

Media Literacy and Digital Privacy Management among Indonesian University Students on Social Media

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Abstract

This study aims to determine how proficient students at the University of Muhammadiyah Riau are in using technology and managing the privacy of their communication on social media, considering online crimes and potential misuse of personal data. Using a descriptive purposive sampling technique. The results show that students possess good digital literacy in maintaining communication privacy and security on social media. They demonstrate

awareness of digital, ethical, security, and cultural components that support responsible digital behavior, indicating that these literacy dimensions are effectively implemented in managing students' privacy and digital footprint.

Keywords: Digital Communication, Digital Literacy, Privacy Management

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, social media has become an essential element of daily life, especially for young adults and college students. With 185.3 million internet users as of January 2024, Indonesia had a 66.5% internet penetration rate. Of this total, 139 million people, nearly half of the population, are active social media users. They spend an average of 7 hours and 48 minutes online every day, with 41.9 percent of that time dedicated to social media platforms. Indonesia is also one of the nations with the highest numbers of Instagram and Facebook users worldwide. Information seeking, social engagement, self-expression, material sharing, and entertainment are all common uses for these platforms (Heinonen, 2014).

Even if social media greatly improves connectedness and communication, excessive usage of it raises substantial privacy and personal data protection issues. Users are encouraged by a number of platform features to provide personal information on a regular basis, usually without fully understanding the risks involved. According to a Kaspersky Lab survey, 44% of users make their personal information publicly available, while 93% of users communicate information digitally (Kaspersky Labs, 2017). Global worries about digital privacy and data misuse have increased as a result of high-profile occurrences like the Cambridge Analytica scandal, which involved the unlawful collection of personal data from millions of Facebook users for political objectives. These incidents demonstrate how users' personal information is vulnerable and emphasize how crucial it is to handle privacy effectively in online communication settings (Ho et al., 2023).

Even though the majority of social media sites provide security measures and privacy settings, many users lack the information and abilities needed to properly manage their digital privacy. According to research, consumers frequently know how to use digital technologies effectively but are ignorant of the dangers of disclosing personal information or how to properly employ privacy measures (Susilawati et al., 2022). Due to their high usage of social media, university students are especially vulnerable to these threats. Many students exhibit low digital literacy with regard to privacy management, despite their general

proficiency with digital platforms. This includes a lack of awareness regarding data protection, a lack of use of security features, and an inadequate assessment of the repercussions of online self-disclosure (Tanjung et al., 2024).

Digital literacy is widely recognized as a critical competence for navigating digital environments safely and responsibly. Beyond basic technical skills, digital literacy encompasses critical thinking, ethical awareness, and the ability to manage personal information in digital communication contexts (Anggreni et al., 2023). One essential dimension of digital literacy is privacy management, which enables users to distinguish between public and private information, regulate self-disclosure, and protect themselves from potential misuse of personal data. However, existing studies suggest that digital literacy education, particularly concerning privacy, is often inadequately integrated into formal educational settings, including higher education institutions (Page et al., 2022). In the context of social media, CPM theory is especially relevant, as users continuously make decisions about what personal information to share, with whom, and under what conditions, often within platforms that blur the boundaries between private and public spaces.

Although CPM theory has been applied in various communication contexts, its use in examining digital literacy as a practical mechanism for managing privacy on social media remains limited, particularly in the Indonesian higher education context. Previous studies in Indonesia have predominantly focused on new media literacy in general or examined social media literacy among high school students, with less attention given to university students and the concrete practices through which they manage communication privacy. Given that young adults aged 19-34 constitute nearly 80 percent of internet users in Indonesia, university students represent a critical yet underexplored population in studies of digital literacy and privacy management (Dewi et al., 2021).

In order to close this gap, this study looks at how Muhammadiyah University of Riau (UMRI) students maintain their communication privacy using digital media literacy. In contrast to earlier studies that focus on general awareness or cognitive understanding, this study stresses the performative aspect of digital literacy and how literacy is enacted through regular social media privacy management activities. This study aims to explain how students negotiate privacy limits, control self-disclosure, and make judgments about personal information in digital communication environments by using CPM theory as the primary analytical framework (Sari & Prasetya, 2022).

Therefore, using CPM theory as a framework, the goal of this study is to examine how digital media literacy might be used to manage students' social media communication privacy. The results are anticipated to make a theoretical contribution by reinforcing the connection between digital literacy and communication privacy management, as well as a practical contribution by providing guidance for digital literacy education programs in higher education, especially with regard to privacy awareness and responsible social media use.

2. Method

2.1 Research Design and Approach

In order to investigate how college students use digital media literacy to manage communication privacy on social media, this study uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. Because the study aims to comprehend meanings, experiences, and decision-making processes connected to privacy management rather than measure variables or test causal correlations, a qualitative method is acceptable. This method, which is based on a post-positivist paradigm, enables the researcher to thoroughly analyze participants' subjective viewpoints and investigate social phenomena in their natural setting (Sugiyono, 2022). Given that privacy management involves nuanced judgments, contextual considerations, and personal boundaries, a qualitative design is particularly suitable for capturing these complexities. Rather than aiming for statistical generalization, this study emphasizes analytical depth and theoretical insight, using Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory as the primary interpretive framework. The focus is on understanding how digital literacy is enacted in everyday social media practices, especially in relation to self-disclosure, boundary regulation, and privacy control.

The research was conducted at Muhammadiyah University of Riau (UMRI), a private university in Indonesia with a student population that actively engages with social media platforms, particularly Instagram. Instagram was selected as the primary platform of analysis because it is one of the most widely used social media platforms among Indonesian university students and is highly visual, interactive, and disclosure-oriented, making it a relevant site for examining privacy management practices.

2.2 Participants and Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling, a method frequently used in qualitative research to find informants with pertinent experience and expertise linked to the research focus, was used to select participants. Active Instagram use,

frequent content sharing, and a willingness to talk about personal experiences with social media privacy management were among the selection criteria. Four informants participated in the study: two typical students and two campus influencers, sometimes known as "campus celebrities." Students who regularly produce public content, have a noticeably larger number of followers within the university community, and are acknowledged by peers as prominent players on campus social media are referred to in this study as "campus celebrities." This distinction was intentionally made to capture variation in privacy management practices between students with high online visibility and those with more private or limited audiences. The inclusion of these contrasting profiles allows for comparative analytical insight rather than representational generalization.

This study does not intend to extrapolate results to all university students, despite the small number of informants. Rather, it aims for theoretical saturation at the conceptual level, where recurrent patterns concerning disclosure regulations, privacy boundaries, and literacy practices appear in all circumstances. When no significantly new themes related to CPM theory and digital literacy practices emerged after data analysis, data saturation was deemed to have been reached.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

To guarantee consistency and contextual knowledge, data were gathered over a predetermined period of time using in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. The main technique for gathering data was semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The four pillars of digital literacy access, analysis, evaluation, and content creation, as well as important ideas from Communication Privacy Management theory, served as the foundation for the development of an interview guide. Participants' reasons for sharing content, opinions about privacy, usage of Instagram privacy settings, encounters with boundary violations, and methods for handling personal data were all included in the interview questions (Ahmad & Muslimah, 2021). Open-ended questions allowed participants to articulate their experiences freely, while probing questions enabled deeper exploration of emerging themes. Each interview began with rapport-building and informed consent procedures and concluded with opportunities for clarification and follow-up.

Observations were conducted by systematically examining participants' Instagram activities, reflecting publicly accessible content such as posts, stories, highlights, captions, and visible privacy settings. The observation protocol focused on patterns of self-disclosure, audience targeting, interaction features, and indicators of privacy regulation, such

as account settings and content restriction practices. These observations provided contextual support and behavioral validation of interview data. Documentation included screenshots of public posts, platform features, and relevant policy documents related to Instagram privacy settings. All documentation was collected ethically and limited to content that participants consented to be analyzed.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Data reduction, data display, and conclusion drafting and verification comprised the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The initial step was organizing and transcribing observational notes and interview transcripts. The researcher used CPM theory and the four pillars of digital literacy as a guide for theme coding during data reduction. There were two phases to the coding process. Initially, open coding revealed recurrent ideas about rules, privacy boundaries, disclosure choices, and literacy practices. Second, theoretical coding connected these ideas to the operational aspects of digital literacy as well as CPM elements like privacy ownership, boundary coordination, and boundary turbulence.

Data were then categorized and displayed in thematic matrices to identify patterns and contrasts between campus influencers and regular students. Conclusions were drawn through iterative comparison between data sources and theoretical constructs. Verification involved continuous re-examination of the data to ensure consistency and analytical coherence. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source and method triangulation were employed. Convergences and inconsistencies were found by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documents. When discrepancies emerged, the researcher went over the data again and, if needed, asked participants for an explanation. In order to reduce researcher bias and record interpretive choices made during the research process, reflexive notes were also kept.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the entire research process, ethical guidelines were closely followed. Prior to data collection, each participant gave their informed consent and was made aware of the goals, methods, and ability to withdraw from the study at any time. Pseudonyms were employed to anonymize participant identities, and all information was safely preserved and utilized only for academic research. No social media content that was restricted or private was accessed without specific authorization.



Figure 1. Flowchart of the Research Methodology for the Study of Digital Literacy and Communication Privacy Management

3. Results

3.1 Digital Literacy Practices in Managing Privacy on Instagram

Analysis of interview and observation data shows that UMRI students demonstrate varied yet patterned forms of digital literacy in

managing their communication privacy on Instagram. All informants have fundamental technical skills, but their behaviors show varying levels of risk awareness, boundary negotiation, and reflexivity. Participants' capacity to manage numerous accounts, alter information, and modify privacy settings demonstrates their digital skills. One informant clarified, for instance:

“I separate my personal and public accounts. On my public account, I’m more careful because anyone can see it. On my private account, I only accept people I really know.” (Informant J)

This contrast demonstrates how students operationalize privacy boundaries in accordance with CPM theory, which places an emphasis on audience segmentation and control over information ownership. Technical proficiency does not, however, automatically equate to reliable privacy protection. Participants occasionally left stories publicly accessible during promotional or high-engagement moments, despite their understanding of privacy settings, according to observational data, suggesting an intentional trade-off between visibility and privacy. Students' digital habits are also influenced by ethical issues. Informants talked about intentionally exercising self-control when sharing sensitive content, refraining from hate speech, and double-checking the sources of information before doing so. A participant observed:

“Sometimes I want to share my feelings, but I think again—will this affect my image or other people? If it’s too personal, I don’t post it.” (Informant R)

This reflects ethical filtering rather than unrestricted self-disclosure. Yet, ethical decision-making was not uniform. One informant admitted difficulty resisting trends that encouraged oversharing, suggesting that social pressure and algorithmic visibility occasionally override ethical considerations. These findings indicate that ethical literacy is situational and negotiated rather than absolute.

In terms of digital safety, all informants reported activating two-factor authentication and using strong passwords, demonstrating awareness of platform security features. Students also acted as informal peer educators, helping friends recover hacked accounts. However, minor inconsistencies were observed: some participants reused passwords across platforms for convenience, acknowledging the risk but prioritizing ease of access. This contradiction highlights the tension between security awareness and everyday digital habits.

Digital skills, digital ethics, digital safety, and digital culture are the four interconnected dimensions via which UMRI students use digital literacy in maintaining Instagram privacy, according to an analysis of

interview and observational data. Instead of functioning independently, these elements come together to build a dynamic system of behaviors that are influenced by societal expectations, platform affordances, and situational judgment. Table 1 summarizes the empirical patterns found among participants in order to improve transparency and analytical clarity. The literacy dimensions, specific behaviors, empirical data, and their consequences for privacy protection are compared in the table.

Table 1. Integrated Patterns of Digital Literacy and Privacy Management

Digital Literacy Dimension	Observed Practices	Empirical Evidence	Implications for Privacy
Digital Skills	Account separation, privacy adjustment, content editing	Interview excerpts; and profile observation	Enables audience segmentation and selective disclosure
Digital Ethics	Self-censorship, avoidance of sensitive content, verification	Participant narratives; posting behavior	Reduces reputational and relational risk
Digital Safety	Two-factor authentication, peer support, password reuse	Self-reports; follow-up observation	Enhances security but reveals a convenience–risk trade-off
Digital Culture	Cultural promotion, watermarking, attribution	Content analysis posts	Strengthens identity while protecting ownership

The reviewer's desire for a categorical comparison is clearly addressed by this comparative structuring, which shows that digital literacy is implemented differently across dimensions. Technical proficiency is constantly high, but safety and ethical standards vary based on engagement incentives, perceived danger, and context.

3.2 Negotiating Privacy Boundaries: A CPM-Based Interpretation

According to the Communication Privacy Management theory, students' digital literacy activities can be viewed as continuous discussions of privacy limits. Participants described privacy as relational and context-dependent rather than static. Perceived risk, audience type, and content purpose all had an impact on disclosure decisions.

One informant explained boundary coordination explicitly:

“If it’s about campus activities, I don’t mind sharing publicly. But if it’s family or personal problems, that’s not for Instagram.” (Informant S)

This illustrates CPM’s concept of rule-based disclosure, where individuals determine what information is shareable and with whom. Boundary turbulence, another CPM concept, emerged when content spread beyond intended audiences. One participant recounted discomfort after a private post was reshared without consent, leading them to tighten privacy settings afterward. Such experiences prompted adaptive literacy practices, showing that privacy management skills often develop reactively following boundary violations.

Importantly, the findings do not suggest uniform mastery. Instead, students oscillate between openness and control, visibility and restraint. Digital literacy, in this sense, functions as a performative competence, enacted through repeated decisions rather than fully stable knowledge. To clarify causal relationships between literacy practices and privacy outcomes, the findings can be conceptualized as a processual flow of privacy management, illustrated conceptually in Figure 2 :

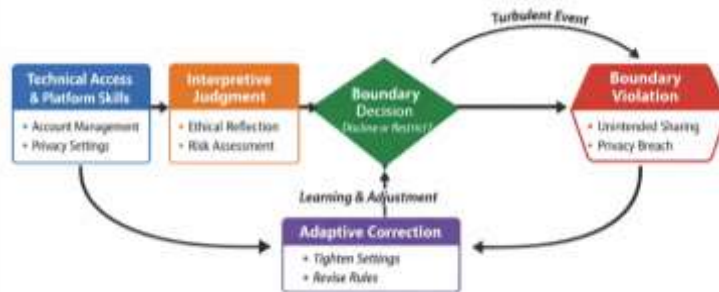


Figure 2. Process Model of Digital Privacy Management

Technical access and platform proficiency are the first steps in digital literacy practices, which are followed by interpretive judgment (risk assessment and ethical contemplation) and boundary decision-making (disclosure or limitation). Students use adaptive correction to tighten privacy settings or update disclosure guidelines when boundary violations (such as inadvertent resharing) take place. This flow shows that privacy management is recursive and experiential rather than linear and static. A key component of Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory, boundary turbulence appears as a learning trigger instead of an endpoint. After losing control, students improve privacy regulations, confirming Petronio's (2002) claim that boundary disruption leads to the evolution of privacy regulations.

3.3 Integrated Patterns of Digital Literacy and Privacy Management

Table 1 provides an integrated picture of how digital literacy aspects are implemented in practice and how they influence privacy management in order to summarize these findings. The table functions as an analytical summary based on observational and interview data rather than taking the role of narrative analysis.

Table 2. Patterns of Digital Literacy Implementation and Privacy Management

Dimension of Digital Literacy	Observed Practices	Evidence from Data	Implications for Privacy
Digital Skills	Account separation, content editing, privacy setting use	Interview statements; Instagram profile observation	Enables selective disclosure and audience control
Digital Ethics	Self-censorship, avoidance of harmful content, and source verification	Informant reflections: posting behavior	Reduces reputational and relational risks
Digital Safety	Two-factor authentication, password management, and peer assistance	Self-reports; follow-up observations	Protects accounts, though convenience sometimes compromises security
Digital Culture	Promotion of local culture, watermarking content	Content analysis of posts	Reinforces identity while safeguarding intellectual ownership

All things considered, these trends show that digital literacy among UMRI students is neither strictly technical nor consistently applied. Rather, it is influenced by societal expectations, contextual demands, and past privacy risk experiences. CPM theory reveals digital literacy as a living, adaptable, and occasionally conflicting practice by offering a

cogent explanatory framework for comprehending how students manage boundaries between the public and private domains.

4. Discussion

4.1 Digital Literacy Beyond Competence: From Technical Mastery to Interpretive Judgment

The results of this study imply that digital literacy among UMRI students functions as an interpretive and situational judgment practice rather than just a collection of technical skills. Strong digital skills, such as source verification, privacy setting administration, and content editing, were displayed by participants; however, these capabilities did not always convert into reliable or consistent privacy protection. This result casts doubt on the instrumental definition of digital literacy, which links technical proficiency to ethical online conduct (Anggreni et al., 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, this gap underscores the limitation of skill-based models of digital literacy. As argued by Pangrazio and Selwyn (2018), digital literacy must be understood as socially embedded and context-dependent. The present findings reinforce this perspective by showing that students' privacy decisions are shaped by competing motivations: visibility, self-branding, relational maintenance, and ethical restraint. In practice, students frequently balance privacy concerns against perceived benefits of openness, such as engagement metrics, audience growth, or professional recognition (Suciati, 2019). Thus, digital literacy emerges as a negotiated competence, enacted differently across situations rather than applied uniformly. The CPM theory's premise that privacy management is flexible but rule-based is consistent with this understanding. Privacy regulations are constantly updated in response to changing circumstances. Platform affordances that promote transparency in digital settings exacerbate these expectations, making it more difficult for users to uphold consistent privacy limits (Monggilo et al., 2021).

4.2 Reinterpreting CPM Theory in Algorithmic Communication Environments

Although Communication Privacy Management theory offers a useful framework for understanding how students control disclosure, the results also point to the necessity of expanding CPM theory to better take into consideration the dynamics of digital platforms. Privacy negotiation is often seen by CPM as an interpersonal activity between co-owners of information. However, in social media settings, individuals negotiate privacy limits with platform architects and algorithms in addition to other users. The results show that students intentionally differentiate between private and public accounts, audiences, and content kinds, which is

consistent with CPM's border coordination and privacy ownership tenets (Anggreni et al., 2023). However, boundary turbulence frequently arises when content circulates beyond its intended audience, often facilitated by platform features such as reposting, algorithmic amplification, or visibility incentives. These experiences prompt reactive adjustments, such as tightening privacy settings or limiting future disclosures, illustrating CPM's adaptive cycle in action.

Importantly, algorithmic systems function as implicit boundary co-owners, shaping what content gains visibility and encouraging behaviors that may contradict users' privacy intentions. This suggests that CPM theory, when applied to digital contexts, must move beyond interpersonal negotiation to include socio-technical mediation. Instead of being exclusively negotiated between sender and recipient, privacy limits are now filtered, rearranged, and magnified by platform logics that users have no control over. By presenting CPM as a paradigm that requires non-human actors to actively participate in privacy management procedures through algorithms, measurements, and interface design, this paper makes a theoretical contribution.

4.3 Ethical Reasoning, Moral Tension, and the Limits of Individual Agency

The prevalent narratives of responsible digital citizenship are further complicated by the results pertaining to digital ethics. Even while students show a high level of ethical awareness by avoiding objectionable content, confirming facts, and respecting others' boundaries, social and institutional factors sometimes limit their ability to make moral decisions. Participants talked about times of doubt and internal struggle, especially when peer expectations or participation incentives clashed with ethical restraint. This conflict is a reflection of what CPM theory refers to as boundary dilemmas, in which people have to decide between protection and openness. The moral economics of visibility in social media settings exacerbates these conundrums, since restraint or quiet may result in diminished social capital or significance. Therefore, ethical literacy cannot be viewed as a fixed moral position but rather as a contextual negotiation influenced by platform standards and audience perception. Furthermore, these results cast doubt on the notion that privacy management is exclusively the duty of the person. Students' autonomy is constrained by platform designs that promote disclosure and ongoing engagement, even while they exhibit ethical intent. This realization is consistent with critical research on digital ethics, which contends that moral failings in digital settings are frequently systemic rather than just personal. As a result, teaching digital literacy that just emphasizes

individual responsibility runs the danger of ignoring the institutional factors that encourage excessive sharing.

4.4 Cultural Expression, Identity, and Privacy as Collective Meaning-Making

The digital culture dimension reveals that privacy management is also deeply intertwined with identity and cultural representation. Students' use of social media to promote local Malay-Riau culture reflects a form of culturally situated digital literacy, where privacy decisions are informed by collective values rather than purely personal concerns. Practices such as watermarking content and crediting sources indicate an awareness of intellectual ownership and communal respect. From a CPM perspective, this suggests that privacy boundaries are not only individual constructs but also collectively informed norms.

Cultural identity shapes what is considered appropriate to share and what must be protected. In this sense, privacy management becomes a form of cultural communication, where disclosure choices reinforce belonging and moral responsibility (Wasisto Aji et al., 2023). However, the findings also suggest that cultural expression is mediated by dominant digital trends that may commodify culture for visibility. This creates a subtle tension between cultural preservation and algorithmic performance, further complicating privacy decisions. Thus, digital culture should be understood as both empowering and constraining, offering opportunities for representation while imposing new forms of exposure (Noerma Kurnia Fajarwati, Fitrianti et al., 2023).

4.5 Implications for Theory, Practice, and Institutional Responsibility

The results of this study suggest that the scaffolding of reflective and situational decision-making should be the main emphasis of digital literacy interventions in higher education, rather than only the transfer of technical skills. Students' privacy results are more significantly influenced by how they understand risks, assess ethical implications, and negotiate disclosure boundaries in context, even while they show sufficient mastery of platform features. In order to allow students to critically analyze privacy ownership, boundary coordination, and boundary turbulence as lived communicative processes rather than abstract concepts, universities are urged to incorporate Communication Privacy Management (CPM)-based reflective modules into digital literacy curricula. Instead of depending just on post hoc fixes after privacy breaches, such integration would enable learners to foresee privacy difficulties and create adaptive reasoning skills.

In addition, the findings underscore the importance of explicitly addressing algorithmic influence within digital literacy education. Students' disclosure decisions are not made in a neutral environment but are continually shaped by visibility incentives, engagement metrics, and content amplification mechanisms embedded within platform architectures. Instructional practices should therefore incorporate platform-specific simulations and case-based scenarios that expose students to ethical and privacy trade-offs arising from algorithmic curation. By situating privacy education within realistic communicative contexts, institutions can foster greater awareness of boundary turbulence and enhance students' capacity to navigate tensions between visibility, self-presentation, and privacy protection. Importantly, the responsibility for managing digital privacy should not be framed as an exclusively individual obligation. The findings suggest that institutions and platforms alike must acknowledge the structural production of privacy risk and actively participate in mitigating it through pedagogical design, policy development, and more transparent platform governance.

This study has a number of limitations that should be taken into account despite its contributions. Because the experiences recorded could not accurately reflect larger student populations or other sociocultural settings, the use of a small, purposeful sample limits the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, because the study only looked at Instagram, its conclusions cannot be applied to other platforms with different affordances, norms, and algorithmic logics. Because participants may have presented their privacy practices in more morally acceptable terms than their actual activities, the use of self-reported data further raises the risk of social desirability bias.

In order to overcome these constraints, future studies should use longitudinal study designs that document how privacy literacy changes over time and throughout significant life transitions. Cross-platform comparative research would provide more light on how various technological affordances influence privacy management tactics. A more complex and empirically sound explanation of the connection between declared privacy goals and observed behaviors may also be obtained by integrating mixed-source data, such as digital trace analysis or platform interaction logs. These methods would enhance knowledge of how digital literacy grows via regular engagement with socio-technical systems as well as reflection.

This study concludes by showing that preserving digital privacy cannot be boiled down to using platform features or adhering to rigid online conduct guidelines. Instead, privacy management becomes a

continuous decision-making process in environments that are defined by social pressure, cultural norms, and algorithmic mediation. This study provides a theoretically enhanced and empirically supported view of privacy as a negotiated, adaptive, and structurally limited practice by fusing Communication Privacy Management theory with digital literacy analysis. According to this viewpoint, digital literacy is reframed as a lived competence that is constantly performed, updated, and tested in the ever-changing social media landscapes of today.

5. Conclusion

Using the four pillars of digital literacy and Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory as analytical frameworks, this study investigated how Muhammadiyah University of Riau (UMRI) students apply digital media literacy in the management of communication privacy. The results show that students exhibit a variety of digital literacy practices that influence how they negotiate privacy limits on social media, especially Instagram. These practices include computer skills, ethics, safety, and cultural awareness. The findings show that students' digital literacy functions as a situated and negotiated practice, molded by contextual needs, platform affordances, and personal judgment, rather than implying uniform or optimum ability.

According to the survey, students have a basic understanding of privacy issues and use a variety of techniques to control self-disclosure and safeguard personal data. However, conflicting aims like visibility, participation, and societal expectations often jeopardize these approaches, making them inconsistent. This conclusion suggests that awareness and technical expertise do not always convert into completely effective or consistent privacy outcomes in reality, highlighting a crucial contrast between perceived digital literacy and implemented privacy management.

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the application of CPM theory in digital environments by illustrating how privacy boundary negotiation is influenced not only by interpersonal relationships but also by algorithmic systems and platform design. Privacy management in social media contexts emerges as an adaptive process involving continuous adjustment in response to boundary turbulence, audience diversity, and structural constraints. Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. The small, purposive sample and the focus on a single institution limit the generalizability of the findings. Participants' self-reported accounts may also be influenced by social desirability bias, and the study does not assess actual security

outcomes or long-term privacy impacts. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as exploratory rather than representative.

Despite these limitations, the study offers meaningful implications for higher education and digital literacy initiatives. Universities may benefit from integrating privacy-focused digital literacy into formal curricula, emphasizing not only technical skills but also critical reflection on platform dynamics, ethical dilemmas, and the gap between intention and practice. Educators are encouraged to frame digital literacy as an ongoing process of decision-making rather than a fixed set of competencies.

This study should be expanded upon in future research by using comparative or longitudinal designs, looking at various social media platforms, and using bigger and more varied groups. Additional research on the connection between perceived privacy competence and real data security results would be beneficial in determining how successful digital literacy initiatives are. This study concludes by highlighting the fact that social media communication privacy management is a complex and dynamic practice that calls for critical awareness, ethical judgment, and institutional support in an increasingly data-driven digital environment.

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