

Digital Citizenship Engagement in Social and Political Issues Among Students in Three European Countries

Dr. Simona Bezjak

The Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

Abstract

The paper explores the relationship between students' digital citizenship engagement with political and social issues and their broader civic and citizenship attitudes and behaviours in Slovenia, Italy, and France. In the context of this study, digital citizenship engagement is defined as any online activity of searching for, posting, sharing, commenting on, or liking content related to political or social issues. Using data from the ICCS 2022 study, the analysis examines how predictors traditionally linked to citizenship engagement relate to students' digital citizenship engagement. The results show that students' discussion of political or social issues with their parents and friends is the strongest predictor of their engagement with political or social issues using digital media in all three countries. Students' interest in political or social issues and their involvement in community-based groups or organisations also increase the likelihood that they will engage digitally, although differences between countries suggest context-specific dynamics. Additionally, students' expected participation in legal civic activities, such as peaceful protests or petitions, as well as illegal protest actions, is also significantly related to their digital engagement. Conversely, there is a significant negative relation between digital engagement and students' expected future electoral participation in all three countries. The paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of the intersections between the multidimensional nature of digital citizenship and youth civic engagement, providing comparative empirical findings from three European countries.

Keywords: civic engagement; digital activism; online political engagement; political participation; youth civic participation