Implications of the Digital Age on Social Engagement and Political Participation in the Context of Civic Education

Afandi¹ Dea Amanda² Della Anggriani Laia³ Syarifah Zulfa Aripah Billah⁴ Ummi Fatoni⁵ Virga Virnanda⁶

Biology Education Study Program, Department of Mathematics and Natural Sciences Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Tanjungpura, Pontianak City, West Kalimantan Province, Indonesia¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶

Email: afandi@fkip.untan.ac.id¹, deaamanda9010@gmail.com², dellaanggrianilaia18@gmail.com³, syfzulfa9@gmail.com⁴, ummifatoni1@gmail.com⁵, virgavirnanda31@gmail.com⁶

Abstract

Digital technology plays a role in human life. It is important to understand how young people respond to and engage in political discussions on social media. Citizenship education is one of the efforts to deal with the implications of the digital era in order to form a young generation who has ethics and a responsible attitude in political participation. Therefore, this research will discuss in more depth the implications of the digital era for social and political involvement in civic education. This study uses a qualitative approach, while to obtain data, research uses literacy studies to obtain information regarding the implications of the digital era on social and political engagement. This research obtains the results of the implications of the digital era on social and political involvement in citizenship education that must be understood by the community, especially for individuals and groups who are in the world of politics. The digital age provides both opportunities and challenges for participatory social and political engagement. Therefore, civics education must be adapted and use approaches that are relevant to the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Era, Social Engagement, Political Participation, Citizenship Education

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

INTRODUCTION

The development of technology towards all-digital is currently increasing rapidly. In the digital era, people tend to have a new lifestyle that cannot be separated from all electronic devices. Technology is a tool that can meet the needs of most people. One can use technology to facilitate the completion of any task or job. The important role of technology has pushed human civilization into the digital era (Setiawan, 2017). The digital era has brought many positive changes that can be utilized as best as possible. But at the same time, the digital era also brings many negative impacts, so that it becomes a new challenge in human life in this digital era. The challenges of the digital era also affect various fields such as politics, economics, socio-culture, defense, security and information technology itself.

Social media is used as an alternative means to see what developments are hotly debated as well as a means of user interaction in response to a current topic. Meanwhile, in the era of digital technology there are various opportunities and negative effects that can harm humans. This is because the ease of working with various applications and techniques makes a person less mobile, less physically active, lazy, various diseases such as obesity, and so on can occur. Excessive use of social media can backfire and have a negative impact on its users.

In the socio-cultural field, the digital era has both positive and negative impacts which make its improvement a challenge in itself. The moral decline of society, especially young people and students is one of the serious socio-cultural challenges. The pattern of interaction
between humans has changed with the presence of digital era technology such as computers, especially in the upper middle class. Computers connected to phones give everyone the ability to connect to the outside world without having to socialize in person.

Politicians and political parties use social media to increase their electability and popularity, and even civil society in general use it to access information that is currently developing. The use of social media has now become a political realm that is very easily accessible to all groups, starting from the government in socializing its work programs, even using social media can be done by anyone regardless of age. Leveraging social media in politics will in itself encourage public discussion of current politics. This is because voters are able to express their opinions on political issues, social media is used as an indicator of political participation in the context of digital democracy (Wahyudi, 2018).

In dealing with the implications of the digital era for social engagement and political participation, civics education plays a very important role. Civic education must adapt to these changes, by preparing young people to face the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. In the context of civics education, it is important to strengthen critical skills, media literacy and understanding of digital ethics. In addition, citizenship education must also encourage active participation in responsible political discussion and action, both in cyberspace and in the real world. In the digital era that is growing rapidly as it is today, information and communication technology has changed various aspects of human life. These technological developments have had a significant impact on social engagement and political participation in the context of civics education. Through digital platforms, individuals can easily access information, communicate with people from various backgrounds, and engage in discussions on relevant social and political issues.

Politicians use advanced technology created by humans to their advantage in an effort to win the support and empathy of the general public. The use of digital media such as smartphones connected to social networks is very effective in reaching young people who are often the most difficult segment of society to be included through conventional strategies. Efforts to increase electability and popularity can be carried out by using digital facilities such as today’s smartphones by providing sophisticated features and applications that are connected directly to social networks that are able to connect one individual to another, between one group to another, even different countries. have a significant impact on contemporary politics (Setiawan, 2017).

Political communication used by the government and political parties aims to gain support both in the context of elections and outside elections. For example, in the 2019 elections, coalition parties that support Prabowo-Sandiaga used the internet, such as YouTube and Instagram, to spread political campaigns through engaging videos with music. This effort aims to gain popularity, electability, and support from netizens throughout Indonesia (Rahmah in Boestam et al., 2023). In addition, in the online campaign in 2014, the Hanura party carried out a strategy that had a positive effect of 54% in Tembalang Village, in contrast to the campaign through television advertisements. These results indicate that the higher political exposure through online media, the higher the popularity and electability of the Hanura party. Conversely, negative online political exposure tends to reduce the level of choice towards the Hanura party. Therefore, the two variables have a close relationship.

This paper will explore more deeply the implications of the digital era for social engagement and political participation in the context of civics education. Researchers will analyze how young people are connected to the world through social media, how individuals are involved in political discussions, and how citizenship education can help individuals develop a critical and responsible understanding of their role in this increasingly connected
society. By understanding these implications and challenges, we can explore the positive potential of the digital era in strengthening political participation and building a more inclusive and responsive society.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is qualitative research with a type of literacy study. The literature study method is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and taking notes, and managing research materials (Zed in Kartiningrum, 2015). Literature study is an activity that is required in research, especially academic research whose main objective is to develop both theoretical and practical aspects (Kartiningrum, 2015). The literature taken comes from publications of the last 10 years for books and scientific journals. The data collection technique used in this study is the documentation technique. Documentation studies can be interpreted as data collection techniques through written materials published by institutions that are the object of research (Yusra, 2021).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Information technology is the latest measure of socio-economic changes in mankind by bringing about changes in all human life, including social, economic and political. The emergence of digital communication has also brought changes to people's social behavior, which includes shifts in culture, ethics, and norms (Boestam & Devirianti, 2022). Indonesia has a large population with various cultures, ethnicities, races and religions and has the potential for great social change thanks to the development of information technology, especially in the field of communication. Almost all Indonesian people from various backgrounds and ages own and use social media to gather information and communicate with the public.

Social media is part of new media that can connect individuals or groups through messages that are spread or shared. This relationship can be in the form of collaborative relationships, cooperation in bringing out creations, discussing, finding someone who can be made a close friend or used as a partner, and building new groups (Mayfield in Fitrya et al., 2018). The amount of time spent using social media shows that Indonesian people are very enthusiastic about using digital communication, and it cannot be denied that this has greatly influenced the current communication model and ultimately changed people's social behavior. The creative process of modernizing society is also destructive and cannot be separated from the development of digital communication.

The presence of social media as a means of digital communication has a very significant impact on changes in people's behavior. The presence of social media has an impact on the ways and aspects that are communicated where it runs more effectively. The existence of digital technology has succeeded in changing the pattern of communication between people, providing complete and affordable information, entertainment, and forming mindsets, attitudes and actions or behaviors that lead people to an instant lifestyle. However, negative social changes occurred, especially in the social norms of Indonesian society, such as bullying, sarcasm, racism, and so on. The emergence of the phenomenon of deviation from social norms due to ease and freedom of expression through technological media encourages people to speak more boldly (Sari., et al in Boestam & Devirianti, 2022).

Not only that, a person can also reveal his identity through social life, and individuals also try to provide information about their identity to others through social media. Identity is a subjective feeling about oneself that is consistent and develops over time. In various places and social situations, a person still has the feeling of being the same person, so that other people will know the character of that person and can respond appropriately (Erikson in Fitrya et al.,
A person's identity is influenced by the social group he belongs to so that social identity arises. Social identity is part of the self component through the involvement of social groups that bind us interpersonally so that we are aligned with our social environment groups. With this social identity we can make a statement about who and what we are like. This social identity takes a relatively long time to develop so that social identity does not change frequently. This is because we have to invest and do it interpersonally with our social groups (Kristiyono, 2022).

From this explanation, it is clear that social media and digital platforms affect a person's social engagement, which includes influences on social identity, group formation, and information dissemination. In the world of politics, the digital era also has an impact or influence on political participation. For example, the role of the political sector is useful as one of the government's efforts to facilitate its programs, such as the use of the media in holding general elections, which is a tool for promoting campaigns (February et al., 2018). In its development, the use of information technology has shifted public space from conventional to digital space. The use of the internet network has created a new public space. The opening of internet access presents a free digital space for the public to express their opinions regarding the government. The tendency to use digital media in conveying political messages has spawned a new term, namely digital democracy (Nofiar, 2022).

Current technological developments have a major impact on political processes, one of which is political democracy. The use of technology is currently a political area for people to access the latest information. Today's technology has provided a new space in the study of democracy, this study of democracy is referred to as digital democracy which is defined as the use of digital communication technology to advance public participation in democracy. In the context of digital democracy, technology is used as an indicator of political participation. The opening of information through this technology provides enormous opportunities for the public to access it. This technology plays a role in the media as a tool for promoting and communicating politics at this time, this kind of thing is inseparable from the development of social media in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0. The era of the industrial revolution 4.0 resulted in the rapid development of information and communication technology.

Along with technological developments that have penetrated the development of the world of education, business, and politics, social media such as the internet has an important role. Especially for the world of digital politics, people can be faster and respond to the information they need. The use of social media for political communication using online media is a trend chosen by political parties. The Indonesian state itself has begun to be seen by political parties using social media to disseminate political information to the public or to simply maintain existing networks, especially to gain public sympathy (Wahyudi, 2018).

Thus, it is known that the current digital era has changed the way people are involved in social life and in political participation, so there is a need for the readiness of the nation's next generation to go through this. One of the efforts to prepare the younger generation to live social and political life in the digital era is through citizenship education. Citizenship Education is very important because citizenship education is a fundamental thing that raises awareness of individual values, the role of the system, rules, and everything related to society and the state. Citizenship education is intended so that the younger generation becomes individuals who are virtuous, responsible, moral, and good citizens. Citizenship education is actually a form of education for the next generation of young people. Citizenship education must be taught to all young people from elementary school to university. This education is important so that the younger generation grows to become more critical of national and international issues, individuals who have high tolerance who love peace with an understanding of democracy, so
that the goals of Pancasila democracy are realized, namely the generation that participates in local, national and international political life. so as to realize the role of the younger generation as agents of change who can systematically drive social and economic change. Education experts are trying to restore the importance of civics education to the younger generation, trying to restore the image of a generation that is tough and in accordance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Alvira, 2021).

Citizenship education teaches that citizens are not only submissive and obedient to the state, but also teaches how citizens must actually be tolerant and independent. This education allows every future generation to have knowledge, develop skills, and also develop public character (Nuralisa, et al., 2020). Citizenship education also plays an important role in cultivating the national spirit, especially for the younger generation as the nation’s successors who are expected to contribute more to the good of their country. Through civic education it is hoped that the younger generation will be fully aware of democracy and human rights (HAM). With this awareness, they will make a real contribution to overcoming various problems faced by the nation, such as conflicts in society, and be able to solve them intelligently and critically (Alvira, 2021).

The younger generation plays an important role in the journey of the Indonesian nation to achieve its national goals, the role of the younger generation as agents of change must become the center of the Indonesian nation’s self-development. Agent of change or agent of change is a motivational word made to move towards a better form of change (Sofyan in Alvira, 2021). Agents of change, namely a group of people who get the attention and hope of the community to be able to live and lead the social system (Ayu Luhuan in Alvira, 2021).

The goals of citizenship education are regulated in National Education Regulation Number 22 of 2006 concerning Content Standards for Elementary and Secondary Education. The aim is for students to have the following skills:
1. Think rationally, creatively and critically in responding to current citizenship issues.
2. Participate actively, responsibly and act intelligently in carrying out the constitutional order and implementing an anti-corruption spirit.
3. Develop positively and democratically to form oneself based on the characteristics of the Indonesian nation so that they can live with other nations.
4. Interact with other nations.

(Ahmad Sanusi in Iyan & Dewi, 2021) states that the main objectives of civic education in general are as follows: Life within constitutional guarantees; Development of the nation according to constitutional requirements; Citizen awareness through good political education; Education that makes citizens have an attitude of responsibility; Exercise in democracy; Participate in the implementation of political life; School as a democracy laboratory; Procedures for making decisions; Leadership training; Supervision of state institutions; Foster international understanding and cooperation.

In general, the goal of civics education is to form smart and good citizens based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The goal of civics education in more detail is to promote morality in everyday life that reflects divine values based on faith and piety to God Almighty through a society consisting of various religions. In addition, to shape the behavior of citizens based on just and civilized humanity. Behavior that supports the welfare and unity of the diverse nation and society forms behavior that prioritizes common interests above individual interests to achieve the goal of social justice for all Indonesian people (Djair in Iyan & Dewi, 2021).
Citizenship education, especially digital-based citizenship education, is important to integrate into the education curriculum. This is important to do so that the quality and relevance of citizenship education in facing challenges and opportunities in the digital era are increasing. In addition, students can become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens in an increasingly digitally connected society. There are many strategies and approaches to equip young people with sufficient skills and understanding to be actively involved in a digital society. Strategies that can be done as follows:

1. Holistic Digital Education. Integrative Holistic Education is education that integrates all values and aspects in education such as moral, religious, psychological, ethical, philosophical, and social in a whole unity in material unity and spiritual aspects to meet the essential needs of children (Asiyani et al., 2022). If it is related to the digital era, it can be understood that there is integration of digital literacy in the education curriculum as a whole which includes an understanding of digital technology, use, evaluation of information, solving digital problems, and so on.

2. Information Literacy. Information literacy is a skill when accessing and evaluating information effectively to solve problems and make decisions (Pattah, 2014). Thus, the younger generation can check the accuracy of the information and identify reliable sources.

3. Digital Communication Skills. Digital communication skills in question are skills to access data, then be able to manage the information that has been received by understanding it well. Then, they must also be able to integrate and communicate this information properly. With good digital communication skills, it will improve other abilities through the skills of creating information and writing it through a series of sentences that are easy to understand (Qutni, 2022).

4. Involvement of the Young Generation. The digital era provides opportunities for young people to be involved in social, political and environmental issues. The younger generation is closely related to digital technology. Where this technology focuses on digitization and automation patterns in all aspects of human life. The active role of the younger generation in the era of digital development is a strategic step that must be implemented. The government must actively work to create an environment that supports the development of digital development and youth participation (Askolani & Al'Munawar, 2020).

5. Building Understanding of the Political System. The younger generation should be equipped with an understanding of the political system. Political education in civics education can be used to foster its function to become citizens who are politically literate. Citizenship education teaches how to form good citizens, namely citizens who are politically educated, have political awareness and participate in political life, political participation, are intelligent, and are responsible (Lukitadewi, 2022).

6. Development of Digital Ethics. Digital ethics are a set of rules and values that govern our behavior in using digital technology and accessing information. This involves restricting privacy and reaching consensus on the use of digital technology. Privacy has become very important with the increasing use of digital technologies that collect and use data. Privacy includes the personal area of an individual that includes the individual’s body and entire life, including information that uniquely identifies that individual. Digital ethics provides a moral framework that helps us understand what is good and bad when it comes to digital technologies. This helps companies make the right and clear decisions regarding the use of digital technology (Aripradono et al., 2021).

7. Good Role Model. Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) discusses morals and character which cannot be equated with the use of digital technology. However, due to technological and cultural advances, these two things must go hand in hand, by providing
motivation and cultivating a sense of responsibility in children. For example, when children use the internet to transcribe answers in exams, we can teach them about the importance of responsibility and build trust in them. Technology is inseparable from our lives, and when we use technology, as in spreading fake news (hoaxes), we can teach children to always verify that information. In addition, in using material references, we must pay close attention because it is a form of appreciation for the work of others (Putri & Setyowati, 2021).

After knowing that digital-based citizenship education is very important to do, individuals must also consider the challenges and opportunities that will arise due to the implications of the digital era for social and political engagement in the context of civics education. The opportunities from the implications of the digital era for social engagement and political participation in the context of citizenship education are as follows:

1. Easier Access to Information. With technology and the internet, access to political and social information has become easier. Students can quickly find information about political issues and social problems, get news from various sources, and access knowledge about the rights and obligations of citizenship. This helps increase their understanding of the world of politics and encourages active participation.

2. Discussion Rooms and Online Forums. Online platforms provide discussion spaces and forums where students can participate in political dialogue, share their views, and listen to the perspectives of others. This allows learners to develop communication skills, broaden their perspectives, and build a better understanding of various political issues.

3. Active Participation Through Social Media. Social media plays an important role in political participation in civics education. Students can use social media platforms to voice their opinions, join social movements, and mobilize support for issues they consider important. Social media also allows them to interact directly with political leaders, advocacy organizations and communities who share the same interests.

4. Technology-Based Citizenship Education. Citizenship education can use technology to provide more interactive and immersive learning experiences. For example, online simulations, educational games, and web-based learning platforms can be used to teach political concepts and encourage students to participate actively in situations that simulate civic challenges.

5. Opportunity to Engage in Online Activism. The digital age has opened doors for students to engage in activism online. They can use social media and online platforms to organize virtual petitions, campaigns and protests related to political and social issues. It provides students with the opportunity to influence social and political change through their active participation in cyberspace.

With the prominent presence of social media in Indonesia, the digital era is a challenge for democracy in the future. There is mediation in the form of economic, cultural and social capital in shaping individual involvement in the context of digital culture through information and communication technology (ICT) and knowledge about civic literacy (Selwyn in Maulana & Bainus, 2022). The digital era has brought significant challenges and implications for social engagement and political participation in the context of civics education. The following are some of the main challenges that emerged and some of the associated implications:

1. Disinformation and Inaccurate Information. In the digital era, information is easy to find and disseminate, but it is also easy to disseminate inaccurate or disinformation information. These challenges can interfere with the learning process and influence students’ understanding of political and social issues. The implication is the importance of developing
critical and media literacy skills in civics education, so that students can sort out reliable information and understand the political implications of the information they encounter.

2. Bubble Filters and Echo Chamber. In the digital age, one tends to get content that is only in line with one’s own views and beliefs. Social media algorithms often select content based on pre-existing preferences, creating filter bubbles and echo chambers where students are exposed to only the same viewpoints. The implication is the importance of broadening perspectives in civics education by introducing students to diverse viewpoints and promoting open and inclusive discussion.

3. Spread of Hate and Extremism. Social media has facilitated the spread of hatred, intolerance and political extremism. These challenges can threaten social harmony and reduce healthy political participation. The implication is the need for civic education that encourages mutual respect, tolerance and understanding of differences. Students need to be provided with a good understanding of the negative effects of political extremism and hatred and given skills to counter and deal with harmful propaganda.

4. Online Activism and Political Participation. The digital era also carries great potential for increasing social engagement and political participation. Students can use social media and other online tools to voice their opinions, mobilize support, and influence social change. The implication is that it is necessary to strengthen students’ understanding of the rights and responsibilities of digital citizens, as well as provide them with the practical skills to participate effectively in social movements or political processes.

5. The Digital Divide. Access to technology and digital skills is unequal across society. These challenges can deepen social and political inequalities, with disadvantaged groups facing difficulties participating online. The implication is the need for educational policies that ensure equitable access to technology and provide digital skills training to all students, so that they can effectively engage in social and political life.

CONCLUSION

The implications of the digital era for social engagement and political participation in the context of civics education are issues that must be understood by everyone, especially individuals who are involved in politics. The digital era presents challenges and provides opportunities for the development of more inclusive social engagement and political participation. Therefore, civics education needs to pay attention to these changes and provide approaches that are relevant and responsive to the digital age. In this case, the role of the younger generation is needed as an agent of change to move towards a better form of change.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Afandi, et al. – Universitas Tanjungpura 120


