



The Role of Social Media Literacy and Use in Determining Emotional Well-being

Noor Afy Shovmayanti^{1*}, Nisrina Akbar Rizky Putri², Ardiansyah³

¹Communication Science, University of Muhammadiyah Klaten

^{2,3}Information Technology, University of Muhammadiyah Klaten

*Correspondent email: noorafyshov@umkla.ac.id, nisrinaakbar@umkla.ac.id,
ardiansyah@umkla.ac.id

Abstract

Social media life is where communication and individuals and communities are characterized through social media networks. Concerns about the adverse effects of social media have directed public attention to media literacy as a potential solution. The SMILE Model is an effort to equip social media literacy that can influence social media use (in terms of exposure and self-expression), ultimately positively impacting individual/adolescent well-being. The results showed that most respondents preferred video content and a combination of video and text. Influencers' influence also influenced the use of social media, but only 25% of respondents felt that influencers had a significant impact on their use. Good social media literacy involves cognitive understanding and emotional regulation to improve emotional well-being. Balanced and healthy social media use can reduce loneliness and increase social support.

Keyword: *social-media, media literacy, adolescents, social media users*

Abstrak

Kehidupan ber-media sosial dimana komunikasi dan eksistensi individu dan masyarakat ditandai melalui jaringan media sosial. Kekhawatiran dampak buruk media sosial telah mengarahkan perhatian publik pada literasi media sebagai solusi potensial. SMILE Model sebagai upaya membekali literasi media sosial yang dapat mempengaruhi penggunaan media sosial (dalam hal paparan dan ekspresi diri), yang pada akhirnya berdampak positif pada kesejahteraan individu/remaja. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar responden lebih menyukai konten video dan kombinasi antara video dan teks. Pengaruh influencer juga mempengaruhi penggunaan media sosial, tetapi hanya 25% responden yang merasa bahwa influencer memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap penggunaan media sosial. Literasi media sosial yang baik melibatkan pemahaman kognitif dan regulasi emosional untuk meningkatkan kesejahteraan emosional. Penggunaan media sosial yang seimbang dan sehat dapat mengurangi rasa kesepian dan meningkatkan dukungan sosial.

Kata kunci: *sosial-media, literasi media, remaja, pengguna media sosial*





Introduction

The internet and new media make communication much faster and more efficient in everyday life (Dimas et al., 2023). Today, life is a social media reality where communication and the existence of individuals and society are characterized through social media networks. Information about oneself and society is created, organized, and distributed through networks (Kalorth et al., 2020). The process of seeking and providing information occurs within these networks, where the meaning and purpose of information determines communication. Misinformation is one of the challenges that social media presents (Wang et al., 2019). The truthfulness of information is one of the concerns people have about social media content (Cho et al., 2022).

Concerns of the adverse effects of social media have directed public attention to media literacy as a potential solution (Cho et al., 2022). Based on *Digital Civility Index* (DCI) survey research, Indonesian netizens when responding to issues or information top the level of incivility using Instagram social media, especially adult and teenage respondents (Dimas et al., 2023; Rizqi Fitri Ardiani et al., 2021). Getting negative feedback from peers on social media has a negative impact on the development and psychosocial well-being of adolescents, especially early adolescence (Koutamanis et al., 2015).

Early adolescence with an age range of 10-15 years (Aisyaroh et al., 2022; Schmuck, 2021). According to research, nearly half of the world's 1.2 billion adolescents live in low- and middle-income countries, where early adolescence is one of the most critical developmental periods (Mmari et al., 2021; Schmuck, 2021). The number of adolescent groups in Indonesia with an age range of 10-19 years is 46 million or about 17% of the population (Unicef, 2021); the majority use the internet to access social media (84.37%), news (84.28%), and entertainment (83.78%) (Nabilah et al.). Early adolescents are the Alpha generation who grew up with the rapid development of technology and digitalization. However, every progress and growth also brings potential adverse impacts if not accompanied by vigilance, fearing adverse effects on children's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Devianti et al., 2023). Skills are needed in using digital technology, in this case, social media, because according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2021, most children over five have accessed the internet for social





media in Indonesia. The percentage reached 88.99%, the most significant compared to other internet access purposes (Cindy et al., 2021). Equipping early adolescents with media literacy is a step toward strengthening character education and informed decisions to be better prepared to form Indonesia's Golden Generation. 2022, according to Indonesiabaik.ID data is still at a moderate level of 3.54, up 0.05 compared to 2021 at 3.49. To increase digital literacy, research is carried out on media literacy to build digital ethics.

Potter (2019) views media literacy as encompassing skills, knowledge structures, and personal locus. In this perspective, skills and tools are used to understand media messages. Knowledge structures refer to the organized collection of information within an individual that provides a context that can be used to interpret messages (Dame Adjin-Tetty, 2022). The media interpretation model (Austin and Johnson) states that the decision to adopt the behavior portrayed by the media (e.g., drinking, smoking) is based on logic and affect. According to the logical view, users evaluate whether media messages are representations or reality. Based on this two-pronged analysis, social media users adopt behaviors that influence decisions. To overcome this, media literacy plays a role in changing the attitudes and skills of social media users (Cho et al., 2022).

The development of technology that we feel today not only has an impact on adolescents and adults but also children, especially elementary school students. Elementary school students widely use digital space to have social networking accounts for entertainment and knowledge enhancement, including social media. The number of users of social media accounts among elementary school students is relatively high. The Central Bureau of Statistics noted that most children aged five years and over in Indonesia have accessed the internet for social media. The percentage reached 88.99%, the largest compared to other internet access purposes. Apart from social media, 66.13% of children aged five years and over in Indonesia also access the internet to get information or news. Some access the internet for entertainment as much as 63.08%, compiling data from the databoks.katadata.co.id portal.





No.	Nama Data	Nilai / %
1	Media sosial	88,99
2	Mendapat informasi	66,13
3	Hiburan	63,08
4	Tugas sekolah	33,04
5	Pembelian barang/jasa	16,25
6	Mendapat informasi barang	13,13
7	Mengirim/menerima email	13
8	Fasilitas finansial	7,78
9	Perjualan barang/jasa	5,33
10	Lainnya	4,74

Figure 1. Percentage of Children 5 Years and Older Accessing the Internet by Purpose

According to Data Reportal, in 2023, there will be 4.76 billion active social media users worldwide, equivalent to 60% of the world's population. Social media users have experienced rapid growth over the past ten years. In the middle of 2023, the number of social media users increased by 137 million new users. 353.8 million mobile connections were active in Indonesia at the beginning of 2023, equivalent to 128.0 percent of the total population.

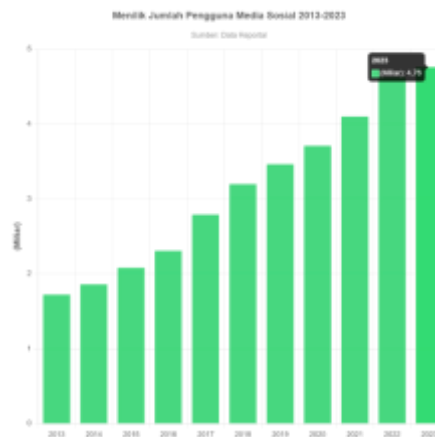


Figure 2: Number of Social Media Users

Currently, it is undeniable that many students need to be wisely in using social media. Media literacy is needed in information saturation, high media exposure, and various problems in the information that surrounds our daily lives. Through media literacy learning, elementary school students are expected to have good thinking skills, not just literal understanding, but also the ability





to use the media as needed at the appropriate age. Although the current literature discusses media literacy processes, few theories explain the social role of media literacy. Social media is used daily by many young people and may have an essential influence on the well-being of its users. Given the media literacy, media effects, social psychology, interpersonal communication, and education literature, a new theoretical framework called the Social Media Literacy Model (SMILE) is introduced. This framework is formulated to explain (1) how to conceptualize social media literacy and (2) how social media literacy can change the dynamics between social media and its users. The SMILE model is illustrated against the backdrop of social media positivity bias. Ultimately, the newly developed guiding framework aims to stimulate more theory-driven research on the scientific understanding of social media literacy in public welfare. Such insights may benefit research in children, adolescents, and media (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2021).

Literature Review

Based on the problem described above, the approach to dealing with social media exposure in early adolescence is to equip understanding and skills to realize social media literacy. In previous research, experts created a way to conceptualize social media literacy, the Social Media Literacy (SMILE) model, which consists of two interconnected dominants: development and empowerment.

SMILE Model

According to SMILE, the development of social media literacy is influenced by family, peers, and educators (Festl, 2021; Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). The domains of development and empowerment in social media literacy consist of cognitive and affective abilities. On the empowerment side, social media literacy moderates the effects of social media use on well-being (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). The media literacy conceptualization framework can be seen in the figure below, indicating the assumed relationship between social media literacy and social media use, where social media literacy is assumed to affect the way and quality of social media use.





The illustration of the model below shows that good social media literacy (both from cognitive and affective aspects) can influence social media use (in terms of exposure and self-expression), positively impacting individual well-being. Social media users who understand media literacy have less exposure to harmful content than users who do not. This is manifested in two different ways; firstly, in media selection theory, social media users selectively choose what content to view, critically evaluate who is connected, and classify as friends and strangers. Secondly, users with media literacy pay less attention to harmful content. (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2021; Vraga et al., 2016). Hence, the likelihood of encountering harmful messages can be smaller (Lup et al., 2015).

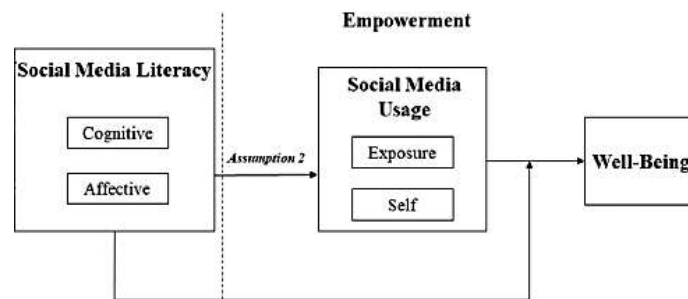


Figure 3. SMILE Model

Early adolescents' use of social networking sites significantly changes how they communicate, with whom, and the consequences (Livingstone, 2014). In addition to media understanding and skills, integrating social media users with digital ethics principles will help users navigate responsibly, ethically, and safely in using social networks. Moderate literate social media users are specifically expected to try to adaptively control negative emotions, such as jealousy and envy (Schreurs et al, 2020).

Social media literacy studies that have been conducted include (1) social media literacy and adolescent social online behavior in Germany. Literature underscores the importance of a holistic approach to social media literacy, encompassing individual competencies, parental mediation, and educational interventions (Festl, 2021). In the second study (2), the development of social media literacy in children is a multifaceted process influenced by cognitive and social maturation. By integrating insights from media literacy research and developmental psychology,





this document provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how children learn to interpret and navigate the complex digital landscapes of social networking sites (Livingstone, 2014). The third (3) review highlights the importance of children's participation in guided media literacy activities and how this helps them develop the necessary skills to interact with digital technologies in their daily lives (Aarsand et al, 2016).

The fourth (4) study conducted by Claresta concludes that self-disclosure on TikTok among adolescent girls is primarily evaluative, focusing on expressing feelings and seeking social support. This review provides an understanding of the dynamics and implications of self-disclosure on TikTok among adolescent girls, highlighting the role of social media in contemporary interpersonal communication practices (Claresta et al, 2021). The fifth (5) study conducted in Bengkulu highlighted the importance of formal and informal education in improving digital media literacy among students. The existence of more structured and directed media literacy education on campus and support from families can help increase individual understanding and competence in utilizing digital media more effectively and wisely (Kurniawati, 2016). Future research can elucidate the multifaceted nature of social media literacy by rigorously exploring the interactions among individual competencies, developmental processes, guided activities, platform-specific behaviors, and educational interventions. Based on previous research that has been conducted, this article focuses on how social media literacy, from both cognitive and affective aspects, can improve users' well-being by encouraging more positive social media use.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method, and the research was carried out in the environment of Muhammadiyah Tonggalan Elementary School Klaten to explore and describe the phenomena that occur. Descriptive analysis here involves observing students and how the use of social media relates to social media literacy. The descriptive analysis method is used in the hope that the research can provide solutions or answers to research questions related to the attributes of individual characteristics in the use of social media and to increase social media literacy in the SD Muhammadiyah Tonggalan Klaten environment.





Qualitative research aims to provide meaning and an in-depth understanding of natural problems, focusing on the significance of communication interactions between researchers and research subjects. Qualitative research aims to understand better human and social problems rather than describe reality's surface (Rijal Fadli, 2021). The data collection method was a quiz through a Google form containing a combination of open and closed research questions with informants as many as 112 6th-grade students of SD Muhammadiyah Tonggalan to measure the participants' understanding. The data collection process is in the flow chart in the figure below. The data collection is carried out after the preparation, discussion, and observation stages regarding research problems, after which data management and matching are carried out. In the next stage, data analysis is carried out from the data obtained from the field, and the data is evaluated and followed by the compilation of a research report.



Figure 4. Flowchart of Research Data Collection

Results and Discussion

Research Result

Data findings in the field related to the use of social media by grade VI students of SD Muhammadiyah Tonggalan Klaten are presented in the table below. The characteristics of social media use in grade VI students are grouped based on gender, age, type of social media used, and duration. The results of field findings show that the percentage of female gender is higher, namely 62.5%, compared to men, totaling 37.5%. Most social media users in grade VI students are 12





years old, as much as 78.6%, and the most widely used media is TikTok at 64.3%, with an average usage duration of 3 hours.

Table 1. Media Usage Characteristics

Gender	Female	62,5 %
	Male	37,5 %
Age	11 years	13,4 %
	12 years	78,6 %
	13 years	8,0%
Types of Social Media Selection	Tiktok	64,3 %
	WhatsApp	21,4 %
	Instagram	7,1 %
	Youtube	2,7 %
Duration of Media Use	1 hour	16,1 %
	2 hours	21,4 %
	3 hours	27,7 %
	4 hours	19,6 %
	5 hours	15,2 %

Based on the data in the table above, it can be concluded that the use of social media is still in the regular stage, which is around 4 hours and 17 minutes, by Sativa (2017) which discusses the theory from the University of Oxford about the ideal time to do online activities every day is 257 minutes (Zamaa et al., 2023). The pie chart below shows the distribution of internet usage for various purposes. The diagram is divided into three sections with different colors and percentages. 22.3% of respondents used the Internet to support learning activities. This includes searching for information, doing assignments, taking online classes, and other education-related activities. The orange diagram shows 38.4% of gaming activities, indicating that almost a third of respondents' internet use is for entertainment activities such as online games. Then, the most significant online activity, 39.3%, is used for activities on social media. This includes accessing platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media to interact, share content, and keep up with the latest news or trends.



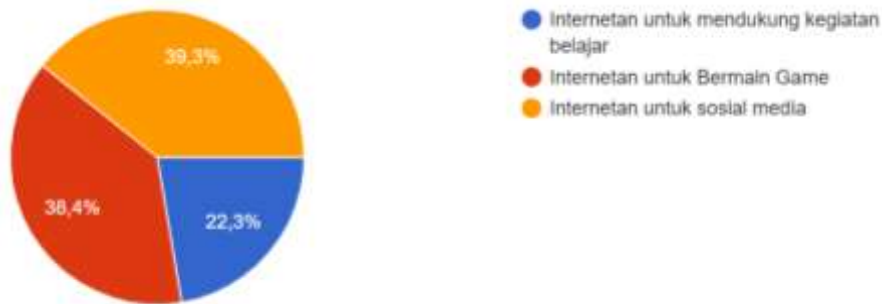


Figure 5. Internet Usage Activity

Overall, the diagram above shows that most internet usage among respondents is for entertainment and social interaction, with a smaller portion used for educational purposes. The use of online activities among teenagers is illustrated in the diagram below, which shows the primary information sources used by respondents, namely, the largest source of information with 94.6% of respondents using social media such as Tiktok, Instagram, and WhatsApp to get information, only 3.0% of respondents get information from news on TV, sources of information from teachers, friends, and parents are used by 2.4% of respondents. Based on this diagram, most respondents rely more on social media as their primary source of information than TV or information from people around them.

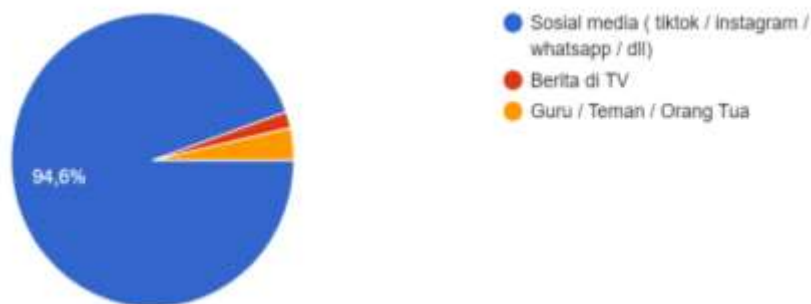


Figure 6. Sourcing Information

The data obtained relates to understanding social media content on user behavior and feelings through the analysis of data collected from respondents. The type of content that attracts





respondents' attention varies based on the data collected. Most respondents showed interest in video content (40%) and a combination of video and text (45%). Only 15% of respondents preferred text only. The most memorable content types by respondents included gaming content (35%), memes (25%), and funny content (30%), with the remaining 10% recalling other types of content. This indicates a preference for entertaining and light-hearted content, with gaming content being the most dominant

Table 2. Content Type

Attention-grabbing Content Types	Video	40%
	Video and Text Combination	45%
	Text	15%
Most Memorable Content	Game Content	35%
	Memes	25%
	Funny Content	30%
	Others	10%

The influence of influencer content on respondents' behavior also varies. A total of 30% of respondents stated that gaming tricks from influencers influenced their behavior, 25% were influenced by new knowledge about particular places, products, or issues, and achievements shown by influencers influenced 20%. However, another 25% of respondents did not feel influenced by the influencer's content. Most respondents (60%) stated that the influence of the content they see on social media does not significantly affect their behavior. Only 40% claimed that the content they saw influenced their behavior.

Table 3. Content Influence

Influence of Influencer Content	Gaming Tricks	30%
	New Knowledge (place, product, issue)	25%
	Achievements	20%
Influence of Content on Behavior	Unaffected	25%
	Influence	40%
	Not Affecting	60%





While 55% of respondents felt supported by others when they received comments or likes on their posts, 45% did not feel the same way. In addition, 60% of respondents feel lonely if they do not use social media, while 40% do not feel lonely without social media. This shows a high level of dependency on these platforms for social needs.

Table 4. User Emotions

Feeling of Support from Comments or Likes	Feeling Supported	55%
	Not Feeling Supported	45%
Feelings of Loneliness Without Social Media	Feeling Lonely	60%
	Not Feeling Lonely	40%
Feeling of Support from Comments or Likes on Posts	Feeling Supported	55%
	Not Feeling Supported	45%

55% of respondents felt supported if someone commented on or liked their posts, while 45% did not feel the same. Most respondents (70%) felt angry and sad when they received negative comments, while 30% did not feel bothered by negative comments. Reactions to criticism also showed that 60% of respondents felt angry and sad when criticized, while 40% were not bothered by criticism.

Table 5. Emotional Response

Reaction to Negative Comments	Feeling Angry and Sad	70%
	Not Feeling Angry or Sad	30%
Reaction to Critique	Feeling Angry and Sad	60%
	Not Feeling Angry or Sad	40%

Overall, the study revealed that social media significantly influences users' feelings and, in some cases, behavior. Entertaining and informative types of content tend to be more engaging and memorable. Social interactions through comments and likes provide many users with social support, although the negative impacts of comments and criticism can affect users' emotional well-being. These findings are essential in understanding the dynamics of social media use and its effects on users.





Discussion

The research results illustrate the relationship between social media literacy, social media use, and the well-being of adolescent users, especially students of SD Muhamadiyah Tonggalan. Based on the data obtained, it can be concluded that:

1. The types of content that were interesting and memorable to most respondents showed interest in video content and the combination of video with text. The most memorable content was gaming content (35%), memes (25%), and funny content (30%). This suggests entertaining and light-hearted content is more attention-grabbing and memorable to users.
2. The influence of influencer content that gained attention, including gaming tricks, new knowledge, and achievements, tended to influence the behavior of some respondents. However, 25% of respondents did not feel influenced by influencer content, indicating variations in the influence of content on user behavior.
3. The influence of social media on behavior shows that most respondents (60%) stated that the content they see on social media does not significantly influence their behavior. Only 40% claimed that the content influenced their behavior, suggesting that the influence of social media varies among users.
4. Social support from interactions on social media: 55% of respondents felt supported by comments or likes on their posts, while 45% did not feel the same. In addition, many respondents (60%) feel lonely if they are not on social media, indicating a high dependency on these platforms for social needs.
5. Emotional reactions to negative comments and criticism showed that most respondents (70%) felt angry and sad when receiving negative comments, and 60% felt angry and sad when receiving criticism. This indicates a high sensitivity to negative feedback on social media.

Development and empowerment in social media literacy consist of users' cognitive and affective abilities (Schreurs & Vandenbosch, 2020). Cognitive ability relates to understanding, analyzing, and evaluating information received through social media. It involves critical skills to





assess the validity of sources, understand context, and identify bias or misinformation. On the other hand, affective capabilities involve social media users' emotional aspects and attitudes. This includes awareness of the emotional impact of content consumed and shared and the ability to manage emotional responses wisely. The cognitive aspect includes users' understanding and knowledge of social media.

The research shows that respondents' most engaging and memorable content is entertaining content such as video, text, and a combination of both. This shows that users have particular preferences and understanding of their content. The affective aspect involves emotional reactions to social media content. The data shows that most respondents feel angry and sad when receiving negative comments (70%) or criticism (60%). This indicates that emotional literacy in responding to interactions on social media is essential for their well-being. The findings of the media literacy concept reveal the development of cognitive competencies, where critical thinking, socio-emotional competencies, and technical competencies are vital while taking into account the social environment. Because social media is such a popular location for people to engage, the development of socio-emotional competencies is noteworthy (Polanco-Levicán et al, 2022).

Exposure to media use refers to how often and under what conditions users are exposed to social media. Most respondents felt lonely without social media (60%), indicating high exposure and reliance on social media for social interaction. A similar study conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic in Norway, the UK, the US and Australia during April-May 2020, and 3,810 participants aged 18 years and over found higher levels of loneliness among high-frequency social media users at younger ages. Older people's engagement on social media may be a resource to reduce loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bonsaksen et al., 2021). Self-disclosure refers to how users present themselves on social media. The research shows that 55% of respondents feel supported by comments or likes, influencing how they see themselves in a social media context.

The results of this study suggest that good social media literacy (cognitive and affective) can influence how users use social media (exposure and self-presentation), which in turn impacts their well-being in accordance with research conducted by Taibi (2023) which found that social media has a very important role in adolescents' daily life, providing them with means for communicating,





sharing, representing themselves and creating and maintaining relationships (Taibi et al., 2023). For example, a good understanding of the content consumed and the ability to manage emotional reactions can help users deal with negative interactions and improve their emotional well-being. In addition, healthy and balanced social media use can help reduce loneliness and increase feelings of being socially supported. However, high dependence on social media can also lead to negative impacts without adequate social media literacy. In order to improve the well-being of social media users, it is essential to pay attention to both aspects of social media literacy (cognitive and affective) and how users utilize the platform. Educational programs that teach a better understanding of social media content and how to manage emotions can help improve users' overall well-being.

Conclusion

The study analyzed the relationship between social media literacy, media usage, and the effectiveness of social media use among young people like the results of research that has been done before (Aarsand et al, 2016). The results showed that most respondents preferred video content and a combination of video and text. Influencers' influence also influenced the use of social media, but only 25% of respondents felt that influencers had a significant impact on their use. Social media influencers' influence on users also varied. Social media influencers' influence on users also varied. Social media influencers' influence on users varied in their influence. Social media influencers' influence on users varied in their influence. Good social media literacy includes the cognitive ability to comprehend the content and the affective ability to moderate emotional reactions, which can help users deal with negative interactions and improve their emotional well-being. Balanced and healthy social media use can help reduce feelings of loneliness and increase feelings of social support. However, a high reliance on social media can also negatively impact without adequate literacy. Media literacy activities for children involve verbal, embodied, and social competencies, which are made accessible through adult-child interaction and actualized through peer interaction (Aarsand et al, 2016) .





To improve the well-being of social media users, it is essential to educate them about social media literacy, which includes both cognitive and affective aspects. Educational programs that teach a better understanding of social media content and how to manage emotions can help improve users' overall well-being (Schreurs et al, 2020). In addition, it is essential to encourage users to use social media in a balanced way and consider the impact of social interactions on the platform on their well-being. With better social media literacy and healthy usage, it is hoped that users can experience the positive benefits of social media without experiencing significant adverse impacts.

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