

The Impact of Social Media Use and Digital Literacy on Adolescents' Self-Disclosure

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the impact of social media use and digital literacy on adolescent self-disclosure. The research used a quantitative survey method with a correlational design. Respondents were adolescents aged 15–21 years who actively used social media. Although the initial minimum sample target was 100 respondents, the valid data recorded in the SPSS output consisted of 106 respondents. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The results showed that social media use and digital literacy simultaneously had a significant effect on self-disclosure, as indicated by $F = 36.869$ and $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$. The coefficient of determination was 0.417, meaning that both independent variables explained 41.7% of the variance in self-disclosure. Partially, social media use had a positive and significant effect on self-disclosure ($B = 0.851$; $t = 8.342$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$), whereas digital literacy did not ($B = -0.148$; $t = -0.992$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.324$). These findings indicate that adolescents' openness in digital spaces is more strongly related to their social media use than to their digital literacy level.

Key Words: social media use, digital literacy, self-disclosure, adolescents.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak penggunaan media sosial dan literasi digital terhadap keterbukaan diri remaja. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei dan desain korelasional. Responden penelitian adalah remaja berusia 15–21 tahun yang aktif menggunakan media sosial. Sampel awal ditetapkan minimal 100 responden, sedangkan data valid yang tercatat pada output SPSS berjumlah 106 responden. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner skala Likert dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif serta regresi linear berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media sosial dan literasi digital secara simultan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keterbukaan diri, dengan nilai $F_{hitung} = 36,869$ dan $\text{Sig.} = 0,000$. Koefisien determinasi sebesar 0,417 menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel bebas memberikan kontribusi sebesar 41,7% terhadap keterbukaan diri. Secara parsial, penggunaan media sosial berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keterbukaan diri ($B = 0,851$; $t_{hitung} = 8,342$; $\text{Sig.} = 0,000$), sedangkan literasi digital tidak berpengaruh signifikan ($B = -0,148$; $t_{hitung} = -0,992$; $\text{Sig.} = 0,324$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa keterbukaan diri remaja di ruang digital lebih kuat dipengaruhi oleh penggunaan media sosial dibandingkan tingkat literasi digitalnya.

Kata Kunci: penggunaan media sosial, literasi digital, keterbukaan diri, remaja.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of communication and information technology has brought major changes to adolescents' social lives. These changes are seen not only in how easily adolescents obtain information, but also in how they build social relationships, present their identities, express emotions, and disclose personal experiences to others. If adolescent communication previously took place mostly face-to-face in family, school, and peer environments, it is now increasingly conducted in digital spaces. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, X/Twitter, WhatsApp, and other platforms have become part of adolescents' daily lives. Through social media, adolescents can share photos, videos, short stories, comments, opinions, personal experiences, and even their current feelings.

Social media is no longer just a source of entertainment; it has also become a space for interpersonal communication. In this space, adolescents can build social relationships, gain recognition, seek emotional support, and present a certain self-image to others. Adolescents can express themselves through posts, statuses, comments, short videos, stories, and private online conversations. This activity shows that social media plays an important role in shaping how adolescents interact and express themselves. Therefore, social media use is closely related to self-disclosure because it provides a broader platform for adolescents to express their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and personal identity.

Adolescence is a crucial developmental phase characterized by identity exploration, formation, and social adjustment. During this time, adolescents seek acceptance, respect, and recognition from their peers, which often motivates them to communicate more actively and be more open. Social media can enhance this dynamic by providing a space where adolescents feel freer to express themselves without face-to-face interaction, making it easier to share thoughts that might be hard to convey directly.

Self-disclosure is the process by which a person reveals personal information to others, whether in the form of factual information, experiences, feelings, or personal views. In adolescence, self-disclosure plays an important role in identity formation, social acceptance, and the ability to build interpersonal relationships. Gayatri and Bajirani (2024) concluded that self-disclosure on social media has become a common activity among adolescents, but it still carries risks and therefore must be done wisely. Thus, adolescents' self-disclosure on social media should be understood not only as a communication behavior but also as a social phenomenon related to psychological development and digital culture.

Wiyono and Muhid (2020) found that adolescents disclose themselves on Instagram to clarify their feelings and achieve self-actualization. This finding shows that social media can serve as a space for self-expression, especially when adolescents seek to convey emotional states or build a specific self-image. Similarly, Moekahar and Hastuti (2022) found that TikTok can serve as a platform for adolescents to reveal their potential or hidden talents, which may be difficult to display in direct social settings. This shows that social media gives adolescents opportunities to be more open, creative, and expressive.

In addition to social media use, digital literacy is also an important factor in understanding adolescents' behavior in digital spaces. Digital literacy is not only about using devices and applications but also about evaluating information, understanding communication ethics, protecting privacy, and taking responsibility for the content shared. Meilinda, Malinda, and Aisyah (2020) emphasize that adolescents need digital literacy to use social media more wisely, especially because digital spaces are vulnerable to hoaxes, hate speech, and misinformation. Maifianti, Hidayati, and Mauliansyah (2021) also explain that digital literacy includes the ability to create, evaluate, and critically and responsibly understand digital information.

In practice, digital literacy may have two possible relationships with self-disclosure. On the one hand, adolescents with strong digital literacy may feel more confident interacting on social

media because they understand how to use platform features, manage digital identity, and choose appropriate content. On the other hand, strong digital literacy may also make adolescents more cautious about revealing personal information because they understand privacy risks, digital footprints, and the potential for misuse. Therefore, the relationship between digital literacy and self-disclosure is not always linearly positive, but may depend on how adolescents interpret safety and ethics in social media use.

Several recent studies show that adolescents' self-disclosure on social media is influenced by various factors. Gayatri and Bajirani (2024) grouped the factors affecting adolescent self-disclosure into personal, interpersonal, motivational, and affective factors. Haesyi (2025) found that adolescent Twitter users tend to engage in self-disclosure to express emotions, seek attention, and obtain catharsis. Meanwhile, Bagus and Reniasih (2022) found that TikTok and Instagram simultaneously had a positive effect on self-disclosure. These studies show that social media is closely related to self-disclosure behavior, but further quantitative research is still needed to examine social media use alongside digital literacy as predictor variables for adolescent self-disclosure.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the impact of social media use and digital literacy on the self-disclosure of adolescents aged 15–21 years. Specifically, this study examines: (1) the simultaneous effect of social media use and digital literacy on adolescent self-disclosure; (2) the effect of social media use on adolescent self-disclosure; and (3) the effect of digital literacy on adolescent self-disclosure. The results of this study are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding factors that contribute to adolescent self-disclosure behavior in digital spaces.

METODE

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The research design was correlational because the study aimed to determine the relationship and influence between the independent variables, namely social media use (X1) and digital literacy (X2), and the dependent variable, namely self-disclosure (Y). The quantitative approach was chosen because the research data consisted of numerical scores from respondents' answers, which were then analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression.

The study population consisted of adolescent social media users. The respondent criteria were adolescents aged 15–21 years, active social media users, and willing to complete the research questionnaire. The initial sample target was set at a minimum of 100 respondents, per the research design. However, based on the valid data recorded in the SPSS output, the number of respondents that could be analyzed was 106. Therefore, all statistical results in the findings section refer to the 106 valid respondents, consistent with the data processing output.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, meaning respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique was used because the study focused on adolescents who had experience using social media and were therefore able to answer questionnaire items about social media use, digital literacy, and self-disclosure.

The research instrument was a Likert-scale questionnaire. The social media use variable (X1) measured the level of social media use, the frequency of involvement, the intensity of access, and the use of social media as a communication space. The digital literacy variable (X2) measured respondents' ability to understand digital information, evaluate content, uphold ethical standards, and consider privacy and security. The self-disclosure variable (Y) measured respondents' tendency to reveal information, feelings, experiences, and identity to others through social media.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. The analysis stages included descriptive statistics, including the minimum, maximum, mode, mean, and standard deviation for each

variable. Next, hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple linear regression to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of social media use and digital literacy on self-disclosure. The significance level used was 0.05. If the significance value was less than 0.05, the effect was considered significant.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistical analysis results for social media use, digital literacy, and self-disclosure are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Range	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media Use	106	30,00	20,00	50,00	35,6792	6,52110	20,00
Digital Literacy	106	21,00	29,00	50,00	41,4811	4,44272	29,00
Self-Disclosure	106	36,00	12,00	48,00	28,7264	8,29174	12,00

Based on Table 1, the social media use score had a mean of 35.68 with a standard deviation of 6.521. The minimum value of 20 and the maximum value of 50 show variation in respondents' social media use levels. However, a smaller standard deviation than the mean indicates that the data spread is still relatively small and not too far from the central value.

The digital literacy variable had a mean of 41.48 with a standard deviation of 4.443. This indicates that, in general, respondents had a relatively high level of digital literacy. The minimum value of 29 and the maximum value of 50 show that most respondents were fairly capable of understanding digital media use. Meanwhile, the self-disclosure variable had a mean of 28.73 with a standard deviation of 8.292, a minimum of 12, and a maximum of 48. The larger standard deviation compared with the other two variables indicates that self-disclosure among respondents was more varied.

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented through the model summary, ANOVA, and regression coefficients.

Table 2. Multiple Correlation and Determination Coefficients

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,646	0,417	0,406	6,39108

Based on Table 2, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.646 shows a positive relationship between social media use and digital literacy, taken together, and self-disclosure. The R Square value of 0.417 indicates that social media use and digital literacy account for 41.7% of adolescents' self-disclosure, while the remaining 58.3% is explained by other variables outside the model, such as personality, self-esteem, trust, social support, affiliation motives, privacy risks, and emotional factors.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Significance Test

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3011,934	2	1505,967	36,869	0,000
Residual	4207,132	103	40,846		
Total	7219,066	105			

Based on Table 3, the calculated F value was 36.869 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, social media use and digital literacy simultaneously have a significant effect on adolescents' self-disclosure. Thus, the regression model used in this study is appropriate for explaining the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients and Partial Significance Test

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4,522	6,040		0,749	0,456
Social Media Use	0,851	0,102	0,669	8,342	0,000
Digital Literacy	-0,148	0,150	-0,080	-0,992	0,325

Based on Table 4, the resulting multiple linear regression equation is:

$$Y = 4,522 + 0,851X_1 - 0,148X_2$$

This equation indicates that the constant value of 4.522 represents the baseline self-disclosure level when social media use and digital literacy are both at zero or unchanged. The regression coefficient for social media use is 0.851 and positive, meaning that a one-unit increase in social media use will raise self-disclosure by 0.851 units, holding other factors steady. Conversely, the coefficient for digital literacy is -0.148 and negative, implying that each additional unit in digital literacy reduces self-disclosure by 0.148 units, assuming other variables stay constant.

The t-test results indicate that social media use has a t value of 8.342 with Sig. = 0.000, meaning it has a positive and significant impact on self-disclosure since the significance is below 0.05. Conversely, digital literacy shows a t value of -0.992 with Sig. = 0.324, which is above 0.05, indicating it does not have a significant effect on adolescents' self-disclosure.

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that both social media use and digital literacy significantly impact adolescents' self-disclosure. This suggests that adolescents' behavior of sharing personal information online is closely linked to their experiences on social media and their understanding of the digital environment. With an R Square value of 41.7%, these two variables account for a substantial portion of the variation in self-disclosure, though 58.3% is affected by other factors. This aligns with Gayatri and Bajirani (2024), who emphasize that adolescent self-disclosure is shaped by personal, interpersonal, motivational, and emotional factors.

Partially, social media use was shown to positively and significantly influence adolescents' self-disclosure. This indicates that increased social media use correlates with a higher likelihood of adolescents sharing personal information. Social media offers a quick, interactive, and accessible platform for expressing feelings, experiences, opinions, and identity. Adolescents can utilize posts, stories, comments, reposts, live videos, or short clips to showcase themselves and engage with others. This result aligns with Bagus and Reniasih (2022), who reported that TikTok and Instagram positively impact self-disclosure. It is also supported by Wiyono and Muhid (2020), who noted that adolescents use Instagram for self-actualization, and by Haesyi (2025), who found that self-disclosure on Twitter can serve as a form of catharsis for adolescents.

The positive effect of social media use on self-disclosure can also be understood through the nature of social media, which gives users a sense of control. Adolescents can choose what information to share, to whom the information is directed, and how the information is presented. In some situations, social media even provides a sense of safety because adolescents can express themselves without facing the other person directly. Moekahar and Hastuti (2022) showed that social media, especially TikTok, can encourage adolescents who tend to be reserved to display their potential. Thus, social media acts as a new social space that facilitates self-expression and interpersonal openness.

Meanwhile, digital literacy does not have a significant effect on adolescents' self-disclosure.

This finding is interesting because high digital literacy does not automatically make adolescents more open on social media. One possible explanation is that digital literacy actually makes adolescents more selective in sharing personal information. Adolescents who understand digital ethics, privacy risks, and digital footprints may be more cautious in revealing themselves. Therefore, the negative but non-significant coefficient of digital literacy can be understood as a tendency that the better a person's digital understanding, the more likely they are to consider risks before disclosing personal information.

This finding aligns with Meilinda et al. (2020), who state that digital literacy is essential for adolescents to use social media responsibly and identify threats like hoaxes, hate speech, and misinformation. Maifianti et al. (2021) further highlight that digital literacy extends beyond searching and sharing information; it also involves evaluating, understanding, and being accountable for the outcomes of disseminating information. Therefore, digital literacy serves as a control tool rather than just encouraging self-disclosure.

This research shows that adolescents' self-disclosure on social media is influenced more by how often and intensely they use these platforms rather than their digital literacy skills. Practically, this means digital literacy education should remain important, but its focus should shift from encouraging openness to helping teens share responsibly, safely, and appropriately. Melina, Admiral, and Sari (2025) highlight that improving digital literacy among youth requires continuous efforts through cooperation among schools, parents, and communities, to ensure that adolescents engage with social media in a wise and ethical way.

CONCLUSION

Research indicates that both social media use and digital literacy significantly influence adolescents' self-disclosure. The F value of 36.869 with Sig. = 0.000 confirms the regression model's adequacy for explaining self-disclosure. A coefficient of determination of 0.417 suggests that these factors account for 41.7% of the variance in self-disclosure among adolescents, with the remaining 58.3% affected by other factors not examined in this study.

Partially, social media use has a positive and significant effect on adolescents' self-disclosure. This means that the more adolescents use social media, the greater their tendency to disclose themselves. In contrast, digital literacy does not have a significant effect on self-disclosure. This finding suggests that digital literacy does not always increase self-disclosure, but may instead make adolescents more selective and cautious in sharing personal information.

Given these findings, adolescents are encouraged to use social media carefully by respecting privacy boundaries and being mindful of their digital footprints. It is also important for parents, schools, and communities to offer digital literacy education that covers not only technical skills but also ethics, security, and responsible communication online. Future research should include additional factors like self-confidence, self-esteem, social support, social anxiety, self-control, and perceived privacy risk to gain a more complete understanding of adolescents' self-disclosure behaviors on social media.

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