

## Strengthening Digital Literacy and Hoax Awareness of SDN Pandean 1 Students

Tri Lestari<sup>1</sup>, Dimas Widya B. Putra<sup>2</sup>, Safira H. Prasetyo<sup>3</sup>, Soffi Setyaningtyas<sup>4</sup>, Nadilla R. Agustin<sup>5</sup>, Nimas A. Rahayuningsih<sup>6</sup>, Ernia T. Asriani<sup>7</sup>, Reza Ramadhani<sup>8</sup>, Siti Zanuba N. Maryam<sup>9</sup>, Roihan B. Perdana<sup>10</sup>, Sai B. Daniel<sup>11</sup>, Welly Mahardhika<sup>12</sup> 

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup>Universitas Tidar

<sup>12</sup>Universitar Tidar, <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4953-9747>

Corresponding author's email: [trilestari@students.untidar.ac.id](mailto:trilestari@students.untidar.ac.id)

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### Abstract

This community service-based study responds to the urgency of strengthening digital literacy and awareness of hoaxes among elementary school students amid the increasing use of gadgets. The rapid penetration of digital technology has made children active internet users, but without adequate critical thinking skills, they remain vulnerable to false information and unethical digital behavior. This Program was held at SDN Pandean 1 and involved students in grades IV–VI through structured digital literacy socialization activities that focused on responsible use of gadgets, basic fact verification skills, and digital ethics. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews with students and teachers, and documentation during program Implementation. The findings suggest that although students demonstrate high technical expertise in using digital devices, their ability to critically evaluate information, especially in identifying hoaxes, is still limited. However, such socialization activities contribute to increased awareness in verifying the source of information, recognizing misleading content, and adopting more ethical online behavior. This community service initiative highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy education into elementary learning environments. The results suggest that collaborative involvement between schools, teachers, and parents is essential to build students' critical digital competencies from an early age.

**Keywords:** digital literacy, hoax awareness, elementary students, community service, gadget use

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technologies permeates almost all aspects of life, including primary school students. Today the internet and social media become an important part of student's daily lives, even elementary school students are actively using gadgets for learning and entertainment <sup>1</sup>. The latest Data recorded Indonesia's internet penetration is excessive reaching 80.66% Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII) <sup>2</sup> recorded about 229 million internet users, while BPS (2024) showed that almost 35.57% of children aged 0-6 years had accessed the internet<sup>3</sup>. Digital media-based educational technology offers innovative opportunities in learning, facilitates the development of

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<sup>1</sup> Lisnawita et al., "Improving Digital Literacy to Prevent the Spread of Hoax News," *DINAMISIA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 8, no. 1 (2024): 298–303, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31849/dinamisia.v8i1.17275>.

<sup>2</sup> Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, "Survei Internet APJII 2025" (Jakarta, Indonesia, 2025), <https://survei.apjii.or.id/>.

<sup>3</sup> dan Statistik Dinas Komunikasi, Informatika, Persandian, "Komitmen Pemerintah Melindungi Anak Di Ruang Digital" (Pemerintah Kabupaten Buleleng, March 2025), <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/artikel/detail/komitmen-pemerintah-melindungi-anak-di-ruang-digital>.

digital literacy through safe educational devices and applications and motivates learning participation <sup>4</sup>. However, this ease of access to information also presents a risk, as students are vulnerable to exposure to negative content such as hoaxes that can be harmful if not balanced with the ability to filter adequate information <sup>5</sup>.

One of the main challenges of digital literacy among elementary school students is the widespread circulation of hoaxes and the limited understanding of digital ethics. The post-truth phenomenon, combined with the ease of disseminating information through social media, has contributed to the increasing consumption of unverified information <sup>6</sup>. Low levels of digital literacy put elementary school students at risk of being provoked by hoaxes, cyberbullying, and hate speech. In addition, the aspect of digital ethics is an important highlight, because many students do not fully understand the responsible attitude in the dissemination of information and use of online media <sup>7</sup>. Purba & Ain <sup>8</sup> even noted that the lack of digital literacy programs in schools is a major problem in addressing this issue. It is in this context that the ability of students to filter hoaxes and apply digital ethics becomes very urgent to be developed.

Various previous studies have examined digital literacy at the elementary school level. Lisnawita et al.<sup>9</sup> reported that the interactive learning approach managed to increase students' digital literacy knowledge by 69.78%. <sup>10</sup> also found that the psychoeducational intervention "smart use of gadgets and the Internet" significantly improved the knowledge and understanding of digital literacy of elementary school children. Similarly, Resti et al.<sup>11</sup> concluded that the utilization of technology-based learning media contributes significantly to improving the digital literacy of elementary school students. Purba & Ain<sup>12</sup> affirm the importance of the role of teachers and the active approach of teachers in digital literacy is proven to improve students understanding of technology and critical digital content. Naimah et al.<sup>13</sup> reported that digital literacy programs in elementary schools provide important information about the positive and negative impacts of social media and social media ethics. Tsaniyah & Juliana<sup>14</sup> adds that counteracting hoaxes requires massive development of digital literacy, covering the eight essential elements of digital literacy. While these diverse results have been achieved, most studies are still quantitative or literature reviews, and there are still rare qualitative case studies in elementary schools that explore students deep understanding of hoax screening as well as digital ethics.

Despite these findings, most existing studies remain quantitative in nature or rely on literature reviews. There is still a limited number of qualitative, context-based studies that explore elementary school students in-depth understanding of hoax filtering and the application of digital ethics in real learning environments. Based on this condition, this community service activity was designed and implemented at SDN Pandean 1,

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<sup>4</sup> Resti Resti et al., "Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Sebagai Alat Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Digital Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Al Madrasah Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiya* 8, no. 3 (2024): 1145, <https://doi.org/10.35931/am.v8i3.3563>.

<sup>5</sup> Tina Afiatin et al., "Psikoedukasi 'Cerdas Menggunakan Gadget Dan Internet Untuk Anak': Upaya Untuk Meningkatkan Pengetahuan Literasi Digital Anak," *Gadiah Mada Journal of Professional Psychology (GamaJPP)* 10, no. 2 (2024): 74, <https://doi.org/10.22146/gamajpp.98270>.

<sup>6</sup> Naimatus Tsaniyah and Kannisa Ayu Juliana, "Literasi Digital Sebagai Upaya Menangkal Hoaks Di Era Disrupsi," *Al-Balagh: Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi* 4, no. 1 (2024): 121–40, <https://doi.org/10.22515/balagh.v4i1.1555>.

<sup>7</sup> Naimah, Muhammad Fauzan Muttaqin, and Meilina, "Implementasi Literasi Digital Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Profesi Guru* 7, no. 1 (2024): 85–94, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jippg.v7i1.75992>.

<sup>8</sup> Az Zahrawaani Purba and Siti Quratul Ain, "The Role of Teachers in Introducing Digital Literacy to Upper Primary School Students," *Kependidikan Vol.13 No. 001 Spesial Issue Desember 2024 Peran* 13, no. 001 (2024): 1–10.

<sup>9</sup> Lisnawita et al., "Improving Digital Literacy to Prevent the Spread of Hoax News."

<sup>10</sup> Tina Afiatin et al., "Elementary School Students' Knowledge of Gadget and Internet Use after Receiving a Psychoeducation Program," *Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi Terapan* 13, no. 2 (2025): 94–104, <https://doi.org/10.22219/jipt.v13i2.38000>.

<sup>11</sup> Resti et al., "Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Sebagai Alat Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Literasi Digital Siswa Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>12</sup> Purba and Ain, "The Role of Teachers in Introducing Digital Literacy to Upper Primary School Students."

<sup>13</sup> Naimah, Muhammad Fauzan Muttaqin, and Meilina, "Implementasi Literasi Digital Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar."

<sup>14</sup> Tsaniyah and Juliana, "Literasi Digital Sebagai Upaya Menangkal Hoaks Di Era Disrupsi."

involving students in grades IV–VI. The activity focused on strengthening students understanding of responsible gadget use, hoax identification, and digital ethics through learning-based socialization and guided interaction. The contribution of this article lies in providing an empirical description of students digital literacy practices within a school-based community service context. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for teachers, parents, and policymakers in designing more effective and relevant digital literacy learning strategies, enabling students to develop a strong foundation for facing information challenges in the digital era.

## METHOD

This community service activity employed a case study design with a qualitative descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to describe and understand in depth the initial impact of digital literacy socialization activities, gadget use, and attitudes toward hoaxes among elementary school students within a real educational context<sup>15</sup>. The activity was carried out at SDN Pandean 1 as the selected case study location, involving 57 students from grades IV to VI who were chosen through purposive sampling based on their active participation and cognitive readiness to understand digital literacy materials<sup>16</sup>. Teachers who accompanied and facilitated the activities were also involved as supporting informants to provide contextual insights into students' learning behaviors.

Data were collected through field studies and literature studies. Field data consisted of direct observations and in-depth interviews with students and teachers to examine the implementation of activities, students' responses, and their understanding of digital literacy, gadget use, and hoax-related issues, using systematic observation procedures<sup>17</sup>. Documentation in the form of photographs and field notes was used to reinforce the credibility of the data and triangulation, while literature reviews supported the theoretical foundation and interpretation of the findings<sup>18</sup>. Data analysis is carried out qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to provide a comprehensive picture of the initial impact of the activity<sup>19</sup>.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was implemented in the form of a digital literacy socialization program focusing on wise gadget use and initial attitudes toward hoaxes among elementary school students. Data were collected through direct observation during the activities, interactive discussions with students, and short interviews with teachers and parents as learning partners. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach to identify patterns of students' understanding and attitudes after participating in the program.

The results indicate that the digital literacy socialization contributed to an improvement in students' initial understanding of gadget use. Students began to realize that gadgets are not merely tools for entertainment but can also be utilized for learning purposes. Most students were able to mention examples of beneficial gadget use as well as potential negative impacts of excessive use. Class teachers reported that after socialization activities, students showed a better understanding of the rules and consequences related

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<sup>15</sup> Sena Kurniawan and Yuni Siti Sarah, "Meningkatkan Literasi Digital Di Sekolah Menengah Atas: Tantangan, Strategi Dan Dampaknya Pada Keterampilan Siswa," *INSOLOGI: Jurnal Sains Dan Teknologi* 2, no. 4 (2023): 712–18, <https://doi.org/10.55123/insologi.v2i4.2321>; Mahdina Munawarah, Muhammad Andri Setiawan, and Ali Rachman, "Penggunaan Base Telegram Dalam Melatih Literasi Digital Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Ar-Rahman* 10, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.31602/jbkr.v10i2.16726>.

<sup>16</sup> Ting Xu, Kyung Hee Park, and Xiaoxia Tian, "Structural Relationship on Factors Influencing Digital Literacy of College Students," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* 18, no. 19 (2023): 147–59, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v18i19.38319>.

<sup>17</sup> Niculeta Cristea Pleşan, "The Method of Observing the Student's Behavior in the Educational Environment," *MATEC Web Conf.* 342 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1051/mateconf/202134211009>.

<sup>18</sup> L.-L. Ebidor and I Ikhide, "Literature Review in Scientific Research: An Overview," *East African Journal of Education Studies* 7, no. 2 (2024): 211–18, <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.7.2.1909>.

<sup>19</sup> Emma Knott et al., "Interviews in the Social Sciences," *Nature Reviews Methods Primers* 2 (2022): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-022-00150-6>.

to daily use of gadgets. The findings are in line with a study by Hafidhi et al.<sup>20</sup>, which states that introducing digital literacy from an early age can increase students' awareness of the functions and risks of digital technology through a simple and contextual learning approach.

In addition to better understanding, the activities also revealed early changes in students' attitudes toward gadget use. Some students verbally express their intention to reduce the use of gadgets for entertainment and allocate more time to activities related to learning. However, these changes are still at the level of initial awareness and intention, so they cannot yet be interpreted as stable or sustainable changes in behavior.

To evaluate and determine the level of students' understanding of the material that has been delivered, this socialization activity was accompanied by training for students through the "Quizizz" digital quiz platform and a game-based quiz platform. Assessment was carried out using a post-test instrument in the form of multiple-choice questions representing the main concepts of digital literacy, gadget use, and understanding of hoaxes. At the end of the presentation session, students who were able to answer the post-test questions well and demonstrate understanding of the material were given prizes as a form of positive reinforcement in the form of student appreciation to increase student motivation to learn during the material presentation activity. The results of the reinforcement and evaluation showed that around 80% of students were able to understand the material that had been delivered, as reflected in the students' ability to answer the post-test questions correctly. These results indicate that most students understood the socialization material well after participating in the learning session. Students' active participation during the final exam showed positive cognitive responses and their ability to connect the material with the use of gadgets and digital literacy information in their daily lives. Therefore, the use of digital game-based evaluation media not only serves as a tool to measure understanding but also supports the process of internalizing digital literacy concepts among elementary school students.

In this context, the causal claim between digital literacy socialization and changes in gadget use behavior is limited. Children's digital behavior is influenced by a variety of factors, including parental parenting styles, habits formed at home, and school rules. This finding aligns with Longkutoy et al.<sup>21</sup>, who emphasize that children's digital literacy outcomes result from interactions between school, family, and broader social environments.

Another theme that emerged from this analysis was the increase in students' initial awareness of hoaxes. Students begin to understand the concept of false information and realize that not all information found on the internet can be trusted. Although students have not yet developed the ability to independently verify information, they show greater caution by asking teachers or parents when encountering questionable content. Parents involved in the program reported that children began to seek clarification before believing or imitating the digital content they encountered.

These findings suggest that digital literacy socialization primarily serves as a trigger for awareness of the risks of digital information, rather than as a single intervention capable of directly generating advanced digital literacy skills. These results are in line with a community service program conducted by Hidayat & Abriyani<sup>22</sup>, which found that digital literacy education at the elementary school level is more effective in fostering initial critical attitudes toward hoaxes.

Changes in students' digital behavior cannot be achieved through one socialization session alone; such changes require ongoing habituation and consistent support. Therefore, digital literacy activities related to the use of gadgets and awareness of hoaxes should be routinely integrated into learning in schools and strengthened through parental involvement at home. Theoretically, this is in line with the Health Belief Model (HBM), which emphasizes that perceived threat and self-confidence are key factors in behavior change<sup>23</sup>. In this study, socialization activities served as a trigger for action, raising students' awareness of the risks of improper use of gadgets and exposure to false information. However, due to their age and limited cognitive

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<sup>20</sup> M Hafidhi, D Rahmawati, and Y Suryana, "Digital Literacy Education for Elementary School Students: Enhancing Awareness of Gadget Use and Digital Risks," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 9, no. 1 (2024), <https://journal.unpas.ac.id/index.php/pendas/article/view/13690>.

<sup>21</sup> J F Longkutoy, A Rahman, and M Yusuf, "Children's Digital Literacy Development: The Role of School, Family, and Social Environment," *Palita: Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 9, no. 1 (2024), <https://ejournal.iainpalopo.ac.id/index.php/PiJIES/article/view/6767>.

<sup>22</sup> R Hidayat and F Abriyani, "Strengthening Elementary School Students' Critical Awareness of Hoaxes through Digital Literacy Education," *Asian Journal of Community Service and Empowerment (AJPM)* 3, no. 1 (2025), <https://journal.ubpkarawang.ac.id/index.php/AJPM/article/view/9259>.

<sup>23</sup> M H Becker and I M Rosenstock, "The Health Belief Model and Personal Health Behavior," *Health Education Monographs* 2, no. 4 (1974): 324–508.

development, students' confidence in critically evaluating digital information remains low. This highlights the need for ongoing guidance and support, both at school and at home, to develop students' skills and confidence in managing digital information responsibly<sup>24</sup>.

This community service activity shows that a simple, interactive, and contextual approach can effectively help elementary school students understand responsible gadget use and recognize hoaxes at an early stage. By connecting the material with students' everyday digital experiences, the activity encouraged active participation and made abstract concepts easier to grasp. The students' responses during discussions and examples indicate a growing awareness that using digital technology requires caution, even though deeper behavioral changes cannot yet be observed in the short term. These findings suggest that early digital literacy education functions as a foundation for shaping attitudes and basic critical thinking skills rather than producing immediate outcomes. Therefore, consistent and continuous guidance from both schools and families is essential to reinforce these initial understandings. When schools provide structured learning and families support it through daily supervision and examples at home, children are more likely to develop sustainable and responsible digital habits over time.

## CONCLUSION

The digital literacy socialization activities focusing on gadget use and attitudes toward hoaxes made an initial contribution to improving elementary school students' understanding of wiser and more responsible use of digital technology, although observable behavioral change could not yet be optimally identified in the short term. These community service findings indicate that the development of digital literacy among children requires a continuous learning process that is integrated between schools and the family environment. Therefore, socialization should not be understood as a one-off activity, but rather as part of a habituation process supported by the roles of teachers and parents in guiding children toward healthy, safe, and critical use of digital technology from an early age.

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## DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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<sup>24</sup> Melody Taba et al., "Adolescents' Self-Efficacy and Digital Health Literacy: A Cross-Sectional Mixed Methods Study," *BMC Public Health* 22, no. 1 (2022): 1223, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13599-7>; A Rezakhani Moghaddam, S Hosseini, and M Ghaffari, "Health Literacy and Misinformation Susceptibility among Adolescents," *Frontiers in Public Health*, 2022, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2022.916362/full>.

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### Author(s) Biography

All authors, namely Tri Lestari, Dimas Widya B. Putra, Safira H. Prasetyo, Soffi Setyaningtyas, Nadilla R. Agustin, Nimas A. Rahayuningsih, Ernica T. Asriani, Reza Ramadhani, Siti Zanuba N. Maryam, Roihan B.

Perdana, and Sai B. Daniel, are undergraduate students at Tidar University who are active in academic activities and community service in the field of education. They are involved in various educational activities focused on literacy, learning assistance, and student development in the school environment. Welly Mahardika is a lecturer at Tidar University who is active in teaching, research, academic guidance, and community service in the field of education.