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CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: STRENGTHENING AND IMPLEMENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract

Keywords:

Character education; Islamic education; Moral values; Ethics; Digital era

The digital age is marked by massive technological developments, having a significant impact on the world of education. The study aims to delineate the application and strengthening of character education through Islamic education in addressing the negative impact of technology in the digital age. The research method uses a library study as an approach to analyzing the concept of the application and strengthening of character education through Islamic education. The results of the study include various findings that address these concepts, highlighting strategies and methods that can be used to enhance the character of students. The research results show that Islamic-based character education is crucial in view of the impact of technological changes that affect interaction, communication, and behavior. Ethical guidance in the use of technology can be obtained through Islamic education, with emphasis on the application of everyday character through cultivation and uniformity. Successful character education requires shared responsibility from schools, communities, and parents. The recommendation of this study is the need for further integration between technology and character education through Islamic education. It requires a joint effort from education, parents, and the community to ensure that the use of technology is done positively, in line with student character formation.

Abstract

Kata kunci:

Era Digital; Etika;
Nilai-Nilai Moral;
Pendidikan Agama
Islam; Pendidikan
karakter

Era digital ditandai dengan perkembangan teknologi yang masif, memberikan dampak signifikan dalam dunia pendidikan. Meskipun teknologi mempermudah proses pembelajaran, dampak negatifnya juga patut diperhatikan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menguraikan penerapan dan penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui pendidikan agama Islam dalam mengatasi dampak negatif teknologi di era digital. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan studi kepustakaan sebagai pendekatan untuk menganalisis konsep penerapan dan penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui pendidikan agama Islam. Hasil studi ini mencakup berbagai temuan yang membahas konsep-konsep tersebut, menyoroti strategi dan metode yang dapat digunakan untuk meningkatkan karakter siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter berbasis Islam sangat penting seiring dampak perubahan teknologi yang memengaruhi interaksi, komunikasi, dan perilaku. Panduan etis dalam penggunaan teknologi bisa diperoleh melalui pendidikan agama Islam, dengan penekanan pada penerapan karakter sehari-hari melalui pembiasaan dan keteladanan. Keberhasilan pendidikan karakter membutuhkan tanggung jawab bersama dari sekolah, masyarakat, dan orang tua. Rekomendasi dari studi ini adalah perlunya integrasi lebih lanjut antara teknologi dan pendidikan karakter melalui pendidikan agama Islam. Diperlukan upaya bersama dari pihak pendidikan, orang tua, dan masyarakat untuk memastikan bahwa pemanfaatan teknologi dilakukan secara positif, sejalan dengan pembentukan karakter siswa

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of changing behavior, adding knowledge, and gaining life experience by maturing the thoughts and attitudes of students (Tsoraya et al., 2023). Education in the digital era is developing rapidly. One of the impacts of the rapid development of the world of education is the use of technology as a means of long-distance interaction between educational actors such as teachers and students in various fields. Then, with the opening of information and globalization, which is all digital, everyone can get information without a teacher (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022). On the other hand, it is not only adults who enjoy advances in technology but also youth who are students who can enjoy the effects of current technological developments.

According to Abidah (2023), there are several negative effects of excessive use of gadgets on student development that cause children to become addicted, including: 1) Time is wasted. Children often forget the time when playing with gadgets; 2) Bad impact on brain development. Too much use of devices in all daily activities interferes with brain development. So, there are obstacles that interfere with the ability to speak (not fluent in communicating) and make it difficult for children to

express their thoughts; 3) The number of gadget applications that are inappropriate for a child's age; 4) It can endanger children's health if they use gadgets excessively; 5) Reducing children's interest in reading, because they are used to pictorial and moving objects; and 6) Loss of interest in real-life games or other activities. This makes them more individual.

In addition, there is a decline in the moral quality of students from time to time due to the use of gadgets (Hasanah & Kumalasari, 2015; Maulana et al., 2021). Even Aswar et al. (2021) explained in their research that accessing gadget features such as online games, social media, and pornographic content has a direct impact on the development of students' characters, morals, and manners. Character-building must be an important requirement for Indonesia due to the various negative effects of digitalization. So, character formation is needed early on and must be done to foster good national character. One way to channel character education is through Islamic education.

In Islam, the concept of morality is closely related to character education (Farida, 2016). Syahbani, et al (2017) explained that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in the form of Islam, is the perfect religion for all mankind at all times. Prophet Muhammad SAW is the last messenger and the final messenger of the prophets sent by Allah to all mankind regardless of ethnicity and race. One of the missions of the Prophet Muhammad SAW was to develop human morals. As a popular hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْخَلْقِ

Which means "I have been sent to perfect good character" (Taufiq & Rohmadi, 2011). Thus, during the Jahiliyah era, the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent to the midst of society. At that time, people's morals and behavior were very barbaric, full of idol worship, exaltation of people over others, slavery, full of quarrels, and oppression of the authorities. Allah sent Rasulullah SAW with noble morals and he became the best role model for his people.

Morals, manners, behavior, and character are manifestations of the practice of Islamic education values. As a transformation of moral values, the importance of character in building human resources needs to be applied properly. Therefore, to welcome the progress of the times in the current era of globalization, the preparation, and application of character is a very important educational need. Ainiyah (2013) explains that character education is the right answer to the problems mentioned above, and schools as education providers are expected to be places capable of realizing the mission of character education.

The implementation of character education in schools is actually regulated by clear rules, for example in the 2013 curriculum it is strengthened by Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017

concerning Strengthening Character Education (PPK). Through these regulations, it is hoped that the values of character education can be practiced through the school system and can be implemented by all school members. In the education curriculum, character education is included in learning at school, such as in the subjects of religious education, citizenship education and so on. However, in its implementation, character education cannot be formed instantly but requires a long process and consistent habituation (Solehat and Ramadan, 2021).

Islamic education is expected to produce human beings who are always trying to perfect faith, piety, and noble character. A noble character can include ethics, good habits, manners, and morality. People who have this noble character are expected to be able to survive the challenges, obstacles, and changes that arise in community relations at the local, national, regional, and global levels (Bayanuddin and Zulkifli, 2023).

Several previous studies have discussed character formation through Islamic education (Ainiyah, 2013); and strengthening character education (Setiawan, et al., 2021 and Solehat and Ramadan, 2021). Other research has also discussed the implementation of character education in schools (Syarnubi, 2021; Jhon, 2021; Munthohar, 2021, Fathinnaufal and Hidayati, 2020; and Berkowitz (2022). However, research that connects character education and challenges in the digital era is still minimally carried out. For this reason, this research will focus on discussing strengthening character education in Islamic education in the digital era.

In its implementation, character education requires exemplary and habituation functions. For example, getting used to doing good things, such as being honest, helpful, and tolerant (Tsoraya, et al., 2023). Character building does not happen overnight, it must be practiced in earnest. The purpose of character education is to make students as citizens who have morals and noble character. Based on some of the problems that have been described and the importance of character education, especially in Islamic education, the researcher considers it necessary to examine more deeply how important character education is in the current digitalization era through the role of Islamic education.

METHODS

This study uses the method of literature study (library research). Sari and Asmendri (2020) explain that library research is research that is used to collect data and information using various material tools in the library such as documents, books, magazines, historical stories, and others. In the current era of digitalization, library studies do not only use libraries in the traditional way,

such as coming directly to the library building, but rather use digital libraries or online publishing institutions. The existence of digital libraries and online publishing institutions makes it easier for readers to access various literatures online wherever and whenever (Prayitno, 2015).

In this study, researchers are more dominant in utilizing available online literature. The existence of various search engines for academic manuscripts such as Google Scholar and PubMed is utilized by researchers to facilitate the collection of literature. This search engine can help researchers in various ways such as ease of access, saving space and funds, and time efficiency (Falagas et al., 2008; Gehanno et al., 2013; Gusenbauer, 2019). Researchers use Google Scholar and utilize relevant keywords that match the research theme. Data collection techniques were obtained from library sources in the form of books, journal articles, and relevant proceedings. Furthermore, researchers analyzed related library data according to the research focus, namely regarding character education through Islamic education in the digital revolution era. Data analysis that can be carried out by researchers can be in the form of making notes, quotations, or information that is arranged systematically so that research can easily be retrieved if needed at any time (Darmadi, 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Character Education

Character is often associated with a person's temperament as an identity or personality trait that distinguishes him from other people (Nurazizah et al., 2022). Character is typically associated with positive traits such as honesty, tolerance, hard work, fairness, and trustworthiness. Character, in other words, is a person's positive behavior that is reflected in his identity.

Meanwhile, character education is an effort to provide and instill positive values in individuals with the aim of strengthening their identity. That means, if the process of strengthening noble character is carried out correctly, it will create a person's identity as a superior and civilized human being. Furthermore, the positive values that are inherent will be able to become a culture for society to be passed on to future generations (Syarnubi, et al., 2021).

Omeri (2015) explains that character education is a system of naming character values which includes components of knowledge, awareness, will, and action towards the realization of these values both towards God, oneself, others, the surrounding environment, and the country. Ainiyah (2013) explains that the term character is combined and interchanged with the term ethics, morals and/or values and refers to moral strength, which has a positive meaning rather than a neutral meaning. Therefore, character education can be interpreted in a broader sense as education that

develops the cultural values and national character of students. These students are expected to have values and manners and apply these values in their own lives which causes them to become members of society and citizens who are religious, nationalist, productive, and creative.

The government and the society must take this concept seriously in responding to the real conditions faced by the Indonesian people recently, which are marked by increasing crime, decreasing nationalism, increasing racism, decreasing religious tolerance, and so on, which are marked by the loss of the value of religious society (Aladdiin & Kurnia Ps, 2019). Therefore, so that the community's cultural values that have faded can return to mainstream culture, immediate efforts are made to improve the curriculum of the national education system which leads to authentic character education. Even from the beginning of the emergence of education, experts have assumed that character education (morals) is considered a necessity.

For example, John Dewey in 1916 explained that it was common in educational theory that character building is the general goal of the learning process in schools (Zulkarnaen, 2022). Furthermore, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture explains that character education is moral education, value education, character education, and character education, all of which aim to develop students' abilities to make good and bad decisions, defend what is good, and realize full goodness in everyday life (Suharyanto & Yunus, 2021).

Character education is closely related to Islamic education. Suprayitno and Wahyudi (2020) explain that in Islamic education, character education places greater emphasis on individual growth through instilling noble character so that students can become better individuals for themselves, their peers, and the wider community. Character education is expected to be able to shape the character of the younger generation, to become a generation of highly knowledgeable, faithful, and devoted to God Almighty, to have noble characters, to be capable, creative, independent, and to become democratic and responsible citizens. Character education in Indonesia is usually carried out through formal education. In the current era of digitalization, formal education is claimed by many parties to have a direct or indirect impact on developing student character. Then Gaffar in his workshop entitled "Islamic-Based Character Education" explained that character education involves three main components, namely the process of changing values; which is then developed in personality; and becomes a habit (Banna, 2019).

Character education is in line with Islamic education because it has the same ideals, namely forming good character according to the personality of each individual. Islamic education in schools has a big role in instilling noble character and strong faith in every student. Through Islamic education, students not only gain knowledge related to the Islamic religion, but also become part of

the self-familiarization process to instill the values of piety within themselves. These habits can be trained by practicing Islamic teachings at school, such as practicing the five daily prayers, reading the Koran, behaving politely towards teachers, parents and friends (Farid et al., 2021).

Strengthening and Implementing Character Education in the Digitalization Era

The era of globalization has made it easy for humans to use existing technology, not only adults but also children (Sunandari, 2023). The existence of the Internet and digital tools creates fertile conditions for the emergence of new crimes and moral violations (Jasminto, 2022). One reason is that traditional moral deviations only get worse when the consequences are no longer local, but have the global reach of the internet. Several problems arise due to digitization which is closely related to information technology, including online bullying, trolling, online humiliation, revenge, pornography, and digital harassment (Jasminto, 2022). The emergence of many destructive cases indicates the weakness of the nation's character. Therefore, the character of a nation must be formed and nurtured as early as possible, especially through education. This needs to be done so that good character and behavior can be instilled in students from an early age to reduce crime in the cases above. Thus, character building from an early age is necessary to foster a good culture of national character, and is the most important key in nation building, especially in the current digitalization era.

In the current era of digitalization, it is so easy for every individual to use and take advantage of technology and so quickly get information and communicate without knowing space and time. This is an era where everything has been facilitated by technology. With good character, of course, wise use of technology can be implemented (Janatin and Kurnia, 2022; Massie and Nababan 2021). If this can be achieved, improving the quality of education in the digital era can undoubtedly be carried out. Therefore, there are various character education efforts to improve the quality of education in the digital era.

Today's technology has made things much simpler. Education is also affected by this. Changes that were originally a traditional technology-based learning environment also had an impact on student learning styles. For example, there are students who are increasingly active in learning, looking for other sources and using technology to find other materials outside of face-to-face learning at school. However, there are also students whose learning is hindered because they have not been able to adjust or sharpen their thinking sharpness because they always rely on the internet. Educational institutions must be able to fulfill their duties, not only to educate the nation's children but also to educate their character as well.

In the context of Islamic education as a tool for implementing character education, technological sophistication and digitalization does provide its own opportunities, such as easy access to knowledge, fast dissemination of information, as well as learning models that are varied and not monotonous (see the development of Artificial Intelligence). However, on the other hand, digital advances also provide serious challenges such as dependence on technology, shifts in authority and learning processes that seem instant. If in the past a student who wanted to study religion had to go to an Islamic boarding school and choose a teacher with a clear sanad, now they prefer to study on Google to answer problems in their life. This also opens up space for extreme right groups to spread radical values and also extreme left groups who put forward liberal thinking (Kosim, 2020). Without critical thinking, a person will be trapped in bigotry, exclusivism, causing identity problems such as hate speech, terrorism, and Islamophobia.

Masri (2022) explains that in realizing the importance of character education to shape student personality development in dealing with the digitalization era, an appropriate strategy is needed to provide an appropriate approach in adapting student personalities to technological developments. Character education must be planned in such a way that these moral values are well embedded in students' personalities and can be applied in social life. Strengthening character education is actually a program for all components in society. The right approach in cultivating character education must be carried out in all fields both in terms of materials, strategies, learning methods, and the use and utilization of technology. Strengthening student character is very useful for creating the next generation who are always more innovative and humane.

In the application of character education in the digitalization era, learning that applies creativity, critical thinking, cooperation, communication skills, community and character skills must be maintained and even improved. Even with character education in the digitalization era it can help improve the quality of education itself. As explained by Purna et al., (2023) that there are several character education efforts in improving the quality of education in the digital era, namely, a) character education can build strong morals and ethics in students so that they can perform well in complex and diverse digital environments; b) character education can help students develop social and professional skills such as empathy, cooperation, and self-control. These skills are especially important in the digital age, where social relationships are often intertwined through social media and digital communications; c) character education can help students avoid negative behaviors such as bullying, violence, and online crimes; d) character education can shape students' critical thinking; and e) character education can improve the quality of students' social relations. Thus, there is actually a positive reciprocal relationship between character education and the quality of

education itself in the digitalization era. Based on this, it is expected that character education can be applied properly in the current era of digitalization.

Concept of Character Education through Islamic Education

Kalsum and Muhid (2022) explain that Islam defines character as the main goal of education. Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah are guidelines for morality. The good or bad of a person's character refers to these two sources. Other standards used as moral guidelines are the mind, heart, and community judgment. In Islamic education, a character is very important, because it is as considered the identity of the state and individual. It is not surprising that in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, there is a virtue of morality, such as the hadith which says "teach your children goodness and educate them" (Fauzi, 2022). Morals have always been the main target of the Islamic education process because morals are considered the basis for the balance of human life which determines the success of other pedagogical potentials (Parnanda, 2021).

Mahmud (2003) explained that moral principles contain four things; first, wisdom, namely aspects of right and wrong that are distinguished based on one's psychological state; second, *syajaah* (truth), which is a mental state to vent or maintain emotional potential under rational control; third, *iffah* (chastity), which means controlling potential desires under the control of reason and Islamic law; fourth, justice, which means that the psychological situation regulates emotions and desires based on the need for wisdom. The description of moral principles explains that humans have good and bad desires. The purpose of education is to train people to direct their desires in a good direction.

The direction of Islamic education is to strengthen the character of each individual, which will shape the character of individuals and society. Character education in Islam is called moral education. Al-Ghazali revealed that education should foster and instill good morals because the main aim of education is *taqarrub ilallah* (self-approach to Allah SWT) (Aeni 2014). Thus, the values of Islamic Education should be the foundation for humans to achieve goals based on devotion to the creator.

Nur Ainiyah (2013) explains that character education is not in the form of material that can only be recorded and memorized and cannot be evaluated in a short period of time, but character education is a learning that is applied in all student activities both at school, in the community and at home through process habituation, exemplary, and carried out continuously. Therefore, the success of character education is a shared responsibility between schools, communities, and parents. Character education is one of the right accesses in carrying out character building for the younger generation; generation who have high knowledge, equipped with faith and piety to God Almighty,

have noble character, are capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

The implementation of character education in Islamic education can be applied in the learning process starting from preliminary activities, core activities and closing activities (Syarnubi, et al., 2021). This is also inseparable from the teacher's ability to act as a role model for his students during learning activities so that students can practice the targeted character values. For example, in introductory activities the teacher invites students to pray and get used to reading the Koran before learning. Then in the core activity the teacher not only explains the material but also designs a learning model that can require students to actively respond to problems, be responsible for discipline, cooperate and care for others. In the closing section, teachers can invite students to reflect on learning activities so as to train students to introspect themselves and reflect on the benefits of the learning process that has been carried out.

To support the success of the character education process in the digital era, teachers can also use digital sophistication during the learning process, starting from using media and teaching materials, choosing teaching strategies to choosing teaching methods that are adapted to the character of the current generation of children who are quite technologically literate. With the assistance and reinforcement of values from the teacher during learning, students can still learn using technology while controlling the use of that technology to stay on the right track. Teachers can also provide education about the benefits and dangers of misuse of technology so that students understand and have good character.

CONCLUSION

In the era of digitalization, where information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly dominant, character education based on Islamic values is becoming more relevant and important. This is because technology brings many changes in the way we interact, communicate, and behave. Islamic education can provide direction and guidelines for individuals to use technology wisely, ethically, and responsibly. Character education is not a lesson that is only enough to remember but needs to be applied in everyday life. Character education requires a process of habituation, exemplary, and is carried out continuously. In supporting the success of character education, shared responsibility is needed between relevant stakeholders such as schools, the community, and parents. By implementing Islamic religion-based character education in the digitalization era, it is hoped that there will be born a generation that is responsible, ethical, and able to face future challenges wisely.

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