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Smart Citizen Learning Model: Innovation in Realizing Students Characters

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the urgency to develop students' character amid the complexities of the digital era, where low ethical literacy and declining digital citizenship awareness pose real challenges to the education system. To address these issues, a learning model is needed that not only emphasizes technological mastery but also fosters integrity, responsibility, and social awareness as integral components of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. This research aims to examine the implementation strategy of the Smart Citizen learning model in supporting character formation among students at One of State Senior High School in Central Java, Indonesia. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and documentation, and is analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman. The findings indicate that the Smart Citizen model is effective in promoting the realization of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, particularly in the dimensions of independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. Its implementation integrates active learning methods such as Project-Based Learning and Problem-Based Learning, which encourage students not only to understand the content but also to internalize digital ethical values and act as responsible digital citizens. This model aligns with the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum, fostering deep learning based on experience and personal reflection. With strengthened teacher competencies and ongoing evaluation, the Smart Citizen model holds the potential to be replicated in other educational institutions as a contextual and transformative strategy for digital character education.

Introduction

The advancement of technology and innovation across all sectors has significantly transformed the ways in which people live, learn, and interact (Sagala et al., 2024; Legi et al. 2023). Today's youth are growing up as part of a digital ecosystem where access to information and freedom of expression occur almost without boundaries in digital spaces (Trisiana et al., 2019; Tsaliki, 2022). This has led to a logical consequence: students are not only required to be digitally literate but also to possess ethical awareness, social concern, and a sense of responsibility as digital citizens. These qualities form what is known as smart citizenship, which is both a vision and a necessity for developing a generation of students with digital civic awareness aligned with the broader vision of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, a key foundation of the independent curriculum (Rosa et al., 2024).

The *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* serves as an ideal representation of Indonesian learners who excel not only in academic competencies but also in character, national insight, and preparedness to thrive in a digitally interconnected world (Masrukhi et al., 2024). Its six main dimensions faith and devotion, global diversity, independence, critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration serve as the value framework guiding student development at the local level and steering the direction of national education transformation (Kemendikbudristek, 2021).

However, in practice, schools still face numerous challenges in aligning programs with students' digital competencies while simultaneously strengthening character education (Attruk et al., 2024; Iksal et al., 2024). These challenges are rooted in two main issues: Data from the national survey on digital literacy in Indonesia (Samudra et al., 2025; Nugroho & Nasionalita, 2020) indicate that Indonesian youth's digital literacy remains in the moderate category (3.49 on a 5-point scale), with notable weaknesses in digital ethics and digital safety. This shows that students are vulnerable to the negative impacts of technology use that is not accompanied by ethical awareness and national values. A sharp increase in disciplinary violations related to traffic by young people in Semarang, reaching 417,523 cases (Alim & Bangsawan, 2023), along with the persistent issue of juvenile delinquency. According to data from Basto-Pereira & Maia (2018), there were 43 reported cases of youth gang fights and *kreak (gengster)* street crime throughout 2024.

In response to these issues, the researcher previously conducted a study in 2023 focused on developing the Smart Citizen learning model, designed to internalize the values of independence and discipline, specifically within the context of traffic discipline. The results showed that the model was: valid (expert validation score of 93%), practical (91.6% of students responded "very practical"), and effective (N-Gain score of 0.76, categorized as high) (Wijayanti et al., 2023). However, that study did not yet address how the model could be implemented systemically and sustainably as a preventive solution to the broader issues.

This gap presents a compelling rationale for further research. The success of a learning model is not only determined by its design and initial testing but also by its implementation strategy one that must be contextual, adaptive, and integrated into school culture. Especially in secondary education settings, the successful realization of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* relies heavily on how teachers implement innovative, sustainable, and impactful learning strategies that shape students' character in everyday life. Based on extended observations, teachers still face challenges in translating model designs into concrete instructional steps, particularly in cross-value learning and digital practice contexts. Meanwhile, schools require systemic strategies to ensure that educational innovations like the Smart Citizen model are

not merely limited to pilot programs but are fully integrated into students' daily learning culture.

Based on this background, there is a need for follow-up research that specifically examines the implementation strategy of the Smart Citizen learning model in supporting the achievement of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* at public Senior High School in Central Java. This study focuses on how the model can be optimally implemented within school learning contexts, identifies supporting and inhibiting factors, and analyzes the extent to which the implementation strategy shapes learners who are critical, responsible, and possess character in accordance with *Pancasila* values both in digital and real-life settings. Thus, this innovative learning model will not only remain at the design level, but will become an effective and applicable instrument for character education innovation for students.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the Smart Citizen learning model implementation strategy in realizing the Pancasila Student Profile at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang, a class of 36 students in grade XI 7. The research presents a comprehensive argumentative narrative that captures the complexity of learning practices integrating digital literacy and character values, while also providing in-depth analysis of the dynamics of model implementation within the actual school environment (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

SMA Negeri 2 Semarang was purposively selected as the research site because the school had previously been involved in the development of the Smart Citizen learning model. This model aims to integrate digital literacy, critical thinking, and civic responsibility through five main steps: (1) identifying problems, (2) exploring information, (3) collaborative discussion, (4) digital presentation, and (5) reflection. Each step is connected with student character indicators such as creativity, collaboration, responsibility, and digital ethics, which became the focus of observation in this study. Allowing for the observation of continuity between the model's design and its implementation.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data included (1) observation using character rubrics to assess student indicators such as responsibility, collaboration, and creativity during the P5 project activities, (2) interviews with teachers and students, and (3) documentation in the form of portfolios and project reports. Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and relevant research documents (Kurniawan & Wijayanti, 2023). To ensure the validity of the research data, triangulation of techniques was employed to test data credibility by comparing the same data sources through different methods. Data analysis followed the interactive analysis model of Miles & Huberman, involving four stages: Data Collection, Data Reduction, Data Display, and Conclusion Drawing/Verification (Sugiyono, 2015).

Results and Discussion

The implementation strategy of the Smart Citizen learning model innovation was carried out collaboratively by teachers, the curriculum development team, and school management as part of an effort to strengthen the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang. This model was designed to address the challenges of character education in the digital era while integrating digital literacy and character-building dimensions into the learning process (Wijayanti et al., 2022). The initial step in the planning strategy began with aligning the

learning model with character-strengthening goals as defined in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. Teachers in collaboration with the school curriculum team, designed ways to internalize dimensions such as independence, critical thinking, and collaboration through learning activities based on case studies, project-based tasks, and exploration of digital issues relevant to students' everyday lives. The Smart Citizen model was then integrated into instructional tools such as lesson plans, teaching modules, and P5 (*Project Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*). In this integration, teachers designed contextual learning experiences that encouraged students to identify digital social issues in their surroundings such as unethical behavior on digital platforms, traffic discipline violations, and the spread of misinformation on social media. The content planning was adapted not only to target cognitive objectives but also to address affective and value-based domains. This aligns with Singerin (2024) research, which asserts that an effective learning model must engage not only the cognitive domain but also the affective and psychomotor domains. In addition, the planning strategy included the formulation of success indicators that went beyond academic achievement to reflect students' attitude and behavioral development. Teachers prepared attitude observation rubrics, student reflection sheets, and project guidelines that enabled character assessment to be conducted in a sustainable and contextual manner (Sagala et al., 2024).

Model Implementation Strategy in Learning Practice

The Smart Citizen learning model is implemented at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang through a combination of active learning approaches, such as project-based learning (PjBL), problem-based learning (PBL), and reflective discussions. This reinforces the argument of Anwar (2022), who states that combining active learning approaches enables students not only to conceptually understand the material but also to develop critical thinking skills, collaboration, and character values in real-life contexts.

Implementation begins with the formulation of contextual issues relevant to students' lives, such as personal ethics and norms, traffic discipline, misuse of social media, the spread of hoaxes, and digital ethics. These issues serve as triggers in problem-based learning (PBL) scenarios, where students are guided to analyze problems, seek solutions, and present their findings in an argumentative manner. Subsequently, within the PjBL framework, students are encouraged to develop real-world projects grounded in digital citizenship values. For instance, students create educational campaigns on themes such as noble-character youth, digital ethics, short videos promoting traffic discipline, or digital literacy infographics published through the school's social media platforms. These activities not only foster critical and creative thinking but also build a sense of responsibility and public awareness in digital spaces.

Students play an active and participatory role in the implementation of this model. They engage in decision-making, divide responsibilities within groups, and reflect on their learning experiences. During this process, teachers no longer serve as the sole source of knowledge but instead act as facilitators who guide, pose meaningful questions, and nurture the internalization of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* dimensions. This aligns with Efendi et al. (2022), who assert that teachers have a role in facilitating the academic process and guiding the internalization of values particularly those related to responsibility, integrity, collaboration, and ethical awareness in technology use. These values are instilled through critical discussions, individual reflection sessions, and feedback throughout the learning process.

This implementation strategy positions the Smart Citizen model not merely as a thematic approach but as a value-based framework that can encompass various active

learning methods. With a contextual, flexible, and experience-based execution, this model shows great potential in shaping students who are not only digitally literate but also possess a strong national identity and social responsibility.

Evaluation and Impact of the Smart Citizen Model Implementation

The implementation of the Smart Citizen model at SMA Negeri 2 Semarang was comprehensively evaluated to determine the extent to which this learning strategy impacts students' character development and digital literacy. The evaluation was carried out by teachers during the learning process using various techniques, including classroom observation, student reflection, project assessment, and portfolio analysis.

The assessment in this study was not limited to academic achievement but emphasized behavioral change and the internalization of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* values. The observed dimensions included independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. Independence was assessed through students' ability to manage project tasks with minimal teacher guidance, critical thinking was measured by their capacity to analyze social phenomena and construct arguments, while collaboration was evaluated through teamwork in problem-based projects and digital campaigns. These dimensions were measured using character rubrics and observation sheets as part of the research instruments.

The evaluation results revealed that students began to exhibit ethical awareness in their use of digital media, such as being cautious in sharing information, more thoughtful in commenting on social media, and promoting positive values both online and offline. These behaviors were quantified through observation rubrics, and the percentage of students demonstrating each indicator is presented in the results section. In some cases, students extended classroom projects into voluntary activities beyond school, such as producing educational content for their personal digital platforms. Teachers noted that this approach strengthened the connection between learning and students' real-life experiences, while also shifting the role of students from passive recipients to active participants who reflect upon and construct values. From the teachers' perspective, reflections during the process indicated that the model's success largely depended on the consistency of value integration and the flexibility of the teaching approaches employed.

The implementation of the Smart Citizen model proved effective in enhancing students' digital literacy as well as fostering the internalization of *Pancasila* character values. The assessment particularly highlighted three core dimensions: independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. Based on observation data, 78% of students demonstrated independence by managing project tasks and completing assignments with minimal teacher intervention, 72% showed critical thinking skills through analyzing digital social phenomena and constructing arguments based on authentic cases, and 81% exhibited collaboration during teamwork in project-based activities. Classroom practices further confirmed these findings, as students were able to independently organize their workflow, engage in reflective discussions regarding digital citizenship, and collaboratively design digital campaigns promoting positive values. These results indicate that the Smart Citizen model not only structured the learning process but also produced measurable outcomes in strengthening *Pancasila* character formation in a meaningful and transformative manner.

Learning Transformation through the Smart Citizen Model

The implementation of the Smart Citizen model represents a form of learning transformation that aligns with the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum policy. This model not only offers a contextual approach to instructional content but also promotes student

engagement in reflective and transformative learning processes (Wijayanti et al., 2023). Through a combination of project-based learning, value-driven discussions, and the exploration of digital social issues, students are encouraged not merely to understand concepts cognitively, but to internalize values, reflect upon them, and apply them in real-life situations.

In this context, learning evolves from the mere transmission of information into a process of ethical awareness formation and the cultivation of social responsibility, which lies at the heart of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* dimensions. Students are not only invited to think, but also to feel and act, embodying the essence of deep learning. They do not merely learn about values; they experience and practice them through meaningful activities both in the classroom and in their digital interactions. This model also reflects the spirit of the independent curriculum by positioning students as the primary agents in the learning process learning through experience, local context, and autonomously developed interests (Damayanti & Suryadi, 2023). The Smart Citizen strategy is designed to foster active student engagement by encouraging initiative in decision making, strengthening collaboration in team-based activities, and promoting problem solving skills that are directly linked to contemporary challenges, particularly in the areas of digital literacy, media ethics, and social participation.

Thus, the Smart Citizen model is not merely a methodological innovation, but a representation of a paradigm shifts in learning. It bridges the goals of national education with students' everyday realities and opens up space for the development of holistic character formation value-based, contextually relevant, and grounded in meaningful experience.

Research findings indicate that the Smart Citizen learning model holds significant potential as an approach for shaping student character in the digital era. This model not only fosters critical thinking and digital skills but also instills moral values, ethics, and social responsibility in alignment with the dimensions of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. The model's primary strength lies in its ability to integrate character education and digital literacy into a single, contextual learning approach. Amid the widespread use of technology among students, this approach responds to contemporary educational needs forming learners who are not only digitally competent but also possess integrity and ethical awareness as responsible citizens. By focusing on real-world issues that students face in their digital lives such as media ethics, social discipline, and public responsibility the Smart Citizen model becomes a pedagogical framework that is relevant, applicable, and directly impactful on character development. The model can be implemented through various active learning methods, including problem-based learning (PBL), project-based learning (PjBL), reflective discussions, and digital campaign projects, all of which provide space for experiential learning. The implication of these findings is that character education in schools must undergo a transformation in response to the changing times. Character formation cannot rely solely on advice or theoretical instruction, but must instead be designed as contextual and reflective learning experiences, as exemplified by the Smart Citizen model.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Smart Citizen learning model is effective in supporting the realization of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, particularly in the dimensions of independence, critical thinking, and *bergotong royong*. Through the application of active methods such as project-based learning (PjBL) and problem-based learning (PBL), this model not only imparts knowledge but also internalizes the values of digital ethics,

encouraging students to take active roles as responsible digital citizens. Aligned with the independent curriculum, the model fosters deep learning by emphasizing student engagement through real-life experiences and personal reflection. Its implementation has shown a positive impact on character development while also preparing students to face the challenges of the digital world. With adequate teacher training and ongoing evaluation, the Smart Citizen model holds strong potential to be scaled and replicated in other schools as a relevant strategy for strengthening student character in the digital era.

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