

The Implementation of Character Education to Generation Z in Indonesia

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Abstract. Generation Z is gaining popularity as the name is used to refer to children who were born in the mid to late 1990s. It is the generation after the Millennials which have much publicity for their impact on society. Generation Z students that will be the main actors in nation-building are unique; therefore, the government must prepare to meet the demands of educating this new generation. The students of Generation Zs are different from the previous generations because they have different time challenging. Therefore, they need a particular system as their provision to face the globalization era. Character education is one of the strategic systems because it focuses on the character-building of the students. It is useful for students to prepare the future because it does not only focuses on the students' intelligence but also to build students' integrity in the aspects of social, moral, and spiritual.

Keywords: *character education, new generation, generation Z*

INTRODUCTION

Character education is one of the prominent issues in Indonesia in the last decades. In 2010, character education became a national movement, and education becomes the essential and strategic institution as the process of national character-building because of its system, infrastructure, and supporting ecosystem, which spread in Indonesia [1]. Character education also become one of the mandates and "Nawacita" introduced by President Joko Widodo in the National Mental Revolution Movement. Through the movement, the Ministry of Education and Culture strengthen character in all levels, types, and areas of education.

Moreover, there are seven skills needed in the 21st Century, namely critical thinking and problem-solving; network-based collaboration; capability to adapt and change direction quickly and effectively; ability to speak and write effectively; having the power

of initiative and entrepreneurship; having access and analyzing information; want to act and imagine [2]. These are what Generation Z needs for their future. Therefore, the education system has to give good provisions for them, so that they can deal with the 21st-century challenges.

Character education is needed to prepare independent generations to be capable of building and utilizing the existing resources [3]. However, it is useful to prepare the next generation to live in the globalization era full of readiness and competitiveness and to advance the nation and state [4]. At the same time, character education has a role as a filter for possible misdirection of education that only pursues and boasts the intelligence without regard to the students' integrity, which potentially full of intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual. This thesis aims to find common ground and the common thread between character education with the situation and demands of the 21st Century development and how to strengthen it.

The need to implement character education in Indonesian education is based on challenges that Generation Z must face. Character education also, both implicitly and explicitly, has become the government's concern. This can be seen from the various regulations made by the ministry of education and culture and the president himself. Furthermore, looking at character education in education, especially for Generation Z, is a need that must be met.

METHOD

In this study, the writers used the qualitative method and descriptive-analytic technique to observe the implementation of character education in Generation Z in Indonesia. Generation Z that refers to people, or in the context of education, can be called students, who were born in the late 1990s as the object of the current study. By seeing the development of the world and all the challenges that exist, Generation Z must have a provision that is different from the previous generation. This is what Arslantas called as

the relationship between individuals and social function [5]. Therefore, this study tries to analyze the needs of Generation Z in education.

The decision to focus on the world of education was chosen as the assumption that the institution, and the learning process in it, can be used as a place to shape the character of Generation Z. By mapping the conditions that must be faced by Generation Z, this research places character education as something to be applied in education in Indonesia.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

1. Character Education

Character education was developed in Indonesia based on the national education constitution system. Constitution Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that national education functions establish the capabilities to shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation [6]. Also, it aims to develop the potential students to be human beings who believe in God and have good morality, good health, sufficient knowledge, good capability, and make them creative, independent, democratic, and responsible [7]. Five of the nine goals of national education are the core of character education, namely faith and piety to God, noble character, independent, democratic, and responsible.

Character is the values that underlie human behavior based on religion, culture, legal/constitutional norms, customs, and aesthetics [8]. Character education is a planned effort to make students know, care, and internalize the values so that they will behave like human beings. Ultimately, it is a system of instilling behavioral values (characters) to school members. Those values are knowledge, awareness or will, and actions to carry out values (both towards God, self, others, environment, and nation), and to be good people [9]. Meanwhile, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture, character education covers five central values: religious, nationalist, independent, mutual assistance, integrity [10].

2. Moral-Based Character Education

Strengthening character education in a global era, which is full of paradoxes and shifting values, is very relevant and urgent to overcome the moral crisis. Although the causes of moral decline are involved, two factors cannot be denied, namely, internal social factors and external factors. In internal social factors, there is a slight decrease in social functions on the moral formation of children, such as reducing parental supervision, community indifference, loss of role model, and disharmony [11]. While on external

factors, flogging the entry of values from outside through various advances in IT leads to a conflict of values within the child, even contrary to the norms that are being grown on the family, school, and community. These two factors are the cause of the moral decline in children, leading to demoralization in social and national life.

The moral decline among children makes the presence of character education as part of efforts to build national morals. For this reason, the design of character-based moral education needs to receive attention and input in strengthening the actualization and implementation of character education. According to Pala, character education has a similar essence and meaning to moral education. The goal is to shape the child's personality to become a good human. The purpose is to encourage the growth of good children. Growing and developing good morals will enable students to grow with their capacity and commitment to do the best and everything right and to have a purpose in life [12].

Raharjo emphasizes the importance of the moral dimension in character education. According to him, character education is an educational process that holistically connects the moral dimension with the social realm in the lives of students as a foundation to form a qualified generation that can live independently and has the principle of truth [13]. The emphasis of character education on the moral dimension is also comprehensively reviewed by Lickona [14], which states that character education is primarily the formation of morals. In character education, there are three components of good character, and they are moral knowing (moral knowledge), moral feeling (emotional reinforcement), and moral action.

Character is developed through the stages of knowledge (knowing), implementation (acting), and habits [15]. Character is not limited to knowledge. Someone who has excellent knowledge is not necessarily able to act by the knowledge, if not trained (become a habit) to do good. The character also reaches into the realm of emotions and self-habits. Sari states that character development should lead children to value recognition cognitively, appreciate useful values, and finally to the practice of tangible values [16]. There is one significant private event that must occur in a child, namely the emergence of a compelling desire (determination) to practice values. This event is called *conatio*, and the step to guide the child to make this determination is called the *conative* step. Character education should follow the systematic steps, starting with cognitive recognition of values, affective understanding and living values, and conative determination [17].

Since the significant challenges faced by the nation, it is necessary to regrow the noble values of the

nation's culture through value-based character education. Rediscovery, revitalization, or reinvented traditions of national socio-cultural values need to be carried out through the medium of character education as a moral nation's generation figures. It is time for this nation to reformulate the nation's original socio-cultural values, especially in the global era. The concept of Indonesian nationality needs to be strengthened through the internalization of values. Based on these reasons, character education based on national values needs to focus on a national character through the historical background, language, cultural characteristics, and social, political, economic conditions of various ethnicities. This information must be comprehensive, analytical, and comparative, and must include similarities and differences between the groups. Knowledge about cultural pluralism is the basis needed to respect, appreciate, and assess diversity (political of recognition) [18].

3. Religious Character Education

The phenomena that occur in society with the increasingly rampant cases of immorality and criminality encourage people to take action to keep the nation. Lickona states that there are ten signs of nation destruction, namely (1) Increased violence among adolescents, (2) The worsened use of language and words, (3) The increased of influential peer groups in acts of violence, (4) Increased self-destructive behavior, such as drug use, alcohol, and free sex. (5) Increasingly obscured moral guidelines both individuals and citizens, (6) Decreased work ethos, (7) Increasingly more reduced respect to the elders and teachers/lecturers, (8) Less responsibility of individuals and citizens, (9) Cultivating dishonesty, and (10) The rise of mutual suspicion and hatred among people [19].

Character education is a deliberate effort that is systematically arranged to develop good characters based on core virtues objectively for both individuals and society [20]. Character is the personality that is formed by the internalization of various virtues that are believed and used as a basis for perspective, thinking, and acting. The development of Islamic character given in early age will provide a foundation and become a strong fortress of the civilization based on Islamic teachings. The embodied Islamic character is a commendable character, such as good behavior, honesty, compassion, guarding views and genitals, fair, and so forth [21]. Those characters have been written clearly in the Holy Quran. Besides, the Islamic character has been seen in the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad. The embedded behavior is all forms of good character to be given to students. \

However, harmony in the education process does not work as expected because of the existence of a

national exam. The evaluation system to determine student graduation has unknowingly shifted the real goal of character education. The crucial problems are related to the existence of national exams unconsciously creates a new culture in our education. In the last few years, the education system with the application of national examinations has stripped our nation to the chaos of education and community morality. The impact of a national examination has unwittingly directed education far from the substance of education itself. The number of cases of fraud committed shows that the morality of education practitioners is questionable. The current education system should support the orientation of character education, not to disregard the substance of character education itself.

4. Graduate Profiles Required in Generation Z

Related to the demands of development in the global era, educational experts agree that the 21st Century is the Conceptual Era. In that era, humans must have "Six High Concepts and High Taught Senses in the Conceptual Age." It is a crucial concept of success in the 21st Century. According to Wagner, there will be a gap between what is learned in schools and the competencies needed in the real world [22]. Schools and educational institutions that are not aware of this issue will produce graduates who cannot live optimally in their life. Progress towards the Conceptual Era is described in the Roadmap for Development and Quality Improvement of Senior High School 2025 [23].

The tendency that will occur in Generation Z is the rise of new competencies that require them to adjust and respond to global developments actively. The new competencies are subsequently known as the 21st Century Competency Framework, namely life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information, media, and technology skills [24]. Another tendency in the 21st Century era is the rise of work competition, which is getting tighter. Even in several fields, education is no longer becoming a measure of employee recruitment and will shift to two primary competencies, namely global and specific competencies. Global competence will shift from education level to international language skills and information technology competencies, while specific competencies follow the new types of job specifications that arise due to the development and impact of information technology and globalization.

According to Fikrianto, to prepare the competitiveness of graduates in a global society, curriculum and educational activities in the future must consider at least seven interventions: English proficiency, high quality, inclusive, general/liberal education, extracurricular activities that emphasize

leadership and character building, enrichment of curriculum with ASEAN perspectives, teaching quality such as reasoning, problem-solving, analytical and critical thinking skills, students and mobility staff, and soft and professional skills, entrepreneurial mindset [25].

UNESCO recommends four-character education goals in the 21st Century: (1) learning to know; (2) learning to do; (3) learning to be; (4) learning to live together. The four pillars of educational goals, according to UNESCO, promote the balance between personal and social competence. The UNESCO concept is also in line with the concept of education experts about the competency of skills that must be mastered in the 21st Century, about scientific approaches to learning, and authentic assessment [26] [27]. Moreover, according to Trilling and Charles, all students need to be equipped with various competencies in the 21st Century, including Life and work skills, Learning and innovation skills, and Technology and information media skills [28].

CONCLUSION

Character education is vital to equip children and the young generation to be able to maintain a balance between global demands and the values of goodness. Character education is one of the filters that is expected to be able to take advantage of developments in information and communication technology while controlling the negative impacts of global developments.

The success of character education allows the development of information and communication technology to be controlled and utilized for human life. Generation Z, which will be the main actors in nation-building, will genuinely become a golden generation to advance the nation in 2045. Therefore, strengthening character education must be carried out, improved, evaluated, and perfected continually, so there will make creative, innovative, productive, independent, secure, and responsible golden generations. The role of the education unit, especially educators and education personnel, school curriculum, educational activities, and school culture, is critical to realizing ethical values through character education.

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