Character Education for Indonesian Gold Generations: Basic Education Challenges in the Era of Disruption

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ABSTRACT

The current era of disruption has had an impact on lifestyle changes and created many opportunities as well as challenges for the nation’s generation. The fact that the moral degradation of the nation’s generation is still quite concerning for our world of education, especially basic education, even though they are the golden generation of the Indonesian nation in the future. The purposes of this article are: (1) to describe the theoretical concepts and needs of character education for Indonesia’s golden generation in the era of disruption, and (2) to describe the challenges and direction of basic education development. The data collection method is a literature study. The data obtained were compiled, analyzed, and conclusions were drawn. The results of the study show that the need for character education for the golden generation of Indonesia is: (1) as a means of forming the nation’s civilization in the future, (2) as a means of fortifying the younger generation from the threat of spiritual unrest and emptiness as a result of digitalization, and (3) character education as a means to realize the ideals of a democratic society. Basic education development orientation aims to prepare students to become good, competitive, innovative personal qualities, prepare students to continue to higher education levels, explore and develop their interests and potential, and prepare them to participate actively in society.

Keywords: character education, basic education, the young generation, era of disruption

1. INTRODUCTION

Education has an important role in the whole of human life and life. The role of education is very important in developing the abilities and character or character of an individual so that he can grow in experiencing the meaning of life and life. In human history, it is also noted that education has a big role in the formation of a nation’s civilization.

In-Law Number 20 of 2003 on National Education System [1] in Article 3 it is explained that “National education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a nation with dignity to educate the nation’s life, aimed at developing the potential of students so that human beings who believe and fear the Almighty God, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens “.

Based on the provisions of the article, national education in Indonesia functions to shape the character of the nation’s generation and build a dignified Indonesian civilization. This dignified national civilization will be realized through the formation of the character of the nation’s generation. Likewise, on the contrary, the collapse of a nation’s civilization will begin the day of the destruction of the character of its generation.

The challenge for our education, especially basic education, in an era of disruption is increasingly complex. The era of disruption is marked by changes in various sectors as a result of digitalization and the “internet of things” (IoT). This era has offered opportunities as well as challenges for the nation’s generation. Technological advances provide ample opportunities to actualize and work hard to achieve life goals in the future. For a nation that has a tough character, modernization and digitalization will make the nation more competitive and more prosperous [2].

The use of sophisticated, smart, and effective machine technology, as well as rampant digitalization in all fields, have implications for changing the lifestyle of
the younger generation based on modernity. The impact is a crisis of morality and spirituality among the nation’s young generation [3]. Some facts of the life of the millennial generation based on the study of Umami, Gani, & Waskito [4] include free sex, violence, plagiarism, drug abuse, pornography, rape, robbery, robbery, juvenile delinquency, cheating habits, intimidation, and subsequent gang fights. impact on criminal behavior.

Many among the millennial generation are also prone to stress, depression, and feelings of isolation, often feeling very insecure and worried without knowing the cause [5–7]. These facts show that there has been a moral degradation of the nation’s generation amidst various problems and challenges of living in the current era of disruption.

Character education is very important to build the morality of a society and nation [8]. Character education has become a national movement in several countries, including Indonesia. The aim is to realize education that encourages ethics and ethical virtues in shaping the nation’s young generation.

The author strongly believes that character education is one of the best solutions to prepare Indonesia’s golden generation as agents of change in the future. Therefore, character education can be a framework and guidance in designing basic education programs optimally and effectively [9,10] in responding to the challenges of basic education in the present and future era of disruption.

The main purpose of this article is focused on 2 (two) things, namely: (1) describing the theoretical concept and the need for character education for Indonesia’s golden generation in the era of disruption, and (2) describing the challenges and direction of basic education development in the era of disruption.

2. METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach to the type of research library. Research type library research is research that collects data or scientific writing which aims as an object of research or collection of library data [11]. Preparation in this study is the same as other research, but the sources and methods of data collection are by taking data from the library, reading, taking notes, and processing the research materials/results.

The object of study in this paper puts the focus of the study on 2 (two) things, namely: (2) theoretical concepts and the need for character education for Indonesia’s golden generation in the era of disruption, and (2) describing the challenges and direction of basic education development in the era of disruption.

The type of data used is secondary data. The data collection method is a literature study, namely the collection of literature data through library materials that are coherent with the object of study in question. The data obtained were compiled, analyzed, and conclusions drawn.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Moral Education Theory and Character Education

The moral is a good bad principle that exists and is inherent in the individual. Meanwhile, the quality of one’s good and bad judgment is called morality. Morality can be traced from the way individuals who have morality obey and observe values and moral rules. So the concept of moral refers to human behavior about morality that is practical in action [12,13]. That is, morality is a demand for good behavior that an individual has as morality, which is reflected in his thoughts/concepts, attitudes, and behavior.

In the study of western philosophy, the study of moral philosophy is often confronted with the Kantian Ethics (Kant in 1785 and 1983) which was developed by his successors such as John Rawls (1971, 1993) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1971, 1976). Kantian ethics emphasizes moral education on the awareness of the autonomy and dignity of each person as well as efforts to respect that dignity and autonomy [14,15]. This means that a person’s morality lies in self-awareness, or a conscious morality even though in conscience. Kantian ethics have had a lot of influence on the implementation of moral education at home and school. Kohlberg’s theory which is well known to date and is often used as an approach to cognitive moral reasoning (in Indonesia it is known as moral dilemma theory), is based on the perspective of the stages of individual moral development [16–19]. Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development which are divided into three levels, namely: the first level (pre-conventional), consisting of: (1) obedience and punishment orientation; (2) personal interest orientation; the second level (conventional); (3) consists orientation of interpersonal harmony and conformity (good children’s attitude); (4) orientation of authority and maintenance of social rules (the morality of laws and rules); the third level (post-conventional); (5) consists of social contract orientation; and (6) universal ethical principles.

Apart from Kohlberg, the study of moral education approaches was also popularized by Jean Piaget [20]. According to him, the purpose of moral education is an effort to develop children’s moral cognitive structures (especially the ages of children and adolescents) in the school environment [21–23]. Some contemporary moral education experts claim that the highest virtue is shown by a person through certain habits, perceptions, desires,
and choices. According to this view, a person is said to be truly good, or kind, if he can think about how they can help those around him or people who need help [24].

The concepts of moral education and character education are different, but both have a close relationship with each other and are even difficult to separate (dichotomy). The difference is that moral education is more theoretical, whereas character education combines theoretical and practical aspects, so character education has become a very eclectic field by combining several moral education [10].

Character is personality/traits based on values that are believed and firmly embedded in a person that underlies the actions taken. This character is permanent so that it differentiates one person from another. In other words, the character is the values in a person that are actualized in real attitudes and actions. These values are unique, both embedded in oneself and behavior and are firmly attached to form a natural nature in a person and are manifested in real action through behavior [25–28].

Character education has a long history [10], [29]. Since the days of classical philosophy, Aristotle has developed ideas about character education until its reappearance in the late nineteenth century and continues through the first four decades of the twentieth century. Aristotle and Confucius have deeply reflected on the questions of “what kind of person do we want from each of our children and how can we raise and educate them to be like that?” The answer to this question will lead us to talk about morality, where every society needs individual members of society to become moral persons. They need children to develop into moral adults [10], [24], [30], [31].

Character education is moral plus education because the components of character education include moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action [25,32,33]. Without these three aspects, character education will not be effective. According to Lickona, character education is a deliberate attempt to cultivate virtue. This means that character education must be taught. Without character education and teaching, one will not be able to have the virtues for good character. Virtue provides the standard for good character knowledge. Thus, the more virtues that can be known and obtained, the stronger the character building will be [25], [34].

3.2 Character Education for Indonesia’s Golden Generation in the Era of Disruption

The current era of disruption has created a revolution in various fields of life, including in the field of education. The era of disruption has encouraged the digitization of the education system. The emergence of technological application innovations in various fields has inspired the birth of digital applications in education, including MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) such as the Teacher Room, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). MOOC is an online learning innovation that is designed to be open, able to share and connect or network with each other. Meanwhile, AI is an artificial intelligence machine that is designed to do specific jobs in helping humans daily. In the field of education, AI will help individual learning. This principle marks the start of the democratization of education which can create opportunities to exploit the world of technology productively.

The evolution of learning with a digital learning pattern will provide a learning experience more creative, participatory, diverse, and comprehensive for students. However, on the other hand, the degeneration which has changed the learning system to everything completely digital and machines has created serious concerns over the threat of moral degradation of the nation’s generation. Some learning systems may be replaced by super-sophisticated machines, but one important aspect of education, namely character education, cannot possibly be replaced by machines and digital. Character is the key to success (Omari, 2015) because the character is the main and important asset for the progress of individuals and nations. Character education is an important element that determines the strength of a nation (Koellhoffer, 2009). National character determines the national strength of a nation (Morgenthau, 1991). Good character is not formed automatically but must be formed over time through a continuous process of teaching, modeling, modeling, learning, practice, and example. Character education is a means to form a nation’s civilization. Arnold Toynbee (Saptono, 2011) once revealed that “out of twenty world civilizations that can be recorded, nineteen were destroyed not because of conquest from without, but because of moral decay from within.” This means that the collapse of a country’s civilization will begin the day the character of its generation will destroy. The character of a nation will be strong if the individual character of the generation of the nation is also strong. Therefore, cultural education and national character must be instilled in 240 million golden generations of Indonesia who are Indonesia’s human resources as a supporting element for this country to become great in the future (Rokhman, Syaifudin, & Yuliati, 2014).

The results of research on Child Development Programs in six school districts in the United States [35] have reported several important findings related to character education programs in primary schools. This research was conducted for 4 years to encourage the social, ethical, and academic development of elementary school students. By comparing 12 schools, the results of Battistich’s research showed that student attitudes, students’ perceptions of school, and student achievement changed for the better. In fact, not only that, it is known that there are significant changes in social attitudes, values, and skills of students through programs designed, reducing the use of alcohol and marijuana, reducing
violent behavior, gang fights between students, and school violations [35]. The Battistich study is in line with the findings of the study that character education programs have improved academic achievement and increased discipline (attendance) of program participants, increased compliance, reduce the number of delays, reduce the number of truancy, and reduce the number of fights and violations of student learning discipline [36], [37].

Based on some of the studies that have been presented above, character education for Indonesia’s golden generation must be the direction and ideals of education, especially basic education in the future. This is because basic education is a very important level of education because of the formation of the personality and potential of students at the earliest stages. Character education as a process of instilling the values of life is expected to be developed in students so that it becomes a habit in the joints of their life.

This understanding needs to be accompanied by conscious efforts to develop good character education for Indonesia’s golden generation. Learning in elementary schools is no longer just a transfer of knowledge, but also a transfer of values to shape the attitudes, behavior, character, and leadership of the nation’s young generation.

3.3 Character Education and the Direction of Basic Education Development

In article 77H Paragraph (1) Government Regulation Number 32 of 2003 concerning National Education Standards [38] explains that “the structure of the basic education curriculum contains learning content or subjects designed to develop religious-spiritual competencies, personal and social attitudes, knowledge, and skills”. Based on these provisions, the purpose of basic education is the inculcation of the basics of values and morals in students to form character and personality that includes moral, spiritual, religious values, their personal and social attitudes. If this formation is carried out properly and appropriately, the quality of basic education outcomes will also be achieved properly. Thus, the function of basic education is not only to prepare students who are ready to attend further education, but also even more importantly, basic education has the responsibility to develop the potential of students, namely fostering religious-spiritual values, morals, and ethics, personal and social attitudes that are beneficial to the lives of students in society and the nation.

The current advancement of information technology has promised many opportunities as well as a challenge for the world of education, including basic education. The era of disruption or industrial revolution 4.0 has developed rapidly. Change is happening more quickly and is followed by turmoil in all fields that make human life very open and competitive. The challenge of basic education in the future is the need for awareness of the development of basic education goals that are oriented towards preparing students to become good, competitive, innovative personal qualities, preparing students to continue to higher education levels, exploring, and developing their interests and potential, and prepare them so that they can participate actively in society [37]. Primary education should be able to guarantee the formation of individuals who can lead happy lives as good people and good citizens [28]. Of course, this challenge is not easy, because it requires the participation of all parties, especially elementary education teachers, to shape the personalities of students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also socially, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent.

Berkowitz [10] have noted some empirical evidence that the results of school-based studies have produced empirical databases to show the potential effectiveness of character education in schools. Berkowitz recommends that an effective character education program model is the development of moral reasoning through moral discussion in the classroom. Kohlberg [17] emphasizes cognitive moral considerations through moral dilemmas. Dewey’s view emphasized moral education through democratic education, which in its development greatly influenced its application in education.

Several other experts have given mixed views about the effective character education model in schools. The character education model according to Lickona [25] emphasizes the formation of moral reasoning through discussion with peers. Active teaching methods have an impact on moral education on the aspects of recognition, emotion, and behavior of students in the fifth grade of elementary schools. There is 5 (five) keys to the success of character education, namely: (1) planned to learn (must be planned); (2) application; (3) teacher-friendly; (4) supported by all; and (5) approach to students [29].

The character education program in elementary schools is based on the results of a study of best practice implementation of character education in East Java, Indonesia. According to the results of this study, the implementation of good character education can foster good character in basic education units. A good character education program needs to be supported by the vision of the education unit, socialized to all members of the education unit concerned, understood, then built with a joint commitment to achieve the vision. To achieve this goal requires the support of various parties, including school managers, educators and education personnel, parents, students, as well as the community and government. Character learning through various learning activities is also able to develop the good character of students in elementary schools.

Some of the character education standards used to direct education are as follows: (1) promoting ethical
values as the basis for character education; (2) identifying characters comprehensively, this includes ideas, feelings, and actions; (3) using effective training and approaches to cultivate and build character; (4) creating a caring educational environment; (5) provide opportunities for students to express their ideas and attitudes; (6) develop an appropriate curriculum that supports character education; (7) fostering student motivation; (8) share responsibility to all school members for the sake of educational character; (9) building good leadership in character education; (8) build good cooperation and relationships with families and people around the school; and (9) evaluating the character of the school.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, several conclusions can be made about the need for character education for Indonesia’s golden generation and the direction of basic education development in the era of disruption, as follows:

a. Character education is a means to form a nation’s civilization. Character education is an important element that determines the strength of a nation, but the good character must be formed from time to time through a process of continuous education, for example, modeling, learning, and exemplary.

b. Character education is an effort to strengthen the nation’s young generation to have good personal qualities. The goal is that the nation’s young generation is not easily trapped in the flow of modernity which is full of materialistic life which can cause restlessness and spiritual emptiness. The hope is that in the future, in the 100 years of Indonesia’s independence there will be a strong Indonesian civilization that is not only intellectually intelligent but also socially, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent.

c. Character education in schools aims to create a democratic society in modern life that is increasingly open and competitive today, which is certainly vulnerable to conflicts of interest, desires, and beliefs that can lead to conflicts of interest.

d. The development of basic education in the future needs to be reoriented to efforts to prepare students to become good, competitive, innovative personal qualities, prepare students to continue to higher education levels, explore and develop their interests and potential, and prepare them to be able to participate. active in society, the goal of basic education is the inculcation of the foundations of values and morals in students to form character and personality that includes moral, spiritual, religious values, their personal and social attitudes.

The results of this study can be used as material for reflection in the study of basic education as part of an effort to “reflect” on what to do, how to do it, and what to do with it. Basic education must be able to guide their students to find themselves, through all the processes that take place in the classroom and school, then mature in the family and society. Therefore, basic education must be able to become an important actor in preparing Indonesia’s future golden generation.

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