

# OPTIMIZING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY TO SUPPORT CONTEXTUAL MISSION SERVICES

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**Abstract**

The ability to utilize social media positively and creatively is needed in contextual mission ministries that interact with the digital community. To respond to this need, digital media literacy training as a community service activity was conducted at El-Bethel to optimize the ability of contextual mission ministers to utilize social media. The purpose of this article is to describe how digital media literacy can optimize the use of social media to support contextual mission services through the development of spiritual influencers. The method used in the community service program is service learning. Research was conducted using the participatory observation method during the program's implementation. The results showed that the training maximized the training participants' analytical skills and visual media content design skills. Participants can produce content that offers solutions to social problems.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of digital media, social media has become an important means of information and communication. Social media is a system that provides opportunities for individuals to participate in the same platform. It facilitates interaction between individuals and groups and develops social relationships (Ozdal, 2017). Social media allows users to create profiles and communicate with other users in the system (Greenhow & Askari, 2017; Homer et al., 2018).

Social media affects individual behavior both socially and personally. A literature review shows that social media impacts individuals' internalization of self-images (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020) and decision-making (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Social media mediates choices in various aspects of personal and social life, increases individual awareness of these choices (Ye, 2023), and fosters an individual's sense of belonging to a group (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015).

Departing from the literature study, a media literacy workshop was conducted as a community service activity to optimize the use of social media to support contextual mission services. This community service activity supports the proper utilization of social media to optimize its positive use and increase its positive impact, especially on contextual mission services.

The novelty offered in this article is the utilization of social media for contextual mission service through the coaching of spiritual influencers who maintain a pattern of spiritual communication that is understood and easily accessible on digital platforms. Contextual mission service is the proclamation of spiritual values by prioritizing the needs and cultural background of the community. In the era of digital society, the relevance of contextual mission services is increasing along with the development of lifestyles and changes in the interaction between humans and technology (Margareta & Lie, 2023).

The problem with contextual mission services is that the approach is less adaptive to the dynamics of digital society, which demands effective interaction and communication. This non-adaptive approach makes the proclamation of spiritual values ineffective and difficult to understand. The utilization of social media is less than optimal in contextual mission services; therefore, optimizing the use of social media needs to be done through media literacy to support contextual mission services.

From the above review, the purpose of this article is to describe how media literacy can optimize the use of social media to support contextual mission ministry through the coaching of spiritual influencers.

## 2. METHOD

The materials used in this study were media training materials developed by the author. This material was shown through an LC projector and given to the training participants as printed PPTs. The PPT material equips trainees with a theoretical understanding of media, namely the definition of media literacy, the affective nature of media, the nature of programming, media credibility, media language, and digital platform models. Practical materials included multimedia operation techniques, scripting, and live content.

The media training participants were 11 prospective mission workers from areas outside Java who were ready to be deployed to serve in their home areas. The characteristics of the trainees were that they lacked knowledge about digital technology both theoretically and practically.

The research was conducted during the implementation of the media training program in July and August 2024. The program was conducted once a week with eight face-to-face meetings. The implementation was at El-Bethel Surabaya, Which provided the multimedia room and equipment needed for the training.

This community service program uses the service learning method to solve the problem of the less-than-optimal use of social media in contextual services. This method is intended to integrate learning into community service activities by emphasizing practical aspects and referring to the concept of experiential learning, namely the application of knowledge amid society/community while interacting with society/community and becoming a solution to the problems faced by society/community (Afandi et al., 2022).

The service learning method divided the implementation of media training into lecture sessions for theoretical exposure in the first and second meetings and collaborative and consultative practice sessions in the third to eighth meetings. In the practical sessions, participants worked with partners or in small groups. During the practice process, participants consulted with the trainer for any difficulties. Collaborative and consultative workshops can improve theoretical knowledge and its implementation (Pribadi, 2016).

Qualitative data were obtained through participant observation during the implementation of the training program. The analysis method used was participant observation. Participatory observation is structured and transparent, with three things in common: observation is carried out directly with participation, participants understand the research process, and observation is organized systematically. (Jelmi, 2020). Observation is divided into three parts: data collection stage, data processing stage, and conclusion stage (Kumar et al., 2024).

In the data processing stage, observation data takes the form of narrative descriptions in the trainer's notes about the training process and the participants' work. The conclusion involves summarizing the main findings, comparing the findings with previous research, interpreting the findings based on the data and concepts/theories, and answering the observation objectives and problems (Zou & Xu, 2023).

### **3. RESULT DAN DISCUSSION**

The findings refer to the participants' analytical and design skills during training. In analytical skills, participants showed organizational skills, while in design skills, participants showed visual creativity.

Analytical skills were obtained from the assignment of creating podcast content on Instagram based on social reality given during the training. The prominent aspect of the analytical ability shown by participants is the ability to organize the community's real needs through an inventory process that precedes the creation of podcast content on Instagram. Visual content is intended to offer solutions to social problems.

Some of the social problems inventoried by the participants were divorce, parenting, and juvenile delinquency. These social issues are issues of concern in the contextual mission ministry of family restoration. Inventorying social problems shows organizational skills that underline the participants' connection with social problems, which are the basis for creating visual content. Social problems raise questions about the solutions that can be offered. Participants focus on the driving question that directs visual content creation, sets the context, and underscores the purpose of visual content creation.

Organizational skills also underline communication skills and the distribution of responsibilities in teamwork. Participants worked in pairs or small groups. Team discussions focused on the design of a podcast on Instagram that answered key questions about how to resolve conflicts in households and marriages to prevent divorce, how to have good parenting to produce a golden generation, and how to educate teenage children to prevent juvenile delinquency (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Live Podcast Practice with the Theme of Juvenile Delinquency

The visual media content design skills obtained in training are drafting a 5-minute podcast script and practicing live podcasts on Instagram. This design ability is demonstrated by skills in outlining social issues that are the target of the project and identifying the audience. Participants designed a live podcast concept for adult audiences.

Skills in using multimedia equipment also support visual media design skills. Participants must learn to use multimedia equipment before practicing live podcasts (Figure 2).

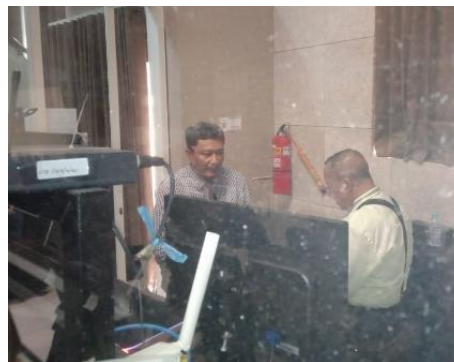


Figure 2. Practice using Multimedia Equipment

The final stage in the visual media content design process is to evaluate the podcast's performance and quality and fine-tune the details needed in the podcast content. The participants' visual products showed better final results (Figure 3). Visual content design skills support the contextual mission of offering solutions through podcast packaging.

The findings of this study indicate that the service learning method in implementing community service programs can improve cognitive, psychomotor, and affective skills. The increase in psychomotor skills generated through service learning-based media training adds to the findings in previous studies that emphasize service learning methods that are limited to improving cognitive skills, namely pedagogic knowledge (Syamsudduha & Tekeng, 2017) and affective skills, including supporting the spirit of learning (Pramanik et al., 2021), increasing motivation (Bukidz, 2022), and strengthening civic competence (Nanggala & Suryadi, 2021). The findings of this study also confirm the results of previous research, which states that digital media literacy improves the ability to understand, analyze, and produce content on social media platforms creatively (Sari & Prasetya, 2022).



Figure 3. Final Result on Live Podcast Practice

Analytical and design skills are needed to support contextual mission ministers directly in the community and interact directly with the digital society. Thus, digital literacy is needed as one of the leading programs for advocating contextual mission ministers as social media users to be able to interact with people who have different characteristics from the previous era. The positive utilization of social media for contextual mission ministry underscores the meaning of digital literacy. Digital literacy is the awareness, attitude, and ability of individuals to use digital tools and facilities appropriately to identify, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize digital resources, build new knowledge, create new media, and communicate with others, in the context of specific life situations, to enable constructive social action; and to reflect on these processes (Aguilera & Pandya, 2021).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The analytical skills and visual media content design produced during the training clearly show how digital media literacy can support contextual mission ministry by developing spiritual influencers who can use social media actively and creatively to solve social problems. Digital media literacy optimizes analytical skills and visual media content design to process information from the real world and transform it into positive messages that offer solutions and build communities.

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