

Digital Media for Youth Awareness on Corruption and Human Rights

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Abstract

Corruption and human rights violations remain significant global challenges that undermine democratic governance, public trust, and social justice. Despite their structural impact, these issues are often perceived by young people as distant political problems rather than everyday realities. This study aims to examine how digital educational media can enhance youth awareness of corruption and human rights violations. A qualitative descriptive design was employed using purposive sampling. Ten law students who had completed courses related to constitutional law and human rights participated in semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to everyday corruption and rights violations. The findings informed the development of a short educational video distributed through TikTok and Instagram. Audience comments were observed and analyzed descriptively to identify recurring response patterns over a two-week period, assessing awareness, emotional engagement, and expressions of responsibility. The results reveal three primary outcomes: increased recognition of everyday corrupt practices, heightened emotional and moral engagement, and emerging civic responsibility among viewers. These findings align with recent digital civic engagement theories suggesting that online participation often begins with awareness and expressive reflection before evolving into broader civic action. This study highlights the potential of short-form digital media as a complementary tool for civic education and recommends integrating digital campaigns with institutional collaboration and mixed-method evaluation to ensure sustainable impact.

Keywords: Corruption; Human Rights Violations; Public Awareness; Youth Engagement; Social Media Campaign; Legal Education; Civic Responsibility

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption and human rights violations remain critical global challenges that weaken democratic institutions, undermine the rule of law, and erode public trust (Transparency International, 2023; UNODC, 2022). Corruption often begins with minor unethical practices that gradually become normalized and systemic (Khan, 2018). When accountability mechanisms fail, violations of human rights become increasingly difficult to prevent and address (Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016).

Despite their widespread impact, these issues are frequently perceived by young people as distant political problems rather than everyday realities (OECD, 2020). Many youths lack sufficient legal literacy and awareness of how corruption and human rights violations manifest in daily interactions, such as informal fees, abuse of authority, or discrimination. While previous studies have explored anti-corruption education and

digital activism, limited research examines how short-form social media content can connect abstract civic concepts with youths' lived experiences.

The urgency of addressing this research gap is underscored by the dual challenges of persistent systemic corruption and a predominantly young, digitally native population. Indonesia has a significant youth demographic, and their engagement is crucial for the country's future democratic health. Traditional civic education, often delivered through formal and didactic school methods, may struggle to resonate with this generation. If digital spaces are where young people increasingly live, learn, and form their worldviews, then understanding how to utilize these spaces effectively and responsibly for civic education is not merely an academic concern but a societal imperative. Failure to engage youth in these critical issues risks perpetuating a cycle of civic disengagement and tolerance for injustice.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated, audience-centered approach. It is not merely an analysis of social media content or a survey of its reach. Instead, the research design uniquely combines qualitative data from in-depth interviews with law students—used to ground the educational content in relatable, everyday examples—with a qualitative analysis of genuine, unsolicited responses from a broader youth audience on social media platforms. This bottom-up approach, where the target audience's perceptions inform the message and their subsequent reactions are interpreted through the lens of digital civic engagement theory, provides a more nuanced and ecologically valid understanding of the medium's potential and limitations. It moves beyond measuring views or likes to explore the quality and depth of engagement itself.

In the digital era, social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have become primary communication spaces for Generation Z. Research indicates that digital platforms can enhance political awareness and civic engagement when content is delivered in accessible and relatable formats (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). Therefore, innovative approaches that utilize digital storytelling may open new pathways for youth civic education.

This study aims to explore how educational video content distributed through social media can raise youth awareness of corruption and human rights violations. It contributes to the growing body of literature on digital civic education by demonstrating how short-form content can facilitate awareness, emotional engagement, and emerging civic responsibility among young audiences.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design integrated into a social awareness initiative. The research consisted of two stages: (1) semi-structured interviews for content development and (2) qualitative observation of audience responses following video dissemination.

Sampling and Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: (1) undergraduate law students, (2) completion of courses related to constitutional law, criminal law, or human rights, and (3) willingness to participate voluntarily.

A total of ten law students participated in the interviews. They were recruited through academic networks and informed about the purpose of the study before providing consent. Law students were selected because their academic background

provides foundational knowledge of legal norms, anti-corruption frameworks, and human rights principles.

Interview Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were conducted either face-to-face or via online platforms. Each session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was recorded with informed consent. The interview guide covered definitions, everyday examples, perceived causes, and prevention strategies related to corruption and human rights violations.

The interview data were analyzed descriptively by identifying recurring patterns and key points that reflected participants' perceptions. These recurring ideas were summarized and used as the basis for developing the educational video script.

Audience Comment Analysis

After the video was uploaded to TikTok and Instagram, audience comments were observed over a two-week period. Only publicly available comments were included. Irrelevant or promotional comments were excluded.

Rather than applying formal coding software or structured coding procedures, the comments were reviewed repeatedly to identify dominant response patterns. The analysis focused on categorizing responses into three descriptive themes:

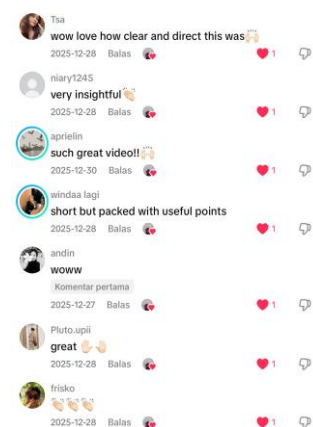
1. Expressions indicating increased awareness
2. Emotional reactions (e.g., concern, anger, reflection)
3. Statements suggesting personal or collective responsibility

This approach aimed to capture general tendencies in audience engagement rather than to produce quantifiable thematic frequencies. Given the exploratory nature of this social project, the analysis prioritized interpretive description over formal coding procedures. Engagement metrics such as views, likes, and shares were noted only as contextual indicators and were not treated as primary analytical data.

Ethical Considerations

All interview participants provided informed consent, and their identities were anonymized. Social media comments were analyzed only in aggregated form without disclosing usernames. The project avoided partisan political messaging and emphasized universal values of integrity and human rights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



The educational video distributed through TikTok and Instagram generated diverse audience responses, primarily expressed through the comment sections. Beyond

serving as indicators of awareness and engagement, these responses reflect the early stages of digital civic participation. When interpreted through the lens of digital civic engagement theory, the findings suggest that awareness-building and expressive reflection constitute foundational steps toward broader civic involvement.

Increased awareness as the first stage of civic engagement

Many viewers indicated that they had previously perceived corruption and human rights violations as distant political problems. After watching the video, they began recognizing these issues in everyday contexts, such as informal fees, abuse of authority, or discrimination. From a theoretical perspective, this shift represents a reduction of psychological distance. Digital civic engagement theory emphasizes that online participation often begins when abstract public issues become personally relevant. By translating macro-level legal concepts into relatable daily experiences, the video functioned as a bridge between structural injustice and lived reality.

This transformation from passive knowledge to critical recognition reflects the initial cognitive stage of civic engagement, where individuals begin questioning normalized unethical practices. Rather than merely absorbing information, viewers demonstrated interpretive processing, connecting the content to their own experiences. This suggests that short-form digital media can effectively activate awareness when it contextualizes legal norms within everyday social situations.

Emotional and moral engagement as catalysts

Beyond cognitive awareness, the comments revealed emotional responses such as anger, concern, guilt, and empathy. These reactions indicate moral engagement rather than simple information consumption. According to civic education literature, emotional engagement plays a crucial role in motivating ethical reflection and potential behavioral change. In this study, storytelling techniques and conversational language appeared to humanize abstract issues, making them morally compelling.

Within digital civic engagement theory, such expressive reactions represent the second stage of participation: affective involvement. However, while emotional responses may signal the internalization of values, they do not automatically translate into concrete action. Emotional expression in comment sections can remain symbolic unless supported by institutional structures or collective opportunities for participation.

Emerging civic responsibility and its constraints

Several viewers expressed intentions to refuse illegal practices, report violations, or educate peers. These statements suggest the emergence of civic responsibility. Theoretically, this reflects the transitional phase from expressive engagement to potential participatory action. However, the findings also reveal structural tension: awareness does not eliminate fear, power imbalances, or perceived inefficacy. Some comments implied hesitation, indicating that young people may recognize injustice yet feel constrained by social risks.

This highlights an important limitation of digital civic campaigns: while they can foster moral intention, they cannot alone resolve systemic barriers to action. Without safe reporting mechanisms, institutional support, or collective mobilization channels, digital awareness may stagnate at the level of intention.

Digital platforms as opportunities and limitations

The findings confirm that TikTok and Instagram can serve as accessible entry points for civic education. Their short-form, interactive nature enables rapid dissemination and dialogic engagement. However, a more critical perspective is necessary. Platform algorithms may limit content visibility, reducing organic reach.

Short-form videos also risk oversimplifying complex legal issues. Moreover, digital activism can encourage performative engagement, where symbolic participation replaces sustained offline involvement.

Additionally, reliance on digital platforms may exclude youth with limited internet access or digital literacy. The fragmented attention economy of social media also competes with educational messaging, potentially diluting its impact. Thus, while digital media offers significant pedagogical potential, it should complement—not replace—formal civic education institutions and policy-based reforms.

Limitations and future directions

This study relies primarily on qualitative thematic analysis of audience comments, which provides interpretive depth but does not allow for measurable assessment of knowledge or behavioral change. Future research should incorporate mixed-method designs, including surveys, engagement analytics, or longitudinal tracking, to evaluate sustained impact. Furthermore, expanding collaboration with schools, universities, and civil society organizations could strengthen both the reach and long-term internalization of civic values.

CONCLUSION

This social project demonstrates that short-form educational videos distributed through TikTok and Instagram can serve as accessible entry points for raising youth awareness of corruption and human rights violations. By translating complex legal concepts into relatable everyday scenarios, the initiative successfully stimulated cognitive awareness, emotional engagement, and early expressions of civic responsibility among young audiences.

However, awareness alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable civic transformation. To strengthen long-term impact, future initiatives should adopt a structured scaling strategy. First, digital campaigns should be replicated across different regions through partnerships with schools, universities, youth communities, and local civil society organizations. Localization of content—by incorporating regional case examples and local languages—may increase relevance and inclusivity.

Second, digital initiatives should be integrated with offline civic education activities, such as workshops, classroom discussions, community dialogues, or student-led campaigns. This hybrid approach can help translate online reflection into collective action and reinforce the internalization of integrity values.

Third, future projects should include systematic evaluation mechanisms. Combining qualitative analysis with quantitative tools—such as pre- and post-awareness surveys, engagement analytics, and longitudinal tracking—would enable more precise measurement of behavioral impact and sustainability.

Additionally, collaboration with anti-corruption agencies, human rights institutions, and educational policymakers could help institutionalize digital civic education within broader national integrity frameworks. Providing practical guidance within digital content—such as safe reporting channels, whistleblowing mechanisms, or youth advocacy networks—may also empower young audiences to act responsibly without facing disproportionate risks.

In conclusion, digital educational media holds significant potential as a complementary civic education strategy. When supported by institutional collaboration, structured evaluation, and integration with offline engagement, short-form digital

campaigns can move beyond awareness-building toward fostering sustained civic participation, accountability, and respect for human dignity.

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