International Journal of
Students Education

BERPUSI PUBLISHING

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA IN FORMING CRITICAL THINKING AND PARTICIPATING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

In an increasingly interconnected digital era through social media, the role of civic education becomes ever more crucial in equipping students with the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the complexities of online information. This research addresses the pivotal role of civic education in shaping students' critical thinking amidst the dynamics of the digital age. Through an exploration of the interplay between civic education and social media, this paper investigates how civic education curricula can incorporate lessons in digital literacy and online ethics to train students in information evaluation, diverse perspective development, and critical assessment of widely circulated content in the online realm. Furthermore, this study also delves into the potential positive impacts, such as heightened student participation in social and political discourse, which serves as tangible manifestations of an understanding and application of civic values in an era filled with challenges and opportunities. The primary challenge in integrating civic education with social media lies in identifying effective methods for teaching digital literacy and online ethics to students. Additionally, sustained efforts are required to measure the positive impact of this approach on the development of students' critical thinking skills in the face of the ever-evolving digital landscape. Finally, it is essential to consider how civic education through social media can assist students in comprehending and applying civic values within a broader and more relevant context in their lives.

Keywords : Critical Thinking, Social Media, Civic Education, Digital Literacy, Digital Era

Introduction

In the ever-developing 21st century, the role of digital technology, especially social media, in everyday life has become increasingly dominant and has a deep impact on various aspects of society. This era is often referred to as the "Digital Age" due to the drastic changes in the way information is distributed, accessed, and used by individuals around the world. Social media, as one of the main pillars in this digital ecosystem, has changed the landscape of communication, social interaction and how we consume information. The ability to connect with others, share views, and access information in seconds has had a significant impact on the way we think, socialize, and participate in society. Seeing this, Indonesian people will definitely be able to face this era of globalization well. Starting from the idea of globalization and national values, namely Pancasila, an argument was put forward stating that there is a significant relationship between technology and national values (Muflih Ihsan Pratama & Fatma Ulfatun Najicha, 2022). Amid this transformation, citizenship education has an increasingly important role in equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to function as responsible and skilled citizens in this digital era. One of the key skills that needs to be instilled is critical thinking abilities. Critical thinking is not just about evaluating information carefully, but also about the ability to understand diverse points of view, identify bias, and make decisions based on careful analysis. In the context of social media and the unlimited presence of information online, this capability becomes increasingly important to avoid disinformation, polarization and

inequality in access to information. Therefore, this research aims to explore the important role of citizenship education in shaping students' critical thinking in the digital era, with a focus on the interaction between citizenship education and social media. We will investigate how civics education curricula can integrate digital literacy and online ethics lessons to train students in the critical evaluation of information, the development of diverse viewpoints, as well as the critical assessment of content that is widespread in cyberspace. In addition, we will discuss possible positive impacts, such as increasing student participation in social and political dialogue.

Research Methodology

This research uses the literature analysis method as the main framework to explore a deep understanding of the role of citizenship education in shaping students' critical thinking in the digital era. The initial step in this methodology is to identify relevant theoretical and research sources that have been published in scientific literature and trusted academic sources. Once these sources were identified, we conducted a critical analysis of existing content with a focus on how citizenship education has been integrated with digital literacy and media literacy in the context of social media and the ever-evolving digital era. We also explore the views of various researchers and experts in this field to understand the latest developments in citizenship education in the digital era. The results of this literature analysis will help us formulate a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing citizenship education in shaping students' critical thinking in the digital era. The literature analysis method was chosen because it allows us to collect and synthesize information from various reliable sources in the scientific literature. This allows us to develop a comprehensive understanding of this topic, identify trends, as well as detail the various perspectives that exist in the relevant literature. In addition, this method also allows us to bridge existing knowledge with new findings emerging from our research. Thus, literature analysis becomes a very effective tool in exploring and understanding important issues surrounding citizenship education in the context of the continuously developing digital era.

Result & Discussion

The results of the literature analysis show that the role of citizenship education in shaping students' critical thinking in the digital era is very important and complex. A thorough analysis of various sources of scientific literature and current research reveals that the integration of digital literacy and media literacy in the citizenship education curriculum can help students develop better critical thinking in dealing with information spread widely on social media. Critical thinking allows students to critically evaluate the information they encounter, identify bias, and develop strong analytical skills. Related to this, all Indonesian citizens, especially the younger generation of Indonesia, need to be provided with citizenship education with a good and dynamic understanding of national and state awareness, in order to foster an attitude of willingness to sacrifice for the sake of their nation and state (Asyari & Anggraeni Dewi, 2021). In addition, the results of the analysis also highlight the importance of a skills-based approach in citizenship education. In a digital era full of information challenges, skills such as understanding resources, verifying information, and using analytical tools are becoming increasingly essential. In this context, civics education can help students hone these skills so they can more effectively sort information, identify fake news, and participate in critical dialogue on social media. Therefore, every citizen is expected to be able to think critically, rationally and creatively in responding to citizenship issues (Gunawan et al., 2022). The results of this literature analysis confirm the importance of citizenship education in overcoming the challenges of critical thinking in the digital era. The integrity of information is increasingly being questioned on social media, and critical thinking skills are a crucial tool in navigating this complex information environment. Therefore, citizenship education needs to continue to adapt to changes in the digital environment to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills. In this era, information spreads very quickly and is easily accessed by anyone, even without filters or verification of truth. This allows for the polarization of conflicting opinions and beliefs (Rizka Wulandari et al., 2023). Furthermore, a skills-based approach in citizenship education is also an integral part in equipping students for the digital era. Digital literacy, media literacy and analytical skills are important components in students' readiness to deal with online information. In the early period of literacy progress, literacy was interpreted as the ability to use language and video in various forms to read, write, listen, speak, see, express and reflect ideas critically. Further progress shows that literacy is related to social situations and applications (Dewi et al., 2021). This approach also provides a strong foundation for students to understand online ethics and their digital responsibilities in participating in social media.

Challenges and Risks

Although civics education through social media has great potential, there are a number of challenges and risks that need to be considered. The first challenge is the spread of false information or disinformation that can confuse students and influence their thinking. Another risk is students' exposure to radical attitudes and extremism that can be found on social media platforms. Therefore, wise efforts are needed to manage this risk. Schools can implement specialized training programs that help students recognize false information, avoid the pitfalls of extremism, and develop strong analytical skills. Additionally, an inclusive educational approach and open dialogue about sensitive issues can also help students develop balanced critical thinking. If the younger generation is prepared with guidance that makes them grow up, they will become people who will make achievements in the history of this country's civilization. On the other hand, if they are treated as normal or even made to never think independently, it will only burden this nation (Ariella Prity Anggraini & Fatma Ulfatun Najicha, 2022).

Provision for the Digital Era

Globalization comes with sophisticated information technology which makes all people's activities easier, especially the younger generation, but most of them are too busy with cyberspace so they forget and don't even care about the surrounding environment (Ratri & Najicha, 2022). Apart from digital literacy and online ethics, citizenship education must also provide an understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens in cyberspace. This includes an understanding of free speech, online privacy, and personal data protection. Civic education must also include an understanding of how to participate in digital democratic processes, including online elections and participation in online political discussions. By ensuring students understand these aspects, citizenship education will equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to function as responsible citizens in an ever-evolving digital era.

Active participation

Student participation in social and political issues through social media is a key element in citizenship education in the digital era. Some important points to consider in this context are:
a) Student Empowerment: Students' active participation in social media gives them a sense of empowerment. They feel like they have a voice and influence on the issues they care about. This can increase their sense of social responsibility as active citizens. Awareness of the importance of national identity for a teenager with conditions of communication science and technology that are constantly developing is an important thing that must be developed (Zulfa & Ulfatun Najicha, 2022)
b) Speaking Skills Development: Social media provides a platform to talk openly about important issues. Students can learn how to construct strong arguments, express their views clearly, and respond to responses from others. This helps them develop speaking skills that are so necessary in a democracy
c) Introducing a Diversity of Views: Social media often allows students to interact with individuals from different backgrounds and with diverse views. This broadens their perspectives and teaches tolerance for differences of opinion
d) Practical Experience in Democracy: Through participation in social media, students can experience how democracy functions on a smaller scale. They 7 can understand the importance of discussing, reaching consensus, and making decisions together in an online environment. Develop positively and democratically to shape ourselves based on the character of Indonesian society so that we can live side by side with others (Tuhuteru, 2017)

Challenges and Risks

a. Exposure to Misinformation: Students who engage in civic activities on social media risk exposure to false or inaccurate information. This can confuse their thinking and influence their views on social and political issues. It is important for schools to teach students how to conduct research and verify information before accepting and spreading news or opinions
b. Risk of Conflict and Polarization: Social media is often a place where conflict and polarization easily arise. Students can get caught up in online disagreements that have the potential to damage their interpersonal relationships. Civics education should involve discussion of healthy dialogue, tolerance, and the ability to talk productively with people who hold different views.

Provision for the Digital Era

a. Online Rights and Responsibilities: Civics education should provide a solid understanding of students' rights and responsibilities in the online environment. This includes their privacy rights and awareness of how their personal data is used and protected. Students should also be taught about the laws and regulations that apply in cyberspace, including laws relating to illegal or dangerous online actions. Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy skills are an obligation in the industrial revolution 4.0, this must be done so as not to be left behind by other nations (Aditya Hutomo et al., nd)

b. Understanding Online Security: Online security skills, such as using strong passwords and protecting yourself from cyber threats, are important components in equipping students for the digital age. Schools can provide training on good online security practices so students can protect themselves and their personal information when interacting online

c. Participation in Digital Democratic Processes: Citizenship education should teach students about how they can participate in digital democratic processes, including how to vote in online elections, write letters to representatives online, and participate in civilized political discussions on social media.

Conclusion

In a digital era increasingly connected through social media, citizenship education plays an increasingly important role in equipping students with the skills necessary to function as responsible citizens. This research has explored various important aspects in efforts to form critical thinking, integrate digital literacy, and encourage active student participation through social media in the context of citizenship education. Critical thinking is at the core of citizenship education in the digital era. Students are taught to critically evaluate information, identify bias, and make informed and rational decisions. Through this approach, students can face various information circulating on social media with a skeptical and analytical attitude. They become better able to sort fact from opinion and form evidence-based views. Apart from critical thinking, the integration of digital literacy and online ethics is essential in citizenship education. Digital literacy equips students with the skills necessary to use digital technology wisely, while online ethics teaches responsibility in behavior in cyberspace. With this understanding, students can avoid the pitfalls of disinformation, extremism, and unethical interactions on social media. Students' active participation in social and political issues through social media is a real manifestation of successful citizenship education. Students feel they have a voice and influence in society. They develop speaking skills, learn to listen to different views, and engage in public dialogue. This participation not only builds active citizenship, but also provides practical experience of how democracy functions on a smaller scale. Challenges and risks are also an important part of civic education on social media. Students need to be taught how to recognize incorrect information and overcome bias. Schools need to play an active role in managing these risks wisely through media literacy training and monitoring online student behavior.

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