

Enhancing Digital Political Literacy to Improve Migrant Voter Participation: A Case Study in Penang, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital literacy is essential for enabling individuals to distinguish between facts and opinions, verify the accuracy of information, and understand the influence of social media algorithms. With the rise of post-truth politics, where the boundaries between truth and falsehood blur, voters are increasingly susceptible to misinformation and political propaganda. Digital literacy, particularly in the political context, empowers citizens to make informed decisions, fostering critical thinking and responsible social media use. This can be achieved through educational programs, collaborations among governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations, and campaigns promoting the importance of digital literacy. Social media platforms also play a crucial role in combating misinformation by enhancing hoax detection technology and providing warning labels for unverified content. The urgency of digital political literacy is particularly relevant in the context of elections, where misinformation, fake news, and disinformation can lead to social polarization and confusion. The use of digital communication technologies, which decentralize information sources, has transformed the political landscape, making cyberspace an important platform for both political campaigning and public expression. By developing digital political literacy, citizens are better equipped to evaluate political offers, access reliable information, and make informed choices. This study explores the importance of digital political literacy in combating misinformation, particularly among Indonesian migrant workers. In the era of post-truth politics, where falsehoods dominate digital spaces, fostering critical digital skills is essential. The paper advocates for educational programs and collaborative initiatives to empower migrant voters in making informed electoral decisions, thereby enhancing democratic participation and reducing polarization.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History :

Submitted/Received 20 June 2025

First Revised 3 July 2025

Accepted 29 July 2025

First Available online 31 July 2025

Publication Date 31 July 2025

Keyword :

Literacy Politic

Democracy

Digital Education

Migrant political participation

General Elections

Social Media and Politic

INTRODUCTION

Background Of the Problem

Developing digital literacy means learning to distinguish between facts and opinions, verifying the accuracy of information before sharing it, and understanding how social media algorithms influence the information we see. With this understanding, voters can become more intelligent in making decisions based on accurate information and less susceptible to black campaigns or political propaganda.

One way to enhance digital literacy is through education. Governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations can collaborate to create programs or workshops on fact-checking, recognizing media bias, and using social media responsibly. Campaigns promoting the importance of digital literacy can also help raise public awareness.

Additionally, social media platforms play a crucial role in combating false information. They can improve hoax detection technology and provide warning labels on unverified information. This can help users make better decisions about which information is trustworthy and shareable.

Amidst the vast amount of information and news we encounter daily, it is essential to sharpen our digital literacy skills. Over the past decade, we have witnessed how electoral politics has become an arena where truth and lies intertwine, leading to confusion, social conflict, and polarization in society. Elections in various countries, including Indonesia, have become a battleground for post-truth politics, where the line between truth and falsehood is increasingly blurred.

Politics no longer prioritizes rational discourse but instead relies on emotionally driven arguments rooted in fear, anxiety, and public uncertainty. This condition is further fueled by the rise of internet-based digital communication technology, which allows information sources to be decentralized and spread everywhere. The cyberspace is seen by politicians as an effective platform for political communication, campaigning, and garnering support. For the public, cyberspace serves as a medium for self-expression and showing support for their preferred candidates.

Problem

The article highlights several key problems related to digital literacy and political misinformation. One major issue is the spread of misinformation and disinformation in politics, where fake news and manipulated information influence voter decisions. The increasing difficulty in distinguishing between facts and opinions has led to social conflicts and polarization. Political campaigns often rely on emotional manipulation rather than rational discourse, making it harder for voters to make informed choices. Additionally, the lack of digital political literacy, especially Indonesian migrant workers, makes them more vulnerable to misinformation. Many individuals lack the critical skills to evaluate political information, and social media, while a powerful platform for political discussions, is often misused to spread false narratives.

Another significant problem is the rise of post-truth politics, where political elites exploit digital platforms to manipulate public opinion. The decentralized nature of internet-based communication further complicates the control of misinformation, as misleading content spreads rapidly across various channels. This situation creates a political environment where fear, anxiety, and confusion dominate over rational discourse. Without adequate digital political literacy, voters may struggle to recognize credible sources of information and could be easily swayed by misleading political narratives.

Purpose

Strengthening digital literacy through education and awareness campaigns is essential. Governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations should collaborate to provide fact-checking workshops, training on media bias, and responsible social media usage. Public awareness campaigns should emphasize the importance of verifying information before sharing it to prevent the spread of misinformation. Additionally, encouraging political literacy among voters is crucial. Migrant voters need to be educated on how to assess political information, compare candidates, and make informed decisions. This will help them develop critical thinking skills and engage constructively in political discourse.

Another purpose is promoting the responsible use of social media for political communication. Social media platforms should implement stricter policies to detect and label hoaxes and unverified information, ensuring that users are aware of the credibility of the content they consume. Political discussions on social media should encourage open, democratic, and fact-based conversations rather than spreading fear and misinformation. Lastly, empowering voters to be rational and independent is crucial. Citizens should be encouraged to access diverse sources of information, critically evaluate different political offers, and participate actively in democratic processes. By fostering an informed and politically literate society, the negative effects of misinformation can be reduced, ensuring a more transparent, democratic, and responsible electoral process.

METHOD

This study uses workshop and questionnaire methods simultaneously, which can be referred to as mixed research or mixed methods research. This study combines quantitative approaches (using questionnaires for structured data) and qualitative approaches (using workshops for in-depth exploration) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how political education delivered through digital platforms affects migrant voter participation. The purpose of this workshop method is to improve digital political literacy among migrant voters so that they are able to identify valid political information, filter hoaxes and digital propaganda, and increase awareness and participation in the political process, especially for migrant voters. The questionnaire method is used to measure the level of digital political literacy of migrants. We aim to ascertain the degree of migrants' comprehension, aptitude, and perspectives regarding the utilization of digital media for information, their capacity to differentiate genuine information from fakes, and their comprehension of their political rights as migrant voters. This research workshop lasted for 5 hours and was attended by 24 workshop participants from migrant workers living in Penang, Malaysia.

RESULT OF ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION

Materials and Equipment for Activities

Workshop materials were distributed to participants related to theoretical and practical materials. Workshop materials are presented in the form of power points. Workshop material is explained interactively in the form of presentations and group discussions.

Activity Material

a. Importance of Material

The study regarding the importance and role of migrant voters in democracy in Indonesia consists of: studies and journals presented in powerpoint form.

b. Location of Penang, Malaysia

On all of Indonesian migrant workers in Penang, Malaysia

c. Situation Analysis

Low political literacy among migrant voters means that general selection results do not reflect autonomous voter behavior. Migrant voters are not interested in knowing and understanding politics, something that is very necessary for the development of democracy in Indonesia.

d. Solution

Strengthening digital literacy through education and awareness campaigns is essential. Governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations should collaborate to provide fact-checking workshops, training on media bias, and responsible social media usage. Public awareness campaigns should emphasize the importance of verifying information before sharing it to prevent the spread of misinformation. Additionally, encouraging political literacy among voters is crucial. Migrant voters need to be educated on how to assess political information, compare candidates, and make informed decisions. This will help them develop critical thinking skills and engage constructively in political discourse.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion Political education in the digital era plays a critical role in increasing migrant voter turnout and strengthening democratic processes. Amidst the rapid advancement of information and communication technologies, political education faces unique challenges and opportunities. Significant challenges include the spread of invalid information, the digital divide, dependence on digital platforms, and variability in digital literacy skills.

However, technology also offers opportunities, such as rapid access to information, interactive educational platforms, and better media literacy skills. To capitalize on these opportunities and address the challenges, digital-era political education strategies must be carefully designed. This includes incorporating intensive digital literacy training, developing innovative curricula that integrate technology, partnering with technology companies to create inclusive educational platforms, and using social media campaigns to promote active political participation.

Effective political education in the digital era aims to prepare migrant voters for elections and empower them to actively contribute to the political life of their country. With the right approach, digital-era political education can help individuals become informed and engaged voters, contributing to the strengthening of democracy and the creation of a more inclusive and transparent political future.

Activity Evaluation

Evaluation is carried out at the final stage of the activity, through data collection based on observations of the course of socialization activities. At the evaluation stage, it is carried out by concluding the participants' understanding and also evaluating the results of the news content production work made by the participants.

- a. Through the attendance list, it is known that there are 24 participants according to the invitation and the target of the workshop participants.
- b. The presentation of the workshop material is carried out according to the training schedule

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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