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Research Article

Reframing Peace Education: Understanding Generation Z's Values In the Digital Age

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Abstract

The digital age has changed a lot about how people communicate, obtain information, and become involved in world affairs. Generation Z, the most digitally connected group, has improved its ability to use technology, its awareness of global issues, and its involvement in social issues. Still, this increased connectivity also brings problems, like the loss of national identity, less social cohesion, and a greater risk of false information and online conflict. In this context, peace education constitutes a vital framework for fostering non-violence, tolerance, and global responsibility among youth. This paper uses a qualitative, review-based methodology to examine the concept of peace education and evaluate the influence of digital culture on peace values within Generation Z. It also examines the impact of empathy and global citizenship on individuals' perceptions of peace and conflict resolution. The results show that digital culture encourages knowledge and empathy by exposing people to different cultures around the world, but it also causes people to become more divided and less engaged. Therefore, integrating digital literacy, empathy-based education, and global citizenship training is essential for fortifying peace principles among Generation Z. The study underscores the imperative of reconfiguring peace education in the digital era to cultivate responsible, inclusive, and socially conscious global citizens.

Keywords: *Peace Education, Generation Z, Digital Culture, Empathy, Global Citizenship, Social Cohesion*

Introduction

The global information age has drastically changed how people interact, talk to each other, and learn. Generation Z has emerged as the most technologically engaged and globally interconnected cohort in this rapidly evolving environment (Seymour, 2019). People born between the middle of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2010s are very proficient at using digital tools, interacting with social media, and finding information rapidly. Their constant exposure to different points of view from other countries has helped them understand social, cultural, and political realities in a more complete way. But these improvements also make things more complicated. The rapid spread of transnational cultures, digital misinformation, and online conflicts has caused worries about national identity, which has weakened social cohesion and increased ideological division (Edoardo et al., 2024; Tykhomyrova, 2026). Generation Z, while globally aware, often encounters a tension between local identities and global influences (Tirocchi, 2024), which can lead to confusion about their own cultural identity and how to navigate these competing pressures. This generation is simultaneously changing how digital media functions for both influence and engagement, as they leverage platforms to advocate for

social issues and connect with diverse audiences. Their ability to acquire, analyse, and disseminate knowledge has positioned them as significant catalysts for change (Chalmers & Shotton, 2015; Asimakopoulos et al., 2025). They engage in discussions about human rights, climate change, social justice, and equality, showing that they are more aware of their responsibilities to the world.

Generation Z plays a big role in making multicultural societies more tolerant and accepting of differences. Their willingness to accept differences and their ability to adapt to change make them important people to help promote peaceful coexistence (Peredy et al., 2024; Balraj, 2024). The rise of digital intolerance and polarisation necessitates structured educational initiatives that specifically address these issues and equip young people with the skills to navigate online interactions responsibly. In this context, peace education becomes increasingly important. It promotes values like empathy, nonviolence, and global citizenship, helping young people learn how to use technology safely and make the world a better place.

Objectives of the Study

In this paper, the authors aim to

- Examine the idea and importance of peace education in relation to Generation Z.
- Analyse how digital culture influences Generation Z's attitudes, values, and viewpoints regarding social harmony and peace.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology based on a comprehensive literature review. The research employs secondary data sources, including academic journal articles, books, policy papers, and scholarly publications relevant to peace education, Generation Z, digital culture, empathy, and global citizenship. Relevant literature was collected from various academic databases and scholarly platforms to understand the growing interplay between digital technology and peace values. The collected data was analysed using thematic and interpretive frameworks. This strategy helped identify recurring themes, conceptual links, and patterns about how digital culture affects Generation Z. The qualitative review method provides a comprehensive understanding of how peace education may be redefined in the digital age to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Concept and Significance of Peace Education

Peace education is a transformative process that equips individuals with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to promote nonviolence, social justice, and harmonious coexistence (Akhter, 2023; Saleh et al., 2025). It goes beyond just not having conflict and stresses the need to build a culture of peace based on equality, human rights, and mutual respect (Bharaty et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2025).The significance of peace education lies in its ability to shape attitudes and behaviour. It fosters a critical comprehension of the root causes of conflict and equips individuals with mechanisms for peaceful resolution (Askerov, 2010; Adan, 2025), such as negotiation skills and conflict mediation techniques that are essential in today's diverse societies. In the context of Generation Z, peace education is crucial for addressing the challenges posed by digital environments, including misinformation, polarisation, and online hostility. Furthermore, peace education fosters critical thinking (Akhter, 2023) and ethical awareness (Özel & Sümer, 2025), equipping youth to adeptly navigate complex global realities (Kumar, 2024). It also builds resilience (Ajmal, 2022), helping students keep social harmony (Saleh et al., 2025) even when they hear stories that don't agree with one another.

Generation Z in the Digital Age

Digital culture has a big impact on who Generation Z is? Social media sites, online forums, and digital communication technologies make it easier for them to stay in touch with each other. This constant connection

has created a generation that is brilliant, aware of social issues, and interested in the world (Przybylski et al., 2013).Digital immersion has also brought up new problems at the same time. The rapid spread of information often leads to a superficial understanding of complex issues, which can hinder critical thinking and informed decision-making (Shanmugasundaram & Tamilarasu, 2023; Sharma et al., 2023), while algorithmic content may reinforce biases and create echo chambers that limit exposure to diverse perspectives (Liu et al., 2025; Bojić et al., 2025). Additionally, excessive reliance on digital communication may jeopardise interpersonal relationships (McDaniel & Radesky, 2017; Bharaty & Das, 2023) and weaken social cohesion (Ali & Iqbal, 2024), leading to feelings of isolation and a decline in community engagement. Despite these challenges, Generation Z exhibits strong values such as empathy, authenticity, and inclusivity. They are involved in social issues and are willing to fight against unfairness and injustice (Dobbs, 2025; Jude & P, 2025). Their hybrid identity, which combines local and global influences, shows how complicated life is in a digitalised world, as they navigate diverse cultural expectations and social norms while striving to maintain their core values of empathy, authenticity, and inclusivity.

Influence of Digital Culture on Peace Values

Digital culture has two effects on Generation Z's values about peace. It raises awareness by showing people about problems around the world, different cultures, and humanitarian disasters (Sharma et al., 2023). This exposure fosters empathy and encourages prosocial behaviour, such as activism and community engagement (Seymour, 2019; Özel & Sümer, 2025).On the other hand, digital platforms can make conflicts worse by spreading false information, encouraging hate speech, and making people more polarised in their beliefs (Adan, 2025; Bojić et al., 2025). Online echo chambers often make divisions worse and make it harder to have productive conversations (Edoardo et al., 2024). So, digital culture can help or hurt peace. To address these challenges, peace education must incorporate digital literacy. This includes developing the ability to think critically, act ethically online, and accurately judge information. By doing this, people can be more responsible in digital spaces and help create a culture of peace.

Role of Empathy and Global Citizenship

Empathy is an essential element of peace education. It allows individuals to comprehend and empathise with others' emotions (Askerov, 2010; Dobbs, 2025), consequently diminishing prejudice and promoting mutual respect. Generation Z's digital exposure to global suffering and inequality has heightened emotional awareness, making empathy a crucial driver of social action (Jude & P, 2025).

Global citizenship enhances peace values by prompting individuals to perceive themselves as members of a broader human community. It fosters accountability regarding global issues such as climate change, human rights, and social justice (Peredy et al., 2024).Empathy and global citizenship collectively establish a basis for harmonious coexistence. They advocate for individuals to transcend limited identities and adopt diversity, inclusivity, and collective responsibility, which are essential for addressing global challenges and fostering a more equitable society.

Religious Moderation and Peace in Multicultural Societies

In a diverse society, peace education is necessary to promote religious tolerance. Generation Z is open-minded and adaptable, which makes it the perfect group to embrace values of tolerance and respect for different belief systems. Digital platforms have become important places for sharing moderate and open-minded views (Chalmers & Shotton, 2015). However, they also pose risks by enabling the spread of extremism and intolerance (Balraj, 2024), which can undermine the values of tolerance and respect that Generation Z typically embraces. Therefore, combining peace education with understanding of religion and culture is important for stopping conflicts and encouraging harmony.

Challenges: National Identity and Social Cohesion

A major worry in the digital age is the loss of national identity and social cohesion (Seymour, 2019; Özel & Sümer, 2025). Being exposed to cultures and ideas from around the world can sometimes make people lose touch with their customs and values (Akhter, 2023).Moreover, digital misinformation and online conflicts may exacerbate societal divisions, leading to increased polarisation and a weakening of community ties (Liu et al., 2025; Bojić et al., 2025). The lack of meaningful interpersonal interactions intensifies social fragmentation, leading to a weakened sense of community and increased isolation among individuals. Peace education might help with these problems by bringing together a strong sense of identity and community through global awareness. It encourages people to value diversity while keeping society together, fostering mutual respect and understanding among different cultural and social groups.

Opportunities for Digital-Age Peace Education

Despite its challenges, the digital age offers significant prospects for peace education. Digital platforms can help people become more aware, start conversations, and work together to solve problems. New ways of teaching, like online classes, projects led by young people, and digital activism, can make peace education more effective and reach more people. Combining technology with value-based education can create fun and effective learning experiences for Generation Z, such as interactive online workshops and gamified learning modules that engage students in meaningful discussions about social issues.

Conclusion

Generation Z has a lot of potential to help create a more peaceful and welcoming world. Their digital connectivity, global awareness, and social responsiveness position them as essential catalysts for change.The complexities of the digital age require a reimagined approach to peace education. By teaching kids how to use technology, be empathetic, and be a responsible global citizen, schools can provide them the skills and values they need to solve problems and promote peace. In the end, peace education is important for both personal growth and the creation of a fair, just, and long-lasting global society.

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