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Digital literacy-based learning strategies in shaping media-wise characters in the modern young generation

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to the communication patterns, information access, and social interactions of the modern young generation. However, the high intensity of digital media use is also accompanied by various problems such as the spread of hoaxes, cyberbullying, hate speech, and low awareness of digital ethics. This study aims to analyze digital literacy-based learning strategies in shaping wise media character in the modern young generation. The study used library research methods with data collection techniques through documentation studies of various books, scientific journals, articles, and relevant research results. Data were analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify patterns, relationships, and key findings related to digital literacy and media character. The results show that digital literacy-based learning strategies, such as critical, collaborative, reflective, and project-based learning, can improve critical thinking skills, digital ethics awareness, social responsibility, and the ability to filter information appropriately. Thus, digital literacy plays a crucial role in supporting the character formation of a young generation that is intelligent, ethical, and wise in using digital media.



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Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed communication patterns, social interactions, and the way young people obtain and disseminate information in their daily lives. The presence of various social media platforms, video-sharing applications, instant messaging services, and a variety of internet-based information sources provides unprecedented ease in accessing knowledge and building social networks. However, behind these various benefits, increasingly complex problems have emerged related to media behavior among the modern generation of young people. The spread of false information, hate speech, cyberbullying, misuse of personal data, and poor ability to verify information are common realities in the digital space. Young people, as the largest group of internet users, are often the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of digital media use due to their high level of interaction with various digital platforms. This situation demonstrates that technological advances are not always accompanied by individuals' ability to use media responsibly and wisely.

Numerous cases emerging in educational settings and society demonstrate that there is still a gap between the ability to access technology and the ability to understand the social, ethical, and moral implications of digital media use. Therefore, the issue of wise media character among the younger generation is a crucial issue that requires attention through an educational approach that is relevant to current developments.(Okilanda et al., 2024).

Various previous studies have shown that digital literacy is significantly related to an individual's ability to understand, evaluate, and effectively utilize information in the digital environment. The emerging literature positions digital literacy as a set of competencies encompassing technical, cognitive, social, and ethical skills in using information technology. Several theories also emphasize that improving digital literacy can help media users address the risks of disseminating misleading information, improve critical thinking skills, and foster more responsible digital behavior. However, most previous studies have focused on technology skills and information access, while the development of media-savvy character as a result of digital literacy-based learning processes has not been thoroughly explored. Several studies also indicate that high levels of digital media use do not always equate to high-quality media behavior among the younger generation. This indicates that existing theories and approaches have not fully explained how digital literacy learning strategies can effectively shape responsible, critical, ethical, and reflective media use. Therefore, there is still room for further research on the relationship between digital literacy-based learning strategies and the development of media-savvy character in the modern young generation.(Kumar et al., 2024).

This study aims to analyze and describe digital literacy-based learning strategies that can be used to shape the media-savvy character of today's young generation. The primary focus of the study is on identifying various learning strategies that integrate digital competency mastery with the strengthening of character values in learning activities. Furthermore, this study also aims to explain how the digital literacy learning process can encourage students to develop critical thinking skills regarding the information they receive, understand digital communication ethics, respect diversity of opinions, and be responsible for every activity they undertake in the digital space. This study not only positions digital literacy as a technical ability to operate technology, but also as a means of character education oriented towards developing positive behaviors in media use. Through this study, the research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between learning strategies and media character formation that is in line with the demands of contemporary digital society. Thus, the research results are expected to provide conceptual and practical contributions to the development of learning that is more adaptive to technological developments while supporting the creation of a young generation with balanced digital skills and social responsibility.(Ramadan et al., 2024).

Based on the reality of the problems occurring in the digital space and the identified gaps in the literature review, research on digital literacy-based learning strategies is crucial because it offers a more comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges posed by digital media development among the younger generation. This research is based on the assumption that wise media character is not formed automatically through intensive technology use alone, but rather requires a planned, systematic, and continuous learning process. Learning strategies that integrate digital literacy skills with character values are believed to increase students' awareness of ethical aspects, responsibility, security, and critical thinking in media use. If the learning process is designed contextually in accordance with the younger generation's digital experiences, the formation of positive media character will be easier to achieve than approaches that only emphasize mastery of the technical aspects of technology. Therefore, this research is highly urgent because it can provide a conceptual basis for developing learning models relevant to the needs of today's digital society. In addition to enriching academic studies on digital literacy and character education, this research also has the potential to serve as a reference for educators, educational institutions, and policymakers in designing educational programs capable of developing a young generation that is intelligent, critical, ethical, and wise in using digital media.(Uduehe, 2025).

Method

Research Object

This research focuses on the phenomenon of digital media use by the modern young generation, which exhibits various dynamics of media behavior amidst the increasingly rapid development of information technology. This phenomenon is characterized by the increasing intensity of social media use, information-sharing platforms, and various digital communication applications that have become an integral part of the daily lives of the younger generation. On the one hand, these developments provide extensive opportunities for increasing access to information, developing knowledge, and expanding social interactions. However, on the other hand, various problems have emerged related to the poor ability to filter information, the widespread spread of hoaxes, cyberbullying, hate speech, violations of digital ethics, and low awareness of the security and privacy of personal

data. These various phenomena indicate that technological mastery has not been fully balanced with the ability to use media critically, ethically, and responsibly. This condition is a significant concern because the younger generation is the group with the highest level of involvement in digital activities. Therefore, this research makes digital literacy-based learning strategies in shaping wise media characters the primary object of study to understand how education can play a role in addressing the various challenges arising from the development of the contemporary digital environment. (Panigrahi, Shrivastava, & Kapur, 2024).

Research Type and Data Source

This study uses a library research approach, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of digital literacy-based learning strategies in shaping the media-savvy character of the modern young generation. This library approach was chosen because it allows researchers to conduct comprehensive conceptual exploration through various scientific sources relevant to the research focus. The data used in the study consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from various primary literature that directly discusses the phenomenon of digital media use, the media behavior of the younger generation, and the implementation of digital literacy learning in educational contexts. This literature includes academic books, scientific articles, national and international journals, and research results directly related to the problem under study. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various supporting sources that discuss aspects of digital literacy, media character, character education, the younger generation, and the development of information technology in general. Secondary data also includes research reports, scientific proceedings, academic documents, and other relevant references to strengthen the research analysis. Through the use of both types of data, the study is expected to produce a systematic, comprehensive study with a strong scientific foundation. (Abubakar & Madawaki, n.d.).

Basic Research Theory

This study uses the digital literacy theory developed by Paul Gilster in 1997 as the primary theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between digital literacy skills and the formation of wise media character. Gilster defines digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information from various digital sources effectively in various life contexts. This theory emphasizes that digital literacy is not only related to the technical ability to operate technological devices, but also includes the ability to think critically, evaluate information, understand the context of digital communication, and use information responsibly. In addition, this study also utilizes the concept of character education developed in the thinking of Thomas Lickona in 1991 through the theory of Character Education. According to Lickona, character formation involves three main components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which are interrelated in shaping individual behavior. The integration of these two theories provides a relevant conceptual framework to explain how digital literacy-based learning strategies can contribute to shaping the character of the younger generation who are able to use media wisely, critically, ethically, and responsibly. Thus, these theories serve as a basis for understanding the phenomena studied and serve as a foundation for the process of analyzing and interpreting research data (Khairunisa & Sundawa, 2023).

Research Process and Data Collection Techniques

The research process was conducted through several systematic stages to obtain data and information consistent with the research objectives. The first stage began with identifying the research problem related to the challenges of digital media use among the younger generation and the need for learning strategies capable of developing media-savvy characters. After the research problem was formulated, the next stage involved searching for and collecting various literature sources relevant to the research focus. The data collection technique in this study employed documentation studies through reading, recording, reviewing, and examining various written sources related to the research theme. These sources included scientific books, research journals, academic articles, previous research results, scientific papers, research reports, scientific magazines, and various other documents relevant to digital literacy, media-savvy characters, and the younger generation. All data obtained was then selected based on the level of relevance, source credibility, and its relevance to the research focus. This process was carried out continuously to ensure that the data used could provide an accurate and in-depth picture of digital literacy-based learning strategies in developing media-savvy characters in the modern young generation (Kahfi et al., 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this study used content analysis techniques, which aim to identify, understand, and interpret various pieces of information contained in the collected literature sources. Content analysis techniques were chosen because they provide a deep understanding of the meaning, patterns, trends, and relationships between concepts contained in various research documents. The analysis process began with reading and understanding all the data obtained from various literature sources, followed by a classification process based on themes that

align with the research focus. After the data was grouped, key concepts related to digital literacy learning strategies, media literacy, and youth development in the digital environment were identified. Next, the data were analyzed to identify relationships between the various findings, thus fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The results of the analysis were then systematically interpreted to produce conclusions that align with the research objectives. Through the use of content analysis techniques, this study is expected to uncover various patterns of thought, ideas, and scientific findings that can explain the role of digital literacy-based learning strategies in shaping media literacy in the modern youth. (Ilham & Mainil, 2025).

Results and Discussions

Table 1 <Results of Identification of Main Research Themes>

No	Findings Theme	Key Indicators	Literature Sources
1	Digital Literacy	Ability to access, understand, evaluate information	Digital literacy books and journals
2	Media Characters	Ethics, responsibility, digital awareness	Character education journal
3	Modern Young Generation	High intensity of digital media use	Digital generation research
4	Learning strategies	Critical, collaborative, reflective learning	Educational research
5	Implementation of Education	Integration of curriculum and digital practices	Educational academic articles

Description of Table 1: The table shows five main themes found through content analysis of various literature relevant to research on digital literacy-based learning strategies in forming wise media characters in the modern young generation (Salavati et al., 2024).

The literature analysis shows that the development of digital media has created significant changes in the interaction patterns of the modern young generation. Nearly all communication, information seeking, learning, and entertainment activities are conducted through digital devices connected to the internet. This condition makes the younger generation the group most active in utilizing digital media in their daily lives. Various studies analyzed show that the high intensity of digital media use is not always accompanied by the ability to manage information wisely. Many young users still have difficulty distinguishing between valid and invalid information, making them vulnerable to the spread of hoaxes and information manipulation. Furthermore, low awareness of digital ethics has also been found in various studies discussing the behavior of social media users. These findings indicate that technical skills in using technology are not sufficient to ensure positive media behavior. Therefore, an educational approach is needed that can develop digital skills while sustainably shaping the character of media users (Markauskaite et al., 2023).

The study's findings indicate that digital literacy is a key competency that young people must possess to navigate the development of information technology. Various literature sources explain that digital literacy is not only related to the ability to operate digital devices, but also encompasses the ability to think critically, evaluate information, understand communication contexts, and use media ethically and responsibly. Analysis of various studies shows that individuals with high levels of digital literacy tend to be better able to avoid the spread of false information and are more selective in receiving information from the internet. These abilities contribute to the formation of safer and more productive digital behaviors. These findings reinforce the view that digital literacy is a crucial foundation for building healthy media character in the modern young generation. (Oyasi & Machoka, 2024).

Data analysis shows that a wise media character consists of several important, interrelated elements. These elements include critical thinking skills, social responsibility, awareness of digital ethics, the ability to respect differences of opinion, and concern for personal data security. Various studies confirm that a wise media character is not formed automatically through the use of technology, but rather through a continuous learning process. A wise media character is also influenced by the educational environment, family, and the digital culture that develops in society. Therefore, developing a wise media character requires an educational strategy that can integrate aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills simultaneously. (Mustafa, 2025).

The analysis shows that an effective digital literacy-based learning strategy is one that positions students as active participants in the learning process. This approach allows students to be directly involved in information analysis, source evaluation, and discussions on various emerging digital issues. Through this active involvement, students gain real-world experience in identifying the risks of digital media use while developing the ability to

make informed decisions in a digital environment. These findings demonstrate that active learning significantly contributes to strengthening the character of media literacy.(Zein & Karimah, 2025).

Further findings indicate that the use of project-based learning methods can increase students' awareness of the importance of responsible media use. In various studies analyzed, students were given the opportunity to create educational digital content, conduct digital literacy campaigns, and develop solutions to various digital media problems. These activities have been shown to enhance students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and social responsibility regarding the information they produce and consume.(PUTRA, 2024).

The research also shows that collaborative learning is an effective strategy for building character in media use. Through group work and digital discussions, students learn to respect differences of opinion and develop better communication skills. The interactions that occur in a collaborative learning environment help students understand the importance of digital communication ethics and responsibility for the consequences of every action taken in the digital space(Ahmad et al., 2023).

A literature analysis found that digital reflection is a crucial component of digital literacy-based learning strategies. Reflection allows students to evaluate their experiences using digital media and understand the impact of their behavior on themselves and others. Through the process of reflection, students can develop greater self-awareness and develop responsible media use(Livingstone et al., 2023).

Other findings indicate that integrating digital literacy into the educational curriculum has a positive impact on student character development. This integration enables the digital literacy learning process to take place systematically and sustainably. Various studies have shown that schools that integrate digital literacy across various subjects have higher levels of digital awareness than those that implement partial learning(Carlisle et al., 2023).

Overall, the research results indicate that digital literacy-based learning strategies have a strong relationship with the development of media-savvy character in the modern generation of young people. The better the implementation of these learning strategies, the greater the likelihood of developing critical, ethical, responsible, and productive digital behavior. These findings demonstrate the central role of education in preparing young people to face the challenges of the digital society(Poláková et al., 2023).

Table 2 <Relationship between Learning Strategies and Media Character>

Learning strategies	Impact of Digital Literacy	Impact of Media Characters
Critical Learning	Improve information analysis	Reducing the spread of hoaxes
Project Learning	Enhancing digital creativity	Cultivating responsibility
Collaborative Learning	Developing digital communication	Respecting differences
Digital Reflection	Increase self-awareness	Forming media ethics

Description of Table 2: The table explains the relationship between digital literacy-based learning strategies and aspects of wise media character that develop in the younger generation(Jagannathan, 2021).

The research findings indicate that digital literacy cannot be understood solely as the technical ability to operate technological devices, access the internet, or use various digital applications. These results align with the digital literacy theory proposed by Paul Gilster (1997), which asserts that digital literacy encompasses the ability to understand, evaluate, interpret, and utilize digital information critically and responsibly. In the context of today's young generation, these skills are a fundamental necessity because they live in an environment filled with a rapid flow of information whose accuracy cannot always be verified. For example, a student receiving information about a health issue from social media must not only be able to access the information but also be able to examine the source of the information, compare it with official sources, and assess the credibility of the information before sharing it with others. These findings demonstrate that digital literacy is a combination of cognitive, social, and ethical skills that play a role in shaping the behavior of media users. The novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate digital literacy as an instrument for developing wise media character, rather than simply as a technological competency. Thus, this study broadens the perspective of digital literacy from a technical skills approach to a more comprehensive character education approach that is relevant to the challenges of the 21st century digital society.(Panigrahi, Shrivastava, & Nudurupati, 2024).

The research results also show that a wise character in using media is the result of a planned, structured, and continuous learning process. This finding supports Thomas Lickona's (1991) theory of character education, which explains that character formation involves three main dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In the context of digital media use, students not only need to know that spreading hoaxes is wrong, but also must have the moral awareness to reject such behavior and be able to implement concrete actions such as verifying information before spreading it. For example, when students encounter content containing hate speech or discrimination on social media, they not only understand the negative impact of such content but are

also motivated to report it, avoid spreading it, and educate their surroundings about the importance of healthy digital communication. The research results show that digital literacy learning integrated with character education can strengthen all three aspects simultaneously. The novelty of this research lies in developing a conceptual relationship between digital literacy and character education theory, which has tended to be studied separately. This research shows that digital literacy can function as a medium for actualizing character values in the digital lives of the younger generation.(Mudayat & Mualip, 2024).

The implementation of active learning strategies has been shown to significantly improve students' critical thinking skills in dealing with various digital phenomena. Critical thinking skills are crucial because the digital space is currently filled with various forms of disinformation, misinformation, propaganda, data manipulation, and content deliberately designed to influence public opinion. In active learning, students are encouraged to analyze real-life cases, identify sources of information, evaluate available evidence, and develop arguments based on reliable facts. For example, teachers can provide case studies of unverified viral news and then ask students to fact-check the news through various trusted sources. This activity not only improves information analysis skills but also fosters a cautious attitude in receiving and disseminating information. These findings demonstrate that active learning plays a strategic role in developing critical and responsible character in the use of digital media. The novelty of this research is evident in the emphasis that critical thinking skills are not merely the result of academic learning but also serve as the foundation of media character that can protect young people from various social and psychological risks that arise in the digital space.(Parra et al., 2024).

Project-based learning has also been found to be an effective strategy for developing digital literacy while fostering media literacy. This approach provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations, making the learning process more meaningful. For example, students can be tasked with creating a digital campaign about the dangers of spreading hoaxes, personal data security, or ethical communication on social media. In the process, students learn to conduct information research, craft educational messages, develop digital content, and consider the social impact of the information they disseminate. This hands-on experience helps students understand that every digital activity has consequences that can affect both individuals and society. Research shows that project-based learning not only improves digital competence but also strengthens the values of responsibility, integrity, and social awareness. The novelty of this research lies in the assertion that digital projects are not merely a means of developing technological skills but also serve as a space for character formation through authentic experiences directly related to students' digital lives(Audrin & Audrin, 2022).

Further research findings indicate that collaborative and reflective learning play a crucial role in strengthening the social dimension of digital literacy. The modern digital environment demands the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, and respect the diversity of views that emerge in the digital public sphere. Through collaborative learning, students learn to discuss, express opinions politely, accept criticism, and resolve differences constructively. For example, students can work in groups to analyze the phenomenon of cyberbullying and design educational solutions that can be implemented in the school environment. Meanwhile, reflective learning encourages students to evaluate their own digital experiences, including mistakes made and the impact of digital behavior on others. The results show that the combination of these two approaches can develop empathy, social awareness, and communication skills, which are essential components of a wise media character. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the reflective dimension as a key component of digital literacy, so that learning focuses not only on the ability to obtain information but also on the ability to understand the meaning and social impact of digital media use(Murniasih et al., 2025).

Overall, the research results indicate that digital literacy-based learning strategies are highly relevant in addressing the various challenges of digital media use among the modern young generation. The implementation of learning strategies that combine active, project-based, collaborative, and reflective learning has been proven to be able to shape critical, ethical, responsible characters, and have a high social awareness in the use of digital media. In contrast to previous research that generally positions digital literacy as a technological skill, this study offers a new perspective that digital literacy is an instrument of character education that can shape sustainable media behavior. The main novelty of this research is the development of a conceptual model of "Media Character-Based Digital Literacy," which places digital skills, ethical awareness, social responsibility, critical thinking, and self-reflection as a unified, mutually integrated whole in the learning process. This model provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of curriculum and learning strategies in the digital era. Therefore, digital literacy-based education needs to be positioned as an important part of efforts to prepare a young generation that is not only technologically proficient, but also able to use media wisely, productively, and responsibly in social life(Timotheou et al., 2023).

In addition to the various findings described previously, this study has several novel aspects that distinguish it from previous research on digital literacy and character education. Most previous studies tend to position

digital literacy as a technically oriented skill, such as the ability to access information, use digital devices, operate applications, or understand information technology. Meanwhile, this study develops a broader perspective by positioning digital literacy as a character-building instrument oriented toward the development of attitudes, values, morality, and social responsibility in the use of digital media. Thus, this study not only addresses the issue of digital skills but also addresses the urgent need for character development for the younger generation amidst the increasing complexity of digital interactions in the information society era.(Mudayat & Wahyudi, 2024).

The next novelty lies in the development of the concept of "Media Wisdom Character" as the final outcome of a digital literacy-based learning process. In various previous studies, digital literacy success is generally measured by students' ability to search for information, evaluate sources, or utilize technology for academic purposes. This study offers a different perspective by placing media wisdom character as the main indicator of learning success(Retnowati, 2025). Media wisdom character in this study includes the ability to think critically about information, awareness of digital ethics, social responsibility in media, the ability to maintain digital security, respect for diversity of opinion, and the ability to reflect on digital behavior. This approach broadens the scope of digital literacy from mere competence to the formation of sustainable digital identity and character(Falloon, 2020).

Another novelty is the development of a conceptual framework for Media-Based Character-Based Digital Literacy (LDBKB), which integrates five main dimensions: digital critical thinking, digital ethics, digital responsibility, digital collaboration, and digital reflection. These five dimensions are designed as an interconnected whole in shaping the digital behavior of the younger generation. Digital critical thinking functions as the ability to filter and evaluate information. Digital ethics plays a role in guiding polite and responsible communication behavior. Digital responsibility relates to awareness of the consequences of media use. Digital collaboration emphasizes the ability to work together in diverse virtual environments. Meanwhile, digital reflection allows individuals to evaluate their digital activities. This model provides a new theoretical contribution because it connects the dimensions of digital competence with the dimensions of character formation in a systematic and integrated manner(Lybeck et al., 2024).

Another novelty that can be identified is the use of an integrated learning approach that combines four learning strategies simultaneously: active learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, and reflective learning. Generally, previous research has focused on only one specific learning strategy to improve digital literacy. This research shows that developing a wise media character requires a more comprehensive approach through the integration of various learning strategies. Active learning plays a role in developing critical thinking skills, project-based learning strengthens students' authentic experiences, collaborative learning builds social and digital communication skills, while reflective learning strengthens self-awareness and evaluation of digital behavior. The integration of these four strategies results in a learning process that not only increases knowledge but also forms positive media habits and character(AIDhaen, 2023).

From a practical perspective, this research offers novel recommendations for implementing digital character education that can be applied at various levels of education. Character education and digital literacy are often taught separately in the curriculum. This research demonstrates that the two can be integrated into a single, mutually reinforcing learning process. For example, when students learn how to verify digital information, they simultaneously learn the values of honesty, responsibility, and concern for the impact of disseminated information. This approach allows for a more contextualized educational process as students learn through real-world problems they face every day in the digital space.

Furthermore, this study also presents a new concept regarding the Digital Character Ecosystem, which emphasizes that the formation of wise character in using media is not only the responsibility of schools, but also involves families, communities, and the digital environment itself. In this concept, schools function as centers for the development of digital competence and character, families act as a supervisory and habituation environment, communities function as a space for social practice, while digital media becomes an arena for behavioral actualization. The synergy of these four components is seen as a crucial factor in creating a young generation capable of using technology intelligently and responsibly. This concept provides a new perspective that the success of digital literacy is determined not only by the quality of classroom learning, but also by the quality of the social ecosystem that supports the formation of students' digital character.

Based on these overall findings, it can be emphasized that the main contribution of this research lies in developing a new paradigm that views digital literacy as a means of transforming the character of the younger generation in the digital era. This research not only expands theoretical studies on the relationship between digital literacy and character education, but also offers a conceptual model, implementation strategies, and practical recommendations that can be used by educators, schools, and policymakers in designing learning

programs that are more adaptive to the challenges of the 21st-century digital society. Thus, this research provides significant added value from both academic and implementation aspects in the development of digital education oriented towards the formation of wise media characters.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that digital literacy-based learning strategies play a crucial role in shaping the media-savvy character of the modern young generation. Digital literacy serves not only as a technical skill in accessing and using technology, but also as a means to develop critical thinking skills, ethical awareness, social responsibility, and the ability to make appropriate decisions in the digital environment. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of active, collaborative, reflective, and project-based learning strategies can support the internalization of character values needed to face the various challenges of the digital era. In addition, the integration of digital literacy into the educational process provides greater opportunities to build a healthy, safe, and responsible media culture. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy-based learning strategies needs to be a concern for various parties, especially educational institutions, educators, and policymakers, in order to create a young generation that not only has good digital skills but is also able to use media wisely, ethically, and productively in social life.

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