

Cultivation of Democratic Values for Students

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ABSTRACT

The instillation of democratic values among students becomes one of the important foundations in shaping active, critical, and responsible citizens. This research aims to identify concrete efforts and obstacles in the development of democratic values through Citizenship Education in the environment of the State Polytechnic of Malang. Some learning strategies implemented include the development of a democracy-based curriculum, the use of interactive learning methods, involvement in student organizations, leadership training, and community service activities. In addition, the use of social media as a political campaign tool has also become a focus of study, considering its significant influence on students' political views and participation. Based on the interview results, the majority of students consider social media an effective platform for political campaigning, but they also recognize its negative impacts, especially in terms of the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. Other problems that arise include the limited understanding of democracy, a lack of supporting facilities, and a gap between theory and social reality. This research concludes that strengthening digital literacy, facilitating participatory spaces, as well as contextual and collaborative learning approaches are key to shaping a healthy democratic culture in the higher education environment.

Keywords: Cultivation, Values, Democracy, Politics, Students

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that adheres to a democratic system, where freedom of opinion, political participation, and respect for human rights are fundamental values in national life. However, the public's understanding of democracy is often misunderstood as absolute freedom without responsibility, which can potentially create an unfavorable socio-political situation and trigger horizontal conflicts.

The implementation of democracy cannot function optimally without the support of a democratic society's behavior. The reality on the ground shows that many citizens do not yet fully understand and correctly apply the values of democracy. This phenomenon is reinforced by Azyumardi Azra's statement highlighting the tendency of political elites in Indonesia to use non-democratic methods and violence as a result of prolonged conflicts without resolution. In fact, one of the essences of democracy is the ability to compromise and respect differences of opinion.

The legacy of the authoritarian political system of the past, both during the Old Order and the New Order, has contributed to a rigid and closed political culture, which affects the weak internalization of democratic values in society. Even the education sector, which should be the primary instrument in shaping democratic character, at certain times has been used as a tool for uniformity of thought.

Therefore, education especially citizenship education, plays a strategic role in instilling democratic values in the younger generation, including students. Education not only serves as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a medium for shaping critical, tolerant, and participatory citizens.

This article will examine the efforts made by the Citizenship Education lecturers at State Polytechnic of Malang to instill the importance of democratic values in students. Additionally, it will discuss the various challenges faced in this process as well as the solutions implemented to overcome them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy is not a new term in the life of a nation and state. Etymologically, this term comes from the Greek language, namely "demos," which means "people," and "crates" or "cratos," which means "government." Therefore, democracy is essentially a form of government based on the power of the people. (Winarno, 2019). In practice, democracy emphasizes participatory values and the sovereignty of the people that must be implemented by all citizens. This includes the right to participate in political decision-making and public policy. (Kadek Radhitya, 2019).

However, democracy is not just about systems or procedures. Furthermore, according to Nasiwan, democracy must create a conducive space for the internalization of educational values and the formation of social hopes. This means that democracy must be carried out consciously and innovatively, especially through education that supports the critical awareness of citizens. In this sense, democracy encompasses a mindset, attitudes, and actions that uphold the equality of rights and obligations among individuals in social life.

The Big Indonesian Dictionary states that democratic traits include an open attitude, sportsmanship, peace, responsibility, not imposing one's will, and respecting the rights of others. This attitude needs to be cultivated from an early age in every citizen, especially through formal education. This is in line with the mandate of Article 3 of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that national education aims to shape individuals who are faithful, virtuous, intelligent, creative, and to become democratic and responsible citizens.

Education plays a crucial role in preparing citizens who are mature in moral, social, and political aspects. Through education, society is shaped to have the capacity to determine social, cultural, and political directions independently and responsibly (Supratiwi, 2021). In this context, political participation becomes the primary indicator of the success of democracy. Akram and Marsh emphasize that political participation is a voluntary activity of citizens in state affairs, which arises from awareness, not coercion. The high level of community participation is significantly influenced by education, political awareness, access to information, and the role of social actors such as intellectuals and the government.

Tukiran (2016) adds that the younger generation will be able to participate in a democratic political system if they have a sense of identity, social awareness, the ability to seek information, and a deep understanding of democracy. In this regard, education has the task of shaping character and citizenship competencies such as civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic disposition (Stokamer, 2013).

The importance of the role of education in shaping democratic citizens is also emphasized by Ki Hajar Dewantara. According to him, education should guide a child's potential in a holistic manner so that they grow into independent, ethical, and responsible individuals. In a modern context, this role is manifested in the form of citizenship education courses that not only teach the norms and laws of the state but also instill values of character and public morality.

Civic education has a strategic dimension because it serves to foster a sense of nationhood and statehood. Based on Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, civic education includes the strengthening of the values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and Unity in Diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika) as pillars of nationalism. This is in line with the statements of Dikti (2014) and Eko Budiono (2015), which emphasize that civic education aims to develop civic intelligence, civic participation, and civic responsibility, the three main elements that determine the progress of a nation.

Therefore, through a strong vision and mission, citizenship education in higher education is expected to become a source of values and guidance in shaping students into whole individuals who love their homeland, think critically, act tolerantly, and are able to play an active role in democratic life. Students, as the younger generation, are the spearhead of the nation and bear a great responsibility in continuing and preserving the values of democracy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students are encouraged to carry out work or assignments that make them active in the political arena, such as carrying out innovative teaching and learning based on the latest developments, research that leads to new knowledge in the field, and organizing community service activities in various fields of education and educational science to improve the quality of education itself. The role of students in politics in society cannot be separated from the realization of the importance of education for the students themselves. Several concrete efforts have been made to develop students' democratic values through citizenship education, among others:

1. Develop a Citizenship Education curriculum that includes material about democracy.
2. Using interactive learning methods, such as discussions, simulations and collaboration between students to increase understanding of democracy.
3. Cultivate and instill an attitude of tolerance and increase behavioral patterns of mutual respect towards fellow friends and lecturers.
4. Encourage students to get involved in organizations that focus on social and political issues, so that they can practice participating in the democratic process.
5. Holding social activities that involve students in real action, such as awareness campaigns, fundraising, or community service programs.
6. Organizing leadership training that emphasizes the importance of democratic values and social responsibility.
7. Encourage students to self-reflect about their experiences in citizenship education and how this influences their views on democracy.
8. Invite students to participate in public activities, such as seminars, panel discussions, and forums that discuss democracy issues.

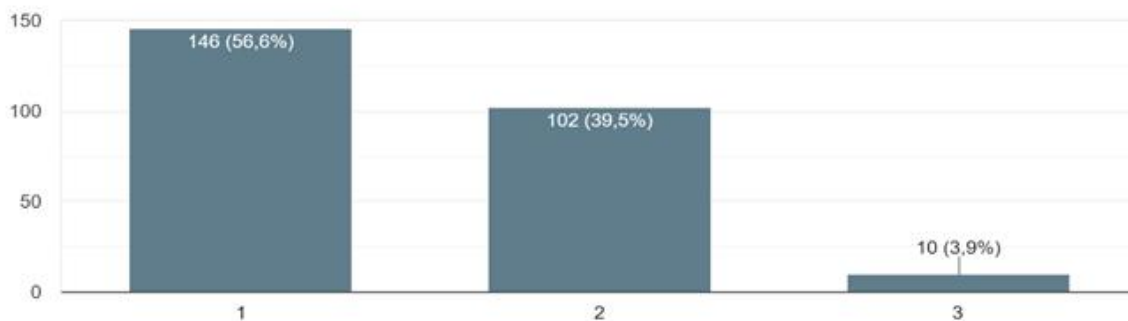
Regarding the problems or obstacles that are often faced in the context of developing and instilling democratic values in the campus environment, these include:

1. Many students do not have sufficient understanding of democratic principles, rights and obligations as citizens and the urgency of participation in the democratic process.
2. Limited educational facilities and facilities that support active learning about democracy can hinder the process of developing these values.
3. Social and cultural environments that do not support democratic values, such as intolerance or discrimination, can influence student attitudes.
4. Inaccurate information or fake news on social media can form a false view of democracy and reduce students' trust in the democratic process.
5. Some student groups may feel marginalized or do not have equal access to participate in activities related to democracy.
6. There is a negative stigma towards students who are involved in political activism, which can make students hesitate to participate.
7. High academic loads can reduce students' time and energy to be involved in activities related to developing democratic values.
8. The difference between the theory presented in the learning process and the reality that occurs in the surrounding environment. So this will allow a crisis of student confidence to emerge.

The development of technology in modern times, such as today, can be one of the factors that influence students' perspectives on the application of democratic values. This is affected by the role of social media today, which has become a means of sourcing information, interacting, and socializing. At the beginning of its emergence, social media indeed functioned merely as a tool for self-expression; however, this function has evolved. Nowadays, social media is also widely utilized for the dissemination of information across various fields, including education, culture, social issues, the economy, law, and politics. Of course, this can be a positive aspect of technological development because by utilizing social media, one can increase knowledge and information from various aspects of life. However, this can also become a challenge if not

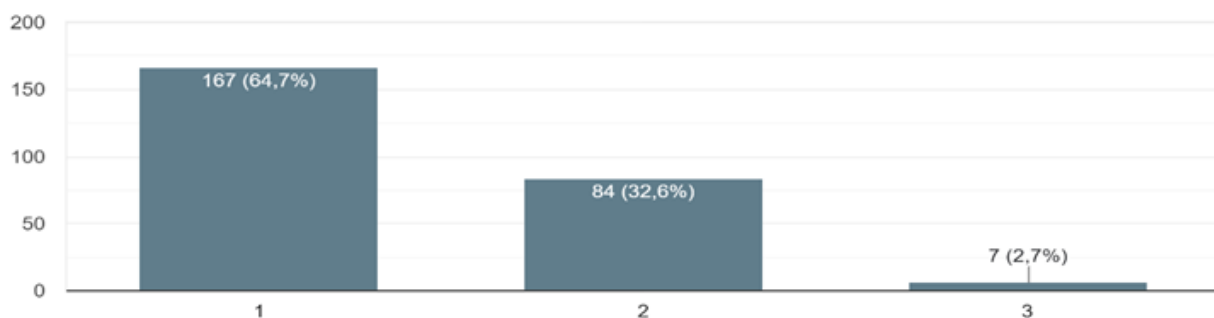
addressed wisely due to the abundance of information being disseminated. In practice, the free flow of information is not matched by clear and verifiable sources of information. Unbeknownst to many, people tend to trust information from social media more than what they acquire directly. This is not a problem if the information can be accounted for, but if the information is unclear in its source or even contains false information, it will have a negative impact on the use of social media. It will also affect the perspective of the younger generation on the importance of applying democratic values amidst that freedom of information.

One example of the embodiment of democratic values by students is their participation as the younger generation in the political field, namely involvement in the Democratic Party of the 2024 General Election. Below, we present data related to one of the obstacles in realizing democratic values by students, which is the negative impact of technological development and social media.



Picture 1: Students Opinions on the Effectiveness of Social Media as a Political Campaign Tool

Based on the results of interviews conducted with students of the Accounting Department of Malang State Polytechnic, the results are as shown in the table above. The percentage of effectiveness of social media use as a political campaign tool in the 2024 election indicates that 56.6% of respondents chose effective, 39.5% chose fairly effective, and 3.9% chose ineffective. The use of social media as a means of political campaigning is very effective because it is easily accessible and widely used by both teenagers and adults. Therefore, information related to political campaigns and others will also be easily obtained. According to Suryo & Aji (2020), the embodiment of democratic values in the political participation of today's youth is more open and influenced by the social media they use. One reason is the significant intensity of social media usage. Unbeknownst to them, a majority of young people are already discussing political matters, which makes them eager to know about current political developments. It can be said that most students used social media as a preference to determine their choices in the recent 2024 general elections.



Picture 2: Student Opinions on the Negative Influence of Social Media as a Means of Political Campaigning

Based on the results of the interviews conducted with students from the Accounting Department of State Polytechnic of Malang., the table above shows the percentage of the negative impact of social media as a

means of political campaigning. A total of 167 respondents, or about 64.7%, chose to say it has a very significant impact; 84 respondents, or 32.6%, chose to say it has a somewhat significant impact; and 7 respondents, or 2.7%, chose to say it has no impact. Social media as a means of political campaigning many times has a negative influence in the form of false information or hoaxes. This is due to the ease of disseminating information, while the filters to screen that information are very limited, depending on the knowledge and discretion of each social media user.

Furthermore, as an effort to develop democratic values, students are given the opportunity to participate in various campus activities, by giving them the right to convey their aspirations, for example in the election of the chairman of the Student Executive Board or chairman of other student associations. Fostering an attitude of equal rights and obligations in participating in student organizations. Facilitate activities and foster students in their self-development efforts through collaboration between groups or student organizations and involving all parties on campus. And within an existing student organization, clear and precise rules must be made in accordance with the vision and mission.

To make this happen, State Polytechnic of Malang always strives to organize and develop quality, innovative, and competitive vocational education that encourages lifelong learning patterns and the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit and meets the needs of industry, government institutions, and society. Carrying out research that is beneficial for the development of science and technology as well as community welfare and providing community service. Likewise in the learning process, for example, the teacher gives assignments in groups; this is also included in the form of developing an attitude of cooperation with friends, where students will definitely discuss with each other and not do it alone, so the author, as a teacher, provides rules of conduct with the aim that students be honest, disciplined, and punctual in every activity that involves the learning process.

In addition, as an effort to address the negative impacts of technological and social media developments in the form of the spread of fake news, digital and media literacy should be emphasized. Students need to be equipped with strong digital literacy skills to filter and analyze the information circulating. Activities such as media literacy workshops, fact-checking training, and open discussions about social media ethics should be promoted in the campus environment. Students can also play an active role in citizen journalism or reporting misleading content. Through this active participation, students contribute to strengthening democracy by becoming guardians of information ethics.

Higher education institutions need to facilitate and support various roles for students to grow and develop in the campus environment. This approach is an educational procedure aimed at helping learners understand the meaning of the subject matter they study by connecting it with the context of their own lives in personal, social democracy and cultural society. (Edueksos Journal 2020).

CONCLUSION

The development and instillation of democratic values among students is an important part of creating a civilized and participatory society. Citizenship education in higher education institutions, such as that implemented at Malang State Polytechnic, has sought to instill these values through various strategies, including the development of a democratic curriculum, interactive learning methods, student involvement in organizations, social activities, leadership training, and aspiration forums.

However, challenges remain. The main obstacles include the low understanding of democratic principles among students, limited learning facilities, the influence of non-democratic social environments, and the negative impact of social media spreading disinformation. Data obtained from students in the Accounting Department shows that although social media is considered effective as a means of political campaigning (56.6%), it also has significant negative impacts in the form of hoaxes and misinformation (64.7%).

To address this issue, strong digital literacy is needed so that students can become smart and responsible consumers of information. Training programs such as media literacy workshops, fact-checking, and citizen

journalism can strengthen students' critical capacity towards political information. In addition, active participation of students in campus activities, both academic and organizational, must continue to be facilitated to train democratic skills such as discussion, compromise, leadership, and appreciation for differences.

Through an integrative approach between education, technology, and social participation, higher education institutions can create a learning ecosystem that is not only oriented towards the mastery of knowledge but also towards the formation of a democratic, critical, and active citizen character. Thus, students do not merely become objects in the process of democratization, but also the main subjects in realizing a healthy and sustainable democracy in Indonesia.

RECOMMENDATION

Higher education institutions need to develop a Citizenship Education curriculum that is contextual and relevant to social issues and the times, in order to encourage critical thinking among students. In facing the digital era, students also need to be equipped with digital literacy through media training, fact-checking, and social media ethics to counteract hoaxes, especially ahead of political moments.

In addition, campuses must strengthen the role of student organizations as a means of learning democracy through discussion activities, social advocacy, and community service, with support and guidance from higher education institutions in instilling inclusive values, tolerance, and equality. Providing spaces for aspirations, such as student forums and internal elections, is important to train participation and the expression of opinions in a respectful manner.

Lecturers are also encouraged to relate learning to social reality through projects, case studies, and other real activities. Higher education institutions also need to collaborate with external agencies in the form of internships, seminars, training, and collaborative research.

With these strategies, it is hoped that students will develop not only intellectually but also as democratic, critical, and responsible citizens in facing global challenges and the digital era.

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