









Research Article

Cerdik Politik Digital Comic

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Abstract: After Malaysia has amended the eligible voting age in this country, the literacy in politics among teenagers is regarded as significant matter. This is due to the concern that the future of the country is at the hands of this group of voters as they became the largest proportion of voters in Malaysia. In 2019, eligible voting age is lowered from 21 years old to 18 years old. Knowing Gen Z and current teenagers' preference as they love to learn something in fun, rich in multimedia and so on. Therefore, the Cerdik Politik Digital Comic is designed to capture the attention of this group to learn about politics in a way that is more attractive, interesting, and easier. The comic is divided into 10 brief chapters to introduce to the youngsters on sufficient basis knowledge about the state, democracy, election and how all of these are practiced in our country. The comic comes in digital form and can be surfed freely as long as the users have internet access. This product is expected to help in increasing the political literacy in the country. The comic is complete and ready to be accessed by the users.

Keywords: Political literacy; Digital comic media; Vote 18



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1. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, political literacy among teenagers has gained widespread discussion and debate after the amendment to Article 119(1) of the Federal Constitution, which reduces the minimum voting age from 21 to 18. The Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara unanimously approved the amendment through the Constitution Act (Amendment) 2019 (A1603), which was gazetted on Sept 10, 2019. The amendment also allows 18-year-olds to be admitted as members of the Lower House (Parliament) and members of the State Legislative Assembly and to implement automatic voter registration. Generally, political literacy refers to an individual's understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, and issues. It is a fundamental component of democratic citizenship. According to Krosnick (1990), political literacy refers to the state of having political information. This implies that individuals possess knowledge about political issues enabling them to stay informed and engaged in the political sphere.

Expanding on this definition, Crick (2004) suggests that political literacy involves learning about and acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to make oneself effective in public life. It encompasses the ability to participate in the political process actively, have a voice, and exercise rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Thus, political literacy empowers individuals to make informed decisions and encourages active participation in the democratic process.

Undoubtedly, fostering political literacy among the young generation is crucial for the future of our society. As the recent 2022 General Election demonstrated, the participation of young voters between the ages of 18 and 21 increased significantly, with an additional 1.3 million individuals casting their votes. This surge in youth participation led to a substantial rise in the total number of registered voters, increasing from 15.8 million to 21.1 million, representing a growth of over 40% (Lim, 2021). Consequently, it is justifiable to be concerned about the future of our country, as the young voters have become the largest proportion of voters in Malaysia. Therefore, it is crucial to equip them with political knowledge and empower them to become engaged citizens capable of influencing public discourse and shaping policies. However, the current state of political literacy among the young generation in Malaysia raises significant concerns, as evidenced by previous research. A study by the University of Tunku Abdul Rahman's Tun Tan Cheng Lock Center for Social and Policy Studies revealed that only 40% of the youth surveyed have sufficient knowledge about Malaysia's voting system, and merely 42% understand the different political parties (Malaysia GE15: Low Political Literacy and Indecisiveness Limit Youth Votes, n.d.). This result is consistent with the previous study by Umami et al. (2016), which showed that 57% of Malaysian university students surveyed exhibited low political knowledge. This lack of awareness leaves them ignorant about their nation's governance and administration systems.

Moreover, a study conducted by Merdeka's Centre National Youth Survey in 2021 unveiled concerning statistics. Among respondents aged 18-22, 71% expressed disinterest in politics, perceiving it as too complex to comprehend (Survey Report-National Youth Survey 2021 | Merdeka Center, 2021). This sentiment was also expressed in an interview conducted by Kasmani (2023) with a sample of respondents, in which 25 out of 44 individuals expressed a lack of interest in politics. They perceived politics as complicated, confusing, and in constant crisis. This disinterest directly results from the low level of political literacy among the young generation. This lack of political awareness significantly hinders youth participation and engagement. A study by Razali et al. (2020) revealed that only 39% of Malaysian youth actively engage in political party activities, and 32% contribute ideas to political parties. These findings highlight the negative impact of low political literacy on the level of engagement displayed by the younger generation.

To address this issue and increase political literacy among the young generation, incorporating the use of comic media can be an effective solution. According to Smaldino (2012), comic media is a graphic communication medium to convey subject matter quickly and concisely that attracts students' attention. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of comic media in the field of education. Various research studies have highlighted its effectiveness as a powerful tool for enhancing comprehension and understanding across different educational environments, including language (Robbani & Khoirotnunnisa, 2021; Arief et al., 2022), science (Akcanca, 2020; Badeo & Koc, 2021), and mathematics (Ahmadi et al. 2021). Comic media offers a unique combination of visual storytelling and concise textual content, which can facilitate information retention and engagement among students (Rutta et al., 2020). Thus, integrating comic media into political education can be highly effective in increasing political literacy among young voters. By presenting political concepts and information in a visually appealing and easily digestible format, comic media can effectively engage and capture the attention of young people. Its unique ability to simplify complex political concepts makes political education more accessible and engaging (Sari & Prasetyo, 2018). Furthermore, the use

of comic media can also promote critical thinking and analysis skills (Ilhan et al., 2021). By presenting political information and issues in a visually engaging manner, comic media encourages young voters to think critically, analyze different perspectives, and form their own informed opinions.

To further enhance the integration of comic media into political education and make it more accessible to young voters, incorporating digital comic media can be an effective approach. Digital platforms offer various advantages compared to printed media, such as wider reach, interactive features, and ease of distribution. By taking advantage of these benefits, political literacy initiatives can effectively engage young audiences through digital comic media. Digital comic media provides an opportunity to reach a larger audience by utilizing online platforms and social media. These platforms allow for easy sharing and distribution, enabling the dissemination of political information and concepts to a wide range of young individuals. Additionally, digital comics can incorporate interactive elements, such as audio, video, quizzes, or animations, which can further enhance the learning experience and increase engagement. This integration of multimedia elements can make the learning process more appealing to young voters, as it taps into their familiarity with digital media formats.

Therefore, it is vital for the future of Malaysian society to recognize the importance of political literacy among the younger generation. To cater to this objective, the creation of a digital comic media called 'Cerdik Politik Digital Comic' has been designed specifically to capture the attention of Gen Z, making the learning of politics more attractive, interesting, and accessible. The comic is divided into 10 brief chapters, providing a foundational understanding of the state, democracy, elections, and their application within Malaysia. The details of the content can be seen in a flow chart presented in Figure 1. The contents are based on the provisions of the federal constitution, which serves as the supreme law of the country. One of the main strengths of the 'Cerdik Politik Digital Comic' is its visually stunning presentation. The vivid and colorful images immediately grab the reader's attention and draw them into the world of politics. Moreover, this digital comic goes beyond traditional learning methods by incorporating multimedia elements that enhance the overall understanding of complex political concepts. Through interactive elements, the comic makes learning fun, interactive, and easy to understand. Accessibility is another important advantage of the 'Cerdik Politik Digital Comic' It can be freely accessed by anyone with an internet connection. This ensures that knowledge about politics is no longer restricted to a limited audience but can reach a wider range of people.

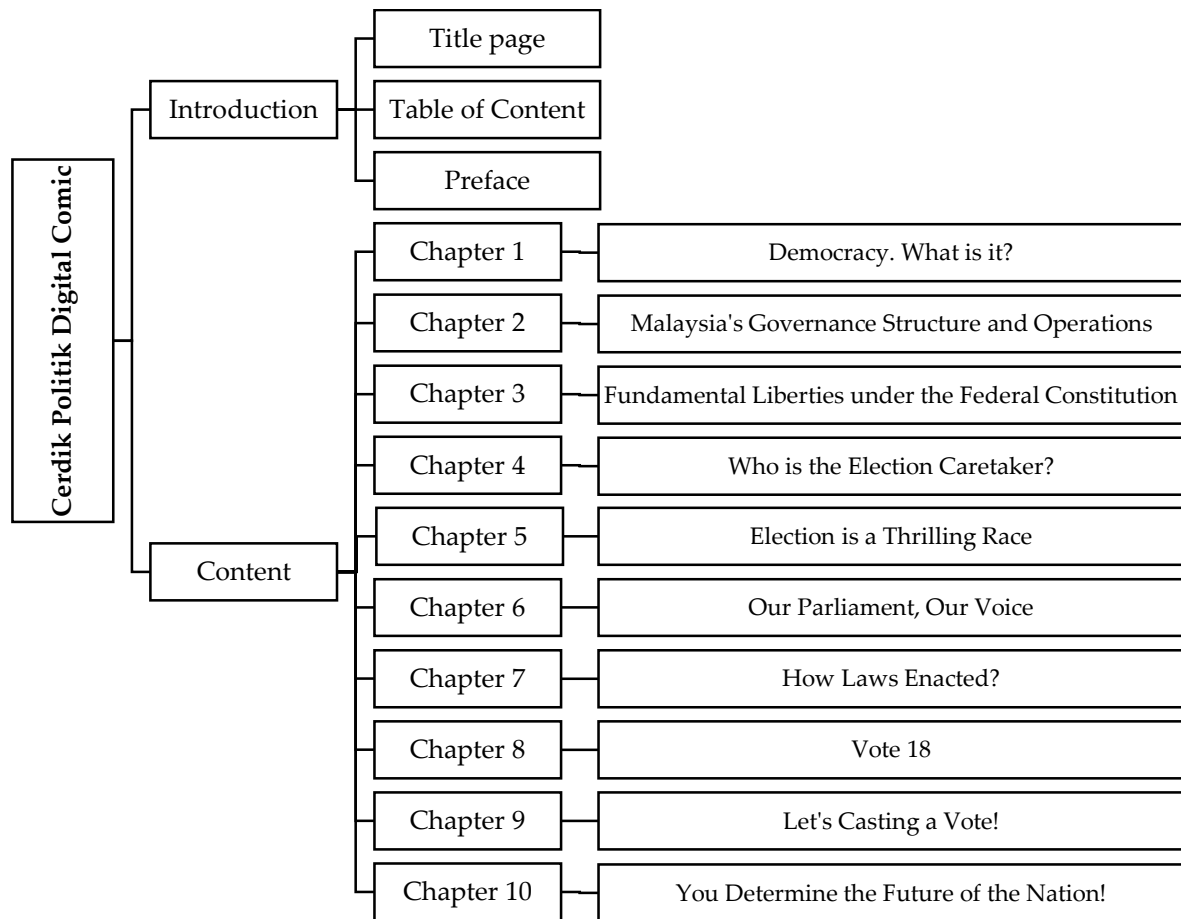


Figure 1. The content of 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic'.

2. METHOD & MATERIAL

The application was developed based on the Web Development Lifecycle (WDLC). WDLC is a systematic and structured approach to building dynamic and interactive websites. The WDLC encompasses different phases, including requirements gathering, system design, development, testing, deployment, and maintenance. This methodology ensures that the web development process is well-organized, efficient, and meets the requirements of the client and end-users.

The first phase of the WDLC is requirements gathering. In this phase, the development team interacts with the client to understand their goals, target audience, and specific functionalities required for the website. This information helps shape the overall design and development process. Once the requirements are gathered, the development team moves on to the system design phase.

During the system design phase, the team creates a blueprint of the website's structure, layout, and functionalities. They determine the technology stack to be used, including PHP for server-side scripting, jQuery for client-side scripting, and HTML for structuring the website's content. PHP allows for dynamic server-side processing, while jQuery enhances user interactivity and HTML provides the foundation for the site's structure and content.

The next phase is the development phase, where the actual coding takes place. The development team uses HTML5 and PHP to handle client and server-side scripting, which enables dynamic content generation, database connectivity, and user authentication. jQuery is utilized for

client-side scripting, allowing for smooth animations, interactive forms, and enhanced user experience. HTML is employed to structure the website, with tags and elements defining the content, headings, paragraphs, and links.

Once the development phase is complete, the website undergoes rigorous testing in the testing phase. This ensures that all functionalities work as intended, there are no bugs or glitches, and the website is responsive across different devices and browsers. Testing involves code reviews, unit testing, integration testing, and user acceptance testing (UAT) to guarantee a high-quality and error-free website.

Finally, in the deployment and maintenance phase, the website is launched and made available to users. Ongoing maintenance and updates are performed to keep the website secure, functional, and up-to-date. Regular monitoring and performance optimization are conducted to ensure the website's smooth operation. Continuous improvement and adaptation to new technologies and user requirements are key factors in the long-term success of the website.

In conclusion, web development based on the Web Development Lifecycle (WDLC) provides a systematic and well-structured approach to building dynamic and interactive websites. This methodology, utilizing PHP, jQuery, and HTML, allows for efficient development, robust functionalities, and an enhanced user experience. By following the WDLC, organizations can ensure that their web development projects are successful, meeting the needs of their clients and users while maintaining high standards of quality and performance.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 User-Friendly

A user-friendly website plays a crucial role in delivering a seamless and enjoyable experience for visitors. 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic' is designed to be easy to access and can be used at any time, providing convenience and satisfaction to users. One key aspect of a user-friendly website is its accessibility. This means ensuring that the website is compatible with different devices and screen sizes, allowing users to access it from desktop computers, laptops, tablets, or smartphones. By adapting to various devices, the website becomes accessible anytime and anywhere, catering to the diverse needs and preferences of users. Additionally, a user-friendly website focuses on intuitive and straightforward navigation. 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic' incorporates clear menu structures and logical page hierarchies, making it effortless for users to find the information or services they need. The use of descriptive labels, intuitive icons, and concise yet informative content further enhances user understanding and engagement. Visitors should be able to find what they are looking for within a few clicks, minimizing frustration and ensuring a positive user experience.

Another aspect of a user-friendly website is the use of responsive design. This means that the 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic' automatically adjusts its layout and content based on the user's screen size. A responsive design ensures that the website is visually appealing, readable, and functional on any device, regardless of whether it is a large desktop monitor or a small smartphone screen. This responsiveness ensures that users can access and use the website comfortably, regardless of the device they are using.

Furthermore, a user-friendly website takes loading times into consideration. Slow-loading websites can deter users and lead to high bounce rates. To address this, a user-friendly website is optimized for fast loading times. This includes minimizing file sizes, optimizing images, and utilizing

efficient coding techniques. By prioritizing quick loading speeds, users can access the website promptly, allowing them to navigate and interact with its content without undue delays.



Figure 2. Interface Design

3.2 Digital Interaction

Digital interaction describes the ability to connect with others online through devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets. Digital interaction has become a fundamental part of our lives and provides individuals and businesses with many advantages. One of the primary advantages of digital interaction is convenience. It allows individuals and organizations to connect with people from anywhere in the world at any time. This is especially important for businesses as it can provide an efficient and cost-effective way to connect with customers, suppliers, and partners without being limited by physical barriers.

‘Cerdik Politic Digital Comic’ enables interaction with people online and can save valuable time and resources. Digitally, everything can be accomplished at a much faster pace with less physical effort. This means, for example, that learning process can be addressed more quickly and efficiently. ‘Cerdik Politic Digital Comic’ also offers increased opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and innovation. It fosters new ways of thinking, interacting, and sharing of ideas. Individuals can draw inspiration and ideas from online communities, discussion forums, and social media platforms. Digital interaction thus creates a specific kind of brainstorming that is much more diverse than traditional methods.

Finally, digital interaction can provide anonymity and privacy. For individuals, this level of privacy can increase their willingness to express themselves openly and honestly without fear of being identified. This can foster more authentic and meaningful interactions, particularly in sensitive or controversial topics. ‘Cerdik Politic Digital Comic’ offers many advantages such as convenience, efficiency, creativity, innovation, anonymity, and privacy. It has revolutionized the way people interact and connect with others, shaping our daily lives and creating new opportunities both in personal and professional settings.

4. DISCUSSION

Digital comics represent a new way of enjoying comic books and graphic novels via a digital device, such as a tablet, e-reader, or smartphone. Digital comics have been gaining popularity over the years and offer several advantages over traditional printed comics. One of the main advantages of digital comics is accessibility. With digital comics, readers can access a vast library of comics and graphic novels from anywhere in the world and at any time. This eliminates the need to physically go to a comic bookstore to purchase a printed comic.

A digital comic also provides readers with options such as zoom in/out features, adjustable screen brightness, and text display settings. This allows readers to customize their reading experience, making it more enjoyable and comfortable. It also gives users with visual difficulties options to read comfortably without straining their eyes.

Additionally, digital comics are eco-friendly and save space. Printed comics take up a lot of space and often require special storage to protect them from damage. A digital comic takes up no space, and readers can store hundreds, if not thousands, of digital comics on a single device. The advantage here is also environmental; fewer printed materials can help reduce the global paper consumption rate.

One critical advantage of digital comics is price. Whereas buying a traditional comic can be quite expensive, digital comics tend to be more affordable. Consequently, digital comics offer a perfect way for new readers to explore different comics, publishers, and genres before investing time in money on a printed copy. Thus, the use of 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic' may help others to enhance their knowledge on the political aspect of the country.

5. CONCLUSION

The use of 'Cerdik Politic Digital Comic' may help to foster a new generation of thinkers among young Malaysians. The adaptation of digital interaction helps to enhance understanding on the current political scenario, as well as encourage the active participation from the community. Moreover, the application is user-friendly, cost-effective, and accessible from multiple mediums and formats.

The application, however, is not without limitations. First, the application is targeted for desktop users and mobile users via web browsers. Thus, a good upgrade is suggested by offering the application via mobile apps that are compatible with both Google Play Store and Apple Store. Second, the use of static representation of the digital comic may reduce its effectiveness over time. Thus, it is suggested to have an interactive representation of the comic such as via Video Recording or Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) applications.

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