

Character Education in the Digital Age: Strategies for Teaching Moral and Ethical Values to a Generation that Grows Up with Technology

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of strategies for teaching moral and ethical values to a generation that has grown up with technology in the digital era. This research uses the literature study method to examine character education in the digital era, with a particular focus on strategies for teaching moral and ethical values to a generation that has grown up with technology. The results of this study show that character education that is well integrated in the school curriculum can help children develop a deep understanding of moral values, such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility, which are needed in digital life. The use of technology as an educational tool has also proven effective in delivering moral messages in a way that is engaging and relevant to the digital generation. Educational apps, interactive games and multimedia content have helped strengthen students' understanding of the importance of acting ethically and responsibly in online interactions. In addition, the development of good digital literacy, which includes an understanding of data privacy, online safety, communication ethics and the ability to manage information encountered on the internet, is also an important factor in character education in the digital era. The implication of this study is the need for a holistic approach in integrating character education with digital literacy in the education curriculum. This will not only help protect children from the negative impact of technology, but also equip them with the necessary skills to face and overcome moral and ethical challenges in online life.

Keywords: Character Education, Digital Age, Teaching Moral and Ethical, Technology

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Introduction

Character education in the digital era occupies an increasingly important role given the rapid development of technology and its widespread influence in everyday life (Luthfi, 2024). Technology not only changes the way we communicate and learn, but also affects how we understand and apply moral and ethical values in various contexts (Kusumasanthi, 2023). Today's young generation grows up in an environment where they are routinely connected to unlimited information through the internet, engage in intense digital interactions, and use social media as an integral part of daily life (Ulum, 2023). Character education in this context is no longer just about imparting academic knowledge, but also becomes the main foundation in shaping a strong personality and stable morals in a generation that grows up with technology. Amidst the diversity of information and influences available on the internet, it is important for character education to accommodate new challenges in teaching relevant moral values and encouraging appropriate ethical practices in the use of technology.

Character education has long been considered an important foundation in shaping individuals who have integrity and strong morals in society (Sari, 2023). Values such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility are not only taught as norms of behavior, but also as principles that help individuals build healthy relationships and strengthen trust in social interactions (Virdi, 2023). However, with the entry of the digital era characterized by the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, character education faces unprecedented new challenges (Kholifah, 2022). Today's young generation is growing up in an environment where technology is not only a communication and information tool, but also a platform for complex social interactions (Sikumbang, 2024).

Character education needs to develop an adaptive and proactive approach to teaching moral values to a generation that has grown up with technology (Salisah, 2024). Strategies should include holistic education on digital ethics, responsible use of technology, and fostering the ability to filter and assess information obtained from various online sources (Haleem, 2022). Parents and educators have a very important role in assisting children and adolescents in understanding the moral implications of their daily use of technology. The significant changes in ways of interacting and learning brought about by technology have thoroughly altered social and cultural dynamics. Children and adolescents not only face challenges in understanding traditional moral concepts, but also have to face new ethical dilemmas in the use of technology (Lal, 2023).

Character education in the digital era needs to adjust its approaches and strategies. Educational institutions, both schools and families, need to be more skillful in integrating moral values in the daily use of technology (Taufik, 2020). It is not only about protecting from the negative impacts of technology, but also guiding to become responsible and ethical users in an increasingly complex digital world. Developing effective strategies in teaching moral and ethical values to the digital generation also requires the active involvement of parents, teachers and the community at large (Kim, 2018). Collaboration between these stakeholders is important to create an environment that supports the formation of strong character in children, so that they can face future challenges with high moral integrity. In a digital environment, students not only need to understand moral concepts theoretically, but also be able to apply them in their daily lives online. This calls for an inclusive character education strategy that not only responds to technological changes but also teaches the skills needed to behave ethically in various online situations.

Through a deep understanding of the background and challenges of character education in the digital era, we can develop a holistic and sustainable approach to support the healthy moral and ethical development of the generation that grows up with technology (Cipta, 2023). Thus, they can become responsible leaders and be able to cope with the complexities of globalization and digitalization wisely and ethically. Gaps in this research include the lack of emphasis on the integration of character values in the education curriculum that is adequate to address moral challenges in the digital era. Many education systems still focus on academic and technical aspects, while moral and ethical aspects are often overlooked. There needs to be a greater emphasis on developing effective strategies for teaching moral values that are relevant and responsive to technological change. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of strategies for teaching moral and ethical values to a generation that has grown up with technology in the digital age.

Methodology

This research uses the literature study method to examine character education in the digital era, with a particular focus on strategies for teaching moral and ethical values to a generation that has grown up with technology. The first step in this method is to determine the main topic and scope of the research, namely character education in the digital era and strategies for teaching moral and ethical values. Next, literature collection was conducted through various academic databases such as Google Scholar and Springer using relevant keywords such as "character education", "moral and ethical values", "digital era", "educational technology", and "digital teaching strategies". The literature collected included journal articles, books, dissertations and research reports. Once the literature was collected, the next step was to evaluate and select the literature based on relevance, quality, source reputation, and year of publication. The selected literature was then analyzed to identify effective approaches and challenges in teaching moral and ethical values in the digital era. The results of this analysis were used to develop recommendations for character education strategies that are relevant and applicable in the context of modern technology.

Results and Discussion

The Influence of Technology on Children's Character

Technology has become an integral part of everyday life, especially for generations who have grown up with technology. Children and adolescents today are familiar with digital devices from an early age, using smartphones, tablets and computers as the main tools in various aspects of life (Alia, 2018). The impact of this technology use is very diverse, ranging from the way they communicate, learn, to social interaction (Ihza, 2024). While technology provides convenience and wide access to information, it also brings its own challenges in terms of morals and ethics (Putra, 2023). One of the positive impacts of technology on children's character is increased access to information and education. With the internet, children can easily access learning materials, tutorials, and various other educational resources (Nisa, 2023). It opens up opportunities for children to learn independently and in-depth about topics they are interested in. Technology also enables interactive learning through educational apps and games, which can increase children's interest and engagement in the learning process (Camilleri, 2020). However, behind these benefits, there are major challenges associated with supervising and managing children's use of technology. Without proper guidance, children can be exposed to inappropriate or harmful content on the internet (Thoha, 2023). Content such as violence, pornography, and hoaxes can affect children's moral and ethical development (Ayu, 2023). Therefore, the role of parents and educators is very important in providing guidance and supervision of what children access online. In addition, technology is also changing the way children communicate and interact socially. Social media, instant messaging and other digital platforms allow children to communicate with friends and family quickly and easily. However, this convenience can also bring problems, such as reduced ability for face-to-face communication, as well as increased risk of cyberbullying and online harassment. Children who are accustomed to communicating digitally may have difficulty in developing social skills and empathy that are important in face-to-face interactions (Zaidar, 2023).

Excessive use of technology can also negatively affect children's physical and mental health (Aisyah, 2023). The habit of sitting for long hours in front of a screen can lead to health problems such as obesity, sleep disorders and vision problems. In addition, overexposure to digital media has also been linked to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Mulyani, 2024). Therefore, it is important to teach children about the importance of balance between technology use and physical and social activities. In the context of character education, technology can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, technology can be used to support the learning of moral and ethical values through various educational programs and applications (Eryandi, 2023). On the other hand, without adequate supervision, technology can also be a source of negative influences that damage children's character. For example, through social media, children can be exposed to examples of unethical or immoral behavior exhibited by public figures or their peers.

Another challenge that arises is how to maintain children's privacy and safety in the digital world. Many children do not realize the risks of sharing personal information online (Siswadi, 2024), which can be exploited by irresponsible parties. Therefore, education about digital privacy and security should be an integral part of character education in this technological era. Children need to be taught about the importance of protecting their personal data and being careful when interacting with strangers online. Technology can also affect the way children view the world and themselves. Constant exposure to social media can create pressure to be perfect and compare themselves to others, which can have a negative impact on children's self-confidence and self-esteem (Harahap, 2023). Therefore, it is important to teach children to use social media wisely and healthily, and help them develop a positive and realistic self-image.

Moral and Ethical Challenges in the Digital Age

The digital generation faces unprecedented moral and ethical challenges. These include cyberbullying, plagiarism, data privacy and hoaxes (Isdendi, 2023). Along with the rapid development of technology, these challenges are becoming increasingly complex and have the potential to have a significant negative impact on children's character and morals. Therefore, it is important to understand and address these challenges with effective strategies. One prominent negative impact is cyberbullying, which is a form of bullying or harassment perpetrated through digital tools such as social media, instant messaging and other online platforms. Cyberbullying can happen anytime and

anywhere, with no time and place restrictions, leaving its victims feeling under constant pressure. The impact can be very damaging, including causing anxiety, depression, and even encouraging victims to take extreme measures (Purba, 2024). Therefore, the role of parents and educators is crucial in recognizing the signs of cyberbullying and providing support and guidance to children to deal with it.

Plagiarism is also a significant moral challenge in the digital age (Hasnida, 2024). With wide access to information on the internet, children may be tempted to copy other people's work and claim it as their own. This not only violates intellectual property rights but also undermines children's academic integrity and work ethics. Therefore, it is important to teach children about the importance of originality, respect for others' work, and the consequences of plagiarism. Thus, children can understand the values of honesty and responsibility in the academic and professional world. Data privacy is another major challenge in the digital age. Children are often unaware of the risks associated with sharing personal information online (Cahyanto, 2023). Information such as home addresses, phone numbers, and other personal details can be exploited by irresponsible parties for harmful purposes. It is important to educate children about the importance of keeping their data private, using strong passwords, and being careful about sharing personal information on the internet. This education should be done continuously so that children can develop a deep awareness of the importance of privacy.

Hoaxes and false information spread rapidly in the digital world, and children are often victimized by the spread of misinformation. Without the ability to sort out what is valid information from what is not, children can be easily influenced by fake news and hoaxes circulating on social media and other online platforms (Rahman, 2024). Digital literacy education is essential to help children develop critical skills in assessing information sources and understanding how media works (Cynthia, 2023). With good digital literacy, children will be better able to face the challenges of false information in the digital age (Darimis, 2023). The internet is full of inappropriate content, including violence, pornography and material that is not suitable for children. Without strict supervision, children can easily access this kind of content, which can have a negative impact on their moral and ethical development. Parents and educators need to use filtering and monitoring tools to limit children's access to inappropriate content, and discuss the dangers and consequences of such content. This way, children can learn to distinguish between useful and harmful content. Social media has a huge influence on how children view themselves and the world around them. The pressure to always look perfect and gain recognition from peers can lead to mental health issues such as anxiety and low self-esteem. Children need to be taught about the healthy and wise use of social media, and the importance of having a positive and realistic self-image. Education about the impact of social media should be an integral part of moral and ethical education in the digital age (Furnamasari, 2024).

The Importance of Character Education

Character education aims to form individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals and ethics. In the digital era, character education is increasingly important to guide young people in dealing with the ethical and moral challenges they face in everyday life (Diniati, 2024). Character education can help children develop the critical skills, empathy and responsibility needed to navigate the complex digital world (Carkinah, 2024). In an era where technology affects almost every aspect of life, children need guidance to use technology wisely and responsibly. Character education plays a role in teaching values such as honesty, integrity and respect that are much needed in online interactions. With a strong understanding of these values, children can make better decisions when dealing with difficult situations in the digital world. In addition, character education helps children develop critical thinking skills that are essential for assessing the information they encounter online (Aresta, 2024). In the midst of rampant hoaxes and false information, the ability to sort out valid information from invalid is crucial. Character education can encourage children to always question the source of information and not be easily influenced by fake news.

Empathy is another important aspect of character education in the digital age. Technology often makes interactions impersonal, which can reduce empathy. Through character education, children are taught to understand and respect the feelings of others, both in face-to-face and online communication (Fitriani, 2022). This helps prevent behaviors such as cyberbullying and promotes more positive interactions on social media. Character education also emphasizes the importance of responsibility in the use of technology. Children need to learn about the impact of their actions in the digital world, including the consequences of sharing personal information, uploading inappropriate

content, or engaging in unethical behavior. By understanding these responsibilities, children can be more cautious and act mindfully online. Character education plays an important role in helping children develop a healthy sense of confidence and self-esteem. In an era where social media often emphasizes appearance and recognition from others, character education can help children build a strong and positive identity that is not dependent on external validation. This is crucial for their mental health.

Strategies for Teaching Moral and Ethical Values

Value Integration in the School Curriculum:

The integration of values in the school curriculum, especially through subjects such as Civic Education, Religion and Ethics, plays a crucial role in shaping the character of the younger generation in the digital age (Akrima, 2023). These subjects not only provide a platform for understanding moral values in general, but also specifically address the implications of technology use in everyday life. Discussions on ethics in technology use not only teach students about the importance of acting ethically online, but also give them a deep understanding of how online actions can affect society more broadly. Civic Education is an appropriate platform to teach students about their rights and obligations as digital citizens. Discussions on data privacy, digital rights and responsibility in using technology are an important part of this curriculum. Students are invited to consider the moral consequences of their online actions on themselves, their families and society as a whole. In addition, Religion subjects provide opportunities for students to understand spiritual and ethical values that are relevant in a digital context. Discussions about integrity, empathy and respect for individuals in online interactions can help students build awareness about the importance of maintaining healthy and moral relationships online. Ethics lessons, on the other hand, teach in-depth moral theories and their applications in everyday life, including in the use of technology. Students not only learn about various ethical approaches such as deontology and consequentialism, but are also provided with case studies and challenging ethical dilemmas in the digital context. This helps students develop the ability to think critically and make responsible decisions in complex situations in the online world. A cross-curricular approach can also enhance the integration of moral values. Teaching moral values in a digital context also requires an interactive and participatory approach (Dalimunthe, 2023).

Utilization of Technology as an Educational Tool

The utilization of technology as an educational tool not only provides new opportunities in teaching moral values, but also offers an interesting and relevant approach for the digital generation (Mawardi, 2023). Educational applications, interactive games, and multimedia content are some examples of technologies that can be used to strengthen students' understanding of moral values (Zakwan, 2024). Educational apps are specifically designed to convey moral concepts in an interactive and engaging way (Miswanto). They can present moral dilemma scenarios that allow students to make decisions and see the consequences firsthand. Thus, students can learn about the implications of the various moral choices they make in realistic yet safe situations. Interactive games are also an effective tool in character education. They can be designed to teach values such as cooperation, honesty and empathy through entertaining game challenges (Chiang, 2021). With direct engagement and instant feedback, students not only actively learn, but also feel the impact of every moral action they take in the context of the game.

Multimedia content, such as videos, animations, and digital stories, can present moral values in a form that is visual and appealing to students (Choo, 2020). These stories not only entertain, but also teach moral messages in a way that is more relatable to a generation accustomed to digital media. Through strong narratives and relevant characters, students can learn about values such as loyalty, commitment and integrity. Technology also allows for personalization in character education. Digital apps and platforms can be tailored to students' individual needs and interests, allowing them to learn about moral values in a context that is relevant to their daily lives (Decuyper, 2021). This helps to increase their engagement and understanding of the importance of applying these values in various situations, both online and offline. Besides delivering moral messages, technology can also facilitate discussion and collaboration between students. Online forums, virtual discussion rooms, and collaborative projects through digital platforms can enable students to share ideas, explore different perspectives, and work together in finding solutions to complex moral dilemmas. However, utilizing technology as a moral education tool requires attention to proper supervision and guidance from

educators and parents. The availability of appropriate content, control over the quality of information, and guidance in interpreting moral values correctly and contextually remain crucial. By optimizing the use of technology as a moral education tool, character education in the digital era can become more effective and relevant for a generation that has grown up with technology. It opens the door for deep and meaningful learning experiences, and prepares students to face the moral challenges in their lives as digitally connected global citizens.

Digital Literacy Development

The development of digital literacy is essential in facing the complex moral and ethical challenges of the digital age (Kateryna, 2020). ethics in communication is an important part of digital literacy. Children should be taught about the importance of interacting respectfully and responsibly online, including understanding the impact of their words on others. They also need to learn about the appropriate use of language and how to respond to comments or messages that may violate ethical norms in communicating online. time management and digital balance are also important aspects of digital literacy. Children need to be educated on the importance of managing their time in a balanced way between online and offline activities. This includes recognizing the signs of technology addiction and developing the habit of taking regular screen breaks for the sake of their mental and physical health. Digital literacy should also address the development of reasoning and decision-making skills. Children need to be trained to consider moral values in their online actions, as well as to make responsible and ethical decisions in situations they encounter online. the integration of digital literacy in the school curriculum also demands an active role from teachers and educators. They are not only the deliverers of the material, but also the role models of safe and responsible online behavior. Teachers should be able to present the material in an interesting and relevant way and provide guidance in developing appropriate attitudes and values in the use of technology.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that character education in the digital era has a crucial role in guiding young people to face complex moral and ethical challenges. Effective strategies in integrating moral values in the school curriculum, utilizing technology as an educational tool, and developing good digital literacy have been shown to have significant positive impacts. Research shows that the integration of moral values in the school curriculum enables students to understand and internalize values such as integrity, empathy and responsibility more deeply. The use of technology, such as educational apps, interactive games and multimedia content, has been effective in delivering moral messages in a way that is engaging and relevant to the digital generation. In addition, the development of good digital literacy has helped students to manage information more critically, understand the ethics of communicating online, and maintain their personal safety and privacy online. The implication of these findings is the need for an integrated approach to character education and digital literacy in educational settings. Teachers and educators need to continue to develop innovative strategies and methods to enhance students' understanding of moral values in an ever-evolving digital context. This will not only help protect young people from the negative risks of technology, but also prepare them to become responsible, ethical and adaptable individuals in an increasingly digitally connected society.

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