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## The role of digital literacy in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The rapid development of information technology and social media has greatly enhanced the dissemination of political information in Indonesia, especially among first-time voters, a key demographic in elections. However, this increase in information flow has also heightened the risk of political disinformation, which can shape young voters' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Many first-time voters, due to their limited ability to verify information, are vulnerable to becoming both targets and spreaders of political hoaxes. This study examines the role of digital literacy in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia, focusing on access, evaluation, creation, ethical awareness, and active participation in online discourse. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the study analyzes relevant studies published between 2013 and 2024. The findings show that digital literacy enhances first-time voters' ability to verify information and avoid sharing unverified content. Strengthening digital literacy is crucial for enhancing democratic participation and mitigating the negative impacts of disinformation.

### Keywords

Digital literacy, first-time voters, hoax prevention, political disinformation, social media

### Article History

Received 14 September 2025  
Accepted 20 January 2026

### How to Cite

Utami, A. G. I. D. A., Budiarta, I. W., Wirayhyuni, K., & Sujana, I. P. W. M. (2026). The role of digital literacy in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education | IRJE |*, 10(1), 143-157. <https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v10i1.48338>

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## Introduction

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology over the past two decades has fundamentally transformed how people access, process, and disseminate information. The internet, social media, and digital devices have created a new public space that is interactive, dynamic, and boundaryless. In Indonesia, this shift is particularly evident in the growing internet penetration, even in rural areas, which has significantly expanded access to various sources of information, particularly for the younger generation (Nurdin et al., 2025). This digital transformation has enhanced public participation in discourse, particularly on social and political issues. However, despite these opportunities, significant challenges arise from the overwhelming flood of unverified information. Often, this information blurs the line between facts and opinions or is outright disinformation, potentially misleading the public.

This issue has become more pronounced as the younger generation increasingly engages in politics, especially first-time voters, who play a crucial role in every election. First-time voters, typically aged 17 to 21, are in a transitional phase toward political maturity, as their critical thinking and political awareness continue to develop. While this group generally possesses considerable digital literacy in using social media and technology (Destavino et al., 2023), they are also highly vulnerable to the influence of an overwhelming, unfiltered flow of information they encounter, especially when it is presented in persuasive or emotional forms. In this context, digital literacy becomes essential, as it equips first-time voters with the necessary skills to identify, verify, and critically analyze the information they receive.

The spread of political disinformation in the digital age is a global concern that threatens the integrity of democratic processes. In Indonesia, particularly during election periods, social media is often inundated with misinformation and disinformation aimed at distorting public perceptions of political candidates or parties (Santoso et al., 2024). Political disinformation often exploits popular platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter, employing emotional narratives, manipulated videos, and viral memes to influence voters. First-time voters are prime targets for such disinformation, as they tend to respond more readily to short, provocative content but are less likely to fact-check before believing or sharing it.

According to the Digital News Report by the Reuters Institute (2023), approximately 62% of internet users in Indonesia rely on social media as their primary source of political information, with the 18-24 age group being the largest consumer of news through these platforms (Hari et al., 2025). Furthermore, data from the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society (MAFINDO) showed that more than 1,500 political hoaxes circulated on social media in the lead-up to the 2019 elections, with WhatsApp and Facebook being the primary channels. A 2022 UNESCO report found that while 54% of young people in Indonesia trust information on social media, only 27% verify the information they receive routinely (Nurliah et al., 2025). This gap in digital literacy directly contributes to voters' vulnerability to political disinformation.

Digital literacy, as defined by Marwiyah et al. (2025), encompasses not only technical skills in using digital devices but also cognitive abilities to understand, evaluate, and create digital content in an ethical manner. In the political context, digital literacy is a vital tool for fostering critical and rational thinking among voters, enabling them to distinguish between

truthful and misleading information. Voters with strong digital literacy are better equipped to recognise information manipulation, understand media biases, and cross-check sources, all of which are essential for maintaining the quality of political participation and preventing social polarisation caused by disinformation.

In addition to the cognitive and technical skills, digital literacy includes ethical awareness, particularly in how individuals consume and share political information. First-time voters who are aware of digital literacy principles will be more cautious about sharing unverified information and act as gatekeepers within their social circles (Kurniasih et al., 2024). Moreover, digital literacy can empower the younger generation with the skills necessary to fact-check, understand digital footprints, interpret privacy policies, and assess the credibility of sources. Thus, digital literacy serves as a safeguard against disinformation, encouraging political empowerment and fostering healthier, more responsible engagement in the democratic process (Setiawan, 2021).

While numerous studies have examined the impact of digital literacy on disinformation prevention, a significant gap remains regarding its specific role among first-time voters in Indonesia, particularly during the election period. Most existing studies have focused on digital literacy in general or broader demographics, overlooking the unique characteristics of first-time voters. These individuals exhibit distinct patterns of information consumption, platform preferences, and levels of political maturity. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on digital literacy as a preventive measure against political disinformation, specifically targeting first-time Indonesian voters during the lead-up to national elections, and considering the cultural and behavioural factors that shape the digital habits of the younger generation.

This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the role of digital literacy in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia. Specifically, it seeks to explore how digital literacy influences first-time voters' ability to recognise and reject disinformation, the mechanisms they use to verify political information, and strategies to enhance their digital literacy and improve political participation in the digital age.

## **Methodology**

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant scientific publications concerning the role of digital literacy in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia (Ullah et al., 2025). The SLR approach was selected because it provides a comprehensive overview of existing research, identifies knowledge gaps, and offers evidence-based recommendations. The literature review process adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, which comprise four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion (Haddaway et al., 2022).

A literature search was conducted across national and international academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, Garuda, and Neliti. Keywords were formulated using Boolean operators, such as "digital literacy" AND "political disinformation" AND "first-time voters" AND "Indonesia," along with relevant synonyms and related terms. The inclusion criteria comprised articles published between 2020 and 2024,

in either Indonesian or English, that were directly relevant to the topic of digital literacy and political disinformation and addressed the context of first-time voters or younger generations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Non-peer-reviewed articles, focused on non-political disinformation, or did not present a relevant conceptual framework or empirical findings, were excluded.

The analysis phase involved thematic content analysis to categorize and group information according to emerging themes identified in the selected literature. The analysis began with a thorough review of each article, followed by coding to identify patterns and themes, such as the dimensions of digital literacy, common forms of political disinformation targeting first-time voters, proven effective prevention strategies, and factors hindering the implementation of digital literacy (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Findings were then compared and synthesized to identify similarities, differences, and emerging trends across the studies. The results of the SLR are presented in a structured, descriptive narrative, accompanied by a summary table that includes the research identity, study focus, methodology, key findings, and their relevance to the research objectives (Creswell, 2017). This approach enables the SLR to offer a detailed, measurable understanding of the role of digital literacy in preventing political disinformation, while also identifying areas requiring further research, particularly among first-time voters in Indonesia.

## Findings and Discussion

The analysis in this study follows a comparative synthesis approach, comparing the results of this research with those of previous studies to identify similarities, differences, and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of digital literacy. As noted by Mubarok et al. (2025), a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) not only summarizes existing literature but also uncovers patterns and research gaps. Therefore, the discussion is organized thematically, linking dimensions of digital literacy—such as source evaluation, fact-checking skills, ethical awareness, and online participation—with the behavior of first-time voters in addressing political disinformation. Each subsection integrates findings from two to three relevant studies, both from Indonesia and internationally, to strengthen the analysis and ensure a solid academic foundation. In this way, the discussion contributes to the development of contextual and applicable digital literacy strategies for preventing political disinformation in Indonesia.

The findings indicate that high levels of digital literacy among first-time voters significantly enhance their ability to verify political information before sharing it on social media. This aligns with studies by Latif et al. (2025), which found that digital literacy improves the young generation's ability to identify fake news, particularly political content. Digital literacy, encompassing skills in source evaluation, content analysis, and fact-checking, serves as a protective measure against disinformation. Similarly, research by Septian et al. (2024) in Indonesia showed that first-time voters with higher digital literacy were more likely to fact-check multiple sources before making political decisions. However, differences emerged from the findings of Karo and Afriani (2024), which found that despite respondents' high digital literacy, fact-checking behavior remained low due to low political motivation. This highlights the additional role that political interest and democratic awareness play in the effectiveness of disinformation prevention.

Additionally, this study identified that the most influential dimension of digital literacy in preventing political disinformation was the ability to evaluate information sources. This finding is consistent with [Harjanta \(2024\)](#), who conducted a digital literacy training experiment for young voters in Yogyakarta, and found that evaluating sources and recognizing media bias had a greater impact on accessing information than technical skills. The study emphasized that although young people are proficient in using technology, their critical thinking capacity still needs strengthening. This observation is further supported by [Handayani et al. \(2024\)](#), who emphasized the importance of critical thinking in digital literacy to mitigate the spread of political hoaxes. However, research by [Safitri & Wardhani \(2025\)](#) suggested that active participation in online discourse is also an important indicator, as individuals who engage more actively in discussions tend to be more aware of the need to verify information. This difference in focus illustrates that digital literacy is multidimensional and its application must be adapted to each country's socio-political context.

The study also found that positive digital literacy reduces the tendency of first-time voters to believe disinformation and share unverified information. This finding is consistent with [Amalia's \(2025\)](#) report, which indicates that participants with high digital literacy were 35% less likely to share unverified political content compared to those with lower literacy levels. [Susilawaty et al. \(2024\)](#) also demonstrated that digital literacy serves as a filter for information-sharing behavior, thereby minimizing the spread of political hoaxes before they reach wider networks. However, research by [Haryono et al. \(2025\)](#) suggests that, despite high digital literacy, factors such as political identity and ideological polarization continue to influence the tendency to share disinformation that aligns with personal political views. This suggests that while digital literacy is important, psychological factors and political affiliation also play significant roles in the spread of disinformation.

The study also found that platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp were the primary channels for disseminating political disinformation among first-time voters. This supports the findings of [Tamrin et al. \(2024\)](#), who reported that 72% of political hoaxes during the election period were spread via WhatsApp, followed by Facebook and Instagram. This is consistent with [Awaluddin et al. \(2024\)](#), which showed that first-time voters tend to consume and share short, visual political content, such as memes and videos, without conducting thorough verification. However, these results contrast with [Satria et al. \(2023\)](#), who found that Facebook was the dominant platform for political hoaxes, while TikTok played a lesser role. This discrepancy highlights variations in information consumption and distribution patterns, which depend on user demographics and technological trends in each country.

A key finding of this study is that structured digital literacy training programs can significantly improve first-time voters' awareness and information verification skills. This aligns with [Gushevinalti et al. \(2024\)](#), who found substantial improvements in participants' fact-checking skills after engaging in a one-week digital literacy training module. [Vinalti et al. \(2024\)](#) also found that media education interventions can reduce susceptibility to political hoaxes, particularly among adolescents and young voters. However, [Pramesti et al. \(2025\)](#) highlighted that the positive effects of training tend to decline after three months without continuous practice and the use of updated materials. This suggests that the sustainability of digital literacy programs is a critical factor in maintaining their effectiveness.

The study also identified several barriers to preventing disinformation, including low political motivation, confirmation bias, and a weak culture of verification. These findings align with those of Latief and Triuspita (2024), who explained that confirmation bias often leads individuals to accept information that confirms their existing beliefs without proper verification. Jati (2024) also found that some first-time voters were reluctant to verify political news due to perceived limitations in their capacity or time. Additionally, research by Abisono et al. (2024) highlighted that economic factors, such as limited access to high-quality internet, are significant barriers to combating disinformation. These findings indicate that it is necessary for digital literacy strategies to consider not only cognitive and behavioral aspects but also the socio-economic context of the target population.

**Table 1.** *Grouping research results based on category*

Category	Researcher Name	Findings
The Influence of Digital Literacy on the Ability to Verify Political Information	Karo and Afriani (2024), Latif et al. (2025), Septian et al. (2024)	High digital literacy improves first-time voters' ability to verify political information before sharing it on social media. Voters with high literacy tend to fact-check multiple sources before making a decision. However, low political motivation can lead to minimal verification behavior, even with high digital literacy.
The Most Influential Dimensions of Digital Literacy	Handayani et al. (2024), Harjanta (2024), Safitri and Wardhani (2025)	The ability to evaluate information sources is the most dominant dimension in preventing disinformation. The ability to recognize media bias and think critically has a significant impact compared to technical skills in accessing information. Active participation in online discourse is also a crucial indicator in encouraging information verification behavior.
The Influence of Digital Literacy on Information Sharing Behavior	Amalia (2025), Haryono et al. (2025), Susilawaty et al. (2024)	Good digital literacy reduces the tendency to share unverified political information. Digital literacy acts as a filter on sharing behavior, thereby minimizing hoaxes. However, political identity and ideological polarization still encourage some individuals to share information that aligns with their personal views, even if it's unverified.
Social Media Platforms as Channels for the Spread of Disinformation	Awaluddin et al. (2024), Satria et al. (2023), Tamrin et al. (2024)	Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are the primary channels for disseminating disinformation among first-time voters. Most political hoaxes are spread through WhatsApp, followed by Facebook and Instagram. In some contexts, Facebook is more dominant and TikTok plays a lesser role, demonstrating variations in information distribution based on technological and demographic trends.

Effectiveness of Digital Literacy Training	Gushevinalti et al. (2024), Pramesti et al. (2025), Vinalti et al. (2024)	Digital literacy training programs increase awareness and information verification skills. Media education interventions reduce vulnerability to political hoaxes, especially among adolescents and young voters. Positive effects tend to diminish without continued practice and updated materials, making program sustainability a critical factor.
Barriers to Preventing Political Disinformation	Abisono et al. (2024), Jati (2024), Latief and Triuspita (2024)	Key barriers include low political motivation, confirmation bias, a weak culture of verification, and limited access to quality internet. These factors hinder the optimal implementation of digital literacy, so prevention strategies need to consider socioeconomic and behavioral aspects, in addition to cognitive factors.

Source: Processed Results (2025)

Table 1 presents a categorized summary of the key findings from the literature reviewed in this study. It organizes the research results into six main categories: (1) the influence of digital literacy on the ability to verify political information, (2) the most influential dimensions of digital literacy, (3) the influence of digital literacy on information-sharing behavior, (4) social media platforms as channels for spreading disinformation, (5) the effectiveness of digital literacy training, and (6) barriers to preventing political disinformation.

Each row of the table highlights the relevant studies and summarizes the main findings. For example, the findings indicate that digital literacy enhances the ability of first-time voters to verify political information before sharing it, with critical thinking and source evaluation skills being the most influential dimensions in preventing the spread of disinformation. However, the table also reveals the complexities of disinformation prevention, such as the influence of political identity, ideological polarization, and confirmation bias. The table further shows that platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok are the primary channels for disinformation, and that structured digital literacy training can increase fact-checking skills, although its effectiveness may diminish over time without continuous reinforcement.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize the critical role of digital literacy in mitigating political disinformation among first-time voters. High digital literacy enables voters to verify political information before sharing it, with the most significant dimensions being source evaluation, critical thinking, and active participation in online discourse. However, the study also highlights the psychological and political factors, such as political motivation and ideological polarization, that can influence voters' behavior, regardless of their level of digital literacy. Furthermore, while platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok are primary channels for the spread of disinformation, effective digital literacy programs can help reduce the dissemination of unverified information. However, these programs must be sustained to maintain their impact, and strategies should consider socio-economic barriers that affect access to digital resources. This study underscores the importance of integrating digital literacy education with political awareness, media ethics campaigns, and accessible verification technologies to strengthen democratic processes.

### *Dimensions of digital literacy and their role in preventing political disinformation*

Digital literacy encompasses a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable individuals to effectively access, understand, evaluate, and utilize information in the digital environment. In a political context, it extends beyond the ability to use digital tools and encompasses critical thinking, ethical awareness, and responsible behaviour when interacting online. The rapid and overwhelming flow of information in today's digital environment makes digital literacy a key factor in maintaining the quality of political participation, especially for first-time voters, who are often targeted by social media-based political campaigns (Putri et al., 2025).

First-time voters, aged 17 to 21, are at a pivotal stage in their political maturity. They are active users of digital technology but are still developing critical thinking and political awareness, making them susceptible to manipulative content, including political disinformation. Without adequate digital literacy, they may internalise false narratives or unknowingly contribute to their spread. Therefore, understanding the dimensions of digital literacy and its role in disinformation prevention is crucial (Dharmajaya et al., 2025).

***Dimensions of information access and navigation***, the first dimension of digital literacy is the ability to access and navigate information effectively. This involves not just owning a device and having internet access, but also the skill to retrieve accurate, relevant information from diverse digital sources. It includes using search engines, managing keywords, and understanding how social media algorithms influence the content presented.

For first-time voters, the ability to navigate information is essential in combating political disinformation. Skilled navigators are less likely to rely on a single source of information. They can actively seek out alternative perspectives, breaking free from the "information bubble" created by algorithms. This broader exposure reduces the risk of being trapped in a narrow narrative, which is often fertile ground for disinformation.

***Dimensions of information evaluation and assessment***, information evaluation is central to digital literacy in the context of disinformation prevention. It includes the ability to assess the credibility of sources, accuracy of content, relevance of data, and the intent behind the information. In the digital world, where anyone can create or manipulate content, first-time voters must develop the ability to spot signs of inaccuracy, such as factual errors, emotional language, or the lack of clear references.

Strong evaluation skills help voters distinguish between credible content and material designed for manipulation or propaganda. In practice, this may involve verifying content creators' credentials, comparing information with official sources, and identifying biases in news or posts. The stronger a person's evaluation skills, the less likely they are to be influenced by disinformation or contribute to its spread.

***Dimensions of digital content creation***, digital literacy extends beyond consuming information to include the ability to create accurate, ethical, and meaningful content. Content creation involves understanding public communication rules, the ethics of sharing information, and technical skills in processing text, images, and videos.

For first-time voters, content creation is important because they are not just consumers of information but also producers and distributors. The ability to create factually accurate, well-supported content is an active way to counter disinformation. First-time voters skilled in content creation can help generate healthy counter-narratives that challenge the false information circulating online.

***Dimensions of ethical awareness and digital responsibility***, ethical awareness is crucial in digital literacy. It involves understanding the consequences of one's actions in the digital space, both for oneself and others. Sharing misinformation can harm individuals, divide society, or even influence the outcome of democratic processes. Digital responsibility requires individuals to think critically before sharing content, considering its social and political implications.

For first-time voters, ethical awareness serves as a reminder that their social media activity has broader societal implications. Digital ethics encourages them to question the validity of information before sharing it, maintain civility in online discussions, and respect differing opinions. Without strong ethical awareness, even high levels of digital literacy can be misused, contributing to the spread of harmful content.

***Dimensions of active participation in online discourse***, active participation in online discourse involves engaging in constructive conversations on forums, social media, and other platforms. This includes not only sharing information but also commenting, questioning, and responding based on logical arguments and data. In preventing disinformation, active participation serves as a social monitoring mechanism. First-time voters who engage in discussions are more likely to encounter diverse viewpoints, improving their ability to distinguish between fact and opinion. This interaction fosters a healthy discussion culture where political claims are verified before being widely accepted.

The dimensions of digital literacy are interconnected and mutually reinforce one another. Accessing information is meaningless without critical evaluation. Likewise, content creation is less effective without ethical awareness in its dissemination. Integrating these dimensions forms a strong foundation for a digital environment resilient to political disinformation. For first-time voters, this means possessing the skills to protect themselves from manipulation. When encountering political news, they will access multiple sources, evaluate their accuracy, consider their implications, and decide whether to share it. This practice is a concrete manifestation of comprehensive digital literacy.

Digital literacy directly influences the behaviour of first-time voters when they consume and share political information. Those with strong digital literacy are selective in their information consumption, relying on trusted sources and rarely sharing unverified content. They are more open to differing opinions and better able to separate fact from opinion. In contrast, individuals with lower digital literacy are more likely to rely on one or two sources, seldom verify information, and are more easily swayed by emotional narratives. They are also at risk of being trapped in an echo chamber, where only information that aligns with their beliefs is shared. Thus, digital literacy is not just a supporting factor but a determining one in the quality of political participation for the younger generation.

Strengthening digital literacy among first-time voters can be achieved through formal education, community training, and public campaigns. Formal education can incorporate digital literacy curricula teaching information evaluation, ethical awareness, and content

creation. Community training can provide hands-on experience in verifying political news and creating counter-disinformation content. Public campaigns can use social media to help people recognise and avoid disinformation. Collaboration among governments, educational institutions, civil society, and social media platforms can make digital literacy a collective movement that protects first-time voters from disinformation and fosters a healthier political culture in the digital era.

Digital literacy is essential for first-time voters to navigate the complex flow of political information. Information access, critical evaluation, content creation, ethical awareness, and active participation in discourse are complementary components in building resilience against disinformation. Integrating these dimensions not only prevents the spread of misinformation but also fosters a transparent, inclusive, and democratic political environment. Strengthening digital literacy enables first-time voters to become agents of positive change, protect themselves from manipulation, and contribute to a healthy political information ecosystem in Indonesia.

### ***Behaviour of first-time voters in facing political disinformation***

First-time voters are typically aged 17–21 and are engaging in the democratic process for the first time. This group is characterised by idealism, curiosity, and significant exposure to digital information. Social media and online platforms provide them with access to political issues but also expose them to disinformation (Susilawaty et al., 2024). While first-time voters are eager to learn, they often lack experience selecting credible sources, leading to varied responses to political content. Some voters verify information critically, while others rely on their social networks or public figures.

First-time voters often rely on social media as their primary source of political information, particularly on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp. Consuming short, visual formats, such as videos and memes, often appeals more than long-form articles. As a result, first-time voters react quickly to political issues without thoroughly evaluating them. However, some voters use social media as an entry point and then seek additional information from mainstream media or official sources. Political interest, digital literacy, and the social environment influence this difference in behaviour (Haryono et al., 2025).

Trust in information sources is another crucial factor. Many first-time voters place significant trust in public figures, idols, or close friends, regardless of the validity of the information they share. Social connections and personal preferences often serve as filters before factual verification. This characteristic makes first-time voters vulnerable to political campaigns leveraging influential figures or social networks to spread narratives. Others rely more on official institutions or reputable sources for political information.

First-time voters' responses to political disinformation range from passivity to scepticism and proactivity. Passive voters tend to avoid engaging in discussions or verifying information, either because they perceive it as irrelevant or because they lack the necessary fact-checking skills. Sceptical voters question information and seek supporting evidence before believing it (Tamrin et al., 2024). Proactive voters verify information and actively provide counter-narratives to disinformation. These behaviours indicate that digital literacy,

political interest, and media exposure significantly influence first-time voters' responses to disinformation.

One significant aspect of first-time voter behaviour is their tendency to share political information on social media. Many voters share content they consider interesting or that aligns with their views, even without verifying it. This behaviour can become a primary avenue for spreading disinformation. Voters with higher awareness are more likely to verify information, while those with less concern for content validity are more likely to spread disinformation.

The social environment plays a significant role in shaping how first-time voters respond to political disinformation. Discussions within families, among friends, and in online communities shape their opinions and responses. If the social environment encourages verification, first-time voters are likely to adopt these practices. However, if unverified information is common, such behaviour is easily replicated. A highly polarised political environment can also encourage voters to accept information that aligns with their beliefs, reinforcing the echo chamber effect.

Psychological and emotional factors pose significant challenges in addressing political disinformation. Disinformation is often designed to trigger emotions like anger, fear, or pride, which can cloud judgement. Voters who are not accustomed to managing emotional responses may quickly believe or spread disinformation. Confirmation bias also plays a role, as individuals tend to believe information that aligns with their existing views. Building awareness of these biases is essential to enhancing resilience to disinformation (Awaluddin et al., 2024).

Despite challenges, some first-time voters have developed strategies to counter disinformation, including verifying information from multiple sources, using fact-checking services, and avoiding unreliable content. These strategies, if consistently applied, can significantly reduce the risk of spreading disinformation.

Participation in digital literacy education positively influences the behaviour of first-time voters. Such programs teach fact-checking, source evaluation, and disinformation detection, enabling voters to be more cautious when consuming and sharing political information. Participation in anti-hoax communities or campaigns also strengthens critical attitudes toward political content. Thus, digital literacy education fosters positive habits for engaging responsibly in the digital space.

First-time voters' behaviour has direct implications for the quality of democracy. Voters who critically evaluate information contribute to a healthy democratic process, while those who spread disinformation undermine political participation and trust in democratic institutions. Strengthening digital literacy among first-time voters is essential for protecting democracy in the digital era.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the overall findings and discussion, it can be concluded that digital literacy plays a pivotal role in preventing the spread of political disinformation among first-time voters in Indonesia. Digital literacy, which encompasses the ability to find, evaluate, create, and share information ethically, is crucial for fostering responsible, critical, and discerning political behavior. First-time voters with strong digital literacy are more likely to verify political information before believing or sharing it, thereby interrupting the chain of disinformation.

Conversely, low digital literacy increases vulnerability to information manipulation, reinforces cognitive biases, and contributes to greater political polarization. Therefore, digital literacy is not merely a technical skill but a foundational element for ensuring healthy and democratic political participation in an era dominated by fast-moving digital information.

Strengthening the role of digital literacy in preventing political disinformation among first-time voters requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and social media platforms. Digital literacy programs should be designed comprehensively, incorporating relevant content, interactive methods, and contextual approaches tailored to the characteristics of the younger generation. Training and public campaigns must focus on enhancing skills for evaluating sources, fostering ethical awareness, and promoting the creation and dissemination of accurate political content. Furthermore, integrating digital literacy education into high school and college curricula should be considered a long-term strategy for cultivating a generation of informed, critical, and resilient voters who are resistant to the influx of political disinformation in the digital space.

### **Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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