

Teaching Digital Ethics through Citizenship Education in the Merdeka Curriculum at Junior High Schools in Surakarta

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Abstract

Digital technology has had a far-reaching impact on society, and it is important to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to address ethical challenges in the digital world. This qualitative research aims to determine the implementation of digital ethics education in the Merdeka Curriculum at junior high school level in Surakarta. This study focuses on teaching practices in citizenship education, seeking to identify effective strategies for imparting knowledge of digital ethics. The methodology used in this research follows Miles and Huberman's qualitative research framework. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with experienced citizenship teachers and focus group discussions with students from two junior high schools in Surakarta. The findings from this research show that teachers use different strategies to teach digital ethics in the Merdeka Curriculum. These strategies include: discussion-based learning, case study analysis and lectures. The findings from this research also reveal the challenges teachers face in teaching digital ethics. These challenges are that many teachers lack the training and skills needed to teach digital ethics effectively, limited resources are available to support teachers in teaching digital ethics, some students have not shown seriousness about learning digital ethics, and find it irrelevant or boring. By analyzing the identified teaching practices, teachers can effectively meet development needs and opportunities in teaching digital ethics. This ultimately fosters responsible and ethical digital citizenship among junior high school students in Surakarta.

Keywords: Digital Ethics; Civics Education; Independent Curriculum.

Introduction

The development of digital technology continues to accelerate and has changed the way individuals interact, communicate and live their daily lives (Adhiorso et al., 2019). These changes include innovations in various areas of life, from widespread Internet access and widespread use of smartphones to the emergence of various types of social media platforms (Zulkifli, Muh et al., 2022). Technological developments have integrated into human life, both in carrying out daily activities and can create completely new jobs, trade and social relations (Setiawan, 2017).

With the increasingly widespread use of digital technology in society, problems arise regarding the ethics of internet users (Afriani & Azmi, 2020). According to Ribble and Bailey, digital ethics are standards of behavior expected

by other users of digital technology (Ribble & Bailey, 2007). Digital ethics encompasses an overarching set of norms, principles, and rules that govern human behavior in digital spaces. Digital ethics regulates various matters such as maintaining online privacy in the era of data surveillance, strengthening cyber security against cyber attacks and data breaches, and combating the spread of digital misinformation and fake news, overcoming cyber bullying, and dealing with ethical dilemmas caused by cyber bullying.

The increase in media use in this digital era is accompanied by privacy and ethical issues (Barrett-Maitland, 2020). According to Microsoft's "Digital Civility Index" report, Indonesia is ranked as the country with the lowest level of civility among Internet users in Southeast Asia (Arief Maulana, 2021). In this data there are several factors included in the

assessment, namely the spread of fake news, scams and hate speech, all three of which increased from 5 to 13% (Maya Citra Rosa, 2022). In the context of communicative ethics, Aristotle stated that lying or being dishonest is a crime. Aristotle explained that ethics is more about character than behavior. Therefore, people who know how to communicate well are people who apply ethics with good intentions and are honest (Chelin Indra Sushmita, 2020). The results of the 2021 Indonesian Digital Literacy Index survey specifically show that the Digital Ethics Pillar for Central Java Province received an index score of 3.71. The index score has decreased compared to the 2020 index score which reached 3.72. This decline can occur due to various factors. One of the factors is that the curriculum does not yet fully represent the content of digital literacy material and educators have not strengthened digital literacy in the 21st century in schools.

Based on the observations that have been made, students have been able to use the internet in everyday life. However, the lack of control from parents means that students surf freely and do not have good control over their behavior when using gadgets or when interacting in digital spaces with other users.

Pancasila and Citizenship education are mandatory subjects in the Indonesian national education system. Pancasila and Citizenship education emphasizes the formation of citizens who are able to understand and carry out their rights and obligations well in accordance with the mandate of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Pancasila and Citizenship education is intended to shape students into good, intelligent, skilled and characterful citizens (Winarno, 2014). Pancasila and Citizenship education has an important role in forming responsible and ethical digital citizens (Global Society)(Ubaedillah & Abdul, 2008). Civics subjects are used as a platform where students gain basic knowledge about the values and norms of applicable society, including matters relating to ethics in the use of digital technology. Pancasila and Citizenship education is expected to equip students with the knowledge and competencies to be able to engage responsibly in the digital world (Mughtarom et al., 2018). Learning digital ethics through Pancasila and Citizenship

education can increase students' awareness of the importance of maintaining online privacy, foster empathy in online interactions, train critical thinking when evaluating digital content, and the importance of contributing positively to online communities.

Indonesia has implemented a new curriculum called the Merdeka Curriculum. The Independent Curriculum is a policy aimed at restoring learning launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) (Nugraha, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum is a response to the complexity of educational developments and an ever-changing environment, one of which is due to the phenomenon of learning loss after the Covid-19 pandemic (Widyasari et al., 2022). This gives schools the ability to better adapt to students' needs and aspirations and create more meaningful and relevant educational experiences in the face of modern-day challenges.

Based on this background, it can be concluded that this research aims to: (1) find out the methods and strategies used in learning digital ethics in the Merdeka Curriculum, (2) the challenges faced in learning digital ethics in the Merdeka Curriculum and (3) the impact of learning ethics digital on student behavior. This research is expected to provide an overview of digital ethics learning practices in junior high schools in Surakarta.

Literature Review

Digital Ethics

Digital Ethics according to Ribble and Bailey are standards of behavior expected by other users of digital technology (Ribble & Bailey, 2007). According to Siberkreasi & Deloitte, individuals must be able to master skills related to digital ethics which include;

- a. Ability to realize
- b. Ability to exemplify
- c. Ability to adapt
- d. Ability to rationalize
- e. Ability to consider
- f. Ability to develop digital ethical governance (netiquette).

These abilities start from low abilities, namely awareness, to high abilities, namely digital ethical governance (Deloitte &

Cybercreation, 2020). It is hoped that these capability stages can form digital ethics for users.

According to a study conducted by Moonsoon Choi, there are four main categories that build digital citizenship, namely Ethics, Media and Information Literacy, Participation/Engagement, and Critical Thinking Ability. The ethics category has three sub-themes (Choi, 2016):

- a. safe, responsible and ethical use of technology and the internet; citizens know the norms and values regarding what is appropriate and effective in the use of technology.
- b. digital awareness; Citizens have awareness about politics, economics, social, culture and various problems that stem from the use of the internet in everyday life.
- c. digital responsibilities and rights; Citizens have responsibilities and rights in using the internet, for example the right to express opinions, safeguard personal data and privacy, the responsibility to respect other people and prevent bullying.

By implementing digital ethical norms, we can create a digital space that is safe, comfortable and beneficial for all.

Civic Education

Citizenship education is related to students' personal development and the development of political and social life in society at the local, national and international levels (Osler & Starkey, 1996). Citizenship education must be designed with the aim of radiating and crystallizing civic virtues/civility (Center for Civic Education, 1994; Winataputra, 2014). According to Branson, there are three main competencies in Citizenship Education that students need to master, including civic knowledge, civic skills, civic dispositions (Winarno, 2014). John J. Patrick and Thomas S. Vontz explain that the components of civic disposition consist of promoting the common good, affirming the same and equal humanity and dignity of each person, respecting, protecting and exercising the rights equally owned by each person, participating responsibly in political life as well as national and social life, respecting, protecting and running the government with the

consent of the people and supporting and practicing civic virtues (Patrick & Vontz, 2006).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that Citizenship Education aims to form citizens who have a sense of nationality, national and state awareness, and have national insight, love of the homeland, and positive attitudes and behavior as Indonesian citizens. Citizenship education is needed to form citizens who have awareness and apply digital ethical norms and use digital technology responsibly and without harming themselves or others (Komalasari & Anggraini, 2020).

Merdeka Curriculum

The use of technology in learning in the current era is one of the urgent needs for developing the Independent Curriculum (Marisa, 2021). Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that gives authority to educational units to develop learning according to the needs and characteristics of students (Munawar, 2022).

This curriculum aims to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and prepare students to face the challenges of the 21st century. The learning system and atmosphere are designed to have a different feel. This curriculum emphasizes the learning process with more emphasis on building students' character (Marisa, 2021). Merdeka Curriculum has 3 characteristics that differentiate it from the previous curriculum, namely (Kemdikbud, RI):

1. Soft skills and character development
2. Focus on essential material
3. Flexible learning

Merdeka Curriculum gives teachers the freedom to develop learning according to the needs and conditions of students. This allows teachers to incorporate digital ethics material into lessons.

Through learning, teachers can emphasize the development of students' character and social-emotional competencies, especially on digital ethics material through the Pancasila Education subject, which is part of the social-emotional competencies that are important for students to develop so they can become wise internet users and responsible.

Method

Setting and Participants

The database consists of 2 Pancasila Education subject teachers and 113 students conducted in the 2023/2024 academic year. This survey was conducted at junior high school educational institutions in the city of Surakarta.

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with experienced citizenship teachers and students from two junior high schools in Surakarta. The methodology used in this research follows Miles and Huberman's qualitative research framework with a case study approach (Mills, 2005). To obtain data, data collection was carried out through literature study, observation and interviews (Hayati et al., 2020) (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). Researchers processed data using the triangulation method, which consists of triangulation of methods and data sources. After data processing, analysis was carried out using the interactive data analysis model from Miles & Huberman (Miles et al., 2014).

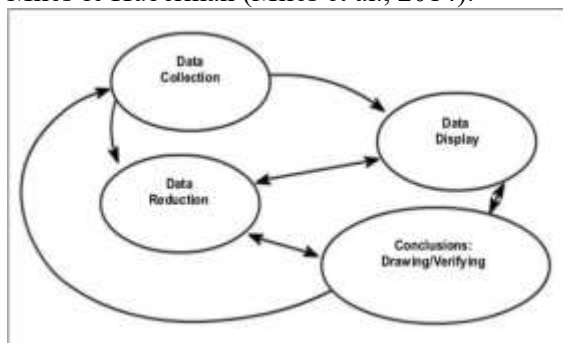


Figure 1. Interactive model of analysis

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Digital Ethics Learning through Pancasila Education in the Merdeka Curriculum

Based on research data, it was found that the Pancasila Education learning process on digital ethics material was carried out by two teachers in their schools with different teaching methods. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 carry out

learning activities by providing an apperception regarding digital literacy and accompanied by trigger questions. Teacher 1 explores the material by implementing active student activities (student-centered learning). Learning activities are carried out with learning strategies which include discussion-based learning, case study analysis and lectures. Discussion activities are carried out by dividing the class into several groups and students then carry out the chosen activity, namely analyzing hoax news. Meanwhile, the results of the interview showed that Teacher 2 stated that the activities were carried out with lectures and discussions without using digital learning media (teacher-centered learning). After the discussion activities have been completed, students are asked to present the results of each group's discussion in front of the class.

Based on research findings, learning with different methods allows for different learning outcomes. According to research, learning using the discussion method can improve Citizenship Education learning outcomes (Jamalong, A, 2015). Learning strategies using the discussion method can make students participate more actively in the learning process and teachers become facilitators who lead the discussion activities (Munthe et al., 2022). Based on previous analysis and research, digital ethics learning needs to be carried out comprehensively and involves various learning methods. Ethics is a science that discusses ideal human behavior related to right and wrong as well as good and bad (Rich, n.d.). Apart from discussion and lecture methods, teachers can use the value clarification techniques as their learning method. Values clarification techniques are proven to be able to grow and improve students' civic character (Benaziria, 2018). This is because digital ethics has a fairly complex and varied scope of discussioncategory, safe, responsible and ethical use of technology and the internet; digital awareness; digital responsibilities and rights (Choi, 2016). Choosing a discussion topic for the students is also important, teachers can help the students to broader issues related to digital ethics so they can understand better about the real problems that has been happening in the real world.

Ethics learning that has been carried out by teachers in two different educational units shows that learning has referred to

learning objectives to form abilities realize, exemplify, adjust oneself, rationalize, consider, developing digital ethical governance (netiquette) (Deloitte & Cybercreation, 2020). However, to increase the effectiveness of digital ethics learning, teachers can use various learning methods and use digital learning media, such as videos, animations or simulations to make it more interactive and interesting.

1) Challenges Faced in Learning Digital Ethics in the Merdeka Curriculum

Research findings show that Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 face several challenges in learning digital ethics in the independent curriculum. First, teacher 1 and teacher 2 lacked the training and skills necessary to teach digital ethics effectively. This is supported by interview results which state that teachers have difficulty compiling ideal teaching modules for this learning. Learning design skills are a competency that must be possessed by a professional educator because with careful planning, educators can adapt material with appropriate methods, strategies, models and learning media to achieve learning objectives (Purwinda Anggrella et al., 2023). Digital Ethics material is new material that has never existed in the previous curriculum, so teachers have not been able to organize differentiated learning activities. Through differentiated learning activities, all students' needs can be accommodated according to the interests or learning styles of each student (Herwina, 2021).

Second, there are limited resources available to support teachers in teaching digital ethics. The lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure for learning digital ethics, such as computer equipment, the internet and digital learning applications, makes learning less interesting and interactive, so that students' understanding of digital ethics is poor. Facilities and infrastructure play an important role in improving learning standards, fostering a positive social atmosphere, and controlling learning dynamics so that teachers can effectively build an ideal teaching and learning atmosphere (Bararah, 2020).

Third, some students are not enthusiastic about learning digital ethics, and find it irrelevant or boring. The results of interviews with students show that some students are not enthusiastic about learning digital ethics. Students said they considered digital ethics

irrelevant to their lives. They also said that the digital ethics learning materials they received were too boring. This is reinforced by teacher 1's statement that several students in discussion and presentation activities have not followed it seriously and effectively. Teachers must develop a learning environment that supports them to obtain meaningful learning (Zein, 2016). Learning can be done in an interesting, interactive way and actively involves students and they can take meaning from the learning process they go through.

2) The Impact of Digital Ethics Learning on Student Behavior

Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it was found that students were not fully aware of the differences between the real world and the virtual world, for example what happens in the virtual world can affect the real world and vice versa. As a result, students cannot be fully responsible for their actions in cyberspace and their ability to understand the rules is still low. The survey results show that there are students who violate digital ethics in using the internet and social media.

Table 1. Implementation of Student Digital Ethics

Behavior	Percentage
Do not make posts that hurt or harm other people	76%
Do not make comments that offend Ethnicity, Religion, Race, Intergroup, on content on social media	84%
Clarify Information before reposting it	58%
Use works or writings by citing the source	55%
Using the internet to access pornographic content	10%

These results indicate that digital ethics learning is not fully effective in improving students' understanding and behavior regarding digital ethics. Forming student ethics is very important to do. The standards of behavior that have been set in the digital space must be used as a role model for users (Ribble & Bailey, 2007). Digital ethics are also standards of behavior expected by other users of digital technology. Users are required to be responsible

for their every activity and behavior in the digital space.

Conclusion

The research results show that teachers use different strategies to teach digital ethics in the Merdeka Curriculum. These strategies include: discussion-based learning, case study analysis and lectures. The findings from this research also reveal the challenges faced by teachers in teaching digital ethics, which include teachers not being able to prepare learning plans that include differentiated learning, a lack of learning facilities and infrastructure and students who are less enthusiastic about learning. This research also found that students' practices of implementing digital ethics were not fully implemented based on ethical principles due to low knowledge. By analyzing identified teaching practices, teachers can effectively address development needs and opportunities in digital ethics teaching.

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