

Digital Literacy and Violence Prevention: Empowering Communities for a Brighter Future

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to enhance digital literacy among students and teachers in Caringin District, with a focus on preventing digital violence. Through a seminar organized for students, participants were provided with an understanding of the importance of using social media wisely, as well as the negative impacts of cyberbullying, hoaxes, and online harassment. In addition, a sharing session with guidance counselors aimed to equip them with the skills to support students involved in online issues. The results of the activity show that seminar participants demonstrated increased awareness of digital risks, as well as the importance of protecting their privacy and security. Guidance counselors also felt more prepared to provide counseling to students regarding digital violence. Although challenges in changing digital behavior remain, this activity successfully laid a strong foundation for creating a more aware and responsible community regarding digital ethics. The program highlights the importance of collaboration between students, teachers, and parents in creating a safe and positive online environment. For sustainability, further programs and more intensive mentoring are needed to ensure that behavioral changes can be fully realized.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Digital Empathy, Digital Literacy, Digital Violence, Social Media, Students, Technology, Violence Prevention.

Introduction

In an increasingly evolving digital era, digital literacy has become a necessity for every individual. Amid rapid technological advancements, the ability to use digital tools effectively and wisely is crucial. Digital literacy is not only about the technical ability to operate devices but also involves critical understanding of the information available in the digital world (Martínez-Bravo et al., 2022; Milenkova & Lendzhova, 2021; Nikou et al., 2022). This becomes a key pillar in community empowerment, as with good digital literacy, individuals can leverage technology to enhance their quality of life, access useful information, and participate in the global society. Therefore, the

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development of digital literacy can open up many opportunities and improve the competitiveness of society in various fields.

In addition to the opportunities offered by technology, there are significant challenges that arise, one of which is the issue of violence in society. Violence, whether physical, psychological, or sexual, remains a serious problem that can disrupt social harmony. In this context, digital literacy can play a crucial role in violence prevention (Čustović, 2024; Kazan, 2022; Setiansah et al., 2025). By understanding digital ethics, society can avoid behaviors that may lead to violence or harm others, either directly or through social media. Furthermore, digital literacy also helps individuals recognize the signs of violence and seek relevant help or information to address these issues.

The community service activity conducted by the Faculty of Islamic Education and Teaching at Universitas Garut in Caringin District aims to enhance digital literacy among the local community while providing an understanding of the importance of preventing violence. This program is not only intended to teach technical skills in using technology but also to raise awareness about the negative impacts of technology when not used wisely. Through this activity, it is hoped that the community will become more discerning in filtering information, using technology positively, and avoiding content or behaviors that could lead to violence.

Through this program, it is hoped that the community in Caringin District will not only have the skills to use technology but also develop a high level of awareness regarding the importance of digital ethics and violence prevention. The program also aims to create a community that is more conscious and responsible in using technology, enabling them to actively participate in creating a safe and healthy environment, both physically and digitally. It is hoped that this activity will serve as a starting point in forming a more prosperous, open, and socially responsible society in the digital world (Pappas et al., 2023; Zhanbayev et al., 2023).

The community in Caringin District, particularly among the youth, faces two interrelated main issues: low digital literacy levels and a tendency towards bullying behavior. Most of the population still lacks a proper understanding of how to use technology wisely, leading to an inability to fully utilize digital potential in areas such as education, employment, and access to information. On the other hand, bullying cases, both in the real world and those triggered by interactions on social media, further exacerbate the situation. Many individuals, especially the younger generation, are involved in violent behavior or become victims of digital violence without understanding its negative impacts. This creates an unsafe and unproductive environment, where technology instead becomes a channel for violence and the spread of misinformation. Therefore, improving digital literacy is a crucial step in reducing violence and building public awareness about the importance of ethical behavior in the digital world.

Method

The method used in this activity consists of two main parts: a seminar and a sharing session. The activity begins with a seminar aimed at students, with the goal of enhancing their understanding of the importance of digital literacy and the impacts of digital violence, such as cyberbullying, hoaxes, and online harassment. This seminar focuses on how to use social media wisely, where students are taught how to select information carefully, maintain personal security online, and the importance of digital empathy. Additionally, students are encouraged to think critically before spreading information or interacting in the digital world, with an emphasis on values of courtesy and digital responsibility.

To delve deeper into this topic, the activity continued with a sharing session with the school's guidance counselors. In this session, the counselors were provided with more in-depth knowledge on how to support students who may be involved in digital violence or those who have become victims of such behavior. The teachers were also given guidelines on how to help students use social media and the internet more wisely. This sharing session aimed to equip guidance counselors with the necessary skills to be effective facilitators in helping students address issues related to the digital world.

The methods applied during the seminar and sharing session were more interactive, encouraging participants to actively engage in discussions and share their experiences. In the seminar, participants were prompted to think about the impact of their actions in the digital world, such as comments or posts that could harm others. On the other hand, the sharing session with the guidance

counselors emphasized a more personal approach, where the counselors could share the challenges, they face in supporting students and gain practical solutions to address them. With this approach, it is hoped that the messages conveyed will be more easily accepted and applied in daily life (Amir et al., 2024; Faustyna, 2023; Inayyah & Simanjuntak, 2022).

This activity was also supported by relevant materials and teaching aids, such as infographics, videos, and case studies that illustrate the negative impacts of violent behavior in the digital world. Through these various materials, participants were able to better understand the importance of maintaining digital ethics and actively contributing to creating a safe digital space. This method aimed to provide broader insights into a safe and productive digital world, as well as to create a more empathetic environment in the digital realm (Prasai, n.d.; Trikha et al., 2024).

Result and Discussion

Outcomes

The results achieved from this community service activity show a significant positive impact in enhancing the digital literacy of participants, both students and guidance counselors. Through the seminar provided to students, the majority of participants demonstrated an increased understanding of the importance of digital literacy and how to use social media wisely. Students became more aware of the impact of their actions in the digital world, such as the risks of cyberbullying and the spread of hoaxes. Additionally, they gained a better understanding of how to protect themselves online by safeguarding their privacy and avoiding falling into online scams. This understanding is expected to help them interact more safely and positively in the digital world (Freed et al., 2023; Huda, 2024; Ting et al., 2021).

The sharing session with the guidance counselors had a significant impact in supporting student guidance. The counselors gained new insights into their roles in helping students face challenges arising from the use of technology. The teachers were also equipped with skills to recognize signs of digital violence, such as cyberbullying or online harassment, and how to support students who may be victims. The response from the teachers was very positive; they felt more prepared to provide more effective guidance to students in facing the challenges of the digital world. Through this session, the teachers also learned how to facilitate discussions that create space for students to share experiences and collaboratively seek solutions to the issues they face in the digital realm (Hover & Wise, 2022).



Figure 1. Seminar Activity Highlights

Feedback from the participants indicated that the materials presented were highly relevant to their conditions, especially regarding how to use social media wisely and avoid digital violence. The students expressed that they felt more discerning in selecting and sharing information on social media

platforms. They also became more aware of the importance of digital empathy and how to think carefully before posting or commenting in ways that could harm others. The participants realized that their digital footprint could affect their reputation in the online world, leading them to be more cautious in every online interaction.

Participants also gave positive feedback on the material about the introduction of various forms of digital violence, such as cyberbullying, doxing, and hate speech. Both students and guidance counselors felt more knowledgeable about how to identify digital violence and the steps that can be taken to combat and prevent it. They also became more open to reporting if they or their peers became victims of online violence. Overall, the results of this activity indicate a positive shift in the behaviors and mindsets of the participants regarding the use of technology and social media, which is expected to have a long-term impact on creating a safer and more empathetic digital space (Lee & Hancock, 2024; Parry & Coetzee, 2025).

Analysis of Effectiveness

The analysis of the effectiveness of this community service activity shows that the approach used was quite effective in achieving the established goals. The increase in digital literacy among students is evident from the improvement in their understanding of how to interact safely in the digital world. The majority of seminar participants stated that they are now more aware of the dangers lurking in the digital space, such as cyberbullying, hoaxes, and online scams. Through the materials presented, they learned to be more cautious in selecting information they receive and share, as well as how to protect their privacy online. This indicates that the seminar was successful in raising students' awareness about the importance of using social media wisely (Alexander, 2025; Ruswaji et al., 2024).

Although significant progress has been made, some challenges still arise in the application of the knowledge gained. Some students expressed that, despite being more aware of the importance of maintaining privacy and digital ethics, they still struggle to fully avoid negative behaviors on social media, such as following risky trends or engaging in online bullying. This indicates that, while knowledge of digital literacy has increased, a full behavioral change requires time and ongoing support (Cetindamar et al., 2021; Koskelainen et al., 2023; Yu, 2022).

From the effectiveness perspective of the sharing session with guidance counselors, this activity proved to be highly useful in equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to support students facing issues in the digital world. The guidance counselors involved in the sharing session felt more prepared and confident in providing guidance on digital issues, such as cyberbullying or online harassment. They also felt more capable of offering emotional support to students involved in online issues and assisting them in reporting unethical incidents on social media platforms. Some teachers noted that, despite the training, they still require more time and resources to effectively intervene in real-life situations.

From the perspective of the materials presented, the use of supporting media such as infographics, videos, and relevant case studies proved to help participants better understand the concepts being explained. This was evident from the positive responses from participants to the visually and contextually presented materials. The biggest challenge faced is ensuring that participants can apply what they have learned in their daily lives. While digital literacy has improved, the implementation of behavioral changes in the real world requires ongoing efforts, including more intensive support from both schools and families (Anurogo et al., 2023; Arsalani et al., 2022; Meng et al., 2025).

This activity can be considered effective in raising awareness about digital literacy and the prevention of online violence. Although some aspects require more time to be fully implemented, the positive changes observed indicate that the educational approach used can have a long-term impact, especially if followed by follow-up programs that support the application of the knowledge and skills acquired.

Challenges and Limitations

Although this community service activity yielded positive results, several challenges and limitations remain factors that need to be addressed for future improvements. One of the main

challenges is the varying level of participation among students. Some students appeared very enthusiastic and active in the discussions, while others were passive or less engaged during the seminar and sharing sessions. This indicates a gap in understanding and attention to the importance of digital literacy, which may be influenced by individual student backgrounds or their lack of awareness of the potential dangers in the digital world. It is important to identify more effective methods to engage all participants actively in such activities (Howell, 2021; Maroungkas et al., 2023).

The biggest challenge is changing students' behavior in real life. Many students have expressed difficulty in fully implementing the knowledge gained in their digital lives. For example, although they understand the importance of maintaining privacy, some still tend to overlook privacy settings on social media or fail to think twice before posting content that could harm themselves or others. This shows that knowledge alone is not enough to change behavior; a more holistic approach is needed, one that involves the active roles of parents, teachers, and the community in providing ongoing support and guidance (Karimullah, 2023; Nash et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2021).

Another limitation is the limited time available to fully implement behavioral changes. While students have been provided with sufficient knowledge during the seminar sessions, they only have a limited amount of time to adapt to and internalize the learning. Therefore, this activity requires a follow-up or more intensive continuation program to ensure that the material provided can be applied in the long term. Without consistent follow-up, the expected changes may not occur significantly.

With these various challenges and limitations, this activity provides valuable insights into the importance of continuous support and a more comprehensive approach in addressing issues of digital literacy and online violence. To create a greater impact, ongoing evaluation and improvements are needed in this program, involving various stakeholders to create a safer and more positive digital environment for students.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this community service activity shows that digital literacy plays a crucial role in equipping society, particularly the younger generation, with the skills to interact safely and responsibly in the digital world. Through the seminar and sharing sessions with guidance counselors, participants not only gained technical knowledge on how to use technology wisely but also developed a deeper understanding of the negative impacts of behaviors such as cyberbullying, hoaxes, and other forms of digital violence. Although challenges in changing digital behavior remain, the increased awareness generated by this activity provides a strong foundation for building a community that is more conscious of digital ethics and capable of creating a safer and more empathetic online environment.

This program also highlights the importance of collaboration between students, teachers, and parents in supporting the application of the knowledge gained during the seminar and sharing sessions. With the active involvement of all parties, the desired behavioral changes can be more effectively achieved. The sustainability of this program is a key factor, considering that the implementation of effective changes in the digital world requires time, intensive mentoring, and continuous evaluation. Therefore, follow-up actions are needed to guide participants in implementing the knowledge they have acquired in their daily lives.

By focusing on digital literacy and the prevention of online violence, this activity not only enhanced the participants' technical skills but also fostered a more positive mindset towards the use of technology. It is hoped that this activity can serve as a model for other community initiatives aimed at creating a healthier, safer, and more productive digital space, while strengthening collective awareness of the importance of ethical behavior in the digital world. The implementation of this program in the future can be expanded by involving more communities and educational institutions to achieve a broader and more sustainable impact.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors hereby declare that there are no conflicts of interest in relation to the publication of this article. The research and findings presented are free from any financial, professional, or personal relationships that could have

influenced the outcomes. The content has been developed with the sole intention of advancing knowledge in the field, without any bias or external influence.

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