well as digital skills training for underserved communities, can go a long way in reducing this gap (Alibraheim., 2023)

On the other hand, it is important to encourage active involvement of teenagers in positive digital projects. This could be participation in tech clubs or online communities that promote the use of technology for beneficial purposes, such as coding, graphic design or social campaigns. By encouraging creativity and initiative, teenagers can see technology as a powerful tool to express themselves and make positive changes in Society (Bakare, 2023).

Thus, the level of digital literacy among teenagers is very important to be considered and improved as a whole. Digital literacy is not just about technical skills, but also includes critical thinking, ethical judgement and responsible use. With collaboration between schools, families, governments and communities, holistic digital literacy can be achieved, so that adolescents can become wise and responsible users of technology, ready to face the challenges and opportunities in an ever-evolving digital world.

### **Digital Communication Skills Adolescents Should Have**

Digital communication skills are an important aspect of life for today's youth in the age of technology. These skills include the ability to use various digital platforms to communicate effectively and efficiently. Teenagers now use social media, instant messaging apps and email to communicate with friends and family. The ability to write clear, concise and targeted messages is crucial, especially in contexts where communication is often quick and informal (Baroud, 2023).

In addition, teens should also develop digital listening skills, which is the ability to understand and respond appropriately to messages received. This includes reading and interpreting the tone and context of the message being sent, which is often more challenging in text communication that lacks non-verbal cues such as facial expressions or voice intonation. These skills help adolescents to avoid misunderstandings and strengthen their interpersonal relationships digitally (Bello, 2023).

Social media interaction skills are also a key aspect of teenagers' digital communication. They should know the ethics of using social media, such as how to make positive and constructive comments, respecting others' privacy, and how to deal with cyberbullying. Understanding and applying these etiquette helps teenagers to create a safer and more positive digital environment for themselves and others (Bolaños, 2023).

Understanding digital safety is also an important component of digital communication skills. Teens should be trained to recognise and avoid various online

threats such as phishing, scams and hacking. These skills include using strong passwords, privacy settings, and how to report and handle suspicious behaviour. With these skills, teens can protect their personal information and communicate safely online (Bonneton, 2023).

Finally, creativity is another aspect of digital communication skills that is important for teenagers. They often use a variety of digital tools to create and share interesting content, such as videos, images and blogs. This ability not only enhances self-expression, but can also open up new opportunities in careers and education. Teens who are able to utilise digital tools creatively and effectively will be better equipped to deal with the demands of an increasingly technology-driven future.

### **Factors Affecting Digital Literacy in Adolescents**

Digital literacy is the ability to understand and use digital technology effectively, and many factors influence the level of digital literacy in adolescents. The first highly influential factor is accessibility to technology. Adolescents who have easy access to devices such as computers, smartphones and stable internet connectivity tend to develop their digital literacy faster. Family economic factors and infrastructure in the neighbourhood also have a big impact on how easily this access is obtained (Bossolasco, 2023)

Formal education also plays an important role in shaping adolescents' digital literacy. Schools that provide a curriculum that includes technology education and digital media usage help students develop these skills. Qualified teachers and supportive educational resources, such as computers and educational software, also promote improved digital literacy. In addition, extracurricular programmes that focus on information and communication technology provide opportunities for adolescents to explore and deepen their knowledge beyond the basic curriculum (Chudasma, 2023)

The influence of family and peers cannot be ignored either. Parents who are tech-savvy and encourage the wise use of digital tools can effectively provide guidance and support to their children. On the other hand, peers are often the main source of digital knowledge and skills through daily interactions and information sharing. Supportive and motivating social groups can accelerate the learning process and improve adolescents' digital literacy (Combrinck, 2023)

Culture and social norms in society also influence digital literacy. Societies that are open to new technologies and have a culture that supports innovation and creativity will tend to see digital literacy as a necessity. In this context, technology festivals, workshops, seminars and similar events can encourage teenagers to explore and develop their digital skills. Conversely, in societies that tend to be more closed or have a fear of technological advancement, adolescents may experience barriers in developing their digital literacy (Cristina, 2023).

Finally, individuals' attitudes and awareness of the importance of digital literacy also affect their level of proficiency. Adolescents who are highly motivated to learn and

understand new technologies usually develop their digital literacy faster. Awareness of the importance of digital skills in daily life, including in education and career, encourages adolescents to take self-learning initiatives and participate in technology-related learning activities. Proactive attitude and curiosity will accelerate the digital literacy process and help adolescents to be better prepared to face the challenges in the digital era (Eid, 2023)

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Thus, digital literacy in adolescents is influenced by various interrelated factors. Accessibility to technology is a basic factor that determines how easily adolescents can utilise digital devices and the internet. Formal education with a supportive curriculum and support from qualified teachers promotes digital literacy. Family and peer influences also play a significant role by providing guidance and a supportive social environment. Culture and social norms in society can help or hinder the process of developing digital literacy depending on how open the society is to technology. Finally, proactive attitudes and individual awareness of the importance of digital literacy encourage adolescents to continue learning and improving their skills. All these factors together determine the level of digital literacy of adolescents in facing the challenges of the ever-evolving technological era.

## **Conclusion**

Digital literacy among teenagers varies in level, with the majority of teenagers having good access to digital devices such as smartphones and computers. This phenomenon highlights the importance of adequate technological infrastructure in supporting digital literacy. This high accessibility allows adolescents to develop basic knowledge of information and communication technology, although there is still a gap in the use of technology for productive rather than entertainment purposes.

Digital literacy among teenagers plays a crucial role in determining their ability to communicate effectively in the digital era. Teenagers who have good digital literacy can utilise various communication platforms, such as social media, email and messaging apps, more wisely and efficiently. They tend to be more aware of digital safety, privacy and ethical issues in communicating online. The study also highlights the importance of formal education in equipping adolescents with adequate digital skills, such as online information search, source credibility evaluation and responsible digital content creation.

Support from the social environment, including family, friends and teachers, greatly influences adolescents' digital literacy. The involvement of parents and educators in directing the use of technology is crucial to ensure that adolescents are not only proficient in using digital devices but also able to avoid potential dangers, such as cyberbullying and the spread of false information. In conclusion, improving digital literacy and communication skills among adolescents requires close collaboration between various related parties, in terms of infrastructure, formal education, and social support.

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