

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INCREASING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

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Abstract

The collaboration between the internet and culture in Indonesia has provided significant benefits by enhancing the accuracy of information and understanding its boundaries. In the context of the 21st-century digital era, environmental issues have become a primary focus, challenging the sustainability of human life and the planet. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a literature review to analyze the impact of social media related to environmental issues. The study's results reveal the positive impacts of social media, including equal and rapid access to information, high interactivity, content virality, educational approaches, and its role as a catalyst in forming environmentally conscious communities. The research also emphasizes that social media is not just a communication tool but also a source of knowledge and a catalyst for the formation of environmentally conscious communities. Discussions on responsibility, ethics of social media use, and collaboration between the government, environmental organizations, and social media platforms are crucial foundations for developing effective and sustainable environmental campaign strategies. These findings serve as valuable guidelines for policymakers, environmental activists, and stakeholders in maintaining environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Social Media, Society, Environment

INTRODUCTION

The collaboration between the internet and culture has provided significant benefits to both. It is essential to understand the impact of the internet on society and culture, where it is evident that the internet influences culture through its flexibility and freedom. In fact, this impact can be considered a unique form of culture. Upon closer examination, the collaboration between the internet and culture in Indonesia can contribute positively, particularly in enhancing the accuracy of information by understanding its boundaries.¹

This process requires years to be fully implemented in Indonesia. The internet significantly influences lifestyles, altering how people communicate, the frequency of their communication, and their habits due to the availability and accessibility of online communication tools. The development of information and communication technology, along with the pervasive impact of globalization, has transformed the way society lives, interacts, learns, and redefines cultural identity. Traditional concepts of space, time, and distance lose their meaning. While providing benefits, this collaboration also carries risks, such as cultural globalization and the global movement of ongoing cultural processes. There is a significant correlation between the role of social media in raising public awareness of environmental issues, where both the internet and social media serve as driving forces for cultural change and environmental awareness.²

Environmental issues, one of the primary concerns of the 21st century, pose various serious challenges that threaten the sustainability of human life and the planet. These challenges include climate change, habitat destruction, and pollution, which can damage ecosystems and disrupt the natural balance. Climate change, linked to human activities such as greenhouse gas emissions,

¹ (Tejo Sampurno, Kusumandyoko, & Islam, 2020, p. 532)

² (Tjhin, Alfakihuddin, & Mangkuluhur, 2022, p. 169)

leads to rising global temperatures and extreme weather changes. Habitat destruction, caused by deforestation and other human activities, threatens the sustainability of various species and ecosystems. Additionally, pollution, particularly of air, soil, and water, has negative impacts on human health and environmental sustainability.

In the context of this digital era, social media emerges as a highly potential platform for disseminating information and shaping public opinion regarding environmental issues. Through social media, information about climate change, habitat destruction, and conservation efforts can be quickly and widely conveyed to the global community. The presence of social media allows individuals to engage in dialogue, share experiences, and voice their opinions on environmental issues. Thus, social media not only serves as a tool for spreading information but also plays a crucial role in shaping public awareness and opinion regarding the environmental challenges faced by the planet.

Social media possesses unique characteristics that make it an effective tool in raising public awareness about environmental issues. Its success lies in its accessibility, which allows information to reach a broad audience, its interactivity, which facilitates the exchange of information and views, and its virality, which accelerates the spread of interesting and relevant information.³

Social media has eliminated human limitations in social interactions, freeing meetings from the constraints of place and time. By utilizing social media, individuals can communicate without being restricted by distance and time. Social media plays a central role in various aspects of life, becoming the primary tool for information exchange, collaboration, and interaction, both in visual and audiovisual forms. As an online facilitator, social media strengthens social bonds among users. The benefits of social media identified by Puntodi include personal branding, finding suitable environments, learning how to communicate, maintaining consistency, and serving as a medium for integration.⁴

Social media opens up opportunities for closer interaction with consumers and serves as a platform for forming online communities. As part of e-marketing strategies, social media becomes a platform for conveying information related to environmental conservation efforts, including beach conservation initiatives across Indonesia. Online education about abrasion, coastal areas, clean air supply, and marine ecosystem damage can be accessed through various social media platforms such as blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Path, TikTok, Snack Video, websites, and Wikipedia.⁵

Bennett & Alexandridis reveal that social media has the power to influence individual and societal behavior in supporting environmental sustainability. Through interactions on social media, public knowledge expands, and environmental awareness grows. As an educational medium, social media is not only a source of entertainment but also an alternative source of information for everyday questions, including environmental issues.⁶

Several proposed strategies include using engaging and relevant content such as videos, photos, articles, or infographics, employing language that is easily understood by the general public, and including clear calls to action to encourage participatory actions. By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that social media can become an effective tool in raising awareness and fostering public participation in maintaining environmental sustainability.⁷

METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach through a literature review. This approach focuses on the analysis and interpretation of information from

³ (Pambudi, 2016, p. 168)

⁴ (Alyusi, 2019, p. 15)

⁵ (Tjhin et al., 2022, p. 170)

⁶ (Filho, Salvia, Pallant, Choate, & Pearce, 2023, p. 263)

⁷ (Matondang et al., 2023, p. 342)

literature sources related to environmental issues and the role of social media. The research seeks a deep understanding of the conceptual framework of environmental issues and the impact of social media through relevant literature reviews.

Researchers will gather information from literature that discusses environmental issues and social media interactions. The analysis is conducted by detailing findings from these literature reviews. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of environmental issues and how social media influences public perception and understanding of these issues.

By focusing on a descriptive qualitative approach through a literature review, this research aims to contribute to a deep and contextual understanding of environmental issues and the role of social media based on existing findings and perspectives in the scientific literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through in-depth literature analysis, this literature review reveals crucial findings that highlight the significant role of social media in raising public awareness about environmental issues. Social media has become an important medium for education, offering an abundance of information and open opportunities for interaction, as well as guidance for further information through additional links. In this context, social media functions not only as a communication platform but also as a source of knowledge and an interaction channel that enables users to engage in further information development through references and external links.⁸

Several key aspects emerge, demonstrating the positive impact of social media in changing societal paradigms and behaviors related to environmental sustainability. First, social media provides equal and rapid access to information about environmental issues. In an era where news and information are constantly evolving, social media platforms serve as the primary means for the public to access up-to-date information on environmental issues. As a result, the dissemination of information becomes more inclusive and widespread among the community.⁹

The ability of social media to present information instantly and broadly makes news and environmental issues more accessible to various segments of society. Thus, these platforms become democratic and inclusive channels, ensuring that information about environmental sustainability is not limited to certain groups but can be enjoyed by people from diverse backgrounds. This fast and equal accessibility creates a strong foundation for increasing public awareness and understanding of the environmental issues being faced.

Secondly, social media enhances interactivity and community engagement. Users can interact, share information, and discuss environmental issues, forming online communities that care about environmental sustainability. This interaction fosters a deeper perception and understanding of environmental issues.¹⁰

Social media provides a platform that allows individuals to actively engage in dialogues about environmental issues. Users can exchange views, share experiences, and discuss potential solutions. With the formation of online communities focused on environmental sustainability, interactions among members can enrich the collective understanding of the challenges faced by our planet. This high level of interactivity encourages the development of a deeper and more collaborative understanding of complex environmental issues.

Third, engaging and relevant content on social media has the potential to go viral, reaching a wider audience. In other words, social media not only presents information but also serves as a platform for creativity and innovation to deliver environmental messages in an engaging and easily digestible manner.

Through social media, content supporting environmental issues can be presented in various forms, such as captivating images, videos, or infographics. The ability to share and disseminate

⁸ (Pambudi, 2016, p. 39)

⁹ (Alyusi, 2019, p. 16)

¹⁰ (Tejo Sampurno et al., 2020, p. 6)

content quickly and widely allows environmental messages to reach a broader audience, including those who may not have been directly involved in environmental issues previously.¹¹

Fourth, an educational approach through social media opens doors to raising public awareness about conservation, coastal erosion, and the impacts of marine ecosystem damage. These complex issues can be explained in simpler and more engaging ways through social media content, making it easier for the general public to understand.

Social media provides space to develop educational material that is both informative and entertaining. Videos, infographics, and short articles presented on social media platforms can break down scientific concepts and environmental issues in ways that are easily understood by different segments of society. By leveraging this approach, social media becomes an effective tool for expanding public understanding of complex environmental issues, creating deeper awareness, and stimulating interest in conservation and preservation efforts.¹²

Finally, social media acts as a catalyst in the formation of online communities focused on environmental issues. By connecting individuals who share similar concerns, these communities can become a driving force that supports and advocates for sustainability principles on a larger scale.

Lastly, social media acts as a catalyst in the formation of online communities focused on environmental issues. By connecting individuals with similar concerns, these communities can become a driving force that supports and advocates for sustainability principles on a larger scale.¹³

Through social media platforms, individuals who are interested and concerned about environmental issues can unite, share information, and support each other. The formation of these communities creates a space for collaboration and joint action in supporting environmental sustainability. Additionally, social media facilitates the exchange of ideas, sustainability projects, and campaigns that encourage active public participation in environmental conservation. Consequently, these online communities have the potential to create a larger positive impact in efforts to preserve and protect the environment.¹⁴

The positive influence of social media in raising public awareness about environmental issues raises questions regarding the responsibility and ethics of using social media for environmental campaigns. Discussions involve the role of social media in shaping public opinion, building online communities, and its impact on environmental policies. Moreover, the discourse includes collaborative efforts between governments, environmental organizations, and social media platforms to create more effective campaigns.¹⁵

Questions regarding responsibility arise in relation to how social media is used to disseminate environmental information. This includes aspects such as the accuracy of information, the spread of fake news, and the potential manipulation of public opinion. Additionally, the ethics of using social media come under scrutiny, including the sustainability and long-term impact of campaigns conducted through these platforms.

Discussions on the role of social media in shaping public opinion involve analyzing how information is presented, disseminated, and received by the public. The impact of public opinion formed through social media is also a key focus, especially in the context of its influence on environmental policies adopted by governments and related institutions.

The importance of building online communities that care about environmental issues is a crucial part of this discussion. These communities not only serve as places for sharing information but also as support and motivation bases for individuals involved in environmental campaigns.¹⁶

¹¹ (Matondang et al., 2023, p. 334)

¹² (Pambudi, 2016, p. 39)

¹³ (Hisyam & Pamungkas, n.d., p. 514)

¹⁴ (Anindya, Hanana, & Elian, 2021, p. 108)

¹⁵ (Leonita & Jalinus, 2018, p. 28)

¹⁶ (Tejo Sampurno et al., 2020, p. 8)

Furthermore, collaborative efforts between governments, environmental organizations, and social media platforms become a strategic discussion. These efforts include drafting guidelines and regulations, ensuring the accuracy of information, and optimizing social media features to support more effective and sustainable environmental campaigns. The discussions on responsibility, ethics, the role of social media in shaping public opinion, and collaborative efforts lay the foundation for developing better and more sustainable environmental campaign strategies through social media.¹⁷

Thus, these findings provide a comprehensive overview of how social media has a positive impact on increasing public awareness and participation regarding environmental issues. The implications offer a basis for developing more effective and efficient communication strategies through social media, making this research a valuable guide for policymakers, environmental activists, and other stakeholders in the pursuit of environmental sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a source of knowledge and an interaction channel that enriches information through references and external links. The positive impacts of social media include equal and rapid access to environmental information, high interactivity and community engagement through the formation of online communities, the potential for engaging content to go viral, educational approaches that facilitate understanding of environmental issues, and its role as a catalyst in forming environmentally conscious communities.

Discussions on responsibility, the ethics of using social media, and collaborative efforts between governments, environmental organizations, and social media platforms form an essential foundation for developing more effective and sustainable environmental campaign strategies.

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¹⁷ (Nurritzka, 2016, p. 6)

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