

## Generation Z, Disinformation, and Critical Digital Literacy: Strengthening National Identity in the Social Media Era

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**Abstract:** *Generation Z's knowledge exploration, interpretation of nationality, and existence as citizens are all influenced by social media, which has evolved beyond its original purpose of sharing news. Combining the emotional intensity of broadcasts with the impersonal nature of automated curation may lead to a loss of context and the polarization of public discourse. This study employs a qualitative literature review by examining scholarly sources published between 2015 and 2025. The analysis was carried out using a thematic synthesis approach to identify patterns, findings, and emerging trends related to disinformation, critical digital literacy, and national identity among Generation Z. This article presents a practical solution: bolstering Indonesian identity while simultaneously combating misinformation via the integration of critical digital literacy, algorithmic awareness, and digital nationalism. A review of research conducted between 2024 and 2025 highlights four important aspects: (1) misleading campaign videos with text often surface on social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. (2) In order to combat this, schools should implement source verification assignments, encourage slow reading, and create data-based counternarratives. (3) To create an effective literacy the environment, teachers and librarians should prioritize frequent small sessions, literacy teams, student representatives, and interactive channels. (4) Gen Z is more likely to find meaningful cultural hashtags, local collections, historical site vlogs, and participatory national narratives. Thus, being tech-savvy is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to digital literacy; it also serves as a glue for Indonesian identity and a foundation for public reason.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The last decade has seen the rise of social media as a dynamic public forum. Gen Z builds their opinions on their nation, makes connections, and learns a lot there. While intriguing material frequently switches up stories, algorithms have a tendency to recycle old ideas. Critical thinking is not always automatic if you do not make it a habit to verify information. A shift toward evidence-based learning is possible, nevertheless, by repurposing common digital activities such as reference browsing, note-taking, and task sharing. Local tales that speak to people's lives, expressed graphically, succinctly, and with an invitation to participate may also breathe life into national storylines. Classrooms, libraries, and communities may all benefit from the practical steps outlined in this article, which combine literacy resilience with identity enhancement.

Both the material and the channel mostly revolve on the current state of environmental art. During the 2024 election, most political information on social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok was in the form of short films with written descriptions. Even if little language and images might make people feel something, they do not always have enough background

information. Therefore, counter-narratives that are both informative and brief have a better chance of keeping people's attention.

Networks and actresses alike. Digital teams are known for their adaptability; a core team handles the narrative, while the network takes care of the technical stuff. Repetition of the content creation cycle is possible without complex automation because of cheap entry costs and informal patronage.

capability for digitized historical records on campus. Interventions such as cross-source verification, integration, and multi-modal incorporation are necessary to ensure that students' learning is not limited to the condensed nature of material, as is shown by assessments of their narrative reading, source comparison, and argument writing skills. The importance of information literacy in educational institutions. When designed with youth habits in mind, literacy programs that target this age group are more likely to be successful. These habits include: subject-relevant resources, brief practice sessions, flexible activity areas, digital literacy groups/literacy representatives, and interactive channels.

Identity at the national level in the digital era. Because of exposure to global culture, local tales encounter difficulties. Digital media brings local tales to life with its concise, visually appealing, and contextually appropriate storytelling, which helps to strengthen the connection to tradition.

**Scientific Novelty** This article's unique selling point is the way it brings together three components that often function independently. The first is LDV, or critical digital literacy, which teaches people to regularly assess information, formulate arguments, and ask pertinent questions. In order to avoid having judgments overshadowed by the upload speed, the rhythm is purposefully slowed down via close/slow reading. The second is KA, which deconstructs the inner workings of curation and engagement metrics and makes them part of everyday life via activities like auditing feeds, shattering viewing bubbles, and extending channels. Thirdly, there is ND, which means interpreting national ideals via participatory narratives like cultural vlogs, themed hashtags, and collections of local languages and tales. The integration of LDK, KA, and ND ensures the continuation of literacy and also contributes to the consolidation of Indonesia's online identity.

**Research Problem and Purpose** Problem statement: How can critical digital literacy strategies mitigate the impact of disinformation while strengthening national identity among Gen Z? Objective: To synthesize the latest empirical and conceptual evidence across schools, campuses, and platforms into operational recommendations that can be implemented by educators, librarians, communities, and policymakers.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative literature review method that focuses on analyzing academic literature related to disinformation, critical digital literacy, and the formation of national identity among Generation Z. The process consists of the following steps: choosing appropriate keywords (e.g., Generation Z, misinformation, critical digital literacy, national identity), doing systematic searches on official journal portals and repositories, and finally, filtering results according to relevance, credibility, and recency ( $\leq 10$  years). Gen Z's susceptibility to misinformation, cognitive-ethical-sociocultural approaches to digital literacy, and the impact of social media on national identity are the three main areas of evidence. In order to find patterns and gaps, thematic synthesis is performed, while source triangulation ensures consistency.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1) Gen Z's vulnerability to disinformation**

Issues of character and identity were the targets of deceptive propaganda during the 2024 election. Among young voters, short films with impactful messages spread like wildfire. Emotionally charged images drew viewers in, and cross-platform monitoring revealed an upsurge in political hoaxes. There is a disconnect between knowing about hoaxes and being confident in determining the reliability of sources when it comes to digital literacy; mistakes are easy to make when information comes too fast. The attention economy and algorithmic bias only serve to amplify the problem by rewarding spectacular material with more interaction.

## **2) Critical digital literacy strategies (cognitive–ethical–sociocultural)**

Techniques that work do not end with proficiency using devices. A combination of source evaluation (credibility, proof, context) and ethical awareness (privacy, anti-protection, authenticity) is used. Some examples of possible implementation strategies include incorporating the Pancasila Student Profile into the curriculum, creating school literacy teams, incorporating project-based learning into the curriculum, enhancing teacher capacity, and assigning tasks that employ social media as a creative platform. According to studies, students' ability to argue and write persuasively is enhanced when they practice critical literacy using real-world resources like postings and videos.

## **3) National identity and social media**

Social media may be a breeding ground for digital nationalism if national narratives are portrayed as interactive and competitive. The viewer is given a feeling of connection and context with 60-90 second "Flash Facts" (details about the venue or event), "Living Language" (expressions from the area and modern instances), or "Cultural Traces" (local cuisine and traditions and their values). Collaboration between local communities and cross-channel distribution aid in keeping the manufacturing chain running smoothly.

## **CONCLUSION**

In closing: In an era when programs are selected by algorithms and attention is assessed by engagement statistics, Generation Z needs assistance with things like critical literacy, fact-checking habits, and a national narrative that feels relatable. Integrating LDK, KA, and ND into practical learning methods helps dispel misinformation, improves the quality of public discourse, and preserves Indonesia's welcoming and inclusive character.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Colleges and universities should adopt a SoTL model for historical-digital literacy. Video assignments should have validated text to go along with them. Small, frequent sessions should be used, and students should get meaningful feedback. Administrative constraints should be reduced in order to maximize content support.
2. Teachers/Librarians: Instead of focusing on administration, try guiding and moderating content development. Make literacy seem more relevant by assigning tasks using social media tools like blogs, infographics, and resource-sharing forums.
3. Platforms/Media: Improve cooperation with educational groups and fact-checking networks; establish quick reporting routes; promote real engagement metrics (complete watching, retention) above just clicks.
4. Public Authorities: Support local digital archives to provide a forum for grassroots narratives; establish enforceable limitations on manipulation (such as impersonation, deepfakes, and click-farms); and facilitate cross-regional national content contests.

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