



Women's Literacy in Using Digital Media Information

¹ Suharnanik Suharnanik, Yanuastrid Shintawati², Daniel Pandapaton³,
Rifka Khairiah⁴, Adinda Restu Pribadi⁵

¹²³⁴⁵ Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University, Indonesia

¹ nanik_fisip@uwks.ac.id, ² yanuastrid@uwks.ac.id, ³ danifisip@uwks.ac.id, ⁴
rk008@mhs.uwks.ac.id, ⁵ arp011@mhs.uwks.ac.id

DOI: [10.30742/tb.v8i2.4040](https://doi.org/10.30742/tb.v8i2.4040)

Received: 18 Sept 2024

Revised: 3 October 2024

Accepted: 28 October 2024

ABSTRACT

Purpose Research. Indonesian women have low digital literacy skills, and data from 2022 shows that only 34.7% have good literacy skills. 54.6% of Indonesian women receive hoax messages compared to men, while cyberbullying shows 39.2% occurs in women. This causes women to be less confident in accessing the internet. This research aims to analyze women's literacy levels in utilizing digital information media, identify the challenges they face, and explore the impact of cyberbullying on women to formulate strategies for increasing digital literacy that are safer and more inclusive. **Research Method.** The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods with data collection through in-depth interviews, online surveys, and social media content analysis. **Data Analysis.** The research sample consisted of women with various social, economic, and educational backgrounds who actively use social media. **Results.** The results of the study are expected to provide insight into the level of social media literacy among women, the challenges they face, and effective strategies to improve this literacy. In addition, this study also aims to identify the role of social media in strengthening or inhibiting women's empowerment in various sectors of life. **Conclusions.** This research is expected to contribute to the development of more inclusive and gender-sensitive social media literacy education programs and provide policy recommendations to support more active and critical involvement of women in the digital world.

Keywords: women, social media literacy, empowerment, digital media.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian women have low digital literacy skills; in 2022, only 34.7% (Katadata, 2022) had good literacy skills. 54.6% of Indonesian women receive hoax messages compared to men, while cyberbullying shows 39.2% occurs in women (Kominfo, 2022). Cyberbullying against women often occurs using body shaming, for example, giving connotations to fat women as identical to emotional control (



Stellarosa & Iwanti, 2017). Accepting yourself as you are is a natural form of facing the war on bullying, especially beauty bullying (Rubyatomo, 2023). Women must make more effort to go to the city (Faderman, 2022) and face public spaces (ibid, 2022). Because it is not easy for them, women have a leap of ideas and movements that they bring from home where the challenge is to change the perception that has been in them to try to follow customs and values that prohibit them, guide them, or educate them only to be loyal to their domestic sphere. This does not happen to men, who since childhood, are encouraged to fight and survive in public life, such as political, social, and economic activities.

Media literacy is a new social movement (Potter, 2004). It explains that media literacy is a person's ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages in various forms of media. Thus, Hobbs (2010) proposes that media literacy is a process that integrates critical thinking skills and the ability to communicate through media. This concept of media literacy is supported by (Mihailidis, 2014), who states that media literacy is an instrument for empowering individuals in the information society. In contrast to Buckingham, he emphasizes that media literacy is more than just technical skills; it involves social and cultural dimensions. Media literacy is a critical skill for interpreting and questioning media so that people can understand how identity, social norms, and power are represented in the media. He also emphasized the importance of understanding media genres and formats (Buckingham, 2003). Media literacy emerged because of the almost unstoppable flow of information. Information from social media, both good and bad, is present in society and is primarily consumed by minors and women who are very vulnerable to being exposed to social media.

Women's lack of social media literacy can also impact the harmony of building relationships with their families. This can be seen in many cases of divorce resulting from communication interactions carried out on social media between women and the opposite sex who are not their family. So, women must be wiser in using social media because if it is not used and utilized correctly, it can disrupt family communication between members. After all, family members prefer to communicate on social media. In addition, social media must be used as an invitation to creativity and to improve the quality of women in Indonesia even better. UNESCO defines literacy by stating that, based on the UNESCO definition in 1958, literacy is the ability of an individual to read and write by understanding short statements related to their lives. This definition has evolved to encompass multiple skill domains, each seen as having different levels of mastery and serving different purposes. Research on women and the media can help understand the barriers women face in politics and find solutions to increase their participation.

Gender stereotypes The media often portrays negative gender stereotypes about women, such as that women are incompetent in politics or only suitable for domestic roles. This can influence public perceptions of women in society and discourage women from entering the public sphere. Research on women and the media can help challenge these stereotypes and encourage women to be more active in the public sphere and pursue their dreams. This research aims to analyze women's literacy levels in utilizing digital information media, identify the challenges

they face, and explore the impact of cyberbullying on women in order to formulate strategies for increasing digital literacy that are safer and more inclusive.

B. METHODS

Several studies that use a netnographic approach include research (Belezasand Daniel,2021) and (Reid & Duffy, 2018), which examine the conditions of the pandemic, research can still be carried out, research (Hudaefi & Beik, 2018), which examines the conditions of the pandemic, research can still be carried out, 2021), discussing charity campaigns in social media, research (Kozinets & Handelman, 2024), conducted by Kozinets as the initiator of the method in describing consumption behavior and also carried out by on social media (Kumar & Dholakia, 2022). Of all the researchers, the netnography method determines the locus of its research in online communities, online platforms, and online spaces where online interactions occur. Likewise, this study focuses on women who use Internet media for digital media literacy. This study is qualitative research, where participants are determined by purposive sampling, aimed at women who use social media and the internet. Data was collected using Google Forms for both open and closed questions. Researchers also observed in depth the responses of women between data from in-depth interviews with the conditions of social media in which women are actively or passively involved.

Kozinets (1998) states that netnography is an online research method that helps us understand how social interaction occurs. The steps in this research include data collection, analysis, research ethics, and representation. As Kozinets explained, at least two ideas and concepts align with Kozinets' ideas, and in this study, he can explore and reach new research themes related to the use of digital media. In addition, this research will describe changes or shifts in meaning or perception in digital society.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In today's digital era, with adequate devices, it is straightforward for women to get information. Where data shows that women have lower literacy skills compared to men; not only that, women are also more easily influenced by hoax messages and more easily exposed to cyberbullying than men. This shows that modern society in the digital era has undergone a significant transformation but has not fully occurred in women. The obstacles are an essential topic of discussion in this research. While on the other hand women are required to play an active and critical role in the digital world. Why? Because women still experience problems related to culture, power, and poverty.

Where everything is based on the ability to have a quality of life that is still low, this causes women to be left behind (Castells, 2000). Explains how information technology can change the economic and social structure of society.



In this case, women's abilities and skills are more emphasized in order to be able to access and use information technology effectively and efficiently. Because this is the key for women to be directly involved in digital economic activities, this literacy can increase its role in mastering new economic technologies such as e-commerce, virtual assistant, data coding, and data analysis, all of which are integral parts of the network society as described by Castells.

I. Cyberbullying

In the concept of "A Cyborg Manifesto" (Haraway, 2013). Where women experience identity crisis and vulnerability in digital space, the hope is that women can use digital space by becoming a cyborg identity to cross the traditional boundaries that have so far shackled women in society. The achievement of becoming a new hybrid is expected to fail in digital space, where cyberbullying occurs, and even gender-based violence occur again in the digital context.

Table I. Cases of Cyberbullying in Women

Once	Never
31.0% of respondents have experienced cyberbullying	69.0% of respondents have never experienced cyberbullying

Primary Data, 2024

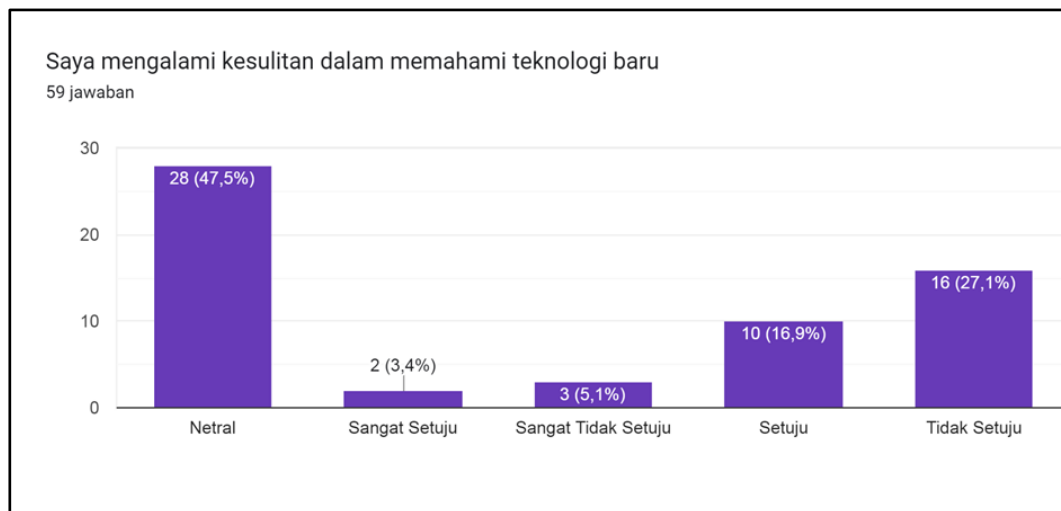
Table I. shows that women who have experienced cyberbullying as much as 31%, while 69% stated that they have never experienced cyberbullying. The data shows that cases of cyberbullying are lower than those who have not experienced cyberbullying. However, this data can be examined as a hope that the number of victims of cyberbullying is indeed lower, but when viewed from the percentage, it is quite high. It should be noted that this research was conducted in urban areas, meaning that the city has not provided a guarantee that women will not experience being victims of cyberbullying.

In Haraway's concept, women are expected to be able to criticize power and supervise the running of government. However, if women experience cyberbullying, they will not be able to carry out their roles, even deliberately created to silence women so that they are deterred and intimidated in carrying out movements that strengthen hierarchies and inequalities that aim to empower them. It should be understood that the context of empowerment is not just technical skills. However, critical skills are needed to face and overcome them because if not, they will become victims of cyberbullying.

2. Challenges and Obstacles

Although information technology has rapidly developed, not all women have access to the facilities and can use digital devices properly. To Silitonga & Zatira, (2023), the challenges for women that are often experienced are limited access, where women are in remote areas where internet stability is inadequate, and

digital devices that poor women cannot afford. Women also experience gender inequality by being treated differently in families and communities using digital devices. Research Harwati & Septiana, (2023) states that women face obstacles from their families because parents prioritize their sons to provide digital device facilities compared to women. Women's education and skills in using digital devices are lower than men's.



Source: Primary data, 2024

Figure 1. Opinions on Women Experiencing Technological Difficulties

Figure 1 shows the opinions of women who have experience with technology. However, as many as 27.1% said they disagree that women understand technology. This shows a growing opinion in society stating that they disagree that women have difficulty understanding new technology. This means there is an optimistic attitude toward gender equality in technology media. As an idea, progressive ideas for women need to be initiated and campaigned continuously so that the discourse efforts of gender narrative agents reach a common understanding to achieve equality and justice together. So that this public opinion becomes a joint movement that positively impacts women's empowerment in the realm of technology, and not just an opinion.

3. Accessibility of Digital Literacy for Women

Digital literacy technology is increasingly developing, with inadequate support for digital devices and the internet, this can hinder women from understanding what digital literacy is. The following data shows that women use digital devices such as computers, smartphones and tablets.

Table 2. Data on Women's Accessibility to Digital Literacy

Often	Not often
96.6% of respondents stated that they frequently use digital devices	5.2% of respondents stated that they do not often use digital devices.

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Table 2. shows that women stated that they often use digital devices as much as 96.6%, while those who use them rarely or not often are only 5.2%. This data shows that women's accessibility to digital information is excellent. This is different from the research by Kholil & Budiantoro, (2022), which states that digital space does not yet have a gender perspective, so women often experience violence. Women are still in a position of gender injustice, where their social culture still experiences discrimination and stereotypes that limit women from learning and using digital devices, as in their research (Wahyuningtyas & Adi, 2016) (Fadilla, 2020) (Sholehudin & Sulastri, 2024). Furthermore, it is possible that in certain areas, such as (research), there are obstacles regarding lack of education and training. Lack of training and low education in developing countries (Adam, 2021) result in low digital literacy among women.

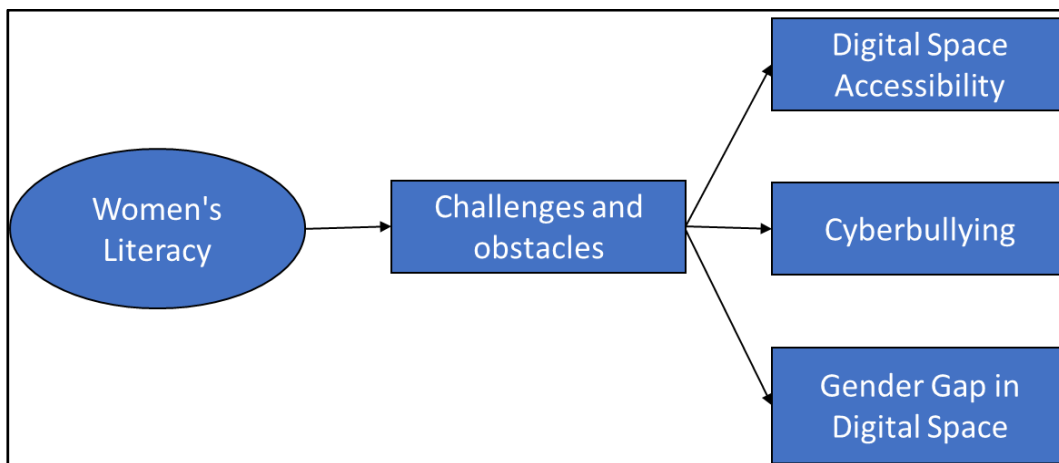


Figure 2 . Flowchart of women's literacy in the digital space

Figure 2. shows that women's literacy has challenges and obstacles, including ease of access, bullying issues, and gender gaps. Each of these findings is an exciting factor to discuss *first*, ease of access where there are women with easy access while other groups of women have obstacles. In the group of women who have easy access, of course, they need the ability to support literacy, including knowledge and skills. Knowledge is needed to get relevant information to support their development to be better, including those related to health, education, and economic empowerment. With adequate skills, they can encourage women to get job opportunities, work online, or various other variations of digital



entrepreneurship. As explained in *The Information Society* by Castells, women who have not received digital access cannot become subjects of control in playing the economic structure. This group of women tends to be consumers of online media alone.

Then the *second* is cyberbullying, which is a threat to women in digital media. It is proven that researchers found data on urban women as many as 31% of women have experienced cyberbullying. Haraway's emphasis on changing women into autonomous, critical-thinking individuals fails here. The cyberbullying trap on women, which ultimately causes deep trauma and is again faced with the reality of a society that gives a weak stereotype of technological capabilities, is proven. Awareness needs to be given to women to be able to get out of cyberbullying by emphasizing that this case can certainly be overcome with a maturity of thought and high digital technology skills and experience. The *third*, about the gender gap, which is an obstacle for women, is the unequal treatment experienced by women. The interpretation of society towards men and women is different, which causes men to be prioritized, prioritized, and specialized in matters of education and the provision of information technology facilities. Women are ranked second and asked for later. If men are already in front, then women are given the opportunity. The same thing happens in political power; women have not occupied strategic positions of power in quantity or quality. This is the reality of the gender gap that occurs in digital technology in society.

Then where is the disparity, namely in the inequality of access for women who live in underdeveloped areas so that women do not get technological devices and costs that are beyond the reach of poor women. This is what causes women not to get computers, smartphones or internet connections. Disparities also occur in women who have low education and training, making it difficult for women to use digital technology effectively.

This disparity can occur due to normative and socio-cultural factors, where teachings in society are still fixated on limiting the role of women in accessing technology. The limitation of these roles is carried out systematically, through a subtle subconscious, for example, by giving subtle doctrinal sermons so that the perception arises that not mastering technological tools for women is normal. There is also limited time for women to perform household tasks and responsibilities, reducing learning time. The dogma of society is in the form of stereotypes that men are identical to openness to technology. At the same time, women are not worthy because they are considered rigid and backward, and technology influences how women position themselves and view technology. The tendency of women to imitate how their families and communities position themselves towards technology makes them lag. So that women are ultimately unable to compete and become subjects of digital media entrepreneurs.

E. CONCLUSION

Gender equality and egalitarianism between men and women in digital literacy, but the gap is not too significant in this research. So, the conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that in terms of data, men and women have the same ability to use digital literacy. Then why is the problem still high for women in terms of cyberbullying and access to information? The cyborg manifesto acknowledges that the hybridity of humans and machines can create new advantages as superhumans but does not rule out the possibility of creating a disaster for its users. Women can be something different beyond traditional boundaries, breaking down the patriarchal hierarchy, but technology can also be a new tool of oppression.

From this research, a new definition can be taken that digital literacy for women does not guarantee that women are free from cyberbullying. To reduce the problem and number of cyberbullying, yes, but there is no guarantee because the most important thing is the ability to handle cyberbullying so that it does not become a physical and psychological problem for someone. If women receive treatment related to their identity, with digital technology, they can reconstruct even with their gender. This means that social and cultural norms that have been obstacles for women have finally opened up and become new opportunities.

However, Castells reminded us that the main focus of digital information is on the structural and economic. Women with digital information control will have a new power source over access and control over information. With women's power, they can negotiate to suppress or support gender liberation. Finally, they can also oppose digital inequality, a problem for women.

REFERENCE

- Adam, A. (2021). Perempuan Dan Literasi Di Era Digitalisasi. *AL-WARDAH: Jurnal Kajian Perempuan, Gender dan Agama*, 15(2), 251-261.
- Belezas, F and Daniel, A. (2021). Innovation in Pandemics: A Netnographic Approach To The Sharing Economy Contributions. *J Sci Technol Policy Manag.*
- Buckingham, David. (2003). *Media Education: Literacy, Learning and Contemporary Culture*. Polity Press.
- Castells, M. (2000). Toward a sociology of the network society. *Contemporary sociology*, 29(5), 693-699.
- Faderman, L. (2022). "The Struggle to Transform Woman into Citizen." In *Woman: The American History of an Idea*, 168–97. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2bfhfs.10>. 10.21009/Communicology.051, July



- 2017,
<http://journal.unj.ac.id/unj/index.php/communicology/article/view/2669>.
- Faderman, L. (2022). "Woman Enters the Public Sphere: The Nineteenth Century." In *Woman: The American History of an Idea*, 86–114. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2bfhfs.7>.
- Fadilla, N. (2020). Kesenjangan digital di era revolusi industri 4.0 dan hubungannya dengan perpustakaan sebagai penyedia informasi. *Libria*, 12(1), 1-14.
- Haraway, D. (2013). Situated Knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective I. In *Women, science, and technology* (pp. 455-472). Routledge.
- Harwati, T., & Septiana, I. (2023). Pendidikan Gender Dalam Keluarga: Peluang dan Tantangan Di Era Digital. *Sharia and Law Proceedings*, 1(1), 171-182.
- Hobbs, Renee. (2010). *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. The Aspen Institute.
- Hudaefi, F.A and Beik, IS. (2021). Digital Zakāh Campaign In Time Of Covid-19 Pandemic In Indonesia: A Netnographic Study. *Journal Islam Mark*. 12(3):498–517.
- Katadata. (2022). Data Perempuan Memiliki Literasi Digital. Survei Katadata Insight Center. Dapat diakses dalam <https://kic.katadata.co.id/>
- Kholil, K. L. R., & Budiantoro, W. (2022). Cyberfeminism: Pembebasan Psikologi Perempuan di Ruang Digital. *KURIOSITAS: Media Komunikasi Sosial dan Keagamaan*, 15(1), 97-121.
- Kominfo. (2022). Kementerian Informasi dan Informatika. Data Perempuan. Dapat diakses dalam <https://www.kominfo.go.id/>
- Kozinets, RV and Handelman, J. (2024). Ensouling Consumption: A Netnographic Exploration Of The Meaning Of Boycotting Behavior. Hutchinson JWA & JW, Pedoman Pelaksanaan Penelitian dan Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat Tahun 2024 | 13 editor. Vol. 25. ACR North American Advances. Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research. 1998. 475–480 p.
- Kumar, B and Dholakia, N. (2022). Firms Enabling Responsible Consumption: A Netnographic Approach. *Mark Intell Plan*. 2022;40(3):289–309. 20. Kozinets R. *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. 1997. Sage Publications.
- Mihailidis, Paul. (2014). *Media Literacy and the Emerging Citizen: Youth, Engagement and Participation in Digital Culture*. Peter Lang.
- Potter, W. James. (2004). *Theory of Media Literacy: A Cognitive Approach*. SAGE Publications.



- Reid, E and Duffy, K. (2018). A Netnographic Sensibility: Developing The Netnographic/Social Listening Boundaries." *J Mark Manag.* 2018;34(3–4):263– 86.
- Rubyatomo, AP. (2023). "Self-Acceptance Beauty Bullying Sebagai Media Refleksi Dalam Proses Cinta Terhadap Diri." *Joged*; Vol 21, No 1 (2023): APRIL 2023. 49-70 ; 2655-3171 ; 1858-3989 ; 10.24821/Joged.V21i1. May 2023. <https://journal.isi.ac.id/index.php/joged/article/view/9662>.
- Sholehudin, R. E., & Sulastri, R. (2024, January). Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan Di Media Online. In *Gunung Djati Conference Series* (Vol. 39, pp. 24-30).
- Silitonga, M. S., & Zatira, N. H. (2023). Tantangan dalam Membentuk Pemimpin Perempuan yang Memiliki Literasi Digital di Indonesia. *Dinamika Governance: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Negara*, 12(4/Januari).
- Stellarosa, Y and Iwanti, D. (2017). "Strategi Komunikasi Ikatan Wanita Gemuk Indonesia Sebagai Wadah Motivasi Wanita Plus Size." *Communicology: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*; Vol 5 No 1. *Communicology: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, Volume 5 No 1 Juli 2017. 41-59 . 2580-9172 . 2339-1480.
- Wahyuningtyas, N., & Adi, K. R. (2016). Digital Divide Perempuan Indonesia. *Jurnal Sejarah dan Budaya*, 10(1), 84-92.