

Technology, Ethics and Citizenship: Harmonizing Smart Citizen and Good Citizen

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Abstract: *Advances in digital technology have given birth to the concept of smart citizens, individuals who are able to utilize technology to support their daily activities efficiently. However, this approach often overlooks the ethical values and social responsibility that characterize good citizens. Starting from the issue of the gap between digital skills and citizenship awareness, this study aims to formulate an approach that integrates the two concepts in a balanced framework. This study uses a literature review method of various literatures that discuss technology, ethics, and civic education. The analysis shows that the integration between smart and good citizens can be achieved through the development of three main aspects: mastery of digital literacy, understanding of ethical values, and active involvement in social and political life. This harmonization model is expected to become a reference in the development of digital citizenship education that is adaptive and meaningful, and forms citizens who are not only technologically competent, but also morally responsible.*

Keywords: *Smart citizen, Good citizen, Digital ethics, Citizenship education*

Abstrak : Kemajuan teknologi digital telah melahirkan konsep smart citizen, yakni individu yang mampu memanfaatkan teknologi untuk menunjang aktivitas harian secara efisien. Namun, pendekatan ini kerap mengesampingkan nilai-nilai etis dan tanggung jawab sosial yang menjadi ciri khas dari good citizen. Berangkat dari persoalan kesenjangan antara kecakapan digital dan kesadaran kewarganegaraan, penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan pendekatan yang mengintegrasikan kedua konsep tersebut dalam satu kerangka yang seimbang. Kajian ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka terhadap berbagai literatur yang membahas teknologi, etika, dan pendidikan kewarganegaraan. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa integrasi antara smart dan good citizen dapat dicapai melalui pengembangan tiga aspek utama: penguasaan literasi digital, pemahaman nilai-nilai etis, dan keterlibatan aktif dalam kehidupan sosial dan politik. Model harmonisasi ini diharapkan menjadi acuan dalam pengembangan pendidikan kewarganegaraan digital yang adaptif dan bermakna, serta membentuk warga negara yang tidak hanya kompeten secara teknologi, tetapi juga bertanggung jawab secara moral.

Kata kunci: Smart citizen, Good citizen, Etika digital, Pendidikan kewarganegaraan

INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology have revolutionized various aspects of life, from the way individuals interact to how governments manage public services. The smart city concept has developed as a form of technology integration in city governance that emphasizes efficiency, data, and innovation (Batty et al., 2012: 483). In this ecosystem, a new role of citizens emerges as smart citizens, namely individuals who have the ability to utilize digital technology actively and effectively (Nam & Pardo, 2011: 284). However, too much emphasis on the technical aspects risks neglecting the moral, ethical values and principles of inclusive citizenship.

This situation raises a crucial question: is technological proficiency enough to make someone an ideal citizen? Selwyn (2016: 35) highlights that the use of technology that is not accompanied by ethical responsibility can actually exacerbate digital inequality and reduce the quality of citizen participation in the life of the nation. In Indonesia, Sari and Nugroho (2020: 117) found that more than 70% of respondents only use technology for personal interests, not for social contributions. This fact confirms that digital capabilities have not been fully matched with an understanding of social roles as citizens.

A number of approaches have been introduced to address this challenge, such as digital citizenship education (Ribble, 2011: 94), strengthening the ethics of digital media use (Ohler, 2012: 18), and developing public policies that are sensitive to social values (Townsend, 2013: 112). However, there is still a lack of studies that fully integrate technological competence (smart citizen) with moral and social virtues (good citizen). Therefore, this research aims to formulate an integrative model that combines digital literacy, ethical awareness, and public participation as the foundation for the formation of adaptive citizens with integrity in the digital era.

Metode Penelitian

This research uses the literature study method (library search) as its approach. This method is a research method carried out by critically examining various knowledge, ideas, and findings contained in academic literature. This approach is based on the thoughts of experts as well as the results of previous research. In general, this method is used to solve a problem by referring to various written sources that have existed before

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Smart Citizen

The term smart citizen refers to individuals who are able to utilize information and communication technology wisely, efficiently and responsibly in their daily lives. In the context of smart cities, smart citizens act not only as users of digital services, but also as active contributors who supply data and participate in technology-based decision-making processes (Nam & Pardo, 2011). Characteristics of smart citizens include digital literacy, use of data to support informed decisions, involvement in e-government, and awareness of the impact of

technology use. Smart citizen juga harus memiliki kesadaran etis terhadap teknologi yang digunakan. Rapid technological advances often outpace the development of existing policies and social norms (Komninos, 2013).

Meanwhile, good citizens are individuals who are aware and responsible in carrying out their rights and obligations as citizens. They uphold the moral, ethical and legal values that apply in society. Heater (2004) states that the characteristics of a good citizen include involvement in social and political activities, upholding the principles of justice and equality, adherence to legal and moral norms, concern for the environment and community. In today's digital era, being a good citizen also means understanding ethics in the digital space, including respecting privacy, not spreading hoaxes, and being wise in online interactions.

Unifying the Concepts of Smart Citizen and Good Citizen

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that although the concepts of smart citizen and good citizen come from two different domains - technology and citizenship - they have great potential to complement each other. Individuals who are only digitally savvy but lack ethical awareness can misuse technology. Conversely, citizens who only adhere to ethical values but are not technologically literate can be marginalized in modern society.

Therefore, integration between the two is needed through an approach that aligns digital competencies and civic values. This integrative concept can be realized through digital civility, which is polite behavior and respect for the digital rights of fellow users (Microsoft, 2020), technology-based civic participation (civic tech), which encourages public engagement through digital platforms (Balestrini et al., 2015), and information ethics, which is an understanding of the moral consequences of data management and dissemination (Floridi, 2013). In other words, forming citizens who are at once technologically savvy and moral is the key to building a society that is responsive to the challenges of the digital age without abandoning the basic values of citizenship.

Modern technology is not only present as a tool in daily activities, but also has a strategic role in supporting the strengthening of ethical values in civic life. In the context of a digital society, various technological platforms such as the internet, online government applications, and social media, can be used to encourage active citizen participation while strengthening ethical behavior in public life (Mossberger, Tolbert, & McNeal, 2008). Through digital media, the distribution of civic knowledge becomes more inclusive and accessible. Educational content on rights, obligations, democratic values and tolerance can be delivered interactively, for example through educational videos, online discussion forums or learning apps (Ribble, 2011). This helps foster ethical awareness early on in the digital environment.

Technology also plays an important role in creating a more open relationship between government and society. Through digital government services and open

data systems, the public can access policy, financial, and public service information transparently. This strengthens the culture of ethical and accountable governance (Janssen, Charalabidis, & Zuiderwijk, 2012). Social media platforms are now widely used as a tool to voice citizens' aspirations and advocate for social issues. Digital movements such as anti-corruption, environmental conservation, or social justice campaigns show that technology can encourage the growth of solidarity and collective ethical awareness (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

However, technological development also brings negative impacts such as the spread of disinformation, hate speech, and privacy violations. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the use of technology is accompanied by good digital literacy and regulations that are able to guide its ethical use (Floridi, 2013). These efforts will support the formation of morally aware and responsible digital citizens.

The Challenge of Harmonizing Smart and Good Citizen

Not all individuals have digital skills that are balanced with an understanding of their roles and social responsibilities as citizens. Some are proficient in using technology, but lack ethical awareness in using it, and vice versa (UNESCO, 2021). This imbalance makes it difficult to integrate digital competence and civic character. Digital platforms such as social media often become fertile ground for polarizing opinions, spreading hoaxes, and conflicts between groups. In this situation, digitally savvy individuals may not necessarily act according to ethical norms, as they are easily influenced by unhealthy information flows (Zuboff, 2019). This is exacerbated by the lack of digital regulations that are responsive to social dynamics.

The formal education system often separates the learning of technology from the formation of moral and civic values. As a result, students learn to become technically proficient, but not with an understanding of social responsibility in using these skills (Ribble, 2011). Research shows that the integration of character education, digital literacy and legal awareness in one curriculum can shape responsible and ethically aware digital citizens (Livingstone & Third, 2017). This can start from primary to tertiary education institutions.

Digital developments provide ample space for the public to engage in public affairs, such as through e-voting, online complaints, and digital campaigns. These initiatives can encourage strengthening the active role of citizens in an ethics-based digital democracy system (Janssen et al., 2012). The government has the opportunity to create technology policies that prioritize ethical values, such as personal data protection, national digital literacy, and the development of technology systems oriented towards the public interest (Floridi, 2013). This step is important to create a healthy and responsible digital space

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature study, it can be concluded that harmonization between the concepts of smart citizen and good citizen is an urgent need in today's digital era. Smart citizens describe citizens who are adaptive to technology, while good citizens reflect individuals who uphold ethics, social

responsibility and civic values. Research shows that technology plays a strategic role in supporting civic education, strengthening public participation, and creating government transparency and accountability. However, this harmonization effort faces various challenges, such as digital literacy and ethics gaps, lack of integration in the education curriculum, and the risk of misuse of technology in the public sphere. However, great opportunities exist through the development of ethics-based digital policies, education that integrates technology and morality, and the utilization of digital media as a space for responsible participation.

Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutions develop a curriculum that synergizes digital literacy with ethical citizenship values in an integrated manner. The government is expected to formulate regulations that are adaptive to technological developments, but still favor moral principles, social justice, and the protection of citizens' rights. In addition, civil society and the private sector also need to be encouraged to be actively involved in creating a digital ecosystem that is inclusive, healthy, and supports the formation of citizens who are not only digitally proficient, but also have high integrity and social responsibility. With these steps, the goal of forming smart and ethical digital citizens will be closer to reality.

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