



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN A DIGITAL AGE

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ABSTRACT

Character education is an attempt to apply religious, moral, ethical values to students through science, assisted by parents, teachers, and society which is very important in the formation and development of students' character. Every child has good potential from birth, but this potential must continue to be honed and socialized properly so that the character of each child is formed and develops optimally. In this all-digital era, children can easily use digital media. The digital age, which not only has positive impacts, but also negative impacts, is a task for educators, parents and adult society in guiding and monitoring what children do with their digital media, so that children are able to make the best use of their digital media and get the maximum benefits. both for himself and his life.

Keywords: *Character Education, Elementary school, Digital*

INTRODUCTION

Character education as the goal of national education is contained in Law number 20 of 2003 in chapter 1 of article 1 paragraph 1 concerning the

national education system which states that: "education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential himself to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by himself, society, nation and state. Ki Hadjar Dewantara at the Taman Siswa Congress said that education generally means efforts to advance the growth of character (inner strength, character), mind (intellect), and the child's body (Yanuarti, 2017). Education is a conscious effort in the learning process both from an academic and non-academic perspective with the aim that students are able to develop knowledge, attitudes and behavior for the better.

The process of character education needs to be done early and must be maximized at elementary school age. Good potential is actually owned by humans since birth, but this potential must continue to be fostered and developed through good socialization from the family, school, and community. In this era of globalization, humans easily use existing technology, not only adults but also children. Technology is currently used in the world of education because it really helps the process of learning and developing knowledge. In addition, technology can also be used as a communication tool between educators and students. However, technology has both positive and negative impacts in the realm of education. The large number of cases of cyberbullying, brawls between students, material violence against sexual abuse in children is a weakness of national character (Supriyanto, 2020). Good national character must be formed and educated as early as possible so that society is able to instill good traits and behavior from an early age so that it can reduce the crime rate in such cases. case above.

METHODS

Literature Study, the research method used is literature review or literature study. Data were collected from various sources, including scientific journals, textbooks, research reports, articles and other related documents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Character Education

The term character is taken from the Greek "Charassian" which means "to mark" or to mark and focus on how to apply good values in the form of

action or behavior, so that people who are dishonest, cruel, greedy and other bad behaviors are said to have bad character. Conversely, a person whose behavior conforms to moral principles is called a noble character. The definition of character according to the Language Center of the Ministry of National Education is "innate, heart, soul, personality, character, behavior, personality, nature, character, temperament, character". personality, behavior, character, and character.

Meanwhile, for the notion of character education, Lickona states "character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values", this means that character education is a deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act on core ethical values (Budi Juliardi, 2015). Character Education is education that supports the social, emotional and ethical development of students. While in simple terms character education can be interpreted as any positive thing that the teacher does and influences the character of the students he teaches (Muhammad, 2014). Character education is an effort to build character (character building). Elmubarok states that character building is a process of sculpting or sculpting the soul in such a way that it is unique, interesting and different or distinguishable from others, like a letter in the alphabet that is never the same as one from the other. other, thus people with character can be distinguished from one another (Harahap & Isya, 2020). Character education can also be referred to as moral education, value education, affective world education, moral education, or character education.

1. Purpose of Character Education

States that character education aims for students as the nation's successors to have good character and morals, to create a just, safe and prosperous national life. This is related to Law number 20 of 2003 concerning national education.

The foundation of character education is mentioned in the Qur'an Q.S 31:17 "O my son, establish prayer and order people to do good and prevent them from doing what is wrong and be patient with what befalls you. Indeed, that is one of the things that is required by Allah. The Qur'an clearly explains that people call for and uphold the truth and stay away from evil deeds.

Character education given by a father to his son to always pray, and always be patient.

- The government introduced a government program called Strengthening Character Education (PPK), PPK is an attempt to cultivate character education in schools. The PPK program will be implemented in stages and as needed. The PPK program aims to promote 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:
- Building and equipping students as the golden generation of Indonesia in 2045 with a Pancasila spirit and good character education to face the dynamics of change in the future.
- Developing a national education platform that places character education as the main soul in providing education for students with the support of public involvement which is carried out through formal, non-formal and informal educational pathways by taking into account the cultural diversity of Indonesia.
- Revitalize and strengthen the potential and competence of educators, education staff, students, communities, and the family environment in implementing PPK. Strengthening Character Education.

According to Piaget, children aged 7-11 years' experience a level of concrete operational development. This level is the beginning of rational thinking. This means that children have logical operations that they can apply to concrete problems. When faced with a conflict between thought and perception, children in this period choose to make logical decisions and not perceptual decisions like pre-operational children. In the digital age, elementary school-age children are able to operate technological items such as cellphones, computers, video games and others.

Technology helps facilitate all human activities, information search, information delivery. Technology in general is a process that increases added value, technology is a product that is used and produced to facilitate and improve performance, structure or system in which processes and products are developed and used.

Technology is very useful in the world of education. Searches about literacy to add knowledge in learning, technology can be utilized. Students can search Google or Yahoo and other sites in search of journals, papers, and electronic books. However, this does not mean learning do not use available textbooks, use literacy from Google or other sites only to increase knowledge and material in the learning process.

Technology not only has a positive impact but also a negative impact. For this reason, educators must supervise students in utilizing technology. The family as the closest person to students, also participates in supervising and guiding students in using technology so that students are able to filter and distinguish what is good and bad from the impact of technology itself.

1. The Basic Concept of Character Education

The basic concept of character education is contained in Permendikbud No. 23 concerning the Growth of Character and Character in 2015. The Development of Character Education (PBP) aims to:

- Making the school a fun learning park for students, teachers and education staff.
- Developing good habits as a form of character education in the family, school and community.
- Making education a movement that involves the government, local government, communities and families.
- Fostering a harmonious learning environment and culture between families, schools and communities.

Character is formed from activities that are carried out repeatedly and becomes a habit. It is these habits that stick and become a person's character. Instilling and developing character in the school environment is a shared responsibility not only for the teacher but also for the collaboration of students and parents. However, character development at school only being a 'supplement' for students. Meanwhile the real 'staple food' for character development is at home. Where the family has a big responsibility in educating a child at home.

2. Principles of Character Education

The Character Education Quality Standard recommends eleven principles to create an effective character, as follows:

- Promoting basic ethical values as a basis of character.
- Identify character comprehensively to include thoughts, feelings and behavior.
- Uses a sharp, proactive and effective approach to character building.
- Creating a caring school community.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate good behavior.
- Includes a meaningful and challenging curriculum that values all students, builds their character and helps them to succeed.
- Trying to grow students' self-motivation.
- Involve school staff as a learning and moral community to share responsibility for character education and to adhere to the same core values in guiding student education.
- Fostering shared moral leadership and long-term support for character education initiatives.
- Involve family and community members as partners in character building efforts.
- Evaluating school character, the function of school staff as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

3. The Role of Education in Character Building

- Cultivating character in its role in the field of education is as follows:
- Character building, (honest, smart, caring, tough) is the main task of education. Changing bad habits step by step that will eventually become good. Can change happy but bad habits which in the end become hate but become good.
- Character is a trait that is instilled in the soul and with that trait a person can spontaneously easily radiate attitudes, actions and actions.
- Character is a trait that is manifested in the ability to drive from within the body to display commendable and virtuous behavior.

The planting of these character values can be implemented and made into a school culture. An effective process for building a school culture is to involve and invite all parties or stakeholders to jointly provide their commitment. Many values can and should be built in schools, such as caring and creative values, honesty, responsibility, discipline, health and cleanliness, caring for one another. A school is like a garden or fertile land where the seeds

of these values are sown and planted. Therefore, character education in schools is a joint task.

Character Education in the Digital Age

This era of all-technology makes children look very passive and rarely socialize in the family and society. Most children today are more focused on paying attention to the screen in front of their eyes than playing with their peers. So it's not uncommon for children to lose valuable time playing with family, studying, developing their talents or playing with their friends because the focus has been taken over by cellphone screens or existing technology (Sugiharti & Sukowati, 2020). Here the role of parents is very important in guiding, monitoring, and managing children's time from devices. digits used.

What parents have to do with their children in digital parenting or digital parenting is as follows:

- Improving and updating knowledge about the internet and gadgets. Parents cannot supervise children if parents are technology savvy.
- If there is internet at home, position it in the family room and who can see what children are doing when accessing the internet.
- Limiting time for children to use gadgets and the internet.
- Providing shared understanding and awareness of the negative impacts of the internet or gadgets.
- Strictly ban as soon as possible if there is something inappropriate to watch.
- Establish open two-way communication with children.

Many children in the digital era have been spoiled with sophisticated technology, such as searching for learning materials through the Google site, and many traditional games have been abandoned. The characteristics of the Digital Generation are as follows:

- The digital generation is busy creating accounts on social media to prove to the world that they exist.
- The digital generation tends to be more open, outspoken, and more aggressive in thinking.
- The digital generation tends to want freedom. They do not like to be controlled and controlled.

- They want to be in control and the internet offers freedom of expression.
- The digital generation is always accessing with Google, Yahoo, or other sites.

Their learning ability is much faster because all the information is at their fingertips. As an educator and a parent, you must be a good role model and role model for children in order to form a good personality and character. Especially in this digital era, it is very easy to dig up and get information on the internet. As educators or parents, you should be a good supervisor and guide for children in getting information. Moreover, the age of elementary school children who are still not able to properly distinguish between what is good and what is bad. It is feared, with existing technology, children will actually be negatively affected by the technology itself due to the lack of monitoring by educators and parents. (Xia & Wang, 2021) mentioned positive impact dan negative dari teknologi digital, as follows:

1) Positive Impact

- Means of conveying information, information on an incident quickly, precisely and accurately.
- Facilitate access to new information, obtain information anytime and anywhere. Social media, bringing individuals together with new people, bringing individuals together with old friends who rarely meet, business advice.
- Assist in finding information on learning materials for students.
- Entertainment media.
- As someone's existence in social media.
- Facilitate communication even in a state of great distances.

2) Negative Impact

- Individual children, reduced levels of direct encounters or interactions between human beings.
- Temperament, the habit of socializing with social media, children will think that the outside world is a threat.
- News without responsibility, Hoax news, Bullying.

- Vulnerable eye health, especially nearsightedness or farsightedness.
- Unable to enjoy life. When attending a party, we are even engrossed in taking pictures, without watching parties and music.
- Radiation from technological devices endangers children's brain health.
- The rise of fraud cases via sms, telephone and internet.
- Easily access porn videos.
- The child forgets the homework assigned by the teacher and forgets to carry out worship, such as praying and reciting the Koran.
- Children are targeted by crimes, such as child kidnapping and child rape.

The most common and widespread example of a case is bullying where the impact is very influential on the victim. The impact is not only short term but long term and can even carry over until the victim continues their education to a higher school level. The impact of bullying itself makes the victim feel inferior, not confident, tend to close themselves from the social environment, self-harm or worst yet is to have a desire to commit suicide.

2. The Role of the Family, Teachers and Society in Character Education

Parents are the people who are most responsible for the development of children's character because the family is the most important and first provider of education before other complementary education. Parents also play a role in the development of children's character at school. There are several activities that parents can do, such as monitoring development their children's behavior through student activity books that have been prepared by the school, actively participating in routine or rotating activities carried out by the school in meetings between parents and homeroom teachers and class teachers.

The teacher prepares various choices and strategies for instilling each of the values, norms and habits into the subjects they teach. The teacher can choose certain ways in the learning process, such as conveying various quotes in the form of pearls of wisdom or proverbs related to characters, short stories, group discussions, making short essays and so on. Each school should determine specific activities that can bind teachers to carry out these activities on an ongoing basis.

The school together with the school committee and the community jointly compiles an activity that can support the creation of culture and inculcation of good character for all school members. Activities that can be carried out include carrying out mutual cooperation in cleaning public places such as mosques, rivers, and others.

CONCLUSION

A person's character will be formed if the activity is carried out repeatedly on a regular basis until it becomes a habit, which in the end does not only become a habit but has become a character. Therefore, character education must be done as early as possible so that children are able to instill good character so that they can carry it into adulthood. Character education in schools can be applied to all subjects. Every subject related to norms needs to be developed and related to everyday life.

In this digital era, the role of the family, teachers and the surrounding community is very important in improving the character of the future successors of the nation. The family as the main and first place for students to live their lives and education should supervise and guide them lovingly, firmly and carefully. The role of the teacher in schools not only teach but also educate. The role of the teacher as a role model in the view of the child so that the teacher will become a benchmark for the attitude of students. Teachers not only teach the concept of good character, but how to direct students to be able to implement it in everyday life. The surrounding community also plays a role in supervising and motivating the character development of students.

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