

E-Learning as a Medium for Strengthening Civic Disposition in Junior High School Civics Education

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Abstract

This paper explores the strategic and sustainable utilization of e-learning as an effective means to strengthen students' civic disposition in the digital era. The study highlights how Civics Education can move beyond temporary online learning toward an integrated digital pedagogy that fosters responsibility, discipline, and democratic participation among students. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected from Civics teachers, guidance counselors, and students at SMPN 1 Pacet, Bandung Regency, through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the success of e-learning in developing civic disposition depends on teachers' leadership in designing interactive, value-based, and reflective learning activities. E-learning not only enhances students' access to civic knowledge but also serves as a transformative medium for cultivating moral awareness and digital citizenship. Furthermore, the study identifies several challenges, including varying digital literacy among teachers and students, as well as limited school infrastructure. The paper concludes that sustainable teacher professional development and strategic digital leadership are essential to transform e-learning into a character-building ecosystem that supports responsible citizenship in the 21st century.

Keywords: *e-learning; civic disposition; teacher leadership; digital citizenship; professional development,*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital era, the cultivation of civic disposition defined as the attitudes, values, and behaviors consistent with democratic citizenship is becoming increasingly essential in civic and citizenship education. Civic disposition, together with civic knowledge and civic skills, forms the fundamental triad of civic competencies that shape responsible and participatory citizens (Halimah & Anisah, 2018; Putri & Siagian, 2023). These components are crucial for preparing students to act ethically, think critically, and participate meaningfully in both digital and physical civic spaces. However, the practice of Civics Education (*Pendidikan Pancasila dan Kewarganegaraan* atau PPKn) in many junior high schools remains predominantly focused on knowledge transmission rather than attitude formation (Belladonna & Anggraena, 2021).

Recent transformations in education, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have forced schools to adopt digital modes of learning. While e-learning initially emerged as an emergency response, its potential for fostering civic values and digital citizenship has become increasingly

apparent (Baber, 2021; Almahasees, Mohsen, & Amin, 2021). Nevertheless, the integration of e-learning into Civics Education often lacks a sustainable and strategic framework that explicitly targets the development of civic disposition. Most existing research focuses on improving civic knowledge or 21st-century competencies such as collaboration and creativity (Henderson & Honey, 2017), leaving a significant research gap on how e-learning can serve as a sustained moral and civic learning ecosystem that strengthens civic attitudes over time.

Studies in the Indonesian context highlight this gap. Halimah and Nurlela (2020) demonstrate that civic disposition is central to character education, showing that moral-based approaches in correctional settings effectively shape responsible behavior and civic awareness. Meanwhile, Fajar, Syobar, and Komariah (2023) emphasize the integration of digital techniques in PPKn and Social Studies learning as part of teachers' adaptation to the 21st-century learning environment. However, these studies primarily explore skill acquisition rather than the formation of civic disposition. This research therefore introduces novelty by bridging digital pedagogy and civic character formation, positioning e-learning not as a temporary instructional tool but as a strategic, sustainable platform for value-based civic education.

Equally important is the role of teacher leadership and professional development in facilitating e-learning that meaningfully engages students in civic practices. Teachers act as moral agents and learning designers who shape the virtual classroom into a space for civic reflection and ethical reasoning (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). In Indonesia, studies reveal that PPKn teachers often face constraints in digital literacy and pedagogical innovation, hindering the integration of civic-oriented digital learning (Erayani, Simarmata, & Samosir, 2022). Thus, the teacher's capacity for digital instructional leadership becomes a decisive factor in realizing sustainable e-learning practices that align with civic and moral objectives.

This study, conducted at SMPN 1 Pacet in Bandung Regency, seeks to address these challenges by examining how e-learning can be systematically implemented to strengthen students' civic disposition. By analyzing the objective conditions of e-learning (planning, strategies, and execution), students' civic attitudes, and the role of teachers as digital leaders, this research extends the discourse beyond urban and higher-education settings. It contributes to understanding the dynamics of e-learning in regional junior high schools and its implications for equitable digital citizenship education.

In summary, this paper aims to explore the strategic and sustainable utilization of e-learning to strengthen students' civic disposition in junior high Civics Education. Specifically, it investigates: (1) the objective conditions of e-learning implementation; (2) the ways in which e-learning develops civic ecosystem, this study contributes both theoretical and practical insights for teacher leadership, instructional design, and education policy in the digital age

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design aimed at exploring how e-learning can be strategically and sustainably utilized to strengthen students' civic disposition in junior high school Civics Education (PPKn). The descriptive qualitative approach was selected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the real conditions, processes, and dynamics of digital learning, as well as the role of teachers in developing civic attitudes among students (Creswell &

Poth, 2018). The study emphasizes the interpretive understanding of meaning and teacher leadership in the digital learning environment rather than measuring variables numerically.

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Pacet, Bandung Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The school was selected purposively because it had implemented e-learning consistently since the pandemic and continued to integrate digital pedagogy into Civics Education. The participants consisted of one Civics Education teacher, one guidance and counseling teacher, and six students from Grades VIII and IX who were actively involved in online Civics classes. The selection followed the purposive sampling technique based on the participants' relevance and involvement in e-learning activities (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct classroom observations (both synchronous and asynchronous sessions), and document analysis. Interviews explored teachers' perceptions of e-learning design, strategies for civic disposition development, and encountered challenges. Observations were conducted during online Civics learning sessions to record teacher–student interactions and student behavioral responses. Documentation included lesson plans (RPP), e-learning materials, discussion transcripts, and student activity records. These combined techniques ensured triangulation of data sources to enhance the credibility of findings.

Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Patterns and themes related to civic disposition reinforcement—such as responsibility, discipline, respect, cooperation, and digital ethics—were identified and categorized. The analysis process was iterative, involving constant comparison between data sources to derive valid interpretations.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, the study applied source triangulation (between teachers, students, and documents) and method triangulation (interviews, observations, and documents). Credibility was further enhanced through member checking, in which participants reviewed summaries of interpretations for accuracy. Dependability and confirmability were maintained through audit trails and reflective researcher notes.

Ethical approval was obtained from the school administration. All participants were informed of the study's objectives and provided consent. Data confidentiality and participant anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the research process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Objective Conditions of E-Learning Implementation

The implementation of e-learning at SMPN 1 Pacet reflects a structured, intentional approach to digitalizing civic education (PPKn). Teachers designed lessons on a Learning Management System (LMS) platform, supported by tools such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp groups for coordination, monitoring of participation, and discussion prompts. This aligns with the notion that “readiness” of e-learning involves technology, pedagogy, and infrastructure (Nuzulismah, Santoso & Hadi Putra, 2022).

However, despite improved digital access, the condition remains uneven: students in more remote areas reported connectivity lags, intermittent power supply, or lack of dedicated devices. Previous research shows infrastructure disparity is a major predictor of e-learning success,

especially in secondary education in developing contexts (Nuzulismah et al., 2022; Yulianto & Layona, 2023).

What is notable in this study is that teachers did not simply rely on synchronous sessions they adopted asynchronous modules (recorded videos, discussion boards) to accommodate connectivity issues, illustrating pedagogical adaptability beyond mere technological deployment. This suggests that sustainable e-learning requires not only readiness of tools but intentional design for inclusivity (Setyawan, Sukardi, Mardizal et al., 2024). Moreover, such planning and adaptability illustrate a move from emergency remote teaching to strategic digital pedagogy: i.e., e-learning as embedded within institutional planning rather than stopgap measure (Rahayu, Dirgantoro & Purnamasari et al., 2024).

In sum, the objective conditions reveal a dual reality: progress in digital tool adoption, alongside persistent systemic constraints. For civic disposition reinforcement via e-learning to be effective, both the structural infrastructure and pedagogical intentionality aligned with civic values must be present.

2. Civic Disposition Development through E-Learning

The study found that e-learning served not merely as a content delivery medium but as a dual academic-moral environment fostering civic disposition. Students engaged in digital discussions, collaborative group work, and reflection prompts about social issues (e.g., community service via online coordination, digital ethics). These activities appear to stimulate attitudes of responsibility, cooperation, and participation core dimensions of civic disposition (Anggraini, Sopianingsih & Lukman, 2023).

Yet, despite these positive instances, the student responses were heterogeneous: some students demonstrated increased civic awareness and self-regulation, while others showed emotional instability (e.g., distraction, procrastination) or over-reliance on digital shortcuts (e.g., copying peers in discussion groups). This mirrors findings that while online learning can produce civic outcomes, it may also exacerbate disengagement if not scaffolded appropriately (Halimi, Rahmat, Nugraha & Pratiwi, 2023).

Notably, the novelty of this study lies in framing e-learning not only as a tool for knowledge or skills, but as a character-forming process where civic dispositions (values, attitudes, behaviours) are systematically nurtured through digital pedagogy. This advances beyond prior work, which often emphasises digital literacy or civic knowledge integration (Alrahman, Budimansyah & Sapriya, 2022).

Furthermore, teachers incorporated situational themes such as tolerance in digital communities, environmental citizenship in online projects, and responsible digital behaviour thus bridging civic content with real-life digital contexts. This situational contextualisation aligns with calls for transformative civic education in digital societies (Hoskins & Kerr, 2022).

In conclusion, while e-learning shows promise for civic disposition development, its effectiveness depends on structure of tasks, reflection opportunities, and teacher scaffolding. Without these, the potential of e-learning as moral-civic medium remains under-realised.

3. The Role of Civics Teachers as Digital Leaders

The leadership role of PPKn teachers emerged as a central determinant in the effectiveness of e-learning for civic disposition. In the case of SMPN 1 Pacet, the civic teacher operated not just as content provider but as digital-moral leader facilitating online discussions, monitoring participation, offering feedback on civic behaviours, and encouraging student-led digital civic projects. This mirrors research indicating that teacher leadership with digital competence fosters better engagement and teacher reflection (Agustina, Kamdi, Hadi et al., 2023).

Moreover, teachers' mindset shifted from "coverage of curriculum" to "cultivation of citizenship" in virtual spaces. They structured assignments that extended beyond homework they included service-learning tasks, peer discussions on social responsibility in digital forums, and reflective e-journals. These practices align with the idea that teacher leadership in digital environments must embrace ethical and civic dimensions, not only technological fluency (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Importantly, this study highlights that teacher professional development in digital pedagogy is essential: teachers who had training or peer-mentoring networks showed greater confidence in designing civic-oriented e-learning activities. This echoes global findings that professional learning communities focused on digital citizenship enhance teacher capacity (OECD, 2022). Therefore, this research reinforces the view that in digital civic education, teacher leadership and ongoing professional development act as the linchpin linking technology with civic character outcomes. Without such leadership, e-learning risks remaining superficial.

4. Challenges and Barriers

Analysis uncovered two primary clusters of challenges: internal constraints and external barriers. Internally, limited time for online interaction, teachers' difficulty in assessing civic attitudes digitally, and student self-regulation issues were salient. Externally, inadequate infrastructure (internet, devices), uneven digital literacy among teachers and students, and institutional support gaps emerged. These findings parallel broader literature that identifies similar barriers to sustainable digital learning in secondary schools (Erayani, Simarmata & Samosir, 2022; Tambunan, Budimansyah & Darmawan, 2021).

Yet, rather than being solely impediments, some of these barriers became catalysts for teacher innovation: for example, blended learning models (combining face-to-face and online) and formative reflection tasks were used to mitigate limited interaction time and infrastructure constraints. Such adaptation shows that sustainable e-learning for civic education is not about eliminating barriers but designing resilient pedagogies around them (Setyawan et al., 2024). Overall, the dual recognition of both structural and pedagogical barriers highlights that sustainable e-learning is a complex ecosystem requiring continuous improvement in infrastructure, teacher capacity, institutional policy, and student support.

5. Discussion: Toward Strategic and Sustainable E-Learning

The novelty of this study lies in conceptualising e-learning as a sustainable civic learning ecosystem, rather than a temporary or purely technological fix. Unlike earlier research that positioned online learning as emergency remote teaching, this study demonstrates how e-learning, when aligned with teacher leadership and civic-character-oriented pedagogy, can systematically nurture civic responsibility, empathy, and collaboration among students. This advances the

discourse by framing sustainability in e-learning not merely in terms of technology adoption but also ethical continuity and pedagogical intentionality (Alrakhman et al., 2022; Hoskins & Kerr, 2022).

In terms of teacher professional development, the findings underscore that continuous digital training and collaborative professional communities are critical for sustaining e-learning as a transformative space for citizenship education (Agustina et al., 2023; OECD, 2022). When teachers engage in reflective practice, peer-learning, and leadership in digital pedagogy, the potential of e-learning for civic disposition is amplified.

Finally, by studying a regional junior high school in Indonesian setting (SMPN 1 Pacet, Bandung Regency), the research expands literature beyond urban, tertiary or higher-income country contexts. It highlights how context matters: infrastructural disparities, local teacher culture, and regional socio-digital conditions impact the effectiveness of e-learning in civic education. Thus, policy implications include context-sensitive planning, teacher capacity building, infrastructure investment, and aligning digital learning with civic-character goals.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the strategic and sustainable use of e-learning plays a crucial role in strengthening students' *civic disposition* in junior high Civics Education. The case of SMPN 1 Pacet shows that e-learning can evolve from a temporary response during the pandemic into a sustainable civic learning ecosystem that nurtures responsibility, participation, and democratic awareness.

The results indicate that e-learning supports not only cognitive but also moral development. Through online discussions, collaborative tasks, and reflective activities, students develop civic attitudes such as tolerance, discipline, and social empathy. The Civics teacher's leadership becomes a key factor—acting as a digital facilitator and moral guide who connects technology use with civic values and ethical reflection.

Despite its potential, several challenges persist, including limited interaction time, unequal access to digital tools, and insufficient infrastructure. Yet, these challenges have also stimulated teacher innovation, such as blended learning designs and continuous reflection, proving that effective civic education depends on both pedagogical creativity and institutional support.

The findings imply that teachers should strengthen their digital and moral leadership, designing e-learning that integrates civic values into technological practices. Schools need to provide ongoing support, adequate infrastructure, and professional development for teachers to share digital civic learning innovations. Policymakers should also ensure equal access to digital resources and promote civic and character education within digital learning programs.

In summary, this study offers a new perspective by positioning e-learning as a strategic and value-based civic education framework, where digital learning serves not only as a means of knowledge delivery but as a transformative process for cultivating responsible, ethical, and participatory citizens in the digital era.

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