

Restoring the Nature of Arts Learning for Character Building Due to the Use of Technology in Online Learning: A Case Study in the Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

Online learning as one of the COVID-19 pandemic impacts tends to make school-age children spend more time on gadgets and the Internet. The negative impact of online learning during the pandemic is the tendency for children to abuse internet access excessively out of control with inadequate parental supervision on the use of devices while studying. This will damage the younger generation characters due to the negative influence of the Internet. Many inappropriate contents, online games, and social media with unlimited open access can affect the mental development of school-age children. Art plays an important role in education and human life to build the characters because it can provide a stimulus or stimulation that affects human emotionally. If arts education is carried out according to its concept and aims, it can be employed to teach and foster a sense of sensitivity. Also, art is able to provide stimuli that affect emotions. The government is responsible for ensuring quality education. Arts education must be maximized in addition to developing learning materials. The government must be able to encourage teachers to further optimize learning, by not only pursuing material quantity but also focusing on the learning quality. The teachers play an important role in carrying out learning as a facilitator and activator to direct the students to experience how to process feelings which then form characters as the students' personalities.

Keywords: Arts Education, Hyperreality in Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a global outbreak caused by the coronavirus known as COVID-19. The global pandemic that has hit many countries creates a negative impact on the health and economic sectors and it causes a domino effect in various fields, including education. Since the first case of Covid-19 infection appeared in Indonesia in early March, the government mandated to close public places and even temporarily stop the activities in worship places and schools. School closure which results in the termination of all face-to-face teaching and learning activities was certainly not a policy taken without consideration. This regulation is one of the government's efforts to prevent the potential transmission of COVID-19 to stop infection cases. All face-to-face learning was temporarily stopped and replaced by online learning. Face-to-face teaching and

learning activities stopped right in the middle of the even semester, and then from April to May in the education calendar agenda, School Exam and National Exam would be held. Practically, all of these activities could not be implemented, so the policies in determining graduation must also change. The National Exam elimination was carried out sooner because previously, the government had planned to abolish the National Exam as a determinant of graduation in 2021.

The number of COVID-19 infection cases increasing day by day makes education practitioners quickly adapt to the demands and learning needs. It is a heavy blow to the world of education; without adequate preparation, all learning that should be done face-to-face is transferred to online mode. Online learning is the only step that must be taken to continue the learning process as an effort to reduce the potential for COVID-19 transmission.

The implementation of online learning certainly finds obstacles. New problems have reappeared on the surface: the teacher unpreparedness in developing material, the students' difficulties dealing with limited facilities to join online learning, and the low student understanding of the material presented online, complaints of parents who are unavailable to assist learning, limited learning facilities, and many other obstacles. In this case, we realize that education collides with health and economic problems, and it is clear that education in Indonesia has not been going well. What is worse for online mode learning amid the pandemic is the tendency for school-age children to abuse internet access excessively out of control and the lack of parental supervision on the use of devices while studying. Guided learning patterns applied in schools change into independent learning. All learning activities use devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops/pc by utilizing virtual class platforms such as Google Classroom, Email, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet, YouTube, communication applications, and other social media. It creates a possibility that they will be interested in opening other applications such as online games and social media during learning activities.

According to David Bell in his book *an Introduction to Cyberculture*, technology can provide both positive and negative social impacts for its users. Information and communication technology causes social changes that increasingly obscure realities and encourage people to get into cyberspace [1]. Baudrillard with the postmodern theory in his book entitled *Simulacra and Simulations* discusses the relationships between realities, symbols, and societies where the authenticity is replaced by symbols and signs, and human experience is considered as a reality simulation [2].

The digital era creates an immersive virtual world as a space for all daily life activities. The limit between the real and the virtual world almost disappears. The boundaries of the two are very unclear, and sometimes people do not realize that they have spent a lot of time living in a "seemingly real" world, especially during the pandemic, forcing all learning activities to employ devices and the Internet. This condition may damage the characters of the younger generation due to the negative influence of the Internet, a virtual world which is then considered as normal or real life.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Education

Education has begun since human is in womb. The first education is acquired from the closest people and taught by parents, family members, and the surrounding community. Family education teaches how to behave, speak, and act, and basic lessons about

life. By the time, people realize that they do not only need basic education, but also ways to develop skills for survival, to elevate social class, and to improve the standard of living for themselves and their families.

The world has prioritized education as the main focus of attention because it is one of the quality determinants of the nation's human resources. Also, education produces a generation with competencies in the fields of expertise, so that the country would be stronger with a generation that increasingly develops according to the demands of the times. It is stated in Law Number 20 Year 2003 in Article 1, that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere; thus, students actively develop their potential to acquire religious-spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, and the state and nation [3]. Public awareness of education significance and government efforts in providing careful planning is needed to carry out education properly. Education is defined as an orderly deliberate and sustained effort to transmit or develop knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes, or habits [4]. In the online Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language, education is the process of changing attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people to mature humans through teaching and training [5].

Education changes the patterns of human behavior to be educated individuals who can improve life quality as a provision in society, nation, and state. Quality of life is related to knowledge and skills acquired from how a person gains experiences in education. It is the reason why education also improves an individual's social status. Therefore, education is considered as an effort to improve the quality of humans in cultivating reasons and characters.

2.2. Education in the 21st Century

A 21st-century education cannot be separated from the roles of technology. The technology exists to provide broad information access and convenience for its users. The rapid progress of information technology creates a huge impact on the world of education in Indonesia. The learning applications using various computer media can facilitate the teaching and learning process. According to Timothy D. Walker in the book *Teach Like Finland*, to assist students to understand learning materials, teachers need to utilize technologies as learning media [6].

Laura Greenstein adds that technology becomes a learning platform because students have instant access to obtain real-time information and to generate new ideas. Through the use of technology in collaborative learning, students practice their critical thinking and gain broader knowledge [7].

The use and development of various learning media, teacher training, facilities and infrastructure,

and the curriculum update are inseparable from the efforts to keep up with the needs of the rapidly changing times, with the aim that education in Indonesia will not be left behind by other countries. Indonesia is an archipelago country with a very large area and it must be admitted that the massive development carried out by the government in recent years has not been felt equally. Efforts echoed by the government to accelerate development to face the Industrial Revolution 4.0, especially in the frontier, outermost, and least developed regions have also not been implemented thoroughly. Each region has different characteristics and potentials in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and differences in policies. Many areas have not yet provided adequate school facilities, infrastructure, and competent human resources such as teachers, students, and the community.

Indonesia is quite far behind Malaysia and Singapore in facing 21st-century education. The problem in education is still the main issue that must be resolved. The concept of Ki Hajar Dewantara on the three centers of education states that schools, communities, and families must be synergetic to work together to improve the quality of education with support from the government. Education in Indonesia has a long way to go. Several times, the curriculum has changed since Indonesia's independence, which is not an instant process. A curriculum is seen as a construction foundation that must be strong to properly support the building above it. The curriculum is a reference that contains all matters related to the implementation of education. The success or failure of education depends on what and how the curriculum is developed by taking into account the needs and demands of the times. Besides, it urges teachers to adapt to a variety of changing demands. A teacher holds a very vital position for development; no matter how good the concept of education is will not be successful without the teacher's roles. However, the problem is what kind of teacher. This is also the government's essential task to improve the quality of education.

The coming challenges in the implementation of the 21st-century education do not only require teaching and learning that can keep up with the needs of the times but also build the student characters to produce a generation able to compete at a global level but still performing attitudes consistent with the personality of this nation.

2.3. Arts Education

Arts education in Indonesia is covered in the formal education curriculum with several changes in concepts and learning objectives following the applicable curriculum. Art provides multidimensional, multilingual, and multicultural characteristics to play a

role in shaping the student character. The direction of arts education is more than merely creating and understanding arts and aesthetics but employing aesthetics and arts education in the context of humanism development [8]. Meanwhile, Rohidi (in Irawan, 2017) sees arts education as a tool or medium to make a balance between intellectuality and sensibility, rationality and irrationality, and reasoning and emotional sensitivity to produce humans who can 'humanize' [9]. Based on the book *Why We Need Arts Education* by Cannatella, art has values that can influence the formation of human character by opening and raising awareness and providing real learning from things, ideas, incidents, and events that can be understood [10]. This is in accordance with the Government Regulation Number 19 Year 2005 concerning National Education Standards, Article 6 Paragraph (1); the aesthetics subject group is intended to improve sensitivity, the ability to express and appreciate beauty and harmony [11]. Arts education has great potential in directly processing science and the values of human life [12].

Various scientific writings on the benefits of arts education lead to a conclusion that art plays an important role in education and human life to build student character because of the given stimuli that affect human emotion. Therefore, if arts education is carried out according to the concept and aims, it can be used to teach and foster a sense of sensitivity. Arts education plays an important role in building the student character and it is able to provide stimuli that give effects emotionally.

3. METHOD

This is qualitative research using a literacy study method with a content analysis. The stages of this research procedure are as follows (1) making and planning a research design, (2) collecting data through literacy studies, and (3) writing a research report.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

All aspects of human life cannot be separated from the role of increasingly sophisticated technology. The presence of information and communication technologies makes rapid changes for humans. Sending and receiving information do not take a long time compared to physical mails delivered by postmen. Technology provides convenience in all areas, including the field of education. The use of technology to support learning in several studies has been able to contribute to its success. Research on the advantages of technology by Sutton in his thesis entitled *The Effect of Technology in Society and Education* states that the reasons for employing technology in classroom learning are as follows. Technology can help create fun learning; students can be directly involved in learning; technology helps teachers explain, use time more effectively, improve students' learning outcomes,

enhance learning styles, and supervise students on online assignments [13].

The characteristics of 21st-century learning are closely related to the use of technology. Even, education today is directed to facilitate students to face the demands and challenges of the times. The results of the study show that there is a shift in work in the future, which shows that the highest type of work needs creativity, and routine jobs will be taken over by robots and automation technology [14]. Creative work requires human intelligence and resourcefulness to produce inventive and innovative products [14]. How much technology is utilized can be regarded as an indicator of how big and developed a country is. Technology also seems to be a measure of the advance in human civilization. Conversely, if people do not want to utilize technology, they will be left behind for sure.

The global pandemic caused by COVID-19 has created a considerable impact on the education sector. The whole implementation of face-to-face learning is temporarily stopped to reduce the risk of transmission. Teaching and learning activities cannot be carried out face-to-face due to the very high level of COVID-19 transmission. However, it is also hard to decide to stop or abolish the learning process in an uncertain time. Online learning becomes the main alternative for continuing learning activities by utilizing various media. Devices and the internet are indispensable for the online learning process. This is one of the technology roles in supporting education. Technology can be utilized to facilitate distance learning. Of course, during the implementation of online learning, there is a huge increase in the use of devices and the Internet. The data from the Ministry of Communications and Informatics in 2019 shows that internet users in Indonesia had reached 150 million, in which 142.8 million was the number of internet mobile users [15]. During the pandemic with the need for online learning, this number will be even greater.

The utilization of information technology will always be the most practical alternative. During the pandemic, students stay at home and can join the online class held by the teacher. Technically, online learning is carried out based on the learning hours at school, but in its implementation, several possibilities occur due to obstacles in the availability of online learning facilities. The inhibiting factors include unavailability of supporting devices and internet access in some areas, unaffordability to buy internet quota, and low ability and knowledge in accessing online learning. This results in online learning which does not run well and evenly. Students with low economic backgrounds will have difficulties to participate in the learning activities.

Students with complete supporting facilities for online learning are not automatically able to engage in the learning process. The use of devices for online learning opens up a wide opportunity to access materials other than the learning needs. The Internet today provides an immanent real world, with its various strengths and weaknesses used by people all

over the world, creating a borderless world that can be explored in a short time. All information needs covering learning materials, knowledge, and homework answers are instantly available. This phenomenon then becomes two blades. On the one hand, the Internet can provide easy access to information on various kinds of knowledge, but on the other hand, it can make people dependent on its ease. The role of the Internet is commonly considered equal to teachers'; even only with gadgets, students can easily explore the world, find answers to assignments or homework, and copy other people's works. Social media with excessive news, social networking applications that open access to free interaction with other people, online games, and unlimited access can provide a very bad impact on the mental development of school-age children. The convenience that technology provides opens up chances in various possibilities to be exploited negatively.

Based on the research conducted by Mildayani Suhana (2018) i.e. the effect of using gadgets on the child's socio-emotional development, the tendency of children to isolate themselves from social life and the lack of emotional management result in introversion and impatience [16]. The use of modern technology requires a comprehensive understanding of changes that occur in society. Collaborations are needed between government agencies, accompanied by useful awareness programs and family support to use modern technology appropriately to ensure and protect future generations [17].

The government is responsible for the fate of a nation. Immediate actions to protect the younger generation urgently need to be executed to avoid backwardness. Apart from the religious factor, another important aspect in developing civilization is a scientific tradition [18]. Education's roles as a foundation of the quality formation of human being must be maximized. Improving education quality should be mainly taken into account.

Arts education as a subject included in the formal education must be able to contribute to build students' positive characters. The benefits of arts education are beyond doubt. Even in developed countries, arts education has gained tremendous attention. A study on the effect of arts education on the child socialization by Arts education aims to encourage children to have good personalities and to be creative, confident, and productive with a better aesthetic sense. A child who can express him/herself through arts is able to develop healthy personality characteristics, participate in social life actively, and to be a contributive person [19].

These benefits will not be achieved without the supporting elements. The level of learning success is not only based on the scores written on the report but also attributed to the student character. The success of education, in general, is not only determined by one of the elements that implement education, but also assessed from several aspects including a quality curriculum, teachers, students, parents, administrative staff, infrastructure, school environment, community, and government elements.

5. DISCUSSION

Technology changes various aspects of human life and provides positive benefits, but it can create a negative impact on its users. Information technology that is growing rapidly must be handled wisely by its users. The demand in the fast-paced development of the era cannot be avoided. The Internet as a technology that can provide broad access to information and communication should be used in a wise and balanced manner. Education as one of the sectors that utilize technologies must be able to provide an effort to balance the impact on the students, which if ignored will ruin the life pattern in society.

6. CONCLUSION

The tendency of students to overuse technologies due to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be anticipated by the government. The

government can take actions to improve the education quality by optimizing arts education as an effort to build student characters.

The steps that must be executed by the government are not only to develop the curriculum and learning materials but also to encourage arts education teachers to optimize learning by balancing both material quantity and learning quality. Teachers play an important role in carrying out learning as a facilitator and activator to lead the students to process feelings, which then form a character attributed to the student personality. A teacher is a key to the success of arts education learning, so She/he must achieve the competencies. Teaching is not merely a transfer process of knowledge, but it involves a learning process to shape student character to produce better humans.

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