



Citizens in Hyperconnection: How to Civic Engagement Building through Character Education on Digital Platforms?

Leni Anggraeni ^{a,1*}, Dinn Wahyudin ^{a,2}, Abdul Azis ^{a,3}, Baeihaqi ^{a,4}, Tarekh Febriana Putra ^{a,5}, Ludovikus Bomans Wadu ^{ab,6}

^a Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

^b Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, Indonesia

¹ l_anggraeni@upi.edu*

*korespondensi penulis

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to investigate how to build civic engagement through character education on digital platforms. This research explores the influence of citizen attitudes and behaviors on digital platforms on the development of the characters of citizen awareness, participation and commitment. The method used is a quantitative approach. Data collection was conducted through a field survey using a validated and reliable questionnaire, designed according to quantitative research standards. The target population of this study were undergraduate students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia with a sample of 394 students selected through cluster sampling from 14 faculties, according to the Slovin formula. Data analysis used descriptive statistics, normality, and homogeneity tests. The results showed that in the attitude domain, citizens showed a good level of engagement, but their behavior showed a low level of engagement. Factors such as disinterest in sharing digital content related to character education, lack of skills in creating digital content, and infrequent preference to use social media are the main causes of this disparity. The implications of this study highlight the need for consistency in building commitment to civic action in citizen engagement in the digital era.

ABSTRACT

Citizens in Hyperconnection: Bagaimana Membangun Keterlibatan Warga Melalui Pendidikan Karakter di Platform Digital? Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi bagaimana membangun keterlibatan warga negara melalui pendidikan karakter di platform digital. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi pengaruh sikap dan perilaku warga negara di platform digital terhadap pengembangan karakter kesadaran, partisipasi, dan komitmen warga negara. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui survei lapangan dengan menggunakan kuesioner yang tervalidasi dan reliabel, dirancang sesuai standar penelitian kuantitatif. Populasi yang menjadi sasaran penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa S1 Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia dengan sampel sebanyak 394 mahasiswa yang dipilih melalui kluster sampling dari 14 fakultas, sesuai dengan rumus Slovin. Analisis data menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji normalitas, dan homogenitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam domain sikap, warga negara menunjukkan tingkat keterlibatan yang baik, namun perilaku mereka menunjukkan tingkat keterlibatan yang rendah. Faktor-faktor seperti ketidakminatan dalam berbagi konten digital terkait pendidikan karakter, kurangnya keterampilan dalam membuat konten digital, dan preferensi yang jarang menggunakan media sosial menjadi penyebab utama ketimpangan ini. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya konsistensi dalam membangun komitmen tindakan civic dalam keterlibatan warga negara di era digital.

Kata-kata kunci:

Keterlibatan Warga Negara;

Platform Digital;

Pembangunan Karakter.

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Introduction

The development of information technology leads society to modernization in various social life. The implications of this social change are a big challenge for the world of education, especially in cultivating and internalizing the noble values of religion and social culture in society. This role is one of the roles of education through educational institutions to create optimal education. But of course the task of education is also correlated with the family and the community, which is known as the tri education center. In the current digital era, one of the realities of the complexity of these problems is moral degradation (Muthohar, 2015). The initial problem of moral degradation can be indicated by various cases and bad actions (Marufah et al., 2020).

One of the indications of this cause is because in the current digital era, any information can be accessed very easily, and this is a double-edged sword which has positive and negative influences simultaneously, the impact of which can affect various aspects of individual and community life, one of which is fading. moral values and will be directly proportional to changes in ethics and behaviour that are not in accordance with the civilized values of citizens attached to them as the character of their identity that shapes their growth and development as an individual and the society in which they were born. So one way to overcome this nation's problems is to provide strengthening for the young generation with character (Arthur, 2015). Because the main goal of character education is character development in students (Berkowitz, 2015).

Alleviating this problem must be driven by citizen participation, which requires citizen involvement in encouraging the cultivation and internalization of character education, one of which can be encouraged by using digital/social media platforms. Based on survey results from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2020), internet users in Indonesia reached 215.63 million people in the 2022-2023 period. This number increased by 2.67% compared to the previous period which was 210.03 million users. The number of internet users is equivalent to 78.19% of Indonesia's total population of 275.77 million people. The high number of internet users is basically because it is directly proportional to gadget ownership in Indonesia. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2022) shows data that, 67.88% of the Indonesian population aged 5 years and over will already have a mobile phone or mobile phone in 2022. This percentage has increased compared to 2021 which is still 65.87%, as well as being the highest record in the last decade.

Based on this data, this gives rise to opportunities and potential in building digitalization of character education informally with the main prerequisite being citizen involvement. Through the use of this platform, it will encourage the strengthening of influence in internalizing moral values that are in accordance with the civility of citizens in accordance with the values, morals and norms that grow and develop in a particular region. Historically, research on youth engagement in society has followed different lines of research regarding community service or helping behavior versus political engagement, but attention to community and political engagement is critical to understanding youth contributions to society (Amnã, 2012; Flanagan, 2012; Wray-Lake et al., 2017)

From a multidimensional perspective, it is crucial to consider psychological aspects of civic engagement, including values, intentions, and behavioral measures, for several reasons. Firstly, not all youth have equal opportunities to participate in civic actions (Levinson, 2010). Secondly, youth exhibit diverse motivations for engaging in civic behavior (Ballard, 2014).

Therefore, relying solely on behavioral measurements may not comprehensively capture youth involvement in society (Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013).

Based on this perspective, understanding attitudes, opportunities, and actions in citizen involvement must stem from citizenship attitudes rooted in awareness and commitment as stated by Pattie et al. (2003). The basis of such awareness and commitment will directly influence actions and participation within the realm of citizen involvement, highlighting the substantial role of informal education in shaping character education.

Civic engagement, therefore, can be interpreted as a prosocial and political contribution to the community and society at large. This concept is comprehensive in scope, encompassing not only observable behaviors but also values, attitudes, and knowledge (Amnå, 2012; Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009; Wray-Lake et al., 2017). In today's digital age, encouraging citizen involvement necessitates leveraging digital platforms, emphasizing the tricenter scheme's role in informal education within the digital society.

In addition, based on the results of studies on civic engagement in China, it has been shown that new communication technologies also help increase social mobilization within a community (Cheng et al., 2015; Perry, 2008). This shows that citizen involvement can not only be done directly, but can also be done through networks such as the internet, social media and others. (Hart & Kirshner, 2009) also identified that civic attitudes are a major factor in fostering civic engagement. So, in building civic engagement participation can be done by providing provision for the dimensions of knowledge, skills and caring character values (Hilson, 2018), so as to achieve social cohesion in the community based on the development of social sensitivity and social skills mobilized from a caring character.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach utilizing a survey method to measure citizen involvement in character education through digital platforms, focusing on participation, awareness, and commitment. The research investigates the degree of citizen engagement in providing character education in informal educational settings via these platforms. The research process begins with an assessment of the current state of digital platform usage in character education, highlighting the fundamental issues related to citizen engagement. The study explores the potential of civic engagement to enhance the effectiveness of digital platforms in delivering character education. Data collection was conducted through a field survey using a validated and reliable questionnaire, designed according to quantitative research standards. The population targeted for this research comprises undergraduate students from the Indonesian University of Education, with a sample of 394 students selected through cluster sampling from 14 faculties, in line with the Slovin formula. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, normality, and homogeneity tests, aimed at elucidating the potential of citizen involvement in fostering character education practices via digital platforms.

Result and Discussion

The level of citizen involvement on digital/social media platforms related to character education is based on two main indicators: citizen awareness and commitment, as reflected in their actions and attitudes. The survey results illustrate that citizen awareness of the importance of character education in the digital age is on the rise. However, the commitment to implement these values in daily life still requires further improvement. The survey results can be illustrated as follows:

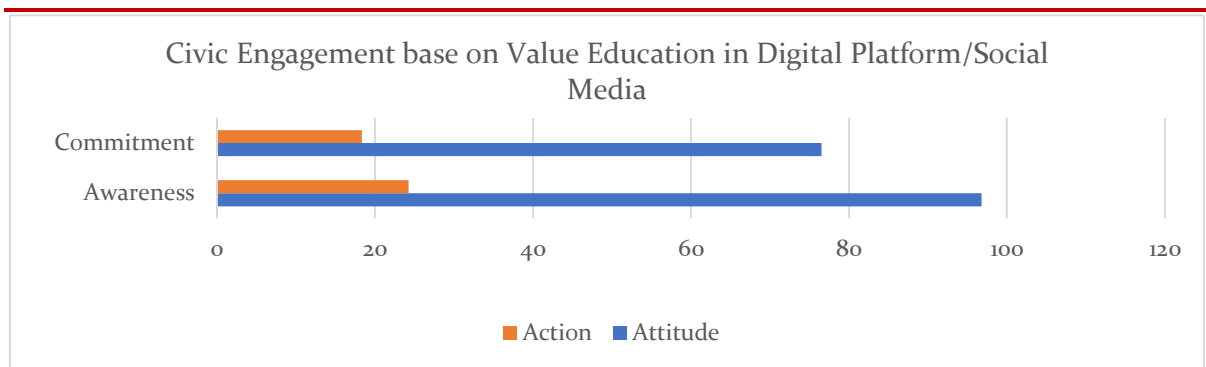


Figure 1. Grafik of Civic Engagement base on Value Education in Digital Platform/Social Media

According to the graph, it is evident that citizen involvement in terms of attitude surpasses their involvement in action, across both awareness and commitment indicators. This disparity suggests that UPI students inherently possess a positive attitude but have not yet translated these attitudes into corresponding actions. The implication of this is that civic engagement, particularly related to character education on media platforms, is currently limited to the attitudinal level among citizens and has not progressed to actionable behaviors.

This observation highlights a critical gap: while there is a foundational positive attitude among students, there is a significant lack of practical application or action. This points to a need for initiatives that not only foster positive attitudes but also encourage and facilitate concrete actions aligned with those attitudes. In essence, the current civic engagement efforts are not sufficient to move students from a state of passive agreement to active participation. Addressing this issue could involve creating more opportunities for students to engage in actions that reflect their beliefs, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of character education initiatives on media platforms. Based on these results, the reasons behind this inequality are obtained, which are illustrated as follows:

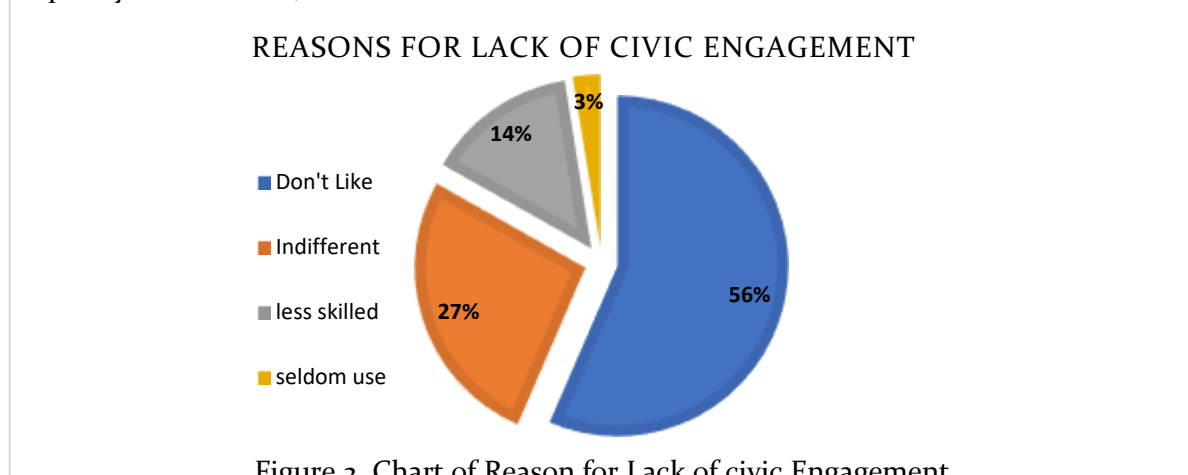


Figure 2. Chart of Reason for Lack of civic Engagement

Based on this figure, it is evident that there are four primary reasons for the lack of civic action in fulfilling Civic Engagement: (1) Disinterest in Sharing or Creating Digital Content Related to Character Education: This reason accounts for 56% of the respondents, indicating that a significant majority are not inclined to engage in digital content creation or dissemination concerning character education. This lack of interest significantly hampers the potential for meaningful civic action in this area. (2) Indifference Due to Lack of Interest: This factor affects 27% of the respondents, highlighting that over a quarter of the participants are simply not interested in civic action related to character education. This apathy underscores a broader issue

of disengagement and lack of intrinsic motivation among citizens. (3) Lack of Skills in Creating Digital Content: Representing 14% of the respondents, this reason points to a practical barrier where individuals feel they lack the necessary skills to create relevant digital content. This skill deficit limits their ability to contribute actively to civic engagement through media platforms. (4) Dislike or Rare Use of Social Media: A smaller segment, 3% of the respondents, indicated that they either do not like or rarely use social media. This preference impacts their participation in digital civic activities, given the pivotal role of social media in modern civic engagement.

These findings highlight a significant lack of self-motivation to convert knowledge and positive attitudes into concrete actions. While there is recognition of the importance of character education, there is a noticeable absence of enthusiasm to actively engage and contribute in this domain. This gap underscores the need for targeted interventions that address both attitudinal and practical barriers hindering civic action.

To effectively address these challenges, initiatives should focus on two main fronts. First, enhancing attitudes towards civic engagement through awareness campaigns and education can help cultivate a deeper sense of responsibility and commitment among individuals. Second, practical measures such as providing skill-building opportunities in digital content creation and improving access to relevant and compelling content are crucial. These steps aim to empower citizens with the tools and motivation needed to participate meaningfully in character education initiatives. By bridging these gaps, communities can foster a more engaged and proactive citizenry, thereby strengthening the impact of character education efforts in shaping responsible and informed individuals.

Civic engagement often represents a development discontinuity, meaning that the way young people choose to engage in civic life changes with development (Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009). More broadly, a relational developmental systems theoretical approach to civic development envisions civic engagement as exhibiting plasticity, non-linear trajectories, and individual differences in intraindividual change, caused in part by experiences in context (Lerner et al., 2014).

Developmental theorists have called for equal emphasis on understanding consistency as well as change in development, arguing that dynamic exchanges between individuals and their environments may underlie some forms of developmental stability (Bornstein et al., 2017; Sampson & Laub, 1994). This is what creates inconsistencies or imbalances between awareness of attitudes in action and citizen participation in citizen involvement and citizen commitment, which is a form of implication for the attachment of citizenship status to them.

The results of studies conducted by Dávila & Mora (2007) and Foster-Bey (2008) show that there are various racial/ethnic differences in youth involvement in society, some of which show that white youth are more likely to vote, write letters to public officials, and engage in community service compared to black, Latino, and Asian youth. There are also those who consider black youth to be more politically involved than Latino, Asian youth, and in some cases mention white youth (Lopez, 2004; Lopez et al., 2006; Pritzker, 2012).

Latino youth often feel excluded from formal civic spaces, but the level of protest is higher than other groups (Lopez et al., 2006). Although several studies document Asian youth being less civically engaged, a study on the typology of citizenship indicates considerable inter-individual variability among Asian youth (Wray-Lake et al., 2017). Civic typology analysis can provide different insights into sociodemographic variations.

Based on this study, the discrepancy between awareness of attitudes and commitment to the behavior of these citizens basically returns to self-motivation. Community involvement is important to help determine the starting point for community development during

adolescence. Because according to the system theory of relational development, optimal development occurs as a result of mutual interaction and mutually reinforcing between the individual and the context (Overton, 2013). Certain day-to-day interactions with individuals can be assets that foster civic values and behavior among adolescents (Boyd et al., 2011; Lerner et al., 2014; Wray-Lake & Sloper, 2016; Zaff et al., 2008)

Existing research has recognized civic discussions as a strong predictor of youth civic engagement, and in line with a relational systems view of development, civic discussions are understood to be influenced by the environment as well as directed by youth, reflecting human-dynamic environment (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002).

Most of the evidence on the role of civic discussion comes from cross-cutting data and little research has focused on peer contexts. This study presents a new study of the role of citizenship discussions with parents and friends in citizenship development, by assessing parental and peer discussions about news as a correlation to stability and changes in youth typology of citizenship which varies over time. News by its nature raises issues that face the wider collective in a community, state, nation, or world, and therefore offers ample scope for discussion of political and social issues.

Adolescent discussions about political and social issues with parents are positively related to a set of civic values and behaviors (Boyd et al., 2011; Campbell, 2008; Hooghe & Boonen, 2015; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; McIntosh et al., 2007). Citizenship discussions help youth formulate their views on an issue, spur them to seek more news and information, and motivate community action (Hess, 2009).

Community discussions within the family may be a stronger predictor of political behavior than community service or helping behavior (Pancer et al., 2007; Wray-Lake & Sloper, 2016). Although little research has linked community discussions between parents and children to changes in youth civic engagement over time, one study found that community discussions with parents predicted long-term increases in political behavior among Asian and Latino youth (Diemer, 2012).

Thus, this research explains the importance of character values to be structured as perceptions that must be built through citizens' digital involvement. This condition is increasingly needed considering that current social developments are increasingly oriented towards digitalization. However, this research also believes that character strengthening is related to the formation of perceptions which are not only cognitive products, but also measure the impact of the perceptions explained. This is based on the understanding, as explained above, that actions can be part of the manifestation of a reaction. The description in this research report will describe the affective and psychomotor situation of the citizenship of the subjects studied. The measurement of these two situations is based on the theoretical explanation of multidimensional citizenship presented by Gordon & Hampton (2016) that youth involvement in citizenship is defined as an effort to make a difference in the civic life of a community. It also involves developing a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation.

Based on this, to encourage the motivation and interest of citizens to act and not just act, it is necessary to optimize the tricerter of education, where character education in the family and in society must also be carried out. Through efforts to encourage character education through digital/social media platforms, it will encourage and influence the younger generation to discuss and be critical of value education issues, so that stimulus is obtained from internet networks and other platforms are needed to encourage citizen action to participate, one of which is by mutually share and influence each other which is concentrated in social mobilization in a controlled digital world according to digital ethics.

Conclusion

Citizen involvement as a prosocial and political contribution to the community and society basically can not only be done directly, but can also be done through networks such as the internet, social media and others. Therefore, citizen involvement related to character education in digital platforms/social media can be measured from the civic action component in the form of actions taken based on civic attitude which refers to awareness and commitment. The survey results show that there is an imbalance between attitudes and behavior in citizen engagement which is due to the inconsistency of the commitment domain in civic action, so the implication is that civic engagement is not yet optimal at the civic action level of students. The reasons behind this are: (1) don't like sharing or creating digital content related to character education; (2) indifferent because they are not interested, (3) lack of skills in creating digital content; and (4) dislikes/rarely uses social media.

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