

The Effectiveness of the E-Library as a Learning Resource for Elementary School Students' Social Studies in Improving Literacy Skills

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to describe the effectiveness of an e-library as a social study (hereafter, IPS) learning resource for elementary school students in improving their literacy skills. When developing learning materials for social studies, Social Studies (IPS) teachers in elementary schools should have a clear goal and direction, including the use of e-library resources that can enhance students' literacy skills. A descriptive qualitative research approach was utilised to examine the efficacy of the e-library as a learning resource for primary school pupils in the field of social sciences, with a specific focus on enhancing their reading abilities. Data was collected through a literature review and document analysis on social studies learning in elementary schools, literacy skills, and e-libraries. In this investigation, up to 40 research articles were used. The findings indicated that the e-library was effective in helping primary school students study social subjects and develop their literacy skills. In order to optimize the potential of the library, the government or schools should: 1) provide relevant learning resources; 2) establish a 24-hour accessible system; 3) employ a creative librarian; and 4) utilize information technology to target students. This will enable students to access and acquire learning content easily. Additionally, the library should create a space for students to express their ideas freely and channel creativity, making library activities more lively and enjoyable.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching social studies (IPS) is crucial due to the diverse backgrounds of students in elementary and secondary schools, as their understanding of the community they belong to is influenced by their surroundings (Mutiani et al., 2021). Although students can gain knowledge about society through various media outside of school, such as television shows, radio broadcasts, and newspapers, such exposure may be insufficient, lacking in detail, and incomplete. To make the introduction more meaningful, it is necessary to organize the information and material that students receive from outside of school. Therefore, the school plays a significant role in developing and integrating students' knowledge obtained outside of school into a more comprehensive and meaningful understanding, depending on their level of development and maturity. Social studies education at the primary school

level strives to provide students with the information, abilities, attitudes, and sensitivities they need to deal with social issues. Although elementary school students can be introduced to social problems, their stage of development makes it difficult for them to fully comprehend the complexity and breadth of these issues (Wakhidah & Erman, 2022). Social studies education can equip students with the necessary information, skills, attitudes, and sensitivity to deal with life's challenges and make informed decisions when resolving issues. It is important to recognize that the world is constantly changing in all aspects, with advancements in technology and information providing new realities beyond our physical surroundings. As science and technology progress, neighbouring countries become more connected through advancements in transportation and communication, making the world seem like a close neighbour. Therefore, it is as if the world has been "brought" into the space of our own homes.

Social studies, in this case, promotes human solidarity and understanding, while emphasizing interpersonal relationships and societal comprehension (Jumriani et al., 2022). IPS can also increase students' sensitivity towards life and society, highlighting the fact that we will encounter numerous obstacles in life. In order to achieve this, IPS can help students: 1) organize their existing knowledge, skills, and abilities related to people and their surroundings to make them more significant; 2) become more aware of and respond to social issues in a rational and responsible manner; and 3) cultivate greater tolerance and solidarity within their immediate environment and between individuals.

Recently, it has become necessary to carry out activities at home by utilizing technological advancements, and the education sector has been greatly affected (Nababan et al., 2022). The government has urged the elimination of activities that lead to crowds, resulting in schools shifting to online or network-based learning. To cope with these conditions, the government has developed an independent learning curriculum that encourages all aspects of education to continue classes even during school closures. However, this online or network-based learning process has some drawbacks, such as the lack of references to support learning, the need to purchase expensive internet data plans to access learning resources, and websites containing annoying advertisements that make downloading resources difficult and time-consuming. Furthermore, not all lessons, especially social studies, which covers a broad range of social sciences, can be fully taught using online learning methods.

Online social studies lessons often rely on one-way learning, and some educators may assign time-consuming assignments in a short period (Hasudungan, 2020), resulting in a lack of reference materials among students. However, government quota assistance for students and educators has greatly aided the learning process. Internet access support should be fully utilized by both educators and students. Despite the availability of many digital reference pages, educators and students seem to be unaware of them. Students tend to rely on keyword searches for answers instead of utilizing available digital references that have credible sources and can enhance their knowledge. Therefore, this article aims to explore reflections on online social studies learning, concepts and practices of using virtual libraries as a learning resource, and ways to support online social studies learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The primary aim of social studies education is to equip students with essential knowledge and skills that they can apply in their daily lives. IPS plays a crucial role in preparing students to actively participate in Indonesia's development and engage in the global community (global society). IPS is an integral component of students' overall education, as it significantly influences and guides their perception of themselves in the context of contemporary life and their responsibilities as members of a globally connected society. IPS is taught in primary schools and integrates ideas from various disciplines, including humanities, science, social science, and a range of societal issues and life challenges (Hasudungan & Sartika, 2019). The social studies curriculum for elementary school students does not prioritize disciplinary subjects but rather pedagogical and psychological considerations, as well as the holistic thinking abilities of students (Sihombing & Asnawi, 2023).

Integrated learning is a method of learning that enables students to actively explore and discover ideas and principles in a real-world context, both individually and in groups. It provides students with firsthand experience, which helps them better absorb, remember, and understand the material being studied. Integrated learning encourages students to make their own discoveries in a comprehensive,

meaningful, authentic, and active way. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated conducting all activities from home using advanced technology. The education sector has been impacted by the pandemic (Agung Ratih Rosmilasari & Adoe, 2021). To prevent crowds, the government has urged schools to conduct classes from home or through online networks. To support this approach, the government has developed an independent learning curriculum that encourages all educational stakeholders to continue with classes even when schools are closed. However, online or network-based learning can be less effective due to the lack of reference materials to support learning. Additionally, accessing learning resources can be costly due to the high cost of internet data. Moreover, some websites that provide reference materials for learning are often cluttered with annoying advertisements, which can make downloading the materials difficult and time-consuming.

Not all subjects can be effectively taught through online learning methods, particularly social studies, which encompasses a wide range of social sciences. Online delivery of social studies lessons often results in one-way learning, which may not be as effective as interactive teaching methods. Some educators also assign time-consuming assignments within short periods of time, which can create a shortage of reference materials among students. Government aid in the form of internet data assistance for both students and educators can greatly facilitate the learning process. Educators and students should make the most of internet access support, including digital references that are available. However, many educators and students are not aware of the digital reference materials available to them and rely on searching for answers through search engines. There are many pages that provide reference materials with clear and credible sources that can increase students' knowledge. This article aims to discuss reflections on online social studies learning, the concepts and practices of using virtual libraries as a learning resource, and support for online social studies learning during the COVID-19 pandemic era (Dhawan, 2020).

In addition, Indonesia is in a very unfortunate position given the severity of the literacy crisis and the urgency of the need for e-library. Indonesia is rated 62 out of 70 nations, or the bottom 10 countries with poor literacy rates, according to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) study published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019. Factors that cause low literacy are 1) a lack of reading activities; 2) reading activities that do not have to be through the books in the library. In the era of digitalization and the existence of the internet, there is a lot of information and knowledge that we can take from the internet. Almost every Indonesian already has a gadget, but they don't use gadgets as an alternative to reading. 3) lack of understanding of the importance of literacy; 4) understanding and awareness of the importance of literacy are very important to improve and sharpen the brain so that it is not lazy to think; 5) The curriculum is set by the government; 6) The curriculum implemented in schools uses the memorization method. This results in students not learning to think critically, analyze, and solve problems because they only memorize the material.

The emergence of a digital library (E-library) in Indonesia was welcomed by information managers or librarians. Most librarians are open to technological change, but also retain their traditional function, which is to help people find information, whether in digital or printed form. Dissemination of digital library programs to network members and users is important. In this case, it is necessary to increase awareness of their main function, which is to provide users with easy access to information. To facilitate access, librarians need to encourage digital library users to be "information literate". Library users like this are those who are aware of when they need information and are able to find information, evaluate it, and use the information they need effectively and ethically. Economically speaking, digital libraries are more profitable than traditional ones. Four arguments are put forth by Chapman & Kenney (in Sismanto 2008), namely: (1) institutions can share digital collections; (2) digital collections can lessen the need for printed materials at the local level; (3) use of them will increase electronic access; and (4) the long-term value of digital collections will reduce the costs associated with maintaining and delivering them.

First, Fakunle et al.'s (2022) analysis of the influence of digital literacy as a deciding factor in library utilization among students at two private institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria, is a pertinent earlier study. The study by Fakunle et al. is different from ours in that it focuses on how pupils' reading abilities in primary schools are affected by digital literacy. Second, López-Escribano et al., (2021) looked at how early literacy abilities are impacted by digital literacy. Their research is different from ours since we concentrate on analyzing how digital literacy affects children's reading abilities in elementary school. Third, Habibi et al. (2020) investigated the Media Literacy Model to improve early-grade kids' reading abilities. Using the Research and Development methodology, their research sought to generate reliable, usable, and productive literacy media for enhancing elementary school pupils' reading abilities. Our study, in contrast, adopts a descriptive qualitative research methodology to examine the efficacy of using an e-library to improve students' reading abilities. The effectiveness of the e-library as a learning resource for elementary school students' social studies in improving literacy skills, the researchers conclude, has to be further investigated. This will help to fill in the gaps and overcome the shortcomings of the earlier study.

By assessing the usefulness of an e-library as a learning resource for elementary school children studying social studies (IPS), this project is expected to provide significant insights into the use of information and communication technology to promote learning. The findings of this study may be used to create curriculum that prioritizes engaging and cutting-edge teaching methods, improves students' learning resources, and provides teachers with other alternatives for delivering relevant and engaging IPS materials. This study may also be able to assist educational authorities in comprehending how e-libraries improve young children's reading development at the primary school level.

2. METHODS

Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that the goal of qualitative approaches is to understand the phenomena experienced by study participants. This involves explaining behavior, perceptions, motives, and other aspects of human actions in a comprehensive, contextualized manner, using natural techniques within a specific real-world setting. The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive approach. The study aims to describe the effectiveness of using an e-library as a learning resource to enhance literacy skills among elementary school students in social studies (IPS).

In this study, researchers collected data from various sources, in this case 40 scientific articles related to the use of e-library and students' mastery of literacy skills were involved. The data from the scientific articles were processed and analyzed in depth to understand the effectiveness of e-library in improving students' literacy skills. This study describes the existing characteristics and phenomena, and provides an overview of how e-library can affect students' reading and comprehension skills in social studies subjects.

In this study, the researcher identified the factors that play a role in the success of e-library as a learning resource to improve students' literacy skills, as well as providing relevant recommendations or implications to improve the use of e-library as an effective learning tool at the primary school level.

Data analysis was conducted through data triangulation by selecting the most relevant data to be used to support the research. Sorting was necessary to facilitate data classification. Data was filtered and then categorized as needed. After reducing and classifying the data, the next step was to display the data. At this stage the researcher designs the rows and columns of the qualitative data matrix, determines the type and format of data to be entered into the metric field, and draws conclusions (Sugiyono, 2017).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The basic question of this study is, "Is the E-Library useful as a learning resource for elementary school children in developing reading skills?" In general, this study intends to provide a response to that question. The emphasis of this study is on the open-ended topic of whether or not the E-Library, used by primary school pupils as a social learning tool, improves reading abilities. As a result, this

study will reveal and offer explanations for the significance of the E-Library as a learning tool to aid primary school students in honing their reading abilities.

3.1. The Essence of Digital Libraries

A system with a variety of services and information items that allow access to these information objects through digital devices is referred to as a digital library (Gupta & Quamara, 2020). This service is designed to make it easier to quickly, precisely, and accurately conduct a search for information inside a collection of digitally stored information items, including databases, documents, and photos. The digital library connects to other sources and does not exist in a vacuum. Users from all over the world can use its information offerings. The scope of the collection includes digital artifacts that cannot be replaced in printed form in addition to electronic documents that may be used in place of printed ones. Collections provide a focus on the information content, which might include both traditional papers and search results. Information users, information managers, and machines are all served by this library (Okunlaya et al., 2022). All of this is done to support services that help with collection management, storage, and information retrieval. According to Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Vokasi Kemendikbudristek (2023) it adopted the concept of a digital library with a program aimed at facilitating easy access to scientific and technological data documentation in digital form in a more integrated and dynamic manner.

A digital library is defined as follows by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) (Upev et al., 2020): 1) The digital library is not a single entity; 2) The ability for digital libraries to connect to various resources requires technology; 3) The relationship between different digital libraries and information services for users is transparent; 4) Universal access to digital libraries and information services is a goal; and 5) Digital libraries require technology to be able to connect to various resources. 5) Digital library collections include digital objects that cannot be represented or transmitted in a printed manner, not just document representations. According to the author, a digital library is one that can be accessed via a computer and has a collection of books in digital form.

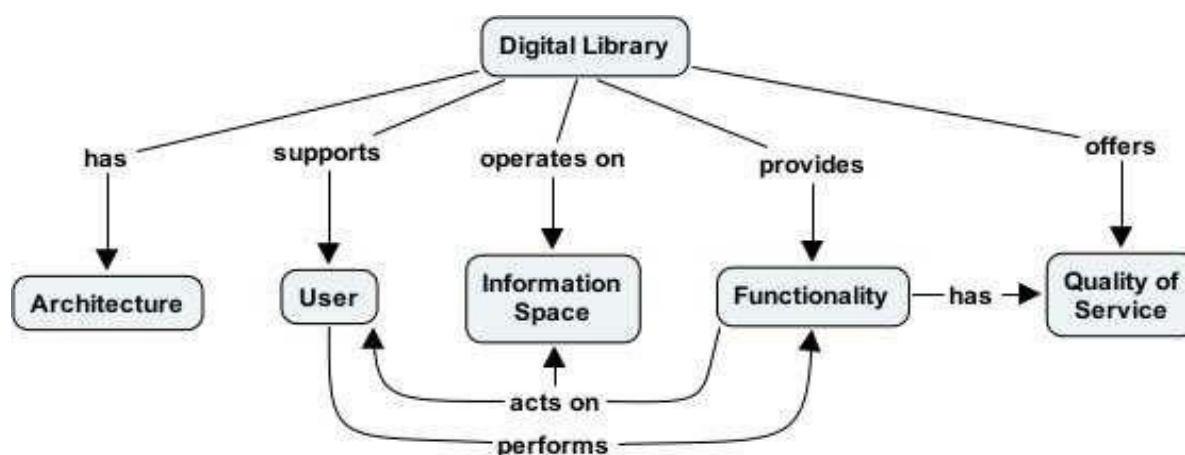


Figure 1. E-Library Concept (Candela et al., 2011)

The goal of the digital library is to strive to provide the broadest access possible to published knowledge. According to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), 1995, the objectives of digital libraries are as follows (Lee et al., 2022), 1) to hasten the methodical development of information and knowledge collection, storage, and organization in digital formats; 2) to create cost-effective and efficient information delivery across all sectors; 3) to promote collaborative efforts that have a significant impact on investment in research resources and communication networks; 4) to improve communication and cooperation in the research, business, government, and educational environments;

5) assuming the responsibility for future global leadership and spreading knowledge to strategically vital regions; and 6) increasing chances for lifelong learning.

However, the collections in digital libraries are quite different from conventional libraries. In a digital library, there are no collections, such as cassettes, audio, printed books, videos, and microfilms. In other words, almost all collections in digital libraries are in the form of books or monographs. The collections in the digital library are stored on a server that can be located locally or at a location far enough away so that using a digital library requires the internet. Therefore, when the internet speed is stable, the digital library can be accessed smoothly and more comfortably. The benefits of digital libraries are as follows:

3.1.1 Obtained Information Becomes Faster and Easier

Technological developments will facilitate various kinds of human activities. Likewise the presence of a digital library can make it easy for librarians to find books, so it doesn't take long to get the book you want to read. The faster the book is found, the faster we read the book. In general, when opening a digital library, we only search for the appropriate keyword (book title or author) in the digital library search engine. After typing keywords in the search the desired book will appear, it's easy, isn't it? Quite a large collection of books

As with conventional libraries, digital libraries have quite a large collection of books, even along with technological developments, many publishers are starting to publish their books digitally (Khan, 2021). In addition, digital libraries have more storage space and do not require a large amount of space when compared to conventional libraries. In fact, we can share the collections in the digital library with other people, so that other people don't have to bother looking for the book.

3.1.2 Avoid Physical Book Damage

It's no stranger, if a physical book will definitely be damaged which makes the reader uncomfortable. The damage that occurs to books is usually in the form of loose paper, faded paper color, and so on. On the other hand, the condition of the books in the digital library will not be easily damaged because they are digital and stored on a server (Mehta & Wang, 2020). In addition, the use of virtual libraries will make access to information easier and the process of teaching and learning, research and development of science will be easier to do. The use of virtual libraries during a pandemic like this is a solution for learning because information can be accessed easily, quickly and practically. However, the real challenge is the paradigm of students themselves who are accustomed to relying on educators when learning, relying on face-to-face services, and being limited to their own textbooks, which will greatly hinder the use of virtual libraries as a learning resource and support for online social studies learning (Alvarez, 2020). So the role of educators is needed to change the paradigm. That the ability to use the library to develop every subject in school is highly dependent on the ability of social studies educators themselves to create and apply everything around students.

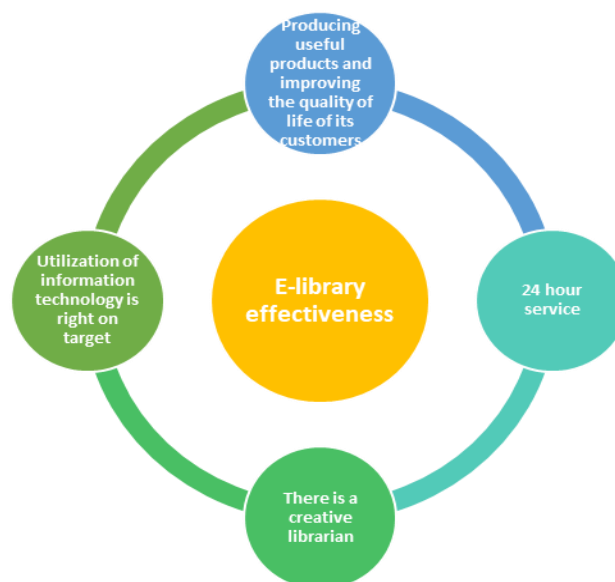


Figure 2. E-library effectiveness

In addition to strengthening the effectiveness of the e-library as a social studies learning resource for elementary school students in improving literacy skills, it is necessary to minimize the disadvantages of digital libraries as follows (Ortega-Martínez et al., 2021):

3.2. E-Library as a Social Studies Learning Resource for Elementary Students in Improving Literacy Skills

When An online digital library called an "e-library" allows users to access a variety of books, journals, and other materials relevant to their chosen subject of study (Lotfy et al., 2022). Students now have online access to more thorough and authentic materials thanks to the e-library. Students may study social studies content independently, whenever they want, wherever, thanks to the e-library (Maryati et al., 2022; Omeluzor et al., 2023; Sucha et al., 2022). Reading books and other digital resources about topics of interest allows students to increase their vocabulary, which helps their literacy skills while using e-libraries as social studies learning materials (Igbozuruike & Grace, 2022). With more broad and varied reading experiences, individuals can advance their reading and writing skills. Also, e-libraries may assist students in improving their digital skills, which are critical in today's world (Fakunle et al., 2022).

IPS examines a selection of social issue-related incidents, details, ideas, and generalizations. Social studies classes at the SD/MI level cover geography, history, sociology, and economics (Mustofa, 2017). Students are guided to become citizens of Indonesia who are democratic and accountable, as well as citizens of the globe who value peace, through social studies classes (Riswan et al., 2022). The topic of social studies (IPS), which integrates the humanities (aspects of norms, morals, language, art, and culture) and the social sciences (history, geography, economics, and sociology) to study social life, is not a scientific discipline (Setyowati & Fimansyah, 2018). Although social intelligence is innate to every human being, social studies still need to be taught and acquired by students. This is because people's lives and all of their issues are getting worse, making natural social knowledge insufficient (A. N. Lubis, 2022).

Formal education is required to deal with these ongoing processes, especially given the low levels of literacy among Indonesian students and the social studies curricula in schools (Bartin, 2020). In order to "encourage students to become decent citizens who have knowledge, skills, and social caring that are helpful for themselves as well as for society and the country," social studies education has this as its stated goal. To do this, the IPS learning process emphasizes the moral (affective) components of living and realizing a life full of issues, challenges, barriers, and competition in addition to knowledge

(cognitive) and skill (psychomotor) aspects. Students are encouraged and nurtured for their mental and intellectual capacities via IPS education to become citizens who are knowledgeable, socially conscious, and accountable in line with the principles found in Pancasila (Hadiapurwa et al., 2021). Particularly when the E-Library is able to provide learning resources in accordance with social studies learning themes, IPS teachers in elementary schools need to have insight into the goals and directions that should be taken into account when developing learning materials, including those sourced from the E-Library for improving literacy skills.

Since teachers frequently assign work without requiring students to reflect, social studies learning online is still ineffective in practice (Coman et al., 2020). Students will only focus on completing the task after a brief online meeting and assignment delivery. This won't work since students are less prepared to discover information and are less literate to finish assignments assigned by teachers. In reality, raising student accomplishment will be directly impacted by raising literacy and informational levels. The results of this study were also reinforced by the results of research by Sumartin, Missriani, & Wardiah (2021) which stated that the more students used the library, the higher their academic achievement. From an advantage, we are actually currently benefiting from facilities during the pandemic that have been prepared in such a way and supported by technological developments. Facilities such as internet quota assistance by the government, the digitalization of resources, and the existence of virtual libraries really support online social studies learning (De' et al., 2020). Several virtual libraries should already be known and even used by educators to be applied in learning, such as Edmodo, the National Library of Indonesia, the Internet Archive, and university library websites that are members of the Indonesia Digital Library Network (IndonesiaDLN).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes to human life in learning and teaching in the world of education, including in Indonesia. The problem is, distance learning or online learning has not become a regular part of schools in Indonesia. Schools generally rely on face-to-face learning, educational institutions in Indonesia have been heavily affected by the shift from this learning method to online learning at home. Switching to online social studies learning at home is even more difficult in primary schools because young students generally need more help with their studies. This condition creates tension between school and home. On the school side, elementary school teachers struggle with these changes by having to study information technology for learning media (Erawati et al., 2021), then school equipment such as the school library must innovate to provide services to students online. At home, parents must be prepared to provide internet devices and networks. The problem of learning resources is of concern to the school and parents to support the effectiveness of studying social studies at home, by using information technology-based library services, students can get electronic social studies learning resources and references easily and can be accessed anytime and anywhere (Wahyuningsih et al., 2021).

Students can learn about the neighborhood through print or electronic media or directly from their own experiences living there (A. H. Lubis & Dasopang, 2021). The goal of social studies education is to create citizens who are knowledgeable about society and their country, who are morally upright, democratic, creative, critical, and analytical, who enjoy reading and possess learning skills, who are curious, who care about the social and physical environment, who support the growth of social and cultural life, and who are able to communicate and be productive—qualities that, of course, cannot be understated (Aslamiah et al., 2021). Students will gain knowledge, awareness, and insight into society via the e-library in Social Studies Learning, as well as comprehension of themselves, their society, their country, and the evolution of national life in the past, present, and future. Don't forget that the teacher's role is crucial for the translation of this information into something useful and suitable. It will be preferable if implanted at a young age since it can act as a guide for students and is anticipated to become a culture for themselves, which will undoubtedly have an impact on the neighborhood. Using information from the internet library, social studies lessons may benefit the neighborhood.

4. CONCLUSIONS

When the library is able to realize all its activities based on information technology continuously and continuously. Ready-to-deliver services and online (interactive) services become important when the e-library is implemented so that they can always accompany students in developing their intellectual and mental abilities to become skilled and socially responsible citizens in accordance with the values contained in Pancasila. So that the enjoyment of elementary students when they become e-libraries as a social studies learning resource is able to increase student literacy, which is still low. In order for the e-library to be effective, schools or the government must do the following: 1) Provide learning resources that are relevant to the topics discussed; 2) Create a system that can be accessed 24 hours a day; 3) There is a creative librarian. On the other hand, the talents and potential of librarians need to be optimized. Freedom to express ideas needs to be channeled into creating creativity. So that library activities are more lively and full of joy; 4) Utilization of information technology on target So that students do not only learn social studies from textbooks or teachers, sometimes they are limited, especially in the aspect of accessing and obtaining learning content. Meanwhile, the e-library has many social studies learning resources and content that are able to appeal to students and have an impact on increasing the literacy of elementary school students. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend making active use of the e-library as a learning resource for literacy development during both school and home learning activities. Thus, it is important that educators keep creating e-libraries and use them to their full potential while teaching social studies. The analysis of the impact of e-libraries on primary students' literacy skills is still restricted to literary studies. So, further research is required to examine how primary school children might utilize e-libraries as a social studies learning resource, particularly to enhance their literacy skills.

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