



## The Role of Political Communication in School Curriculum: Its Impact on Student Activism

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### ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the role of political communication integration in the school curriculum on its impact on student activism in junior high schools. The study is based on the increasing role of civic education in shaping students' political participation, especially in the digital era, where students' have easy access to political information through various social media platforms. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation taken from students, teachers, and activities at school and data analysis with the Miles and Huberman approach. The findings of this study include political communication in class and extracurricular activities increases students' knowledge of politics and their intention to participate in elections. Integration of political communication through discussion and use of social media enriches students political views and encourages them to voice political opinions openly. Civic learning experiences at school serve as strong predictors of students' offline political involvement, including in social movements and campaign activities. The implications of this study indicate the importance of political education in schools to form students who are more informed, critical, and active in political life, as well as strengthening the role of schools as agents of social change in building political awareness of the younger generation.

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## INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, communication plays an increasingly important role in shaping the political attitudes and behaviors of the younger generation. Through various digital platforms and social media, political information can now be easily accessed by anyone, including children and teenagers (Cervi et al., 2023; Saud & Margono, 2021). On the other hand, civics education in schools is often the primary channel for instilling democratic values, social responsibility, and political involvement in students (Ali et al., 2021; Belotti et al., 2022; Sloam et al., 2022). Political activism among the younger generation is on the rise, with many students engaging in political discussions,

demonstrations, and various social movements (Kaskazi & Kitzie, 2023; Swart, 2023). This involvement is not only happening at the university level or among the adult community, but it is also starting to be seen among high school students, who are increasingly aware of the importance of their voice in determining the direction of the state and public policy (Conner et al., 2023; Frye, 2021). A well-rounded education about politics in schools is expected to encourage students to be more active in their political lives, whether through elections, participation in political discussions, or even other social activities.

Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School, as one of the educational institutions in Jakarta that has a reputation for curriculum development based on civic education and student involvement, is an ideal place to see the influence of political communication on student activism. The school has a wide range of programs that engage students in socio-political activities, ranging from class discussions on contemporary political issues to citizenship projects that invite students to design solutions to the social problems around them. This phenomenon reflects how political communication is integrated into the curriculum and plays a role in shaping the character and activism of students. However, despite many activities involving students in political communication, there are still questions about the extent to which this can affect their level of political activism outside of school.

Civic education that includes political discussions in the classroom can enhance students' political knowledge and encourage them to become more involved in political activities (Donbavand & Hoskins, 2021; Levy et al., 2021). The experience of learning citizenship that begins at the high school level has a long-term impact on students' political participation (Agyeman & Malherbe, 2021; Alscher et al., 2022). (Kaufman, 2021) highlight the importance of social media in facilitating political expression among students. Student involvement in political activities at school can reduce socio-economic disparities in terms of political participation. Political education in schools can create equal opportunities for students from different backgrounds to participate in political life (Fitzgerald et al., 2021; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). Students who engage in political debates at school tend to be more active in participating in organizational activities inside and outside of school (Aningsih et al., 2022; Puad & Ashton, 2023). Students who are involved in political activities in schools show a higher level of policy knowledge and are more informed about current Education issues.

While many studies have addressed the impact of civic education on student political engagement, research focusing on the integration of political communication in school curricula is limited. Most previous studies have focused on the influence of political education at the university level or outside

of the secondary school context. Additionally, while there has been research on using social media to increase political participation, few have addressed specifically how social media is used in school contexts to support political communication and student activism. Therefore, this study has a significant novelty by focusing on how political communication is integrated into the curriculum in junior high schools, as well as its influence on students' levels of political activism. The research also explores the role of technology and social media in shaping students' political views and motivating them to participate more actively in political life.

This study aims to analyze the impact of the integration of political communication in the school curriculum on the level of political activism of students at SMP Labschool Kebayoran. The main focus of this research is to explore how political communication taught through discussions, debates, and the use of social media plays a role in shaping students' political attitudes and behaviors. In addition, this study will also look at the extent to which a curriculum based on political communication can reduce political disparities among students with different socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to understanding the importance of civic education based on political communication in shaping an informed young generation and involved in political life.

The research is important because it discusses how a curriculum that integrates political communication can have a significant impact on students' levels of political involvement. In the context of Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School, where students are taught to think critically and develop their arguments, political communication becomes an effective tool to improve their understanding of political issues as well as encourage them to actively participate in democratic life. In addition, with social media-based activities, students not only engage in political conversations in the classroom, but also outside the classroom, which expands the scope of their participation. The research also touched on the importance of inclusive education, where all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, have equal opportunities to learn about politics and participate in civic life.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research focuses on the integration of political communication in the school curriculum and its impact on student activism at SMP Labschool Kebayoran. The material objects in this study are activities related to political communication in schools, including classroom discussions, political debates, civic projects, and students' use of social media for political expression. This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to understand the phenomenon

in depth and comprehensively, with an emphasis on the interpretation of students' experiences and perspectives on political communication in schools. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore students' views, motivations, and behaviors in a broader context (Williams, 2021). The type of research used is a case study, where SMP Labschool Kebayoran is chosen as one representative case that allows to analyze the phenomenon in depth in its specific context.

To obtain valid and relevant data, this study uses three main data collection techniques, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. The interview technique is used to explore a deep understanding of those directly involved in political education activities in schools, such as teachers, teaching staff, and students. Observations are made in classrooms and extracurricular activities that focus on politics, such as political discussions and debates, to see firsthand how students participate and interact in those contexts. Documentation techniques are used to gather relevant written materials, such as subject matter, student assignments, and activities conducted through social media, which help provide a more complete picture of the implementation of political communication in schools and how it impacts students.

The data analysis in this study uses the data analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn (Truman, 2023). In the first stage, data reduction, the researcher will filter and summarize the data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, to weed out information that is not relevant to the focus of the research. The relevant data is then selected for further analysis. In the second stage, the presentation of data, the data that has been selected is arranged in an easy-to-understand form, such as in the form of tables, graphs, or narratives. Finally, at the conclusion drawing stage, the researcher will interpret the data that has been presented to draw more in-depth and comprehensive conclusions about the impact of the integration of political communication on student activism.

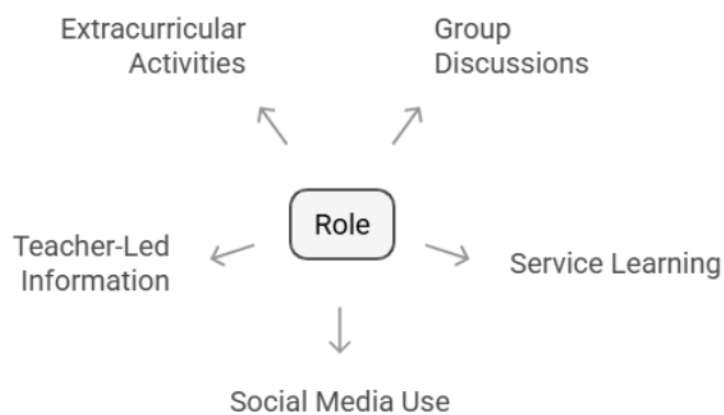
## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Role of Political Communication in Schools**

Political campaigns in schools are not only about the delivery of political information, but also provide opportunities for students to participate in the electoral process through conversation, deliberation, and service learning. The communication process that occurs in the classroom, through the media, as well as in peer networks, contributes to the formation of an active attitude in the political life of students. Courses that focus on political debate, such as the Presidential Debate Watch event, provide students with the opportunity to better

understand the literature related to communication studies, media, and political strategy. This not only enhances their understanding of communication, but also shapes their involvement in civic activities.

Communication activities at Junior High School Labschool Kebayoran are implemented in the form of classroom and extracurricular activities that support the development of students' communication competencies. One of the main activities carried out is the Presidential DebateWatch event which invites students to observe, analyze, and discuss ongoing political debates, both at the national and international levels. In addition, students also engage in in-depth group discussions on contemporary political issues, which allows them to develop the ability to speak, listen, and deliver arguments. This documentation illustrates how political communication is applied in an educational context to teach effective communication skills as well as increase student participation in the democratic process. In this case, political communication is not only a tool for understanding politics, but also a means of active learning.



**Figure 1. Role of Communication**

Figure 1 illustrates activities that directly support students' understanding of political communication and their involvement in civic activities. The Presidential DebateWatch event, for example, provides an opportunity for students to witness political debates live and participate in discussions that lead to a better understanding of emerging political issues. Group discussions allow students to develop communication skills through debate and dialogue on political topics. Service learning, which includes students' involvement in the school's electoral process and campaigns, serves as a tool to teach them about the importance of participation in a democratic system. On the other hand, the use of social media by students to share political views reflects how digital platforms can be leveraged to increase political awareness and active participation. All of these activities contribute to the formation of students' abilities to communicate and participate in political life in a more informed and engaged way.

Communication applied at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School not only serves as an academic learning tool, but also as a means to form students' active attitudes in participating in political and social life. Political communication, through activities such as Presidential DebateWatch and group discussions, plays a role in increasing student engagement in the democratic process. Service learning and active participation in school political campaign activities provide hands-on experience of how the political system works. This shows that political communication not only improves speaking and listening skills, but also forms a deeper understanding of democracy and citizenship. Thus, this study confirms that political communication can be an effective tool to educate students in terms of political engagement and effective communication.

### **Benefits of Integrating Political Communication into School Curricula**

The findings of the study show that participation in deliberative classroom activities and democratic norms applied in schools contribute significantly to the increase of civic activism among students. In addition, through the consumption of news and political expression using digital media technology, students at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School can access various channels of political participation online. The experience of learning citizenship that they gained during high school had a profound influence on their future political involvement, both at the university level and in wider social life. By integrating political communication in education, schools play a role in shaping students' political attitudes, increasing their political knowledge, and fostering interest and awareness of political issues, which ultimately encourages them to participate in political life.

Students are actively involved in a variety of activities that support the learning of political communication. These activities include class discussions on current political issues, political debates, and monitoring political news through social media and other digital platforms. During the learning process, students are given the opportunity to express their opinions openly, learn to listen to other people's points of view, and develop arguments based on facts. In addition, many students have begun to show interest in political issues by following news and events related to elections or government policies. The use of social media as a platform to express their political views is also very popular among students, where they share information and discuss political topics through platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok. These observations show that the integration of political communication in the curriculum not only increases students' engagement in political conversations, but also gives them the tools to actively participate in democratic life.

**Table 1. Aspects of Participation**

<b>Educational Activities</b>	<b>Types of Participation</b>	<b>Participation Channels</b>
Political Issues Class Discussion	Participation in discussions	Classes, Group Discussions
Debate Politics	Active participation in speaking	Classes, Discussion Forums
News Monitoring	Consumption of political news	Social Media, Online News
Digital Political Expression	Conveying views	Instagram, Twitter, TikTok
Extracurricular Activities	Engaging in political campaigns	School Elections, Political Campaigns

Table 1 illustrates various educational activities at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School that are integrated with political communication and their impact on student involvement in political life. For example, in political issues class discussion activities, students not only engage in conversations but also learn to analyze and give their views on current issues. Through political debate, they practice to make arguments effectively, while news monitoring activities through social media and online news platforms help them stay up-to-date with political developments at the local and global levels. In addition, more modern participation channels, such as political expression through Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, provide students with the opportunity to engage in political discussions in a more open and informal manner. All of these activities strengthen their political consciousness and encourage them to be more involved in the democratic process, both in the form of active participation and as informed citizens.

The integration of communication in the curriculum at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School has a significant positive impact on increasing student political involvement. Through participation in deliberative activities such as class discussions, political debates, and news consumption through social media, students not only gain a deeper understanding of politics, but also actively engage in their own political expression. These activities shape students to have better political knowledge and increase their interest and awareness of emerging social and political issues. Therefore, political communication not only improves students' communication skills, but also molds them into more active and informed individuals in political life in society. This shows that political communication can be a very effective tool to strengthen democracy by creating a younger generation that is more involved in civic activities.

### **Impact on Students' Civic Engagement**

The findings show that an open classroom climate, where students are encouraged to express opinions and discuss political issues, has a positive influence on students' civic knowledge, appreciation for political conflicts, and

their intention to become informed voters. This conducive climate provides an opportunity for students to develop a broader view of politics and democracy, and can even compensate for the disadvantages possessed by students with low socioeconomic status. In addition, the experience of learning civics in high school also serves as an important predictor of students' offline political involvement, such as participation in campaigns or other political activities. The active involvement of students in activities that focus on the betterment of society through their understanding of politics is a strong indicator of their intention to continue to participate in political life, both in the present and in the future.

The results of the research at SMP Labschool Kebayoran, where students are involved in various activities aimed at improving their understanding and involvement in politics. Activities such as class discussions, political debates, and civic projects actively encourage students to think critically about political issues and their role in society. Students are encouraged to respect each other's differing opinions and participate in discussions aimed at deepening their insights into democracy and civic rights. One of the most prominent activities is the "Making Societies Better" project, where students are invited to design initiatives that can improve their social lives, both at school and outside of school. Observations show that the open classroom climate allows students to express their ideas without fear, which contributes to increased political knowledge and their intention to engage in the electoral process in the future. In addition, students with lower socioeconomic backgrounds are seen to benefit significantly from this experience, which reduces the gap in knowledge.

**Table 2. Implications for the Academic Community**

Aspects		Impact	Social Engagement
Political Issues	Class Discussion	Improving political understanding	Increase social engagement
Extracurricular Activities		Help build community	Improve social integration
Social Media Activities		Broadening political views	Improve access to information

Table 2 illustrates the various educational activities implemented at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School to increase students' political involvement. Political issues and political debate class discussion activities allow students to actively participate in political conversations and develop speaking and critical thinking skills. Extracurricular activities focused on politics help students understand the importance of participation in the political process through practical experience. Students' involvement in political expression through social media also plays an important role in increasing their awareness of political issues and expanding their access to information.

Activities that engage students in political discussions, debates, and civic projects significantly increase their understanding and participation in political life. The open classroom climate provides space for students to express their opinions without fear, which not only enhances their political knowledge, but also motivates them to become more informed and active voters. These activities show how civic education can reduce the political knowledge gap, especially among students with low socioeconomic status, and provide them with the opportunity to participate in political life in a more inclusive manner. Thus, civic education serves as a bridge to create a generation that is more involved and concerned about social and political issues.

## DISCUSSION

Communication in school helps students to develop critical thinking skills and understand political dynamics (Munadi, 2023; Pribadi, 2022). These findings are in line with the results of research at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School which shows that debate and speech competition activities provide students with the opportunity to think critically about political issues. Political discussions in the classroom increase political awareness and students' active participation in the democratic process. This is similar to the results of this study which shows that group discussions on political issues lead to a better understanding of politics and democracy. Social media is very important in increasing student political participation. At SMP Labschool Kebayoran, students use social media to discuss politics, which shows how this platform can support political engagement among teenagers.

Communication in schools increases students' political awareness and shapes their political views. Teaching about political communication can improve students' ability to debate and discuss constructively (Bandur et al., 2022; Jamilah, 2021). Students' involvement in school political campaigns can enhance their understanding of the democratic process (Sanjani, 2024; Maulidia, 2023; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). The use of social media as a tool to communicate about politics enriches students' perspectives and broadens their participation in political discussions. Political communication in school can encourage students to engage in social and political activities outside of school (Murdiono & Wuryandani, 2021). All of these findings support the results of research at SMP Labschool Kebayoran which shows that political communication serves as a tool to enrich students' understanding of politics and democracy and encourage their involvement in civic life.

Civic education in schools plays an important role in shaping students' political interests and knowledge (Casma et al., 2023). The findings reflect that political education at Labschool Kebayoran Junior High School through

discussion and debate activities increases students' political awareness. The experience of learning civics in high school has a long-term impact on political participation at the university level. This can also be seen in Labschool junior high school students who show a sustained interest in politics. Social media is essential in facilitating political expression among the younger generation. The results of the research at SMP Labschool show that students use social media to discuss and voice their political views, according to these findings. All of these findings suggest that political communication in education has a broad impact on the development of students' political engagement, both in local and global contexts.

Students who engage in political discussions in class tend to be more active in participating in elections. The use of social media in political education enhances students' ability to communicate effectively about political issues (Maulidia, 2023; Willeck & Mendelberg, 2022). Extracurricular activities that focus on politics increase students' political involvement after they graduate from school. Pribadi (2022) emphasizes the importance of civics learning experiences to increase students' political interest and knowledge. Students who are involved in school political campaigns are more likely to continue their political involvement at the college level. All of these findings reinforce the results of research at SMP Labschool Kebayoran which shows that the integration of political communication in the school curriculum has a significant impact on increasing student political participation and the formation of active civic attitudes.

Civic education that prioritizes political discussion in the classroom plays an important role in increasing students' political knowledge and engagement (Murdiono & Wuryandani, 2021; Puad & Ashton, 2023). This is in line with findings at SMP Labschool which show that class discussions and political debates improve students' understanding of politics. Involvement in civic projects in schools can increase students' intention to participate in elections and political life. Political education that utilizes social media can increase students' political participation by expanding access to information. These findings were also seen in observations at Labschool Junior High School, where students used social media to discuss political issues and share their views.

Civic education that involves political discussion in the classroom can increase students' political participation. Civic projects in schools lead to increased social awareness and the intention to participate in political activities. Involvement in school civic activities can reduce inequities in political participation among students with low socioeconomic backgrounds (Jamilah, 2021; Kaufman, 2021; Munadi, 2023). The use of social media in political education increases students' political involvement outside of school. An open

and inclusive classroom climate enhances students' understanding of politics and encourages them to participate in civic life. All of these findings support the results of research at SMP Labschool which shows that open and diverse civics education increases students' political engagement and enriches their knowledge of politics.

## CONCLUSION

The integration of political communication into the school curriculum at SMP Labschool Kebayoran has significantly contributed to increasing student activism. Three main findings were obtained, including: first, political communication implemented in class and extracurricular activities enriches students' political knowledge and encourages them to be more active in participating in organizations; second, the use of social media as a means of political expression helps students to express their political views openly; third, the experience of learning citizenship at school serves as a strong predictor of students' offline political engagement, both in social movements and campaigns. Although these findings provide a broad picture of the positive impact of political communication in schools, this study is limited in terms of geographical coverage that only focuses on one school and does not consider differences in students' socio-economic backgrounds outside of that context. For further research, it is recommended to explore the differences in the impact of political communication in various types of schools with more diverse backgrounds, as well as to examine the role of political education at the college level in continuing students' political engagement.

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