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ECONOMIC EDUCATION STUDENTS' STRATEGY TO ASSESS THE CREDIBILITY OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Social media development has changed how students obtain information, including economic information. Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and other platforms become a accessible source of information, but not all economic information circulating have sources and data. This study aims to determine the source of economic information used by Economic Education students, a strategy carried out in examining the truth of information, as well as factors that influence the credibility of economic information on social media.This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive design. Data was obtained through a questionnaire to 10 Economics Education students from PGRI Mpu Sindok University who used social media and once obtained economic information through social media. The data was analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions by grouping answers based on the research theme. Research results show that Instagram and TikTok are the most widely used platforms, respectively by 40% of respondents. In examining the veracity of information, 50% of respondents find official sources, 30% examined the data or evidence, and 20% checked the source or account. The most widely used factor for assessing credibility is data and evidence of 50%, followed by the media name or institution by 30% and source credibility or a 20% account. This research suggests that students have the awareness of checking economic information, but verification skills still need to be strengthened to be more systematic and critical.
Keywords: *Social Media, Economic Information, Information Credibility, Digital Literacy, Economic Education Students.*

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought major changes in various aspects of life, especially in the world of higher education. Currently, students can obtain information easily over the internet and social media. Various platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok are not only used for communication, but also to seek information related to lectures and economic circumstances. (Patilima, Gorontalo, and Gorontalo 2026) explained that social media plays a role in economic information that can expand students' understanding through academic discussions and analyze actual economic issues. However, this convenience also poses challenges because not all information circulating can be believed. Incorrect information, fake news, and content that has no clear source can make students misunderstand a problem. (Patilima et al. 2026) states that students need to have media literacy so they can filter credible information, understand bias in economic news, as well as assess the truth of information critically. Therefore, students need to have the ability to check the truth and assess the credibility of information before believing or spreading it.

This ability is closely related to digital literacy and thinking critically. Digital literacy does not only mean being able to use technological devices, but also includes search capabilities, understanding, evaluating, and using information appropriately. (Bawang 2025) discusses students' digital literacy skills in Indonesia during the Society's 5.0 era. This research shows that digital literacy is an important ability that needs to be developed

in a college environment. Meanwhile, (Nurviana et al. 2024) discusses relationships between digital literacy and critical thinking skills in reading online news.
The two studies became the basis that students needed to be critical when receiving information on the internet, including by paying attention to sources, content, and evidence supporting that information.

In economics, social media is also a place for students to obtain various information, such as the development of goods, inflation, investment, business activities, and economic policies. This information needs to be carefully considered because it can affect students' understanding of economic conditions. (Khofifah, Economy, and Article 2023) examined the relationship between the intensity of using social media and entrepreneurship knowledge with the interest of entrepreneurship Economic Education student at STIKI PGRI Jombang. In addition, (Putra and Hariatama 2024) discuss social media and financial literacy in relation to the consumptive behavior of Economic Education students. Both studies are related to the use of social media and aspects of student economic life. Nevertheless, the study does not specifically discuss how students check the veracity of economic information they find on social media. Therefore, information credibility still need to be a concern so that students do not immediately receive information only because they are shared or conveyed by a popular account.

The ability to assess information also needs to be supported by good digital literacy. (Stefany and Helmi 2024) discussed digital literacy and online learning design in educators in Indonesia. Although the research focus is different from this study, the study can be used as an additional discussion about the importance of digital literacy in the education environment.(Arifin 2024);(Arifin et al. 2022)

In the context of an Economic Education student, the ability to assess the credibility of economic information can be done by checking who convey information, see if the data or evidence used is clear, comparing information to other sources that are trusted, and observe whether the content of the information is in accordance with the facts. This method is important so that students are not easily influenced by economic information that has not been proven the truth.

Based on this description, research on the strategy of Economic Education students when assessing the credibility of economic information on social media needs to be done. This study focuses on the source of economic information used by students, the way they check the truth of information, the considerations used to determine information credibility, and the obstacles they face when conducting the examination. This research is expected to provide an idea of how Economic Education students respond to economic information on social media and become a consideration in improving digital literacy and the ability to think critically from students.(WIDAWATI and Arifin 2021)

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Informants in this study are students from PG Economic Education Study Program at PGRI Mpu Sindok Nganjuk, who was chosen using purposive sampling technique, with criteria still active as students, using social media such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook or X, as well as finding or using economic information from social media. This study involved 10 students as informants to obtain an idea of students' habits in receiving and examining economic information on social media. (Azzahra, Islam, and Syarif 2026) explains that students are still facing challenges in evaluating, verifying, and assessing the credibility of digital information. Therefore, this study focuses on three aspects, namely sources of economic information often used by students, strategies to check the truth of information, and factors that affect the credibility assessment of information. The source aspect of information includes platforms and types of economic information that are often met, while the verification aspects include the habit of checking sources, checking data or evidence, and comparing information with other sources. The credibility aspect includes data clarity and evidence, the name of the media or institution, and the credibility of a source or account that convey information.

The research data was obtained through a questionnaire provided to 10 students. Questionnaires were used to obtain data on social media platforms used, intensity to find economic information, a type of information received, how to examine the truth of information, factors used in assessing credibility, as well as experience when finding dubious economic information. The questionnaire also contained open questions so that respondents can explain their experience and reasons more

freely. (Hepy Susanty 2026) explains that students are still facing obstacles in evaluating information on social media because some students tend to use simple indicators, such as figures and followers, to assess the truth of information. The findings become the basis for supporters to study student habits in examining economic information before trusting or spreading them. In addition to primary data from questionnaires, this study uses support data in the form of academic sources and official sources relevant to digital literacy, information literacy, and credibility. Supporting sources are used as a comparison to help understand the research findings, not as a replacement for the respondent's answer.

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentations, and conclusions. At the reducing stage, the respondent's answer was selected and grouped according to the research focus. The data is then presented in the form of a descriptive description and a simple percentage to clarify the tendency of the respondent answers to. Next, the researcher interprets the patterns of the answer and connects them to a research-focused. In the analysis process, respondent answers are grouped into several themes, such as sources of economic information, frequency of finding information, verification strategies, data and evidence, media or account credibility, as well as experience of finding dubious information. The results of the grouping are used to see the pattern of students' strategy in assessing the credibility of economic information on social media.

The validity of the data is carried out by comparing answers to closed questions and open questions and matching the research findings with relevant academic sources and official sources. This method is used to see the compatibility between the tendency of respondents' answers and explanations obtained from supporting data. The identity of respondents was not listed in the study report to maintain the confidentiality of personal data.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sources of Economic Information Used by Students

Based on the results of data collection with questionnaires conducted to 10 students, it is revealed that social media is one of the tools that students utilize to get economic information. The most popular platform is Instagram and TikTok, each chosen by four respondents (40%). Subsequently, one respondent (10%) used YouTube, and one responder (10%) chose another platform. These findings suggest that social media focused on visual content and short videos plays a significant role in the spread and receiving economic information among students. The use of social media as a source of economic information confirms that students are able to access information quickly and easily without needing to search through formal sources specifically. The types of information obtained include economic news, advances in MSME and business, the price of goods, policies from the government, as well as information about work and income. This situation is in line with the focus of research that makes social media a source of economic information that needs to be considered. Research articles also revealed that the evolution of social media has changed the way people get information related to inflation, investment, MSMEs, government policies, as well as overall economic conditions.

Viewed from the number of information revenue, a total of 4 respondents (40%) admitted that they often met economic information on social media platforms, 4 respondents (40%) mentioned very often, and 2 respondents (20%) admitted that sometimes. Therefore, the majority of respondents are quite routinely exposed to economic information through social media. This high figure indicates that the student's ability to evaluate the accuracy of information is crucial, considering that regularly accepted information does not always have the same level of trust. The most sought-after type of economic information or noticed by respondents is regarding MSMEs and businesses, shown by 4 respondents (40%). Subsequently, 3 respondents (30%) paid more attention to economic news and policies from the government, while 2 respondents (20%) noticed the price of goods and basic needs, and 1 respondents (10%) were looking for information around job vacancies and revenue. This indicates that the student's interest in economic information is quite diverse and is closely related to academic needs as well as everyday life.

Student Strategy in Examining Economic Information Truths

The results of the survey show that students do not fully receive economic news through social media without conducting analysis first. As many as 5 participants (50%) stated that they were

ensuring to seek information from the official channel before believing what they found. On the other hand, 3 participants (30%) chose to verify the data or evidence presented, and 2 participants (20%) checked the source or account that spread the information. These results indicate that there is awareness among students to check before viewing economic information as valid. This approach can be done using information sources, investigating data or evidence, understand the party that conveys information, and compares it to other sources. In research writing, verification steps also include a source evaluation, author or content producer, date of existing information, data or evidence, as well as comparisons with more trustworthy sources.

The answer to an open question supports the findings. The majority of respondents underscore the importance of cross-examination of obtained information. Some of them stated that economic data should be compared to official sources from the government, trusted media, or academic-based sources. There were also respondents who emphasized the importance of checking the dates, author, data, and purpose of delivering information provided. This indicates that some students are starting to understand that the credibility of information cannot be determined only based on content or how much information is shared. However, there are also answers that are still relatively basic, such as waiting for clarification or providing a response that has not shown a clear verification process. This situation shows that the student capacity in evaluating economic information has not been fully consistent. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen in terms of digital literacy and information literacy so that students are not only able to take advantage of social media, but can also analyze information critically.

Factors that Influence Information Credibility Assessment

Based on the analysis of questionnaires, the aspects most paid for by students in evaluating economic information is available data and evidence. As many as five respondents (50%) chose this factor. Then, three respondents (30%) considered the name of the media or institution that presents information, while two respondents (20%) noticed the credibility of the source or account. These findings indicate that the presence of data and evidence is the main factor being referred to by students in assessing whether an economic information can be considered trustworthy. Information equipped with clear data will be easier to test and compared to other sources. On the other hand, information that only contains no evidence of supporting has a lower level of credibility. This result is in line with the concept of information credibility in the article, namely information is considered reliable if equipped with a clear source, supported by the right data, and can be verified through the official source.

In addition to facts and evidence, identity and reputation from information sources is also an important factor for students. This is seen when respondents check media names, institutions, or accounts that provide information. That way, students not only focus on information content but also pay attention to who issued the information. Nevertheless, credibility from sources must still be proven by using data and doing comparisons with other sources. Another important thing is that the popularity of an account should not be considered the only benchmark for information truth. Accounts that have a lot of followers or content that often appear on social media don't always guarantee that they provide accurate economic information. Therefore, students are required to prioritize the quality of information, clarity from sources, supportive evidence, and the suitability of information with official sources. The research article also emphasizes that the popularity of the account should not be the only basis in assessing the credibility of economic information.

Student Experience in Finding Dubious Economic Information

The answer to an open question shows that the majority of respondents have found dubious or inaccurate economic information on social media platforms. After finding this information, the generally taken step is not to believe it or distribute it, then verify the source of information. Several respondents said they compared those information with official sources from the government, trustworthy media, and other sources of economic data. If the information is done, the respondents chose not to spread it. There are also respondents who mention that dubious information can arise because of the ease for individuals to create accounts and spread information on social

The findings suggest that students have developed an awareness to avoid the spread of unverified economic information. This attitude is an important element of digital literacy,

because the ability to use social media is not only related to information revenue, but also the ability to assess and utilize information wisely. Research articles explain that digital literacy consists of the ability to access, understand, assess, and utilize digital information with responsibility, while information literacy is related to the ability to choose and use reliable sources.

D. DISCUSSION

Overall, research results show that social media plays an important role in meeting the needs of students' economic information. Most of the respondents used Instagram and TikTok, while their intensity in finding relatively high economic information. This condition indicates that social media has become a source of economic information in students' daily lives. However, high access to information is not always followed by the ability to assess the truth of information critically. (Hepy Susanty 2026) explains that students are still facing difficulties in assessing the credibility of information on social media and some tend to use simple indicators, such as numbers of likes and followers, as the basis of the assessment. Therefore, students need to improve their ability to check sources, compare information, and assess the suitability of data and evidence before trusting economic information. This is important for Economic Education students because they not only play a role as recipients of information, but also as candidates for educators who are expected to be able to convey economic information appropriately and can be accounted for.

Research findings show that the most common verification method of students is to seek information from official sources. Students also check data and evidence and pay attention to the credibility of the source or account that convey information. This finding shows the application of digital literacy in the process of evaluating economic information, although its implementation still needs to be strengthened so that the verification process becomes more systematic. (Maharani et al. 2026) explains that digital literacy affects a student's ability to evaluate the credibility of information sources. Students with good digital literacy tend to filter information first before spreading it. This supports the importance of source, data, and evidence before students trust an economic information. Therefore, the assessment of credibility should not be based on only one indicator, but it should be taken through several steps, such as checking the source and authors of information, paying attention to the dates, researching the data or evidence presented, and comparing them to official sources or other trusted sources. By conducting a thorough examination, students can reduce the risk of receiving or spreading wrong or misleading economic information.

The findings from this research also confirm how important digital literacy is for Economic Education students. Digital literacy should not only be understood as the ability to use social media, but also includes skills to understand, assess, compare, and use information with full responsibility. This research article emphasizes that the student's ability to evaluate information must be assessed based on the process and criteria applied when checking the credibility of the information, not only from the student beliefs of the information. As emphasized by (Sudianto et al. 2025), the use of social media as an exact study tool supported by digital literacy, which is proven to form an analytical, reflective mindset and strengthening student argument skills. Considering the entire existing findings, it can be concluded that Economic Education students have tried to assess the credibility of economic information contained on social media. However, this skill still requires an increase through the habit of verifying a systematic and comparing information with official sources and academic sources. This ability is crucial to form critical, selective, and responsible students in receiving or conveying economic-related information.

E. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that**:**

1. Social media is one of the sufficient sources of economic information used by Economic Education students. Instagram and TikTok are the most widely used platforms, by 40% of respondents respectively. The most important information is related to MSMEs and businesses, economic news and government policies, the prices of goods, and employment and income.
2. Students already have a habit of checking the truth of economic information before trusting it. As many as 50% of respondents chose to find information from their official sources, 30%

checked the data or evidence, and 20% checked the source or account that spread information. However, the verification process has not been fully carried out consistently and systematically by all respondents.

3. Data and evidence are the most considered factor in assessing the credibility of economic information, which is at 50%. In addition, 30% of respondents consider the name of the media or institution, while 20% pay attention to the credibility of sources or accounts. This indicates that the popularity of the account alone is not enough to determine the truth of an information.
4. The majority of respondents have found dubious or inaccurate economic information on social media. When finding this information, students tend to double-check, compare it to its official sources or reliable sources, and choose not to spread information if proven wrong. Overall, Economic Education students have had an awareness of assessing economic information credibility, but this ability still needs to be strengthened through the more systematic verification habits and increased digital literacy and information literacy.

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