THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN ENHANCING SOCIAL AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

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Abstract. Education is recognized as one of the fundamental pillars in societal development. The advancement of information technology, particularly social media, has transformed the paradigm in education. Social media offers a broad and easily accessible platform for communities to share knowledge, information, and experiences. This research aims to delve deeper into the role of social media in enhancing social awareness and community participation in education. The research method employed in this study is a literature review using a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. Data for this research were gathered from Google Scholar for the period 2008-2024. The study findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in enhancing social awareness and community participation in education. Through its ability to disseminate information quickly and widely, social media opens up opportunities to broaden societal awareness of social and educational issues. Furthermore, social media also facilitates active participation in learning and discussions, both in formal and informal contexts.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Awareness, Participation, Education

Abstrak Pendidikan diakui sebagai salah satu pilar utama dalam pembangunan masyarakat. Perkembangan teknologi informasi, terutama media sosial, telah mengubah paradigma dalam pendidikan. Media sosial menawarkan platform yang luas dan mudah diakses bagi masyarakat untuk berbagi pengetahuan, informasi, dan pengalaman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki secara lebih mendalam peran media sosial dalam meningkatkan kesadaran sosial dan partisipasi masyarakat dalam pendidikan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah tinjauan pustaka dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan analisis deskriptif. Data untuk penelitian ini diambil dari Google Scholar pada rentang tahun 2008-2024. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa media sosial memiliki peran yang signifikan dalam meningkatkan kesadaran sosial dan partisipasi masyarakat dalam pendidikan. Melalui kemampuannya dalam menyebarkan informasi dengan cepat dan luas, media sosial membuka peluang untuk memperluas wawasan masyarakat tentang isu-isu sosial dan pendidikan. Selain itu, media sosial juga memfasilitasi partisipasi aktif dalam pembelajaran dan diskusi, baik dalam konteks formal maupun informal.

Kata Kunci: Media Sosial, Kesadaran Sosial, Partisipasi, Pendidikan

INTRODUCTION

Education has been identified as a crucial foundation for the social and economic progress of a nation (Khatete, 2014). The quality of education, when maintained, not only influences an individual's personal development but also strengthens the social and economic structural foundations of society (Angrayana et al., 2023). This is reflected in its long-term effects on skill levels, innovation, and productivity, which in turn significantly contribute to economic growth, infrastructure development, and general welfare. The digital era has witnessed a substantial paradigm shift in the world of education, especially with the advancement of information technology, including the use of social media. The presence of social media has introduced a new foundation that enables the exchange of knowledge, information, and experiences openly and affordably among members of society (Kumar & Nanda, 2024). These platforms, which are inclusive and interactive in nature, expand accessibility to educational resources that were previously limited.

The penetration of social media has expanded across all layers of society, including among student and educator communities. This phenomenon is inseparable from the increasingly widespread and affordable internet access, which significantly reinforces the role of social media as the primary medium for communication and information exchange (Triantoro & Pramana, 2024). Now, with more affordable internet networks available on various devices, from smartphones to computers, people have easier and more flexible access to connect with social media platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Social media offers vast potential for deepening social awareness and fostering active community participation in the educational context (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016). Its existence allows for the instant and widespread dissemination of educational information across all layers of society, shaping a deeper understanding of crucial issues in the realm of education (Raharjo et al., 2023). In this context, social media serves as a tool for spreading news or information and as a platform that enables open dialogue and the exchange of views among various stakeholders involved in the world of education, from educators to students and parents.

Although social media offers significant potential in the educational context, it cannot be denied that there are various challenges that need to be addressed. One crucial challenge is the validity and reliability of the information disseminated on social media, where there is a risk of unverified or even harmful information emerging (Khan et al., 2022). This phenomenon often occurs due to the nature of social media platforms that allow anyone to spread information without first undergoing rigorous verification processes. As a result, there is potential for the emergence of invalid or misleading content, which can affect the understanding and perception

of certain educational issues in society. Additionally, it should be noted that social media often becomes a breeding ground for prejudiced or conflict-triggering content, which can disrupt the teaching and learning process and create an unconducive educational environment (Thaariq, 2020).

In anticipation of the challenges faced in utilizing social media in the educational context, it is important to emphasize the development of educational models that effectively integrate the role of social media as an integral part of the learning process. The development of such models becomes increasingly important as they can provide a strong foundation for innovation and the enhancement of learning quality. Referring to the above explanation, this research aims to investigate in-depth the role of social media in enhancing social awareness and community participation in education. The results of this research are expected to provide a better understanding of how social media can be optimized to improve the quality of education and community participation in the education process.

METHOD

The research methodology employed in this study is a literature review utilizing a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. The qualitative approach enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, in this case, the role of social media in enhancing social awareness and community participation in education. Descriptive analysis is used to systematically describe and analyze data obtained from the literature review, including trends, key findings, and emerging patterns in the articles found. Data for this research were gathered from Google Scholar for the period 2008-2024. The keywords used for the article search were "Social Media," "Social Awareness," "Community Participation," and "Education." The initial search yielded 55 articles. However, to obtain more relevant and specific results, further filtering was necessary. The next steps included removing articles that did not meet the research criteria, such as those that did not directly relate to all the keywords or did not present empirical data. Additionally, duplicate articles or those that were only abstracts without full texts were excluded from the list. After this rigorous filtering process, the number of relevant articles meeting the research criteria was reduced to 48. The remaining articles were then analyzed in greater depth to identify patterns, relationships, and key findings related to the influence of social media on social awareness, community participation, and education. Consequently, the next stage involved synthesizing information from the selected articles to formulate conclusions that could provide insights into how social media can be used as a tool to enhance social awareness, encourage community participation, and support

education. This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of social media in the educational context, focusing on enhancing social awareness and community participation. By employing this method, it is hoped that this research can offer deep and relevant insights into understanding the phenomenon under investigation. The research flowchart is summarized in the figure below.
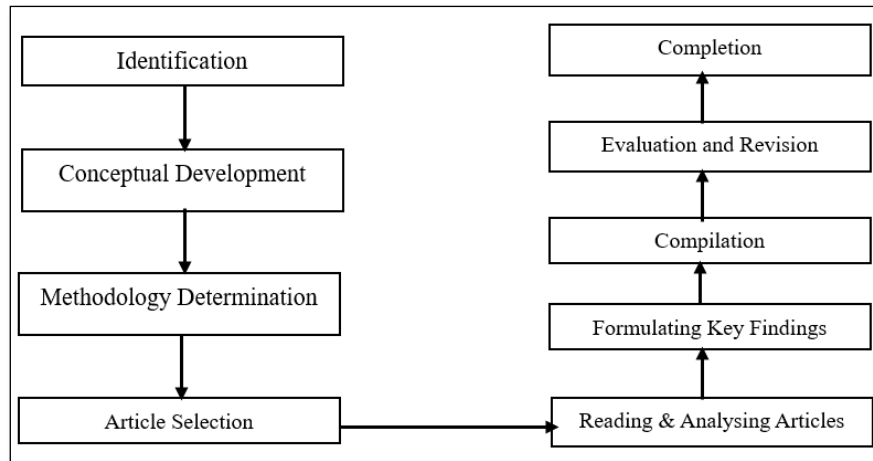

Figure 1. Research Flowchart

RESULTS

Social media refers to online platforms that enable users to interact, share content, and participate in social activities virtually (Sutrisno, Purnomo, et al., 2023). Utilizing internet technology, social media provides various features such as status updates, sharing photos and videos, and comment sections that facilitate communication between users (Ohara et al., 2024). Through social media, individuals can connect with friends, family, and communities quickly and easily, resulting in extensive and diverse social networks (Azzaakiyyah, 2023). Additionally, social media serves as an important space for disseminating information, promoting ideas, and discussing current social issues evolving in society (Purnama & Asdlori, 2023). Thus, social media not only serves as a tool for communication and interaction but also as a crucial medium for self-expression, learning, and social activities online (Ausat, 2023).

Social awareness refers to the understanding and consciousness of individuals or groups regarding relevant social issues in society (Burke et al., 2009). This encompasses understanding human rights, gender equality, social justice, the environment, and various other social issues. Social awareness involves recognizing social issues existing around us and the willingness to take positive actions to influence change or solutions to these problems. Individuals with high social awareness tend to be sensitive to inequalities, injustices, or disempowerment within

society, and they may engage in various activities aimed at improving social conditions or promoting positive change (Maton, 2008). Social awareness also involves the ability to empathize with others, understand different perspectives, and act empathetically to assist those in need. Thus, social awareness serves as a crucial foundation in building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society.

Community participation refers to the active involvement and contribution of individuals or groups in various activities or processes occurring within society (Rijal, 2023). This includes various forms of participation, ranging from participation in elections, public discussions, social actions, volunteer activities, to participation in community activities and local development. Community participation also encompasses joint decision-making and problem-solving done collectively, as well as contributions in designing and implementing programs that affect the daily lives of the community (Shields et al., 2021). Community participation is not just about physical participation in an activity but also involves influencing and contributing ideas, opinions, and aspirations in decision-making processes that can affect the direction and policies of society (Kadariya et al., 2023). With active and inclusive community participation, communities have the opportunity to develop their collective potential, strengthen social relationships, improve quality of life, and reinforce democracy and good governance within a nation.

Education is a systematic process aimed at transferring knowledge, skills, values, and culture from one generation to the next (Sudi et al., 2023). More than just teaching, education encompasses efforts to shape the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development of individuals (Siminto et al., 2023). Through education, individuals are given the opportunity to develop their cognitive abilities, such as reading, writing, and numeracy, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the world around them (Mustofa & Anggara, 2023). Additionally, education aims to shape the character and morality of individuals, teaching values such as tolerance, justice, and cooperation, and preparing them to contribute positively to society (Sutrisno, Permana, et al., 2023). The educational process occurs in various contexts, from formal settings such as schools and universities to non-formal and informal settings, such as learning through everyday life experiences and interactions with the environment (Azzaakiyyah et al., 2023). Overall, education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals, communities, and the future of a nation (Mahmudin, 2023).

DISCUSSION

Social media, with its increasingly pervasive presence and continuous growth, has become one of the most influential communication tools in connecting individuals across the globe (Rahmayanti & Fauzi, 2021). Its profound impact has led to transformations in various sectors of human life, particularly in the contexts of education and social awareness. This technological development has shifted paradigms in the learning process, enabling wider and more open access to information, and facilitating collaboration among individuals from diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. Additionally, social media has opened doors to more open and inclusive dialogues on relevant social issues, expanding the scope of public discussion and raising awareness about various problems affecting society globally (Akram & Kumar, 2017).

The role of social media in enhancing social awareness and engaging community participation in the context of education holds a very significant position in this digital era (Ohara, 2023). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and various others not only create spaces for communication but also open doors for the instant and equitable dissemination of information. The presence of social media drastically changes the dynamics of information dissemination; information about social and educational issues can reach the public at unprecedented speeds (Isriyah et al., 2024). A concrete example is during natural disasters or other significant events, where social media can function as a highly effective channel for disseminating safety instructions, shelter locations, and information on various types of available assistance quickly and accurately. In this context, social media serves as a superior communication tool and an information hub with great potential to mobilize social awareness and collective action.

Besides its primary role as a communication tool, social media also provides opportunities for the public to actively engage in learning processes and deep discussions. Various platforms offer spaces for individuals to share ideas, experiences, and valuable educational resources. The formation of discussion groups and online communities through social media provides opportunities for those with similar interests to engage in productive interactions and enrich each other's knowledge (Kimmerle et al., 2015). Essentially, social media not only serves as a channel for consuming information but also as a platform for active and open collaboration, facilitating the development of shared knowledge and the exchange of enriching ideas in an inclusive and diverse environment.

While it is undeniable that social media has negative impacts, such as the spread of false or inaccurate information that can cause confusion among the public, it is also important to recognize that with wise and critical use, social media has great potential to create a more

informative and educated landscape. The phenomenon of spreading invalid information is an issue that encourages the adoption of more careful approaches in consuming and disseminating content on these platforms (Lan & Tung, 2024). In facing this challenge, the public is expected to hone their digital literacy skills, learn verification techniques, and develop sensitivity to reliable sources. Therefore, despite the inherent risks, social media can still be an effective tool in raising awareness of social and educational issues, provided it is used with full awareness and responsibility.

The importance of social media in education also includes its impact in the context of formal learning in various educational institutions. It is evident that many educational institutions have started integrating social media into their curriculum structures as an integral part of learning tools. Examples of this implementation include using platforms like YouTube to present lesson materials in an engaging visual format, or Twitter to facilitate dynamic and real-time class discussions. By adopting this approach, teachers can create more responsive and interactive learning environments, effectively increasing student engagement (Paladino, 2008). This approach also allows students to learn in a way that is more contextual and relevant to their needs and individual learning styles, expanding the scope of education from merely delivering information to creating deeper and more sustainable learning experiences.

The role of social media in promoting equality in access to education cannot be overlooked, especially with the ongoing transformation of the global educational landscape. Despite various challenges related to geographical or financial access, platforms such as YouTube, Coursera, and Khan Academy have extended the reach of quality education to individuals from diverse backgrounds and locations (Korkut et al., 2015). This phenomenon has provided access and built bridges toward equality in learning. The gap in educational access, which remains a critical issue in many regions, can be addressed more effectively (Haidir & Setyari, 2024). Essentially, through these efforts, social media contributes significantly to fostering a more inclusive educational paradigm where every individual has an equal opportunity to access the knowledge and resources needed to realize their full potential.

Social media is not only a communication tool but also has immense potential in mobilizing support for various educational and social initiatives with positive impacts. In this digital era, crowdfunding campaigns on platforms like GoFundMe or Kickstarter have become effective means for individuals, NGOs, or educational institutions to raise funds for beneficial educational projects. This phenomenon demonstrates that support garnered through social media often transcends geographical boundaries, enabling these projects to achieve their funding targets more quickly than traditional fundraising methods. Social media acts as a major

driver in fostering global collaboration and solidarity in supporting various initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality and improving social conditions worldwide (Matang et al., 2023).

Social media is not merely a communication tool; it also serves as a platform that facilitates educators and social advocates in building networks and raising awareness about crucial societal issues (Tara Karki, 2024). Amid the vast digital information landscape, activists use social media to disseminate informative and inspirational content, forming strong movements to advocate for social and educational change (Valenzuela, 2013). A tangible example of social media's power to effect change is the #MeToo campaign, which exposed sexual harassment and drove cultural change, and the #BlackLivesMatter campaign, which highlighted and challenged racial inequality. Through these efforts, educators and social advocates use social media not just as a communication tool but as a medium to build unity, organize collective action, and extend the reach of their messages globally, significantly impacting the pursuit of social justice and educational advancement.

Of course, in the effort to use social media to enhance social awareness and public participation in education, there are several challenges that require serious attention. One of the main challenges is the risk of restrictions on freedom of speech that may be imposed by parties interested in controlling narratives or limiting access to information (Voerman-Tam et al., 2023). The misuse of social media can also contribute to societal polarization and the spread of harmful content, which may contradict the high educational and social values (Otieno, 2024). Additionally, the adoption of this technology raises concerns about privacy and data security, necessitating ongoing efforts to manage the psychological impacts of excessive social media use (Albulayhi & Khediri, 2022). Acknowledging this complexity, it is crucial for society to actively engage in discussions and policy formulation aimed at addressing these challenges while reinforcing the positive benefits of social media in shaping inclusive social awareness and enhancing public participation in education.

Nonetheless, facing the complexity of challenges in using social media to create positive social and educational change requires a careful and collaborative approach from various stakeholders. Cooperation between governments, civil society organizations, social media platforms, and individuals is key to overcoming these challenges and maximizing the positive potential of social media (Kövér, 2021). Governments can play an essential role in formulating policies that support the responsible and ethical use of social media, while civil society organizations can provide advocacy and support in maintaining information integrity and individual rights in the digital environment. Social media platforms also have a responsibility

to strengthen efforts in controlling and monitoring harmful content, while promoting positive and ethical engagement among their users. On the other hand, individuals also play a role in enhancing digital literacy and awareness of the social impact of media, as well as in supporting campaigns and movements aimed at bringing about positive societal change. If a solid and coordinated cooperation is established between all related parties, we can achieve the common goal of optimizing the role of social media as an effective tool in creating beneficial changes for society and education.

In the context of optimizing the role of social media in raising social awareness and public participation in education, collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders are needed to strengthen digital and critical literacy among the public (Atrup et al., 2023). Comprehensive education on how to consume and produce social media content wisely is crucial to shaping individuals who are more aware of its impact and responsible in its use. Furthermore, appropriate regulation is also a critical aspect in ensuring that social media is used ethically and in line with common interests. Through this holistic and integrated approach, society can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of social media and actively participate in mitigating risks and maximizing its positive potential in shaping a more aware and participatory society in education and social awareness.

Therefore, it is undeniable that social media has great potential to be a powerful tool in enhancing social awareness and public participation in education. By adopting the right approach and through collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, we can fully harness the power of social media to create a more aware, inclusive, and educated society. This signifies that social media is not just a communication tool but also a significant means in shaping social and educational dynamics in this digital era. Through collective efforts in promoting responsible and ethical use of social media, as well as through education on digital and critical literacy, we can create an online environment that is safer, more cultured, and more beneficial for all members of society. Thus, the role of social media in strengthening social awareness and participation in education is not just a possibility, but also an urgent need in facing the challenges and opportunities in the ever-evolving digital era.

Table 1. The role of social media in education

No	Aspects	Description
1	Information Dissemination	Social media enables the rapid and widespread dissemination of information about social and educational issues to the public within seconds, assisting in emergencies such as natural disasters or other significant events.
2	Active Participation	Communities can actively participate in learning and discussions through various social media platforms,

		forming online discussion groups and communities that facilitate the exchange of thoughts, experiences, and educational resources.
3	Integration into Curriculum	Social media is beginning to be integrated into formal education curricula, enriching learning experiences through the use of platforms such as YouTube or Twitter, which help increase student engagement and facilitate learning according to their learning styles.
4	Promotion of Access Equality	Social media platforms such as YouTube, Coursera, or Khan Academy provide access to quality educational resources for anyone, anywhere, addressing gaps in education access that still exist in many regions.
5	Mobilization of Support	Through crowdfunding campaigns on platforms like GoFundMe or Kickstarter, social media mobilizes support for educational projects, aiding in effectively raising funds and reaching project targets more quickly.
6	Building Networks	Social media provides a platform for education enthusiasts and social advocates to build networks and raise awareness about important issues in society, enabling the creation of powerful content to support social and educational change.
7	Challenges	Challenges include the risk of freedom of speech restrictions, social media misuse leading to societal polarization and dissemination of harmful content, as well as the need for digital literacy and appropriate regulations to ensure ethical use of social media.
8	Collaborative Efforts	Collaborative efforts are needed to enhance digital and critical literacy among the public, as well as appropriate regulations to ensure responsible and effective use of social media for the common good.

Source: Secondary data analysis (2024)

CONCLUSION

Social media plays a significant role in enhancing social awareness and community participation in education. Through its ability to disseminate information quickly and widely, social media opens up opportunities to broaden societal awareness of social and educational issues. Additionally, social media facilitates active participation in learning and discussions, both in formal and informal contexts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions drawn suggest the need for a careful and collaborative approach in utilizing social media. This includes enhancing digital and critical literacy among the public, as well as implementing appropriate regulations to ensure the ethical and responsible use of

social media. Thus, the positive potential of social media in creating positive social and educational changes can be maximized while addressing potential challenges.

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