



## Social media as a means for students to become global citizens

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### ABSTRACT

The development of information technology, especially social media, has paved the way for the theory and concept of global citizenship. Integration and connection allow everyone to convey citizens' opinions, ideas, criticism, and actions. Based on the literature and previous studies, social media is analyzed in terms of benefits and disadvantages. This study aims to emphasize the use of social media among students, especially as a means of becoming global citizens. This research was conducted using qualitative methods by analyzing various literature and sources, which were then described. The study results show that student activity in social media contributes to a new media ecology called global citizen solidarity in social media. Student solidarity in viewing various problems that occur led to civic action. Student actions on social media in various fields and issues on global issues such as politics, religion, economy, environment, health, philanthropy, and human rights reinforce the concept of being global citizens. The transformation regarding the use of social media by students into a theoretical framework for global citizen practice. It is important to re-describe the concept of global citizenship or cosmopolitanism through social media to create world citizen solidarity as a sense of responsibility in dealing with global problems and promoting world peace.

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### INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology, especially social media, has become an integral part of everyday life for people worldwide. Social media is a technology that mediates communication and allows much human interaction (Longo, 2014). Having a role as a movement for change (Boulianne, 2019; Goh & Pang, 2016; Joia & Soares, 2018), encouraging participation (D'Ambrosi, 2017; Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2018; Ohme, 2019), which also has implications for civic action towards disaster risk reduction (Yadav & Rahman, 2016).

The use of social media globally in 2020 has reached more than 3.8 billion users (Kemp, 2020), which means that more than half of the world's population uses social media. Social media has now become a tool for various purposes used in the field of education (Abney et al., 2019; Albert, 2015; Freberg & Kim, 2018), for economic purposes (Dey et al., 2019; Laurell & Sandström, 2017; Poorthuis et al., 2020), plays a role in politics (Dumitrica & Bakardjieva, 2018; Ferrucci et al., 2020; Salzman, 2019), studies in the field of religion (Amit et al., 2020; McClure, 2016; Neumaier, 2020), and as part of communication (Fusi & Zhang, 2020; Xu, 2020; Young & Hinesly, 2014).

Increasing the use of social media will certainly lead to positive or even negative impacts (Stuart, 2014). In line with the research results by Allen et al. (2014), the younger generation experiences the paradox of the effects of social media. On the one hand, it increases convenience in online communities, and on the other hand, it can create a source of alienation. It must be admitted that social media has benefits and benefits. However, the negative effects must also be considered. Excessive use of social media can impact mental health (Bekalu et al., 2019; Kaler et al., 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2018), has addictive effects (Abbasi, 2019; Hawi & Samaha, 2019; Jeri-Yabar et al., 2019), has a negative impact on sleep quality (Garett et al., 2018; Kaimal et al., 2017; van der Schuur et al., 2019), and the occurrence of cyberbullying on social media (Byrne et al., 2018; Pillay & Sacks, 2020; Reynolds et al., 2017).

Today's college students are the second generation of digital natives (Covey & Potts, 2018; Dingli & Seychell, 2015). The first generation of digital natives was born after 1980, while those born after 1990 are the second generation of digital natives. The second generation is characterized by the use of laptops, netbooks, tablets, and smartphones as facilities for streaming various kinds of content, and several available information (online) can be easily known to them (Dingli & Seychell, 2015). The second generation of digital natives, besides using the internet a lot, also have a more positive attitude towards the internet than the first generation (Joiner et al., 2013). Furthermore, in the second generation of digital natives, social media is very popular compared to the first generation.

Social media is inseparable from student life (Matang & Samsuri, 2018). The involvement of students with social media has been carried out in several previous studies (Bal et al., 2015; Demirbilek & Talan, 2017; Flores et al., 2020; Mostafa, 2015; Perrault et al., 2019; Samuels-Peretz et al., 2017; Twenge et al., 2019). This research focuses on studying how social media can be a means for students to become global citizens.

Being a global citizen is responsible for poverty, climate change, human rights, religious dialogue, and governance of health issues (Bostad & Ottersen, 2014). Through the development of technology and means of communication, especially social media. National barriers no longer limit the world, and can interact with people in any part of the world. Social media allows all users to interact and build better relationships. Social media facilitates forming global communities, starting from individuals, groups, and organizations. The global entity as a process of globalization is seen from two perspectives. First, globalization is based on collaboration between powerful countries known as the "G 20", which has created a world economic market. Second, globalization is seen as a social movement such as environmental issues, human rights, health, poverty, immigrants, and peace agendas (Moxnes, 2014). For this reason, students as an educated generation who are born and literate in technology have an essential role in responding to various problems that exist in the world. Global problems are indeed the responsibility of all citizens of the world. With the use of social media, students are expected to take part in responding to the challenges of global problems.

Previous research has not specifically highlighted student contributions to developing global citizenship practices through social media. Therefore, this research makes a new contribution by exploring student activities on social media and how they contribute to world citizen solidarity and global citizenship practices. The urgency of this research lies in strengthening the concept of global citizenship and citizenship practices in the digital and social media era, especially among students. In the information and globalization era, social media can be an important tool in forming global citizen solidarity and promoting global citizen practices. This research is expected to provide a new understanding of how social media can strengthen the concept of global citizenship and citizenship practices, especially among university students.

## METHOD

This study uses qualitative analysis in a literature study format (Stratton, 2019). This method is expected to have validity which can then be reproduced in research. The utilization of social media is a top priority in presenting the theme of students being able to play a role in global problems. Literature reviews are descriptive (Jaffe & Cowell, 2014) and depart from relevant themes. Data collection was in the form of primary and secondary literature in the form of theoretical studies, survey results, and previous research results in books and journals. These were then selected,

presented, analyzed, and ended with theory. A total of 109 journal articles and books were reviewed in this study. Journal articles sourced from the journals Taylor & Francis, Sage Journal, Elsevier, Springer, Wiley Online Library, and others. The two journal portal names mentioned earlier dominate the articles analyzed using the keywords "Social Media" and "Students" or "Social Media" and "Global Citizen." The literature review aims to map the theoretical concept of global citizenship and the use of social media for students to achieve this.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Social Media and Globalization

Global history can be understood as a general concept, a history of connections, and a concept of integration (Conrad, 2017). Technology and media evolution that has facilitated cross-border communication and interaction is one of the narratives that can explain the concept of global citizenship. Integration occurs when national boundaries disappear, and technology allows different cultures and nations to communicate and identify as global citizens (Smith et al., 2017). This concept requires imagination about a global world and then applying globalization to refer to the imagined object (Kamola, 2019).

**Table 1.** The Scope of the Concept of Globalization

No.	Studies	Global issues
1.	Axford (2013)	Health issues, poverty, gender, war, migration, pandemics and human rights.
2.	Bostad and Ottersen (2014)	Human rights, climate change, poverty, religion, and health issues.
3.	Figge and Martens (2014)	Political, economic, social and cultural, technological, and environmental issues.
4.	Moxnes (2014)	Environmental issues, the economy, human rights, health, poverty, immigrants, and the peace agenda.
5.	Sassen (2014)	Economy, politics, and environment.
6.	Widdows (2014)	Poverty, development, war, terrorism, environmental issues, and gender.
7.	Cunningham (2015)	Technology and media.
8.	Gardner-McTaggart and Palmer (2018)	Technology
9.	Postill (2018)	Ideology, politics, populism, media and communication.
10.	Corsini et al. (2020)	Technology and gender.
11.	Olivie and Gracia (2020)	Economy, technology, information and science.
12.	Moghadam (2021)	Economy, technology, religion, feminism, global justice, populism and peace agenda.

Source: Processed literature review data

Globalization is a complex process leading to increased relationships and interrelationships in the political, economic, social and cultural, technological, and environmental domains on various scales (Figge & Martens, 2014). As in Table 1, the scope of the concept of globalization can be seen in global issues, which are the focus of the attention of global citizens. The process of globalization developed rapidly during the 90s and 2000s (Olivie & Gracia, 2020), which peaked from the mid-2000s to the present (Flew, 2018). By considering the implications of technology, information media, and science, the globalization process continues to move. Moghadam (2021), interconnection from various parts of the world has opened up possibilities for collective action in a global order centered on peace and people's welfare.

In Theories of Globalization, Barrie Axford (2013) explains that globalization is closely related to the study of geography, followed by anthropology, culture, communication, history, and

economics. The mainstream of the study contributes to complex global themes. Related to issues of gender, health, poverty, and war, these themes, in turn, produce more detailed explanations of migration, pandemics, inequality, and violence. Sassen's (2014) latest study on the theme of globalization is closely related to global political economy issues, which discuss the expulsion of low-income and unemployed workers who are no longer included in government social welfare and health programs as well as company insurance and unemployment benefits that occur in the western world. Another example presented was the emergence of mining techniques that change the natural environment, has an impact on soil and water ecosystems to become polluted and even die, or, in other words, the expulsion of the biosphere or life on earth. From these two theories, the complexity of the problems happening in the world is clear. For this reason, the imagination the awareness of all people in the world as global citizens are needed to help solve these problems.

The development of information technology, which includes social media, has made the imagination of global citizens even more real. This is because social media can connect people in various parts of the world (Golbeck, 2015). Allows for interaction with each other in various ways that build and define online identities. Because social media as a device in hand has influenced the interpretation of the real driving globalization, so by not making it part of the global, it means releasing the idea of global citizens from reality (Gardner-McTaggart & Palmer, 2018). As Cunningham (2015) exemplifies, social media platforms facilitate greater content across local and regional barriers. The globalization of social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and others shows global institutions. The language and culture that was originally only local and regional content expanded to become a global platform that everyone knows about.

The global impact of social media has become a space for participation and collaboration in various fields and issues (Corsini et al., 2020). In a virtual network, issues such as upholding basic human rights can be done with the collaboration of all layers. The global impact of social media as a form of collaboration and participation is exemplified by Corsini et al. (2020) on the hashtags #ILookLikeASurgeon and #NYerORCoverChallenge. Tegar promotes gender equality so that women also have equal opportunities in terms of employment. On the other hand, Schlagwein and Prasarnphanich (2014) highlighted the global impact of social media on cultural values in organizations. Wang (2015) emphasized that social media is a solution to the culture of communication within organizations. The global trend of using social media in various fields and problems cannot be separated from the populist value and benefits it brings.

Social media and the wave of populism are seen as a global perspective in terms of participation (Postill, 2018). Participation is a part of social capital and the involvement of citizens who use social media (Skoric et al., 2016). As a global citizen, seeing the various problems that occur worldwide, of course, participation is very important. As stated by Katz and Halpern (2013), social media is not only a means of participation but also increases the transparency of global governments. The public can be involved in a decision as global citizens.

### **Global Citizenship through Social Media**

Global citizenship refers to the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship. A concept that underlies ethical and moral values that considers world citizens to have the same position (Nussbaum, 2019). Cosmopolitanism is like the story of the dialogue between Diogenes and Alexander the Great, which raised the concept of equality and peace and which later became the idea of the human rights movement in the modern era. Cosmopolitan solidarity fosters awareness as fellow citizens of the world to help each other and be compassionate towards various problems (Khoo, 2014).

Caraus (2018) exemplifies cosmopolitan citizenship in the case of migrants who receive bad treatment as a new form of activism on the global political stage. The intertwined solidarity and cosmopolitanism (Rasmussen, 2014) can be reflected in the public spaces that exist on the internet. This strengthens the position of globalization, which moves with the help of technology. As stated by Kamola (2019), changing conditions make political, social, cultural imagination, and so on, influence positions in the global order, so that both policymakers, business people, campuses, and even students are required to realize that they have become part of of the world order or global citizens.

Global citizenship can be identified through the perceptions of others (Cesario, 2017). When someone has the knowledge and then respects others, then the identity of a global citizen will appear as a minimal concept. The maximal concept is identified when one feels related to the problems in the world. Global problems can be described as poverty, development, war, terrorism, bioethics, environmental ethics, and justice issues from a gender perspective (Widdows, 2014). This concept is like the cosmopolitan understanding of seeing the equality of fate experienced by fellow earthlings and feeling what other people feel in other parts of the world.

Pathak-Shelat (2018) presented the key concepts underlying the debate on global citizenship, namely justice, equality, diversity, identity and belonging, and sustainable development. The perspectives and mainstream of global citizenship have implications for the economy, politics, culture, morality, religion, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, migration, and social class. Furthermore, one of the key issues regarding global citizenship is social media. As Kiwan (2018) stated, social media is an important theme in global citizenship.

The development of social media as an online space has involved students in global citizenship (Loader et al., 2014; Pathak-Shelat & Bhatia, 2019). Social media can be understood as a contextual practice of global citizenship (Mainsah, 2017). On the other hand, Krishen et al. (2016) call it virtual citizenship so citizens can convey opinions and information through social media. Within the global citizenship framework, social media emphasizes the solidarity of global citizens as a sense of responsibility in dealing with problems (Lim, 2017), particularly as a space to promote peace (Naseem et al., 2017).

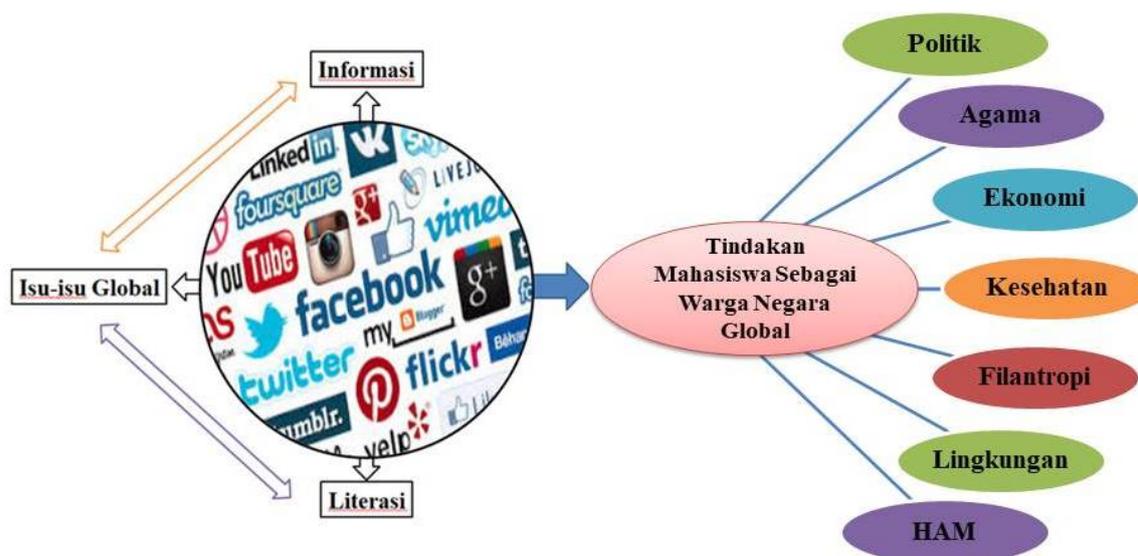
### **Student Actions as Global Citizens**

Networked citizen is a keyword in affirming the position of students as global citizens. Citizens can communicate with everyone worldwide because they are connected by information technology networks such as social media (Navarria, 2019). Events and conditions occurring in one part of the world are now shared instantly via social media and have a massive effect on other parts. Recognizing current global trends and problems is the first step in understanding the position and role of students in a larger global context (Lee et al., 2017). The identity of students as global citizens can be reflected through social media, which ideally plays a key role as agents of change.

As agents of change, students are seen as a generation with better digital literacy than other groups in society (Suparno et al., 2020). For this reason, the importance of media literacy (Manca et al., 2021) related to using social media to maximize the potential of social media appropriately in acting as global citizens (Pathak-Shelat, 2018). Rosengard et al. (2014) exemplify one form of media literacy. When students get information through social media such as Facebook and Twitter, they must confirm it through other sources of information such as television and newspapers and check the relevant websites to validate the information obtained. Media literacy competence is important for students to maximize their actions on social media as global citizens.

Students' actions as global citizens can be seen in their participation in global issues. Figure 1 illustrates social media as a means for students to become global citizens. Hartung (2017) calls it a "responsible citizen." When they see and feel the problems that are happening in the world, students participate in spreading information, providing support, and taking action to solve problems. As with the human rights case involving the murder of Trayvon Martin, which gave rise to the hashtag #Black Lives Matter Williams (2019), bringing up cases of racial discrimination that have gone viral is a real form of participation on social media.

When writing this article, one of the most felt global problems is the COVID-19 pandemic. More information about the pandemic is known to students through social media (Kaya, 2020). This is due to information being disseminated or retweeted by users, including students (Mirbabaie et al., 2020). This action has indirectly made students absorb the concept of global citizens when they see problems in the world and participate in providing solutions in various forms.



**Figure 1.** Student Actions as Global Citizens through Social Media

Source: Processed literature review data

Forms of student participation as global citizens on social media are also seen when promoting the importance of protecting the environment (Scherman et al., 2015). Social media is a strategic place for environmentalists or activists, especially students, to collaborate and communicate online across countries to discuss these issues (Ghermandi & Sinclair, 2019; Kaur, 2015; Sovacool et al., 2020). The role of students, as global citizens, are expected to be able to achieve an understanding of sustainable environmental management.

In addition to human rights, health, and environmental issues. Student participation in global issues on social media can also be seen in political issues (Ahmad et al., 2019; Ekström & Shehata, 2018; Moffett & Rice, 2018), religion (Amit et al., 2020; Evans & Kaynak, 2015; Woodward & Kimmons, 2019), economics (Arora et al., 2019; Fuchs, 2015), and philanthropic actions (Bhati & McDonnell, 2020; Borst et al., 2018; Thomas et al., 2018). The author does not deny that students have participated in other global issues as a limitation of this paper. In general, the various studies that have been reviewed emphasize the role of social media as a means for students to become global citizens. Students, as global citizens, can play an active role in various actions on global issues.

This study uses qualitative analysis in the literature study format, so it does not describe numerically how much influence social media has on student citizenship practices. Furthermore, this research only focuses on university students, so it cannot represent the experiences and views of other groups, such as the general public. In this case, further research can use more varied methods and involve a wider group of people.

The implication for future research opportunities is that there are many important aspects of the use of social media to strengthen the concept of global citizenship and citizenship practices that still need to be studied in more depth. For example, how does the use of social media affect students' views on specific global issues, how can social media be used to strengthen the solidarity of world citizens, and how can digital citizenship be developed in the social media era. Therefore, future research can focus on these topics to provide a better understanding of the use of social media in the context of global citizenship.

## CONCLUSION

As the second generation of digital natives, students and social media have become an inseparable part and characterize this generation. In addition to its use for communication purposes, social media is used in the field of education, economic purposes, political participation, and in the

field of religion. Social media facilitates students to connect with other people in various parts of the world. Based on the results of this study, social media has an important role as a means for students to become global citizens. Students' use of social media emphasizes the solidarity of world citizens as a sense of responsibility in dealing with global problems. Student solidarity in viewing global issues raises global citizens' actions. Student actions as global citizens can be seen in their participation in global issues such as environmental, health, political, religious, economic, environmental, philanthropic, and human rights issues. Students' actions as global citizens or cosmopolitanism will receive criticism from ethnocentric and chauvinist groups. Future research is expected to answer these criticisms in order to continue to create global solidarity and responsibility in solving problems that exist in the world..

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