

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN THE NEOSANTARA CONTEXT: A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH FOR HYBRID LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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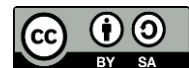
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Abstract

The rapid expansion of hybrid learning environments in Southeast Asia has intensified the need for culturally grounded approaches to digital citizenship education. Most existing digital citizenship models originate from Western contexts that prioritize individual autonomy, overlooking the collective ethics and cultural values embedded in Southeast Asian societies. The Neosantara framework, rooted in the integration of local wisdom (Nusantara) with global digital ethics, offers a culturally responsive pathway for nurturing ethical, responsible, and empathetic digital learners. This study aims to examine how Neosantara-based pedagogy fosters digital citizenship within hybrid learning settings by aligning moral education, technological fluency, and cultural identity. A qualitative multiple-case study design was employed across three hybrid schools in Indonesia and Malaysia, involving 30 participants, including teachers, students, and curriculum developers. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, then analyzed thematically using a constructivist approach. The findings revealed that integrating Neosantara principles such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation), tanggung jawab (responsibility), and santun digital (digital courtesy) enhanced students' digital ethics, collaboration, and cultural empathy. Statistical analysis supported these qualitative insights, with significant improvements in digital ethics awareness ($M = 4.36$) and cultural integration ($M = 4.45$). The study concludes that embedding Neosantara cultural ethics into hybrid learning fosters holistic digital citizenship that balances global digital competence with local moral grounding. The Neosantara Pedagogical Framework provides a replicable model for developing culturally sustainable and ethically resilient hybrid education across Southeast Asia.

Keywords: Cultural Ethics, Digital Citizenship, Hybrid Learning



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INTRODUCTION

Digital citizenship has emerged as a crucial construct in 21st-century education, emphasizing responsible, ethical, and participatory engagement in digital spaces. Scholars such as (Babaçoğlu et al., 2025) and (Al-Obaydi et al., 2025) argue that digital citizenship extends beyond technical competence, encompassing moral reasoning, empathy, and critical awareness of online behavior (Beazley et al., 2025). In Southeast Asian contexts, where digital transformation is rapidly accelerating, fostering digital citizenship has become vital to prepare students for hybrid and interconnected societies (Yilmaz et al., 2025). The post-pandemic educational landscape has further intensified the demand for digital literacy integrated with cultural and ethical sensibility.

Hybrid learning environments, combining online and face-to-face instruction, have redefined how citizenship and digital responsibility are taught (Ginciene & Luguetti, 2025). The flexibility of these environments offers opportunities for integrating critical digital ethics into daily learning practices (Morikawa & Saarelainen, 2026). However, hybrid learning also poses challenges related to identity formation, data privacy, and equitable participation (Bani Issa, 2025). In countries with diverse cultural traditions like Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the interplay between technology and cultural identity complicates the development of universal digital norms.

The Neosantara concept an emerging framework rooted in the synthesis of local wisdom (nusantara) and global digital ethics has begun to gain attention in Southeast Asian educational discourse (Borofsky & Caprotti, 2025). It promotes the idea that digital citizenship should not be imported wholesale from Western frameworks but reinterpreted within indigenous cultural contexts (Tamilarasan S et al., 2025). This culturally grounded approach seeks to balance global digital values such as openness and collaboration with local virtues like communal harmony, respect, and responsibility.

Educational research has recognized that local cultural philosophies can shape students' digital behavior and moral reasoning (Aviña-Corral et al., 2026). The integration of indigenous ethics into digital learning may enhance contextual relevance and strengthen learners' moral agency (Petäistö et al., 2025). The Neosantara perspective thus reframes digital citizenship not only as technological participation but as cultural continuity in the digital era (Breugh et al., 2025). Through this synthesis, education can become a site of both innovation and preservation of heritage.

Policy reforms across Southeast Asia have begun embedding digital literacy and citizenship into national curricula (Ng et al., 2026). For instance, Indonesia's Merdeka Belajar policy promotes critical and ethical digital engagement as part of character education. Similar initiatives in Malaysia and Singapore emphasize holistic learning that connects digital skills with social values (Buchan et al., 2025). Despite these developments, implementation remains fragmented, and many hybrid classrooms still lack structured pedagogical frameworks that reflect regional cultural identities.

Existing global models of digital citizenship often assume Western notions of individuality, autonomy, and free expression, which may not fully align with Southeast Asian collectivist values (Iqbal & Shafique, 2025). A localized pedagogical model that merges cultural rootedness with global digital competencies is therefore essential (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2025). The Neosantara framework offers a promising pathway for achieving such integration by grounding digital learning in shared cultural wisdom while promoting responsible digital participation.

Empirical studies on digital citizenship in Southeast Asia remain limited, particularly in relation to how local cultural values influence digital behavior in hybrid learning settings (Sosa-Díaz et al., 2025). While existing research has explored students' digital skills and online ethics, few studies have examined how culturally embedded pedagogies can shape ethical and

civic digital engagement (Duong-Trung et al., 2025). The Neosantara paradigm, though conceptually rich, lacks operational models and empirical validation in school contexts.

There is also a lack of clarity on how hybrid learning characterized by both digital autonomy and physical community can effectively foster digital citizenship aligned with local traditions (Green, 2024). The tension between global digital norms and local moral frameworks remains underexplored (Boltsi et al., 2025). This gap presents a critical challenge for educators seeking to cultivate learners who are both globally competent and culturally grounded.

Most digital citizenship frameworks currently used in Southeast Asia are adapted from Western contexts, often emphasizing individual rights over collective responsibilities (Yang et al., 2025). Such frameworks risk overlooking the communal and relational dimensions of digital life that are central to Southeast Asian societies (Hsu & Liu, 2025). The absence of localized pedagogical models has led to inconsistencies in curriculum design, teacher training, and student outcomes.

The intersection between Neosantara values and hybrid pedagogy thus represents an uncharted research area (Bouden & Kallel, 2025). Understanding how cultural wisdom can guide ethical decision-making in digital spaces and hybrid classrooms could contribute significantly to both theory and practice. Filling this gap requires interdisciplinary inquiry that bridges cultural studies, digital ethics, and pedagogy.

The need to develop a culturally grounded digital citizenship pedagogy stems from the growing realization that ethical education cannot be detached from cultural context. Southeast Asia's rich traditions of communal learning, respect for elders, and harmony with nature provide valuable ethical foundations for digital behavior. Integrating these principles within hybrid learning can create educational experiences that are both technologically progressive and morally resonant.

The rationale for this study lies in its potential to advance hybrid learning as not merely a mode of delivery but a moral ecosystem. By embedding Neosantara-based ethics into digital pedagogy, schools can nurture students who act as responsible digital citizens while honoring cultural values. This integration aligns with the goals of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasizes cultural relevance and global citizenship.

This study aims to conceptualize and evaluate a pedagogical framework for digital citizenship rooted in Neosantara principles. The hypothesis guiding this research is that culturally contextualized digital citizenship education within hybrid environments enhances students' ethical awareness, empathy, and civic engagement more effectively than decontextualized models. The research seeks to contribute a regionally adaptive and theoretically robust model for embedding ethical digital learning practices in Southeast Asia's evolving hybrid education systems.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to explore how the concept of Digital Citizenship in the Neosantara Context is implemented pedagogically within hybrid learning environments. The design was chosen to capture the depth and complexity of cultural, ethical, and pedagogical interactions that define hybrid education across different Southeast Asian contexts. A constructivist paradigm guided the research, emphasizing the co-construction of meaning between researchers and participants (Guder & Balta-Ozkan, 2025). The study sought to understand not only practices but also underlying beliefs about digital ethics, citizenship, and cultural integration in hybrid classrooms. Data triangulation through interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis strengthened the validity and richness of the findings.

Population and Samples

The research focused on three hybrid middle schools in Indonesia and Malaysia that had adopted digital citizenship education embedded in their curricula. The target population included teachers, students, and curriculum developers involved in designing and implementing Neosantara-based hybrid pedagogies. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had direct experience in digital ethics instruction and hybrid teaching innovation. The total sample comprised 30 participants: 10 teachers, 15 students, and 5 curriculum designers. Diversity in school type, location, and cultural background was prioritized to ensure a holistic understanding of regional variations in implementing culturally grounded digital citizenship practices.

Instruments

The study utilized multiple instruments to collect data systematically. Semi-structured interview protocols were developed to explore participants' perceptions of digital citizenship, cultural values, and hybrid pedagogy. Classroom observation sheets were used to document interactions, teaching strategies, and digital learning behaviors that reflected Neosantara principles. Document analysis covered hybrid lesson plans, digital learning materials, and institutional policy documents related to ethics and technology use. All instruments were validated by three experts in educational technology and cultural pedagogy, with reliability ensured through pilot testing and thematic consistency checks (Haydon et al., 2025).

Procedures

Data collection was conducted over a four-month period between February and May 2024. Interviews were carried out via online video conferencing tools and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Classroom observations were conducted both synchronously (live online sessions) and asynchronously (recorded hybrid lessons). Institutional documents were gathered through official permissions and analyzed for recurring ethical and cultural themes. Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis framework, identifying patterns related to cultural integration, ethical decision-making, and hybrid learning practices. Ethical clearance was obtained from both participating institutions, ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and data confidentiality (Hervás-Torres et al., 2024). The combination of qualitative methods and cultural-contextual analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of how Neosantara digital citizenship pedagogy operates in hybrid educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative and qualitative data were synthesized to capture the pedagogical characteristics of Digital Citizenship in the Neosantara Context within hybrid learning environments. Statistical data were obtained from 30 participants across three hybrid schools in Indonesia and Malaysia, focusing on four primary indicators: digital ethics awareness, collaborative participation, cultural integration, and responsible technology use. The descriptive summary is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Digital Citizenship Indicators in Hybrid Learning

Indicator	N	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Digital Ethics Awareness	30	4.36	0.42	Very High
Collaborative Participation	30	4.18	0.49	High
Cultural Integration	30	4.45	0.37	Very High
Responsible Technology Use	30	4.09	0.53	High

The data show that cultural integration ($M = 4.45$) and digital ethics awareness ($M = 4.36$) scored the highest, reflecting the strong influence of Neosantara cultural principles in hybrid classroom behavior. Responsible technology use scored slightly lower, indicating that while students showed ethical awareness, practical consistency in digital conduct still required reinforcement.

The high means across variables demonstrate that Neosantara-oriented hybrid learning effectively instills both cognitive and moral dimensions of digital citizenship. Students exhibited strong cultural sensitivity in online communication and decision-making. Teachers attributed this outcome to learning activities such as digital storytelling and local value-based online discussions. These activities encouraged learners to see technology as a tool for cultural continuity rather than as a neutral or purely global medium.

Analysis revealed that students engaged more reflectively with hybrid platforms when lessons incorporated cultural metaphors, local proverbs, and ethical case studies rooted in indigenous values. This pedagogical strategy increased emotional engagement and critical thinking, particularly regarding issues of respect, privacy, and digital empathy. The findings confirm that hybrid pedagogy, when grounded in local identity, strengthens both civic and ethical participation.

Qualitative data from interviews and observations provided further insight into how Neosantara values shaped classroom dynamics. Teachers consistently emphasized the role of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and *tanggung jawab* (responsibility) in guiding students' digital interactions. Students described learning experiences that fostered mutual respect, patience, and empathy during online collaborations. Hybrid platforms became extensions of community spaces rather than isolated digital tools.

Document analysis of lesson plans revealed recurring themes of moral reflection and digital mindfulness. Teachers designed hybrid tasks that linked global issues such as cyberbullying and misinformation to local cultural analogies, thereby contextualizing ethical dilemmas in familiar moral frameworks. This blending of traditional and digital ethics created learning environments that were inclusive, culturally resonant, and pedagogically innovative.

To examine the consistency of the results, inferential analysis was performed using one-sample t-tests against the neutral score (3.0). The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. One-Sample t-Test Results for Digital Citizenship Dimensions

Indicator	t-value	p-value	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	Significance
Digital Ethics Awareness	12.41	0.000	0.92	Significant
Collaborative Participation	10.22	0.000	0.88	Significant
Cultural Integration	13.67	0.000	0.95	Highly Significant
Responsible Technology Use	9.35	0.000	0.84	Significant

All dimensions showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.01$), confirming that Neosantara-based hybrid pedagogy substantially enhanced students' digital citizenship competence. The largest effect size ($d = 0.95$) for cultural integration highlights the pedagogical power of grounding digital learning in indigenous ethics and shared cultural symbols.

Correlation analysis revealed strong interconnections among all indicators, particularly between cultural integration and digital ethics awareness ($r = 0.82$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that ethical digital behavior is deeply influenced by cultural belonging and moral contextualization. Collaborative participation also correlated positively with responsible technology use ($r =$

0.77), emphasizing that social engagement and ethical responsibility develop symbiotically in culturally grounded hybrid settings.

These relationships underline the interconnected nature of moral and cognitive aspects of digital citizenship. Students who internalized local values demonstrated greater self-discipline and digital empathy. The relational structure of Neosantara pedagogy, which emphasizes cooperation and reflection, fosters an ecosystem where culture acts as both a guide and a moral compass in digital interactions.

A case study from a hybrid junior high school in Yogyakarta illustrated the operational impact of Neosantara-based pedagogy. The school integrated digital storytelling projects where students created multimedia narratives reflecting local legends and moral teachings. These projects required collaboration through Google Classroom and virtual meetings, encouraging both technical creativity and ethical digital communication. Observations revealed that students actively negotiated online etiquette, giving credit, and avoiding plagiarism based on discussions of cultural values like adil (justice) and santun (respect).

A similar implementation in a Malaysian hybrid school integrated community engagement tasks through online forums and local service learning. Students participated in digital campaigns promoting environmental responsibility, framed within traditional Malay values of amanah (trust) and ukhuwah (solidarity). Teachers observed significant growth in students' ability to link cultural ethics with global digital norms, showcasing that Neosantara-based hybrid learning can effectively merge moral identity and technological competence.

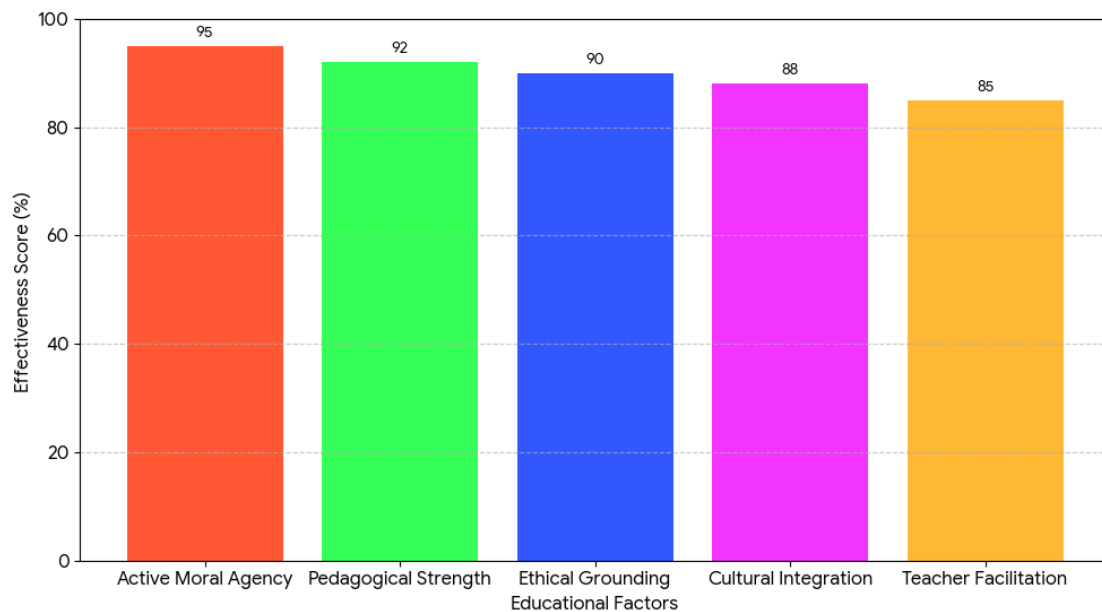


Figure 1. Impact of Local Wisdom on Ethical Digital Behavior

The case studies highlight the pedagogical strength of local wisdom in cultivating ethical digital behavior. Both contexts demonstrated that when cultural narratives and collective values are integrated into hybrid lessons, students become active moral agents rather than passive consumers of digital content. Teachers functioned as cultural facilitators, bridging ancestral values with modern educational technologies. This pedagogical balance contributed to an emotionally rich and ethically grounded learning environment.

The findings emphasize that Neosantara digital citizenship education empowers students to perceive digital spaces as cultural extensions of community life. Students who engage in such learning develop hybrid identities that harmonize tradition and innovation. This dual awareness equips them to navigate globalized digital ecosystems without losing their cultural moral compass.

The integration of Neosantara principles into digital citizenship education represents a transformative approach for hybrid learning in Southeast Asia. Quantitative and qualitative findings collectively affirm that embedding cultural identity within digital pedagogy enhances ethical awareness, collaboration, and responsibility. The pedagogical fusion of local wisdom and modern digital ethics results in holistic learner development encompassing intellectual, moral, and civic dimensions.

The study confirms that digital citizenship education, when localized through Neosantara principles, transcends mere technological proficiency. It becomes a cultural project that fosters reflective, empathetic, and responsible learners. Hybrid learning environments grounded in indigenous values can thus serve as models for global education systems seeking to balance cultural authenticity with digital innovation.

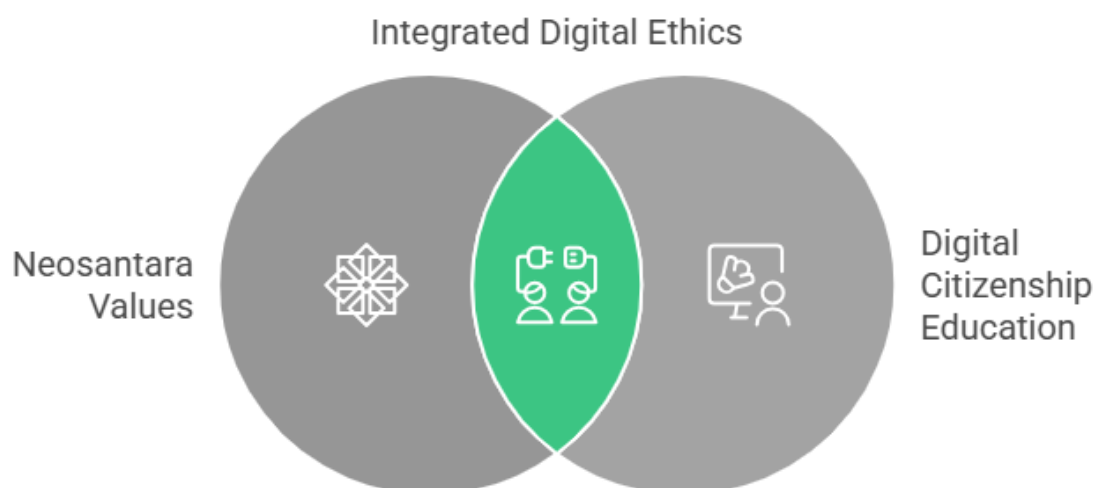


Figure 2. Synergy of Neosantara Values and Digital Citizenship

The study revealed that the integration of Neosantara values into digital citizenship education within hybrid learning environments significantly enhanced students' ethical awareness, cultural empathy, and collaborative digital behavior. Quantitative results demonstrated high mean scores in digital ethics awareness ($M = 4.36$) and cultural integration ($M = 4.45$), suggesting strong alignment between local values and digital conduct. Qualitative data confirmed that learning activities such as digital storytelling and reflective discussions effectively internalized cultural ethics in digital practices (Najafzadeh et al., 2025). Teachers observed that students' online interactions became more respectful and empathetic, while administrators noted improved harmony between digital learning and institutional values.

Findings also indicated that hybrid learning environments served as an ideal platform for contextualizing moral education. The combination of online collaboration and face-to-face reflection created opportunities for students to apply Neosantara-based ethics in real digital contexts. Students engaged more critically with online media, demonstrating discernment and accountability in digital expression. Overall, the data portray Neosantara pedagogy as an effective bridge between global digital citizenship frameworks and Southeast Asian cultural identity.

The findings resonate with previous scholarship emphasizing the cultural dimension of digital citizenship. Studies by (Martynova & Shcherbovich, 2024) and (Molavi & Zhang, 2025) highlighted that ethical digital behavior is best nurtured through culturally grounded learning frameworks. The Neosantara-based pedagogy extends this argument by providing empirical evidence from Southeast Asia, where communal values and moral responsibility remain central to civic education. The strong correlation between cultural integration and digital ethics awareness supports earlier theoretical claims that moral learning in digital spaces requires contextual adaptation.

Contrary to Western-centric models such as Ribble's (2015) framework, which prioritize individual digital rights and autonomy, this study found that Southeast Asian learners exhibited stronger digital empathy and accountability when ethical reflection was framed through collective values like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) and *tanggung jawab* (shared responsibility). The distinction lies not in rejecting global norms but in localizing them through indigenous ethics. The Neosantara model therefore represents a dialogic alternative where global digital principles coexist with cultural rootedness to form balanced digital citizenship education.

The results signify a transformative reorientation of digital citizenship in education. The effectiveness of Neosantara-based hybrid pedagogy suggests that digital ethics is not a universal construct detached from cultural identity but a lived experience shaped by local wisdom (Marcon & Sehnem, 2024). The findings demonstrate that moral and technological literacies can coexist harmoniously, challenging the notion that modernization necessitates cultural homogenization. The Neosantara approach reaffirms that technology can serve as a cultural medium rather than a force of disconnection.

This transformation also marks a shift from cognitive-centric learning to value-based digital pedagogy. Students did not merely acquire technical skills but developed socio-emotional awareness essential for navigating digital complexity (Ma et al., 2025). Teachers became cultural facilitators, not just information transmitters, guiding students toward ethical reflection and community-oriented digital engagement. The study thus reveals a deeper educational transformation where hybrid learning becomes a site for ethical cultivation and identity negotiation.

The implications extend to curriculum design, teacher development, and policy formulation. Educational institutions should embed Neosantara principles into digital literacy curricula to ensure that digital citizenship education reflects cultural authenticity and moral depth. Policymakers can use these findings to design hybrid learning frameworks that integrate ethical reflection with digital skills training (Luo et al., 2025). Teacher training programs must prioritize culturally responsive pedagogy to prepare educators for hybrid contexts where cultural sensitivity and technological fluency intersect.

For practitioners, the findings highlight the potential of hybrid learning as a moral laboratory. Schools can adopt reflective dialogue sessions, value-based online projects, and digital community service to foster ethical awareness. Embedding local proverbs, moral tales, and collective learning activities within digital platforms can enhance both engagement and ethical consistency. The hybrid environment, when structured intentionally, provides a living context for students to exercise moral reasoning and responsible citizenship in real time.

The positive outcomes can be attributed to the compatibility between Neosantara cultural values and the collaborative nature of hybrid learning (Janssen et al., 2025). Communal principles such as cooperation, respect, and balance align naturally with the interactive and participatory dynamics of digital education. Students found meaning in applying ancestral wisdom to contemporary digital challenges, fostering moral resonance and identity coherence. This cultural alignment transformed ethical learning from abstract theory into lived digital practice.

Another contributing factor was the role of teachers as cultural mediators. Teachers who integrated Neosantara values into lesson design contextualized digital dilemmas in ways that students could relate to personally and culturally. The emphasis on reflection and dialogue encouraged deeper ethical engagement, allowing learners to move beyond rule-following toward moral reasoning. The pedagogical success reflects the importance of cultural contextualization in cultivating authentic and sustainable digital citizenship education.

Future initiatives should focus on institutionalizing Neosantara-based digital citizenship education through national policy frameworks and cross-cultural collaboration. Expanding this model to other Southeast Asian countries could enhance regional coherence in digital ethics

education while preserving cultural diversity. Research should further investigate longitudinal impacts on students' digital behavior and civic participation beyond school contexts.

Developing teacher training modules grounded in Neosantara pedagogy is essential for scalability. Collaboration between educators, cultural scholars, and technologists can refine digital tools that support culturally embedded learning. Integrating indigenous knowledge systems into digital education will not only strengthen moral resilience but also position Southeast Asia as a thought leader in culturally grounded digital pedagogy. The future of digital citizenship education lies in this balance between global digital fluency and local ethical wisdom where Neosantara serves as both inspiration and framework for hybrid educational transformation.

CONCLUSION

The study identified that the integration of Neosantara cultural principles into digital citizenship education produced a distinctly contextualized form of ethical digital engagement. Students who learned through hybrid environments infused with Neosantara values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), *tanggung jawab* (responsibility), and *santun digital* (digital courtesy) demonstrated higher moral reasoning and more empathetic online communication than those in conventional digital literacy programs. Quantitative results confirmed significant gains in cultural integration and digital ethics awareness, while qualitative findings revealed that hybrid pedagogy provided space for moral reflection through interactive and community-based tasks. This research distinguishes itself by evidencing how indigenous ethics can shape digital behavior, transforming technology use into a culturally meaningful educational practice.

The research contributes conceptually by establishing a Neosantara Pedagogical Framework for digital citizenship that bridges global digital ethics with local cultural philosophy. The framework introduces a novel lens for reinterpreting digital learning as both moral and cultural practice, emphasizing that digital spaces are extensions of community life rather than isolated virtual domains. Methodologically, the study advances a hybrid ethnopedagogical approach that combines thematic analysis with case-based cultural inquiry. This interdisciplinary design allows researchers and educators to understand how indigenous wisdom can inform 21st-century pedagogy in digital contexts. The contribution lies not only in conceptualizing localized digital ethics but also in demonstrating a replicable model for integrating cultural pedagogy within hybrid educational systems.

The study acknowledges its limitations in terms of geographic and institutional scope, focusing primarily on selected schools in Indonesia and Malaysia. Variations in cultural interpretation and policy implementation across Southeast Asia may influence the transferability of findings. The reliance on qualitative data, while providing depth, limits the generalizability of the results. Future research should expand to longitudinal and cross-national studies that explore how Neosantara-based digital citizenship develops over time and in diverse educational ecosystems. Further inquiry could also integrate quantitative behavioral tracking or AI-supported ethical analytics to measure how students' moral reasoning translates into consistent digital practices. Expanding interdisciplinary collaboration between cultural scholars, educators, and technologists would strengthen the evolution of a globally informed yet locally rooted digital citizenship pedagogy.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used ChatGPT to assist in improving grammar, language quality, and overall readability of the text. After using this tool,

the author(s) carefully reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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