Social media usage and civic engagement among Indonesian digital natives: An analysis

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Abstract
This study aims to identify the relationship between social media use and civic engagement among digital natives in Indonesia using the Grounded Theory method. The study involved 15 digital natives aged 18-24 who actively use social media, selected through a purposive sampling technique. The analysis in this study used NVivo version 12 Plus for MacBook. The study results show that social media use plays a vital role in the civic engagement of digital natives in Indonesia. The participants stated that social media use could help increase their awareness and knowledge about social and political issues in Indonesia and enable them to participate in related activities. In addition, the study also shows that social media use can facilitate interaction and discussion among individuals with different views, which ultimately can deepen their understanding and experience of social and political issues in Indonesia. However, this study also identifies some challenges and obstacles in using social media for civic engagement. One is the authenticity and credibility of information disseminated on social media, which can influence individuals' views and opinions on an issue. Based on these findings, this study recommends improving digital literacy and information verification skills for digital natives in Indonesia.

Keywords: civic enggagement; digital natives; Indonesia; social media

Introduction

Research conducted since the 2000s indicates that digital native generations tend to be less interested in political participation and civic engagement. Some studies suggest that this may be influenced by their passive and uncritical use of digital media (Bennett & Segerberg,

2012; Putnam, 2000). Nevertheless, there are also findings indicating that digital natives have the potential to become agents of change in society if given adequate digital literacy and critical skills (Delli Carpini, 2000; Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Recent studies have also examined the relationship between social media use and civic engagement among digital natives. One study conducted in Indonesia found that social media use can increase civic engagement among digital natives, especially through online participation in political discussions and the use of political information from social media (Supratman, 2018). Another study conducted in Taiwan found that social media use can increase political participation among digital natives, especially through interactions with political information on social media and participation in online political discussions (Zhu et al., 2019).

In addition, several theories support the relationship between digital media and political participation or civic engagement. For example, the Uses and Gratifications theory suggests that individuals use media to satisfy certain needs, including the need to engage in social and political activities (Katz et al., 1974). Meanwhile, the Media Richness Theory emphasizes that richer media with more information and interaction can encourage active participation and engagement (Daft & Lengel, 1986). However, some theories express concerns about using digital media that can trigger inactivity and lack of civic engagement, such as the Spiral of Silence theory, which suggests individuals tend to restrain themselves from expressing opinions if they feel an unsupportive environment (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). However, social media use can strengthen political polarization and social group separation, especially when social media is used to reinforce existing political opinions and views (Baumgartner & Morris, 2010; Sunstein, 2007). This can reinforce narrow views and deepen the divide between social groups. Therefore, social media use must also be done wisely and critically to minimize potential negative impacts.

Community participation in political and social life in Indonesia is still relatively low. According to data from the General Elections Commission (KPU), voter participation in national elections in Indonesia was only 67.5% in 2019 (KPU, 2019). Previous research has shown that digital media use can affect political participation and civic engagement. Digital media can strengthen social ties and political participation by enabling broader interaction and communication (Putnam, 2000). On the other hand, existing literature also shows that digital media use can reinforce dependence on technology and worsen inequality in political participation (Hindman, 2009).

Based on the data, Indonesia has the most significant number of internet users in Southeast Asia and one of the largest in the world, which can be linked to the potential strength to develop civic engagement through social media:

Figure 1.
Internet User Data in Indonesia 2023
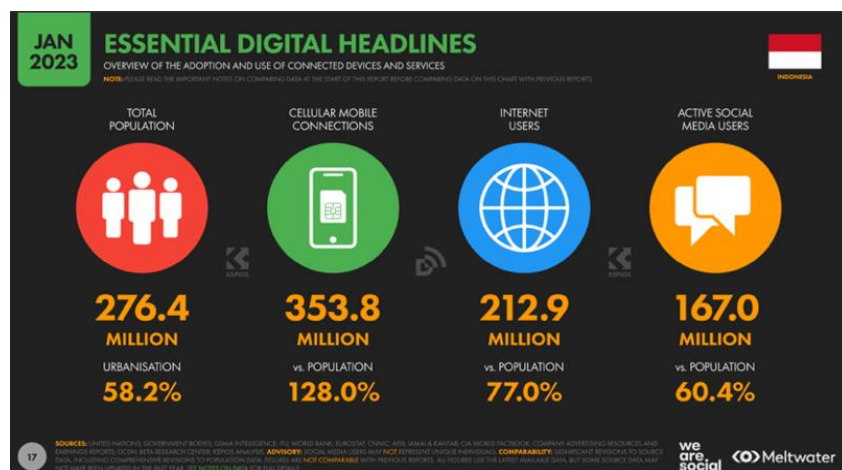
Source: (Kemp, 2023).

Indonesia's significant number of internet users, ranking fourth worldwide according to We Are Social's research data in 2023, presents a tremendous opportunity for developing civic engagement through social and digital media, particularly among the digital native generation. With approximately 77% of the total population or around 212.9 million individuals, being internet users, there is a vast potential for leveraging social media to mobilize support for social and political causes, including election campaigns, protests, and environmental movements. The increasing connectivity of Indonesian citizens to the internet correlates with increased online participation in political and community activities facilitated by the ease of connection and communication among digital natives through social media. This interconnectedness enables the creation of more effective social movements and political campaigns (Anggraheni et al., 2021).

Additionally, the widespread use of social media in Indonesia offers excellent potential for fostering civic engagement among Indonesian digital natives. Examples such as the Indonesian presidential election in 2014, where social media played a vital role in mobilizing young voters and increasing overall voter turnout, and social movements like #SaveKomodo initiated by young Indonesians through social media, demonstrate the capacity of digital natives to rally community involvement in significant environmental and social issues (Dudley et al., 2018; Jurriëns, 2020). Therefore, further understanding how the utilization of social media impacts civic engagement among Indonesian digital natives, as well as identifying the factors influencing their participation in political and community activities, becomes imperative. Exploring the relationship between social media use and civic engagement among digital natives in Indonesia is thus of paramount importance.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with the grounded theory method to analyze the relationship between social media usage and civic engagement among digital natives in Indonesia. Grounded theory involves a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon. The goal is to generate a theory that explains a pattern of behavior or a phenomenon in a way that is grounded in data and that can be used to guide future research and practice" (Charmaz, 2014). In this study, the researchers used purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques to select participants who are digital natives aged 18-24 years old and active social media users in Indonesia.

After selecting the participants, the researchers collected data through open interviews, where the researchers interacted directly with the respondents to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information. Open interviews allowed the respondents to freely express their views, experiences, and knowledge regarding social media use and civic engagement.

Additionally, the researchers directly observed the respondents' social media usage activities. This observation was done by directly observing how digital natives use social media, including the types of content they post, their interactions with others, and their online behavior in general. This observation provided a more detailed understanding of how digital natives interact and engage in the digital environment.

Furthermore, the researchers also utilized documentation methods to collect data. They observed and recorded digital natives' posts related to social, political, and civic issues on social media. The observed documents included various types of content, such as text, images, and videos posted by digital natives. This helped the researchers gain a comprehensive understanding of how digital natives use social media as a tool for participating in civic issues.

After collecting all the data, the researchers conducted the analysis using an inductive and deductive approach. They systematically analyzed the data to identify emerging concepts' patterns, themes, and relationships. Categories and subcategories were developed based on the findings from the data. The researchers also performed data triangulation by comparing and confirming the findings from various data sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents.

Figure 2.
The stages in grounded theory, from Dillon
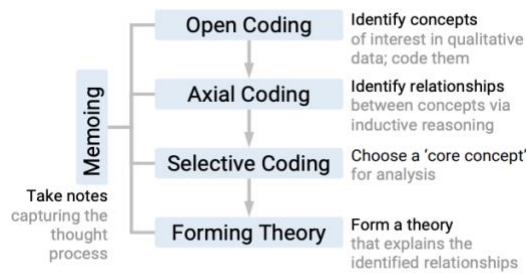
Source: (Chandrasegaran et al., 2017)

The grounded theory approach involves three main stages in data analysis: coding, categorizing, and writing. In the coding stage, data units are identified and labeled or coded. According to Corbin and Strauss, there are two types of coding: open and axial. *Open coding* is the initial stage that identifies concepts that emerge from the data without prior assumptions or biases. In contrast, axial coding is done in the following stage and involves grouping the identified concepts into more organized categories. After coding, the next stage is categorizing, which involves grouping the coded concepts into broader and more organized categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2015). These categories can be organized into a larger model or structure called an "axial model". Finally, the last stage is writing, which involves creating a narrative that describes the analysis results and research findings. A comprehensive narrative that integrates research findings into a coherent and meaningful whole is important.

Result and Discussion

Access to Information is Related to Political and Social Participation

Based on the analysis conducted using NVivo 12 Plus for MacBook in this grounded theory study, it was found that the most frequently occurring keyword is "information." The information plays an important role in the use of social media and civic engagement among Indonesian digital natives.

Figure 3.
Word Frequency

Source: Data analysis using NVivo 12 Plus for MacBook

The research shows that social media can significantly impact citizen participation in social and political activities. It highlights the importance of information exchange and strengthening social networks. Digital natives with good digital literacy skills are more likely to use social media as a source of information. However, the use of social media in strengthening citizen participation is limited to those with sufficient access and digital literacy skills. To improve this, efforts should be made to increase digital literacy for all citizens, especially those not reached by information technology.

Based on these findings, this study can be connected to theories proposed in reputable international journal articles. For example, the article " Impact of Social Media Usage on Civic Engagement towards Societal Problems: Qualitative Modelling Approach" by Shao et al. (2022). found that the use of social media by young generations can increase their civic engagement This is related to the findings in this study that Indonesian digital natives use social media as an important source of information in their civic engagement. In addition, the Uses and Gratifications theory proposed by Katz et al. (1974), can also be linked to the findings in this study, namely that the use of social media as an information source is associated with the need for more specific and personal information (Hoff, 2010). Therefore, the findings in this study can provide an important contribution to the development of theory and understanding of the use of social media and civic engagement by Indonesian digital natives.

This study's findings align with the theory proposed by Norris regarding access to information and political participation (Norris, 2002). According to this theory, the easier someone's access to accurate and relevant information, the higher their political and social participation. In the context of Indonesian digital natives, social media provides easy and fast access to information, thus increasing their participation in political and social activities. Overall, the theory that access to information is related to political and social participation that emerges in this study is consistent with several previous studies and can provide an important contribution to developing theory and understanding of the use of social media and civic engagement by Indonesian digital natives.

The social capital theory proposed by Putnam (2000) can also be linked to the findings in this study. This theory states that participation in social and political activities can improve the well-being of individuals and society. Therefore, using social media as an information source that enables participation in political and social activities can enhance the formation and growth of social capital in the Indonesian digital native community. The Adaptation-Level Phenomenon theory proposed by Brickman & Campbell (1971) can also be linked to the findings in this study. This theory states that individuals tend to adapt to their surroundings, so the use of social media by Indonesian digital natives is a common and routine source of information in political and social activities.

The use of social media by Indonesian digital natives as an important source of information in civic engagement and political participation can provide a new contribution to developing the theory that "Access to information is related to political and social participation". Previously, the theory stated that the easier someone's access to accurate and relevant information, the higher their political and social participation. However, this finding adds a new dimension to the theory, namely the role of social media as a significant source of information in increasing political and social participation, especially for Indonesian digital natives. Therefore, this finding can provide an important contribution to developing the theory "Access to information is related to political and social participation", particularly in considering the role of social media in providing access to information and increasing political and social participation.

Digital Natives in Indonesia Tend to Use Social Media as an Important Source Of Information at an Early Age

This theory is based on the Word Tree analysis of social media in Nvivo 12 Plus, which shows that respondents have been using social media to read and search for the information they need since they were young. Indicates that using social media as an information source has become a habit and behavioral pattern of Indonesian digital natives, which can impact their civic and political engagement in the future. This theory can provide an important contribution to understanding the influence of social media in shaping the character and civic engagement of Indonesian digital natives.

These findings align with other research, such as the study by Prasojo & Yuliana, which found that high school students in Indonesia use social media as their main source of information (Prasojo & Yuliana, 2021). Also found a study by Saputra stated that social media is

the main source of information for Indonesian university students (Saputra, 2019). The research by Qadri also shows that social media is an important source of information for Indonesian youth to form their political opinions (Qadri, 2020). Meanwhile, the study found that social media increases political participation among Indonesian youth (Andriyendi et al., 2023; Tarsidi et al., 2019). In addition, the research by Akhtar found that the Indonesian community also uses social media as a source of information on environmental issues (2020). Social media is not only used as a source of political information but can also be a source of information for social and environmental issues. However, these research findings must be balanced with studies that show that the use of social media can cause inaccurate information and spread false information. The study by Hamzah & Putri (2020) found that many students in Indonesia spread fake and inaccurate news through social media.

In a global context, a study by Yoon found that digital natives in South Korea tend to use social media as their primary source of political information (Yoon, 2018). Meanwhile, a study by Xiang et al. (2022) showed that digital natives in China prefer social media over traditional sources such as television and newspapers Similarly, in Southeast Asia, a study by Abbie Narido et al. showed that digital natives in the Philippines also tend to use social media as their main source of information (Narido et al., 2022). In Thailand, a study by Ugwuanyi et al. found that digital natives use social media to obtain information about social and political issues (Ugwuanyi et al., 2019). Meanwhile, a study by Wardhani et al. showed that the use of social media in Indonesia is more focused on social and cultural issues rather than politics (Wardhani et al., 2019).

Digital natives in Asia, including in Indonesia, are heavily influenced by technological developments and have used social media as their main source of information since a young age. Therefore, the role of social media as an important source of information and political participation tool for digital natives in Indonesia and other Asian countries must be considered in developing political communication strategies and wider community participation.

This study focuses on the digital native population in Indonesia, which can provide a more detailed understanding of their social media usage patterns compared to similar studies in other countries. Additionally, this research highlights the relationship between social media usage and political and social participation among digital natives in Indonesia, which can help design future strategies to increase participation in political and social activities. The study found that a more detailed understanding of the social media usage patterns of Indonesian digital natives can include the most frequently used social media types, the reasons why they choose social media as a source of information, the time spent accessing social media, the type of information sought through social media, as well as their attitudes and perspectives on information found through social media. Thus, a more detailed understanding of Indonesian digital natives' social media usage patterns can provide a more comprehensive insight into how social media is used as a source of information and how social media usage affects their political and social participation. This can provide practical benefits for policymakers and planners in designing strategies to increase social and political involvement among Indonesian digital natives.

Moreover, this research provides a new perspective on the role of social media in political and social participation in Indonesia, which can be useful in designing more effective policies to increase political and social participation among Indonesian digital natives. The role of social media in political and social participation in Indonesia is very important and increasing. Social media provides an easy and fast platform for Indonesian digital natives to connect and interact with others who share the same interests and views and obtain relevant and accurate information. In the context of political participation, social media allows Indonesian digital natives to get information about their political candidates and platforms. Social media also allows them to express their views on political issues and mobilize support from others who share similar views. In this regard, social media can increase political participation among Indonesian digital natives, especially in general elections and political campaigns.

On the other hand, social media also plays an important role in social participation among Indonesian digital natives. Through social media, they can obtain information about ongoing social and humanitarian activities and participate in social campaigns and fundraising to help those in need. In this regard, social media can effectively increase social and humanitarian participation among Indonesian digital natives. However, it is important to note that social media can provide inaccurate information and reinforce narrow-minded thoughts and views. Therefore, it is important for Indonesian digital natives to use social media wisely and critically and to verify the information before spreading or unquestioningly trusting it.

The Use of Social Media as A Source of Information Can Influence The Involvement of Digital Natives in Social and Political Activities

The analysis results using NVivo 12 plus for MacBook from the project map in Nvivo indicate that digital natives in Indonesia tend to use social media as an important source of information from a young age. They utilize social media to search for information regarding social and political issues that are occurring in society. Social media influences their involvement in social and political activities because it makes it easier for them to obtain information quickly and easily. Additionally, through social media, they can expand their social and political networks, thus increasing their participation in social and political activities. Regarding the various uses of social media by Indonesian digital natives, they can be seen in the image below:

Figure 5.
Project Map of Social Media Usage by Indonesian Digital Natives by NVivo
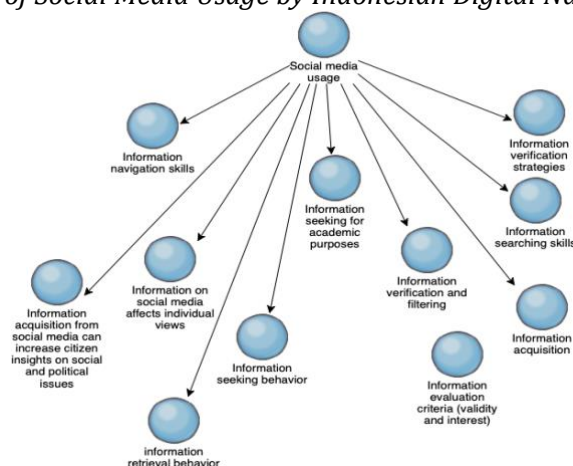
Source: Data analysis using NVivo 12 Plus for MacBook

In this study, it was found that digital natives in Indonesia have good information navigation skills, which enable them to search for and find the information they need on social media. This is supported by the research findings of Emosda & Annisa, which indicate that Indonesian digital natives can use digital information resources and easily understand the information available (Emosda & Annisa, 2020). Additionally, an article by Mihailidis and Viotty explains that information navigation skills are crucial in the current digital era, especially because of the overwhelming amount of information available (Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017). They state that information navigation skills should be formally taught in schools and through lifelong education. Therefore, it can be concluded that information navigation skills are important in using social media, especially for digital natives in Indonesia, who tend to use social media as an important source of information. Thus, efforts are needed to improve information navigation skills in digital natives so that they can better understand and critically evaluate the information they find on social media.

Furthermore, this study also revealed the code "information acquisition from social media can increase citizen insight on social and political issues" in the use of social media by digital natives in Indonesia. According to Miao (2019), social media can increase political participation and influence one's political perception. They found that positive use of social media is associated with political participation at all levels, from non-electoral participation to general

elections. Additionally, Chan et al. showed that political information obtained from social media can influence people's views on politics (Chan et al., 2017). Furthermore, a study by Rosa demonstrated that social media could broaden the scope of political information and increase political awareness (Rosa, 2022). He stated, "Social media has the potential to create social and political change by significantly enhancing access and distribution of political information." Social media allows users to access political information from various sources, such as traditional media organizations, alternative sources, and peers. This enables users to gain a broader and more diverse perspective on political issues, enhancing their insights and engaging them in political activities.

Social media use can also enable citizens' active participation in social and political activities. A study by Pasek et al. found that political participation on social media can help individuals build social and political skills and strengthen their identity as active citizens (Pasek et al., 2006). Similarly, Bimber & Gil de Zúñiga (2020) research stated that using social media can increase political participation and community engagement. Overall, this code shows that the use of social media can have a positive impact on the involvement of digital natives in social and political activities, especially in terms of understanding social and political issues and political participation. However, the use of social media can also have negative effects, such as reinforcing group separation and increasing political polarization. Therefore, using social media as a source of information and a tool for political participation needs to be managed wisely and with discipline to generate significant positive impacts on the involvement of digital natives in social and political activities.

The codes "information retrieval behavior," "information-seeking behavior," and "information searching skills" refer to the behavior and skills in searching for and obtaining information through social media. Previous studies have shown that digital natives tend to have more active information-seeking behavior and higher information-searching skills than previous generations. Some studies indicate that digital natives use search engines and social media as their primary sources for seeking information. A study by Ajiboye & Tella (2007) showed that "about 90% of survey participants use search engines as their first source of information." Similarly, Kim et al. (2020) found that "university students tend to use Google as their main search engine to search for information and social media as a secondary source of information

In addition, the information-seeking and evaluation skills of digital natives have been linked to their increased participation in social and political activities. Marquart et al. (2020) found that "the digital native's ability to search for information has a positive impact on their political participation." They also found that "digital natives who use more varied sources of information are more active in political participation than those who only use one source." This research shows that digital natives in Indonesia tend to use social media as their primary source of information and tend to use multiple sources when seeking information. However, it is also important to consider the skills in verifying and evaluating information obtained from social media to avoid spreading false information or hoaxes. Digital natives tend to have active information-seeking behavior and high information retrieval skills through social media.

They use search engines and social media as their primary sources for seeking information. Therefore, there is a need for digital literacy education that includes skills in information search, evaluation, and verification. This education can help digital natives use social media wisely and obtain accurate information. The information retrieval and evaluation skills of digital natives are related to their increased participation in social and political activities. Those who utilize multiple sources of information are more actively involved in political participation. By understanding the role of social media in the civic engagement of digital natives, more effective efforts and campaigns can be designed to encourage their participation in significant social and political issues.

The code "information on social media affects individual views" is one of the findings from the study "Media Social Use and Civic Engagement among Digital Natives: An Analysis of the

Indonesian Digital Natives." This code indicates that information obtained from social media can influence individuals' views on social and political issues. Research conducted by Effing et al. (2011) shows that information presented on social media can affect individuals' perceptions and opinions on various issues, including social and political issues. Similarly, Kwak & Cho (2018), research show that social media content can affect individuals' perceptions of social and political issues.

Research by Kim et al. (2020) also shows that social media can influence individuals views on political issues. They found that messages spread through social media can influence individuals' attitudes and views on certain political issues. These findings highlight the significant influence of social media on shaping individuals' perspectives and opinions. As a result, it is crucial to recognize the potential impact of social media platforms on the civic engagement of digital natives. By understanding how social media affects the views and attitudes of digital natives, it becomes possible to design more effective strategies and interventions to encourage their active participation in significant social and political issues. This could involve targeted campaigns, educational programs, and initiatives to promote critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible digital citizenship among digital natives.

Conversely, social media messages can reinforce individuals' pre-existing views. Other research findings by Tucker et al. (2018) show that social media can reinforce individuals' views on political issues they support. They found that individuals tend to consume information consistent with their views, and social media allows them to obtain information reinforcing their views. Based on these findings, information obtained from social media can influence individuals views and opinions on social and political issues. Therefore, using social media as a source of information should be balanced with good information navigation skills to help individuals evaluate and verify the information obtained. The practical implication of these findings is the importance of promoting media literacy and critical thinking skills among digital natives. Educational initiatives and campaigns can focus on equipping digital natives with the necessary tools to navigate social media effectively. By fostering information evaluation and verification skills, digital natives can develop a more nuanced understanding of social and political issues, leading to informed civic engagement. Additionally, efforts should be made to raise awareness about the potential for bias and misinformation on social media platforms, encouraging individuals to engage with various perspectives and critically analyze the information they encounter. By emphasizing the development of information navigation skills and promoting media literacy, digital natives can harness the potential of social media as a tool for civic engagement while mitigating the risks of being influenced solely by reinforcing their existing views.

Other studies also support these findings. For example, a study by Zhou et al. (2022) found that "although social media information sources have a significant influence on public views, not all information obtained from these sources is true and reliable." Therefore, individuals must develop skills in evaluating and verifying information to ensure its truthfulness. In addition, research by Shah et al. (2001) shows that individuals can obtain diverse information from social media by using appropriate information acquisition strategies. They state that "individuals who use different information acquisition strategies and obtain information from different sources have the opportunity to obtain more accurate and comprehensive information. However, it should be noted that not all information obtained from social media can be considered valid and true.

Therefore, appropriate information verification and filtration skills are needed. Individuals can develop effective information evaluation criteria by considering information source, credibility, and validity (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017). Individuals can use effective information verification strategies to develop information verification and filtration skills. Thus, individuals can ensure the truthfulness of information before disseminating or making decisions based on it. By equipping individuals with the ability to evaluate and verify information obtained from social media, they can navigate the vast amount of content more effectively. This empowers them to make informed decisions, prevents the spread of

misinformation, and fosters a more responsible engagement with social and political issues. Educational programs and initiatives should prioritize the development of these skills to enable digital natives to become discerning consumers of information in the digital era.

The study "Media Social Use and Civic Engagement among Digital Natives: An Analysis of the Indonesian Digital Natives: An Analysis of the Internet and Social Media" highlights the importance of evaluating and verifying information from social media and the internet. It highlights the need for educational interventions to develop critical thinking and media literacy skills among digital natives, enabling them to navigate the digital landscape with caution and discernment. It also emphasizes the responsibility of digital natives as content creators and sharers, exercising responsible behavior by fact-checking and verifying information before sharing it. Policymakers and educators should integrate information evaluation and verification skills into educational curricula and digital literacy initiatives to foster a generation of digitally savvy individuals who engage in civic matters based on accurate and verified information.

Conclusion

Based on the research data, the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) The presence of information on social media platforms influences the attitudes and perceptions of digital natives towards social and political issues, ultimately affecting their involvement in social and political activities. It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of social media in shaping individuals' viewpoints and opinions and to promote media literacy and critical thinking skills to navigate and assess the obtained information. (2) social media allows digital natives to acquire information swiftly and conveniently, expanding their social and political networks. However, it is essential to maintain a balance by developing practical information navigation skills to ensure accurate and reliable information consumption. (3) The accessibility and advantages of social media for civic engagement are currently limited to digital natives with adequate access and literacy skills. Efforts should be made to enhance access and digital literacy for all individuals, particularly those excluded from information technology. Establishing digital literacy programs that cater to all segments of society can optimize the utilization of social media to strengthen citizen participation in social and political activities.

Overall, understanding the role of social media and its influence on civic engagement among Indonesian digital natives can inform the development of theories and strategies for promoting informed participation in social and political issues. By promoting media literacy, critical thinking, and responsible digital citizenship, digital natives can navigate social media effectively and engage in civic matters based on reliable and verified information.

This research implies that social media can effectively increase citizen participation in social and political contexts. However, it needs to be balanced with good digital literacy and critical thinking towards the obtained information. Recommendations that can be made are to conduct further research on what factors influence citizen participation in social media and to provide training and education related to responsible and proper use of social media in social and political contexts to the public. In addition, the government and educational institutions can make efforts to increase digital literacy among the digital native generation so that they can verify the information and be critical of the content on social media.

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