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Level Of Digital Literacy Understanding In Rt 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, Bengkulu City

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Abstract.

This study investigates the digital literacy proficiency among residents in RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, Bengkulu City. Given how pervasive digital technology has become, it is crucial to assess the community's capabilities in safely accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating, and creating information. We utilized a descriptive quantitative approach, collecting data through a survey administered to the household heads in the area. The results indicate that most residents fall within a moderate level of digital literacy understanding. While basic digital proficiencies such as utilizing social media for communication and routine information retrieval are evident, there is a clear shortcoming in higher-order skills. This gap is most notable concerning digital security awareness and the capacity for critical evaluation of online content. The research recommends focused educational programs designed to bolster advanced digital competencies, thereby enabling the community to more effectively and securely capitalize on the opportunities presented by the digital landscape for personal and economic growth.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Community Understanding, Digital Security, Information Evaluation, RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru, Bengkulu City.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid and pervasive expansion of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped social, economic, and civic life globally, making digital competence an essential determinant of individual and community success (Fahmi et al, 2024). Data from various national surveys indicate that while internet access continues to grow, there remains a persistent disparity in the actual level of digital literacy understanding across different regions and community strata in Indonesia (Pudjianto et al, 2025). Pudjianto et al, (2025) affirm that this disparity is particularly evident in densely populated areas that experience rapid technological change, such as certain neighborhoods in Bengkulu City. RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, is an area characterized by mixed demographics and varying levels of education, where inconsistent digital adoption rates are suspected to be a factor influencing residents' capacity to navigate the modern digital landscape effectively and safely.

Digital literacy is the capacity to safely and effectively access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information using digital devices, and it has become one of the most pressing public competency requirements in the modern era. The shift towards e-government services, online commerce, and digital communication necessitates a skilled population. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Communication

and Informatics, efforts to boost national digital literacy remain high, yet the success of these programs fundamentally relies on community participation and the foundational knowledge held by residents (Fahmi et al, 2025). Despite various governmental and institutional efforts to enhance digital skills, limited public knowledge about critical aspects such as digital security and the ability to critically evaluate online information significantly hampers the community's full benefit from digital opportunities (Merchant, 2025).

Bengkulu City is among the regions experiencing this digital transition, where the increasing reliance on online platforms is juxtaposed with the potential risks associated with digital ignorance. Within the city, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, specifically RT 15, has been observed as an area where community engagement with digital resources is high, but reports from local community leaders suggest that awareness of advanced digital risks and responsible usage is limited.

In RT 15, many residents are proficient in basic digital operations, such as using social media for communication or accessing popular online videos. However, they may not be fully aware of the dangers of phishing scams, tend to neglect privacy settings, or struggle to discern between credible and unreliable news sources. Fahmi et al. (2024) explain that this lack of advanced knowledge not only puts individuals at risk of financial loss or data breaches but also contributes to the wider societal problem of misinformation within the community. Public knowledge about the transmission of information, security protocols, and responsible digital citizenship is therefore a key determinant in the effectiveness of utilizing digital platforms.

The lack of sufficient knowledge also affects the way people interact with critical information. In many cases, residents may inadvertently share misleading health or political content because they are unable to recognize the tell-tale signs of fabricated news or biased reporting (Merchant, 2025). Such limited skills often result in a failure to capitalize on digital tools for personal and economic advancement and increase their vulnerability to online exploitation.

Given these challenges, it is necessary to analyze the level of digital literacy understanding in RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village. Understanding the gaps in awareness especially in the dimensions of critical evaluation and security will help stakeholders, including local government, education centers, and community leaders, to design and implement more effective digital literacy education and intervention programs tailored to the community's specific needs.

This study is expected to highlight the relationship between the current level of digital literacy and the community's ability to safely and effectively participate in the digital economy. By identifying the specific aspects of knowledge that are lacking, such as transmission methods, prevention techniques, or symptom recognition, more targeted educational strategies can be developed. Furthermore, the findings can contribute to broader efforts in Bengkulu City to foster a digitally empowered citizenry and improve community participation in navigating the digital world (Pudjianto, 2025).

Therefore, the research entitled "Level of Digital Literacy Understanding in RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, Bengkulu City" aims to investigate the extent of public understanding regarding core digital competencies, analyze the contributing factors to any low awareness levels, and propose recommendations to strengthen community-based digital empowerment efforts..

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Methods

- Research Type: Quantitative Descriptive
- Research Location: Neighborhood Association (RT) 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, Bengkulu City
- Number of Respondents: 25 heads of families
- Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling
- Instrument: Closed-ended questionnaire
- Data Analysis: Frequency distribution and percentage

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 From the results of a survey of 25 respondents, it was found that:

Aspect of Understanding	Good (%)	Enough (%)	Not Enough (%)
Operational/Technical Skills	45%	30%	25%
Information and Evaluation Skills	16%	24%	60%
Digital Safety and Security	20%	23%	67%

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the level of digital literacy understanding among the heads of families in RT 15, Sawah Lebar Baru Urban Village, Bengkulu City. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that the community's overall digital literacy proficiency falls into the "Moderate to Low" category.

Specifically, the results show a significant disparity across the measured dimensions. Residents exhibit a high operational competency in utilizing common communication and entertainment applications, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok. This indicates successful adoption of digital tools for social interaction and basic information access. However, this proficiency does not extend to the higher-order skills necessary for safe and responsible digital participation.

A critical gap was identified in the dimensions of Information and Evaluation Skills and Digital Safety and Security. The majority of respondents displayed limited ability to critically assess the credibility of online sources, making them highly susceptible to misinformation and hoaxes. Furthermore, their awareness and practice regarding digital security, including recognizing phishing attempts, using strong passwords, and protecting personal data privacy, were found to be minimal. This low level of security awareness significantly increases the community's vulnerability to various forms of online exploitation.

The implication of these findings is that while the community is connected, they are not adequately equipped to handle the complexities and risks of the digital environment. Therefore, this research strongly recommends that local stakeholders, including the Bengkulu City Health Office and local community leaders, prioritize the implementation of targeted digital literacy programs. These programs should move beyond basic operational training and focus specifically on enhancing critical thinking and digital safety practices to empower the residents of RT 15 to fully, securely, and responsibly capitalize on digital opportunities.

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