

The Role of Citizens in Countering Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media

¹Alya Zahirah, ²Zaenul Slam

Jurusan Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri
Jakarta

e-mail: 1alya.zahirah24@mhs.uinjkt.ac.id, 2zaenul.slam@uinjkt.ac.id

Abstract

The digital transformation of sociopolitical life has profoundly influenced the dynamics of citizenship in Indonesia. While social media has expanded opportunities for citizen engagement in the digital public sphere, it has simultaneously facilitated the rapid spread of disinformation and hate speech. These phenomena not only undermine social cohesion but also pose serious threats to democratic quality and the protection of human rights. This article explores the strategic role of citizens in combating disinformation and hate speech by enhancing digital literacy and embracing the values of digital citizenship. Employing literature review methodology, the study draws upon relevant primary and secondary sources, including international research and normative frameworks grounded in the principles of Pancasila. The findings indicate that citizens have evolved from passive recipients to active participants in the production, verification, and dissemination of digital content. Civic education that cultivates inclusive, tolerant, and critical values is essential for fostering an ethical and democratic digital culture. Moreover, multi-stakeholder collaboration among governments, communities, and digital platforms is crucial in developing a healthy and equitable information ecosystem. The study underscores the urgent need to integrate digital literacy, human rights, and active civic engagement as foundational pillars for a resilient digital democracy. This article contributes both conceptually and practically to the discourse on civic education and public policy in the digital age.

Keywords: moral; information; social responsibility; digital literacy



This work is licensed [under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Introduction

The advancement of information and communication technology has brought profound changes to human life not only in economic and cultural aspects, but also in the social-political and civic domains. In today's digital era, the transformation of how people interact, access, and disseminate information has radically reshaped the landscape of public communication. Social media, as a key product of this technological development, has become a new arena for citizens to express opinions, shape public discourse, and participate in various social and political issues.

Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube allow citizens to be active players in the production and distribution of information. By removing geographic and institutional barriers to information flow, social media empowers individuals to reach thousands, even millions, in seconds. However, this openness also presents complex challenges, particularly the surge of disinformation and hate speech that not only disrupts social order but also threatens human rights and the quality of democracy. Disinformation defined as the deliberate dissemination of false information to mislead the public and hate speech targeted

at groups based on race, religion, ethnicity, or political orientation have emerged as two of the most pressing threats in the digital ecosystem. These phenomena not only fuel social and political conflict but also deepen distrust in state institutions, exacerbate social polarization, and undermine the foundations of democratic life. In the context of Indonesia, a multicultural and democratic nation, the impact of disinformation and hate speech becomes even more significant, especially during critical moments such as general elections or major political events.

Citizens, in this regard, occupy a highly strategic position. No longer mere recipients of policy or information, they now act as active agents who shape the digital information landscape. Everyone holds a dual potential: as an empowering agent when disseminating accurate and constructive information, or as a vector of disinformation when spreading misleading or harmful content. In many cases, citizens unknowingly contribute to the spread of hoaxes and hate speech due to a lack of digital literacy.

Therefore, digital literacy is a key instrument in addressing these challenges. Digital literacy extends beyond technical competence in using digital devices or platforms; it encompasses critical thinking, media ethics, social awareness, and civic responsibility in maintaining an inclusive and healthy information space. Strong digital literacy serves as a defensive barrier against the rapid spread of hoaxes, disinformation, and hate speech in online spaces.

Unfortunately, various surveys and reports, including those by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and civil society organizations, show that digital literacy levels in Indonesia remain relatively low. Many citizens are unable to distinguish between factual and manipulated content and are unaware of the social and legal consequences of sharing hateful content. In this context, civic education can no longer be confined to formal and normative frameworks but must be extended to the digital realm as part of building a new civic identity: a digitally informed, ethical, and participatory citizen.

Numerous studies have shown the effectiveness of this approach. Community-based digital literacy programs, the involvement of local leaders and youth, and the use of social media as an educational tool have proven successful in reducing the spread of hoaxes and hate speech. One relevant study shows that citizens who have received legal and digital literacy training are more capable of identifying reliable information and are more cautious and responsible in their use of social media. This indicates that behavioral change in digital spaces can be achieved through contextual and collaborative education.

Cross-sectoral collaboration is essential in facing these challenges. Government, education institutions, civil society organizations, and the tech industry must work in synergy to build a healthy information ecosystem. The government bears the responsibility of formulating fair and proportionate regulations without undermining freedom of expression. Educational institutions are mandated to embed digital literacy into both formal and informal curricula. Communities and civic organizations can serve as intermediaries between policy and public needs, while digital platforms must develop more transparent and accountable content moderation algorithms and policies.

This article adopts a literature review approach, examining a wide range of scholarly sources, policy documents, and research findings from the past decade regarding the role of citizens in countering disinformation and hate speech on social media. The focus of this

review is directed at identifying forms of citizen participation, evaluating the effectiveness of digital literacy strategies, and analyzing the role of civic values in building an inclusive and democratic digital society. Through this approach, the article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how citizens can become active agents in transforming Indonesia's digital

information culture.

Accordingly, this introduction lays the conceptual foundation for the subsequent sections of the article, which include the literature review, results and discussion, as well as conclusions and recommendations on strategies to strengthen the role of citizens in addressing today's information challenges. The article is also intended to contribute to the development of public policy and civic education that are more adaptive to digital realities, positioning citizens not merely as objects but as key actors in nurturing democracy and public civility through informational competence and digital ethics.

Literature Review

1. Disinformation and Hate Speech on Social Media

Disinformation and hate speech are two major challenges in today's digital ecosystem. According to (Tsaniyah & Juliana, 2019), the spread of hoaxes and hate speech on social media can trigger social conflict and threaten national integration. A study by (Andriani et al., 2024) emphasizes that hate speech on digital platforms is often fueled by low levels of digital literacy and a lack of understanding of media ethics.

2. Digital Literacy as a Preventive Measure

Digital literacy refers to an individual's ability to use information technology critically and responsibly. (Maulana, 2023) found that a lack of public understanding of digital literacy is one of the main factors driving the spread of hoaxes. Meanwhile, a study by (Kamba et al., 2021) shows that legal training based on digital literacy can enhance society's ability to identify and report hate speech content.

3. The Role of Citizens in Countering Disinformation

Citizens play a strategic role in maintaining a healthy digital space. Research by (Nisa, 2024) suggests that improving digital literacy among the public can aid in distinguishing between factual and false information, thereby reducing the spread of misinformation. (Adelia, 2023) also highlights the importance of community-based digital literacy strategies to empower citizens in confronting disinformation and hate speech challenges.

4. Policies and Regulations for Combating Disinformation

The Indonesian government has implemented various policies to address the spread of disinformation and hate speech. The national strategy includes strengthening digital literacy, developing adaptive regulations, and fostering collaboration between the government, civil society, and the private sector. However, the effectiveness of these policies heavily depends on the active participation of citizens in applying digital literacy in their daily lives.

Methods

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. This method was chosen because the topic discussed is conceptual and normative, namely the role of citizens in counteracting disinformation and hate speech on social media. This study aims to explore and synthesize various scientific literatures to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of digital literacy and digital citizenship in the context of participatory democracy, especially in Indonesia. The data sources in this study come from relevant secondary literature, such as national and international scientific journals, academic books, research reports from official institutions, public policy documents, and articles that are available online and have gone through a peer-review process. The literature selection criteria were based on three main points: relevance to the theme, currency (published in the last ten years), and credibility of the publisher or institution. Overall, 30 main references were used as references, focusing on the issues of digital literacy, disinformation, hate speech, digital citizenship, and media regulation.

The analysis process was conducted using a thematic content analysis approach, by

identifying, classifying and synthesizing information based on the main themes in the discussion. These themes include disinformation and hate speech as threats to social cohesion and human rights; the role of citizens as information producers in the digital space; digital literacy as a civil defense strategy against manipulative information flows; digital citizenship as a new pillar in strengthening democracy; and the balance between freedom of expression and ethical regulation in social media. Data validity is maintained through source triangulation, by comparing information from various literatures to obtain a more objective and complete understanding. Data validity is also strengthened by prioritizing references from accredited journals and reports from official institutions. With this approach, the research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the concept of digital citizenship, as well as provide practical recommendations for strengthening public policies and civic education that are adaptive to the challenges of the digital era.

Findings and Discussion

1. Forms and Impacts of Disinformation and Hate Speech

A. Forms of Disinformation and Hate Speech

The phenomena of disinformation and hate speech have become structural challenges in the global digital ecosystem, including in Indonesia. Social media platforms originally designed to enhance social interaction are now often misused to disseminate manipulative and harmful content. Disinformation refers to the deliberate spread of false information intended to mislead the public. Disinformation has been described as a form of “information warfare” that fosters public confusion, undermines democracy, and exacerbates social conflict.

Disinformation manifests in various forms, including fake news, manipulated images or videos (deepfakes), distorted quotes, and the use of bots and trolls programmed to systematically amplify specific narratives (M. A. Horowitz, 2019). On social media, disinformation is frequently packaged with sensational headlines, emotionally charged themes such as religion, race, and politics and often targets groups with the intent to divide society.

Hate speech, as interpreted by (Guillén-Nieto, 2023), can also take many forms, ranging from direct insults to symbolic content that reinforces exclusion. It encompasses any form of expression that attacks or demeans individuals or groups based on specific identity attributes such as race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or political views. (Guillén-Nieto, 2023) explains that hate speech is not always explicit; it may appear in the form of jokes, memes, or casual comments that seem innocuous but carry implicit messages of exclusion and discrimination.

Research by (Essalhi-Rakrak & Pinedo-González, 2023) shows that hate speech often intersects with disinformation, particularly in the form of negative narratives directed at vulnerable groups such as refugees, religious minorities, and migrant communities. For example, in the context of Twitter, hashtags like *#EspañaInvadida* were used to disseminate disinformation portraying refugees from the Global South as threats to national security and identity.

B. Social and Political Impacts

The impacts of disinformation and hate speech are broad and multidimensional. At the social level, both contribute to increased polarization, social segregation, and intergroup tensions. (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024) emphasize that social media has become a digital battleground where hate speech thrives amplified by algorithms that favor provocative content and widen the divide between communities.

According to (Colomina et al., 2021), disinformation can undermine democracy by eroding public trust in state institutions, electoral processes, and human rights. This risk

becomes more severe when disinformation is deployed systematically by political actors or foreign entities to manipulate public opinion, as witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic and elections in various countries.

In the Indonesian context, as examined by (Budiana & Warta, 2019), hoaxes and hate speech have posed serious threats to national unity, especially because they are often used to divide communities along primordial lines such as religion and ethnicity. Even Pancasila the foundational ideology of the Indonesian state has been a target of delegitimization through anti-diversity narratives. The spread of false information intensifies, particularly during political years. (Adelia, 2023) found that hoaxes are often framed around sensitive issues such as religion, politics, and race, triggering horizontal conflicts, as demonstrated in the study of the MALIDI (Masyarakat Peduli Literasi Digital) community in Bekasi.

Another critical dimension is the psychological impact on individuals. (Donovan, 2020) notes that disinformation campaigns can lead to digital fatigue, information disorder, and heightened anxiety, particularly among groups targeted by hate speech. Moreover, online hate speech has been shown to correlate with real-world violence, such as attacks on places of worship, online harassment, and identity-based criminalization.

Furthermore, (Kamba et al., 2021) revealed that legal and digital literacy training in rural communities enhanced public awareness in verifying information. Research in Desa Tupa demonstrated that participation in dialogue forums improved critical thinking and legal understanding. Meanwhile, (Nisa, 2024) highlighted the psychological and social impacts of hoaxes, including reputational damage, public panic, and declining trust in state institutions.

C. Implications for Human Rights and Democracy

Disinformation and hate speech pose serious threats not only to social cohesion but also to civil and political rights within democratic systems. (M. Horowitz et al., 2022) emphasize that freedom of expression can be misused as a pretext for spreading hate speech, thereby necessitating clear ethical and regulatory boundaries to protect others from discrimination and violence. The spread of misleading information and identity-based hateful expression can erode the fundamental values of freedom, equality, and protection enshrined in human rights principles. This gives rise to a dilemma: how to uphold freedom of expression while simultaneously limiting the dissemination of harmful content that threatens the rights of others.

As (Putri et al., 2023) explain, freedom of opinion is an inseparable part of democracy, but it must be exercised responsibly and ethically, without infringing on the rights of others. The Indonesian Constitution guarantees freedom of expression as a fundamental right, but with the condition that it must not contradict public interest or cause personal harm to others. Conversely, an overly repressive approach to hate speech may itself violate human rights. Disproportionate restrictions on freedom of expression can be exploited by state authorities to silence dissent or suppress public criticism. Therefore, a balanced and multidimensional approach is essential—one that includes legal reinforcement, public education, civil society engagement, and transparent governance by digital platforms.

In his analysis, Ibrahim Tompo argues that hoaxes and hate speech can be categorized as "crimes against democracy," as they have the potential to damage mechanisms of public participation and undermine popular sovereignty through opinion manipulation and smear campaigns (Tompo, 2021). In the long run, such practices not only weaken democratic quality but also foster fear that hinders citizens' civil liberties.

At the global level, overly repressive policies and interventions against hate speech may lead to abuses of power and human rights violations. (Colomina et al., 2021) highlight the need for a balanced approach involving legal frameworks, digital corporations, and civil society to

formulate fair and effective countermeasures.

2. Digital Literacy as a Preventive Measure

Digital literacy is an essential competency in responding to the rapid flow of information. (Tsaniyah & Juliana, 2019) state that digital literacy encompasses eight key aspects: cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical, and civic. The “civic” dimension particularly highlights the importance of citizens’ active roles in maintaining a healthy information ecosystem.

In the face of growing challenges related to disinformation and hate speech on social media, digital literacy emerges as a crucial preventive strategy. It involves not only the technical ability to access and use information technologies but also critical thinking skills, ethical media engagement, and social awareness in digital interactions.

A. Definition and Dimensions of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy refers to a set of competencies that enable individuals to find, evaluate, use, create, and communicate information intelligently and ethically through digital media. According to (Maulana, 2023), the low level of digital literacy in Indonesian society is one of the main causes of the rampant spread of hoaxes and misinformation, as many social media users cannot distinguish between factual and false information.

The components of digital literacy include: the ability to understand information, verify sources, practice ethical sharing, and recognize the social impact of digital activity (Essalhi-Rakrak & Pinedo-González, 2023). Without strengthening these components, the digital public sphere will continue to be fertile ground for information manipulation and social polarization.

B. Digital Literacy and Disinformation Prevention

Digital literacy serves as the first line of defense against disinformation. (Donovan, 2020) proposes the 3D approach **detect**, **document**, and **debunk** as a simple yet effective framework that can be used by civil society to combat hoaxes and manipulative campaigns. This approach emphasizes basic investigative skills accessible to anyone, not just journalists or academics.

Research by (Kamba et al., 2021) further shows that digital literacy, when combined with legal education, significantly enhances the public’s ability to identify and report hate speech. This indicates that strengthening digital literacy must be integrated with regulatory and legal frameworks.

Moreover, (M. Horowitz et al., 2022) highlight the important role of public service media in expanding digital literacy by providing high-quality, neutral, and fact-based content. Public broadcasters bear a normative responsibility to protect citizens from information disorder through educational programming and awareness campaigns.

C. Digital Literacy as Digital Citizenship

Digital literacy is inherently linked to the concept of digital citizenship—citizens’ ability to use technology responsibly, ethically, and productively. (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024) emphasize that digital literacy education should go beyond cognitive development and include the formation of communicative, tolerant, and inclusive citizen character.

In this context, education plays a pivotal role. (Budiana & Warta, 2019) stress that instilling the values of Pancasila through citizenship education can enhance societal resilience against hate-based manipulation and disinformation. A values-based digital literacy framework can shape citizens who are not only informationally competent but also committed to national unity and integrity.

D. Strategies for Strengthening Digital Literacy

To enhance the effectiveness of digital literacy as a preventive measure, approaches must be educational, collaborative, and sustainable. As (Kamba et al., 2021) explain, digital literacy is

more than just a technical skill—it requires critical thinking, ethical awareness, and social responsibility in navigating the digital world. Based on multiple literature sources, the following strategies are proposed:

1. Integrating digital literacy into formal education curricula from an early age. Digital literacy should be embedded in education from primary school through higher education to instill critical and ethical values in young generations. Digital citizenship education must equip students with an understanding of their digital rights and responsibilities and the skills to evaluate digital content objectively.

2. Community-based digital literacy campaigns. (Adelia, 2023) emphasizes the importance of grassroots campaigns in reaching communities beyond formal programs. This approach is effective as it involves local leaders, civil society organizations, and youth groups in delivering contextually relevant digital literacy content.

3. Multi-stakeholder collaboration in producing educational content. Strengthening digital literacy requires collaboration among government bodies, NGOs, media organizations, and digital platforms to provide accessible and engaging educational content. This may include interactive modules, infographics, educational videos, and social media campaigns tailored to diverse audiences.

4. Utilizing technology and data for targeted interventions. (Bertoni et al., 2023) demonstrate how data analytics and technology can identify patterns of disinformation. These insights are critical for designing precise and efficient interventions—for example, using AI to detect hoax-spreading accounts or developing algorithm-based early warning systems for hate speech content.

These strategies will only be effective if implemented consistently and evaluated regularly. Strengthening digital literacy is not the responsibility of a single institution but a collective national effort to safeguard an inclusive, democratic digital public space. With a systematic, participatory, and evidence-based approach, digital literacy can become a strong foundation for building societal resilience against disinformation and intolerance in the digital era.

E. Implementation Challenges

Despite widespread recognition of its urgency, digital literacy programs still face several barriers, including limited funding, shortages of trained educators, and low public awareness. In Indonesia, these challenges are further exacerbated by digital and educational access disparities between regions.

Moreover, digital literacy must not be viewed as a quick fix. As (M. A. Horowitz, 2019) emphasizes, disinformation is part of a complex ecosystem involving political, economic, and technological interests. Digital literacy must therefore be understood as part of a broader cultural and structural transformation toward an informed and responsible society.

Public awareness of the dangers of disinformation has grown significantly. (Kamba et al., 2021) note that direct training has encouraged citizens to become more proactive, marking a shift from apathy to active engagement in maintaining the integrity of information in digital spaces.

3. The Role and Responsibility of Citizens in the Digital Sphere

The digital transformation has fundamentally altered how citizens engage in social and political life. Social media has become an integral part of the public sphere, where individuals can voice their opinions, access information, and participate in collective discourse. However, this shift also demands a redefinition of the role and responsibility of citizens in maintaining the quality of the digital space so that it remains healthy, ethical, and democratic.

A. Citizens as Information Actors

In the digital ecosystem, citizens are no longer merely recipients of information; they are also producers and distributors of content. Consequently, everyone holds a dual potential: to serve as an agent of empowerment or as a conduit for disinformation. This notion is reinforced by the findings of (Essalhi-Rakrak & Pinedo-González, 2023), who argue that internet users directly participate in creating and disseminating narratives, including those involving disinformation and hate speech—whether consciously or not. The openness of the digital space enables anyone to broadcast content at great speed and reach.

This view is echoed by (Putri et al., 2023), who note that in the digital era, citizens have become active agents not only in accessing but also in producing and distributing social and political narratives via digital media. Civic identity is no longer determined solely by geographic or legal affiliation but also by digital presence, where participation and responsibility for information are essential expressions of modern citizenship.

This role can be both constructive and harmful. Citizens who engage in disseminating information, correcting hoaxes, and countering hate speech contribute significantly to the quality of digital democracy. Conversely, those who lack adequate digital literacy may unknowingly propagate falsehoods and inflammatory content.

In this context, (Putri et al., 2023) refer to these engaged individuals as *active citizens*—those who do not passively consume information but who respond, correct, and even initiate counter-narratives against disinformation and hate speech. They act as *refuters*, a role that is crucial for safeguarding the integrity of the digital public space.

A study by (Akbar et al., 2024) similarly finds that *counter-speech* from ordinary citizens can reduce the virality of hate speech, especially in algorithm-driven social media platforms. The more users participate in spreading corrective information, the less space there is for harmful narratives to dominate.

(Colomina et al., 2021) also note that in a digitized society, citizens become a vital component in maintaining democratic quality by disseminating accurate information and rejecting manipulative narratives. Therefore, citizen awareness and capacity to distinguish factual content from manipulation constitute the foundation of civil defense in the digital ecosystem. Strengthening digital literacy and reinforcing a sense of informational responsibility are urgent needs.

Civic education in the digital age must be directed not only toward fostering an understanding of legal rights and obligations but also toward cultivating awareness of citizens' ethical and informational roles in building a healthy and democratic digital society.

B. Moral and Social Responsibility

Citizens bear a moral and social responsibility not only to passively consume information, but also to actively safeguard the digital space from information pollution. This responsibility spans three key domains:

1. Media ethics – the awareness to refrain from spreading unverified information, to respect diverse viewpoints, and to reject discriminatory content.
2. Positive digital activism – participation in anti-hoax campaigns, dissemination of educational content, and becoming change agents who inspire digital literacy within their communities.
3. Reporting harmful content – using social media platform features to report disinformation, hate speech, or digital violence, as advocated by (Donovan, 2020) through the “detect, document, and debunk” approach.

In many cases, individuals who have access to accurate information and ethical awareness become crucial actors in de-escalating digital conflicts.

In the digital context, citizens are not merely consumers of information but also social agents responsible for the quality of the public sphere. (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024) emphasize that digital citizenship education must cultivate civil communication skills—fostering empathy, tolerance, and dialogue capacity.

Digital citizenship demands moral commitment, including refraining from spreading hoaxes, reporting hateful content, and participating in educational campaigns. These actions constitute digital civic responsibility, a critical component in preserving democracy and social harmony.

C. Digital Citizenship as a Pillar of Democracy

The concept of *digital citizenship* refers to citizens' skills and awareness in using technology responsibly, critically, and participatively. According to Pukallus and Arthur (2024), digital citizenship education must instill the values of civil communication, such as tolerance, empathy, and dialogue, as part of efforts to ease polarization on social media.

In the Indonesian context, the values of *Pancasila* form a highly relevant foundation for instilling inclusive digital character. (Budiana & Warta, 2019) assert that strengthening Pancasila ideology must be realized through digital civic practices that reject hate speech and support national integration.

D. Challenges to Citizen Participation in the Age of Disinformation

Although citizens hold significant potential to safeguard the integrity of the digital space, their participation in countering disinformation still faces various challenges. One of the primary obstacles is the low level of digital literacy among the public. As noted by (Maulana, 2023), many individuals are unable to distinguish information from falsehoods, and thus inadvertently become part of the disinformation chain.

Other critical challenges include:

1. Political polarization, which narrows the space for healthy dialogue. Public discourse is often trapped in identity conflicts and partisan sentiments that deepen social divisions (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024).

2. Unequal access to digital technology, particularly in remote areas where many communities still struggle to obtain reliable internet access. This digital divide hinders the acquisition of essential digital skills and knowledge required for active and critical participation in the online sphere (Colomina et al., 2021).

3. Lack of digital civic education in the formal education system, resulting in citizens who are unaware of their rights, obligations, responsibilities, and ethical standards in digital interaction.

To overcome these challenges, strong synergy is needed among the state, civil society, educational institutions, and digital corporations. Developing comprehensive and inclusive digital literacy strategies is essential. Community-based training programs, education curricula that promote civil communication values, and transparent, participatory regulations are prerequisites for cultivating citizens who are critical, responsible, and tolerant digital actors. As emphasized by (Essalhi-Rakrak & Pinedo-González, 2023), a collective approach that combines the capacities of both state and citizens is key to building societal resilience against manipulative information threats in the digital age.

E. Building an Ethical and Inclusive Digital Culture

Concrete steps to strengthen the role of citizens in the digital sphere include:

1. Promoting critical education from an early age, through a contextual digital citizenship curriculum that integrates values of responsibility, empathy, and digital ethics.

2. Establishing local digital literacy communities that serve as advocacy and learning

centers for grassroots digital empowerment.

3. Developing accessible citizen reporting platforms to combat disinformation and hate speech effectively.

4. Facilitating intergroup dialogue spaces to rebuild public trust and reduce social tensions (Colomina et al., 2021).

As underscored in the *Handbook of Computational Social Science for Policy* (Bertoni et al., 2023), citizen involvement in all stages of the policy cycle—from formulation to evaluation—is a prerequisite for ensuring that digital public policies are truly responsive and just.

4. Policy and Educational Support

Disinformation and hate speech are not merely technical issues in digital communication, but structural challenges that require systemic intervention through public policy and education. Appropriate policy and educational support can help create a healthy information ecosystem and strengthen the capacity of citizens to engage ethically and actively in digital spaces.

A. National and International Policies in Countering Disinformation

Addressing disinformation and hate speech demands comprehensive policy and educational support. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), has launched a national digital literacy program based on four pillars: digital ethics, digital skills, digital safety, and digital culture (Nisa, 2024). However, the effectiveness of this program largely depends on public participation.

As demonstrated by successful cases in Argosari and Bekasi, community- and locally based approaches have proven more effective than top-down strategies. Thus, national policies must be integrated with the social realities of grassroots communities.

Indonesia has adopted several policies to tackle disinformation and hate speech, including regulations under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) and the implementation of national digital literacy programs. The national strategy includes strengthening digital capacity among citizens, developing adaptive regulations, and fostering collaboration among the government, digital platforms, and civil society.

Nevertheless, the implementation of these policies still faces significant challenges, particularly in ensuring proportional law enforcement, bridging the digital divide between regions, and increasing legal awareness among the public. As Budiana and Warta (2019) emphasize, legal policies must remain grounded in democratic principles and the values of Pancasila to prevent abuses of authority.

At the international level, the European Union has pioneered several progressive initiatives to combat disinformation, such as the Action Plan Against Disinformation, the Code of Practice on Disinformation, and the Digital Services Act (DSA), which promotes platform accountability. (Colomina et al., 2021) underscore the importance of incorporating human rights perspectives into disinformation countermeasures to avoid arbitrary restrictions on freedom of expression.

B. The Role of Education in Long-Term Prevention

Beyond regulatory policies, education plays a crucial role as a long-term preventive approach. Comprehensive digital literacy education must be integrated into both formal and non-formal education systems as part of building digital citizenship. This includes not only technical proficiency but also ethical reasoning, empathy, and social responsibility.

In formal education, digital literacy should be embedded into Civic Education (PPKn) curricula. This helps develop students' cognitive knowledge while also nurturing moral and social awareness in their use of digital media. The concept of digital citizenship must be woven

into 21st-century character education programs. As emphasized by Bertoni et al. (2023), the use of computational social science and data analytics can assist in designing more precise and responsive evidence-based policy interventions.

(M. Horowitz et al., 2022) highlight that public service media (PSM) has substantial potential to educate the public through fact-based and informative programming. They propose a framework in which public broadcasters act as key players in the anti-disinformation ecosystem.

Additionally, (Pukallus & Arthur, 2024) stress the importance of digital citizenship education that develops civil communicative skills the ability of citizens to engage in peaceful dialogue and respect differences on social media. They advocate for a dual approach combining top-down regulation (platform governance) and bottom-up empowerment (citizen participation) to build sustainable information resilience.

On the other hand, community-based approaches, as outlined by (Donovan, 2020), demonstrate that civil society organizations can serve as critical actors in disseminating digital literacy education through training sessions, online campaigns, and the formation of community-based information advocacy groups.

C. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Strategic Synergy

The effectiveness of policies and educational programs heavily relies on cross-sector collaboration between governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society. In this context, the *Computational Social Science* approach, as proposed by , offers an opportunity to

design data-driven policies that can respond to the dynamics of misinformation dissemination in real-time with high precision.

By leveraging analytic technologies, governments and educational institutions can map emerging issues, detect patterns in the spread of hoaxes, and develop evidence-based interventions. This approach not only strengthens policy responses but also enhances the effectiveness of public education, making it more contextual and adaptive to the needs of the society. Such collaboration encourages the use of big data to formulate faster, more accurate, and relevant solutions in line with social developments, while also improving coordination among stakeholders in the collective effort to combat misinformation and hate speech.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of misinformation and hate speech on social media represents a serious challenge in the social and political life of the digital era. These two forms of information distortion not only undermine the quality of public communication but also have the potential to disrupt social cohesion, divide unity, and erode public trust in democratic institutions. In the context of Indonesia's plural society, this issue becomes even more complex as sensitive topics such as religion, ethnicity, and politics are often used as tools of provocation in the digital space.

The role of citizens becomes crucial in efforts to counter these negative impacts. As active social media users, citizens not only have the right to accurate and truthful information but also a moral and social responsibility to filter, evaluate, and disseminate information wisely. In this regard, digital literacy becomes a key element. Adequate digital literacy enables individuals to think critically about information, understand media ethics, and be aware of the social and legal implications of their digital behavior.

Civic education must transform to keep pace with the changing times by integrating the principles of digital citizenship. This approach encourages citizens to act actively, ethically, and responsibly in digital spaces, while reinforcing the values of Pancasila as the ethical foundation in social media engagement. Strengthening values such as tolerance, mutual cooperation, and justice is vital to creating a healthy, inclusive digital space that supports substantive democratic

practices.

Success in combating misinformation and hate speech depends not only on government regulations and policies but also on the active participation of all elements of society. Collaboration between the government, educational institutions, civil society organizations, media, and digital platforms is essential to build a fair and sustainable information ecosystem. Citizens must become the main subject in this information culture transformation—not just as recipients, but as agents of change who build a free, responsible, and democratic public digital space.

References

1. Adelia, F. (2023). Strategi Penguatan Literasi Digital Berbasis Komunitas dalam Melawan Hoaks pada Media Sosial di Gerakan Masyarakat Peduli Literasi Digital Kota Bekasi. *Repository.Uinjkt.Ac.Id*.
[https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/75719%0Ahttps://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/75719/1/Fika Adelia - 11190150000030.pdf](https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/75719%0Ahttps://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/75719/1/Fika%20Adelia%20-%2011190150000030.pdf)
2. Akbar, R. S., Hutasuhut, M. A., Rifansyah, M. A. A., & ... (2024). Bela Negara Di Era Digital: Tantangan Dan Strategi Memperkokoh Nilai-Nilai Kebangsaan Melalui Teknologi.
3. Andriani, A. D., Fitri, S. A., Muchtar, K., Ilmu, F., Universitas, K., Indonesia, P., Islam, U., & Sunan, N. (2024). *MODEL KOMUNIKASI LITERASI DIGITAL DALAM*. 13(2), 439–464.
4. Bertoni, E., Fontana, M., Gabrielli, L., Signorelli, S., & Vespe, M. (2023). Handbook of Computational Social Science for Policy. In *Handbook of Computational Social Science for Policy*.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-16624-2>
5. Budiana, I. N., & Warta, I. M. (2019). Fighting Hoax and Hate Speech by Strengthening The Spirit of Pancasila in Preventing Disintegration of The Nation I Nyoman Budiana* and I Made Warta. *JURISPRUDENCE International Journal of Sociological Jurisprudence*, 2(2), 101–107. <https://ejournal.warmadewa.ac.id/index.php/sjj>
6. Colomina, C., Sánchez Margalef, H., Youngs, R., Jones, K., & European Parliament.
7. Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union. (2021). The impact of disinformation on democratic processes and human rights in the world. In *Working Paper - PE 653.635* (Vol. 1, Issue April).
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653635/EXPO_STU\(2021\)653635_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/653635/EXPO_STU(2021)653635_EN.pdf)
8. Donovan, J. (2020). *How Civil Society Can Combat Misinformation and Hate Speech Without Making It Worse | by Technology and Social Change Research Project | PoliticalPandemonium2020 | Medium*. <https://medium.com/political-pandemonium-2020/how-civil-society-can-combat-misinformation-and-hate-speech-without-making-it-worse-887a16b8b9b6>
9. Essalhi-Rakrak, A., & Pinedo-González, R. (2023). #EspañaInvadida. Disinformation and hate speech towards refugees on Twitter: A challenge for critical thinking. *Profesional de La Informacion*, 32(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.may.10>
10. Guillén-Nieto, V. (2023). 1 Approaches to the meaning of hate speech. *Hate Speech*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110672619-001>
11. Horowitz, M. A. (2019). Disinformation As Warfare in the Digital Age : Dimensions , Dilemmas , and Solutions. *Journal of Vicentian Social Action*, 4(2), 5–21.
12. Horowitz, M., Cushion, S., Dragomir, M., Gutiérrez Manjón, S., & Pantti, M. (2022). A Framework for Assessing the Role of Public Service Media Organizations in Countering Disinformation. *Digital Journalism*, 10(5), 843–865.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1987948>

13. innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/view/10783%0Ahttp://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/download/10783/9390
14. *Innovative: Journal Of ...*, 4, 8418–8428. [http://j-](http://j-innovative.org/index.php/Innovative/article/download/10783/9390)
15. Kamba, S. Na. M., Thalib, M. C., Kasim, N. M., Sarson, M. T. Z., & Mandjo, J. T. (2021). Peningkatan Literasi Digital Melalui Pelatihan Hukum dalam Mengatasi Ujaran Kebencian di Media Sosial. *Jurnal Abdidias*, 5(3), 289–295. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31004/abdidias.v5i3.945>
16. Maulana, A. (2023). Literasi Digital Dalam Mencegah Penyebaran Konten Hoaks Pada Aparatur Pemerintah Desa. *JPM: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2(1), 186. <https://doi.org/10.52434/jpm.v2i1.2506>
17. Nisa, K. (2024). Peran Literasi di Era Digital Dalam Menghadapi Hoaks dan Disinformasi di Media Sosial. *Impressive: Journal of Education*, 2(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.61502/ijoe.v2i1.75>
18. Pukallus, S., & Arthur, C. (2024). Combating Hate Speech on Social Media: Applying Targeted Regulation, Developing Civil-Communicative Skills and Utilising Local Evidence-Based Anti-Hate Speech Interventions. *Journalism and Media*, 5(2), 467–484. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5020031>
19. Putri, M., Saputra, R., Iswardhana, M. R., Emillia, Rastati, R., Sugiharto, A., Rendra, A., Rachimoellah, M., Zahri, T. A., Octaviany, N., & Lubis, P. H. (2023). *Kewarganegaraan: Teoretis dan Praksis*.
20. Tompo, I. (2021). *Meningkatkan kewaspadaan nasional terhadap bahaya berita hoaks dan ujaran kebencian di media sosial pada era post truth*.
21. Tsaniyah, N., & Juliana, K. A. (2019). Literasi Digital Sebagai Upaya Menangkal Hoaks Di Era Disrupsi. *Al-Balagh : Jurnal Dakwah Dan Komunikasi*, 4(1), 121–140. <https://doi.org/10.22515/balagh.v4i1.1555>