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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF CIVIC VALUES

Siti Zulaiha¹

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara

Email: sitizulaiha0803@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of children's lives, including elementary school students. This study aims to analyze the impact of social media on elementary school students' understanding of civic values. The research method used was qualitative-descriptive with a literature review approach. The results of the study indicate that social media can introduce students to civic values quickly through educational content, but can also be misleading if not accompanied by proper guidance. Therefore, an active role is needed for teachers and parents to guide the wise use of social media and the correct understanding of civic values. This study is expected to serve as a reference for schools, parents, and policymakers in responding to social media use by elementary school students in a more constructive and educational manner.

Keywords : Social media, elementary school students, citizenship values, literature study, character education.

Introduction

Social media has become a primary source of information for many people, including elementary school-aged children. The development of social media has significantly influenced the younger generation's understanding of Pancasila values. This study highlights how social media can influence people's lives, including their thinking, behavior, and understanding of civic principles. However, a major challenge that arises is how elementary school students can correctly understand civic values when exposed to various information on social media. This study aims to examine how social media influences elementary school students' understanding of civic values and how education can optimize its benefits while minimizing its negative impacts. In today's modern era, social media has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Many young people spend their time on social media. It provides a platform for them to share and interact with one another. However, excessive reliance on social media can have a significant negative impact on their well-being, especially among today's younger generation, including a decline in moral values. Social media has many benefits, facilitating long-distance communication and serving as a learning tool. It can be beneficial and facilitate access to develop students' insights, creativity, and digital literacy skills. Through various platforms, students can learn independently, access educational information, and interact within communities that support their learning. However, the use of social media must be directed wisely to avoid negative impacts, especially for elementary school-aged children. However, despite its numerous and sophisticated benefits, excessive use can have negative consequences, especially for the younger generation. Social media plays a significant role in shaping young people's social identities, changing their lifestyles and mindsets. Through its content, today's youth are susceptible to mental health issues and depression. Social media has become a daily staple in today's era due to its numerous benefits. While it plays a crucial role in facilitating social life, it can also have negative effects if not used wisely.

Research Methodology

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought about significant changes in people's lives, including in education. One particularly influential form of technology is social media. Today, social media has become an integral part of daily life, not only for adults but also for children, including elementary

school students. Increasingly easy access to social media has enabled elementary school students to become exposed to various forms of information, social interaction, and entertainment from an early age. This study employed a literature review method, collecting and analyzing various sources, such as journals, books, and articles, that discuss the influence of social media on the understanding of civic values, as used in *Soewardi et al.'s (2024) study*. This approach is expected to generate recommendations for optimizing the role of social media in character education while minimizing its negative impacts. On the other hand, elementary school is the initial stage in the formation of character and civic values in children. Values such as mutual cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, and love of country are essential components of civic education that need to be instilled from an early age. However, the presence of social media can pose challenges if its use is not accompanied by adequate supervision and guidance. Negative content, the spread of hoaxes, and exposure to values that conflict with national identity pose a real threat to students' character formation. However, social media also has positive potential as a learning tool and as a vehicle for instilling civic values through educational, interactive, and inspiring content. Therefore, it is important to examine the impact of social media on elementary school students' understanding of civic values, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, this study also analyzed social media content, particularly platforms used by elementary school students, such as YouTube and TikTok. The goal was to determine whether social media content helps students understand civic values or provides inaccurate information. This approach provides insight into how social media influences elementary school students' understanding of civic values and how to address its negative impacts. This situation requires the involvement of various parties, especially teachers and parents, in guiding children's wise use of social media. Civic values education cannot be delivered solely through textbooks and classroom instruction but also needs to be integrated into daily digital activities. Thus, social media can become a learning space that strengthens students' national identity.

Result & Discussion

Social media has become a vital and vital resource for the younger generation. Several platforms play a crucial role in shaping their identities. These platforms are what keeps the younger generation connected to the virtual world. They also shape the morals of those who use them. For those who become accustomed to it and can't escape it, social media use has gone too far and is becoming negative for the younger generation. However, this doesn't mean that social media is useless or unhelpful. In fact, it makes things much easier for everyone, especially this generation. Social media will remain a lifeline for this generation, especially elementary school students. This is an era where anyone can use social media. In today's digital era, challenges to children's character are increasingly complex, as they are exposed to various influences from social media and digital content, which are not always positive. In this context, Civics Education also plays a role in guiding students to sort through information and act wisely as digital citizens. Civics teachers act as facilitators, not only delivering material but also providing examples of positive attitudes in real life. Furthermore, active, contextual Civics learning, which encourages critical thinking, will make it easier for students to absorb character values in a fun and meaningful way.

Means of self-expression

Media provides a platform for students to express their thoughts, feelings, and identities, including their understanding and attitudes toward civic values. Social media provides a space for students to interact, share experiences, and express themselves creatively through various content such as writing, images, videos, and comments. Through these activities, students not only showcase who they are but also learn and reflect on the social and civic values they understand within the digital environment. Using social media as a means of self-expression allows students to develop positive self-concepts, such as increased self-confidence, creativity, and the courage to express opinions, which are crucial for understanding and internalizing civic values. However, social media also carries challenges, such as the potential for negative social comparison, pressure to perform perfectly, and the risk of misinformation, which can negatively influence students' understanding of these values. Thus, social media plays a dual role as a means of self-expression that can enrich elementary school students' understanding of civic values through social interaction and self-reflection, while also requiring supervision and guidance so that the impact is not the negatives can be minimized and positive values can be developed optimally

Positive and negative impacts of the role of social media

Positive impacts of social media

Media is evident in its ability to provide broad access to information and educational content related to civic values such as tolerance, responsibility, honesty, and mutual cooperation. Through platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and other social media, students can learn interactively and engagingly, which helps them understand civic concepts more easily and contextually. Social media also serves as a means of self-actualization and

visualization for students, allowing them to express opinions, ideas, and creativity related to social and civic issues, thereby increasing self-confidence and social awareness. Social interactions that occur on social media also encourage students to recognize diversity, foster empathy, and appreciate differences, which are important foundations in developing civic character. In addition, social media can be used to socialize Pancasila values and social media ethics, such as avoiding *cyberbullying* and adopting a positive democratic attitude. Civic education embedded in social media content can help children be wiser in using technology and understand their responsibilities as digital citizens, so they can play an active role in society intelligently and responsibly. Social media also helps strengthen national character and resilience if the content is managed well and in accordance with Pancasila values.

Negative impacts of social media

Age-inappropriate content, hate speech, bullying, and misleading information can shape erroneous attitudes and perceptions about civic values. Students who spend too much time on social media tend to be less focused on formal learning and direct social interactions, which are essential for natural character development. Social pressures on social media, such as the need for recognition through "likes" or popularity, can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and mental health disorders that impact their understanding of and attitudes toward civics. Cyberbullying is a serious threat that can damage children's character development and hinder their understanding of positive social values. Children who are victims or perpetrators of cyberbullying can experience trauma and struggle with healthy social interactions. Students' inability to filter information on social media can also lead to them becoming victims of cyberbullying. Exposure to unfiltered negative content can potentially lead to intolerance or apathy toward civic values. Overall, the impact of social media on elementary school students' understanding of civic values depends heavily on how it is used and monitored. The role of teachers, parents, and the school community is crucial in providing guidance so that students can use social media positively and critically. With the right approach, social media can be an effective and enjoyable learning tool, while also supporting the development of strong character and civic competencies. Conversely, without adequate supervision and education, social media has the potential to have negative impacts that undermine students' understanding and attitudes toward civic values.

Strategy for Strengthening Civic Education in the Digital Era

Strategies for strengthening civic education in the digital era require a comprehensive and adaptive approach to developments in information and communication technology. Civic education must be able to address challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities in the digital world so that the younger generation, particularly elementary school students, can effectively understand and internalize civic values. Development is a key priority. Civics curricula need to be designed to not only teach the traditional rights and obligations of citizens but also integrate digital literacy, digital ethics, cybersecurity, and digital citizenship. This way, students will not only understand the values of democracy, tolerance, and social participation but also be able to use technology wisely and responsibly in their social lives. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing this strategy. They must be trained to master digital technology and interactive learning methods, such as the use of digital media (video, images, presentations), e-learning platforms, and social media as learning tools. Student-centered, collaborative project-based learning approaches can enhance 21st-century skills such as communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking, which are essential to facing the challenges of the digital age. The integration of technology into civics learning must be supported by partnerships between schools and local communities. Involving the community in learning allows students to directly experience the positive impact of good citizenship and practice these values in real life. It also strengthens social awareness and civic responsibility in a broader context. Education in the digital age must emphasize the development of digital literacy and online ethics. Students need to be equipped with the skills to critically analyze information, recognize hoaxes, and understand the norms and ethics of online interactions. This is crucial for them to become responsible digital citizens, actively participate in the digital community, and maintain social security and harmony. Learning must adopt active and participatory methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and collaborative projects involving the use of digital technology.

This approach encourages students to play an active role in the learning process, hone critical thinking skills, and develop a positive attitude of tolerance and diversity. Thus, civics education is not only theoretical but also applicable and contextual, in line with the dynamics of today's digital society. Strengthening civic education in the digital age must also involve character building through concrete examples from educators and the school environment. Teachers and parents need to be role models in implementing civic values and digital ethics, so that students can emulate and internalize these values in their daily lives. *Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL)* is a learning approach that emphasizes full student engagement in the learning process by linking subject matter to real-world situations and conditions they experience daily. CTL aims to ensure that students not only memorize material

but also understand the meaning and relevance of that knowledge in real life, allowing it to be flexibly applied in various contexts. In *CTL*, teachers connect subject matter to students' personal, social, and cultural experiences and encourage students to actively seek, construct, and apply knowledge through meaningful and relevant activities. This learning also emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and the ability to transfer knowledge. The main characteristics of *CTL* include: (1) Active learning, where students are directly involved in discovering and connecting material to real life (2) Meaningful learning, because the material is learned in a context that is relevant to the student's experience (3) Increase student learning motivation by making learning more interesting and contextual (4) The use of authentic assessment integrated with the learning process.

The influence of content algorithms

This algorithm functions to filter and display content deemed most relevant and interesting to users based on their behavior, preferences, and previous interactions. A positive impact of the algorithm is its ability to increase the relevance of educational content received by students, making it easier for them to access information about civic values such as tolerance, responsibility, and social justice. With the right algorithm, students can be exposed to content that supports civic learning and encourages active participation in social issues through digital discussions and campaigns. However, algorithms also have significant negative impacts. Algorithms tend to create *A filter bubble*, or information bubble, where students only see content that aligns with their pre-existing interests and views. This can reduce openness to other perspectives and reinforce social polarization, narrowing and biasing students' understanding of civic values. Furthermore, algorithms can amplify the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and misleading information, potentially undermining character development and healthy citizenship attitudes. The influence of algorithms also makes monitoring and controlling content a challenge for teachers and parents, as it is difficult to control what students consume digitally. Therefore, digital literacy is crucial for students to critically select and understand information, as well as develop a tolerant and responsible attitude in using social media as part of citizenship learning.

Overall, social media content algorithms play a dual role in shaping elementary school students' understanding of civic values. With proper management and guidance, algorithms can be effective tools for strengthening civic education. However, without adequate oversight and digital literacy, algorithms can also amplify negative impacts such as polarization and the spread of misinformation, which are detrimental to students' character development. YouTube Shorts has become a major focus due to its popularity among children and its often unfiltered content. These short videos are easily accessible and spread quickly, but not all of their content is appropriate for children. Some content depicts violence, vulgar jokes, or inappropriate behavior, which, if continuously consumed by children without supervision, can affect their behavior and interactions. In fact, prolonged video viewing can hinder children's physical activity and language development, and increase the risk of speech delay. Overall, this study confirms that efforts to strengthen digital ethics must be carried out collaboratively by schools, teachers, and parents. Overall, this study confirms that efforts to strengthen digital ethics must be carried out collaboratively by schools, teachers, and parents. Early education and instilling habits regarding ethical digital media use are crucial steps to prevent the negative impacts of social media use on children. This understanding will not only protect students from negative content but also shape a generation that is wiser and more responsible in using technology.

Moral formation

Social media can have a positive impact on children's moral development, such as improving adaptability, broadening horizons, encouraging mutual assistance, sharing information, and fostering creativity and empathy. Through social media interactions, students can learn civic values such as cooperation, responsibility, and fairness in a more practical and contextual way. However, on the other hand, social media also has the potential to negatively impact students' morals. Uncontrolled use can cause children to become less sensitive to their surroundings, less likely to socialize directly, and experience decreased discipline. Negative content such as violence, pornography, hate speech, and impolite behavior can negatively influence children's attitudes and behavior. Children are also at risk of imitating negative behaviors they see on social media, such as impolite speech and dress, as well as laziness and procrastination. Furthermore, social media can trigger addiction, which disrupts learning focus and direct social interactions. Therefore, the development of students' morals through social media depends heavily on supervision and guidance from parents, teachers, and the school community. Appropriate guidance can help students utilize social media as a positive tool for learning civic values and developing good character. Digital literacy and moral education are also crucial for students to be able to sort information, recognize appropriate content, and internalize moral and civic values correctly and responsibly. The state's goal in developing Civic Education is so that every citizen becomes a good individual (good citizen), namely a citizen who has intelligence (civic intelligence) both intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, as well as having a sense

of pride and responsibility (civic responsibility), and is able to actively participate in community life. Families play a key role in shaping students' polite character, particularly through three key aspects: educating, teaching knowledge, and evaluating. In practice, religious values such as faith, Islamic worship, and morals serve as the primary foundation for family character education. Some families have successfully instilled polite character through structured approaches such as monitoring social media use, fostering good manners, and providing role models from parents. Conversely, families that are less active in monitoring, especially regarding social media content, tend to fail to maintain their children's character. Children from these families are more easily influenced by negative content on social media, such as vulgar videos or age-inappropriate popular culture, such as K-Pop culture, online games, and purely entertainment content.

The research results show that the use of technology-based learning media in Civics (PKn) learning has a positive impact on student interest and learning outcomes. The use of educational games developed according to the needs of students and teachers has been proven to attract students' attention because it combines visual and audio displays. Visual media has also been shown to increase student participation, because students can understand and explain the contents of the images and provide opinions on the material presented. In another school, learning that initially only used the lecture method proved ineffective due to minimal interaction between teachers and students. However, after the implementation of visual media, student learning outcomes improved because students became more active, creative, and able to connect the concepts learned. The use of videos also had a positive effect, where students were more focused, enthusiastic, and teachers were able to relate the material to students' daily lives. The discussion revealed that civics learning is often considered boring due to its theoretical nature and reliance on lectures. This leads to students losing interest and viewing civics as a rote learning experience. Some teachers also struggle to engage students actively in the learning process. Technology provides a solution to this problem. Media such as images, videos, PowerPoint presentations, educational games, and even educational puzzles can increase student interest by presenting material in an engaging, interactive, and relevant way. Thus, technology not only helps make the learning process more effective but also makes civics learning more enjoyable and meaningful for students. The ultimate goal of civic education is to teach not only how people can be socially responsive, critical, and creative, but also to develop morals that are expected to form noble morals in society.

Conclusion

Social media plays a dual role in elementary school students' civics education. On the one hand, these platforms provide access to extensive and engaging information, but on the other hand, they can be misleading if not supervised by parents and teachers. Social media has a complex impact on elementary school students' understanding of civic values. On the one hand, social media provides broad access to information and educational content that can enrich students' insights into values such as tolerance, responsibility, mutual cooperation, and social justice. These platforms also encourage students' active participation in social and civic issues through digital interaction and self-expression. However, on the other hand, social media also has negative impacts, such as a shift in values toward individualism, exposure to negative content or hoaxes, and addiction that reduces direct social interaction and understanding of the value of togetherness. The influence of content algorithms that tend to reinforce narrow views can also hinder students' comprehensive understanding. Therefore, social media plays a dual role as a learning resource and a challenge in shaping elementary school students' character and civic understanding. To maximize the positive impact of social media on civics education, several strategic steps need to be taken. First, improving digital literacy from an early age so that students can sort and critically understand information. Second, parents and teachers must actively filter and supervise the content consumed by children through the use of parental controls and digital activity monitoring. Third, schools can integrate social media as an interactive learning tool that supports the strengthening of civic values. Fourth, the development of creative and participatory learning methods needs to be encouraged so that students can play an active role in understanding and practicing civic values. Finally, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is crucial to provide ongoing guidance and support in the wise and responsible use of social media, so that social media can become an effective tool in shaping the character and civic insight of the younger generation.

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