

Civic Education Teachers' Strategies in Managing Controversial Issues Amid Students' Digital Polarization

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ABSTRACT

Digital polarisation resulting from social media use is increasingly influencing how students understand and discuss public issues, potentially hindering democratic dialogue in schools. This study aims to analyze the forms of digital polarisation experienced by students, identify the strategies employed by Civic Education (PKn) teachers when managing controversial issues, and examine the challenges involved in fostering inclusive discussions. A qualitative case study approach was employed at a high school in Bandung Regency, Indonesia. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis with three Civic Education teachers, twelve students, and one vice-principal responsible for student affairs. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model. The results indicate that digital polarisation is characterized by selective exposure, confirmation bias, and a tendency to form homogeneous discussion groups that reinforce echo chambers. To address these issues, Civic Education teachers employed democratic dialogue, structured discussions, digital literacy, reflective questioning, and the integration of democratic values. The study proposes the Pedagogical Democratic Mediation Framework as a conceptual approach to strengthening students' civic competencies and democratic participation.

Kata-kata kunci:

Polarisasi digital, isu kontroversial, Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, dialog demokratis, literasi digital.

ABSTRAK

Strategi Guru Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan dalam Mengelola Isu-Isu Kontroversial di Tengah Polarisasi Digital Peserta Didik. Polarisasi digital akibat penggunaan media sosial semakin memengaruhi cara siswa memahami dan mendiskusikan isu-isu publik, sehingga berpotensi menghambat dialog demokratis di sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis bentuk-bentuk polarisasi digital di kalangan siswa, mengidentifikasi strategi guru Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan (PKn) dalam mengelola isu kontroversial, serta mengkaji tantangan dalam membangun diskusi yang inklusif. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus di sebuah sekolah menengah atas di Kabupaten Bandung, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan tiga guru PKn, dua belas siswa, dan satu wakil kepala sekolah bidang kesiswaan. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa polarisasi digital ditandai oleh paparan selektif, bias konfirmasi, dan kecenderungan membentuk kelompok diskusi homogen yang memperkuat ruang gema (echo chamber). Untuk mengatasinya, guru PKn menerapkan dialog demokratis, diskusi terstruktur, literasi digital, pertanyaan reflektif, dan integrasi nilai demokrasi. Penelitian ini menawarkan Kerangka Mediasi Demokratis Pedagogis sebagai pendekatan konseptual untuk memperkuat kompetensi kewarganegaraan dan partisipasi demokratis siswa.

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Introduction

The digital transformation has fundamentally altered how the younger generation acquires information, constructs identity, and participates in social and political life (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2023; Yilmaz, 2025). Social media has now become the primary space for adolescent interaction, providing fast, widespread, and geographically boundless access to information (Durmishi & Durmishi, 2022; Tetteh & Kankam, 2024; Zimmermann & Tomczyk, 2025). However, this advancement also introduces new challenges, notably digital polarization driven by digital platform algorithms. Social media algorithms tend to present information that aligns with user preferences, thereby reinforcing confirmation bias and reducing exposure to differing perspectives (Brady et al., 2023; Ecker, 2025). This condition potentially creates echo chambers that foster opinion segregation, strengthen in-group prejudice, and diminish the quality of public dialogue. Digital polarization not only influences public political behavior but also shapes how the younger generation comprehends social issues, forms civic identities, and interacts with individuals holding different views (Esau et al., 2025; Karmila & Yuningsih, 2025; Latief & Rahman, 2025).

This phenomenon is increasingly relevant in education, given that students represent a highly active demographic of social media users. Various issues trending in the digital sphere, such as politics, diversity, social identity, intolerance, and viral public events, frequently become subjects of discussion and debate within the school environment. Exposure to diverse information, including disinformation and hate speech, can influence how students perceive an issue and shape their attitudes toward other groups. Consequently, the classroom is no longer isolated from the dynamics of polarization unfolding in digital society. Digital polarization can spark tension, prejudice, and conflicts of opinion among students, ultimately affecting the quality of both social interaction and the learning process (Arifah et al., 2025; Mohamed & Jonsson, 2025). Therefore, schools face the challenge of maintaining learning spaces that remain inclusive, democratic, and respectful of diverse viewpoints.

Preliminary observations and informal discussions with teachers in several senior high schools in Bandung Regency suggest that controversial issues circulating on social media frequently enter classroom discussions. Topics related to politics, social identity, religious diversity, and viral public events often generate differing viewpoints among students. Teachers have reported challenges maintaining constructive dialogue because students often rely on information from social media and are sometimes reluctant to consider alternative perspectives. These conditions indicate that digital polarization has increasingly influenced classroom interactions and created new challenges for democratic learning.

In this context, Civic Education holds a strategic role in developing democratic, critical, responsible citizens capable of coexisting in a pluralistic society. Civic Education is oriented not only toward mastering knowledge of the political system and state governance but also toward cultivating civic virtue, which encompasses tolerance, respect for differences, critical thinking, and the competencies of rational dialogue. This role has become increasingly important in digitally connected societies, where interactions on digital platforms increasingly shape civic engagement and character formation. Recent studies have shown that character education and civic engagement in digital environments can strengthen students' civic responsibility and

democratic participation (Anggraeni et al., 2024). From the perspective of democratic education, the classroom serves as a deliberative arena where students learn to express opinions, listen to diverse perspectives, and resolve differences through arguments grounded in democratic value (Garner et al., 2025; Larrain et al., 2021). Thus, learning activities that incorporate discussions on controversial issues become an essential component in strengthening civic competence in the digital era.

In line with these developments, the study of controversial issues in education has garnered increasing attention in international literature. Numerous studies demonstrate that teaching controversial issues can enhance students' critical thinking skills, empathy, tolerance, and democratic competence. Journell (2022) underscores that discussing controversial issues is a vital component of civic education, especially when society faces high levels of polarization. Kindlinger & Hahn-Laudenberg (2023) found that the quality of democratic education is heavily influenced by a teacher's ability to manage differing perspectives in the classroom. Meanwhile, Stitzlein (2022) emphasizes that teaching controversial issues in the post-truth era requires pedagogical strategies capable of fostering critical inquiry while mitigating the influence of disinformation.

Although these studies confirm the importance of education on controversial issues, their primary focus differs substantially. Research on digital polarization predominantly examines algorithmic influences, social media behavior, and the formation of echo chambers among users (Brady et al., 2023; Esau et al., 2025). Other studies emphasize digital literacy and digital citizenship as mechanisms for strengthening students' critical engagement in online environments (Choi & Cristol, 2021; Fajri et al., 2022). Meanwhile, research on controversial issues in education mainly investigates their effects on students' critical thinking, democratic competence, and civic dispositions (Journell, 2022; Stitzlein, 2022). While these studies provide valuable insights, they rarely explain how teachers pedagogically respond to controversial issues emerging from students' digital polarization in everyday classroom settings.

Furthermore, previous studies tend to examine digital polarization, digital literacy, and education on controversial issues as separate domains. Limited attention has been given to understanding the intersection of these phenomena, particularly the role of Civic Education teachers in mediating polarized viewpoints, facilitating democratic dialogue, and transforming polarization into meaningful civic learning experiences. Existing evidence is also largely derived from Western educational contexts, resulting in a limited understanding of how such challenges are addressed within the sociocultural context of Indonesian schools.

Therefore, the present study addresses three specific gaps in the literature. First, limited studies have explored the manifestations of digital polarization among students within classroom interactions. Second, insufficient attention has been given to the pedagogical strategies employed by Civic Education teachers to manage controversial issues arising from digital polarization. Third, little is known about the challenges teachers encounter in fostering democratic dialogue amid increasingly polarized student perspectives. These gaps position teachers not merely as facilitators of learning but as key actors in moderating polarization within educational settings.

Building upon these gaps, this study introduces the Pedagogical Democratic Mediation (PDM) Framework as its primary conceptual contribution. The framework conceptualizes Civic Education teachers as democratic mediators who actively address the effects of digital polarization through democratic dialogue, reinforcement of digital literacy, reflective questioning, and the integration of democratic values. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on student behavior or digital literacy outcomes, the PDM Framework highlights pedagogy as a central mechanism for transforming polarized attitudes into opportunities for civic learning, critical reflection, and democratic engagement.

Method

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore Civic Education teachers' strategies for managing controversial issues amid students' digital polarization. The case study approach was selected to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its real-life educational context (Yin, 2019). The study was conducted at a public senior high school in Bandung Regency, Indonesia, purposively selected for the high intensity of students' social media use and the diversity of viewpoints that emerged during classroom interactions.

The participants consisted of sixteen purposively selected informants, including three Civic Education teachers, twelve students from Grades 10–12, and one vice-principal of student affairs. The selection criteria for teachers included: (1) having at least three years of teaching experience in Civic Education, (2) actively facilitating classroom discussions on social and political issues, and (3) having experience managing differences of opinion among students. Student participants were selected based on: (1) active use of social media, (2) participation in classroom discussions involving controversial issues, and (3) willingness to share their experiences and perspectives. The twelve students were selected to ensure representation across grade levels (Grades 10–12), gender, and diverse viewpoints expressed during classroom interactions.

Data were collected between January and March 2026 through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving teaching modules, lesson plans, digital literacy materials, and school policies related to civic education. The unit of analysis consisted of classroom interactions during Civic Education learning activities, particularly discussions involving controversial public issues. Classroom observations were conducted in six Civic Education classes (two classes from each grade level), resulting in twelve observation sessions. In addition, 10 documents were analyzed, including 3 teaching modules, 3 lesson plans, 2 digital literacy materials, and 2 school policy documents related to student character development and civic education. Interviews lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analytical process involved four stages: data transcription, open coding, category development through axial coding, and thematic interpretation. Open coding was used to identify initial concepts related to digital polarization, controversial issues, and pedagogical responses. Similar codes were then grouped into categories, which were subsequently synthesized into broader themes that reflected recurring patterns across participants' experiences.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking were employed by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation and by confirming preliminary interpretations with selected participants. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study, including voluntary participation, informed consent, protection of confidentiality, and the use of pseudonyms to safeguard participants' identities.

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that digital polarization has become an inseparable aspect of students' learning experiences in contemporary information environments. Interviews with twelve students revealed that social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, and online discussion forums constitute the primary sources of information for understanding social, political, and public issues. Most participants reported regularly encountering controversial topics through algorithmically curated feeds. Student-1 explained that social media had become the primary source of information about social and political issues because information could be accessed quickly and continuously through digital platforms. However, the student acknowledged that information on personal feeds often reflected viewpoints already held, limiting exposure to alternative perspectives. While digital media provide unprecedented access to information, the findings suggest that students frequently engage with content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and preferences.

One of the most prominent manifestations of digital polarization identified in this study is selective exposure. Several students acknowledged that they tend to follow content creators, influencers, and online communities whose viewpoints correspond with their own perspectives. Student-3 explained that information becomes more convincing when delivered by accounts sharing similar opinions, while Student-8 admitted that opposing viewpoints are often perceived as less credible because they contradict previously accepted beliefs. These findings are consistent with Selective Exposure Theory, which argues that individuals actively seek information that confirms existing attitudes while avoiding contradictory information (Kroon et al., 2021; Sude & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2022; Zillmann & Bryant, 2013). The findings corroborate previous studies suggesting that selective exposure is increasingly intensified in digital communication environments (Bakshy et al., 2015; Ramírez-Dueñas & Vinuesa-Tejero, 2021).

Social media algorithms further reinforced the tendency toward selective exposure. Several participants reported that after interacting with certain types of content, similar information repeatedly appeared in their feeds. Student-5 noted that after watching videos on a political issue, the platform continued to recommend content expressing similar viewpoints. These findings support Sunstein's concept of the echo chamber, whereby digital technologies repeatedly expose individuals to homogeneous perspectives while limiting encounters with alternative viewpoints (Figà Talamanca & Arfini, 2022; Sunstein, 2018). Similar patterns have been identified in contemporary social media ecosystems where algorithmic curation contributes to ideological segregation (Cinelli et al., 2021; Maly, 2021). However, the present findings extend existing theoretical understandings by demonstrating that selective exposure

and echo chamber dynamics function not only as communication phenomena but also as educational phenomena that directly influence students' civic learning experiences.

In addition to selective exposure, the findings reveal the presence of confirmation bias among students. Many participants tended to accept information that supported their beliefs without further verification, while information that challenged their assumptions was often questioned or rejected. Student-9 explained that encountering contradictory information typically triggered skepticism rather than critical evaluation. Similarly, Student-11 stated that agreement with information often depended more on its consistency with prior beliefs than on the quality of supporting evidence.

These findings align with Confirmation Bias Theory, which explains individuals' tendency to process information in ways that reinforce existing beliefs (Nickerson, 1998; Peters, 2022; Vedejová & Čavojová, 2022). Consistent with previous research, digital environments appear to amplify this cognitive tendency by continuously providing information that confirms pre-existing attitudes (Baltezarević et al., 2023; Marikyan, 2021; Vicario et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the present findings suggest a refinement of existing theoretical perspectives by highlighting the interaction between cognitive predispositions and algorithmic information systems.

The findings also reveal that students frequently participate in homogeneous discussion groups, both online and offline. Several participants reported that discussions among peers commonly involve individuals who share similar views on social and political issues. Student-2 explained that expressing differing opinions can create discomfort within peer groups, while Student-6 noted that discussions are generally easier when participants already share similar perspectives.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings demonstrate the operation of Group Polarization Theory. Discussions within like-minded groups often lead individuals to adopt stronger positions because their views receive continuous social reinforcement (Myers & Lamm, 1976; Strandberg et al., 2019; C. Wang et al., 2026). Within digital environments, this process is amplified through algorithmic filtering, likes, shares, and comments that validate dominant viewpoints.

The interviews with Civic Education teachers confirmed that digital polarization increasingly influences classroom interactions. Teachers observed that students frequently bring opinions shaped by social media into discussions of controversial issues. Students often arrive with strong assumptions and resist alternative interpretations. These findings suggest that digital polarization extends beyond virtual spaces and has become embedded within educational environments, creating new challenges for Civic Education.

The findings indicate that Civic Education teachers employ several strategies to manage controversial issues amid students' digital polarization. One of the primary approaches involves the promotion of democratic dialogue. Both teachers emphasized the importance of establishing discussion norms that encourage respect, active listening, and evidence-based argumentation. According to Civic Education Teacher-1, students are more willing to consider alternative viewpoints when they feel their opinions are respected.

This strategy reflects the principles of Democratic Education Theory, which views dialogue as a mechanism for developing civic competence and mutual understanding

(Edelstein, 2011; Karakatsani & Pliogou, 2026; Waghid, 2025). Classroom discussions were designed not to determine winners and losers but to facilitate understanding across differing perspectives. Student-4 noted that discussions became more meaningful when participants focused on understanding rather than defending positions. These findings extend perspectives on democratic education by demonstrating that democratic dialogue functions not merely as an instructional strategy but also as a mechanism capable of moderating polarization and promoting collaborative inquiry (Leiviskä, 2023; Parker, 2009).

Another important strategy concerns digital literacy education. Teachers regularly encouraged students to evaluate information sources, identify misinformation, compare perspectives, and assess the credibility of online content. Both teachers recognized that students' susceptibility to misinformation and polarized narratives was partly due to limited digital literacy. Civic Education Teacher-2 explained that students were required to verify information using reliable sources before presenting arguments in class. Similarly, Civic Education Teacher-3 observed that many students tended to rely on information obtained from social media without adequately examining its credibility. To address this issue, students were encouraged to compare information from multiple sources, identify potential biases, and distinguish between evidence-based claims and personal opinions before participating in classroom discussions. These practices reflect teachers' efforts to strengthen students' critical digital literacy and promote more informed engagement with controversial issues in digital environments.

These findings support Digital Citizenship Theory, which emphasizes responsible and critical participation in digital environments (Choi & Cristol, 2021; Huschle et al., 2024; Oyedemi, 2020). Digital literacy has been recognized as a crucial competency for navigating misinformation and fostering informed civic engagement in contemporary societies (Choi & Cristol, 2021; Fajri et al., 2022; Polizzi, 2025). However, the findings further suggest that digital literacy serves not only as a citizenship competency but also as a protective mechanism against polarization.

The findings also reveal the importance of reflective questioning. Rather than directly correcting students' opinions, teachers encouraged learners to critically examine their assumptions by asking questions about evidence, reasoning, and alternative explanations. Student-10 explained that reflective questioning encouraged deeper thinking, while Student-12 reported that it increased attention to source credibility.

These findings support Constructivist Learning Theory, which emphasizes reflection as a fundamental component of knowledge construction (Mann & MacLeod, 2015; Mishra, 2023; Nurhasnah et al., 2024). Through reflective inquiry, students actively reconstruct their understanding and become more open to alternative viewpoints (Fosnot & Perry, 2023; Hong et al., 2022; P. Wang et al., 2025). More importantly, the findings demonstrate that reflective questioning serves as a mechanism to disrupt belief reinforcement in polarized environments.

Teachers also intentionally integrated democratic values such as tolerance, equality, participation, respect, and responsibility into discussions of controversial issues. By linking these values to students' everyday digital experiences, teachers encouraged learners to recognize that democratic citizenship involves both rights and responsibilities within online

environments. This finding reinforces existing scholarship emphasizing the importance of value-based Civic Education in strengthening democratic culture amid social and political polarization (Bakhtiar et al., 2025; Devrika Devra, 2024; Febrianti et al., 2025).

The Vice Principal further emphasized that efforts to manage digital polarization require support beyond classroom-level interventions. According to the Vice Principal, the school actively supports Civic Education initiatives by encouraging collaborative activities, promoting digital citizenship programs, and reinforcing democratic values across various school activities. Such institutional support helps create a learning environment conducive to respectful dialogue, critical engagement with controversial issues, and the development of responsible digital citizenship. These findings suggest that effective responses to digital polarization depend not only on teachers' pedagogical strategies but also on broader institutional commitments that foster democratic school culture.

The findings indicate that managing controversial issues amid digital polarization remains challenging. One major obstacle involves the speed and volume of information circulating through social media platforms. Teachers reported difficulties keeping pace with rapidly evolving online narratives, allowing misinformation and misconceptions to spread before educational interventions can occur. Civic Education Teacher-3 similarly observed that students frequently relied on information obtained from social media without adequately examining its credibility, making them more susceptible to misinformation and biased narratives. This situation complicated classroom discussions, as teachers were often required to address misconceptions and encourage students to evaluate the information they encountered online critically. To mitigate these challenges, students were encouraged to compare information from multiple sources, identify potential bias, and distinguish between evidence-based claims and personal opinions before participating in classroom discussions.

Another challenge concerns students' emotional attachment to particular viewpoints. Student-7 acknowledged that changing an opinion may feel uncomfortable because it can be interpreted as admitting previous mistakes. This finding highlights the emotional dimension of polarization, suggesting that factual correction alone is insufficient. Educational interventions must also address the psychological and social factors influencing students' willingness to reconsider their beliefs.

Limited instructional time further constrains efforts to develop critical thinking, digital literacy, and meaningful deliberation. Teachers must balance curriculum demands with the need to facilitate reflective discussions of controversial issues. These findings suggest that effective responses to digital polarization require not only pedagogical innovation but also institutional support and curriculum flexibility.

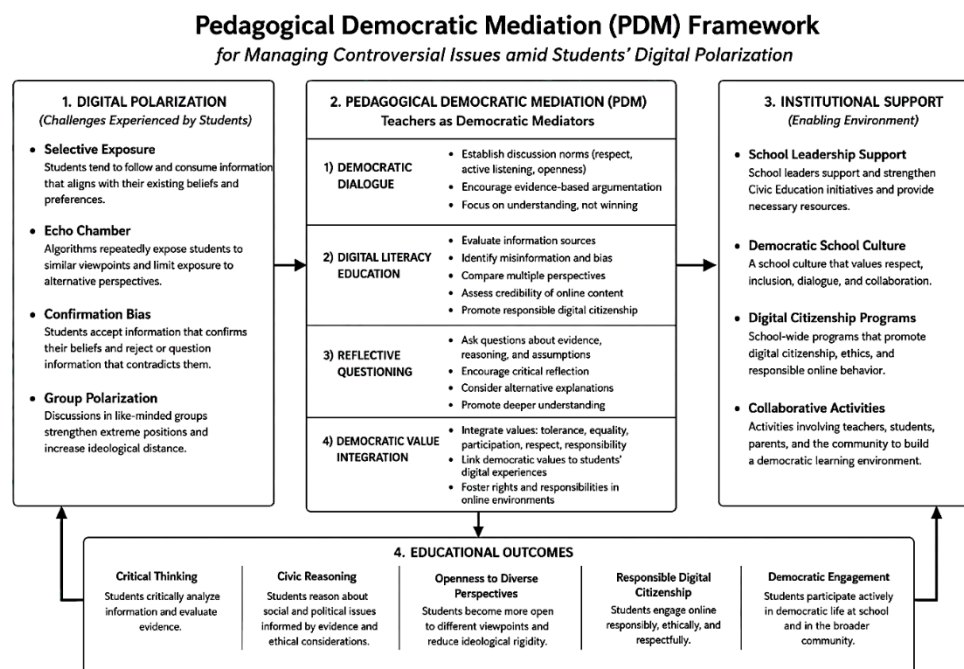
The Vice Principal similarly emphasized that addressing digital polarization extends beyond the responsibilities of individual teachers. According to the Vice Principal, schools struggle to monitor students' digital interactions outside school hours. At the same time, the rapid circulation of online information often outpaces schools' capacity to provide timely educational responses. The Vice Principal further noted that managing misinformation and polarized viewpoints requires coordinated efforts involving teachers, school leadership, parents, and the broader school community. This finding suggests that digital polarization should be

understood not only as a pedagogical challenge but also as an institutional issue requiring comprehensive school-wide policies and support mechanisms.

The findings confirm the relevance of Selective Exposure Theory, Confirmation Bias Theory, Echo Chamber Theory, Group Polarization Theory, Democratic Education Theory, Digital Citizenship Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory in explaining students' experiences of digital polarization. However, these theories primarily explain how polarization emerges and becomes reinforced through psychological, social, and technological mechanisms.

The findings reveal a theoretical gap concerning how polarization may be addressed within educational settings. Based on the empirical findings, this study proposes the Pedagogical Democratic Mediation (PDM) Framework. It should be noted that the PDM Framework is a conceptual model developed from a single-case study involving one senior high school and sixteen participants. Therefore, the framework should be understood as an analytical proposition that requires further testing and validation in different educational contexts.

The framework positions Civic Education teachers as democratic mediators who intervene through democratic dialogue, digital literacy education, reflective questioning, and the integration of democratic values. While existing theories primarily explain the emergence and reinforcement of polarization, the PDM Framework offers a preliminary explanation of how pedagogical interventions may help moderate polarization within classroom settings. Future studies involving multiple schools and broader participant groups are needed to examine the applicability and robustness of the framework.



(Source: Authors, 2026)

Figure 1. Proposed Pedagogical Democratic Mediation (PDM) Framework for Managing Controversial Issues amid Students' Digital Polarization

Figure 2 illustrates the proposed Pedagogical Democratic Mediation (PDM) Framework developed from the findings of this study. The framework conceptualizes digital polarization as

a multidimensional phenomenon that manifests as selective exposure, echo chambers, confirmation bias, and group polarization. These polarization mechanisms shape students' engagement with information and controversial issues, often reinforcing ideological homogeneity and limiting exposure to diverse perspectives. The findings suggest that without appropriate intervention, such dynamics may hinder students' critical thinking, civic reasoning, and democratic participation.

The framework positions Civic Education teachers as democratic mediators who actively intervene in polarization processes through four interconnected pedagogical strategies: democratic dialogue, digital literacy education, reflective questioning, and democratic value integration. These strategies function as mediating mechanisms that encourage students to evaluate information critically, consider alternative viewpoints, and engage in respectful deliberation. The framework further highlights the importance of institutional support, including school leadership, democratic school culture, and digital citizenship programs, in strengthening the effectiveness of pedagogical interventions. Through the interaction of these pedagogical and institutional dimensions, digital polarization can be transformed into opportunities for critical reflection, civic learning, and democratic engagement. Therefore, the PDM Framework extends existing polarization theories by introducing pedagogy as a central mechanism to moderate polarization in educational settings.

Unlike existing polarization theories that focus primarily on the causes of polarization, the PDM Framework explains how educational interventions can transform polarized attitudes into opportunities for critical reflection, civic reasoning, and democratic engagement. The framework therefore extends current theoretical understandings by introducing pedagogy as a central mechanism for managing digital polarization among students.

The findings demonstrate that digital polarization among students manifests through selective exposure, confirmation bias, and participation in homogeneous discussion groups. Addressing these challenges requires an integrated approach combining pedagogical innovation, institutional commitment, democratic values, and digital citizenship competencies. Such an approach is essential for preparing students to become informed, critical, and responsible democratic citizens in increasingly polarized digital societies.

This study was conducted in one public senior high school in Bandung Regency and involved a limited number of participants. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the context of this case study and are not intended for broad generalization. Nevertheless, the study provides valuable insights into how Civic Education teachers respond to digital polarization in classroom settings and offers a conceptual foundation for future research.

Conclusion

This study found that digital polarization among students manifests as selective exposure, confirmation bias, and participation in homogeneous discussion groups, which shape how students interpret and discuss controversial issues. To address these challenges, Civic Education teachers employed democratic dialogue, digital literacy reinforcement, reflective questioning, and the integration of democratic values to foster inclusive and critical classroom discussions. Theoretically, this study contributes to Civic Education scholarship by proposing the Pedagogical Democratic Mediation (PDM) Framework. The framework positions Civic

Education teachers as democratic mediators who can help moderate the effects of digital polarization through pedagogical interventions. However, given that the framework was developed from a single-case study, it should be understood as a conceptual proposition that requires further empirical validation. Practically, the findings suggest that schools should strengthen digital literacy initiatives, support the teaching of controversial issues, and promote a democratic school culture that encourages respectful dialogue and critical engagement with diverse perspectives. Institutional support from school leadership is essential to enhance the effectiveness of these efforts. Future research should examine and refine the PDM Framework across different educational settings, school levels, and sociocultural contexts to assess its applicability and strengthen its theoretical and practical relevance in addressing digital polarization.

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