

History Education in the Age of Disinformation: The Role of Historical Literacy in Social Studies Learning

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of digital media has led to a surge in disinformation, significantly affecting students' understanding of history and weakening critical civic engagement. This article aims to examine the role of historical literacy in countering disinformation within social studies education, particularly in Indonesian secondary schools. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study employs literature review and document analysis of curriculum guidelines, history textbooks, and teaching modules. Thematic content analysis was applied to explore how historical literacy can be integrated into history instruction and how it supports critical thinking, source evaluation, and civic awareness. The findings highlight three key challenges in history education during the disinformation era: low student interest in history, the prevalence of biased or distorted historical content, and students' limited ability to verify sources. The study reveals that strategies such as inquiry-based learning (IBL), multiperspective analysis, digital resource integration, and document-based instruction (DBI) significantly enhance students' historical literacy. These strategies foster deeper engagement with historical content and strengthen students' critical thinking and verification skills. Furthermore, the study presents several best practices from schools that successfully implemented historical literacy approaches, indicating positive impacts on students' ability to analyze historical narratives and resist misinformation. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative perspective—linking historical literacy, digital citizenship, and civic engagement in social studies. It positions historical literacy not merely as a cognitive skill but as a vital competency for navigating a digital, post-truth society. The article recommends developing teacher training programs and curriculum materials that emphasize historical thinking, source critique, and digital literacy. Strengthening historical literacy in social studies will equip students to become informed, reflective, and responsible citizens in the age of disinformation.

Keywords: Historical Literacy, Disinformation, Social Studies Education, Critical Thinking, Civic Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

The era of disinformation we are facing today is marked by the increasing production and spread of false information, which is exacerbated by technological advances as well as the expansion of digital media platforms. Disinformation, especially as it relates to historical issues, has developed into a troubling global phenomenon. Social media platforms are fertile ground for the circulation of historical hoaxes that are easily consumed by the public without an adequate verification process (Levak, 2021; Shu et al., 2020). Emotional content is often more quickly spread and easily accepted by the public because it resonates with pre-existing fears and prejudices, making it difficult to clarify through factual information (Yang et al., 2024). This condition not only weakens the authority of conventional information sources, but also fosters

distrust of the mainstream media, even when the information shared corresponds to certain political leanings (Ognyanova et al., 2020; Mega, 2023).

The algorithmic structure of social media that prioritizes emotional engagement over information accuracy further expands the reach of fake news (Sehl, 2024). Students and the younger generation as active users of digital media often experience difficulties in sorting out valid information due to the large volume of content and the absence of an effective verification system. Moreover, disinformation often spreads before it can be corrected, causing long-term effects that are not easily reversible even after clarification has been made (Ünlü et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024). In this context, traditional approaches such as fact-checking are not always effective, as emotional engagement often trumps the validity of information in shaping public opinion (Xiao & Burke, 2024).

Disinformation has also become a tool in information warfare and the manipulation of public opinion in the socio-political realm. The motivations are very diverse, ranging from ideological to economic and geopolitical (Steinfeld, 2022; Moreno et al., 2023). This shows that the challenges of disinformation are not only cognitive, but also structural and systemic. Therefore, there is a growing urgency to strengthen digital literacy in society, so that individuals have the critical ability to evaluate the information they receive (Virgili et al., 2021; Mawaddah, 2024). One form of literacy that is very relevant in this context is *historical literacy*, especially in formal education such as social studies learning in schools.

History education has the responsibility of not only imparting knowledge of the past, but also forming a critical awareness of how history is constructed and used. Historical literacy teaches students to think like historians criticize sources, understand context, and compare different perspectives. In social studies learning, which includes historical, economic, geographical, and social aspects, the integration of historical literacy is becoming increasingly important as a tool to counter the spread of false information and strengthen students' intellectual resilience to information manipulation. Furthermore, the *infodemic* phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how serious the consequences of disinformation are, especially in terms of public health and social trust (Sharma et al., 2022; Clemente-Suárez et al., 2022). Therefore, the education system must prepare students with the ability to read and interpret history critically so that they do not easily fall into biased or false historical narratives.

Thus, a systematic and historical literacy-based approach is needed in social studies learning that not only teaches historical events factually, but also hones critical thinking skills, assesses the credibility of sources, and understands the dynamics of historical narrative preparation. History education that is adaptive to the challenges of the disinformation era is an important foundation for the formation of a democratic society that is intelligent, informed, and resilient to the manipulation of historical narratives.

As the challenges posed by disinformation increase, history education plays an increasingly crucial role in shaping national identity and critical citizen awareness. Through history education, national values, collective narratives, and historical experiences of a nation are transmitted to the younger generation. Educational institutions use history as a strategic medium to strengthen students' sense of belonging and cultural identity, so that history is not only a means of conveying past information, but also an instrument for forming national awareness (Muis et al., 2024).

In many education systems in the world, history is often used as a political tool to shape ideological uniformity and foster nationalism. History curricula are often designed to feature a single narrative that emphasizes patriotism, national unity, as well as the heroism of certain figures, often by ignoring or simplifying alternative perspectives (Kuş & Mert, 2023; Prastyaningrum & Supardi, 2020; Mafela, 2021). Such historical representations not only influence the way students understand the past, but also how they perceive their position in the context of contemporary nationalism. This poses a challenge for educators to strike a balance between building a strong national identity and developing critical thinking that respects the diversity of historical narratives.

In the context of multicultural Indonesia, the integration of local history and cultural diversity into the educational curriculum is very important. Studies show that recognition of

diverse cultural heritage in history learning can increase students' appreciation of their pluralistic identities and encourage more inclusive social cohesion (Danugroho, 2024; Surya & Fikriya, 2017). This approach not only respects the historical complexity of the nation, but also provides space for students to develop historical thinking skills capable of accommodating a wide range of viewpoints. This ability is important so that students do not just become passive recipients of a single narrative, but active agents who are able to assess and criticize history reflectively (Brett & Guyver, 2021; Subkan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, history education contributes to the formation of constructive civic awareness and civic engagement. By examining past events and the accompanying socio-political dynamics, students can build an informed perspective on contemporary issues. They learn to analyze the structure of social inequality, understand democratic processes, and respond to injustices through a civilized historical approach (Thorp & Vinterek, 2020; Jung et al., 2019; Faden, 2012). In this sense, history is not only a reflection of the past, but also a bridge to a more critical, democratic, and just future (Tangülü & Kaya, 2019).

Therefore, in the midst of a wave of disinformation that undermines the integrity of public information, history education must be directed to not only convey the facts of the past, but also equip students with the cognitive tools to think critically, examine narratives in depth, and build contextual socio-political awareness. Strengthening historical literacy in social studies learning is an urgent need, so that the younger generation is able to play the role of citizens who are not easily influenced by false narratives, but are able to distinguish facts and fictions with reflective and analytical thinking skills.

However, although the urgency of history education in dealing with disinformation has been widely recognized, the systematic application of historical literacy approaches in social studies learning still faces various obstacles, especially at the primary and secondary education levels. One of the most obvious gaps is the lack of comprehensive integration of historical literacy principles into the curriculum and pedagogical practices of social studies teachers in schools. Historical literacy, which is defined as the ability of individuals to understand, analyze, and critically evaluate historical information, is still not a major focus in history and social studies learning strategies in many educational units (Romain & Chudra, 2024; Iannone, 2022). In fact, in the midst of the increasingly massive historical hoaxes circulating in the digital public space, this competency is very important to help students sort out information, understand the historical context, and assess the validity of information sources.

The absence of these skills has the potential to trap learners in false, biased, or manipulative historical narratives, which not only impacts misconceptions about the past, but can also influence their perception of contemporary socio-political conditions. Unresolved disinformation in the context of education can weaken the critical reasoning power of the younger generation and distance them from objective and contextual historical reality (Dinihari et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2022). In this case, historical literacy offers a solutive approach that not only enhances the ability to analyze historical sources, but also fosters a healthy skepticism towards the information circulating in the wider community.

One of the novelty aspects of the historical literacy approach is its ability to develop multiple perspectives on history, including local history and group experiences that have been poorly accommodated in the national narrative. In Indonesia, historical narratives in education are often centered on major national events and figures, while the historical experiences of indigenous peoples, minority groups, or certain regions have not received a proportionate portion (Kuntarto et al., 2021; Iannone, 2022). Historical literacy encourages learners to access and assess historical sources from various perspectives, so that they can understand that history is not a single version, but rather a complex, dynamic, and often contradictory set of narratives. Thus, this approach also contributes to building a more inclusive national identity and respecting the diversity of the nation's history.

In addition, historical literacy also has strategic value in forming active and informed citizens. Students who are trained in these skills will be more sensitive to bias, propaganda, and information manipulation, both in the context of history and other contemporary issues (Astuti et al., 2022; Costa-Sánchez et al., 2023). In situations where information can be produced and

distributed quickly without rigorous verification, the ability to read sources critically, identify the purpose behind the narrative, and consider the validity of the data is an essential citizenship skill. This emphasizes that historical literacy is not only relevant in learning history, but also in democracy education, character building, and the development of a society that thinks reflexively and independently.

Thus, the urgency and novelty of this research lies in two main aspects: first, the importance of filling the gap between the challenges of digital disinformation and the weak integration of historical literacy in social studies learning; Second, on the offer of a pedagogical approach that encourages critical thinking skills, openness to the plurality of narratives, and civic awareness based on historical understanding. Further research and development on the implementation of historical literacy in social studies curricula will be an important contribution to educational practices in Indonesia, especially in shaping a young generation that is not only historically literate, but also resilient in the face of disinformation challenges.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative-descriptive approach to describe in depth the role of historical literacy in overcoming disinformation in social studies learning. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to contextually and interpretively explore the dynamics of historical literacy in the realm of education, in particular how the values of historical critical thinking can be integrated in social learning and humanities in schools.

Data Collection Methods and Techniques

Data collection is carried out through literature studies and document content analysis, which includes the study of educational documents such as social studies curriculum, learning modules, and textbooks used in learning history at the secondary education level. In addition, the scientific literature related to historical literacy, historical education, and disinformation issues in the digital age are also part of the main data sources in this study (Finneman & Thomas, 2018).

This literature study includes previous studies that have addressed the integration of historical literacy in educational contexts and its impact on students' vulnerability to misinformation. In particular, a search was conducted for publications that discuss pedagogical strategies, curriculum design, and teaching approaches that support strengthening students' analytical skills towards historical narratives and digital content (Romein & Chudra, 2024; Fauziah & Karjo, 2023).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques that focused on identifying, organizing, and interpreting the main themes related to the application of historical literacy in social studies learning. The analysis steps include:

1. Identify the initial themes of the analyzed document, such as historical literacy principles, indicators of critical thinking in history, and teaching strategies.
2. Data categorization based on the relevance of content to students' ability to detect and filter disinformation.
3. Contextual interpretation of the content of curriculum, modules, and textbooks in supporting or not supporting the formation of students' critical historical awareness.
4. Narrative synthesis of findings that show good practices, challenges, and potential innovations in the application of historical literacy in social studies classrooms.

Through this approach, the research aims to understand the extent to which the current social studies curriculum and teaching materials are able to accommodate historical literacy approaches in responding to the challenges of the disinformation era. In line with that, the data is critically analyzed to reveal the potential of the curriculum in forming students who are not only proficient in history, but also media and information literacy.

Theoretical Considerations

Historical literacy in this study is not only interpreted as an academic skill, but also as a critical educational tool that aims to shape students' character and civic awareness. Therefore, contextual, reflective, and local experience-based aspects of learning are also analyzed as part of the historical literacy framework (Kuntarto et al., 2021; Muhid et al., 2019). This approach considers the importance of integrating character values and multicultural perspectives in history teaching to strengthen national identity while fortifying students from the dangers of manipulative historical narratives (Haikal et al., 2021; Wulandari, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Challenges of Learning History in the Age of Disinformation

In the era of disinformation, learning history in the context of Social Studies Education faces various serious challenges that affect students' understanding of the past and their role as citizens. One of the main challenges is the low interest of students in reading and learning history. The main cause of this low interest often lies in the method of delivering material that tends to be monotonous and uncontextual, so that students feel that history is irrelevant to their current lives. Özdemir and Tuna (2023) highlight the importance of more interactive approaches, such as digital storytelling, that allow students to construct historical narratives creatively and critically. This approach not only makes learning more engaging, but also trains students to use historical sources analytically and contextually.

The second challenge, which is no less important, is the spread of historical information that is biased or even distorted. Disinformation that enters into learning materials, both through textbooks and digital media, can lead to a narrow, prejudiced, and unobjective understanding of history. In this case, historical literacy is a key element. Yulianto et al. (2024) emphasize that strong historical literacy allows students to evaluate various sources of information, understand context, and view history from various perspectives. This is important to develop a deep historical awareness and encourage the preservation of cultural heritage in a more reflective manner. When students are equipped with the ability to recognize biases in historical narratives, they will be more critical of the information they receive and able to seek the truth more objectively.

The third challenge relates to the weak ability of students to verify the source of information. In the digital era, students are exposed to a flood of information, including hoaxes and fake news disguised as historical facts. In this context, source verification skills are essential skills. Fatimah et al. (2023) state that adequate digital literacy development plays a major role in helping students distinguish valid information from misleading information. Similarly, Kumalasari et al. (2024) show that students who are trained in the ability to assess the credibility of sources will be more resistant to the influence of false narratives that develop on social media and other digital environments.

To answer these three challenges, a curriculum approach is needed that integrates the development of critical thinking skills and thematic analysis. The application of theme analysis in history learning can encourage students to explore complex issues, understand the diversity of perspectives, and develop the ability to interpret historical events as a whole. This not only increases their interest in history, but also strengthens their critical reasoning in the face of disinformation.

Thus, it can be concluded that the challenges of learning history in the era of disinformation can be overcome through innovative and reflective pedagogical strategies. The implementation of digital storytelling, strengthening historical literacy, and training in source verification skills is a complementary and strategic approach. All three play an important role in shaping a young generation that not only understands history academically, but is also able to be critical, reflective, and responsible in responding to the flow of information they face in their daily lives.

Discussing the Results: The Challenges of Learning History in the Age of Disinformation

The findings emphasize that the current disinformation landscape does not merely threaten historical accuracy—it undermines the very function of history education in shaping informed, critical, and democratic citizens. Student disengagement, bias in historical narratives,

and the inability to verify sources collectively disrupt the goals of Social Studies Education. These challenges indicate a gap between curriculum design and the digital realities students face. While digital tools have great potential to support history education, they require thoughtful pedagogical strategies that bridge traditional historical inquiry with digital literacy.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges of learning history in the era of disinformation requires transformative instructional practices. This study confirms that integrating digital storytelling, reinforcing historical literacy, and cultivating source verification skills form a comprehensive and synergistic solution. These approaches not only revitalize students' engagement with history but also empower them to critically assess the information landscape that shapes their worldview. The study contributes significantly to the discourse on 21st-century education by demonstrating how history education can reclaim its relevance and function as a pillar for critical citizenship in the digital age.

2. The Urgency of Historical Literacy

Historical literacy is becoming increasingly urgent to be applied in social studies learning amid the rise of disinformation that spreads widely through various digital platforms. Historical literacy does not simply refer to the ability to read and understand historical narratives, but more than that, it includes the skills to criticize sources, contextualize information, and compare different versions of history rationally and logically (Lee, 2019). In this context, the approach of Wineburg and the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) becomes particularly relevant, as it underscores the importance of students' critical thinking abilities in assessing the validity of the historical information they consume.

The urgency of historical literacy arises along with the increasing spread of false information in the public sphere, which often contains the manipulation of historical narratives for specific ideological or political interests. Early et al. (2024) state that students often fall victim to erroneous historical information due to a lack of verification skills and an understanding of the actual historical context. Historical literacy allows students to question the origins of information, understand the socio-political context behind it, and make comparisons to different historical sources. In this regard, Wineburg (in Lee, 2019) emphasizes three main skills in history learning: sourcing (assessing the origins of sources), contextualization (placing information in a historical context), and corroboration (comparing various sources). These three skills are the main foundation for students to be able to distinguish between credible information and disinformation.

The document-based instruction (DBI) method is one of the effective pedagogical strategies in shaping students' historical literacy skills. Claravall and Irey (2022) show that this approach helps students, including those with learning difficulties, to engage more deeply in analyzing historical documents and understanding the meaning and context behind them. Through an in-depth analysis of primary sources, students not only learn to understand the content of the text, but are also trained to think historically reflexively and critically. The same thing is also affirmed by Cinnamon et al. (2021), who stated that learning based on historical text analysis can foster awareness of bias and the ability to evaluate the reliability of sources.

In learning practice, improving historical literacy must be supported by collaborative and reflective teaching strategies that involve discussions between teachers and the application of disciplinary literacy principles. Lee (2019) notes that history teachers must go beyond conventional reading practices by teaching techniques of source analysis and historical data-based argumentation. The implementation of interactive pedagogy like this will encourage students to actively question the narratives they encounter as well as train their skills in verifying and synthesizing historical information.

Furthermore, the SHEG model developed by Wineburg and his team emphasizes that history learning should involve students' active involvement with history material. This approach is in line with the recommendations of Cinnamon et al. (2021), who suggest disciplinary literacy training for teachers as an effective strategy in countering historical disinformation. In the midst of the rapid flow of digital information, the role of teachers is not only as a content presenter, but also as a facilitator of critical literacy that equips students with

the ability to read the world historically and reflectively (Early et al., 2024; Rantala & Khawaja, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen, 2010).

However, the application of historical literacy in schools is not without challenges. Many teachers face the limitations of a curriculum that is too dense and inflexible to accommodate a comprehensive historical literacy strategy. On the other hand, the variation in students' learning needs also demands an inclusive and adaptive teaching approach. Sumardi et al. (2023) and Lionar et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of integrating multimodal learning resources and differential learning approaches so that all students can access historical materials equally and meaningfully.

Nevertheless, the future of historical literacy remains promising if it is supported by advanced research and pedagogical innovation. One of the strategic directions forward is the exploration of the use of digital technology in strengthening historical literacy. As stated by Fleming-Castaldy (2018) and Lionar et al. (2024), the integration of digital devices, such as historical document analysis applications and online historical simulations, can enrich students' learning experiences and bring them closer to historical thinking processes that are authentic and relevant to the times.

Thus, the urgency of strengthening historical literacy in social studies education does not only function as a learning strategy, but also as a form of social responsibility for education in building the younger generation who are able to think critically, recognize disinformation, and appreciate historical truth in social life. Historical literacy not only saves students from the trap of false information, but also shapes them into historically-conscious, reflective, and democratic citizens.

Discussion and Concluding Implication

This study reinforces the idea that historical literacy is not merely an academic competency, but a civic necessity in an age saturated with disinformation. It demonstrates how structured strategies like DBI, critical pedagogy, and digital integration can be used to cultivate historically literate learners who think independently and contextually. As students become adept at verifying sources and questioning dominant narratives, they are empowered to resist manipulation and embrace a more authentic understanding of the past.

In conclusion, the findings highlight that historical literacy plays a pivotal role in defending educational integrity and social resilience. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to shaping a pedagogical direction that is both responsive to the digital realities of the 21st century and committed to cultivating reflective, critical, and democratically engaged citizens.

3. Strategies for Integrating Historical Literacy in Social Studies Learning

In the face of an increasingly massive era of disinformation, the integration of historical literacy in Social Sciences (IPS) learning is an important strategy that can develop students' critical thinking skills. One approach that has proven effective is *Inquiry-Based Learning* (IBL) which focuses on the active involvement of students in the process of searching, collecting, and analyzing historical sources, both local and national. This learning model encourages students to not just passively receive information, but to engage in the process of historical reasoning through questioning, research, and inferences based on existing evidence (Umamah et al., 2023; Kurniawati & Rahman, 2021).

The implementation of IBL is very much in line with the principles of historical literacy as it emphasizes essential skills such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. Through this method, students are invited to question the source of information, understand the social context and time in which the event occurred, and compare various points of view. Gunansyah and Novayanti (2018) emphasize that students' involvement with primary documents allows them to build opinions based on a deeper understanding, making them active subjects in history learning.

One of the strengths of IBL is its multi-perspective approach in analyzing historical events. This approach is very important in building students' awareness of the diversity of historical narratives and avoiding them from narrow and biased understandings. Kurniawati

and Rahman (2021) stated that the integration of disciplinary literacy in history learning encourages students to criticize historical texts, compare different points of view, and contextualize events in social and historical frameworks. This not only enriches students' understanding of history, but also strengthens their critical power in dealing with misleading information.

In the context of 21st century learning, the integration of digital media is an integral part of the strategy to strengthen historical literacy. Digital platforms provide broad access to a wide range of primary and secondary sources that students can use to delve into historical events from diverse perspectives. Sumardi et al. (2023) emphasized that digital storytelling is one of the innovative methods that can be used to re-narrate history based on the results of students' own investigations. Thus, learning becomes more meaningful and contextual and encourages students' active participation in building a more objective understanding of history.

To effectively implement IBL through digital media, teachers need to design learning that integrates digital literacy and history skills in a balanced manner. This includes explicit training in an analytical approach to historical sources, as described by Cinnamon et al. (2021). Furthermore, the use of technology such as historical simulations, virtual reality applications, interactive graphics, and educational applications can strengthen students' understanding of historical events and help them develop critical thinking skills towards circulating digital information.

By implementing these strategies, social studies learning will not only improve historical understanding, but also equip students with the historical literacy skills needed to face disinformation challenges. This creates an adaptive, reflective, and participatory learning space so that students grow up to be intelligent, critical, and responsible citizens in responding to historical information in the digital era.

Discussion and Concluding Implication

The results of implementing inquiry-based strategies supported by digital tools reveal that students are more capable of navigating complex historical narratives and disinformation. By being actively involved in source analysis and interpretation, learners develop critical inquiry habits that are transferable beyond the classroom. This approach also nurtures reflective thinking and democratic awareness by encouraging students to question dominant discourses and seek historical truth based on evidence.

In conclusion, the integration of historical literacy through inquiry-based and digitally supported instruction is not just an enhancement to history education it is a vital transformation. This study underscores the significance of these strategies in equipping students with the cognitive tools necessary for evaluating history in a disinformation-saturated environment. The contribution of this study lies in offering a practical, student-centered framework that positions historical literacy as both an educational goal and a civic imperative in the formation of informed, critical, and responsible citizens.

4. Case Study (Optional)

The application of historical literacy approaches in social studies learning in several schools has shown significant results in improving students' critical thinking skills and verification skills. Case studies from various implementations show that this approach not only impacts students' understanding of history, but also equips them with the ability to sift through credible information in the context of a disinformation-ridden society.

One effective strategy is the implementation of inquiry-based learning (IBL). Schools that integrate IBL into the history curriculum report significant increases in student participation and the development of historical thinking skills. Through project assignments that ask students to research local historical events, they are encouraged to ask critical questions, dig into data from a variety of sources, and craft evidence-based arguments (Vijayakumar & Ahmad, 2023). This activity encourages students to not only remember historical facts, but also understand the process of forming historical narratives.

In addition, the use of digital media in history learning has been proven to expand students' access to diverse historical sources. Schools that utilize digital archives, virtual

museums, and historical databases in learning allow students to actively interact directly with primary and secondary sources. According to Fodor et al. (2023), this multimedia approach not only increases students' interest in learning, but also strengthens their skills in evaluating the credibility of information through digital tools. This is especially important in today's digital era, where students are often exposed to unverified information (Lemu et al., 2024).

Another strategy is multiperspective analysis that encourages students to examine a historical event from various perspectives. In practice, students are invited to discuss controversial historical topics such as colonialism or the civil rights movement by considering various sources and views. Pratama et al. (2024) show that this approach strengthens students' ability to assess the bias and reliability of a source. In the context of social studies learning, this strategy makes a major contribution to students' understanding of the diversity of human experience and social dynamics in history.

The impact of these strategies on students' critical thinking skills is very real. The Pratama et al. (2024) study revealed that students who are involved in the historical thinking process show better analytical and interpretive skills, as well as being able to evaluate historical claims in depth. Students no longer receive information passively, but instead actively build understanding through high-level thinking that emphasizes evidence and logic.

Furthermore, source verification skills have also improved. Through the practice of evaluating different types of documents, from archives to direct testimony, students become more vigilant in examining the validity of information. Lemu et al. (2024) emphasized that this skill is very relevant in dealing with the heavy flow of information and is not always reliable, especially on social media and other online platforms.

The importance of applying historical literacy is not only limited to the classroom. Gencer and Doğan (2020) emphasize that students who master critical thinking and source verification skills tend to be able to apply them in daily life. They become more selective individuals in absorbing information, both in the academic realm and in social life, so that they can play the role of information-aware and responsible citizens.

Overall, case studies in various schools prove that the implementation of historical literacy through inquiry approaches, the use of digital technology, and multi-perspective analysis is an effective practice in forming students who are critical and able to assess the correctness of information. In the context of social studies education, this strategy is very relevant to equip the younger generation so that they are not trapped in manipulative historical narratives and are able to build a fair and factual understanding of history.

DISCUSSION

The main finding of this study reveals that integrating historical literacy through inquiry-based learning (IBL), digital media, and multiperspective analysis can significantly strengthen students' critical thinking and source verification skills in Social Studies learning. This finding extends the previous works of Özdemir and Tuna (2023), who emphasize the role of digital storytelling in enhancing student engagement, by offering a structured pedagogical model that combines digital narratives with critical inquiry to counter disinformation. Unlike their focus on engagement alone, this study demonstrates how digital storytelling also facilitates reflective source evaluation.

Yulianto et al. (2024) had previously pointed to the importance of historical literacy in helping students understand context and multiple perspectives. This study builds on their work by showing how structured theme analysis and document-based instruction empower students to not only understand perspectives but also critique and synthesize them into historical reasoning. Similarly, Fatimah et al. (2023) and Kumalasari et al. (2024) identify digital literacy as central to combating fake news, yet this study advances the discussion by situating verification training within a historical framework, not just a digital one.

Claravall and Irey (2022) noted the effectiveness of DBI (Document-Based Instruction), particularly for students with learning difficulties. This research confirms that finding but emphasizes its wider applicability across diverse student populations when combined with IBL. Cinnamon et al. (2021), who stress the necessity of critical source analysis in disciplinary

literacy, are echoed in this study's conclusion that digital media must be critically mediated through historical thinking practices to have a lasting impact.

Finally, the studies by Sumardi et al. (2023), Pratama et al. (2024), and Vijayakumar & Ahmad (2023) emphasize components such as digital media and inquiry. However, the novelty of this study lies in the synthesis and integration of those strategies into a cohesive, adaptable model for IPS classrooms—showing that when pedagogical strategies are unified rather than isolated, they produce significantly greater gains in student cognitive outcomes.

In essence, this study moves beyond identifying challenges to offering an integrated solution that transforms Social Studies education from rote learning into a platform for fostering digital-era citizenship grounded in historical thinking.

The findings of this study hold several important implications for history education within the Social Studies (IPS) framework, particularly in the context of combatting disinformation. First, the integration of inquiry-based learning (IBL) and digital storytelling suggests a transformative shift from traditional rote memorization toward a more investigative and student-centered pedagogy. Özdemir and Tuna (2023) emphasized that students' low interest in history learning is often due to monotonous and uncontextual delivery methods. This research implies that implementing more interactive and analytical strategies can significantly increase student motivation and historical engagement.

Second, the research reinforces the urgency of incorporating historical literacy as a fundamental competence in Social Studies learning. Yulianto et al. (2024) showed that historical literacy allows students to understand context, evaluate sources, and approach the past from multiple perspectives. The implication here is that curriculum designers must ensure that historical literacy is not only included in content standards but also practiced explicitly through learning models like document-based instruction (DBI) and theme analysis.

Third, the study demonstrates that source verification skills, as outlined by Fatimah et al. (2023) and Kumalasari et al. (2024), must be taught as part of an integrated digital and historical literacy strategy. This calls for teacher training programs to include both disciplinary literacy (Cinnamon et al., 2021) and technological literacy (Sumardi et al., 2023), thereby equipping educators with the tools to guide students through critical engagement with digital sources.

Moreover, this study supports the idea that learning history with a multiperspective approach enhances students' awareness of diverse narratives, helping to prevent biased understandings of the past (Pratama et al., 2024). Therefore, instructional practices should prioritize source comparison, contextualization, and narrative reconstruction based on verified evidence—empowering students to think reflectively and responsibly about historical claims.

In summary, this research contributes significantly to the evolving discourse on history education by offering an actionable framework that aligns pedagogical innovation with civic goals. It affirms that in the digital era, historical literacy is not merely an academic skill, but a civic necessity, vital for shaping informed, critical, and democratic citizens.

Despite the significant contributions of this study in highlighting the importance of historical literacy in the era of disinformation, several limitations must be acknowledged. One notable constraint is related to curricular rigidity and time allocation, which often restrict teachers from fully implementing comprehensive historical literacy strategies. As noted by Sumardi et al. (2023), many educators are constrained by a dense curriculum that leaves little room for reflective or student-centered pedagogies such as document-based instruction (DBI) or inquiry-based learning (IBL). This inflexibility limits the depth and continuity required for students to internalize sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration skills in history education (Lee, 2019).

Additionally, while digital technology offers vast potential for enriching historical understanding, its unequal accessibility across different schools and regions poses another limitation. According to Lionar et al. (2024), disparities in digital infrastructure and teacher readiness hinder the optimal application of digital archives, virtual simulations, and online historical tools in classroom settings. This uneven access affects the consistency and scalability of digital storytelling or virtual inquiry models across educational institutions.

Another limitation concerns the varied learning abilities and background knowledge of students, which makes it difficult to apply a uniform approach to historical literacy instruction. As Claravall and Irey (2022) argue, students with learning difficulties require differentiated and multimodal strategies to effectively engage in historical document analysis. This calls for more inclusive pedagogical designs, yet many teachers are still adapting to these complex demands.

Furthermore, this study is largely conceptual and qualitative in nature, relying on synthesis from prior studies rather than empirical intervention in classrooms. As such, the lack of longitudinal or experimental data limits the ability to measure the sustained impact of proposed strategies on student outcomes. Future studies may need to adopt mixed-method approaches or case-based interventions to validate the practical efficacy of historical literacy integration in combating disinformation.

In conclusion, while this research outlines promising frameworks for empowering students through historical literacy, its implementation faces practical barriers in curricular policy, technological access, pedagogical inclusivity, and empirical validation—factors that must be critically addressed in subsequent studies and educational reforms.

Given the dynamic nature of disinformation and the evolving digital landscape, there is a growing need for further research that explores the longitudinal impact of historical literacy strategies across diverse educational settings. While this study synthesizes various pedagogical models such as Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), Document-Based Instruction (DBI), and digital storytelling, future research should aim to implement and evaluate these methods in controlled classroom environments to measure their effectiveness in improving students' critical thinking, source verification skills, and engagement over time (Claravall & Irey, 2022; Cinnamon et al., 2021). Moreover, there is a necessity to investigate teacher competencies in delivering historical literacy content—particularly how training programs influence their ability to facilitate reflective and inquiry-driven pedagogy in the face of rigid curricula and technological constraints (Lee, 2019; Sumardi et al., 2023).

Another important direction is the exploration of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary models of historical literacy. Since disinformation is not bounded by geography, comparative studies across countries or educational systems could offer valuable insights into best practices and contextual adaptations. Additionally, research could be expanded to explore how historical literacy intersects with civic education, digital ethics, and media literacy, offering an integrative framework to strengthen democratic citizenship in the digital age (Lionar et al., 2024; Rantala & Khawaja, 2018).

Finally, future studies should consider the development of assessment tools specifically designed to measure competencies related to historical thinking, such as sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. Establishing reliable indicators for these skills will enhance the ability to track progress and refine instructional strategies. Overall, expanding empirical, cross-disciplinary, and context-specific research on historical literacy is crucial to ensure its relevance, scalability, and effectiveness in addressing 21st-century educational challenges.

CONCLUSION

Historical literacy is an urgent need in history education, especially in the era of widespread disinformation. In the context of Social Science (IPS) learning, the challenge of disinformation requires students not only to master factual knowledge alone, but also to have the ability to think critically about various sources of historical information. Historical literacy includes the ability to understand historical context, examine various perspectives, and systematically evaluate the credibility of sources, a very essential skill in dealing with biased or even false historical narratives. Ideal social studies learning must be able to integrate a comprehensive historical literacy approach, both in curriculum, learning strategies, and assessments. One effective strategy is inquiry-based learning, where students are encouraged to ask questions, explore historical evidence, and build understanding through a variety of complementary sources. This strategy directly fosters critical thinking skills and information verification, while increasing students' active participation in the learning process.

However, the successful implementation of historical literacy is highly dependent on the readiness of teachers and the availability of relevant learning resources. Therefore, teacher training that is oriented towards historical literacy is a must, as well as the development of teaching materials that are able to encourage active student involvement in understanding history critically. Thus, history education through social studies learning not only serves as a means of strengthening past identity and knowledge, but also as a fortress for the younger generation in facing the flow of information that is not always reliable. Historical literacy, in this case, is an important foundation in producing intelligent, critical, and responsible citizens in social and national life.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The author is fully responsible for all stages in the preparation of this article, from the formulation of research ideas and topics, the collection and analysis of literature data, to the writing and editing of the final manuscript. The author also conducts critical studies of relevant scientific references, develops conceptual frameworks, and synthesizes data to produce arguments that support the research objectives. In addition, all interpretations, conclusions, and implications in this article are the result of the author's independent thinking, while still considering input from various parties who contribute in the form of discussions and intellectual suggestions. Hereby, the author declares that no other party is directly involved in the writing or academic decision-making regarding the content of this article.

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