

Digital Citizenship Education for Indonesian Diaspora Communities: Enhancing Digital Literacy, National Identity, and Cultural Engagement through Responsible Social Media Use

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Received: 20-11-2024

e-ISSN : 2987-9140

Accepted: 16-11-2025

Volume : 3 No. 1, (2025)

Published: 01-02-2025

Page : 102-112

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26740/ijgsme.v3n1.p102-112>

Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the way diaspora communities communicate, access information, and maintain connections with their countries of origin. However, increasing social media use also presents challenges related to misinformation, irresponsible online behavior, and the weakening of cultural awareness. This study examines the implementation of digital citizenship education through responsible social media training among Indonesian diaspora communities in Malaysia. The program employed a community engagement approach involving needs assessment, participatory workshops, practical digital content activities, and qualitative evaluation of participants' learning outcomes. The training focused on improving digital literacy, strengthening ethical social media practices, enhancing information verification skills, and utilizing digital platforms for cultural promotion. The results indicate that the program improved participants' awareness of responsible social media use, increased their ability to identify unreliable information, and encouraged more reflective digital participation. Furthermore, participants demonstrated stronger national identity awareness by recognizing their role in representing Indonesian culture within international digital spaces. The program also supported the transformation of participants from passive social media users into active digital content creators and contributed to the development of supportive digital networks among Indonesian migrants in Malaysia. This study highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy, citizenship education, and cultural identity development to empower diaspora communities in navigating contemporary digital environments.

Keywords: Digital Citizenship, Digital Literacy, Indonesian Diaspora, Social Media, National Identity, Cultural Engagement

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed patterns of communication, social interaction, and knowledge exchange in contemporary society. The emergence of social media platforms has created new forms of digital participation that allow individuals to communicate beyond geographical boundaries, access diverse sources of information, and establish social networks regardless of physical distance. Digital platforms such as social networking sites, video-sharing applications, and online communication channels have become integral parts of everyday life, influencing how individuals construct identities, express opinions, and engage with social issues. The increasing accessibility of

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digital technology has also enabled migrant and diaspora communities to maintain connections with their countries of origin while simultaneously adapting to new social and cultural environments (Akter et al., 2024; Andersson, 2019).

However, the expansion of digital connectivity has created complex challenges. The availability of vast amounts of information through online platforms does not automatically guarantee meaningful and responsible digital participation. The rapid circulation of information has contributed to the spread of misinformation, misleading content, online hostility, and communication practices that disregard ethical principles (Roozenbeek et al., 2022). Individuals who lack sufficient digital literacy may experience difficulties in evaluating information credibility, understanding the consequences of digital behavior, and using social media constructively (Guess et al., 2020). Therefore, digital literacy is no longer limited to the ability to operate technological devices but has expanded into the capacity to critically analyze information, communicate responsibly, protect personal identity, and participate positively in digital communities (Vuorikari et al., 2022).

In this context, the concept of digital citizenship has become increasingly important. Digital citizenship refers to the ability of individuals to participate effectively, ethically, and responsibly within digital environments (Chen et al., 2021; Choi et al., 2017). It emphasizes that technology users are not merely consumers of digital information but also active participants who contribute to shaping online social spaces. Responsible digital citizens are expected to demonstrate awareness of online ethics, respect diversity, evaluate information critically, and create meaningful digital contributions (Cleofas & Labayo, 2024). Thus, digital citizenship education represents an important approach to preparing communities to navigate technological changes while minimizing potential negative impacts.

These challenges become particularly relevant among diaspora communities, including Indonesian immigrants living in Malaysia. Migration involves not only geographical mobility but also processes of cultural adaptation, identity negotiation, and social integration (Akter et al., 2024). Indonesian migrants in Malaysia maintain strong social, cultural, and emotional connections with Indonesia while simultaneously engaging with Malaysian society (Dalib et al., 2023; Djatmika et al., 2024). In such circumstances, social media provides an important transnational space where migrants can maintain relationships with family members, access information from their homeland, and participate in discussions related to Indonesian culture and national issues (Akter et al., 2024; Rahajeng Mintarsih, 2019).

Nevertheless, the increasing dependence on digital platforms also raises concerns regarding the quality of digital engagement among diaspora communities. Easy access to information through social media does not always correspond with responsible utilization. Without adequate digital awareness, users may unintentionally disseminate unverified information, participate in harmful online interactions, or produce digital content that does not represent positive cultural values. The issue is particularly significant for migrant communities because their online activities may influence not only individual identities but also broader perceptions of their country of origin.

The relationship between social media use and national identity among diaspora communities is therefore an important area of discussion. For Indonesian migrants abroad, maintaining national awareness is essential for preserving cultural identity and strengthening connections

with Indonesia. Social media can function as a bridge between migrants and their homeland by facilitating cultural exchange, promoting Indonesian traditions, and strengthening solidarity among Indonesian communities overseas (Ponzanesi, 2020; Udwan et al., 2020). At the same time, irresponsible digital practices may weaken these connections by encouraging the spread of inaccurate information or reducing cultural engagement among younger generations.

Previous studies have highlighted that digital communication technologies influence patterns of social behavior and cultural interaction (Andersson, 2019; Ponzanesi, 2020). The development of information society has changed the way communities organize relationships and construct meaning through technology. As individuals increasingly incorporate digital platforms into their daily activities, online behavior becomes closely connected with social values, cultural norms, and identity formation. Therefore, improving digital literacy among migrant communities requires an approach that integrates technological skills with cultural awareness and social responsibility.

The Indonesian diaspora community in Malaysia represents a significant social group that experiences these dynamics. Geographical proximity, historical relationships, and economic opportunities have contributed to strong migration flows between Indonesia and Malaysia (Djarmika et al., 2024). Many Indonesian migrants actively participate in Malaysian society while maintaining cultural connections with Indonesia. In this situation, strengthening digital literacy among Indonesian migrants is not only related to improving online skills but also contributes to empowering them as cultural representatives in international digital spaces.

The community engagement program discussed in this study was developed based on the recognition that Indonesian immigrants in Malaysia required greater understanding of responsible social media utilization. The initial identification of problems indicated that although participants had relatively easy access to digital platforms, many had limited awareness regarding information verification, digital ethics, and the strategic use of social media for promoting national identity. The program therefore focused on providing education and practical training related to responsible social media use, digital information evaluation, and creative digital content production.

The training was designed not only to address potential negative impacts of social media but also to explore its positive potential as a medium for cultural expression and community empowerment. Participants were introduced to strategies for identifying misinformation, understanding online communication ethics, and producing digital content that reflects Indonesian cultural values. Through this approach, social media was positioned not merely as a communication tool but as a platform for strengthening national awareness and promoting Indonesia's cultural diversity.

The importance of such programs is further emphasized by the increasing role of diaspora communities in shaping national image through digital spaces. In contemporary society, cultural representation is no longer limited to formal institutions or government initiatives. Individual users and community groups increasingly contribute to the construction of national narratives through their online activities. Therefore, empowering diaspora communities with appropriate digital competencies can create opportunities for them to become active contributors to cultural diplomacy and international engagement.

Based on these considerations, this study examines the implementation of digital citizenship education among Indonesian diaspora communities in Malaysia through responsible social media training. Specifically, this study explores how digital literacy interventions contribute to improving participants' understanding of ethical social media practices, strengthening national identity awareness, and encouraging cultural engagement through digital platforms. The study contributes to discussions on digital empowerment by demonstrating how community-based education programs can support migrant communities in navigating digital environments while maintaining meaningful connections with their cultural and national identities.

The objectives of this study are therefore threefold: (1) to analyze the role of digital citizenship education in improving responsible social media practices among Indonesian diaspora communities; (2) to examine the contribution of social media literacy training in strengthening national identity awareness; and (3) to explore how digital platforms can be utilized as spaces for cultural expression and community engagement. Through these objectives, this study highlights the importance of integrating digital literacy, citizenship education, and cultural identity development in supporting diaspora communities within an increasingly interconnected digital society.

2. METHOD

This study employed a community engagement approach to examine the implementation of digital citizenship education among Indonesian diaspora communities in Malaysia. The program was designed as a participatory intervention that combined digital literacy training, responsible social media education, and cultural content development activities. The approach was selected because it enables direct interaction between facilitators and community members while addressing practical challenges experienced by participants in their digital practices.

The implementation consisted of several sequential stages. The first stage involved community needs assessment through preliminary observation and interviews with representatives of Indonesian migrant communities in Malaysia. This stage aimed to identify participants' challenges related to social media utilization, information management, and digital communication practices. The assessment indicated that although participants actively accessed social media platforms, some still required further understanding regarding responsible information sharing, online ethics, and the potential use of social media as a medium for strengthening national identity.

The second stage was the implementation of a digital citizenship workshop. The training materials focused on responsible social media usage, identifying misinformation, maintaining ethical online interactions, protecting personal information, and utilizing digital platforms for positive purposes. Participants were also introduced to strategies for creating digital content related to Indonesian culture and multicultural values. The workshop emphasized active participation through discussions, practical exercises, and content development activities.

The third stage involved evaluation and reflection to assess changes in participants' knowledge, awareness, and digital practices. Data were collected through qualitative observations, participant feedback, and evaluation activities conducted after the training. The evaluation focused on participants' understanding of digital ethics, ability to recognize

unreliable information, and readiness to use social media as a platform for cultural expression and community engagement. The original program applied both qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation methods conducted immediately after the training and after a certain period following implementation. Through this methodology, the study aimed to capture not only the immediate learning outcomes of participants but also the broader contribution of digital citizenship education in strengthening digital literacy, national awareness, and social connectivity among Indonesian diaspora communities..

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Enhancing Digital Literacy and Awareness of Responsible Social Media Use

The implementation of digital citizenship education demonstrated a positive contribution to improving participants' understanding of responsible social media practices. Before participating in the training program, most participants were already familiar with various social media platforms and actively used them for communication and information access. However, their engagement with digital platforms was primarily focused on consumption activities rather than critical evaluation and responsible participation.

The findings indicate that participants initially had limited awareness regarding the potential risks associated with unrestricted social media use. These risks included the circulation of inaccurate information, the sharing of content without verification, and insufficient consideration of the social consequences of online interactions. This condition reflects a common challenge in contemporary digital societies, where increased technological accessibility does not always correspond with increased digital competence.

Through the training activities, participants developed a better understanding of the relationship between digital access and digital responsibility. The workshop introduced basic principles of digital literacy, including evaluating information sources, identifying misleading content, considering ethical aspects before sharing information, and understanding the implications of digital footprints. Participants were encouraged to recognize that every online activity contributes to the formation of personal and collective identities within digital spaces.

This finding supports the perspective that digital literacy should be understood as a multidimensional competence rather than merely technical ability (Chen et al., 2021; Vuorikari et al., 2022). Effective digital participation requires individuals to combine operational skills with critical thinking, ethical awareness, and social responsibility. In this context, the training successfully shifted participants' perceptions from seeing social media only as a communication platform toward understanding it as a social environment requiring responsible behavior.

The improvement in participants' awareness was particularly reflected in their ability to recognize potential misinformation and harmful digital content. The original program findings showed that participants became more sensitive toward hoaxes, hate speech, and provocative content that could negatively affect individuals and communities. They also learned simple verification strategies, such as checking information sources, publication dates, and content credibility before sharing information. This is consistent with experimental evidence that brief media literacy tips and short inoculation videos can improve people's ability to distinguish false from mainstream content (Guess et al., 2020; Roozenbeek et al., 2022).

This development represents an important aspect of digital citizenship because responsible digital citizens are expected not only to consume information but also to contribute to healthier online environments. For diaspora communities, this ability becomes increasingly important because digital interactions often connect individuals across national boundaries and influence perceptions of social and cultural identities (Akte et al., 2024; Ponzanesi, 2020).

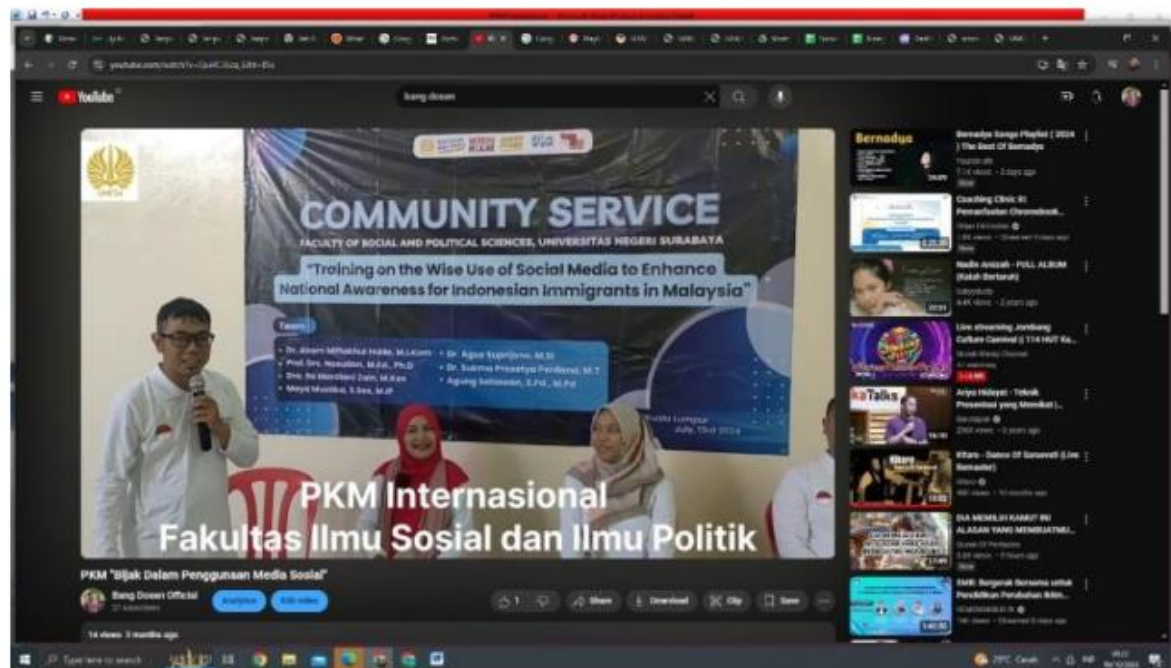


Figure 1. Community Service Activities in Malaysia

4.2 Strengthening National Identity through Digital Engagement

One of the significant outcomes of the program was the strengthening of participants' awareness regarding national identity in digital spaces. For Indonesian diaspora communities living in Malaysia, social media functions as a transnational platform that enables continuous interaction with Indonesian culture, communities, and national issues.

The training encouraged participants to recognize that their digital activities could influence how Indonesia is represented internationally. As migrants living abroad, participants are not only individual social media users but also members of a broader diaspora community whose online expressions may contribute to public perceptions of Indonesia.

The results indicate that participants developed a more reflective attitude toward the content they produced and shared online. They began to understand that digital communication involves responsibility because online expressions may represent personal values as well as cultural backgrounds. This awareness encouraged participants to consider whether their content reflected positive values, respect, and appreciation toward Indonesian identity.

The source program identified that participants realized the importance of maintaining Indonesia's image in international digital spaces. They understood that their words, actions, and uploaded content could influence perceptions of Indonesia among wider audiences. From

the perspective of diaspora studies, this finding highlights the role of digital platforms in maintaining transnational belonging. Diaspora communities often negotiate multiple identities: maintaining connections with their homeland while adapting to the social environment of the host country. Social media provides a space where these identities can coexist by enabling migrants to share cultural experiences, participate in homeland-related discussions, and maintain emotional connections with Indonesia (Akter et al., 2024; Ponzanesi, 2020).

Therefore, digital citizenship education among diaspora communities should not only focus on avoiding negative online behavior but also emphasize the productive use of digital platforms for identity strengthening. In this program, social media was positioned as a cultural bridge that connects Indonesian migrants with their national identity while allowing them to participate positively in multicultural environments.

4.3 Transforming Participants from Digital Consumers into Digital Content Creators

Another important finding was the development of participants' practical skills in creating meaningful digital content. Prior to the training, participants mainly used social media as users who accessed and shared existing information. The program introduced an alternative perspective by encouraging them to become active producers of digital content.

Through practical activities, participants were introduced to creating digital materials such as posters, short videos, and narratives highlighting Indonesian cultural values. This activity expanded their understanding that social media can function as a platform for creativity, education, and cultural promotion.

The transformation from digital consumers to digital creators represents an important achievement because active participation is one of the fundamental principles of digital citizenship. Individuals who can create constructive content contribute more significantly to online communities compared with passive users who only consume information.

The findings demonstrate that participants began developing initiatives to produce content related to Indonesian culinary traditions, cultural practices, national history, and diaspora activities. This indicates that the training successfully encouraged participants to utilize digital platforms as spaces for cultural expression. Similar patterns have been documented among other migrant workers, who use social media platforms such as TikTok to produce and circulate their own cultural expressions (Kaur-Gill, 2023).

This outcome is particularly relevant in the context of cultural diplomacy. In the digital era, cultural representation is increasingly shaped by individual users and community groups rather than only by formal institutions. Indonesian diaspora communities therefore have the potential to become informal cultural ambassadors by presenting positive narratives about Indonesia through social media.

The development of creative digital skills also provides opportunities for participants to strengthen their social participation. By producing informative and culturally meaningful content, diaspora members can contribute to broader conversations about Indonesian identity, diversity, and cultural heritage.

4.4 Building Digital Community Networks among Indonesian Diaspora

Beyond individual learning outcomes, the program generated broader social impacts through the development of digital community networks among Indonesian migrants in Malaysia. Social relationships among participants became more organized after the training, creating opportunities for continued communication, information exchange, and mutual support.

The formation of these networks demonstrates that digital literacy programs can create social capital within diaspora communities. This is consistent with previous studies showing that social media use among migrant workers can sustain social capital, social support, and psychological well-being (Liu & Yeo, 2022; Rahajeng Mintarsih, 2019). Digital platforms are not only technological tools but also social spaces where communities develop trust, cooperation, and collective action.

The findings show that participants established communication groups that functioned as spaces for sharing reliable information, providing assistance, and maintaining solidarity among Indonesian migrants. These networks supported practical needs related to daily life, including information about public services, education opportunities, administrative matters, and community activities.

From a community development perspective, the emergence of digital networks represents an important long-term impact because sustainable empowerment requires continuous interaction beyond the initial training event. Digital communities can become mechanisms for maintaining knowledge exchange and supporting future learning activities.

Furthermore, these networks may strengthen collaboration between diaspora communities and relevant institutions. The original program suggested that such digital communities could become strategic partners for Indonesian representatives and educational institutions in implementing future digital literacy and national awareness programs.

4.5 Implications for Digital Citizenship Education among Diaspora Communities

The overall findings demonstrate that digital citizenship education can serve as an effective approach for empowering diaspora communities in the digital era. The program did not only improve participants' understanding of social media use but also encouraged broader transformations related to identity, creativity, and community participation.

The results suggest that digital literacy interventions for migrant communities should adopt a holistic approach (Djarmika et al., 2024; Vuorikari et al., 2022). Technical skills alone are insufficient because digital participation is closely connected with social values, cultural identity, and ethical responsibility. Therefore, future programs should integrate information evaluation skills, online ethics, creative content production, and cultural engagement.

The experience of Indonesian migrants in Malaysia demonstrates that diaspora communities can benefit from programs that recognize their unique position between homeland and host society (Dalib et al., 2023; Djarmika et al., 2024). Social media provides opportunities for maintaining cultural connections while participating actively in global digital environments.

The findings also highlight the importance of continuous support after initial training. Although participants demonstrated increased knowledge and awareness, maintaining long-term behavioral changes requires further mentoring, digital communities, and collaboration with relevant institutions. The original program recommended sustainable follow-up

activities, including advanced training in creative content production and digital community management.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital citizenship education through responsible social media training can contribute significantly to strengthening digital literacy, national identity awareness, and community engagement among Indonesian diaspora communities in Malaysia. The program showed that social media should not be understood merely as a communication platform but also as a digital space where individuals construct identities, exchange knowledge, and participate in social and cultural activities.

The findings indicate that the training successfully improved participants' understanding of responsible digital practices. Participants became more aware of the importance of verifying information, avoiding the spread of misinformation, maintaining ethical communication, and considering the social consequences of their online activities. These improvements reflect the importance of integrating critical thinking and ethical awareness into digital literacy programs, particularly for communities that actively interact within transnational digital environments.

Furthermore, the program contributed to strengthening participants' connection with Indonesian national identity. As members of the Indonesian diaspora, participants recognized that their digital activities could influence perceptions of Indonesia within broader international communities. Through social media, they were encouraged to promote positive narratives about Indonesian culture, values, and diversity. The training also supported participants in transforming their role from passive consumers of digital information into active creators of meaningful cultural content.

Another important outcome was the development of stronger digital networks among Indonesian migrants in Malaysia. These networks provided spaces for information exchange, mutual support, and community solidarity. Such digital communities have the potential to become sustainable platforms for strengthening diaspora engagement and supporting future digital literacy initiatives.

Overall, this study highlights that digital citizenship education represents an effective strategy for empowering diaspora communities in the digital era. Future programs should focus on continuous mentoring, advanced digital content development, and collaboration with relevant institutions to ensure long-term impacts. By combining digital competence with cultural awareness and social responsibility, diaspora communities can become active contributors to positive digital environments while maintaining strong connections with their national and cultural identities.

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