

Implementation of Character Building in the Era of Digital Technology

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Abstract— Lately, the idea of implementing character building in the digital technology era has become a major concern for all education personnel. This study discusses the implementation of character-building in the digital technology era. The data analysis technique uses content analysis by sorting things that are in accordance with the focus and objectives of the study. This study found that digital technology has positive and negative impacts on the current generation so appropriate implementation is needed in instilling character. One of the most appropriate implementations of character building is the parenting pattern of parents towards children in the digital technology era, including expanding and updating knowledge about the internet and gadgets, because if parents do not have technical knowledge about this, they cannot supervise their children; if there is internet in the house, it should be placed in the family room so that they can see what their children are accessing from the internet; limit the time children spend playing the internet and gadgets; realize mutual understanding and awareness of the negative impacts of the internet and gadgets; if there is content that is inappropriate to be seen, its broadcast must be prohibited; and establish open two-way communication for children.

Keywords— Implementation, Character Building, Digital Technology

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I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary era like today requires the implementation of character building for the digital technology generation. What is meant by character building is a process or effort carried out by individuals or groups to foster, improve, and/or shape the nature, character, mental nature, and morals (character) of human beings (society) so as to form good character (Shofwan, 2022). According to Farantika, et al. (2024) that the success of character education depends on the methods and strategies used. Thus, of course, the implementation of character building in the technological era should involve competent experts, so as to obtain maximum results.

Character building does have a benchmark in its achievement (Shofwan, 2023). Of course, there are several achievements of character building in the digital technology era which include the formation of strong and positive characters through the use of technology, especially social media and the internet with the aim of creating individuals or groups who have integrity, are responsible, and have high moral awareness. From here, character education in the digital era emphasizes the importance of digital ethics, media literacy, and critical thinking skills in facing the opportunities and challenges of an increasingly global world.

Research on character education specifically character building has been conducted by several previous researchers. Farantika, et al. (2023) discuss character

formation for early childhood in schools and communities. Shofwan and Rohman (2022) discuss the values of character education in the *Syi'ir Ngudi Susila* and *Syi'ir Mitra Sejati* books. Hafni, et al. (2023) discuss character education to build students who have a balance of IQ, EQ, and SQ. Setyowati, et al. (2023) discuss strategies for building character in early childhood. It appears that from several studies, none of them have discussed the implementation of character building in the digital technology era.

Based on the above, this paper will conduct research on the implementation of character-building in the digital technology era. There are several positive and negative impacts that must be discussed in the digital technology era, as it is today. Likewise, the characteristics of the digital technology era generation, several challenges of character education for the younger generation in the digital era, and parenting patterns of the digital era generation will be discussed in this study. Some of the hopes of the results of this research are that it will add to the scientific knowledge in the field of education which will be useful for academic communities of various universities, researchers, and the community in general.

II. METHOD

This qualitative paper uses library research in conducting its research. Nazir (2011) stated that library research is a data collection technique by conducting a review study of books, literature, notes, and reports that are related to the problem being solved. A literature study

is a study to collect information and data from several things in the library, such as books, magazines, and others (Mardalis, 2006).

Meanwhile, it is called qualitative research because the research is used to research in natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by data triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and the results of qualitative research emphasize the meaning of generalization (Abdussamad, 2021). Furthermore, data collection is not guided by theory but is guided by facts found during field research.

Meanwhile, Muhadjir (2000) stated that library research requires more philosophical and theoretical processing than empirical testing in the field. Because it is philosophical and theoretical, library research more often uses a philosophical approach than other approaches. The methods in its discussion are; deduction (a way of thinking from general to specific), induction (a way of thinking from specific to general), and comparison (a way of thinking to find differences and similarities). (Hadi, 2004).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Why is it necessary to build character in the digital era? The answer is that in this digital era, not only positive things are developing, but there are also many negative things that are developing in accordance with the times. Building character in the digital era is a conscious effort to be able to make wise decisions and practice them in everyday life so that it can make a positive contribution to oneself and the environment (Dewi, 2023). Of course, in the digital era like today, it is necessary to build the character of students even stronger. Because there are many challenges faced in building character in the current digital era.

Indeed, in the digital era, there are many challenges in building the character of students. The era of digital technology that has penetrated has several positive impacts as mentioned by Purba, et al. (2024), including: (1) the means of conveying information about various events runs quickly; (2) access to new information is easily obtained anytime and anywhere; (3) social media that connects individuals with new people or old friends who are rarely met is very easy; (4) helping to find information about learning materials for students can be accessed easily; (5) entertainment media such as online games are very easy to obtain; and (6) communication with anyone is smoother.

Meanwhile, the negatives of digital technology can be explained as follows: (1) children's individuality reduces the level of face-to-face meetings and human interaction; (2) temperament and habits of using social media make children view the outside world as a threat; (3) irresponsible news, fake news, and bullying; (4) weak eye health, especially nearsightedness, and farsightedness; (5) unable to enjoy life; (6) radiation from technological devices is harmful to children's brain health; (7) fraud via SMS, telephone calls and the internet is increasing; (8) easy access to pornographic videos; (9) children forget the

homework given by teachers and forget to carry out worship such as praying and reading the Koran; and (10) children become targets of crimes such as kidnapping and child rape.

In the current digital era, both children and adults are spoiled with sophisticated technology. According to Purba, et al. (2024), the characteristics of the digital generation include: (1) the digital generation is busy creating social media accounts to prove its existence to the world; (2) the digital generation tends to be more open-minded and aggressive; (3) the digital generation tends to want to seek freedom, where they do not like to be controlled or inhibited, they want to be in control plus the opportunities the internet provides for freedom of expression; and (4) the digital generation always accesses various things they need through Google, Yahoo, or other websites.

Triyanto (2020) stated the same thing, stating that some of the characteristics of the digital generation include: (1) being active on social media to show their presence in the world; (2) thinking more openly and aggressively; (3) wanting freedom and control in expressing themselves; (4) learning quickly because there is ease in accessing any information from the internet. From this explanation, it is very clear that the digital generation is very different from previous generations. Therefore, character education for the digital generation is certainly carried out differently from previous generations.

Several things that parents need to do for their children in parenting in the digital era have been explained by Aziz (2022) below, including: (1) expanding and updating knowledge about the internet and gadgets, because if parents do not have technical knowledge about this, they cannot supervise their children; (2) if there is internet in the house, it should be placed in the family room so that they can see what their children are accessing from the internet; (3) limiting the time children spend playing the internet and gadgets; (4) realizing mutual understanding and awareness of the negative impacts of the internet and gadgets; (5) if there is content that is inappropriate to be viewed, its broadcast must be prohibited; (6) establish open two-way communication with children.

According to Safitri, et al., as quoted by Purba, et al. (2024) in this digital era, the younger generation spends too much time in front of the screen which risks reducing the quality of social interactions in the real world. Lack of face-to-face interaction can lead to social isolation, and difficulty forming healthy interpersonal relationships, and become a cause of increased social anxiety. Therefore, it is very important to balance online and offline activities and provide opportunities for the younger generation to interact directly with their peers and communities. According to him, several solutions and approaches that must be taken can be explained as follows, including:

1. Digital education. Namely, educational programs that provide information about the risks and ethics of internet use include how to recognize and deal with cyberbullying, the importance of online privacy, and how to filter negative content.

2. Parental supervision involvement. Namely, parents must actively participate in their children's online activities, use available monitoring tools, and openly discuss the experiences and challenges they face in the digital world.
3. Limiting device usage time. Namely, setting clear limits on device usage time and encouraging healthy alternative activities such as sports, reading, and other hobbies that can help prevent dependence on technology.
4. Encouraging social interaction. Namely, encouraging the younger generation to participate in social activities both at school and in the community, can help overcome the problem of social isolation and improve interpersonal skills.

From all that is explained above, building the character of the younger generation in the digital era has an important goal that supports their overall development, both in terms of morals and skills with the following description, including:

First, creating a generation with integrity. Namely, the younger generation must be formed into individuals who adhere to moral values even when faced with digital pressure. This integrity includes the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, even in ethically complex situations in cyberspace.

Second, preparation for facing global challenges. Namely, digitalization broadens the horizons of the younger generation and allows them to interact with different cultures and views. Therefore, they need to have a character that is open to differences but still adheres to basic values.

Third, encouraging responsibility. Namely, freedom in using technology must be balanced with a sense of responsibility for the impact of their actions, whether in sharing content or interacting with others online.

Fourth, developing creativity and innovation. Namely, with a character that is open to exploration and problem-solving, the younger generation can use technology as a tool to create innovative solutions to challenges in society.

Fifth, instilling empathy and solidarity. That is, even though technology can make interactions impersonal, the young generation with character must still maintain a sense of care, empathy, and solidarity towards others, both in real life and in virtual (digital) interactions.

In addition, character education in the digital era has several important functions for the younger generation as follows, including:

First, moral education. Namely, character education in the digital era allows children to have a strong understanding of basic values such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness, both in the real world and in cyberspace. Digital ethics, for example, acting politely and wisely on the internet.

Second, is self-protection. Namely, character education in the digital era helps the younger generation recognize threats in cyberspace such as fraud, cybercrime in the form of online fraud to obtain users' personal information

(phishing), or online bullying. With strong character, ethics, and discipline, the younger generation will be able to protect themselves from cyberspace.

Third, social development. Namely, character education in the digital era allows the younger generation to build healthy social relationships, both directly and through digital platforms. They will better appreciate differences of opinion, support each other, and create a constructive social environment.

Some of the challenges of character education for the younger generation in the digital era include: (1) exposure to negative content, namely the younger generation is often exposed to negative content on the internet, such as violence, pornography, and hate speech, which can affect their mindset and behavior; (2) technology addiction, namely many young people are addicted to gadgets and social media, which results in a lack of direct social interaction and disrupts their emotional development; and (3) lack of ethics and morality, namely some internet users, especially teenagers, do not understand internet ethics such as cyberbullying, plagiarism, and the spread of fake news that has become widespread and common.

Based on all of the above explanations, character education in the digital era can be carried out anywhere, both in the family, school, and community environments. The benefits of character education in the digital era include: helping to distinguish between right and wrong in the use of technology, fostering empathy for others, helping to filter negative information, respecting differences globally, creating tolerance in both the real and virtual worlds, and helping to face complex challenges wisely and responsibly. To gain the benefits of character education in the digital era, cooperation from various elements is certainly needed in instilling positive character in students, both in the real and virtual worlds.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, this study produces the following conclusions. **First**, the positive impacts of digital technology include: a means of conveying information about various events quickly; access to new information is easily obtained anytime and anywhere; social media that connects individuals with new people or old friends who are rarely met is very easy; helping to find information about learning materials for students can be accessed easily; and entertainment media such as online games are very easy to obtain; and communication with anyone is smoother.

Second, the negative impacts of digital technology include: children's individuality reduces level of face-to-face meetings and human interaction; temperament and habits of using social media make children view the outside world as a threat; irresponsible news, fake news, and bullying; weak eye health, especially nearsightedness, and farsightedness; unable to enjoy life; radiation from technological devices is harmful to children's brain health; fraud via SMS, phone calls and the internet is increasing; easy to access pornographic videos; children forget the homework given by teachers and forget to carry out worship such as praying and reading the Koran; and

children become targets of crimes such as kidnapping and child rape.

Third, the characteristics of the digital generation, among others: are active on social media to show their presence in the world; think more openly and aggressively; want freedom and control in expressing themselves; learn quickly because there is ease in accessing any information from the internet.

Fourth, parenting patterns for children in the digital technology era, among others: expanding and updating knowledge about the internet and gadgets, because if parents do not have technical knowledge about this, they cannot supervise their children; if there is internet in the house, it should be placed in the family room so that they can see what their children are accessing from the internet; limit the time children spend playing the internet and gadgets; create mutual understanding and awareness of the negative impacts of the internet and gadgets; if there is content that is inappropriate to be seen, its broadcast must be prohibited; establish open two-way communication for their children.

Fifth, the challenges of character education for the younger generation in the digital era include: exposure to negative content, namely the younger generation is often exposed to negative content on the internet, such as violence, pornography, and hate speech, which can affect their mindset and behavior; technology addiction, namely many young people are addicted to gadgets and social media, which results in a lack of direct social interaction and disrupts their emotional development; and lack of ethics and morality, namely some internet users, especially teenagers, do not understand internet ethics such as cyberbullying, plagiarism, and the spread of fake news which has become widespread and common.

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