



# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE DIGITAL LITERACY: A LITERATURE STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

In the 4.0 era, sophisticated technology has negatively and positively impacted society. The positive impact is in the form of women's participation in spreading positive information to the general public, which we often call digital literacy. Meanwhile, the negative effect is the amount of hoax information and forms of harassment on social media. Digital literacy skills in this era must be understood and possessed by everyone, especially women. Research by Women's Right Online indicates that there are pretty extreme habits toward digital empowerment in Indonesia. Women are 50% more likely to be unable to connect online than men. Then about 30-50% tend to use the internet for economic and political empowerment. Because of this, critical thinking and reading abilities are required to evaluate information in a way that advances society. This study, whose data sources came from the findings of prior studies, is being presented to explain how digital literacy empowers women. Women may maximize their potential to overcome gender bias in society and avoid being left behind through digital literacy.

**Keywords:** Women empowerment; digital literacy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In his book *Digital Literacy* (1997), Paul Gilster defines digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information in various forms from various sources accessed via computers. This ability must be possessed by all people who live in the current era of information disclosure. Technological advances cannot be denied by anyone today. Information is straightforward to access through several applications in today's gadgets and technology. The current provides equal opportunities for every community, wherever and whenever, regarding access to information.

However, many still do not understand using digital things correctly and efficiently in today's sophisticated information technology, particularly for women in Indonesia.

Women's Right Online reported that there are pretty extreme habits toward digital empowerment in Indonesia. Women are 50% more likely to be unable to connect online than men. Then about 30-50% of women use the internet for economic and political empowerment. From this, there needs to be more in the use of digital information for women and men.

The digital divide is the inequality regarding the use of digital media between groups or forces that can and cannot access and use digital media (Hilbert, 2011). One of the factors of inequality in the use of computers or digital media is the gender gap, where women only have limited access to digital media and fewer opportunities to join the information communication technology (ICT) community than men. Similarly, what was written by Bahagjjo et al. (2022) is that there is still a digital gender gap in Indonesia. Moreover, there is an impression that women are technophobic, lack interest, and lack technological skills.

The topic of gender and digital literacy has been around for a long time and is heating up over time. It seems that many social problems and gender bias, namely poverty, sexual violence, hoax information, and so on, have been unresolved until now. There is a necessity for women's empowerment through digital literacy. Women's empowerment is a process of raising awareness and developing skills for greater involvement, more power, and control over decision-making as well as transformative acts to result in greater equality between women and men. (Priyono and Pranarka, 1996).

Women and technology are two things that are closely related in this digital era. Given women's great potential in this day and age, women need to take on a more active role. Women seem to have an inequality considered incapacitated because they need support according to current technological developments to increase human resources. The skills of women who can access information and communication technology might empower them to increase their knowledge and insight, or even as additional income.

Women empowerment is a strategy to develop the potential and roles of women in the public and domestic spheres. Various levels of society must carry out this empowerment, for instance, Islamic women's organizations that can contribute to strengthening and improving the quality of life

of women in the economic, social, health, welfare, and education fields (Zakiyah, 2010). Women empowerment is also an effort to create equality in roles, access, and control between women and men in all areas of community development. For instance, government programs and community organizations should be equal for men and women (Puspita, 2016).

With the empowerment of Indonesian women, especially in their involvement in the digital world, it is hoped that they can make a real contribution to Indonesia's development in all aspects of life. Therefore, this paper will review research results on digital literacy skills and their impact on empowering Indonesian women.

## **2. METHODS**

The current study is a literature study in which all primary resources from previous research, websites, and online media reports were related to women's empowerment in digital literacy skills. Many reading sources around the globe can be used. Still, this research only takes only five sources from many that can be used as examples in efforts to empower women by utilizing media technology. Thus, this research is limited to studying women's empowerment in Indonesia utilizing digital technology and does not limit it to particular fields. The researcher also realizes that, especially in the last few years, this kind of women's empowerment is increasingly being carried out, so this research cannot comprehensively conclude what will be conveyed here. The selected literature will then be briefly described and then explained what the main points in the literature are, and in the end, all of the data will be drawn to a conclusion.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to UNESCO, digital literacy is essential in understanding technology, information, and communication devices. One of them is in ICT Literacy which leads to technical skills that involve community components in line with the development of digital-based culture and public services. In its sense, digital literacy means having the right skills in using digital technology to achieve goals. Digital skills include knowledge and abilities about the attributes of digital technology that enable individuals to enhance their learning, life, and work potential in the digital age (Rai, 2019).

In line with that, Hobbs (2010) divides digital literacy into five competencies as follows; (1) access competence, namely individuals skilled in using platforms in digital media and sharing relevant information with others, (2) analyzing and evaluating, individuals have competence in understanding messages and are critical in assessing and analyzing the quality of messages from the point of view of truth, credibility and from the point of view of the message maker, as well as being able to understand the effects and consequences of a message, (3) producing, this competency includes the individual's ability to write and produce content using creativity and being able to produce it with techniques appropriate to digital media platforms according to the message, audience and the goal, (4) reflection, produce and distribute content following applicable ethics and culture and have social responsibility, (5) collaboration, the ability of individuals to collaborate and participate in family, social, and community environments to share knowledge and solve problems at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Meanwhile, Bhatt's research (2012) results stated that communication and information technology skills are the core competencies in digital literacy. Someone must have the ability to master digital technology devices, with the hope that the individual already has digital literacy skills. Digital technology devices that are mastered are not only the internet but various types of digital technology, namely the mastery of effective communication systems. One of the characteristics of digital literacy skills is social media technology with various online communities surrounding it, then mastery of the mobile technology device itself. Such mastery of digital technology is considered a precise stage for digital literacy skills.

According to Brian 2015 in a journal written by Maulana (Maulana, 2015) explains the 10 benefits of digital literacy, namely as follows:

1. Save time,
2. Learn faster,
3. Save money,
4. Make it safer,
5. Always get up-to-date information,
6. Stay connected,
7. Make better decisions,
8. Can make you work,
9. It makes you happier, and
10. Influences the world.

In general, digital literacy is the ability to access digital smells by utilizing digital media to get the information needed. It requires the human ability to sort it out. Women are responsible for disseminating useful information to empower other women in various social issues such as gender inequality, sexual violence, and hoax news. Women's empowerment is essential and urgent because it can play an important role in increasing women's capacity so that they can work, be independent, and have a position in global competition. Therefore, women's participation in various fields of development functions as a medium to achieve equal access in various areas. In fact, women's participation in development has become a parameter for countries in the advanced category (Suharli, 2021).

So it makes sense that the Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), would commit to improving gender equality in various fields, including STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), work participation, and strengthening financial and digital literacy. (Purnamasari, 2021).

Entering the era of information and digital technology, the capacity that must be developed in women's empowerment programs is digital literacy. In simple terms, literacy means reading, writing, and relating information. This ability determines how individuals or organizations develop. This includes women because their ability to access information effectively will reduce their limitations in using digital media (Widyastuti et al., 2016).

Furthermore, with this ability, they can express ideas and thoughts with a broad impact. The development of internet-based digital media, patterns of interaction, and community communication are also experiencing rapid changes. Thus, individuals who have low literacy will need help expressing ideas and thoughts effectively and broadly. In this context, the literacy movement is a new movement urgently needed by women, especially young women or teenagers who are very vulnerable to the flow of digital information on social media (Mulyasih, 2017).

This digital literacy is very important for everyday life so that women understand and understand which information must be received and which source of truth must be sought again. This is because the more sophisticated technology and information, the more people who are not responsible for the information they post. Understanding and implementing digital literacy will enable women to participate in today's modern world. Digital literacy will create a society with a

critical-creative mindset and outlook. So, they will not be easily fooled on a digital basis, such as becoming victims of hoax information. Thus, literacy is needed to read or write, especially by utilizing digital platforms, such as mass media, website pages, and social media.

The relationship between women and digital literacy still needs to be ideal. The main issues that dominate the discourse on the use of digital media by women can be grouped into the digital divide and weak digital literacy competence. The digital divide, which is still gender-based, is a common challenge for all parties involved in digital media, especially for women in rural areas and the elderly. Inequality in technology education and training is also a concern for all of us, where the training targets men more than women, assuming that men master technology more.

Meanwhile, regarding digital literacy competence, women play an essential role as a window for access to information, starting from parenting patterns and supervising the use of technology in the family. The consequences that may arise from the low literacy of women, especially mothers, can result in children being addicted to gadgets and exploring information for adults. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) noted that in 2017-2019 complaints of pornography and online crimes against children increased to 1,940 cases. Therefore, women and the literacy movement are not something to be faced with but a logical consequence when we want to see the progress of a nation.

Women have the same rights as men in the field of digital media and must have digital literacy skills to avoid various problems such as personal data leaks, online fraud, online sexual violence, and also various other digital security so that here women can take over the role of being guardians to be safe for himself, his family and others. Nugroho stated that women's empowerment has several goals, namely increasing women's ability and leadership to participate actively, bidding for positions, organizing small, medium, or large businesses, opening job opportunities, and changing the roles and functions of women's organizations at the local level as media can support women to become active participants in their local life programs (Nugroho, 2008).

Women play a role in shaping the character of the nation. They can invite other women to use and optimize the internet, which is part of their contribution to empowering women in the private and public spheres because women are unique and multidimensional identities. Women build

themselves, their families, society, and the country. A family and a nation will become strong and empowered if the women in it are also strong and intelligent.

Therefore, women must be adaptive to increasingly dynamic information technology and take advantage of existing opportunities to actualize themselves and contribute to realizing Indonesia's Digital Nation (dignified, just, and competitive). So now we can see the contributions of women such as YouTuber Devina Hermawan, one of the Indonesian women who inspires and provides educational content to the public about food recipes, socialism about sex education and health of the reproductive organs, and Gita Savitri Devi about education. Not only that, as productive women, we can also do small things. For example, after reading a book, we review the writing and make it a status on social media, write articles and papers, and then publish them.

The following is an example of empowering women through digital literacy:

#### **a. Launching of the Family Engagement Feature on the TikTok Application**

This family pairing has received support from the Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia (KPPPA) and UNICEF Indonesia, recognizing TikTok's efforts to empower parents to facilitate intelligent online behavior for their teens. This method can increase digital literacy for parents to assist their teenagers in cyberspace, which is one of the government's leading programs. To realize this digital parenting, intensive communication from stakeholder collaboration is needed, including from technology companies such as TikTok.

Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reveals that in 2019 there were 653 cybercrime cases involving children and youth. A similar report was issued by UNICEF, in which unsupervised youth internet use risks include pornography, sexual harassment, radicalism, and cyberbullying. This feature will allow parents and teenagers to customize their security settings based on their needs. This feature adds to TikTok's security features and complements the platform's performance in providing better access to product features as users develop their digital literacy.

#### **b. Social Service for Women's Empowerment through Increasing Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurship Skills**

This activity is entitled Social Service (PkM) for Women's Empowerment through Increasing Digital Literacy and Entrepreneurship Skills. The organizer of this activity is the Rumpun Bambu

Foundation, with the target group of housewives with no income, especially those from the lower middle class. This activity aims to provide knowledge and skills about digital literacy and entrepreneurship by utilizing technology to improve their welfare. The training is packaged in KULWAP (WhatsApp lecture), so the activity is carried out online through the WhatsApp group. After participating in this activity, it is hoped that participants will have new insights regarding digital literacy and entrepreneurship and be able to utilize technology to improve life's welfare.

This activity invites women to know the advantages of using the internet and the steps to develop entrepreneurial skills, especially for housewives because they tend to have more time. In addition, the skills provided can help them develop themselves using digital literacy to actively and creatively support the development of creative economic activities, the environment, and the wider community. Thus, with digital capabilities, women get equal opportunities and even more to play a role in various fields, including earning family living expenses. It eliminates bias in gender.

### **c. Instagram Feminism Movement Community @Narasi\_Perempuan**

The Woman is the first and only feminist movement community present in Banjarmasin City, South Kalimantan Province. Starting from anxiety over the rampant cases of sexual violence and the lack of understanding of women's fundamental rights, 'Narasi Perempuan', or literally means women's narration, was formed on May 14, 2019, by several students across campuses in Banjarmasin. In the early stages of formation, this community only wanted Banjarmasin residents first to become aware of crucial issues that undermine women's rights, such as cases of early marriage and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and other women's issues.

The use of Instagram is to disseminate content and information that can be shaped in such a way quickly and easily. Based on data obtained from the Instagram account @narasi\_perempuan as of November 10, 2020, it already has 2,300 followers, which will surely increase in the future. With the communication process via Instagram, 'Narasi Perempuan' can easily share content containing news or information related to women's issues. 'Narasi Perempuan' acts as a communicator and agent of change, being a pioneer of changes in the public environment that can influence audiences through messages in the form of information about women's issues and can be reached by the wider community, especially Banjarmasin residents.



In this context, using Instagram can be essential in helping marginalized women's groups provide education and information about women's issues, a form of effort to empower them.

#### **d. Women's Empowerment Through Utilization of YouTube**

Empowering women at Bening Saguling NGO is carried out in the form of training provided to improve the entrepreneurial skills of housewives. The utilization of YouTube as a source of community learning is very important, especially in entrepreneurship training, because through YouTube, the community can learn and see the stages of starting a business directly, making a product, and marketing the product. Seeing it visually, the training process will be more enjoyable.

Darmawati (2018) explained the advantages of learning by utilizing YouTube. For instance, students will feel energized because there is audio-visual media that can be enjoyed during the learning process and can be used as a means of entertainment in learning and as a means of sharing knowledge that has been acquired. The entrepreneurship training process for mothers begins with socialization through the use of YouTube and then directs mothers to have ideas to start a business. In the process, YouTube media is used as a learning resource where mothers start by seeking knowledge about the world of entrepreneurship, then are directed to collaborate with other mothers to start a business that is easy but profitable.

Thus, the use of YouTube in empowering women is used to increase community information literacy and as an innovation in developing learning for the community. There is too much creative content on YouTube, including literacy content meant for anyone, regardless of gender. Women, of course, can take advantage of this.

#### **e. Digital Literacy in Productive Women Entrepreneurs**

The subjects of this study are Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Yogyakarta. Women who run MSMEs should have a good level of digital literacy. So that the development of MSMEs can be carried out optimally. As Kervin (2016) stated in his research, digital media can enrich and offer easy learning and literacy opportunities. Because using digital media allows targets to use, be active, build closeness, and encourage the ability to learn (Kervin, 2016). If MSMEs have been developed with a digital literacy approach, then the next concept that must be presented is community development, in this case, MSMEs, with a gender perspective. The hope is that there will

be a concept synergy between technological adaptation, digital literacy, MSME development, and a gender perspective.

To support the sustainability of this business, the residents established a Tourism Awareness Group (Pokdarwis). This group is trying to manage the tourism potential of Krebet Hamlet. Mr. Dervish made Krebet Village a rural tourist destination that offers artistic and cultural potential, for example, wooden batik, offering traditions such as the month of Suro, Maulid, and mass, and there is also the annual village Merti tradition (Yulianto, 2016).

He also started a business by establishing the Sido Katon Multi-Business Cooperative (KSU). This cooperative is a forum for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the Krebet tourist village area. This was established with joint capital from MSME actors with the aim that the craftsmen could fulfill their woodworking needs. This cooperative provides materials for craftsmen to make wooden batik crafts, such as providing raw materials such as wood, bamboo, and cloth. White materials that have not been 'batikiz'ed or colored, paint materials, batik dyes, batik tools, sandpaper, saw blades, materials finishing, packing materials, and other auxiliary materials.

Thus, digital literacy is carried out to build understanding at the level of human resource development related to understanding the existence of digital media. In addition to the level of cognitive aspects, efforts have been made to implement the practical use of digital media in a positive direction. During the pandemic, not a few women increased their capacity. One of the strong factors is to maintain the family's economic income. They are very enthusiastic and even very quick to seize business opportunities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order to reach their full potential in the public realm, men and women have equal rights. Giving women options and releasing them from the boundaries of the house will improve their surroundings. Therefore, women must have both technological and literacy abilities to reach their full potential as individuals and contribute to society. Women must innovate in this digital age, thus, they must take advantage of opportunities. They might create and post inspirational content on social media, ensure that it contains factual information, and promote interest in reading and analytical thought. It should be emphasized once more that all parties' use of literacy skills will benefit the nation.

Women's abilities and skills will keep growing due to their digital literacy. Due to digital literacy, women should be able to locate and comprehend information, expand their language and vocabulary, read, compose sentences, write information, and effectively communicate information. In the present information age, digital literacy is necessary for women to advance their advantages of virtual, such as developing and administering Instagram, WhatsApp, and other social media. Basic concepts in digital literacy include knowing how information circulates in the media both implicitly and explicitly, understanding how media are interconnected, communicating with the public, and being able to access, comprehend, and save information.

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