Opportunities and Challenges of Character Education in Distance Learning Era

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Abstract: This article is aim to discuss the opportunities and challenges of character education in the digital age. This sudy applied descriptive research and literature study. Data analysis in this study was done by using literature study and triangulation. Character education in the digital era has There are various challenges and opportunities of character education in the digital era. This study showed that the digital era provides a positive opportunity to implement character education. The challenge in the era of distance education is the way to teach students and to provide them with the materials of character education in the digital era. The education policy makers need to play an active role in the development of digital sustainable character learning to ensure the implementation of character learning through effective digital media.

Keyword: Character building, Distance Learning

1. Introduction

Character education is one of the important goals of Indonesian national education. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas) Article 3 states that the function of national education is to develop capabilities and shape national character and civilization to educate the life of the nation, aiming at developing the potential of students Who believe and fear God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

The law clearly mandates that the purpose of education is not only to make students intellectually intellectual, but also to be able to produce a generation that has morals and character in accordance with religious values, norms and teachings (spiritual and emotional intelligence). In line with the goals of the national education system, character education is a vehicle for instilling moral values and character for students. Society is very worried about the current condition where morality problems due to character crisis are rampant among children and students. Mixture of students, bullying, violence against teachers and parents, pornography and seems to add a long list of problems that often hit students today. Seeing the existing phenomenon, the implementation of character education for students must remain a priority in any case.

At present time, the school became one of the educational institutions responsible for developing the knowledge, skills and character of students. Parents expect and believe in school as a center for academic education and character education. The process of forming student character values is carried out in accordance with the learning process at school. However, because of the pandemic that hit and schools had to be closed, the sustainability of the character education of the students became the thing that parents were most worried about.

One of the keys to character education is the existence of individual role models with

character. At school, the role model for students in growing character values is the figure of a teacher. Teachers with character will be able to show attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with the norms and values of religious teachings in their daily lives so that they can be imitated by students. Since in principle a child is an imitator, they will easily develop their character by imitating or witnessing the behavior of their teacher.

Habituation and examples given by the teacher will give birth to students who have noble character. For example, students are accustomed to being disciplined by arriving on time because they see their teachers are always present on time. When taking the exam, students will try to be honest since they realize that the teacher always prioritizes honesty in their daily lives. Likewise, they will get used to being polite since they set an example for their teacher who is always polite to everyone. Unfortunately, learning with e-learning methods that are connected to Internet services does not always guarantee that students are safe from the negative influences of the digital world. Digital media with all its freedom presents a variety of positive and negative information. Students who are not ready with heavy and abundant information, have the potential to be negatively impacted which can erode their character. The occurrence of cases of intimidation, pornography, sexual promiscuity and other criminal acts is the impact of the misuse of digital media among students.

2. Research Method

Descriptive method can be interpreted as a problem solving procedure that is investigated by describing the state of the subject or object in research which can be in the form of people, institutions, communities and others that are currently based on visible or original facts. According to Nazir (1988: 63), in the sample book of Research Method, descriptive method is a method in examining the status of a human group, an object, a set of conditions, a system of

thought or a class of events in the presentation. The purpose of this descriptive study is to make a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture, or painting of the facts, properties and interface relationships being investigated.

According to Sugiyono (2005: 21), descriptive method is a method used to describe or analyze research results but is not used to make broader conclusions. According to Whitney (1960: 160), descriptive method is a fact-finding with the right interpretation. It can be said that descriptive research is research that seeks to describe symptoms, events that occur in current or actual problems. This study also applied the literature study method. Literature study is a technique of collecting data by reviewing the literature to the library and collecting books, written materials and references that are relevant to the research being conducted.

3. Discussion

Character education in the 21st century can further be understood as an effort to instill, familiarize, and train about the practice of understanding, appreciating and practicing values related to the character of the nation, so that its character becomes its identity, personality, mindset, perspective, identity, and also love and be proud as a nation, and believe that character values are the most suitable for the life of the Indonesian nation. The values of national character education are translated and elaborated from the ideology of the Indonesian Nation, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and various thoughts and views presented by Indonesian national leaders recognizing credibility, loyalty, commitment, love and sincerity in advancing the Indonesian nation.[1]

The character of the Indonesian nation can be explained, as a character who realizes that divinity is the highest value, only and civilized in the commitment. A person who has the character of the Indonesian nation will

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[1]Alfian, Indonesian Politics, Culture and People, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), p. 104

become a religious nation, have a transcendental vision, prioritize moral and spiritual values, above transient and profane values. With humanity, someone will try to carry out the mission of humanization and liberation, and maintain the ways in which they are anarchic, violent and intimidating in fighting for something with the spirit of Indonesian unity. Such a person will respect and appreciate the existence of diversity (plurality) and will consider it a blessing and wealth that must be synergistic and wisely given so that it becomes a very impressive cultural and cultural capital.[2]

According to the Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 5 of 2019 concerning National Idea Growth Activities in Preliminary Introduction to School Environments, the 2013 Curriculum Government promotes character education which can then improve the quality of the process and education. The expected results lead to the formation of character and noble character of students in accordance with the competency standards in the education unit.

Character education in the 21st century is also closely related to efforts to understand life and practice the cultural values of the Indonesian nation that grows and develops in Indonesia, such as the value of reciprocal cooperation, family, courtesy, tolerance, friendly, reciprocal and mutual respect, prioritizing deliberation as a way to solve problems related to the settlement of religious teachings and various values that grow and develop in various parts of Indonesia, hereinafter referred to as local wisdom. Various cultural values are used as the basis for shaping attitudes, mentalities, paradigms, mentalities, perspectives and actions of the entire Indonesian nation.

National characteristic education produces people with historical, cultural and civilization awareness (civilization). To be able to realize such a nation, it must also be accompanied by efforts to create a nation's character that has a strong intellectual tradition, namely the character of: (1) liking the truth (not trying to be justified); (2) honesty and originality; (3) respect for science; and (4) cosmopolitan attitude. This intellectual tradition has been practiced by the Islamic Ummah in the classical times, when the Islamic Ummah emerged as a guide to the history, culture and civilization of mankind almost all over the world, in more than seven centuries.

Teachers as one of the determining factors in character building must have innovations in this distance learning process. Some of the characters from character education that can be taught in this era of the Covid-19 pandemic aredediscipline, honesty, and responsibility. The first character education is discipline character. This disciplinary character education refers to students' obedience and order by obeying the rules. In face-to-face learning situations or conducted at school, students are required to obey the rules by wearing uniforms and hats during the flag ceremony. Suddenly, during the Covid-19 pandemic period, they were studying at home without uniforms. This certainly provides atmosphere which is different to the students. The second character education is honesty. During exams or working on teacher assignments, students tend to take assignments seriously since the teacher is supervising in class. Unlike when taking exams online, supervision of students tends to be weak due to several factors. Weak supervision has invited students to commit plagiarism, since there is no supervision from the teacher, and this also happens even though parents accompany them. Teachers and parents have different levels of supervision. The third character education is responsibility. In a face-to-face system, there are usually daily picket activities. This activity is intended to train students to be responsible for their tasks, in contrast to online systems where

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[2] Ismed Hadad, (Editor), Political Culture, and Social Justice, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), printed. II, p. 53; See also Alfian, Politics, Culture and People of Indonesia, (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1981), printed. II, p. 104-105.

children tend not to think about their surroundings since they feel that the whole responsibility lies with their parents.

Indeed, it is not easy for a teacher to find a way out of this e-learning problem, but teachers are still needed to find solutions as educators. The first thing the teacher can do is by maintaining communication with students, for example with a reprimand or greeting every morning. The purpose of this activity is to maintain enthusiasm and remind that teachers are always monitoring and being an example that a friendly attitude is very important. The second goal is to increase discipline. This can be applied when the teacher is doing learning, usually the learning time is scheduled, the teacher can do the learning according to the predetermined time without reducing or adding hours of subjects.

Responsibility, a sense of responsibility will occur if teachers and students understand their homework, teachers and students follow it. Thus, they are able to complete their respective tasks independently. This responsibility is not only limited to completing schoolwork, students are also responsible for their position at home. For example, how are the roles and responsibilities as brothers who take care of their sisters, the role of younger brothers who obey their older brothers, the roles of fathers and mothers who educate their children. Not only these things, responsibility in the surrounding environment is also very important, namely in community members.

Teachers and parents should have the same goals for education that are expected to be achieved. Teachers give teaching and parents to understand it, as teachers to provide teaching and parents to do an active example. Indeed, the goal is for students to be more enthusiastic about accepting it. Not only that, parental supervision for children in using technology is also very important. For example, how to manage the time when using cell phones while studying and reading so that children do not mistakenly focus on cellphones for learning activities.

The main educational model is the existence of the individual model. At school, the student model who can cultivate character values is the figure of a teacher. The character or attitude of a teacher will be able to show attitudes and behaviors that meet the standards and values of religious teachings in their daily lives so that they can be imitated by students. Since, in principle, a child is an imitator. Students will easily develop their character by imitating or watching their behavior from their teacher.

Examples that the teacher will give to students about a noble character, for example, students are accustomed to discipline when they arrive on time since they see that the teacher is also always present on time. When doing or completing exams, students will try to be honest since they realize that teachers always adorn honesty in everyday life. Similarly, they will get used to being polite since they describe their teacher as always being polite to anyone.

Unfortunately, learning with online learning methods associated with Internet services does not always guarantee students are safe from the negative influences of the digital world. Digital media with all the freedom has a variety of positive and negative information. Students who are not ready with heavy and abundant information have the potential to be exposed to negative content that can erode their character. The occurrence of cases of intimidation, pornography, free association and other criminal acts is the impact of misuse of digital media among students.

Negative technology and other influences of the Internet make it dependent on its users. One of the most negative impacts of technology on our students is that it is slowly and gradually killing their social skills and prefers to stay isolated. They easily get addicted to technology which in return causes them to use it more and more. So such type of excessive use kills their social skills and hence they do not

interact or communicate well in their real lives which is truly an alarming situation.

Everything is available on the internet which makes some students feel at home and do not want to do physical activities outside the home. There are concerns about such conditions to train students' character to be consumed, minimal creativity, lazy to innovate and want to get something instantly. The effect of Internet dependence also makes students lazy to think and become less responsible, so that they cannot optimaly complete their tasks.

Educational practices in the digital era require continuous innovation and creation so that teachers and students do not easily experience a decrease in motivation and boredom. Teachers and parents should not interpret online learning that offers students to answer. If this happens, the release of learning and character will cease in the slogan without ever experiencing the spirit. As a result, learning never achieves the desired goals according to the curriculum.

However, apart from the obstacles that have arisen, some wisdom can be gained from the Covid-19 pandemic without realizing it. With a distance learning system, where students do many activities at home, parents are encouraged to facilitate supervision of their children. In addition, in terms of the creativity of educators and students in the distance learning system, it is necessary to be creative. For example, some educators can make learning materials presented in the form of learning videos.

4. Closing

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, there has been more than one year of home learning programs (BDR). So far, students only know information from gadgets and the digital world which is not always safe for their character development. This will be a scary thing and if online learning continues, students will not get used to or feel not familiar to people educating. They can also lose a lot of time to get character

education which is very valuable as a condition for living life.

Therefore, it is time for stakeholders in the education world to formulate the best policies by responding to the challenges of personality education during the pandemic. Society certainly does not expect the figure of a noble owner in the future to disappear from students to become part of a new habit in their life. In the future, it will no longer be strange to see the younger generation lose their positive character because of the online learning system that prioritizes the transfer of knowledge apart from instilling values and moral character. A great nation is a country that has a generation that has good personality traits, not only intelligent in science. This pandemic is not an obstacle for us to create a young generation, virtuous and good character.

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