



THE ROLE OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN ADDRESSING THREATS TO THE CREDIBILITY OF CITIZENS' INFORMATION IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

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Abstract: The Post-Truth Era represents a condition where the existence of objective data has faded and has shaped public opinion, resulting in the spread of disinformation. The impact of the Post-Truth Era is also evident in daily life, where the abundance of information circulating on the internet and social media makes it difficult for individuals to differentiate between facts and opinions. This research adopts a qualitative approach with a literature review method. The data analysis includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The conclusion of this research indicates that Civic Education can provide opportunities for students to access various sources of information, both from digital and traditional media. The importance of information literacy serves as a foundation for young citizens. The integration of civic competence based on information literacy, emotional intelligence, and moral intelligence is implemented through: (1) Case Study Methods Based on Citizenship Information; (2) Simulations and Digital Games; (3) Collaborative and Participatory Approaches; (4) Value Education and Media Ethics.

INTRODUCTION

The Post-Truth era is a condition in which objective facts and empirical data lose their influence in shaping public opinion, while emotions, personal beliefs, and subjective interpretations become more dominant. In this era, truth is perceived as relative and dependent on individual perspectives, often disregarding verifiable evidence. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by advancements in digital technology, particularly social media, which facilitate the spread of unverified or misleading information (Hovland et al., 1953).



In the current Post-Truth era, the boundary between facts and lies has become increasingly blurred, making it difficult for society to assess information objectively. This presents a complex challenge for civic education, as its role is not only to impart knowledge about citizens' rights and responsibilities but also to equip individuals with the critical skills needed to navigate the confusing flow of information. For example, Civic Education must be capable of developing students' ability to discern valid and relevant information, as well as strengthen a skeptical attitude toward information that lacks clear supporting evidence (Erlande & Chotimah, 2023). Thus, Civic Education becomes crucial in shaping intelligent and critical citizens amidst the challenges of the Post-Truth era.

Amidst the challenges of the Post-Truth era, a new concept of Civic Education is needed, one that is not only academic but also capable of fostering active and critical citizens in the 21st century. This concept must shift from the traditional academic approach, which emphasizes the mastery of knowledge, to a more transformative approach. Transformative Civic Education will focus on developing critical thinking skills, information analysis, and a deeper understanding of social and political dynamics (Khairunisa et al., 2024). Therefore, transformative Civic Education can help individuals become more discerning in filtering information and making more rational decisions, especially when facing the confusing flow of information in the Post-Truth era (Istianah & Komalasari, 2023).

Education is a crucial tool in creating a positive environment and can serve as a guide toward better change for a nation (Jannah & Sulianti, 2021). In the context of the Post-Truth era, where false information and manipulation of truth often dominate the public sphere, Civic Education plays a key role in equipping individuals with critical thinking skills and information evaluation. The Post-Truth era has had a significant impact on various aspects of public life, including politics and individual decision-making. Public trust in democratic institutions, such as mainstream media and government agencies, has declined due to frequent perceptions that they spread hoaxes or biased information (Buchanan & Kaye, 2022). Therefore, education becomes a vital tool to shape citizens who are not only well-informed but also capable of participating actively and responsibly in the democratic process and responding to the challenges posed by the Post-Truth phenomenon.

The impact of the Post-Truth era is also felt in daily life, where the vast amount of information circulating on the internet and social media makes it difficult for individuals to distinguish facts. This increases their vulnerability to emotional and psychological manipulation, which in turn leads to poor decision-making, both personally and professionally.



This phenomenon also exacerbates the potential for social conflict, as differences in perceptions and beliefs are built on inaccurate information. As stated by Erlande & Chotimah (2023) and Murdiono et al. (2020), advancements in communication and information technology have not only changed the way society lives but have also had a significant impact on the education sector. In this regard, Civic Education is essential for equipping citizens with critical skills to evaluate information, reduce vulnerability to manipulation, and minimize potential conflicts arising from misinformation (Erlande et al., 2024).

Amidst the challenges of the Post-Truth era, Civic Education plays an increasingly important role in preparing citizens to navigate the complexities of available information. Civic Education aims to build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for individuals to actively participate in democratic society (Henderson & Tudball, 2019). Therefore, Civic Education must adapt to the dynamics of the times. Essential skills such as critical thinking, media literacy, and the ability to assess information credibility have become competencies that every individual must possess to navigate effectively in an increasingly complex information world.

Civic Education must continuously evolve to meet the challenges of the current digital era, ensuring that citizens are not only accurately informed but also able to contribute wisely and responsibly to social, national, and state life (Khairunisa & Damayanti, 2023). In the Post-Truth era, which is filled with information that often misleads, the ability to think critically and analyze sources of information becomes crucial. Adaptive Civic Education will help individuals build awareness on how to identify valid information, reduce the spread of hoaxes, and strengthen democratic values within society. Thus, Civic Education plays a role not only as a tool to shape politically informed citizens but also as a foundation to maintain social integrity and encourage active participation in addressing the increasingly complex information challenges. Through this education, it is hoped that citizens will become more discerning in using digital technology, interacting with the virtual world, and upholding truth and social peace amidst the overwhelming flow of information (Erlande et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODS

The research on the Role of Civic Education in Addressing Threats to the Credibility of Citizens' Information in the Post-Truth Era uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis method. The objective of this study is to explore and deeply understand the social phenomenon related to the credibility of information in the Post-Truth era. The primary technique for data collection involves a literature review, focusing on the analysis of various sources such as academic journals, books, research reports, and official documents relevant to



the credibility of information in the Post-Truth era and Civic Education. The research procedure begins with the selection of literature sources, followed by searching, reading, note-taking, and presenting the literature review.

In the data analysis, this study follows steps such as data reduction, where key information is filtered, and related findings are grouped to identify the core material being discussed. The results of this data reduction are then presented systematically through data displays in the form of tables, graphs, or summaries of key findings to provide a clear picture. Next, conclusions are drawn with verification through a triangulation approach, which compares findings from the literature review with other studies and additional data sources to ensure that the findings reflect various perspectives from relevant literature sources (Sugiyono, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Application of Technology in Education in the Modern Era

Over the past few decades, the education system has undergone significant changes influenced by technological advancements and globalization. The 21st century, also known as the information era, presents both opportunities and challenges for education. This modern era is characterized by the development of digital technology, which not only transforms the way humans communicate but also the ways we learn and teach.

Education in the 21st century is marked by the implementation of 21st-century skills, which encompass critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication: (1) Critical Thinking, to sharpen the ability to analyze information, evaluate arguments, and solve problems rationally. This serves as a foundational skill for students as young, intelligent citizens to discern credible information from hoaxes; (2) Creativity, to encourage students to generate innovative ideas and novel solutions, particularly when facing complex challenges; (3) Collaboration, to teach teamwork, both directly and through digital platforms. This is essential for fostering empathy and the ability to work effectively in diverse environments; (4) Communication, to enhance students' ability to articulate ideas effectively, both orally and in writing. This is crucial to develop young citizens who are wise in their use of language and communication in the modern era.

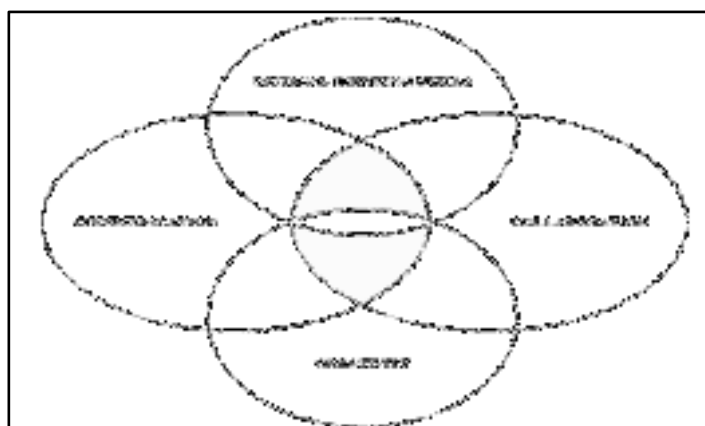


Figure 1. 21st Century Skills

To support these skills, the modern education system increasingly relies on digital technology. Online learning platforms, digital tools such as applications, learning management systems (LMS), and video conferencing have become integral parts of the teaching and learning process.

Research by Fitriyadi (2013) highlights that 21st-century teaching and learning skills integrating technology act as an enabler for lifelong learning, redefining the roles of teachers and students, providing open access to interactive materials and information through networks, eliminating time and space constraints, enabling broader interaction, and supporting learning management. Similarly, Daud et al. (2019) emphasize the use of technology in learning, such as Google Apps for Education and video editing skills, as concrete implementations of modern education systems. These programs not only help teachers develop technical skills relevant to 21st-century demands but also support the transformation of education toward a more inclusive digital era.

This aligns with the characteristics of modern education systems or 21st-century learning, which emphasize technological mastery as a means to develop critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (4C). In this context, technology is not merely a tool but a catalyst to achieve educational goals.

Furthermore, the study by Damayanti et al. (2023) on project-based learning in the digital era highlights the importance of project-based and collaborative learning in enhancing these skills. This context reinforces the notion that modern education requires a synergy between core skills and technology to create meaningful learning experiences.

Thus, education in the modern era offers significant opportunities to create a more effective, inclusive, and relevant teaching and learning process. Digital technology serves not only as a tool but also as a catalyst for educational transformation. By integrating technology



into learning, the education system can more effectively develop 21st-century skills. A balanced collaboration between the government, educators, and society is needed to ensure that technology is optimally utilized to prepare young generations for global challenges.

Credibility of Information Sources in the Digital Era

The selection of credible information sources in the digital era is of utmost importance because the easy access to various sources of information requires society to assess the reliability of the information they consume. According to the source credibility theory proposed by Hovland et al. (1953), individuals are more easily persuaded when the information source is deemed credible. In this context, individuals tend to trust and accept messages delivered by sources they perceive as having credibility in their field. This credibility is not only tied to the source's reputation but also to the public's perception of the quality and reliability of the information provided.

According to Fahrizi et al. (2024), credibility is part of the receiver's (communicant's) perception of the attributes or characteristics of the message sender (communicator). In other words, credibility is not inherently attached to the communicator but depends on how the public evaluates their character and competence. In a digital world saturated with information, the credibility of sources is more rigorously tested, as individuals are frequently confronted with various narratives that may be misleading (Fahrizi et al., 2024).

To build credibility, a communicator must possess three key elements: pathos, ethos, and logos. Pathos refers to the communicator's ability to influence the emotions of the message receiver, making the message resonate with their feelings and perspectives. Ethos relates to the character or personality of the communicator, which affects the trustworthiness of the message conveyed. Meanwhile, logos refers to the communicator's ability to present rational arguments backed by evidence. In the digital era, these three elements are critical in determining whether the received information is accountable or not (Fahrizi et al., 2024). Therefore, it is crucial for individuals in the digital era to identify credible information sources by evaluating the pathos, ethos, and logos of the communicator. Given the proliferation of fake news and hoaxes, this ability is vital to protect oneself from disinformation that could lead to poor decision-making.

According to Azza & Anshori (2022), the credibility of an information source is influenced by three main factors: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. Trustworthiness is the primary foundation for building a source's credibility, as recipients tend to accept messages delivered by sources they deem reliable. This trustworthiness is established when the information provided is consistent and aligns with reality. Expertise also plays a significant



role, as sources with deep knowledge and experience in a given topic are more likely to be trusted by their audience. Such sources are better able to provide relevant and valuable information that fulfills the audience's needs. Lastly, attractiveness is an equally important supporting factor. The appeal of the content or presentation enhances the source's appeal, making audiences more inclined to follow and trust the information provided. These three factors—trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness—are crucial in determining whether an information source is reliable and effective in delivering accurate and relevant messages (Azza & Anshori, 2022).

Additionally, the widespread use of social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and others often exacerbates challenges related to the credibility of information in the digital era, especially concerning compliance with laws governed by Law Number 19 of 2016 on Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE Law). These social media platforms enable information to spread rapidly and widely, often without adequate verification, facilitating the dissemination of hoaxes, hate speech, and other misleading content. For instance, information or narratives that go viral on Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and other platforms are often influenced more by emotional reactions and sensationalism than by verified facts (Khairunisa & Sundawa, 2023). This can result in inaccurate or even harmful information being widely accepted by the public.

Within the framework of the ITE Law, social media becomes a vulnerable medium for legal violations, such as the spread of false information or content that infringes on the rights of others. Article 28, Paragraph (1) of the ITE Law prohibits the dissemination of information that could harm others, both materially and immaterially, which often occurs on these platforms. For example, on Twitter, unverified information can spread within seconds, triggering chain reactions that influence public opinion and lead to social conflicts. On Instagram and TikTok, visually appealing and attention-grabbing videos can make hoaxes or inaccurate content go viral quickly, regardless of their validity (Arifah & Ashidiq, 2024).

This underscores the importance of education on digital literacy and social media ethics in ensuring compliance with laws in the digital realm. Every social media user is expected to have a high level of awareness in verifying the credibility of information before sharing it. Moreover, content creators who utilize platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and others also have a responsibility to ensure that the information they provide aligns with credibility principles that prioritize pathos, ethos, and logos—information that is rational, evidence-based, and accountable (Arifah & Ashidiq, 2024).



Given the speed and reach of social media, enforcing the ITE Law becomes more challenging but remains essential. Therefore, beyond strict law enforcement, society must also be educated on the importance of adhering to legal regulations and respecting the rights of others in digital interactions, so that social media can be used as a constructive and responsible tool (Arifah & Ashidiq, 2024).

Threats to Citizenship in the Post-Truth Era

The Post-Truth Era refers to a condition in which objective facts and empirical data play a significantly diminished role in shaping public opinion or policy. In this era, emotions, personal beliefs, and subjective interpretations take precedence. Truth is often perceived as relative and dependent on individual perspectives rather than verifiable facts. Consequently, people are quick to accept information that aligns with their views or preferences, even if such information lacks strong evidence or contradicts established facts. This phenomenon is exacerbated by advancements in digital technology, such as social media, which facilitate the dissemination of unverifiable information. Broadly speaking, the Post-Truth Era can be defined as the age of post-truth (Ghosh & Jing, 2020).

The Post-Truth Era is triggered by several interconnected factors that undermine the relevance of objective facts. According to Buchanan & Kaye (2022), some of the key drivers include:

1. **Advancements in Digital Technology:** The development of digital technology, especially the internet and social media, allows information to spread rapidly and without stringent controls. Anyone can create and disseminate content without undergoing verification or oversight. This facilitates the spread of misinformation, such as hoaxes or conspiracy theories. Social media algorithms often prioritize emotionally engaging content, such as controversies or sensational stories, over content with verified validity.
2. **Increasing Political Polarization:** The intensification of political polarization leads people to seek and trust information that supports their political views or affiliations. In this context, information contradicting one's political beliefs is often ignored or deemed false, regardless of the evidence. This polarization reinforces cognitive biases, where individuals prefer information that aligns with their existing beliefs.
3. **Declining Trust in Institutions:** A decrease in trust in institutions, such as governments and academic organizations, prompts people to favor narratives presented by non-authoritative figures or unverified sources, as they feel traditional institutions fail to meet their needs or expectations.



4. The Tendency for Quick Information Consumption: In the digital age, public attention often focuses on consuming information quickly and briefly. Headlines or snippets of information are often deemed sufficient for forming opinions, without further effort to understand the context or verify their truthfulness.
5. Psychological and Social Factors: Emotions such as fear, anger, or pride strongly influence how individuals accept and share information. In the Post-Truth Era, these emotions are often exploited to reinforce certain narratives, regardless of their accuracy.

The Post-Truth Era has brought about serious threats, particularly with the rampant spread of hoaxes and hate speech, which are increasingly difficult to control due to their evolving patterns and complexity. According to an APJII report (2017), the rate of intentional internet fraud reached 83.98%, reflecting the high prevalence of cybercrime conducted on a massive scale. In this context, the Post-Truth Era facilitates the spread of misinformation, often accepted and believed as truth by many people. Through social media, hoaxes wield significant power in swaying public emotions, influencing actions, and shaping societal attitudes, even without factual backing (Fatmawati, 2019).

Moreover, the persistent dissemination of hoaxes undermines trust in valid information, including news from official sources such as mainstream media or government institutions. This fosters skepticism among the public, making it difficult to build a fact-based collective awareness. Additionally, hate-based narratives disseminated through social media can exacerbate social polarization and create tensions between groups, ultimately threatening public stability and security. In this condition, the Post-Truth Era not only harms individuals but also disrupts overall social cohesion. These threats demand strategic actions, particularly in the field of education, to strengthen critical thinking skills in society and counter the negative impacts of the Post-Truth Era (Fatmawati, 2019).

Education plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges of the Post-Truth Era, as it not only serves as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a platform for shaping character, values, and individuals' critical thinking patterns. In this context, the education system must be designed to equip students with critical thinking skills, digital literacy, and strong social awareness so they can navigate an increasingly complex information environment filled with misleading content. Education, as a fundamental pillar of societal development, bears the responsibility of ensuring that younger generations can recognize and counteract the detrimental effects of hoaxes and emotionally driven narratives that often dominate public discourse in the Post-Truth Era (Peterson & Bentley, 2020).



One educational approach that needs to be strengthened in the Post-Truth Era is Civic Education. Civic Education has a central role in shaping intelligent and critical generations to face the often misleading information flows. It equips students with the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate facts, identify false information, and understand the implications of narratives that emphasize emotional appeal. Furthermore, Civic Education teaches democratic values, freedom of speech, and social responsibility, helping students recognize the importance of sharing accurate and ethical information (Fatmawati, 2019).

Civic Education essentially delves into the fields of law, politics, and public policy, enabling citizens to gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal system governing national life and how public policies are formulated and implemented. With this knowledge, students not only understand their rights and obligations as citizens but also actively participate in democratic processes in a constructive and fact-based manner. This education empowers them to make rational and evidence-based decisions in social and political life while enhancing their ability to analyze various issues that arise in society (Khairunisa et al., 2024).

By fostering a deeper understanding of political and legal systems, citizens can identify and respond to baseless or manipulative narratives often used to divide or sway public opinion. Additionally, Civic Education instills ethical and moral values in interactions, promoting healthy, rational, and open discussions—essential for maintaining societal integrity and unity amidst the challenges of the Post-Truth Era.

Civic Education as a Solution in the Post-Truth Era

The dominance of emotions and subjective opinions is a hallmark of the Post-Truth Era in shaping public perceptions. This trend is often driven by technological advancements that enable information to spread rapidly without adequate verification processes (Ghosh & Jing, 2020; Erlande et al., 2024). Consequently, information literacy becomes a critical foundation for developing the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically. In this era, information literacy is key to countering the spread of hoaxes and misleading information.

According to UNESCO's *Information for All Program*, information literacy comprises five key competencies: 1) Recognizing the need for information; 2) Locating and evaluating the quality of acquired information; 3) Storing and retrieving information; 4) Ethically creating and using information; 5) Communicating knowledge (Hidayah et al, 2023).

Civic education encompasses a wide range of competencies aimed at shaping exemplary and intelligent citizens who contribute positively to national life. As a multidimensional



discipline, it covers various aspects such as citizenship, politics, moral values, character development, societal dynamics, human rights, democracy, and law, as highlighted by Wahab and Sapriya (2011). One key competency in civic education is civic participation, which focuses on enhancing learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, fostering critical thinking abilities, and inspiring active engagement in diverse social spheres (Damayanti, et al, 2024).

In this context, civic education plays a strategic role in fostering information literacy by developing young people's ability to: (1) Analyze information sources; (2) Evaluate potential biases or underlying motives in the information; (3) Utilize information to support responsible decision-making as citizens.

Civic education offers students the opportunity to engage with various information sources, both digital and traditional. Through this approach, students not only learn about political and governmental matters from multiple perspectives but also gain the skills to evaluate information critically. Integrating media into civic education enriches students' understanding, develops digital literacy, and enhances critical awareness of social, political, and governmental issues. This approach also supports the formation of intelligent and responsible citizens.

Research by Hakim & Pitoyo (2022) shows that information literacy significantly impacts students' affective learning outcomes in civic education. This finding is particularly relevant in civic education, where information literacy supports cognitive understanding and shapes affective dimensions such as national awareness, responsibility, and active participation in society. Similarly, research by Fayza & Nugraha (2021) highlights that information literacy affects the development of civic intelligence competencies, encompassing intellectual, emotional, and moral intelligence.

As Wahab & Sapriya (2011) explain, civic education aims to produce intelligent citizens who can utilize their intelligence for personal and collective progress. Such participation requires a strong foundation, including: (1) Mastery of specific knowledge and understanding; (2) Intellectual and participatory skills; (3) Character and mental resilience; (4) Commitment to constitutional values (Damayanti, et al, 2024). The development of civic competence provides a profound understanding of citizenship values, ethics, and social norms as the basis for moral behavior.

In the Post-Truth Era, where subjective opinions and emotions often override objective facts, civic competence is increasingly relevant. Young citizens need the following core

competencies: (1) Information literacy: To evaluate the truth and reliability of circulating information; (2) Emotional intelligence: To understand differing perspectives without succumbing to divisive emotions; (3) Moral intelligence: To make fair and responsible decisions in complex social contexts.

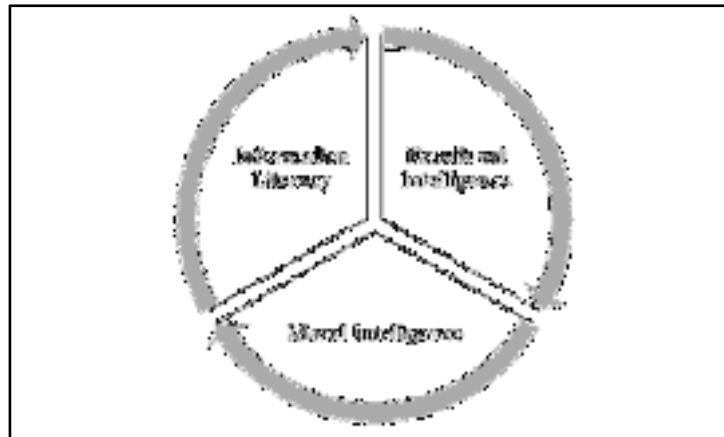


Figure 2. Analysis of citizens' needs in the post truth era

The above components can be integrated through comprehensive and contextual approaches to civic education. This integration can be achieved by enabling civic education to play its role in developing young people's abilities to analyze, evaluate, and use information responsibly, in alignment with the 21st-century 4C skills. These skills include:

1. Case Study Method Based on Civic Information: Case studies are implemented in instructional practices that involve students analyzing current news and issues, such as hoaxes or disinformation.
2. Simulation and Digital Games: The use of technology and media, such as election simulations, mock trials, and analysis of current news games, enhances young people's digital literacy skills. This approach also requires utilizing access to various sources, including digital libraries, online learning platforms, and social media, as learning tools to train young people in evaluating the quality and reliability of information.
3. Collaborative and Participatory Approach: Civic education is inherently a social-based education. It encourages students to work in groups discussing social, political, or environmental issues. Collaborative projects such as debates, anti-hoax campaigns, and the creation of educational content (e.g., infographics or videographics) serve as active learning methods that enhance young people's understanding of the importance of credible information (Damayanti et al., 2024).
4. Education in Media Values and Ethics: Developing values and ethics in media use is one of the competencies of civic education. In this context, young people are trained to use



information ethically, such as respecting copyright, avoiding the spread of hoaxes, and safeguarding others' privacy.

Thus, civic education can be an effective solution to addressing the challenges of the Post-Truth Era by building civic competence, which encompasses citizenship knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. Civic competence can be developed by teaching students to think critically, participate actively, and act as concerned and integrity-driven citizens. This supports the formation of a young generation capable of tackling the challenges of the Post-Truth Era and contributing positively to society.

CONCLUSIONS

Education in the modern era or 21st-century learning, supported by digital technology, offers significant opportunities to create more effective, inclusive, and relevant teaching and learning processes tailored to the needs of the times. The credibility of information sources in the digital era is essential for countering hoaxes and disinformation, which depend on trustworthiness, expertise, and the appeal of the source, further reinforced by digital literacy and adherence to ethics and laws such as the ITE Law.

Civic education provides students with opportunities to access various information sources, both from digital and traditional media. The importance of information literacy serves as the foundation for young citizens. The integration of civic competence based on information literacy, emotional intelligence, and moral intelligence is implemented through: (1) Case Study Methods Based on Civic Information; (2) Simulations and Digital Games; (3) Collaborative and Participatory Approaches; (4) Education in Media Values and Ethics.

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