

The Social Construction of Instilling Bhinneka Tunggal Ika in the Midst of Digital Era Transformations

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Abstract: *The influence of digital sophistication has made the younger generation, especially Generation Z, experience changes in behavior. The generation in modern times tends to be very easily exposed to various information from outside, thus making the sense of national identity in Generation Z fade. This research aims to implement the values of Bhinneka tunggal Ika in the digital era, and ensure that ancestral values are maintained, especially in the face of this digital age. The method used is literature review. The results of this study show that the influence of the sophisticated digital era can have an impact on the next generation, causing them to tend to forget the values contained in Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. Therefore, the cultivation and preservation of the values of bhineka tunggal Ika in the digital era is very important and needs to be addressed immediately. Efforts to cultivate unity in diversity in this digital era can be done by applying digital literacy to the Indonesian people to understand the diversity that exists in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *Social Construction, Unity in Diversity, Changes in the Digital Age, Values of Diversity, Influence of the Digital Age*

Abstrak: Pengaruh digital yang serba canggih, membuat generasi muda terutama generasi Z mengalami perubahan perilaku, Generasi di zaman modern cenderung sangat mudah terpapar dengan berbagai informasi dari luar. sehingga membuat memudarnya rasa identitas kebangsaan pada dalam diri generasi Z. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengimplementasikan nilai-nilai Bhinneka tunggal Ika di era digital, dan memastikan bahwa nilai-nilai leluhur tetap terjaga terutama dalam menghadapi perubahan zaman yang serba digital ini. Metode yang digunakan adalah literatur review. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh era digital yang serba canggih dapat berdampak pada generasi penerus, sehingga menyebabkan mereka cenderung melupakan nilai nilai yang terkandung dalam bhineka tunggal Ika. Oleh karena itu, penanaman dan pelestarian nilai nilai bhineka tunggal Ika di era digital menjadi hal yang sangat penting dan perlu segera ditangani. Upaya penanaman bhineka tunggal Ika di era digital ini dapat dilakukan dengan cara menerapkan literasi digital, kepada masyarakat Indonesia untuk memahami keberagaman yang ada di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Konstruksi Sosial, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Perubahan Era Digital, Nilai Kebhinekaan, Pengaruh Era Digital

Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelago, spread from Sabang to Merauke that has produced a variety of tribes, ethnicities, languages, religions, and traditions. The diversity of Indonesian society shows a social and cultural harmony that supports national unity and integration. This is evident from the Youth Pledge event on 28 October 1928, where young people from various tribes, regions, languages, and organizations expressed their determination to unite in maintaining the integrity of the nation's unity and integrity, in accordance with the meaning of the motto Bhineka Tunggal Ika. The motto of Unity in Diversity is written on the Indonesian national emblem, the Pancasila Garuda bird. The concept of Bhineka recognizes variation or plurality, while the idea of Tunggal Ika indicates unity. Variation is characterized by differences, while unity is characterized by similarities. It can be concluded that Bhineka Tunggal Ika means diverse but still one.

The development of an increasingly advanced era and entering this digital era, makes diversity a crucial challenge in Indonesia to be maintained. Technology that provides a positive impact as an ability to access information, communicate globally, and exchange cultures is very important, but on the other hand, technology can also have adverse effects if not managed wisely. One of the main challenges is the influence of social media. Various social media platforms can serve as powerful tools to strengthen diversity by supporting intercultural dialog, but they can also be misused to spread prejudice and increase social injustice. Misinformation and disinformation can create inequality and disrupt ethnic harmony.

Technology is very much related to social situations. This is because technology is about systems that are constantly changing and involve humans and machines. The development of technology is inseparable from the analysis that exists in human life, where every social interaction in society involves technology in daily life, especially in society 5.0 which is a super intelligent society, where information can be obtained quickly through technology. This situation causes a combination of real life and virtual life and the resolution of social problems that can balance the economic progress of society (Deguchi, 2020). The concept of technology in information society 5.0 is connected to humans in a social context as well as the technology used. The dynamics between humans and technology are complex, defined, and rooted in social construction.

Social construction of technology is one approach among several ways of constructivity in studying science and technology that emerged in the 1980s. The term social construction of technology can be used to indicate two different things. First, it is a research approach to studying technical change in society, both in historical and contemporary studies. And secondly, it is a theory about the relationship between society and technology. The social construction of technology argues that human actions shape technology. In the theoretical construction of technological determinism, there is an assumption that technology determines human actions and technology is a product of the social, political, economic, and

cultural environment in which technology acts as a modifier in the social life of society. In contrast, this approach, known as social constructivism, argues that without an understanding of the social context, technology cannot be fully understood (Burr, 2015). This theory lies within the realm of Science and Technology Studies and is rooted in the sociology of science, as a reaction to the view of technological determinism that sees technology as the regulator of human action.

When it comes to maintaining diversity in the digital age, it is important not to create a morally judgmental impression or take repressive actions that could trigger rejection. It is better to emphasize an inclusive approach. The role of digital literacy is very important in maintaining diversity. Digital literacy is not only about using technology, but also includes how to understand, evaluate and respond to information found online. Equally important is encouraging digital ethics among users, which includes responsible use of the internet and responding to discriminatory actions that occur online. In this way, we can realize the vision of harmonious diversity in this digital age. Integrating technology regulation and community participation is key in creating an online environment that supports and enriches cultural diversity, which can ensure that technology has a positive impact on cultural diversity.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand the social construction in instilling Unity in Diversity amidst the changes of the digital era in depth. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore meanings, experiences, and perspectives that exist in a natural context, without relying on numerical data. This research aims to gain a holistic understanding of the issues studied through the review of various relevant literature sources, by exploring the main themes related to the phenomenon. Data collection methods are conducted through literature review, which relies on secondary data in the form of scientific articles, research reports, and other documents relevant to the research topic. These sources were analyzed to identify new themes, patterns, and insights related to the phenomenon being studied. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative analysis, which aims to explore, organize, and describe the information contained in the literature sources systematically. The data obtained was analyzed to obtain a clearer and more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study, taking into account the various perspectives contained in the existing literature.

Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the articles collected and the results of the author's analysis, it is found that social construction plays a role in instilling the value of unity in diversity amid changes in the digital era.

Overview of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika Value

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is the motto of the Indonesian nation and state which is clearly written on the Indonesian state symbol, Garuda Pancasila. The phrase Bhinneka Tunggal Ika comes from the Old Javanese language which can be interpreted as “Different but still one”. It is a very real motto that describes the life and spirit of the Indonesian nation and state which was formed and stands on a variety of ethnic groups, cultures and so on. Even though they are diverse, they have pledged to declare themselves as one whole unit, one homeland, one nation and one language, namely Indonesia.

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which literally means “Though diverse, yet one,” is Indonesia's national motto derived from the 14th century literary work Sutasoma by Mpu Tantular. It reflects the spirit of unity in Indonesia's cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. It serves as the foundation of national unity and integrity, as well as a binder in the life of the nation and state.

The values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika can be implemented in everyday life, such as by applying tolerance, mutual respect, and appreciation of differences. The motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” contains the value of unity and integrity, despite differences. These values include tolerance, justice, and mutual cooperation, which are very important in the life of the nation. This motto teaches that differences are not obstacles, but rather wealth that must be preserved and nurtured together. Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is indirectly a picture of Indonesian nationalism. The meaning of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika is the principle of Indonesian citizens to build nationalism, which urgently needs efforts to realize and strengthen the national values contained in Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, as a moral teaching about tolerance, fairness and mutual cooperation is the right strategy to overcome new values that tend to be incompatible with the values of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Social Change in the Digital Age

Social media is not just an online place, but also a phenomenon that has significantly changed the way people and groups communicate, exchange content, and form communities online (Bafadhal et al., 2017). In a social media environment, there is an exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among users, forming an active and interactive virtual space (Ramdahan et al., 2023). The notion of social media is broader than just the transfer of data; it encompasses a more complex process in which meaning is created. The importance of social media in shaping people's views and behavior has attracted much thought and reflection (Jauhari, 2017). Its profound impact on everyday life encourages us to explore how social media plays a role in shaping worldviews and influencing the way people interact in communities. Through social media, people have the opportunity to express their thoughts, construct narratives and participate in ongoing global discussions (Kuncoro et al, 2023).

Social media not only provides a place to interact online, but also has an important contribution in shaping the emerging information civilization and digital

culture (Gustiawan, 2023). In this case, social media is not just a means of communication, but also reflects the social and cultural changes taking place today. Therefore, social media not only illustrates the shift to the digital era, but also serves as a driver of change in social and cultural dynamics at the global level (Kuncoro et al, 2023).

The development of digital technology has changed the way communication, social interaction and information are disseminated. Social change in the digital era includes transformations in various aspects of life, such as communication, social interaction, identity and lifestyle. Digital technologies have changed the way we communicate, interact and perceive ourselves, and created new phenomena such as digital identity and global popular culture. Positive impacts include greater access to information, increased political participation and new opportunities in various fields, while negative challenges include the digital divide, privacy and the risk of irresponsible use of technology. Digital technologies provide greater access to education and learning, but also fuel debates about the digital divide and the relevance of traditional education. Social media and instant messaging apps have changed the way we interact, shortening distances and expanding social networks. The rapid flow of information on social media makes it easier for people to access all available information. However, on the other hand, the rapid flow of information has led to a lack of understanding of the values of unity in diversity. The digital era brings significant social changes, both positive and negative. It requires high awareness and wise actions to utilize the positive potential of digital technology and overcome the challenges that arise in the future.

Nowadays, communication technology has changed the way of communication from conventional to modern by utilizing mass media, internet or technology as a means of communication. The focus is of course related to aspects of economic resilience, defense and security, culture, ideology, environment, and politics. To protect ourselves from the disintegration of the unity that has been built with hard work towards destruction due to rapid technological development and its various negative impacts, the Indonesian people need to return to the values of Pancasila, and re-enforce the nation's motto, namely "Unity in Diversity", followed by increasing a strong understanding of the nation's national identity, so that the fighting spirit as an Indonesian people is not easily defeated.

Social Construction of the Value of Unity in Diversity

In a social media environment, where social relations take place online, Social Construction Theory offers a guide to understanding how social media users collectively participate in the process of forming social meanings and norms. Social media becomes a stage where the inculcation of the value of diversity is built through continuous communication. Users, who come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, play a role in the formation of shared stories that have an impact on people's perspectives on *bhineka Tunggal ika*. Public figures and communities play a role in discussing and promoting the values of diversity through

various digital content. As a result, social construction theory provides an understanding of how online interactions play an important role in shaping lives that understand diversity. By understanding the complexity of social construction through the perspective of this theory, we can explain the function of social media in responding to and influencing current viewpoints on the value of diversity, which unites Indonesia from various racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences.

Social construction refers to the view that society's values, norms and identities are shaped through social interactions and media, including digital media. The rapid flow of information through social media greatly affects the way people understand diversity. On the one hand, social media can be a tool that strengthens the values of tolerance and diversity. However, on the other hand, unfiltered information or hoaxes can actually weaken this understanding. So, how people access, interpret and disseminate information about diversity on social media is part of the social construction that shapes their perspective on *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. The existence of technology is not something that is underestimated by digital development, but is the result of social construction.

Wiebe Bijker (1997) asserts that the social interaction patterns of individuals, relevant social groups and users have shaped and decided how technology works or is used. our perspective on technology is shifting. We must begin to understand that the current condition of digital space is socially constructed by social media users. Every time, the pattern of social interaction in the social media sphere will change. Shifting to new trends like trending topics. On that basis, strengthening digital knowledge also needs to be rethought.

Value Embedding Strategy in the Digital Age

The importance of social relationships in building social reality is evident in the way social media users select and present content (Pratama, 2021). In the world of social media, users actively contribute to creating and shaping the values of unity in diversity through various kinds of interactions such as posts, comments, and other forms of engagement. Users of social media platforms often share content such as images, video clips or writings that show how they introduce their identities from different regions. For example, an individual might share a photo of themselves showing a style of dress or activity that matches the identity they want to display. To illustrate, an individual may upload a photo of themselves in an outfit that reflects their identity to express a part of that identity. They can also offer help and express opinions. In this sense, social media is not only a tool for communication, but also a place for social construction.

The digital era is a phenomenon that cannot be avoided in everyday life. Easy access to information and easy access to tools such as gadgets have shifted the lifestyle and mindset of people, both children and adults (Tafsiruddin 2021). Apart from having a positive impact, the digital era also has a negative impact. Therefore, the cultivation of character values must be strengthened so that the negative impacts

that are increasingly widespread can be overcome properly. Some of the characters that are instilled along with the development of information technology include responsibility, discipline, critical thinking, empathy, integrity and religion.

First, the character of responsibility is becoming increasingly important, especially in the use of technology and social media, where each individual must act wisely, manage time well, and be responsible for their actions and the information they share. In the digital era, the character of responsibility is important to avoid spreading hoaxes, cyberbullying, or actions that can harm others online, respect copyright, do not commit plagiarism, and maintain ethics in communicating in cyberspace and utilize technology to increase understanding, creativity, and productivity.

The second is discipline. This disciplined character is important to instill, discipline is one of the key characters that must be possessed. Unlimited access to information and instant technology is often a double-edged sword; on the one hand it provides opportunities, but on the other hand it has the potential to reduce focus and productivity. Discipline also trains you to manage your time well, build consistent good habits, and avoid procrastination. In the long run, this character is an important provision in facing the challenges of an increasingly competitive and technology-based world (Triyanto 2020).

The third character that is instilled is critical character. Critical character is a very important ability, especially in the face of the rapid flow of information that is often not validated. With a critical character, it is easier to analyze information in depth, distinguish facts from opinions, and evaluate the accuracy and relevance of information sources. This ability encourages them not to take things at face value, but to question, investigate and seek evidence to support a claim. In addition, this character also equips them to be independent, reflective, and ready to contribute positively in society (Kurniawaty, Hadian, and Faiz 2022).

Fourth is the character of empathy, empathy is becoming increasingly relevant in the digital age, where interactions often occur virtually without face-to-face contact. Technology has expanded the range of communication, but it can also blur sensitivity to the feelings of others due to a lack of non-verbal cues. Empathy also helps in understanding the perspectives of others, whether in different cultural, social or worldview contexts, thus contributing to a healthier and more inclusive digital space. In an increasingly globally connected world, these characters shape a generation that is not only technologically skilled, but also has a deep social sensitivity (Triyanto 2020).

The fifth character is the character of integrity. The character of integrity in the digital era is becoming increasingly crucial in building honesty, responsibility, and moral consistency in the midst of rampant opportunities to deviate. This character ensures that technological advances not only support intelligence, but also foster solid moral values in the younger generation (Afif et al. 2024). The sixth character is religious character. Religious characters have a crucial role in the digital

era, where technological developments affect almost every aspect of human life. In an increasingly connected world, religious values can be a strong moral foundation to maintain integrity, ethics and social responsibility amidst the rapid and often uncontrollable flow of information. This character helps individuals to sort out digital content wisely, avoiding negative behaviors such as cyberbullying, hoaxes, or harmful exploitation of technology. In addition, religious characters are able to encourage the creation of social harmony by instilling the values of tolerance, justice, and empathy, so that the digital era is not only a space for innovation, but also a vehicle for developing human morals and spirituality (Syahnaz, Hidayat, and Muqowim 2023).

Conclusion

Social construction plays an important role in instilling and maintaining the values of Unity in Diversity amidst the social changes brought about by the digital era. The motto “Unity in Diversity” as the foundation of Indonesian unity faces significant challenges in the digital era, where social media and information technology reshape the way individuals interact, access information, and build identities and views on diversity.

In this context, social media is not only a means of communication, but also a place for social construction that influences people's understanding of the value of diversity. This construction process takes place through the active participation of users in sharing narratives, shaping public opinion, and creating norms and shared meanings of diversity and unity. On the other hand, the rapid flow of information also brings the potential for the spread of hoaxes and polarization, which can weaken the spirit of diversity if not addressed wisely.

Therefore, the strategy to instill the value of Unity in Diversity in the digital era must involve strengthening character, digital literacy, and critical awareness of the use of technology. Characters such as responsibility, discipline, critical thinking, empathy, integrity, and religiousness are essential to create a healthy, inclusive, and united digital space. Strengthening the understanding of national identity and noble values through digital media is an important effort to ensure that Unity in Diversity remains relevant and alive in modern society.

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