

The Role of AI in Digital Citizenship Education: A Solution to Primordialism in Multicultural Societies to Strengthen *Civic Engagement*

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Abstract

This study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital citizenship education as a solution to primordial attitudes in multicultural societies and to strengthen civic engagement. Through a qualitative approach based on literature and case studies, it was found that the current digital space is still filled with exclusive narratives based on religious, ethnic, and political identities. AI has the potential to reduce these sentiments through hate speech detection, the presentation of adaptive multicultural learning content, and the strengthening of civic values through safe and participatory digital media. This study concludes that AI can function as an ethical and inclusive pedagogical tool, but its success is largely determined by data curation, digital literacy, and policy support that supports digital social justice.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Digital Citizenship, Primordialism, Multiculturalism, *Civic Engagement*

Background

In the increasingly advanced digital era, artificial intelligence (AI) has become a transformative technology impacting various aspects of life, including education, politics, and social interaction. One of the major challenges in a multicultural society like Indonesia is primordialism, the tendency to prioritize group identity (ethnicity, religion, or culture) over national identity. This attitude can hinder civic engagement and weaken social cohesion, especially at the local level, such as villages.

One aspect of social relations in Indonesia is primordial identity. Primordial identity is

the identity that is inherent in every Indonesian person. Primordial identity is based on lineage, clan, or status as an indigenous person.¹ Indonesian society maintains a strong sense of primordial identity, such as ethnicity, religion, race, and social class (SARA). This identity is a historical legacy that developed naturally and has become part of the Indonesian nation's character.

Primordialism refers to the tendency of individuals or groups to emphasize their inherent ethnic, cultural, or traditional identity. In this context, the struggle for that identity is often the primary driver of political, social, or cultural action. The era of the digital

revolution 5.0 has seen several cases of primordial sentiments emerge in Indonesia's digital space, namely: 1) Political & SARA Polarization on Social Media (2014, 2019, 2024 Elections); 2) Ethnic Conflict on Social Media; 3) Discrimination against Minority Groups.

Phenomena such as SARA-based political polarization in the 2014, 2019, and 2024 elections (Kominfo, 2020; The Conversation Indonesia, 2023), digital ethnic conflicts such as discrimination against Papuans (CfDS UGM, 2022), and hate speech against religious and gender minority groups (Amnesty International, 2020; Komnas Perempuan, 2022) show that digital spaces often strengthen primordial sentiments and weaken the sense of nationalism.

In this context, AI presents a strategic solution. This technology can be utilized to detect and moderate hateful content through Natural Language Processing algorithms, analyze exclusive digital interaction patterns, and present civics education materials tailored to students' social and cultural contexts.

Several studies, such as those conducted by UNESCO (2023) and the Oxford Internet Institute, have shown that the use of AI in digital learning can raise awareness of the values of democracy, tolerance, and participatory civic engagement. However, the success of AI implementation depends on ethical challenges, the quality of the algorithms, and the readiness of educators to facilitate the learning process. Therefore, the use of AI must be carried out ethically and contextually to truly catalyze the transformation of digital citizenship education, capable of overcoming primordial attitudes while strengthening citizen participation in national life in an inclusive and civilized manner.

This research is important to dig deeper into how AI's role in becoming a solution to the primordialism of multicultural society to strengthen Civic Engagement, especially in digital citizenship education.

Library Review

Literature from Jahan & Oussalah (2021), Garland et al. (2020), and Chung et al. (2023) consistently demonstrates that AI technology, particularly Natural Language Processing (NLP) and deep learning, has successfully detected hate speech based on ethnicity, religion, gender, and politics with high accuracy. These systems also enable the development of automated counter-speech capable of suppressing intolerant narratives and restoring a healthy digital public space. In other words, AI is not only a monitoring tool but also a proactive agent in addressing digital primordialism.

UNESCO IITE (2022, 2023) and Tariq & Sergio (2025) emphasize that AI, when designed with an ethical and adaptive approach, can be an inclusive educational medium. AI can present digital citizenship content in a personalized and multicultural context for learners. Literature from Gunder et al. (2025) and Wired (2024) introduces the concepts of AI literacies and prosocial media, namely how AI can be directed to support positive civic engagement. By developing algorithms that prioritize empathetic, collaborative, and curiosity-based content, AI can significantly reduce echo chambers and political polarization stemming from primordialist sentiments.

Method

For the article entitled "The Role of AI in Digital Citizenship Education: A Solution to Primordialism in a Multicultural Society to Strengthen Civic Engagement", the methodological approach used is a qualitative method with a case study or literature study design.

Results and Discussion

The Reality of Primordialist Sentiments in Multicultural Digital Spaces

The study's findings indicate that primordial sentiments in the digital space manifest in various forms, particularly in political polarization, discrimination against ethnic minority groups, and religious-based exclusivism. The literature reviewed (Kominfo, 2020; Amnesty International, 2020; CfDS UGM, 2022) reinforces the finding that ethnic, religious, and racial identities are often used as political and social tools that undermine civic cohesion.

AI as a Solution to Reducing Primordialist Sentiments

AI emerges as an effective solution to these challenges, primarily through two strategic roles:

a. Discriminatory Sentiment Detection and Filtering

Natural Language Processing (NLP)-based AI systems developed by various parties (Chung et al., 2023; Garland et al., 2020) have been proven capable of detecting hate speech based on religion, ethnicity, and gender in real-time.

b. Automatic Counter-narrative Development

AI also enables the rapid and contextual creation of counter-narratives (counter-speech). Such systems can be used in digital learning platforms to present alternative narratives that dismantle prejudice and foster empathy across identities. This is crucial considering that many students are exposed to intolerant narratives from an early age, both through family and social media.

Strengthening Civic Engagement in the Digital Era through AI

In addition to acting as a filter, AI can also encourage active citizen participation in a healthy and productive digital space. Based on studies from the Oxford Internet Institute (2023) and UNESCO IITE (2022), the integration of AI in digital citizenship learning has been shown to increase student awareness of public issues such as human rights, discrimination, and digital equality; and encourage students to engage in peaceful digital campaigns, such as anti-hoaxes, anti-bullying, or interfaith tolerance.

Ethical and Structural Challenges of AI Implementation

Although the results show that AI has great potential in reducing primordialist sentiment and increasing civic engagement, several challenges remain, including:

- a. Algorithmic bias: If training data is discriminatory, AI can actually reinforce stereotypes. Therefore, an algorithmic fairness approach and data curation that is sensitive to multiculturalism are necessary.
- b. Digital access and literacy gap: Many communities lack access to adequate digital infrastructure, let alone an understanding of the functions and risks of AI.

AI can play a crucial role in reducing entrenched primordialist sentiments in multicultural digital spaces through detection, narrative intervention, and contextualized values education. Furthermore, AI also acts as a catalyst in strengthening civic engagement based on the values of democracy, inclusivity, and equality. However, its effectiveness depends heavily on ethical algorithm design, educator preparedness, and public policy support that supports digital social justice.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the challenges of primordialism in Indonesia's

digital space, concrete, implementable, and measurable solutions can be formulated. First, the implementation of an AI-based early detection system with a Natural Language Processing (NLP) algorithm specifically tailored to the Indonesian language and cultural context, capable of identifying content containing ethnic, religious, and racial nuances in real time on major digital platforms. Second, the development of a systematic counter-narrative strategy through an AI generator engine that produces educational content on tolerance, inclusive counter-speech, and structured digital campaigns against primordial hoaxes. Third, the transformation of civic education through the integration of AI-based learning modules that digitally simulate conflict resolution and internalize Pancasila values. Fourth, the development of an integrated monitoring system in the form of a digital heat map of primordial sentiment and an early warning system for potentially conflict-inducing content. Fifth, the strengthening of socio-digital infrastructure through a massive AI literacy program and the development of an inclusive digital community. These five solutions will be effective if supported by triple helix collaboration between the government, digital platforms, and academics, as well as regulations that support Indonesian AI ethics.

In the context of Indonesia's multicultural society facing the challenges of digital transformation, the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) offers a strategic opportunity to reconstruct digital citizenship education to be more adaptive and transformative. The current reality of Indonesia's digital space is still characterized by the prevalence of exclusive narratives based on primordial identities that threaten social cohesion and weaken civic engagement. This research identifies that political polarization, discrimination against minority groups, and religious exclusivism have become concrete manifestations of the strengthening of primordial sentiments in the digital world.

However, the effectiveness of AI in addressing digital primordialism is not without complex implementation challenges. Algorithmic bias is a crucial issue that requires an algorithmic justice approach and multiculturally sensitive data curation. Similarly, the wide digital and literacy gaps between regions in Indonesia are limiting factors that need to be addressed through inclusive policies.

This study concludes that the integration of AI in digital citizenship education has a dual role: as a filter against primordialist content and as a catalyst for strengthening civic engagement. Successful implementation requires a triadic synergy between the government in formulating regulations that support digital social justice, educational institutions in developing responsive curricula, and civil society in fostering critical awareness of the digital space. With this collaboration, AI can transform the digital space from an arena of identity conflict into a laboratory for sustainable national learning.

The novelty of this research lies in the strategic integration of artificial intelligence (AI) with digital citizenship education in the specific context of Indonesia, which not only utilizes AI as a tool for detecting hate speech but also develops it into a transformative pedagogical system through the development of automated counter-narratives based on Pancasila values and local wisdom. This culturally-responsive AI approach presents a breakthrough by designing an algorithm that is sensitive to Indonesia's cultural diversity while also functioning as a catalyst for civic engagement in the digital space, thus transforming citizenship education from conventional learning into a living laboratory for practicing national values digitally a model that has not been widely developed in similar studies at the global level.

Conclusion

Through a literature review, it can be concluded that AI has a potential and applicable role in shaping democratic, reflective, and inclusive digital citizenship. AI's role is not a single solution. However, it can be a strategic tool in education that can mitigate the negative impacts of digital primordialism and simultaneously strengthen constructive citizen engagement in virtual public spaces. With proper integration, AI can transform the digital space from a battlefield of identity conflict into a space for ethical and transformative national learning.

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