CANVA AS A DIGITAL LEARNING MEDIUM TO DEVELOP STUDENT CREATIVITY AT AL-AZHAR MEDAN HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the role of Canva as a digital learning medium in developing student creativity at the high school level. The background of this study is based on the educational needs in the digital era, which demands interactive and engaging learning that can foster 21st-century skills, especially creativity. The research method used was descriptive qualitative with 15 students from class XII of Al-Azhar Medan High School as subjects. Data were obtained through questionnaires and observations of creativity indicators, including learning motivation, originality, idea elaboration, flexibility of thinking, and cooperation. The results showed that the use of Canva had a positive impact on the development of student creativity. A total of 90% of students showed high levels of motivation, originality, idea elaboration, flexibility, and cooperation. Canva helps students express creative ideas through attractive visual designs and increases participation and collaboration in groups. The obstacles found were mainly related to internet access and initial understanding of Canva's features, but these can be overcome through teacher guidance and independent exploration. Overall, this study concludes that Canva is effective as a digital learning medium that can enhance creativity and learning motivation among high school students, and is relevant for application in the context of innovative learning based on the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom of Learning) curriculum and the Deep Learning Approach.

Keywords: Canva, Digital Learning, Developing Creativity

I. Introduction

In today's digital age, education is required to focus not only on delivering subject matter, but also on developing 21st-century skills, one of which is creativity. In reality, the learning process in secondary schools still relies heavily on conventional media, which tends to be monotonous and therefore less effective at fostering student motivation and creativity. The ideal condition that should be realized is the use of digital learning media that is interesting, interactive, and able to encourage students to participate actively and creatively in learning activities. One potential digital media that can be used is Canva, an online graphic design platform that provides various features and templates to support visual-based learning. Although in theory the use of digital media such as Canva is believed to support the development of student creativity, in practice research focused on high school students is still limited. Most studies have been conducted at the elementary school level or in a general context without specifically measuring indicators of high school students' creativity. This indicates a knowledge gap between theory and practice that needs to be bridged through further research, particularly to prove the effectiveness of Canva as a learning medium that truly contributes to enhancing creativity among upper secondary students. The urgency of this research lies in the need for schools to adopt learning strategies that are in line with the characteristics of the digital generation. Thus, research on the use of Canva as a digital learning medium is not only relevant but also important to provide practical solutions for teachers in developing student

creativity. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide concrete recommendations regarding best practices in integrating Canva into learning activities in secondary schools. Based on the above description, this study aims to describe the role of Canva in supporting the development of creativity in high school students, identify the extent to which Canva influences students' ability to create informative and aesthetically pleasing visual products, and provide recommendations for teachers in utilizing Canva as an innovative digital learning medium.

II.   Literature Review

According to Yanti, et al. (2024), "Canva is a graphic design platform that allows users to easily create various types of visual materials, such as images, graphics, and presentations, with a variety of templates and designs available." According to Muasaroh (2025), "Canva is a feature in the Canva for Education platform that allows teachers to create digital classrooms, manage students, and assign interactive design projects and assignments." Meanwhile, according to Maulia (2023), "Canva is a medium that can support the visual learning process and train visual literacy skills for users in this digital era." According to Syafarina et al. (2025), Canva can be used to develop learning media that can increase student interest and active participation, especially in subjects that were previously considered difficult or boring. According to Yanti et al. (2024), Canva can provide many benefits in learning, including: increasing creativity, improving academic performance, strengthening ICT competencies, enhancing collaborative attitudes, and broadening understanding of media literacy. According to Saputri et al. (2024), "Canva has great potential to improve creativity skills." Several previous studies have shown that Canva contributes significantly to improving the quality of learning. For example, research by Ruszayanthi et al. (2024) shows that the use of Canva has been proven to increase the learning motivation of high school students, as this medium provides a more enjoyable and interactive learning experience. This fact shows that Canva has great potential in increasing students' creativity and learning motivation.

III.   Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach because it aims to describe in depth the use of Canva as a digital learning medium in developing the creativity of high school students. The research subjects were 15 students in grade XII at Al-Azhar Medan High School. The data sources were obtained through direct observation, interviews, and documentation.

IV.   Research results and discussion

The results of the study indicate that the use of Canva as a digital learning medium has a positive effect on the development of creativity in high school students. This is demonstrated by increased learning motivation, students' ability to produce original work, flexibility in using design features, and the elaboration of ideas from simple to more complex. Students also showed active involvement in group work, although a small number still experienced technical difficulties in the early stages of use. These findings support the research objective, which is to obtain an empirical picture of the role of Canva in developing the creativity of students at the secondary education level.

In terms of learning motivation, students reported being more enthusiastic and excited when using Canva. Student motivation not only increased intrinsically but was also reinforced through a creative and collaborative learning environment. In terms of creativity, the results of this study show that students were able to display originality in the posters and infographics they created. This is consistent with the findings of research by Lestari (2022), which also shows that Canva provides ample space for the development of visual ideas, resulting in learning products that differ from one student to another. Thus, Canva has been proven to support the dimension of originality, which is one of the main indicators of creativity. In terms of flexibility, students have proven to be able to use various Canva features such as text, icons, colors, templates, and animations. Canva not only facilitates aesthetics but also fosters flexible creative thinking.

In terms of idea elaboration, students can develop simple ideas into more complex and detailed works, for example, by adding graphic elements, typography, and a neater layout. Canva encourages students not to stop at their initial ideas but to continue refining their work. Canva is an effective digital learning medium for developing creativity because of its easy-to-use interface, numerous templates, and visual elements that allow students to transform abstract ideas into attractive designs such as infographics, posters, or comics, thereby increasing engagement and understanding of the material while learning 21st-century digital skills. Its use encourages students to actively experiment, collaborate, and explore visuals, although its effectiveness is highly dependent on teacher guidance and appropriate learning strategies.

Canva's role in learning is significant as an innovative tool for enhancing creativity, engagement, and digital literacy, enabling teachers and students to easily create engaging visual materials (infographics, presentations, videos) through intuitive features and ready-to-use templates, as well as supporting remote collaboration and interactive learning, which ultimately improves student motivation and learning outcomes. In addition, this study found that the use of Canva also encouraged collaboration among students. The results of the observation showed that students actively discussed, exchanged ideas, and gave each other feedback in creating group designs. Canva not only functions as a design medium but also as a social tool to foster collaboration. This is relevant to the research by Dewi et al. (2022), which states that Canva can be a collaborative medium that strengthens interactions among students.

However, there are still technical obstacles in the form of limited internet access and initial difficulties in understanding Canva's features. Nevertheless, most students were able to overcome these obstacles through independent exploration or brief guidance from teachers. Further findings from this study show that the use of Canva not only has an impact on increasing visual creativity, but also brings about significant changes in learning patterns and overall cognitive engagement among students. Students who were initially passive began to show progress in their analytical skills, information organization, and ability to assess the effectiveness of designs. This was evident when students began to be able to adjust visual displays to suit the purpose of the message, so that the resulting designs were not only aesthetically appealing, but also communicative and relevant to the learning material.

In addition, the use of Canva contributes to the improvement of self-directed learning or independent learning skills. During the task completion process, students were seen to be more proactive in searching for appropriate color references, icons, and visual styles. They explored Canva's features without relying entirely on the teacher's instructions. This behavior indicates the development of independent learning, which is an important indicator in technology-based learning in the digital age. From a pedagogical perspective, Canva has also proven capable of integrating various 21st-century competencies into a single learning process. When creating designs, students not only develop creativity, but also critical thinking, visual communication, problem solving, and collaboration skills. For example, in group assignments, students discuss design concepts, select appropriate visual elements, correct technical errors, and present the results together. These activities demonstrate that Canva can serve as a medium that connects cognitive, affective, and social aspects.

This study also found an improvement in students' digital literacy, particularly in their ability to interpret information and convert abstract content into visual form. Trained students simplify lesson material into key points before incorporating it into their designs. This process of simplifying and reformulating information is crucial in developing higher-order thinking skills. Thus, Canva not only facilitates visual creativity, but also supports a deeper understanding of lesson material. In addition, observations show that Canva boosts students' confidence in presenting their work. Students who previously lacked confidence in presenting their ideas verbally became more courageous in showing their work because the designs they created were visually appealing. This positive impact then strengthened their interpersonal communication skills, especially when they had to explain their choice of colors, icons, and visual structures in the assigned tasks.

However, this study still notes several obstacles that need to be considered in the implementation of Canva. One of them is the disparity in technological capabilities among students. Some students need more time to understand Canva's features, especially advanced features such as layer settings, animation, and layout modification. However, this obstacle can be overcome through short training sessions, guidance from teachers, and group work that allows students to help each other. Technical obstacles such as internet limitations can also be minimized by using offline mode or saving design materials in advance. Overall, the additional findings of this study reinforce the main finding that Canva not only serves as a graphic design tool, but also as a digital learning medium that can enhance students' creativity, critical thinking skills, digital literacy, collaboration skills, and self-confidence. Through the use of Canva, learning becomes more varied, interesting, and in line with the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes in-depth learning and the development of Pancasila student profiles.

V. Conclusion

The conclusion of this study confirms that Canva is an effective digital learning medium for developing creativity in high school students. The integration of Canva in learning not only supports material comprehension but also fosters creative skills that are required in the Merdeka Belajar Deep Learning Approach curriculum. Canva can be used in learning as a free graphic design tool to create interactive and engaging learning materials, both by teachers and students. This tool helps facilitate distance learning and develop students' creativity, critical thinking, and digital skills.

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