

Promoting Digital Literacy Through Social Media: Enhancing Unity and Resilience in Indonesia's Election Discourse

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ABSTRACT

Social media is defined as the ideal platform for creating a new public space where information, agendas, and public discourse can meet. In Indonesia, the threat to social media as a public space arises from the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. This threat becomes particularly evident during election periods. In a democratic society, elections serve as a moment for exchanging aspirations, ideas, and public discourse. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure initiatives that promote unity and digital resilience through social media. This study aims to describe the forms of digital literacy and critical thinking education conducted by Tular Nalar on social media using a qualitative approach. The study analyzes how social media content, as a medium for promoting digital literacy and critical thinking education, can drive unity and digital resilience during election periods. Using content analysis, this research explores the types of content Tular Nalar shares on Instagram. The findings show that using Dialoguer and the Relevance strategy allows Tular Nalar's social media content to reach its audience effectively. To improve engagement and critical awareness among first-time voters, educators and digital campaigners should use dialogic, relevance-based content. From a policy standpoint, the findings could help organizations like Kominfo, KPU, and Bawaslu create inclusive, participatory, and context-sensitive campaigns to counter false information and bolster digital resilience during election seasons by informing national digital literacy frameworks and election communication guidelines.



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INTRODUCTION

The concept of the public sphere, as introduced by Jürgen Habermas (1962), refers to the space between government and public-private institutions where debate and discussion occur to shape public opinion. This concept has become increasingly relevant as we seek to redefine the forms of public spaces in today's context. Habermas himself defined the function of the public sphere as a means of achieving deliberative democracy. In his writings, Habermas argues that true deliberative democracy requires a social system and a communication model (Habermas, 2006). Mahmood et al. (2022) attempt to redefine Habermas's concept of the public sphere through the lens of the evolving communication landscape in the digital era. They argue that technological advancements have played a significant role in reshaping the concept of the public sphere. This shift has blurred the boundaries between traditional and new media, creating a hybrid environment for communication (Mahmood et al., 2022). If we consider the characteristics of new media as defined by Lister (2003), digitality, interactivity, hypertextuality, dispersal, and virtuality, we can see how the concept of the public sphere, as originally proposed by Habermas, has shifted from a physical space to a virtual one, mediated by social media platforms. Through social media, citizens not only create content but also highlight and share others' content by commenting and



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sharing news versions, making the public sphere more democratic and pluralistic. It is no surprise, therefore, that social media has played a crucial role in shaping the new public sphere in the current democratic climate.

From the perspective of scholars, new media, such as the internet and social media, have the potential to enhance public participation and enrich democracy. As Coleman & Blumler (2009) argue, the internet functions as a new public sphere in democracy, where citizens can engage in political discussions, voice their opinions, and access information that was previously difficult to reach. Davis (2010) further asserts that the internet provides tools that allow citizens to interact directly with political elites, thereby creating a more inclusive public sphere and fostering open exchanges of ideas. However, recent discourse suggests that while social media has the potential to create an ideal public sphere in democratic climates, it also brings about paradoxes and disruptions to the public sphere itself. Van de Poel et al. (2023) observe paradoxes arising within the new public sphere created by social media. The shift from physical to virtual public spaces, where users from around the world can interact and influence one another, has led to fragmentation in the discourse. Instead of fostering a more inclusive discussion space, social media has exacerbated divisions by stimulating filter bubbles through its algorithms. Zúñiga et al. (2024) argue that although social media facilitates access to political information, their research shows that social media users often have less in-depth political knowledge compared to those who consume news from traditional media outlets.

In the context of Indonesia, public participation in digital spaces is notably high. Data show that there are 143 million social media users, approximately 50.2% of the total population (Digital 2025: Indonesia — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, 2025). This number has increased by 2.9% (4 million users) from the previous year. This significant figure highlights the high level of public engagement in digital spaces such as social media. As a democratic and pluralistic country, Indonesia faces both vast potential and significant challenges in this digital sphere. These challenges stem from factors such as population size, social diversity, and territorial expanse. On the other hand, the emergence of this new public sphere within Indonesia's pluralistic society presents new problems, particularly regarding the quality of information flow during political moments such as elections.

Recent research indicates that misinformation and polarization on social media have directly affected voter perception and public trust in democratic institutions (Subekti et al., 2025). The uneven distribution of economic and educational resources has further exacerbated these issues, creating gaps in digital competence across regions. Problems such as digital fraud, online gambling, online loans, cyberbullying, hate speech, and fake news are prevalent in Indonesia. Various factors, such as social motivation, trust in information sources, and the influence of social media algorithms, also contribute to the spread of the infodemic among the public (Widyatama et al., 2023). The phenomena of information bubbles and echo chambers, resulting from the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation, further worsen the condition of the digital public sphere.

Research conducted by Wirasti & Wahyono (2024) also explored how the public responds to and interprets misinformation related to the COVID-19 pandemic circulating on social media. The study found that respondents often did not clearly distinguish between false information due to ignorance (misinformation), information intentionally spread with deceptive intent (disinformation), and accurate information used in misleading contexts (malinformation). Furthermore, many respondents admitted that they often shared information without verifying its accuracy, particularly if it came from "close acquaintances" or trusted groups.

Another study conducted by Sad Tanti & M.T. Hidayat (2020) provides an overview of the challenges faced by the digital public sphere in Indonesia. The research highlights the spread of hoaxes and identifies the types of hoaxes circulating during the 2019 Presidential Election in Indonesia. Sad Tanti & M.T. Hidayat (2020) found that hoaxes can undermine public trust in the democratic process and create sharp polarization within society, as seen in the 01 vs. 02 rivalry during the 2019 Presidential Election. Their findings reveal the threat that hoaxes pose to the digital public sphere and, concurrently, to the democratic climate in Indonesia. In the 2024 Indonesian elections, social media has become increasingly dominant as a platform for public discourse, used by both the public and political candidates. While social media provides opportunities for greater public engagement in democracy, significant challenges arise from the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation in digital spaces. To address this issue, digital literacy is critically important to implement.

Efforts to ensure that social media functions as an ideal, democratic, and liberating public sphere can be achieved through strengthening digital literacy competencies. Gilster (1997) defines digital literacy as "the ability to understand and use information in various formats," emphasizing critical thinking over technical skills and communication. Digital literacy is the knowledge that enables us to effectively understand online information, not only to use it but also to leverage it while avoiding its negative impacts. Becoming digitally literate means being able to process various types of information, understand messages, and communicate effectively with others in multiple forms (Wiguna, 2023). Recent research on the role of digital literacy in fostering unity in Indonesia, conducted by Rianita et al. (2023), highlights the growing prevalence of hoaxes and misinformation during election periods, emphasizing the need for enhanced digital literacy among the public. Improving digital literacy can empower individuals to evaluate information critically, thereby reducing the spread of false information and fostering more informed voters.

Promoting digital literacy through social media is crucial in today's digital age. As a public sphere, social media can serve as an effective channel for providing education and bridging the knowledge gap within society. Apriya et al. (2023) argue that social media can be used to enhance digital literacy. Digital literacy on these platforms goes beyond teaching how to use technology; it also involves the ability to think critically, understand the context of information, and determine whether the information is valid. Apriya et al. (2023) further emphasize the importance of equipping the public with knowledge to recognize and avoid digital fraud tactics, while also highlighting the role of social media in educating the public.

Tular Nalar is one of the major digital literacy programs in Indonesia that utilizes social media as an educational channel. As part of MAFINDO (Masyarakat Anti Hoax Indonesia), a volunteer organization focused on digital literacy, Tular Nalar has engaged in numerous collaborations, both in training and socialization, with various communities and partners across Indonesia. As such, Tular Nalar can be regarded as one of the most extensive digital literacy programs in Indonesia, with the highest number of training sessions and participants.

While previous studies have discussed the importance of digital literacy in promoting civic participation, they often remain at a conceptual level, focusing on general frameworks rather than the operational mechanisms through which these programs build digital resilience (van de Poel et al., 2023). Moreover, little is known about how digital literacy initiatives, such as Tular Nalar, function within the public sphere, particularly in responding to algorithmic dynamics and platform-specific audience behaviors during election periods. This gap limits our understanding of how digital literacy interventions concretely shape inclusive discourse and civic engagement in algorithmic environments. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining Tular Nalar's strategies on social media, offering both a contextualized and operational perspective on how digital literacy fosters democratic resilience in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

METHOD

This study examines the elements of photos and videos found on social media, particularly on the Tular Nalar Instagram account. The model used in this research is content analysis with a qualitative method. Prior to conducting the analysis, this study first categorizes the content from the Tular Nalar Instagram account, focusing on socialization and educational messages about digital literacy, with a primary emphasis on elections and democracy. The content shared for digital literacy socialization can be divided into several categories, including education on prebunking and debunking digital information, as well as calls for critical thinking in public discussions related to the election. The data used in this study is qualitative (non-numerical), consisting of elements such as text, images, videos, symbols, and others. In practice, the researcher will observe a number of posts produced and disseminated through social media platforms as part of efforts to promote digital literacy. The method used is content analysis, which is applied to explore the narrative structure, language use, visual symbols, and communication strategies present in the publication materials (Krippendorff, 2022).

The social media platform focused on in this study is Instagram, with the search limited to posts related to digital literacy in the context of elections and democracy. The data for this research is derived from two primary sources: first, content from the Tular Nalar Instagram account, known for its educational messages regarding digital literacy and elections. Second, secondary sources are obtained from articles, journals, and other relevant publications on digital literacy and its impact on elections and democracy. The choice of Instagram as the research platform is based on its popularity among the general public, especially the younger generation, and its effectiveness as an efficient channel for disseminating educational information related to digital literacy (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

In the data collection process, the researcher will gather Instagram posts used in the Tular Nalar program, specifically from 2023 to 2025. The collected materials will be selected based on their relevance to the analysis, with the primary criterion being the presence of educational messages regarding digital literacy related to the election. After categorization, the next step will be to provide in-depth descriptions of these elements and identify the meanings embedded in the messages conveyed. The researcher will also evaluate and compare the extent to which prebunking and debunking materials are used in the Instagram content posted. Additionally, the researcher will conduct brief WhatsApp interviews with the Content & Social Media Team at Tular Nalar to understand how the audience has received educational messages about digital literacy on social media during the election.

To ensure methodological transparency and academic rigor, this study employed purposive sampling to select Instagram posts that specifically addressed digital literacy, democracy, and elections, based on relevance and engagement metrics (likes, comments, and shares). As this is a qualitative content analysis, the researcher served as the primary instrument in interpreting visual and textual elements. The data analysis followed Krippendorff's (2022) content analysis frameworks, incorporating systematic coding, theme identification, and categorization. Posts were initially coded inductively to identify emerging patterns related to digital literacy education, audience engagement, and narratives of the presidential election and democracy. These codes were then grouped into broader thematic categories aligned with the research objectives. Based on this categorization, 344 posts were obtained from 1,073 total posts from the period of October 2023 to March 2025 were selected for analysis. By detailing the analytical procedures and acknowledging the interpretive role of the researcher, this study enhances methodological clarity and credibility.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Dialoguer and Relevance in Digital Public Sphere

As a public sphere, Instagram allows users to collaborate in social discussions, both locally and globally, which in turn influences their perceptions and decisions on various issues, including politics and social matters. Instagram plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and strengthening democracy in the digital space for several key reasons. It also serves as a platform for mobilization and activism, enabling individuals and organizations to rally support for various social movements. By providing a space for the exchange of ideas and debates, Instagram reinforces democratic values, such as freedom of expression and citizen engagement in public processes. With its global reach, Instagram offers broader access to information, which in turn strengthens public participation in democratic discourse (Wilding et al., 2018).

In this context, Instagram serves as a platform for sharing educational messages and facilitating open dialogue on topics relevant to society, such as social and political issues and democracy. As explained in the interview, Tular Nalar uses Instagram to build a persona that feels closer to the audience by leveraging trends and adopting a more casual and engaging style of communication. As mentioned in the interview, Tular Nalar is highly aware of the importance of following trends and adapting to a younger audience, particularly Gen Z, who are very active in seeking information on social media platforms. In the interview, Krisna stated, "As the content and social media team, we cannot be apathetic; we must be sensitive to current issues and popular trends, especially those among our audience, Gen Z."

Tular Nalar's communication strategy on Instagram reflects a shift from traditional top-down messaging toward a more dialogic and participatory approach. Through features such as comment sections, polls, quizzes, and story-based interactions, the campaign actively invites its audiences to engage in two-way conversations. This approach can be interpreted through Jürgen Habermas's concept of communicative action, where participants in discourse seek mutual understanding rather than exerting influence or domination (Habermas, J. (1984). By facilitating interactive exchanges on issues such as elections, disinformation, and digital ethics, Tular Nalar fosters communicative rationality through reciprocal dialogue.

In the document titled Social Media: Audience & Content Strategy Tular Nalar 3.0 (2023), it is stated that Tular Nalar targets two primary audience groups: first-time voters (17-21 years old) and the elderly (45 years old and above), based in Indonesia and intending to vote in the 2024 elections. As explained in the interview, Tular Nalar targets its audience on Instagram, particularly those aged 17 to 25. Consequently, Tular Nalar divides its audience by social media platform, with Instagram targeting Gen Z and first-time voters, while Facebook is used for an older, more mature audience in terms of political issue comprehension. This audience segmentation aligns with research findings indicating that Instagram is the leading social media platform for Generation Z (Gen Z).

This segmentation strategy reflects Tular Nalar's commitment to the inclusivity concept from Habermas, which emphasizes the importance of an open and accessible public sphere for all citizens regardless of social or demographic background (Habermas, J,1984). Rather than creating division, Tular Nalar adapts communication forms to the specific informational needs and cultural affinities of diverse audiences. In doing so, the Relevance strategy operationalizes inclusivity not only as technical access but also as communicative accommodation, ensuring that every citizen can meaningfully participate in public discourse.

Tular Nalar's social media has a primary goal: "Increase the competency of first-time voters and the elderly to preemptively recognize hoaxes before they spread widely in the online space" (Tular Nalar, 2023). To achieve this objective, Tular Nalar employs two main audience strategies: DIALOGUER and RELEVANCE. The dialogic approach is used to interact with the audience, where Tular Nalar, through its Instagram, not only conveys information but also seeks to build a closer relationship with the audience through two-way communication. Tular Nalar leverages this approach by encouraging conversations and direct interactions through comments, direct messages, and Stories. This enables them to build a closer relationship with their audience, particularly with the younger generation, which highly values open and participatory engagement.

A similar dialogic method has also been proven effective in other digital literacy movements. For example, Japelidi's #japelidivshoakscovid19 campaign used interactive social media to engage users in dialogue, allowing the public to actively participate in discussions and reflections on misinformation during the pandemic (Dwi Astuti et al., 2023). This finding reinforces that dialogic strategies can strengthen public engagement and foster collective awareness in digital literacy programs. It is noted that "Gen Zers believe in the importance of dialogue and accept differences of opinion with the institutions in which they participate and with their own families. Members of this generation, therefore, tend to believe that change must come from dialogue" (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Thus, Tular Nalar implements a strategy that aligns with Gen Z values: fostering authentic and relevant two-way communication, which is key to building trust and stronger connections with their audience



Fig.1. Carrousel Content of Tular Nalar Instagram.

Figure 1 above represents a Tular Nalar Instagram post from November 7, 2023. This content is dialogic, inviting the audience, particularly Gen Z, to participate in a giveaway with the hashtag #GenZBisaMilih. The post features an image with a cartoon character asking the audience: "Menurutmu, Kenapa sih Gen Z harus memilih?" (Why do you think Gen Z should vote?) This content is an example of an effective dialogic strategy, as it encourages the audience to share their opinions directly in the comment section. Tular Nalar not only presents engaging content but also fosters direct interaction with the audience, which is key to creating a deeper two-way relationship on social media platforms like Instagram. In the comments, Tular Nalar actively responds to various opinions from their followers, acknowledging their participation and directly confirming the giveaway winners. This creates more intense engagement and strengthens the sense of community among their followers. Through this approach, Tular Nalar successfully activated their audience in relevant conversations and strengthened engagement with hot topics, such as the 2024 election. By inviting the audience to share their opinions and then responding to them directly, Tular Nalar demonstrates the importance of creating open dialogue that not only listens but also actively interacts, in line with the characteristics of Gen Z, who are more likely to engage with content and influencers perceived as honest and transparent, rather than those who appear overly polished or artificial (Jannah, Febyan, & Salam, 2025).

In addition to the dialogic approach, Tular Nalar employs a Relevance approach in their social media strategy. Through this approach, Tular Nalar ensures that the content they post is always relevant to current issues and trending topics in society, particularly those related to digital literacy and elections. To achieve this, they consistently follow emerging trends and link their content to widely discussed events or topics.

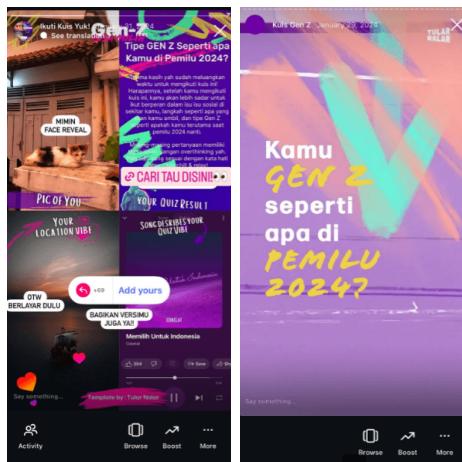


Fig.2. Instagram Stories Content of Tular Nalar.

Figure 2 shows two Instagram Reel posts shared by Tular Nalar, each utilizing the Relevance approach. Through this content, Tular Nalar conveys an essential message about digital literacy and active participation in social issues in a way that resonates with pop culture trends. The second image in Figure 2 is an Instagram Reel posted by Tular Nalar in April 2024, which features a music recommendation related to the digital world. This post clearly shows how Tular Nalar uses a Pop Culture approach through music recommendations, which resonate strongly with Gen Z habits. The recommended songs are also relevant to Gen Z's preferences. By using content closely connected to pop culture,

Tular Nalar can create a stronger connection with younger audiences, who prefer content that is entertaining yet still educational, thereby enhancing the relevance of the message and increasing their active participation in important issues.



Fig.3. Relevance Type of Content Tular Nalar.

Moreover, the content shared through Tular Nalar encourages not only participation but also rational-critical participation, which is a key component of Habermas's theory of deliberative democracy. Posts often incorporate critical thinking tools such as the "Elephant vs. Rider" metaphor, myth-busting quizzes, and prebunking strategies that aim to promote reflection and careful evaluation, rather than provoke emotional or impulsive reactions. These practices foster discourse grounded in reason, evidence, and mutual understanding, which are essential elements of a healthy democratic public sphere, as emphasized by Habermas, J. (1984) in his theory of communicative action. Through these strategies, Tular Nalar's communication practices exemplify the application of Habermas's democratic ideals within Indonesia's digital media landscape. Rather than merely disseminating information, Tular Nalar creates a deliberative space where dialogic interaction, inclusivity, and reasoned participation are nurtured in alignment with the principles of rational-critical debate and public deliberation (Habermas, J, 1984).

While Tular Nalar's communication strategies reflect Habermas's ideals of communicative action, inclusivity, and rational-critical participation, the implementation of these principles exists within a digital landscape marked by significant challenges. For example, algorithms on platforms like Instagram tend to personalize content based on engagement metrics, which may isolate users in ideologically homogenous spaces, limiting their exposure to diverse viewpoints and hindering rational-critical debate. Furthermore, the dominance of commercial incentives can distort communicative rationality, privileging sensationalism or entertainment over substantive public discourse. In this context, Tular Nalar's efforts to promote deliberative dialogue represent not only a practical application of Habermas's concept of the public sphere but also a form of resistance against structural tendencies that threaten the democratic potential of digital media.

B. Gen Z in Digital Democracy

Through hashtags like #GenZBisaMilah, Tular Nalar educates its audience about the significance of participating in the democratic process while encouraging them to think critically about social and political issues. In creating its social media content, Tular Nalar adheres to the material outlined in the digital literacy curriculum module it possesses. In the Tular Nalar 3.0 phase, the digital literacy training program targets vulnerable voter groups, namely first-time voters (Gen Z) and elderly voters. During this phase, Tular Nalar aims to strengthen the digital literacy and critical thinking skills of these vulnerable groups in preparation for the democratic election. Tular Nalar has developed a curriculum and learning tools comprising 8 competencies, which are applied into 8 themes and divided into 3 levels: TAHU, TANGGAP, TANGGUH (KNOW, RESPOND, RESILIENT) (Tular Nalar, 2024). In this phase, Tular Nalar launched two training programs: "Sekolah Kebangsaan," aimed at first-time voters (students & youth), and "Akademi Digital Lansia," targeting pre-elderly and elderly individuals. Broadly, both training programs share similar curriculum topics, including information on democracy, elections, hoax detection, sanctions, and digital footprints.

Tular Nalar's Instagram content addressing elections and democracy aligns with the materials from the Sekolah Kebangsaan Tular Nalar, aiming to increase awareness and participation among young people in the democratic process, particularly in the context of elections. Based on Jürgen Habermas's theory of public space, the indicators of public opinion formation are the most prominent aspect of Tular Nalar's digital communication practices on this section. Habermas (1989) explains that the public sphere functions as an arena where citizens can rationally form public opinion and will through free and reflective exchange of ideas. In the context of Tular Nalar, the use of social media platforms like Instagram is not only a medium for disseminating information but also a deliberative space for shaping public critical awareness of issues

related to democracy, digital literacy, and political participation. This is evident from various educational content, such as the #GenZBisaMilah campaign and “Democracy Party”-themed uploads, which encourage the audience to understand the risks of disinformation and the importance of critical thinking before making political decisions. Through interactive content, Tular Nalar educates the public to participate in healthy and reason-based discourse, making social media a platform for rational public opinion formation, not just a space for information consumption. This practice aligns with Habermas’ view that rational public opinion can only be formed if society engages in an argumentative and autonomous communication process. Thus, the Tular Nalar activity represents the transformation of public space in the digital era, where the process of public opinion formation no longer takes place solely in traditional mass media but also in virtual spaces that allow for active, reflective, and egalitarian participation from digital society.

C. Digital Literacy for Promoting Unity and Resilience in Social Media

The data obtained from the Love Frankie Formative Research Report in the Tular Nalar Social Media Strategy document (2023) reveals that 69% of youth have already encountered election-related misinformation. However, only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of total respondents (26%) indicated that they know how to counter it. Additionally, there is hesitancy to share this information with their networks, as 49% indicated they were either ‘not sure’ or did not plan to share their learnings. Based on this data, Tular Nalar developed a creative strategy for its social media, titled □TULAR NALAR: GEN-Z BISA MILIH□ (GEN-Z Can Choose). Gen-Z Bisa Milah is the umbrella online campaign and will become the prominent social media tagline and hashtag #GenZBisaMilah. The message empowers first-time voters, reminding them that they have the power to choose their future. At the micro level, they can select information wisely through pre-bunking. The goal is to encourage them to become self-aware of how this new pre-bunking movement can change their country and build a better future for Indonesia (Tular Nalar, 2023).

Leveraging cultural and issue trends, the campaign targets first-time voters with a youth-friendly approach, using a range of formats that are entertaining and educational. Given their high levels of confidence and perception of greater knowledge than their peers and family, the content will help them communicate pre-bunking expertise to friends and older generations. This includes content such as tips on media literacy and on engaging your friends in an inoffensive manner. The campaign addresses community-related voting issues during the elections, including challenges like online voter list checking, assisting the elderly with information verification, and providing guidance on locating polling stations. Four content pillars categorize Tular Nalar’s social media content as derivatives of the “Gen-Z Bisa Milah” Strategy. 1) Politalk: Related information about elections and democracy covered with Gen-Z Trend/Pop Cultures in Indonesia. It provides answers, gives information, and encourages young voters to vote. 2) Literaksi: Equip the young voters across Indonesia with pre-bunking knowledge and critical thinking, 3) Opini Gen Z (Gen Z Opinion): Sharing opinions from young voters’ POV related to politics, democracy, elections, and hoaxes, 4) Tular Nalar: FaQ/ BTS/ Project Information about Tular Nalar & the online campaign: “Gen-Z Bisa Milah”.



Fig.4. Content Pillar of online campaign: “GenZ Bisa Milah.”

Research by Sabatier (2012) shows that the success of digital campaigns aimed at driving social change relies on the ability to categorize content into clear, relevant pillars, allowing each category to enhance understanding, engagement, and action among the audience. In this way, the messages delivered not only educate but also motivate the audience to act, whether by spreading information, participating in campaigns, or engaging in protests and lobbying. In this regard, Tular Nalar has categorized its content to support its campaign by providing information on digital literacy and elections. This is essential to ensure that Tular Nalar’s messages about digital literacy and critical thinking are effectively received, ultimately fostering unity and digital resilience.

In an interview, Krisna, the Head of the Content & Social Media Division, explained the role of social media, particularly Instagram, in strengthening unity during elections and democracy. He mentioned that social media can be a very effective tool for raising awareness and encouraging active participation in democratic issues. He also emphasized that social media provides a space for the audience to voice and express their opinions openly, which enables constructive dialogue despite differences of opinion. This aligns with Kaufmann (2015), who highlights how social media platforms

like Instagram offer the opportunity to create a “virtual sense of unity” during crises or major social events. The use of this platform in crises allows individuals to feel connected and more engaged in the recovery process, which in turn strengthens social resilience in the face of collective challenges.

Overall, Tular Nalar’s Instagram is used not only as a showcase of activities but also as a digital public space that opens up dialogue with its audience. The Dialogic and Relevance approaches applied by Tular Nalar enable persuasive activities that enhance understanding of digital literacy skills and critical thinking. The strategies, including the Pop Culture content strategy and the “Gen Z Bisa Milih” communication strategy, along with its derivative content pillars, have successfully translated topics related to digital literacy, critical thinking, and elections and democracy into various content formats that accommodate the characteristics and needs of their audience.

CONCLUSION

The importance of digital literacy amid the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation becomes even more apparent in the context of the 2024 elections, where social media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. Tular Nalar’s program, which emphasizes strengthening critical thinking skills, not only reinforces democracy but also fosters unity in a highly diverse society. Thus, digital literacy education through social media can be a highly effective tool for addressing the information challenges of this digital age and strengthening Indonesia’s democracy.

Based on Jürgen Habermas’s theory of public space, the digital communication practices employed by Tular Nalar can be understood as the actualization of the four main principles in the formation of a healthy public space: rational-critical debate, equal access, freedom from coercion, and the formation of public opinion. First, the rational-critical aspect of the discussion is reflected in the Tular Nalar strategy, which not only disseminates information but also opens up space for dialogue through interactive features on Instagram, such as polls, question boxes, and quiz stickers. Second, the principle of equal access is evident in Tular Nalar’s efforts to use social media as an inclusive means of reaching vulnerable groups, such as first-time voters and the elderly, through the National School program and the Digital Academy for the Elderly. Third, the principle of non-coercion is realized through the Tular Nalar educational approach, which trains the public to think critically and to resist being easily influenced by hoaxes or political manipulation, ensuring that the discourse process proceeds freely and autonomously without external pressure. Fourth, the aspect of public opinion formation is evident in how Tular Nalar uses social media as an arena for digital democracy learning, encouraging the public to form political opinions grounded in accurate information and rational reflection. Thus, the Tular Nalar activity not only serves as a form of digital literacy but also represents the real-world practice of Habermas’s ideal concept of public space: a place where citizens can participate equally, engage in critical dialogue, and build rational public opinion in support of democratic life.

Furthermore, Tular Nalar’s practices exemplify the evolving character of the public sphere in digital environments, responding to challenges such as misinformation and political polarization. This connection demonstrates how civic engagement can still flourish within algorithmic systems when platform features are used intentionally. To translate these insights into practice, educators, NGOs, and government institutions could adapt Tular Nalar’s strategy, especially dialogic and relevance-based strategies to increase public trust, promote voter education, and strengthen democratic discourse in digital spaces.

As a note for future research, this study can be further developed by exploring the long-term impact of digital communication strategies on changes in public literacy behavior, particularly in the post-election context. Subsequent research may also broaden its focus by comparing the effectiveness of other social media platforms, such as TikTok or YouTube, in fostering a critical and inclusive digital public sphere. In addition, a participatory analysis involving audiences directly is needed to assess the extent to which digital literacy messages genuinely influence public attitudes, beliefs, and actions in combating disinformation.

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