



The Importance of Character Education for The Young Generation in The Digital Era

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Abstract. Education is an effort to improve the quality of human resources who have character and can live independently better. Quality education can form a civilized person so as to create a moral social life. Character education is a process of applying moral and religious values through science, applying these values to oneself, others, and the surrounding environment as well as to God Almighty. The demand for education to produce quality human resources continues to be echoed so that all people have awareness that education is important in this digital era. In this digital era, the use of technology properly makes it the main key in the character values of students. And what becomes a decline in morale, lack of knowledge, even character in students is due to deviations in the use of technology and the internet. This research discusses the importance of character education in building the morale of the young generation in this digital era to become a generation that has good morals. To achieve the objectives of this study, the authors took primary data sources through a search of the literature, then discussed in depth and analyzed using content analysis techniques to produce conclusions. The results of this study indicate that character education has a very important urgency to educate and nurture the younger generation so that they can make good use of technology by choosing which things are good and which are bad from the internet. With awareness of the importance of character education in the digital era, it is hoped that the successors of the Indonesian nation will be better in the future.

Keywords: Character, Education, Young generation, Digital era.

1 Introduction

The digital era is an era where everything has become completely digital using sophisticated technology. The digital era was born with the emergence of digital internet networks, especially computer technology. The digital era is also an era where everyone in that era uses digital systems in their daily lives. This era is marked by information technology which has opened up great prospects for the prosperity of literature and art as well as the development of multit talented humans [1].

The digital era also has impacts that can be divided into two, namely, positive and negative impacts. Positive impact in the digital era: makes it easier to find information,

easy to learn, easy to communicate in entertainment media. In the end, in carrying out performance and enabling various activities to be carried out quickly, precisely and accurately, thereby increasing productivity, in the development of social media, many electronic-based learning activities have emerged [2] Negative impacts: becoming addicted, lonely, detrimental to health, and a waste of time. The impact of the digital era has resulted in changes in social behavior in the younger generation, namely becoming less interactive, often delaying their parents' orders, and not respecting other people.

The young generation is the nation's next generation who has the potential to be developed both in terms of character and cognitive aspects. The young generation is one of the most important things for the Indonesian people in the period of nation building, meaning that the young generation is important in national development. This is because the young generation is a human resource (HR) that has the potential to support successful development. So, to be an important component in the development of a nation, we should be able to form the character of a young generation who is competent, and has advantages that lead to high levels of creativity, idealism and literacy in technology so that it becomes an important component in nation building [3].

However, looking at the current conditions, there is one thing that seems to be a problem now, namely the decline in character in the younger generation. With the emergence of cases such as brawls between students, violence against children, robberies everywhere, corruption, bullying cases, violations of human rights (HR) and so on, it shows that the character of this nation's children is very weak. One of the causes of moral degradation or weak character of the nation's children is the weakness of character education in Indonesia, both in the family, school and community environments. And in the end, character education is very important in building the morals of the young generation in this digital era to become a generation with good morals and is the main key in building national unity. Thus, these cases can be reduced to reduce moral degradation or character decline in the younger generation living in the digital era and also in the future.

2 Methods

This research uses library research, namely research in which data collection is carried out by collecting data from various scientific literature. The literature studied is not limited to books but can also take the form of documentation materials, magazines, journals, lectures and training and so on which are related to the problem being researched and discussed. The aim of library research is to collect various kinds of research results that have been carried out previously which have related themes so that they are relevant to the research being carried out [4].

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Implementing Character Education for the Younger Generation

Character is the nature of each individual which can be in the form of character, behavior, traits and personality that can be expressed in everyday life. The term character is closely related to a person's personality. A person can be called a person of character if his behavior is in accordance with moral rules. Character here is synonymous with human nature, therefore the government emphasizes character-based education which we often call character education [5].

Character education is a deliberate (conscious) effort to realize virtue, namely objectively good human qualities, not only good for individual individuals, but also good for society as a whole. Character education is interpreted as education that develops national character in students so that they have values and character as their own character, apply these values in their lives, as members of society, and citizens who are religious, nationalist, productive and creative. Emphasizes that character education is the basic values that must be lived if a society is to live and work together peacefully. Values such as wisdom, respect for others, personal responsibility, feelings of shared destiny, suffering, peaceful resolution of conflicts, are values that should be prioritized in character education [6].

Character education has recently become a big thing popular in our educational world. Character is the main foundation which is the goal of education. Improving the education system as well carried out by improving the curriculum. As an agent of social change, character education is expected to be able to play a role. Its role is to reform negative thinking into a positive direction and can change behavior negative becomes positive [7].

Character formation consists of three interrelated parts, namely moral knowledge, moral feelings and moral behavior. Based on these three components, it can be stated that good character is supported by knowledge of goodness, the desire to do good and carry out good deeds. Good character is living with correct behavior in terms of relating to other people and relating to oneself. Based on this statement, good character is a character that is formed from three types of interrelated parts, and behaves in accordance with the norms or rules that exist in society [8].

Currently the government is introducing a government program called Strengthening Character Education (PPK). PPK is an effort to cultivate character education in schools. The PPK program will be implemented in stages and according to needs. The PPK program aims to encourage quality and moral education that is evenly distributed throughout the nation. Issuance of Presidential Regulation number 87 article 2 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education (PPK), PPK has the following objectives:

- a. Building and equipping students as Indonesia's golden generation in 2045 with a Pancasila spirit and good character education to face the dynamics of change the future.
- b. Developing a national education platform that places character education as the main soul in providing education for students with the support of public involvement carried out through formal, non-formal and informal education channels by taking into account the diversity of Indonesian culture

- c. Revitalize and strengthen the potential and competence of educators, education staff, students, community and family environment in implementing PPK [9].

These character values can be implemented and become school culture. An effective process for building school culture is to involve and invite all parties or stakeholders to share their commitment. The main belief of the school must be focused on efforts to instill and instill moral beliefs, values and norms. There are many values that can and must be built in schools, such as caring and creative values, honesty, responsibility, discipline, health and cleanliness, caring for each other. School is like a garden or fertile land where to sow and plant the seeds of these values. For this reason, school principals, teachers and employees must focus on organizing efforts that lead to the above expectations [10].

The importance of character education for the younger generation can be seen from its functions, including the following:

- a. Developing the basic potential within each child, so that children can grow into individuals who are humble, think well, and behave morally
- b. Building and strengthening the behavior of communities with diverse cultures
- c. Building and improving national civilization which is closely related to international relations.

Basically, the aim of character education is to build a national character that is responsible, has noble character, is tolerant, has noble character and behaves normally. As we know, the role of the younger generation is very large in the country's progress, so strong character needs to be formed from an early age. To achieve good character, children need to be instilled with character-forming values originating from religion, culture and Pancasila. Character formation can be influenced by several factors, including the following: [11]

- a. Internal factors are factors that arise within a person, including:
 - 1) Instinct is a characteristic that can give rise to actions that convey a goal by thinking first towards that goal and not prior to practicing the action. Meanwhile, instinct is a habit that is innate from birth which is an original trait. So a person's actions can originate from training or character
 - 2) Custom or habit. What is meant by habit is an action that is always repeated so that it is easy to do. So it can be understood that by continuously repeating a behavior, that behavior can become a part or habit of oneself
 - 3) Will/ desire, is the will to carry out all ideas and everything intended, even though it is accompanied by various obstacles and difficulties, but at no time is willing to submit to these obstacles. The benefit of a will or willingness, namely being able to be serious about doing something, especially in the desire to behave well, needs to be encouraged to make it come true
 - 4) Inner voice, the function of the conscience is to warn of the dangers of doing bad things and trying to prevent them, in addition to the urge to do good things. In humans there is an inner voice that can make decisions to do good and avoid bad deeds
 - 5) Heredity is a factor that can influence human actions. In heredity there are two types of things that parents can pass on to their two children, namely physical traits, namely the strength and weakness of the muscles and nerves of parents which can be passed on to their children and then spiritual traits,

namely the weakness and strength of an instinct, can also be inherited by the person parents who will influence the behavior of their children and grandchildren [12].

- b. External factors are factors that influence from outside the individual, including:
 - 1) Education. Education has a very big influence in character formation. Education is to mature human personality so that their behavior is in accordance with the education that people have received, whether formal, informal or non-formal education. Education is used as a means or place to practice and obtain information about character, so it is considered important if education is used as a means of forming character
 - 2) Environment, is something that surrounds a living body, such as plants, the condition of the soil, air, and human social interactions which are always in contact with other humans or also with the natural surroundings. The nature that surrounds humans is a factor that influences and determines human behavior. Meanwhile, the social environment is spiritual. A person who lives in a good environment can directly or indirectly shape his personality to be good.

3.2 Digital Era

The digital era is a period where the majority of people in that era use digital systems in their daily lives. The digital era, which has now become a part of people's daily lives, especially the younger generation, will indeed change life patterns. Including learning patterns and information dissemination patterns. This period is also often referred to as the digital revolution. This digital revolution began in the early 1990's in the world. By remembering the principles of digital systems, the digital era is an era where the flow of information through communication media is clear, accurate and fast [13].

The development of science and technology today greatly influences the attitudes and behavior patterns of the younger generation, because the lives of the younger generation are faced with serious challenges. On the one hand, the development of science and technology has had a positive impact, including:

- a. The information you need can be accessed more quickly and easily
- b. The growth of innovation in various fields is oriented towards digital technology which makes our work processes easier
- c. The emergence of digital-based mass media, especially electronic media as a source of public knowledge and information
- d. Increasing the quality of human resources through the development and use of information and communication technology
- e. The emergence of various learning resources such as online libraries, online learning media, online discussions can improve the quality of education
- f. The emergence of e-businesses such as online stores that provide various necessary goods and make it easy to get them.

However, on the other hand, this development has a negative impact on the younger generation which must be anticipated and solutions sought to avoid losses or dangers, including:

- a. The threat of violations of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) due to easy access to data and causing plagiarists to commit fraud
- b. The threat of shortcut thinking occurs where children seem to be trained to think short-term and lack concentration
- c. Threat of misuse of knowledge to commit criminal acts such as breaking into the banking system, etc. (decreased morality)
- d. Not making information technology effective as a medium or means of learning, for example, not only downloading e-books, but also printing them, not only visiting digital libraries, but also visiting library buildings, etc.

In the current digital era, elementary school age children cannot be separated from gadgets, they have even become a necessity. In conditions like this, the role of family, teachers and the surrounding community is very important in improving the character of the nation's future successors. The family as the main and first place where students live their lives should supervise and guide them lovingly, firmly and carefully. The role of teachers in building students' character is increasingly increasing, complex and difficult. Teachers not only teach the concept of good character, but how to direct students to be able to implement it in everyday life. Teachers as role models must also apply good character to themselves. The surrounding community also plays a role in monitoring and motivating the character development of students.

3.3 The Importance of Character Education for the Younger Generation in the Digital Era

For a nation, character education is an important part that cannot be separated in building national identity. The generational character of a nation greatly influences the future of a nation. Instilling and forming good character certainly cannot be separated from the role of the world of education. In the current digital era, it is so easy for us to use and utilize technology and it is so fast to get information and communicate without knowing time and space. This is an era where everything is made easier with technology. This also has an impact on the world of education.

In this increasingly sophisticated digital era, it has caused many changes in life, especially in Indonesia. It is easier for humans to access information and use digital technology freely. The emergence of new media in the digital era is a term used in the emergence of digital, internet networks, especially computer information technology. New media is often used to describe advanced technology. New media has the characteristic that it can be manipulated by internet networks. Apart from the internet, print media, television, magazines, newspapers are not new media. Mass media is switching to new media or the internet because there is a cultural shift in the delivery of information.

In this digital era, characters will be very helpful in using technology. With good character, it will certainly be possible to use technology wisely. When this is successful, efforts to improve the quality of education in the digital era will undoubtedly become something that can be realized. Therefore, there are several character education efforts to help improve the quality of education in the digital era [14].

Character education in this digital era is very important, so that the nation's next generation has good morals. The next generation reflects the quality of the nation. If the next generation is good cognitively and morally then the nation will also be good. For this reason, families, schools and communities have a responsibility to create a generation with morals and good character [15].

The importance of character education for the younger generation is not just about instilling and deepening knowledge. However, school education can also strengthen the character of the younger generation. Character education itself is an important aspect because it teaches religious norms, morality and other norms. Understanding and acting according to applicable norms makes the younger generation strong characters. Where this character is very important for the development and progress of a nation. Because just relying on a smart brain without good character is not enough to advance a country [16].

With character education, one can shape a person's personality into a better one and become a young generation with good morals. Character education is education that contains basic human values that will determine their attitudes and behavior towards Almighty God and the environment in which they live [17]. Character education is closely related to moral education, where the aim is to continuously train a person's individual abilities. So that character education can shape students' personalities into better ones [18].

In forming the personality of the younger generation, character education is very important because it can be used as a unifying support in society [19]. In schools, to provide character education, there used to be character lessons, with these students learn about morals and manners in behavior.

We must instill character education in the nation's next generation, we start from what is easiest for us to do first, namely we start from honesty, because honesty is the bulwark of all our daily behavior [20]. It's sad if we see a child behaving disrespectfully towards older people, especially towards his own parents, this all proves that the child is not behaving well towards his parents [21].

There is still much more character education that must be understood and comprehended by the younger generation, namely justice [23], [24]. We must teach justice to children from an early age, so that they get used to being fair human beings [25]. And if when they grow up they all become leaders, he will be a leader who is fair, honest and wise. Many people expect someone to have good character education. We hope that by implementing character education for the younger generation, starting from elementary school age children, we can lead them to become the young generation who are expected to become the nation's successors. As well as being the successor of a nation that adheres to a strong and civilized character

4 CONCLUSIONS

The development of science and technology today greatly influences the attitudes and behavior patterns of the younger generation, because the lives of the younger generation

are faced with serious challenges. This increasingly sophisticated digital era has caused many changes in life, especially in Indonesia. It is easier for humans to access information and use digital technology freely.

In today's digital era, characters will be very helpful in using technology. With good character, it will certainly be possible to use technology wisely. When this is successful, efforts to improve the quality of education in the digital era will undoubtedly become something that can be realized. Therefore, there are several character education efforts to help improve the quality of education in the digital era.

In forming the personality of the younger generation, character education is very important because it can be used as a unifying support in society. In schools, to provide character education, there used to be character lessons, with these students learned about morals and good manners in behaving. We hope that by implementing character education for the younger generation, starting from elementary school age children, we can lead them to become the young generation who are expected to become the nation's successors. As well as being the successor of a nation that adheres to a strong and civilized character..

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