



Social Media, Digital Literacy, and Youth Civic Engagement in Indonesia: An Integrative Review

Ahmad Rizky Maulana¹, Nadia Putri Safitri², Fajar Ramadhan³

^{1,2,3} English Language Education Study Program, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Indonesia

Corresponding Email : ahmad.rizky.maulana@student.usk.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This integrative review examined how social media use and digital literacy relate to civic engagement among young people (aged roughly 16–30 years) in Indonesia. Scholarly publications and institutional documents published mainly between 2016 and 2026 were identified through purposive searches of scholarly databases and institutional repositories, and were retained if they addressed social media, digital literacy, or civic engagement, concerned young people, and had implications for education, citizenship, or participation. The final corpus comprised 17 sources (6 Indonesia-specific and 11 international); no formal quality appraisal was conducted, and the number of records screened was not recorded. Thematic synthesis yielded four themes: access and participation, information evaluation, civic expression, and collective action. The largely descriptive evidence suggests that social media widens opportunities for young people to encounter public issues, express opinions, and join networked campaigns, but online participation was not shown to become meaningful civic engagement automatically, because algorithmic visibility, unequal access and skills, misinformation, and polarization can limit its civic value. The review proposes, as the authors' conceptual synthesis and not a tested model, that digital literacy links access to informed participation and that schools, families, civil society organizations, public institutions, and platforms share responsibility for digital citizenship. The conclusions are interpretive and need empirical testing in Indonesian communities.

ABSTRAK

Tinjauan integratif ini mengkaji hubungan antara penggunaan media sosial dan literasi digital dengan keterlibatan kewargaan generasi muda (berusia sekitar 16–30 tahun) di Indonesia. Publikasi ilmiah dan dokumen kelembagaan yang terbit terutama pada rentang 2016–2026 ditelusuri secara purposif melalui basis data ilmiah dan repositori kelembagaan, lalu dipertahankan apabila membahas media sosial, literasi digital, atau keterlibatan kewargaan, menyangkut generasi muda, dan berimplikasi bagi pendidikan, kewargaan, atau partisipasi. Korpus akhir terdiri atas 17 sumber (6 khusus Indonesia dan 11 internasional); penilaian kualitas formal tidak dilakukan dan jumlah rekaman yang disaring tidak dicatat. Sintesis tematik menghasilkan empat tema: akses dan partisipasi, evaluasi informasi, ekspresi kewargaan, dan aksi kolektif. Bukti yang sebagian besar deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa media sosial memperluas kesempatan generasi muda untuk mengenali isu publik, menyampaikan pendapat, dan bergabung dalam kampanye berjejaring, tetapi partisipasi daring tidak terbukti otomatis menjadi keterlibatan kewargaan yang bermakna karena visibilitas algoritmik, ketimpangan akses dan keterampilan, misinformasi, dan polarisasi dapat membatasi nilai kewargaannya. Kajian ini mengusulkan, sebagai sintesis konseptual penulis dan bukan model yang telah diuji, bahwa literasi digital menghubungkan akses dengan partisipasi yang terinformasi, serta bahwa sekolah, keluarga, organisasi masyarakat sipil, lembaga publik, dan platform memikul tanggung jawab bersama atas kewargaan digital. Kesimpulan bersifat interpretatif dan perlu diuji secara empiris di komunitas Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Young people have become increasingly visible actors in digitally mediated public life. Social media platforms have changed how citizens obtain information, discuss public issues, organize collective action, and present political and social identities (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). For young people in particular, these platforms offer relatively low-cost spaces for participation that conventional civic institutions do not always provide. Social media can therefore function as an arena in which civic identities are developed, public concerns are negotiated, and social networks are mobilized (Jenkins et al., 2016; Loader et al., 2014).

The expansion of digital participation, however, has not eliminated longstanding inequalities in civic engagement. Access to a device or an internet connection does not by itself provide the capacity to evaluate information, understand public issues, or participate constructively (van Dijk, 2020). Digital environments expose users to abundant information, persuasive political communication, commercial content, misinformation, and emotionally provocative material. Fabricated news stories circulated widely on social media during the 2016 United States election (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), and users may share inaccurate information for reasons that include political identity and limited attention to accuracy (Pennycook & Rand, 2021). The social value of digital participation therefore depends not only on connectivity but also on users' critical capacities.

Indonesia is a particularly instructive context because it combines a young, highly connected population with uneven digital capacity. In its 2025 national internet survey, the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia [APJII], 2025) reported an overall internet penetration of 80.66%, with 87.80% among Generation Z and 89.12% among millennials, but only 69.26% in Maluku and Papua compared with 84.69% on Java. Connectivity does not by itself indicate capability: the 2022 national digital literacy survey of 10,000 respondents placed the overall index at 3.54 on a five-point scale, a moderate level, with digital safety the weakest of four pillars (3.12) and digital skills at 3.52 (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika [Kominfo] & Katadata Insight Center, 2023). Information risks are also visible. The anti-hoax organization Mafindo recorded 2,119 hoaxes between January and June 2024, almost double the 1,185 recorded in the same period of 2023, and 31.6% of them concerned the election (TIMES Indonesia, 2024). Except for the generational penetration rates, these national figures describe the general population; they are used here to establish context, not as evidence of young people's civic behavior.

Indonesian studies of political and civic participation show both promise and limits. Prakasita and Fitria (2026) analyzed social media campaigns for the 2024 presidential election and found that emotional, entertaining, and personalized content was associated with higher online engagement among Gen-Z voters than conventional programmatic messaging, which indicates that attention-oriented visibility and informed participation are not the same thing. Earlier, Lim (2013) argued that social media activism in Indonesia was easy to join but rarely sustained, and Lim (2017) showed how algorithmic enclaves can intensify identity-based polarization. Taken together, these sources define the problem addressed here: young Indonesians are highly connected, national indicators of digital literacy are only moderate, and online visibility has often not translated into sustained, informed participation. This dual

character raises a central question: how can digital participation be transformed into meaningful civic engagement rather than remaining symbolic or reactive?

Digital literacy offers a conceptual bridge between social media use and civic participation. It is increasingly understood as a multidimensional competence involving the ability to access, understand, evaluate, create, and communicate information through digital technologies (UNESCO, 2021). In civic contexts, this competence also includes recognizing sources of authority, identifying manipulation, engaging respectfully with disagreement, and understanding the social consequences of digital communication.

Two terms are used consistently throughout this review. First, youth refers to people aged approximately 16–30 years, following Indonesian Law No. 40 of 2009 on Youth (Republik Indonesia, 2009), which covers secondary-school students, university students, and young adults. Sources that use cohort labels such as Generation Z or young voters were treated as youth sources when their samples fall within this range. Sources on the general population, such as several international studies of misinformation, are identified as such and are used for conceptual background and mechanisms, not as direct evidence about young people. Second, civic engagement is understood broadly as the ways in which people attend to, discuss, and act on public concerns, from informed attention and online expression to volunteering and collective problem solving, and not only as formal political participation (see Loader et al., 2014).

Evidence on these issues is dispersed across communication studies, education, sociology, media studies, and institutional policy reports. In the Indonesian literature reviewed here, work tends to follow separate strands: social media use and political participation, often around elections; population-level measurement of digital literacy as an index of skills, ethics, safety, and culture; and monitoring of misinformation. To the authors' knowledge, few studies connect these strands within a single framework that treats digital literacy as the capacity linking access to civic participation beyond electoral campaigns, while also separating descriptive evidence from causal claims. This review therefore makes three contributions. First, it integrates the three strands for young Indonesians. Second, it pairs international concepts with Indonesian evidence and states the type and population of each source. Third, it proposes a conceptual pathway (Figure 1) that is explicitly the authors' synthesis, intended to guide future empirical testing and not to report a tested model. Accordingly, it addresses the following research questions:

1. What opportunities for youth civic engagement does social media offer in Indonesia?
2. What digital-literacy challenges have limited the quality of that engagement?
3. What educational and social strategies can strengthen responsible and participatory digital citizenship among young Indonesians?

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study used an integrative literature review design (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005), which proceeds through problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, and presentation. The approach was selected because the topic draws on evidence from communication studies, education, sociology, media studies, and institutional policy reports, which differ in their methods and units of analysis. Rather than estimating a single effect size, the review sought to identify recurring concepts, relationships, opportunities, and

risks across the literature. Reporting was guided by the transparency principles of the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021) where they apply to a non-systematic review. Because the search was purposive and not protocol-driven, this study should not be read as a systematic review.

Literature Search

Literature was searched purposively in databases and portals searched, e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, Garuda, and the websites of APJII, Kominfo/Komdigi, UNESCO, and Mafindo] between January 2026 and July 2026. Search terms combined, in English and Indonesian, "social media"/"media sosial"; "digital literacy"/"literasi digital"; "civic engagement"/"keterlibatan kewargaan"; "youth"/"generasi muda"; "misinformation"/"hoaks"; "digital citizenship"/"kewargaan digital". The searches were exploratory and iterative, and the reference lists of retrieved sources were also screened for foundational works. Because the selection was purposive and no review protocol was registered, 150 articles records identified, screened, and excluded were not systematically recorded. This limits reproducibility: the corpus should not be treated as an exhaustive or exactly replicable sample of the literature.

Literature Selection

Priority was given to scholarly publications and authoritative institutional documents from 2016 to 2026, and foundational studies were retained when they provided concepts that remain central to current discussions. Sources were included if they met the following criteria:

- they addressed social media, digital literacy, youth participation, civic engagement, misinformation, digital citizenship, or related social processes;
- they had clear conceptual or empirical relevance to young people; and
- they offered implications for education, citizenship, or public participation.

Sources that did not meet these criteria were excluded.

Corpus and Quality Appraisal

The final corpus comprised the 17 sources that supply the evidence synthesized in the Results: 11 international scholarly or institutional works and 6 Indonesia-specific sources (two national survey reports, two scholarly articles on social media activism in Indonesia, one content analysis of the 2024 election campaigns, and one hoax-monitoring report accessed through a press account). Five further references are cited only for method and definitions (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Page et al., 2021; Republik Indonesia, 2009; Thomas & Harden, 2008; Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). No formal quality appraisal instrument was applied. Instead, each source is labeled by evidence type and study population in Table 1, so that readers can judge the strength and transferability of each claim.

Analytical Procedure

The synthesis followed the logic of thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008), which differs from general thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in its object and purpose. Thematic analysis codes primary data such as interview transcripts, whereas thematic synthesis codes the findings and conclusions reported in existing studies and then builds analytical themes that go beyond the original studies. Thomas and Harden developed the method for qualitative research; here it was adapted to a mixed corpus of qualitative, quantitative, conceptual, and institutional sources, whose findings were treated narratively

without pooling effect sizes. The procedure had three stages. First, each source was read for its focus, population, context, evidence type, and principal arguments, and relevant findings were coded line by line. Second, codes were grouped into descriptive themes by comparing similarities and differences across sources, which produced four themes: digital access and participation; information evaluation; civic expression and identity; and collective action and social responsibility. Third, the themes were compared to identify convergence, tensions, and implications for Indonesia, and this interpretive step produced the conceptual pathway in Figure 1. The synthesis emphasized relationships among concepts rather than treating digital literacy as a purely technical skill.

Because coding was interpretive, the themes reflect the authors' judgment and their background in language education, which may favor educational readings of the evidence. To limit this bias, the mapping between sources and themes is reported in Table 1 so that readers can inspect it.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The reviewed literature indicates that social media has expanded the repertoire available for youth civic participation. Young users can comment on public issues, distribute information, join issue-based communities, support campaigns, raise donations, and coordinate collective activities without relying entirely on formal organizations. This is consistent with a shift from civic participation based primarily on membership toward participation based increasingly on networks and issue-based engagement (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2016), which may lower entry barriers for young people who were previously distant from political institutions. Because most of the evidence is descriptive, qualitative, or correlational, the findings below describe patterns and associations and not causal effects. Of the 17 sources, 6 concern Indonesia directly and 11 are international sources used mainly for concepts and mechanisms. Only the generational penetration rates (APJII, 2025) and the election study (Prakasita & Fitria, 2026) concern young Indonesians specifically; the other Indonesian sources describe the general population. The findings are organized into four themes, which are summarized in Table 1 and elaborated below.

Table 1. Thematic Synthesis, Evidence Base, and Evidence Type of the Reviewed Literature

Theme	Key finding	Principal evidence (type; population)	Social implication
Access and participation	Connectivity is high among young Indonesians but uneven across regions; access widens exposure to public issues, and social media use is generally associated with participation in largely correlational studies.	APJII (2025): national survey; general population with generational breakdown. Boulianne (2015): meta-analysis of largely correlational studies. van Dijk (2020), Bennett & Segerberg (2012), Loader et al. (2014): conceptual.	Connectivity should be linked to meaningful civic participation and to regional inclusion.
Information evaluation	National digital safety and skills are only moderate, and election-related hoaxes rose sharply in 2024; international studies show that misinformation sharing is uneven and that attention to accuracy matters.	Kominfo & Katadata Insight Center (2023): survey, n = 10,000; general population. TIMES Indonesia (2024): press report of Mafindo monitoring. Allcott & Gentzkow (2017); Guess et al. (2019); Pennycook & Rand (2021): United States or general-population studies.	Digital literacy should include source verification and accuracy norms.
Civic expression	Emotional, personalized content drew more online engagement from Gen-Z voters in 2024; activism is easy to join but hard to sustain; algorithmic enclaves can deepen polarization.	Prakasita & Fitria (2026): content analysis; Gen-Z electorate. Lim (2013, 2017): interpretive studies; general population. Jenkins et al. (2016): conceptual.	Civic education should connect online expression with dialogue and offline projects.

Theme	Key finding	Principal evidence (type; population)	Social implication
Collective action	Networked, personalized action can mobilize quickly, but lasting impact depends on offline organization; Indonesian evidence on youth volunteering and community campaigns was limited in the corpus.	Bennett & Segerberg (2012); Loader et al. (2014); Jenkins et al. (2016): conceptual. Lim (2013): interpretive; general population.	Institutions should support continuity between digital and community action.

Note. Sources are labeled by evidence type and population. Evidence on young Indonesians specifically is limited to the generational rates in APJII (2025) and to Prakasita and Fitria (2026); all other sources describe the general population or are conceptual.

Access and Participation

Social media increases opportunities to encounter public information and to connect with people beyond immediate geographic environments. Indonesian survey data suggest that the potential audience is large: 87.80% of Generation Z and 89.12% of millennials were internet users in 2025 (APJII, 2025). Digital platforms allow young people to follow community organizations, public institutions, journalists, activists, and peer networks (Jenkins et al., 2016; Loader et al., 2014), and this exposure may raise awareness of social problems and make participation more immediate. A meta-analysis found generally positive associations between social media use and participation, but the studies were largely correlational, so the direction of influence cannot be assumed (Boulianne, 2015). Access, moreover, remains uneven. Penetration was 84.69% on Java but 69.26% in Maluku and Papua (APJII, 2025), and differences in devices, connectivity, language, socioeconomic status, and digital confidence influence who benefits from digital opportunities (van Dijk, 2020). The digital public sphere should therefore not be interpreted as universally inclusive. None of the Indonesian sources reviewed examined whether differences in access translate into differences in young people's civic participation, which remains an empirical gap.

Information Evaluation

The abundance of content creates a paradox: young people can access more information yet find it harder to determine which information deserves trust. National indicators suggest that this capacity is only moderate. In the 2022 national digital literacy survey ($n = 10,000$), the overall index was 3.54 out of 5, digital safety was the lowest of the four pillars at 3.12, and digital skills scored 3.52 (Kominfo & Katadata Insight Center, 2023); these figures describe the whole population and not young people alone. The information environment is also under strain: Mafindo recorded 2,119 hoaxes in the first half of 2024, nearly double the figure for the same period in 2023, and 31.6% concerned the election (TIMES Indonesia, 2024). International studies describe mechanisms that may also apply in Indonesia. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) documented the circulation of false news through digital networks, and Pennycook and Rand (2021) emphasized the role of attention to accuracy in resisting misinformation. Guess et al. (2019) further showed, in a United States sample, that the sharing of false news was relatively uncommon and concentrated among a small share of users, with older users sharing more than younger ones, which indicates that vulnerability to misinformation is unevenly distributed and should not be assumed to be greatest among young people. Together, these findings suggest that civic participation requires more than frequent platform use. Young citizens need practical strategies for checking sources, comparing claims, recognizing

emotional manipulation, and distinguishing evidence from opinion. The reviewed corpus contains no Indonesian study that measures young people's verification behavior directly, so this implication is inferential.

Civic Expression

Social media enables young people to articulate identities and concerns in forms that are often more immediate and personal than traditional political communication. Participatory-culture scholarship describes how memes, videos, and personal testimonies can make social issues accessible to wider audiences (Jenkins et al., 2016). However, expressive participation can become performative when visibility becomes the primary objective. In Indonesia, Lim (2013) argued that much social media activism was easy to join but rarely sustained, and suggested that lasting influence depended on links with offline networks. More recently, Prakasita and Fitria (2026) analyzed 72 Instagram posts from the six 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidates and found that emotional, entertaining, and personalized content was associated with higher online engagement among Gen-Z voters, whereas issue-based programmatic messaging attracted more limited interaction. Lim (2017) further showed how algorithmic enclaves can intensify identity-based polarization. These studies indicate that a post may attract attention without encouraging deeper understanding or sustained involvement. Civic expression should therefore be evaluated not only by its reach but also by whether it contributes to knowledge, dialogue, empathy, or collective problem solving. Because the election study is a content analysis of campaign posts, it describes what circulated and not how young people reasoned or acted afterwards.

Collective Action

Digital platforms can facilitate rapid mobilization, particularly when users share a common concern. Connective-action theory argues that digital media allow personalized, loosely organized participation that requires fewer organizational resources than traditional collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), and participatory-culture scholarship points to online networks that organize volunteering, fundraising, and advocacy (Jenkins et al., 2016). Yet digital mobilization is vulnerable to short-lived attention cycles. The challenge is to connect online action with sustained offline engagement, because social change generally requires organizational continuity, institutional negotiation, and community-level implementation (Lim, 2013). The Indonesian sources in this corpus concentrate on political and activist uses of social media. Evidence on how young Indonesians use platforms for volunteering, fundraising, or community campaigns was limited, so statements about these uses rest mainly on international literature and require local verification.

Discussion

The synthesis suggests that digital literacy may function as a mediating social capacity: it enables young users to transform access into informed participation. This is a conceptual reading of descriptive evidence, because none of the reviewed sources tested mediation empirically. UNESCO (2021) emphasizes that media and information literacy involves critical engagement with information, and its later guidance on generative and digital technologies places human agency, inclusion, and ethical use at the centre of digital education (UNESCO, 2023). For civic engagement, this means that literacy education should include source verification, contextual interpretation, privacy awareness, respectful disagreement, and responsible content creation.

Digital citizenship is also relational. Young people do not develop civic competence through isolated individual training; their digital practices are shaped by peers, teachers, families, institutions, platform designs, and broader political cultures. Schools and universities can provide opportunities to practice deliberation and evidence-based discussion. Families can reinforce norms of respectful communication, civil society organizations can offer authentic civic projects, and public institutions can improve transparency and access to information. Platforms, for their part, bear responsibilities for safety, moderation, and the design of information environments. Digital citizenship should therefore be assessed through both individual competence and institutional responsibility, since it is insufficient to ask young people to behave responsibly while ignoring platform design, unequal access to information, or institutional communication practices.

Taken together, the evidence suggests a conceptual pathway from connectivity to meaningful participation (Figure 1). The pathway is the authors' own synthesis. It is not reported in any single reviewed source and has not been empirically tested. It was derived in the third stage of the synthesis by combining three bodies of work: van Dijk's (2020) account of successive barriers to digital access, which links motivation and material access to skills and use; UNESCO's (2021) framing of media and information literacy as critical engagement; and connective-action theory (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012), which explains how online expression can become collective action when networks support it. In the pathway, access creates opportunity but does not by itself ensure informed use; digital literacy supports the critical evaluation that makes participation informed; civic identity provides motivation and a reason to express public concerns; and community structures such as schools, organizations, and volunteer groups convert online expression into sustained collective action. The arrows indicate a plausible conceptual order and not a strict sequence, and the stages can reinforce one another. Weakness at any stage may reduce the social value of digital participation: a connected but poorly informed user may amplify misinformation, whereas a highly literate user without opportunities to participate may remain disengaged. The pathway can also be read as a participation continuum (Figure 1B), a descriptive heuristic adapted by the authors. At the lowest level, users encounter civic information without responding; at the next, they express opinions or share content; more advanced participation involves dialogue, collaborative problem solving, and organized action. Digital literacy is proposed to shape movement along this continuum because users must interpret information before they can make informed choices.

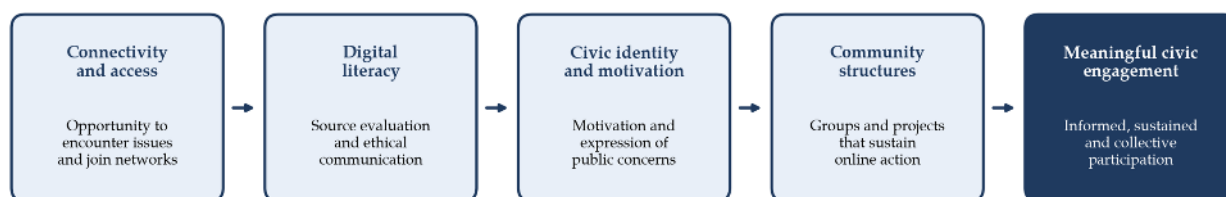
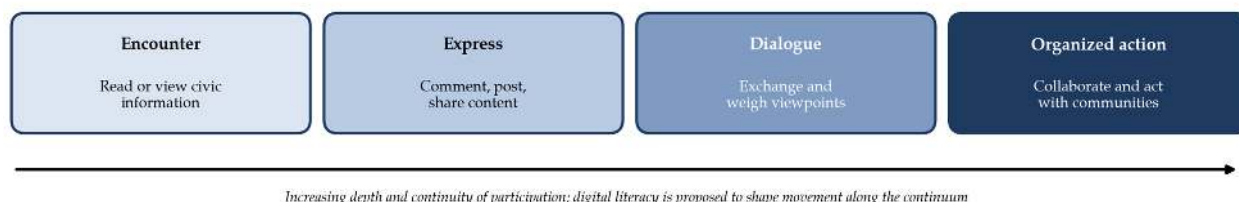
A. Pathway from connectivity to meaningful participation (authors' synthesis)**B. Participation continuum**

Figure 1. Conceptual Pathway from Connectivity to Meaningful Youth Civic Engagement. Source: authors' synthesis, informed by Bennett and Segerberg (2012), UNESCO (2021), and van Dijk (2020). Panel A shows the proposed pathway and Panel B the participation continuum. The pathway is conceptual and has not been empirically tested.

The continuum also clarifies why high social media activity should not be equated with high civic engagement. Platforms reward content that attracts attention, but attention is not the same as civic learning: a youth campaign may be widely viewed without producing sustained understanding or action, a pattern consistent with the election study by Prakasita and Fitria (2026). The quality of participation is better judged by evidence, dialogue, continuity, and community impact than by likes, shares, or follower counts.

Community context remains decisive. Online participation is often connected to existing offline relationships, and young people who belong to schools, organizations, volunteer groups, or neighborhood networks may have more opportunities to translate online attention into collective action. Strengthening local institutions can therefore enhance the civic value of digital platforms. The Indonesian context adds a cultural dimension, which here is the authors' interpretation and not a finding of the reviewed studies: civic engagement is not limited to formal politics but also includes mutual assistance (*gotong royong*), community service, environmental action, local cultural preservation, and responses to community problems. Digital platforms can reinforce these practices when local experiences and community knowledge are represented, so digital citizenship education should not be detached from local social realities. Young people often engage with issues at several levels, from neighborhood concerns to national debates and global campaigns. Local civic projects give abstract democratic values concrete meaning, and digital platforms can then connect these experiences to broader public conversations without erasing local context.

Implications and Recommendations

The following implications are the authors' inferences from the synthesis and not findings of the reviewed studies. For educational institutions, digital literacy curricula should include practical civic tasks rather than focusing only on software operation. Students can investigate a local social issue, compare sources, verify claims, interview community members,

produce evidence-based digital content, and reflect on the consequences of their communication. Such activities combine critical thinking, communication, media literacy, and civic responsibility. Disagreement should also be treated as a normal component of civic participation. Structured online discussions, source-comparison tasks, and moderated community projects can help students encounter different viewpoints without interpreting disagreement as personal hostility, which is especially important in polarized digital environments where recommendation systems may repeatedly expose users to similar perspectives (Lim, 2017).

For public policy, digital inclusion should be linked to social inclusion. Regional gaps in connectivity (APJII, 2025) and a moderate digital safety score (Kominfo & Katadata Insight Center, 2023) suggest that investments in connectivity need to be accompanied by programs that strengthen information literacy, youth participation, and community organizations. Policymakers should also recognize young people as active civic actors rather than merely as recipients of digital safety campaigns, since participation in policy discussions can itself become a form of civic learning. A socially responsible digital ecosystem ultimately requires cooperation among users, educators, communities, governments, and technology providers.

Limitations

Several limitations affect how strongly the conclusions can be held. First, the literature was selected purposively and not through a registered, exhaustive search, and the numbers of records identified, screened, and excluded were not systematically recorded. The corpus may therefore omit relevant studies, may over-represent sources that are easy to find online, and cannot be replicated exactly. Second, no formal quality appraisal was conducted, so studies of differing rigor were weighed by judgment, and a national survey, a content analysis, conceptual works, and a press report of monitoring data carry different evidential strength. Third, the corpus is small (17 sources) and uneven. Most of the conceptual and mechanistic evidence comes from international, mainly United States and European, research, and most Indonesian sources describe the general population or focus on elections and political activism and not on young people's everyday civic participation in diverse regions. Claims about misinformation behavior, for example, are therefore inferential for young Indonesians, and the conclusions can be transferred to specific Indonesian communities only as hypotheses. Fourth, the conceptual pathway is the authors' synthesis and was not tested. The findings should accordingly be read as an interpretive map of current evidence and not as estimates of effects.

Future research should move beyond measuring the frequency of social media use to examine the quality of civic participation, the effects of digital-literacy interventions, and differences between rural and urban youth. Mixed-methods designs that combine surveys of digital practices with interviews, observation of online communities, and analysis of youth-led civic projects would be particularly informative.

4. CONCLUSION

This review set out to answer three research questions. Regarding the first, the reviewed literature indicates that social media offers young Indonesians substantial opportunities to encounter public issues, express opinions, and join networked activities, and that connectivity is widespread among young people, although unevenly across regions. Regarding the second, the evidence suggests that the quality of engagement is constrained by moderate digital safety

and information-evaluation capacity, misinformation, algorithmic visibility that can reward emotional content over informed discussion, and the difficulty of sustaining online action offline; the reviewed sources describe these constraints but do not establish their causal weight. Regarding the third, the synthesis points to shared responsibility among schools and universities, families, civil society organizations, public institutions, and platforms for developing critical and participatory digital citizenship, with digital literacy extending beyond technical skills to critical information literacy, ethical communication, and links to community participation. Overall, connectivity alone does not guarantee meaningful participation, and on current evidence digital literacy is best understood as a plausible linking capacity and not as a demonstrated mediator.

Drawing on this synthesis, the authors recommend that schools and universities integrate civic-oriented digital literacy into learning activities, that civil society organizations create authentic participation opportunities for young people, and that public institutions provide accessible and trustworthy information. Future research should examine how digital-literacy interventions affect sustained civic participation in specific Indonesian communities, and how local culture, socioeconomic conditions, and platform characteristics shape these processes.

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