

The Effect of Information Literacy on Students' Critical Ability in Filtering Disinformation: A Case Study of Library and Information Science Students at Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of digital technology has accelerated information dissemination while simultaneously increasing exposure to disinformation, thereby requiring individuals to critically assess the credibility of information. This study examines the influence of information literacy on students' critical ability to filter disinformation in the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. A quantitative survey design was employed, involving 73 students selected through proportionate stratified sampling from a population of 267 students. Data were collected using a questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale and analyzed through descriptive statistics and simple linear regression. The findings indicate that both information literacy and students' critical ability were categorized as high, with each variable obtaining a mean score of 3.16. Information literacy positively and significantly predicted students' critical ability to filter disinformation, as demonstrated by a regression coefficient of 0.412, a t-value of 4.446, and $p < .001$. These findings confirm that information literacy is an important factor in strengthening students' capacity to evaluate information credibility and identify potentially misleading

content. The study contributes empirical evidence concerning the role of information literacy in developing critical evaluation abilities among Library and Information Science students. Practically, the findings highlight the need for higher education institutions to integrate source evaluation, information verification, and critical thinking more systematically into teaching and learning strategies.

Keywords: Critical Evaluation; Disinformation Filtering; Higher Education; Information Literacy; Library and Information Science

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals access, produce, and distribute information. The internet and social media have provided unprecedented opportunities for obtaining information quickly and efficiently across geographical boundaries. However, these developments have also generated complex challenges, particularly the increasing circulation of misinformation, fake news, and disinformation within digital spaces. The abundance of available information does not always correspond with the ability of individuals to evaluate its accuracy and credibility. Visual and textual disinformation distributed through social media platforms has become a serious concern because misleading information can influence public understanding and decision-making processes (Dan et al., 2021). In Indonesia, the spread of misleading digital content has continued to increase, indicating that information verification remains a major challenge in contemporary society (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2024).

The increasing prevalence of disinformation demonstrates that access to information alone is insufficient in addressing digital information challenges. Individuals require adequate competencies to identify information needs, locate relevant sources, evaluate credibility, and utilize information responsibly. The ability to manage information effectively has become an essential component of digital citizenship because individuals must be able to distinguish reliable information from misleading content (Asnawati, 2022). Furthermore, information literacy contributes to the development of responsible information behavior by encouraging individuals to critically examine sources before accepting or disseminating information (Ayuni et al., 2022). Therefore, strengthening information literacy is considered an important strategy for reducing vulnerability toward disinformation in the digital era.

University students represent a group that actively interacts with digital technologies for academic and social purposes. Nevertheless, high levels of technology use do not automatically indicate strong abilities in evaluating information critically. Previous studies emphasize that information literacy involves not only technical skills in searching for information but also cognitive and ethical dimensions related to evaluating and utilizing information appropriately (Husna & Sayekti, 2023). In higher education environments, students are expected to possess the ability to identify credible sources, assess information quality, and apply information ethically to support academic activities (Hidayah et al., 2023). This ability becomes increasingly important for students in Library and Information Science programs, who are expected to become future information professionals capable of guiding society in managing digital information.

This study positions information literacy as a fundamental factor that may influence students' critical ability in filtering disinformation. The researcher argues that the challenge of disinformation cannot be addressed merely by improving access to information but requires the development of analytical and evaluative abilities. Critical ability enables individuals to examine evidence, question assumptions, compare different perspectives, and make decisions based on logical reasoning. Critical thinking is essential because individuals must process information carefully before determining whether a particular claim is accurate or misleading (Anggraeni et al., 2022). Moreover, critical thinking supports systematic problem-solving processes by encouraging individuals to analyze information and evaluate possible conclusions before making decisions (Sumargono et al., 2022). Critical ability is an essential competence in evaluating information, examining evidence, and making appropriate decisions in complex information environments. Manja et al. (2024) found that critical thinking ability involves students' capacity to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and construct reasoned judgments during the learning process. These findings emphasize that critical thinking is not only related to academic achievement but also plays an important role in responding to information challenges in the digital era.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between literacy competencies and responses toward digital information challenges. Rahwal and Ardoni (2023) found that students' information literacy abilities involve the processes of understanding, accessing, and utilizing information effectively based on the *Bruce's Seven Faces of Information Literacy* model. Their findings emphasize that information literacy is an important competency in developing students' ability to manage and evaluate information sources. Putri and Ardoni (2025) found

that digital literacy positively influenced students' efforts to prevent the spread of hoaxes. Similarly, Mayasari et al. (2025) reported that digital literacy contributes to the development of students' critical thinking abilities in the Society 5.0 era. In addition, Nisa (2024) highlighted that literacy competencies play an important role in helping individuals recognize misleading information, evaluate sources, and develop responsible behavior in digital environments.

Although previous studies provide valuable insights, a research gap remains regarding the relationship between information literacy and critical ability in the context of disinformation filtering. Most previous studies have focused on digital literacy rather than information literacy as a specific competency, while some studies have examined conceptual relationships without empirically measuring the influence between variables. Furthermore, limited research has investigated students of Library and Information Science as a specific population with quantitative approaches to determine how information literacy affects their critical ability when encountering disinformation. Therefore, this study attempts to address this research gap by providing empirical evidence regarding the influence of information literacy on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation.

The novelty of this research lies in examining information literacy as an independent variable that influences students' critical ability within the specific context of disinformation. Unlike previous studies that primarily discuss digital literacy broadly, this study focuses on information literacy competencies related to identifying, accessing, evaluating, and ethically using information. The theoretical foundation of information literacy in this research adopts the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education developed by ACRL, which emphasizes the ability to determine information needs, access appropriate sources, evaluate information critically, and use information ethically (Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, 2000). This framework is considered relevant because filtering disinformation requires individuals to evaluate information sources and assess the reliability of available evidence.

In addition to the ACRL framework, this study applies Facione's critical thinking framework as the basis for measuring students' critical ability. Critical thinking consists of several cognitive skills, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation, which are essential in assessing and responding to information accurately (Finissha et al., 2022). The selection of this framework is appropriate because the process of

identifying disinformation requires individuals to understand information, analyze claims, evaluate credibility, draw conclusions, and reflect on their reasoning process. Other critical thinking perspectives also emphasize the importance of structured reasoning, evidence evaluation, and logical argumentation in developing responsible decision-making abilities (Loh, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study aims to analyze the influence of information literacy on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation among students of the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of information literacy and critical thinking studies, particularly within the context of digital misinformation challenges. Practically, the findings may provide insights for higher education institutions in designing learning strategies that strengthen students' information competencies and critical evaluation skills. Developing these abilities is increasingly necessary because students must be capable of managing complex information environments, verifying sources, and making responsible judgments in the digital age (Manurung et al., 2023).

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method with a descriptive quantitative design. The quantitative approach was selected because the research aimed to examine the influence of information literacy as an independent variable (X) on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation as a dependent variable (Y) through numerical data analyzed statistically. The survey method was applied because it enables systematic data collection from respondents using structured research instruments. The research analysis was conducted to describe students' levels of information literacy and examine the effect of information literacy on critical ability through simple linear regression analysis.

The research design was developed based on two main variables with indicators derived from the theoretical frameworks used in the study. The information literacy variable was measured using the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education framework developed by ACRL, consisting of five indicators: determining the nature and scope of required information, accessing information effectively and efficiently, critically

evaluating information and its sources, using information effectively to achieve specific purposes, and understanding ethical and legal aspects of information use. Meanwhile, students' critical ability was measured using Facione's Critical Thinking framework, which includes six indicators: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. These indicators were used as the foundation for developing the research instrument to measure students' ability to evaluate and filter potentially misleading information.

The participants of this study were active students of the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang from the 2023–2025 cohorts. The research population consisted of 267 students, including 75 students from the 2023 cohort, 86 students from the 2024 cohort, and 106 students from the 2025 cohort. The sample was selected using stratified proportional sampling to ensure that each cohort was represented proportionally. Based on the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, the required sample size was determined as 73 respondents. The selection of these participants was based on their relevance to the research objectives, particularly their involvement in information-related academic activities and digital information environments.

Data were collected through questionnaires as the primary research instrument and literature review as supporting data. The questionnaire was developed based on the indicators of each research variable and distributed online through Google Forms using WhatsApp. A four-point Likert scale was applied, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Before data collection, the instrument was tested through construct validity using Pearson Product Moment correlation and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha. The validity test showed that all questionnaire items were valid because the calculated correlation values exceeded the critical value of 0.230. Furthermore, the reliability test indicated good consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.872 for information literacy and 0.764 for critical ability variables.

Data analysis consisted of several stages, including data examination, tabulation, descriptive statistical analysis, and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive analysis was conducted to identify the general level of students' information literacy and critical ability based on mean scores. Inferential analysis was performed using simple linear regression to determine the influence of information literacy on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation. Hypothesis testing was conducted through the t-test and coefficient of

determination (R^2) to evaluate the significance and contribution of the independent variable toward the dependent variable.

RESULTS

Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		73
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.42951645
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.069
	Positive	.069
	Negative	-.059
Test Statistic		.069
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200 ^d
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^e	Sig.	.529
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound .516
		Upper Bound .542

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

e. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Figure 1. Normality Test

Figure 1. Normality Test shows that the normality test results using the *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* obtained an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200. This value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the residual data are normally distributed. Therefore, the data fulfill the normality assumption and can be further analyzed using statistical procedures.

Linearity Test

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Y * X	Between Groups	(Combined)	941.959	23	40.955	2.323	.007
		Linearity	393.233	1	393.233	22.303	<.001
		Deviation from Linearity	548.726	22	24.942	1.415	.155
	Within Groups		863.958	49	17.632		
	Total		1805.918	72			

Figure 2. Linearity Test

Figure 2. Linearity Test shows that the linearity test between information literacy (X) and critical ability (Y) obtained a Sig. *Deviation from Linearity* value of 0.155. Since this value is greater than 0.05, it indicates that there is no significant deviation from linearity between the two variables. Furthermore, the Sig. *Linearity* value of <0.001 , which is lower than 0.05, demonstrates that there is a significant linear relationship between information literacy and critical ability. Thus, the relationship between the two variables meets the linearity assumption and is suitable for further analysis using simple linear regression.

Hypothesis Test

a. Simple Linear Regression Test

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	37.284	4.420	8.436	$<.001$
	X	.412	.093	4.446	$<.001$

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Figure 3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Figure 3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis shows that the analysis produced a constant value of 37.284 and a regression coefficient of 0.412 for the information literacy variable (X). Therefore, the regression equation obtained is $Y = 37.284 + 0.412X$. The constant value indicates that when information literacy is assumed to be zero, the predicted value of students' critical ability is 37.284. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient of 0.412 indicates that every one-unit increase in information literacy is followed by an increase of 0.412 units in critical ability. The positive regression coefficient indicates that information literacy has a positive relationship with students' critical ability, meaning that higher levels of information literacy are associated with higher levels of critical ability.

b. t-Test

The t-test results indicate that the information literacy variable (X) obtained a t-value of 4.446 with a significance level of <0.001 . Because the significance value is below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is

accepted. These findings indicate that information literacy has a positive and significant effect on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation among students of the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang.

c. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.467 ^a	.218	.207	4.461

a. Predictors: (Constant), X
b. Dependent Variable: Y

Figure 4. Coefficient of Determination Test

Figure 4. Coefficient of Determination Test shows that the R Square value obtained was 0.218. This value indicates that information literacy (X) contributes 21.8% to students' critical ability (Y). Meanwhile, the remaining 78.2% is influenced by other factors outside the variables examined in this study. Therefore, information literacy provides a contribution of 21.8% to students' critical ability in filtering disinformation.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of information literacy on students' critical thinking abilities in filtering disinformation among students of the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. The findings demonstrate that both information literacy and critical thinking ability were categorized as high, with each variable obtaining an average score of 3.16. These findings indicate that students generally possess adequate competencies in identifying, accessing, evaluating, and utilizing information, as well as in interpreting, analyzing, evaluating, and reflecting on information before making decisions. The results further reveal that information literacy has a positive and significant effect on students' critical thinking abilities, as indicated by the simple linear regression coefficient of 0.412, t-value of 4.446, and significance level of <0.001. These findings confirm that improvements in information literacy are followed by improvements in critical thinking ability.

The descriptive findings provide a deeper understanding of the role of each indicator in shaping students' ability to process information. Information literacy was measured using five indicators based on the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education developed by ACRL, namely determining the nature and scope of needed information, accessing information effectively and efficiently, critically evaluating information and its sources, using information effectively for specific purposes, and understanding ethical and legal aspects of information use. The highest indicator was understanding and using information ethically and legally, with an average score of 3.27, while the lowest indicator was critically evaluating information and sources, with an average score of 3.07. This finding suggests that students have developed strong awareness regarding responsible information use, particularly in recognizing the consequences of spreading false information. However, the ability to examine supporting evidence and compare multiple sources requires further strengthening.

The results are consistent with the ACRL framework, which emphasizes that information literacy is not limited to searching for information but also involves evaluating credibility and applying information ethically. The findings indicate that students have successfully implemented several components of information literacy, particularly in identifying information needs and using verified information for academic purposes. Nevertheless, the relatively lower score in critical evaluation indicates that information literacy competencies remain uneven across dimensions. This finding supports previous research by Putri and Ardoni (2025), which demonstrated that students with better digital literacy abilities tend to be more capable of identifying, analyzing, and verifying information before sharing it. Similarly, Nisa (2024) highlighted that literacy competencies are essential in responding to misinformation through the ability to evaluate sources, understand information contexts, and question the validity of received information.

Regarding critical thinking ability, the findings show that students achieved a high category with an average score of 3.16. Based on Facione's critical thinking framework, six indicators were examined: interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Among these indicators, evaluation obtained the highest average score of 3.27, while analysis obtained the lowest average score of 3.05. The high score in evaluation indicates that students are relatively capable of assessing information credibility and recognizing potentially misleading information. However, the lower score in analysis suggests

that students still need improvement in identifying relationships between information, examining arguments, and detecting inconsistencies within information sources.

These findings support Facione's (1990) conceptualization of critical thinking as a process involving interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Students' ability to evaluate information demonstrates that they are able to consider evidence and credibility before accepting information. This result is also consistent with previous studies. Mayasari et al. (2025) found that digital literacy contributes to the development of students' reflective and analytical thinking abilities, while Putri and Ardoni (2025) reported that literacy skills encourage students to verify information before dissemination. Therefore, the current study extends previous findings by specifically demonstrating the relationship between information literacy based on ACRL indicators and critical thinking based on Facione's framework within the context of disinformation filtering among Library and Information Science students.

The novelty of this research lies in its empirical examination of how information literacy contributes to critical thinking ability in dealing with disinformation, rather than merely examining literacy levels or digital behavior. The regression analysis shows that information literacy contributes 21.8% to students' critical thinking ability, while the remaining 78.2% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. This finding indicates that information literacy is an important component in developing critical thinking, but it should be considered as one of several factors influencing students' cognitive abilities.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the integration of information literacy and critical thinking perspectives by demonstrating that the stages of identifying, accessing, evaluating, and using information are closely related to critical cognitive processes. Information literacy provides the foundation for students to interact with information effectively, while critical thinking enables them to assess information quality and make reasonable judgments. Practically, the findings suggest that higher education institutions, particularly Library and Information Science programs, should strengthen learning activities that emphasize source evaluation, information verification, evidence analysis, and identification of misleading information. Such efforts may improve students' preparedness in responding to the increasing circulation of disinformation in digital environments.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research focused only on students from the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas

Negeri Padang, with 73 respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations. Second, the study relied on questionnaire-based measurements, meaning that the results reflect students' self-reported perceptions rather than direct assessments of their actual information-processing behavior. Third, the coefficient of determination indicates that information literacy explains only 21.8% of critical thinking ability, suggesting that other variables should be investigated in future studies. Future research may consider different populations, additional variables, or alternative research approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of factors influencing students' critical thinking abilities in dealing with disinformation.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the influence of information literacy on students' critical ability in filtering disinformation among students of the Library and Information Science Program at Universitas Negeri Padang. The findings indicate that students' information literacy was categorized as high, with an average score of 3.16, demonstrating that students have developed competencies in identifying information needs, accessing information, evaluating sources, and using information responsibly. Similarly, students' critical ability was also categorized as high, with an average score of 3.16, indicating their capacity to interpret, evaluate, and make judgments regarding the information they encounter. The hypothesis testing results confirmed that information literacy has a positive and significant influence on students' critical ability, meaning that higher levels of information literacy are associated with stronger abilities to critically assess and filter potentially misleading information.

The findings provide an answer to the research objective by demonstrating that information literacy represents an important factor contributing to students' critical ability in dealing with disinformation. The main contribution of this research lies in strengthening the understanding of the relationship between information literacy and critical thinking by integrating the ACRL information literacy framework and Facione's critical thinking framework within the context of Library and Information Science students. This study provides empirical evidence that information literacy extends beyond information searching skills, as it also supports the processes of evaluating information credibility, analyzing evidence, and making responsible judgments in digital environments. Practically, the findings provide valuable implications for higher education institutions, particularly Library and

Information Science programs, to develop learning strategies that emphasize source evaluation, information verification, and the improvement of students' critical evaluation skills.

Future research is recommended to explore additional factors that may influence students' critical abilities, considering that information literacy represents only one contributing factor among various elements affecting critical thinking development. Further studies may also involve broader populations, different methodological approaches, or alternative measurement instruments to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' abilities in responding to increasingly complex digital information challenges.

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