

STRENGTHENING CIVIC VALUES IN SHAPING THE CHARACTER OF THE YOUNG GENERATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract. This study explores the process of reinforcing civic values to shape the character of the younger generation in the digital era. It addresses the challenges posed by technological advancements such as misinformation, cyberbullying, and moral decline, emphasizing the urgent need for integrated educational strategies. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research investigates how collaboration between schools, families, and communities contributes to character development. Data were collected through literature review and semi-structured interviews with educators, students, and education observers. The findings reveal that civic education is more effective when supported by digital media and strengthened by consistent communication between parents and schools. Programs that integrate local values and national identity into digital learning platforms enhance students' understanding of civic responsibility. Moreover, parental involvement through digital tools plays a significant role in reinforcing values taught at school. The study concludes that while digital platforms offer innovative methods for character education, their success depends on cultural relevance, ethical supervision, and equitable access. This research contributes to the development of character education models that are adaptable to technological changes while rooted in shared civic values, ensuring that students become both digitally competent and morally grounded individuals.

Keywords: civic values; character education; digital media.

I. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has brought significant transformations across various aspects of life, including the character development of the younger generation. A strong character is essential in facing the challenges of the digital age, such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and moral degradation[1] [2]. Civic values such as responsibility, tolerance, and integrity play a vital role in shaping young individuals who are adaptive yet remain rooted in their national identity[3] [4]. However, globalization and rapid technological change often erode these values, indicating the need for a more holistic approach.

Previous studies have shown that young people are vulnerable to negative content in digital spaces, including intolerance, individualism, and excessive dependence on technology[5] [6]. Some researchers argue that digital technology can, paradoxically, strengthen character through digital literacy education [7], while others emphasize its detrimental effects[8]. This inconsistency highlights a research gap, particularly the lack of integration between civic values and technology-based educational practices, especially within local contexts such as Indonesia.

One effective solution is the reinforcement of civic values through both formal and non-formal education. For instance, integrating Pancasila—the Indonesian state philosophy—into

the curriculum[9], as well as utilizing digital media such as interactive comics (Kusumawati et al., 2024), has proven to enhance moral understanding. A collaborative approach involving schools, families, and communities is also essential in fostering a supportive environment for character formation[10].

Recent studies highlight a growing trend in the use of digital technology for character education, including digital life-value projects[4] and local wisdom-based learning modules[11]. However, most of these initiatives are still context-specific and have not yet addressed the broader needs of the youth population. Unlike previous research, this study explores the integrated implementation of civic values through technology, emphasizing the role of digital communities in shaping moral character.

This research offers practical contributions by formulating a character development model based on civic values that is adaptable to the digital era. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on character education by critically examining the dual role of technology—as both a tool and a challenge. The urgency of this study lies in the growing need to nurture a young generation that is not only digitally competent but also morally grounded in the face of global changes.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of reinforcing civic values in shaping the character of the young generation in the digital era, and to

identify optimal strategies for integrating these values into educational systems and social life.

II. RESEACRH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, aimed at providing an in-depth description of how civic values are instilled in the younger generation and the role of digital media in this process. The methodology chosen ensures that the research findings are reliable and valid, presenting a comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand. Data collection was carried out through a literature review, focusing on relevant books, journals, national education policy documents, and articles pertaining to civic education and character development in the digital age. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Civics Education (Pancasila and Citizenship Education) teachers, high school students, and education observers to gather a richer and more contextual perspective on the subject. These interviews were designed to capture a variety of viewpoints on the integration of civic values within the education system and the impact of digital media.

The collected data were analyzed using the data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques, following the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman in qualitative data analysis. The validity of the data was ensured through the use of source triangulation, comparing the interview results with the literature and official documents to confirm consistency and reliability.

This method aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the strategies for reinforcing civic values in the context of the current challenges brought about by technological advancements and the digitalization of information. Through this approach, the study is expected to offer valuable insights into how civic education can adapt to the digital era while fostering the moral and ethical development of youth.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reinforcement of civic values plays a crucial role in shaping the character of the younger generation, particularly in the face of rapid digital technological advancements. This process involves education that takes place not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom, involving various parties, including schools, families, and communities. In the digital age, values such as responsibility, tolerance, integrity, and social awareness must be continuously taught and reinforced to address challenges such as the spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and moral decline.

Since 2022, several programs have been designed by schools to strengthen civic values through collaboration with parents and the community. One of the main approaches is the integration of civic education into the curriculum, which leads to understanding and applying these values in daily life. Moreover, the use of digital media as a means to teach these values has become increasingly important, especially since the younger generation interacts more frequently with technology and social media.

Collaboration between schools and parents is essential to create an environment that supports the formation of good character in students. Parenting classes, joint religious activities, and discussions on child-rearing are examples of efforts made to link the character education students receive at school with the values applied at home. Through these activities, parents can better understand how to reinforce civic values in their children's daily lives.

Observations indicate that parental involvement in activities supporting character-building has significantly increased. Parents actively participate in programs such as religious studies, child-rearing discussions, and family education seminars. Parents who have received educational guidance play a significant role in shaping their children's social skills and developing their personalities. School documentation shows that the implementation of two-way communication systems has successfully increased parental participation in school activities over the years. This reflects a positive response to the school's efforts in building sustained collaboration with students' families (Documentation, 2025).

In the digital era, digital media plays a vital role in the reinforcement of civic values. The use of digital platforms, such as learning apps, social media, and educational videos, offers an engaging and interactive way to present civic education materials to the younger generation. This approach allows students to more easily access information about civic values and internalize these values in their daily lives.

However, alongside the positive potential of digital media, there are significant challenges that cannot be overlooked. The spread of fake news (hoaxes), hate speech, and cyberbullying have become major issues students face. Therefore, it is essential for schools not only to teach civic values but also to educate students on digital ethics and how to actively contribute to creating a positive and responsible digital environment.

Based on interviews and observations, the reinforcement of civic values, involving multiple parties, particularly schools and parents, has had a positive impact on students' character development. Students whose parents are actively involved in character-building programs tend to exhibit behaviors that are more disciplined, responsible, and socially engaged. Furthermore, parental involvement also accelerates the resolution of student issues, due to the more intensive communication between parents and teachers.

From a digital education perspective, the use of digital media designed to support civic education has significantly improved students' understanding of civic values. Students who are accustomed to accessing material through digital media are more responsive to social issues and actively engage in discussions about their social responsibilities.

Despite the efforts made, challenges remain in the reinforcement of civic values in the digital era. Excessive reliance on technology and the lack of supervision in social media usage can expose the younger generation to negative influences. Therefore, in the future, there needs to be an increase in school and parental involvement in monitoring and guiding the use of technology among students.

Additionally, continuous efforts are required to integrate civic education into every aspect of students' lives, both at home, in schools, and within the community. Collaborative programs involving parents, teachers, and the community must be enhanced to ensure that civic values are effectively strengthened and applied.

The process of strengthening civic values to shape the character of the younger generation in the digital era requires strong collaboration between schools, parents, and communities. Through the wise use of digital media and parental involvement in supporting character education at home, the younger generation can be trained to become individuals who are not only digitally competent but also possess strong character and a sense of responsibility. The challenges faced in the digital era require an evolving approach, including policies, educational programs, and more effective communication strategies.

The process of strengthening civic values to shape the character of the younger generation in the digital era requires strong collaboration between schools, parents, and communities. This research emphasizes that character education should not be confined to the classroom but must be a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders in the educational ecosystem. The role of the school is vital in establishing a foundation of values, but parents and communities also play critical roles in reinforcing these values outside the school environment. Previous studies, such as Sudarmin et al[11]. and Wahab & Irpan[2], highlight that values are most effectively instilled when schools, families, and communities work together to provide consistent and supportive messages. This research adds a new dimension by recognizing the importance of digital media in this collaboration, proposing that it can be an effective tool for promoting civic values in the digital age. While traditional education systems have often focused on face-to-face communication and physical interactions, this study suggests the integration of digital tools into civic education to enhance the reach and effectiveness of character-building efforts.

The involvement of parents in character education has long been recognized in educational theories. Indriani[12], for instance, emphasizes the significant influence that parents have in shaping the civic and moral development of children. However, this research extends this understanding by proposing that digital platforms can facilitate parental involvement in ways that traditional methods cannot. Digital platforms allow parents to engage with educational content, track their children's progress, and participate in character-building activities at their convenience. By integrating technology, parents can become more involved in their children's educational journeys, fostering a deeper connection between school-based learning and home-based values. This modification to the existing theoretical framework introduces the idea that digital platforms can play an active role in character education by offering a flexible, accessible, and scalable approach to fostering strong values at home.

Additionally, the study sheds light on the challenges that arise in the digital era, including misinformation, cyberbullying, and excessive screen time. These concerns are

echoed in earlier studies such as Adhari et al[1] and Mulyono[8], which discuss the risks that digital technologies pose to students' social and moral development. However, this research proposes a more balanced perspective, suggesting that while digital technology brings challenges, it also offers new opportunities for reinforcing civic values.

For example, digital tools like educational apps, online discussion forums, and interactive platforms can help teach values such as responsibility, respect, and social engagement. By combining digital literacy with civic education, students can be taught not only how to use technology effectively but also how to use it ethically and responsibly. This represents a shift from the traditional view of technology as a potential risk to a recognition of its potential as a powerful educational tool. This modification builds on earlier theories about digital citizenship[7] and suggests that, when used responsibly, digital tools can help reinforce values and foster social responsibility.

Furthermore, this research aligns with existing literature on community-based learning[4] and the role of social responsibility in digital environments. Many scholars have argued that community involvement is crucial for developing civic values, and this study enhances that argument by highlighting the role of digital communities in shaping character. In contrast to traditional face-to-face community engagement, digital communities offer opportunities for broader participation. Students can engage in virtual communities that encourage positive social behavior, collaboration, and shared responsibility. These online communities can serve as platforms for discussing important social issues and practicing democratic values. The integration of digital communities into character education programs could thus provide a more inclusive and globally connected environment for youth to develop their civic identities. This approach aligns with[2] Wahab & Irpan's work, which emphasizes the importance of using technology to foster a global sense of citizenship.

The research also critically engages with the challenges of digital inequity—the divide between those who have access to digital tools and those who do not. This issue is raised by Nirwana et al[5] who argue that the digital divide limits the effectiveness of digital educational strategies, particularly in underprivileged communities. This study acknowledges that digital media cannot be the sole solution for civic education if access to technology is unequal. Bridging this divide is crucial for ensuring that all students benefit equally from the digital learning tools available. As Setiono & Kurniasih[7] suggest, without addressing the digital divide, there is a risk of exacerbating existing social inequalities. Therefore, alongside promoting digital media as an educational tool, the study calls for targeted policies and initiatives that provide equitable access to digital resources, ensuring that all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, can participate in civic education programs.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this research aligns with and extends existing frameworks of character education by incorporating digital citizenship as a core component of moral and civic education. Previous studies have highlighted

the importance of teaching students to be responsible and ethical citizens in a digital world[6]. This study builds on these ideas by emphasizing the need for digital literacy education, which not only teaches students how to use technology but also prepares them to navigate the complexities of digital communication, including the ethical implications of their online actions. The findings contribute to the development of a more nuanced theory of digital citizenship, proposing that the development of strong civic values can occur through the responsible use of technology, rather than despite it.

Additionally, the research introduces the idea that digital media should be seen as a tool that enhances the work already being done in schools and homes, rather than as a replacement for traditional educational practices. This theory challenges the skepticism about the role of technology in education by suggesting that, when integrated thoughtfully, digital media can complement and strengthen existing character education programs. As Kokom et al. ([4] argue, technology should not be viewed as a replacement for traditional values-based education, but as a means to reach a wider audience and provide students with the skills necessary to succeed in a digital world. This theory contributes to the growing body of work that advocates for a balanced approach, where technology serves as a facilitator of civic education rather than its sole driver.

In conclusion, this study makes a significant contribution to the field of civic education by proposing a comprehensive approach that integrates both traditional and digital methods of character-building. The research aligns with existing theories on digital citizenship and community-based learning, while also introducing new modifications that account for the evolving role of technology in the educational landscape. By emphasizing the importance of collaboration between schools, parents, and communities, this study reinforces the idea that character education is most effective when it is a shared responsibility. At the same time, it recognizes the challenges posed by digital technologies, particularly in terms of access, and calls for continued efforts to ensure that all students can benefit from the opportunities that digital media offers. This research provides a more holistic understanding of how digital tools can be integrated into character education to foster a generation of responsible, ethical, and engaged citizens.

Strengthening the character of the younger generation in the digital era cannot be separated from the development of the theory of digital citizenship introduced by Ribble[13]. However, the findings of this study expand upon this theoretical framework by incorporating the socio-cultural dimensions of Indonesia—an aspect that has often been overlooked in Western literature. Studies by Adhari et al.[1] and Kokom et al[4] reveal that Pancasila values—such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) and divinity—can serve as critical filters against the negative effects of digital globalization, a feature absent in Ribble's original model. This aligns with Mansour's[14] critique of universalist approaches to digital citizenship education that frequently neglect local contexts.

Previous research, such as Livingstone et al.[15], argued that digital literacy alone is sufficient for shaping positive character. However, empirical data from Sukron & Wuryandani[10] and Nirwana et al.[5] (2025) challenge this assumption, demonstrating that 65% of digitally skilled Indonesian youth remain vulnerable to online radicalization. These findings support a modification of Lickona's character formation theory by introducing a new variable: *cultural resilience* as a mediating factor between digital literacy and character development. In this context, local wisdom—such as the *macca-lempu* values from Sulawesi[16] acts as a moral buffer in digital spaces.

There is also a clear tension between two schools of thought in prior literature. The technocratic perspective (e.g., Reijers[6], emphasizes AI-driven and automated solutions, whereas the humanistic school (e.g., Ratnasari et al.,[3]) advocates for community-based, relational approaches. This study bridges these perspectives by proposing a *Digital-Civic Hybrid Model*, wherein technology is used to strengthen—not replace—human interaction. For example, digital platforms designed with Pancasila principles[9] still require teacher and parental guidance to be truly effective.

From these findings, three new theoretical propositions are proposed. First, the Theory of Contextual Value Dependence, which posits that the effectiveness of digital character education depends on the alignment between the values being taught and the cultural context of the learner. This is supported by contrasting the success of Pancasila-based programs in Indonesia[4] with the failure of similar efforts in Thailand (UNESCO, 2023). Second, the Digital Literacy Paradox suggests that high technical competence without foundational values increases the risk of technological misuse. This is illustrated by data from Hernawati et al.[17], who found that students proficient in coding were involved in hacking activities. Third, the Spiral Model of Digital Character Learning argues that value internalization is not linear, but rather iterative requiring continuous movement between offline reflection and online practice. This dynamic is evident in Wahab & Irpan's[2] study of online discussions supported by real-world activities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Strengthening civic values in the digital era requires strong collaboration between schools, parents, and communities. Integrating civic education into the curriculum, supported by parental involvement and digital media, enhances students' character development. While digital platforms offer effective tools for promoting civic values, challenges like misinformation and cyberbullying remain. Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that students grow into responsible, ethical, and socially aware digital citizens

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