National Character Education in the Midst of Social Dynamics of Indonesian Learners

Siti Aminah[1], Nur Rokhmah Dwi Mulyasari[2], Isnaeni Asifatul Khasnah[3]
[1,2,3]UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Character education is an essential component in shaping students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and socially resilient. In the midst of increasingly complex social dynamics-including globalization, information technology development, and shifting cultural values-character education in Indonesia faces significant challenges. This article examines the strategic role of character education in shaping the nation's generation with integrity and adaptive to social change. Using the literature study method by referring to the latest scientific literature, this study found that the success of Character Education character education is influenced by the social conditions of students, family parenting, school culture, and digital media. It also emphasizes the importance of designing character education that is contextual and relevant to social Indonesian Learners realities in various regions. A collaborative approach between schools, families and communities is key in creating an educational environment that supports character strengthening. Thus, the national education system needs to continuously adapt so that character education strategies remain relevant and effective amid dynamic social changes.

Corresponding Author:
Siti Aminah
UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto
JI. A. Yani No.40A, Karanganjing, Purwanegara, Purwokerto Utara, Banyumas Jawa Tengah 53126
Email:

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important foundation in shaping a generation that is not only superior in intellectual aspects, but also has maturity in morality and social life. In Indonesia, character education has a strategic role as a means of instilling national values such as tolerance, responsibility, honesty and nationalism. However, current social conditions show that the character crisis among students is increasingly worrying. The rise of intolerance, moral decline, violence in schools, and the lack of a sense of nationality and statehood reflect the reduced effectiveness of character education.

This situation is further complicated by the rapid flow of digital media, changes in modern lifestyles, and peer pressure from the social environment. Meanwhile, the education system focuses more on academic achievement and cognitive abilities, so that affective and psychomotor aspects that should be the foundation of character are often neglected. Not infrequently, the character education approach used is still normative, less relevant to the reality of students, and has not touched their daily life experiences.

Based on this background, this paper is prepared with the following objectives: first, as a form of analysis of the challenges of character education in the contemporary social era, in which this paper examines how character education faces various social complexities today, including the influence of digitalization, shifting

cultural values, and moral crises among students. Secondly, as a case study of the implementation of character education in secondary schools, this research looks at the real practice of character education that takes place in the secondary school environment, in order to understand how the implementation of character values is carried out in the daily education process. Third, as a development of a contextual and adaptive character education model, this paper offers a character education model that is rooted in the values of Pancasila, upholds inclusiveness, and integrates local wisdom, so that it can be a relevant and transformative approach for the character building of today's students.

2.   CHARACTER EDUCATION

In the era of rapid globalization and advances in information technology, the education system in Indonesia is faced with great challenges in shaping student character. Various negative behaviors such as intolerance, fighting between students, moral degradation, and a declining sense of nationality are increasingly common. Schools, which should be a safe place to learn and develop, are often the site of conflict and violence. Important values such as tolerance, responsibility, and love for the country are being eroded, replaced by a fast-paced culture and individualistic attitudes among teenagers. This situation is a serious warning that character education should not just be an addition to the curriculum, but should be the main part of the education process.

Education is an inseparable part of the human life process. In the world of education, character education has a very important role as a foundation in shaping the personality of students who have been taught from an early age. In this case, character education can be said to be the process of forming a person's identity and identity through educational institutions. Character itself can be formed, changed and even lost from a

person through a long process. Character formation can be through habituation, this is in line with the opinion (Saputra et al., 2022) which says that habits will shape a person's character. Character education is not just teaching students what is right and wrong, but instilling habituation in children about good values so that children can know, feel and implement them in their daily lives (Silva Ardiyanti and Dina Khairiah, 2021). This character education is a value planting system that includes components of knowledge, awareness of willingness and action to realize these values towards oneself, others and the environment, especially to God Almighty. Given that this character education is based on the basic nature or characteristics of humans that come from religious moral values or what is called the golden rule (Ni Made Suarningsihetal., 2024).

However, compared to existing social phenomena, character education shows a higher level of complexity, which is influenced by a number of key factors such as cultural diversity, the development of digital media technology, and social pressure. Although each factor has its own characteristics, the interaction between the three contributes to strengthening the social dynamics that occur in society.

First, the diversity of cultural backgrounds in society poses challenges in the process of social integration, especially in the era of globalization that brings local and global cultures together directly. One concrete example can be seen in the emergence of the Japanese cosplay subculture in Malaysia, which developed due to the widespread access to foreign culture through digital media (Sandifa. K., 2025). This phenomenon reflects the ability of foreign cultures to be adopted locally, but also raises concerns about the potential weakening of national cultural identity if not accompanied by strengthening cultural literacy. Second, digital media plays a central role in shaping people's mindset and social behavior. A number of studies have shown that social media has a significant effect on the construction of identity and cultural perceptions among adolescents, and contributes to the formation of an intergenerational gap due to the widespread use of nonstandard language (Naila et al., 2024). In addition, the intensity of exposure to social media also has an impact on the spread of misleading information, reinforcement of stereotypes, and pressure for unrealistic lifestyles (Sandifa K., 2025). Third, social pressure is an issue that is often experienced by young people in trying to gain social acceptance from their peer groups. This pressure is exacerbated by digital media that tend to reinforce certain social norms and increase conformity tendencies. Studies show that the rise of viral culture and negative perceptions on social media can lead to digital bullying and social conflict, especially among adolescents (Mokhtar & Hassan, 2023).

These three factors do not exist in isolation, but are interrelated and influential. Digital media, for example, not only spreads foreign cultural values, but also magnifies the social pressures experienced by individuals, which are ultimately processed through the cultural framework of each individual. Therefore, strengthening media literacy, developing multicultural education and preserving local cultural identities are strategic steps in responding to contemporary social dynamics in a critical, balanced and inclusive manner.

In the current educational landscape, character building efforts are often faced with methodological limitations, tending to focus on cognitive and normative approaches. This orientation places a dominant emphasis on aspects of knowledge acquisition and understanding of moral concepts, often neglecting the development of essential soft skills (Saiful B., 2015). Consequently, character education risks becoming just a slogan or theoretical concept that is less deeply implemented in the daily behavior of students (Yosep BK., 2022).

This condition is crucial because without a contextual and sustainable value internalization process, character education loses its transformative power as an instrument for forming solid morals and ethics in real life. Ideally, character education is not only oriented towards the aspects of "knowing goodness," but also "loving goodness" and "doing goodness" through habituation (Ajat S., 2011). Failure to internalize these values is often identified as one of the factors causing a moral crisis among the younger generation, indicating that mere knowledge transfer is not enough to form a character with integrity (Saiful B., 2015).

The phenomenon of changing mindsets, attitudes and behaviours of today's younger generation cannot be separated from the influence of three major factors: increasingly diverse cultural backgrounds, the unstoppable expansion of digital media, and social pressures arising from modernity and globalization. These three factors simultaneously shape the way young people perceive national values and life together. In this situation, the noble values that previously guided the nation's life tend to be marginalized, replaced by pragmatic narratives that emphasize individualism and consumerism. Therefore, a character strengthening strategy is needed that is not only reactive, but also proactive and relevant to the actual conditions of the younger generation.

One of these strategies is strengthening character based on Pancasila values in a contextual and applicable manner. Pancasila must be revived as the nation's philosophy of life that shapes personality, not just memorized material in the classroom. Values such as unity, mutual cooperation, social justice, and respect for humanity and diversity need to be internalized through education that touches the affective and psychomotor aspects (Hanum, et al., 2025). Project-based learning, exemplary teachers, and strengthening social experiences are key so that the values of Pancasila are not only understood but also carried out in the daily lives of students. On the other hand, optimizing digital media as a means of spreading national values is also important, so that the digital-native generation can make cyberspace a field for the growth of national awareness (Putri Alisah, 2024).

Furthermore, inclusive and local wisdom-based approaches complement the strategy of strengthening the nation's character. Inclusive character education accommodates learners' socio-cultural differences and instills the spirit of tolerance and social justice early on. Local wisdom, with all its social and cultural practices, holds noble values that are in line with Pancasila. Traditions such as deliberation, mutual cooperation, and the philosophy of life "where the earth is, there the sky is" are concrete forms of values that need to be revitalized in education. The integration of Pancasila, inclusiveness, and local wisdom makes character education not only ideologically meaningful, but also contextual and firmly rooted in the nation's identity (Delfiyan Widiyanto, et al., 2024).

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Character education is the main foundation in shaping the personality of a superior and competitive nation. In the midst of increasingly complex social dynamics, its urgency not only increases significantly, but also demands a more adaptive and contextual approach. The phenomenon of shifting values due to globalization, the swift flow of information through digital media, and the social pressure experienced by adolescents, has led to a moral crisis among students. This crisis not only has an impact on deviant behavior such as bullying, skipping class, or verbal and physical violence, but also on weakening commitment to the nation's ethical and cultural values.

Bahri's (2015) research confirms that the moral crisis plaguing Indonesian students is a consequence of the dominance of cognitive education that ignores the formation of affective and psychomotor aspects. Schools are too focused on academic achievement and exam results, while value learning often stops at the conceptual level without deep internalization. This is exacerbated by the lack of role models and a school culture conducive to character building. In this context, the implementation of character education strategies that touch the three main domains-learning, extracurricular activities, and school culture-is an indispensable comprehensive approach. Teachers, especially Civics teachers, have a strategic role as value facilitators, moral mentors, and role models for students. As shown in a study by Saputra et al. (2022), Civics teachers can overcome deviant behavior with a combination of preventive approaches, educational sanctions, exemplary behavior, and spiritual guidance through religious activities such as congregational prayers at school.

Furthermore, the values of Pancasila and local wisdom need to be internalized contextually. The values of gotong royong, tolerance, and social justice can be a counterweight to the negative influence of foreign cultures absorbed without filters through digital media. Strategies such as locally-based social projects, community involvement, and humanist approaches that make teachers as friends and active listeners for students have proven to be more effective in shaping character than the lecture method alone. However, these efforts are not free from challenges. Limited cooperation from parents, permissive social environment, and low teacher capacity in implementing value-based learning are significant obstacles. Therefore, there needs to be a synergy between family, school and community in building a sustainable character education ecosystem.

Thus, successful character education is education that is able to touch the hearts and behavior of learners through a comprehensive, humanist, and relevant approach to their social reality. The integration of Pancasila values, transformative pedagogical practices, and strengthening positive school culture are concrete steps in answering the challenges of moral crisis in this digital era. Character education amidst the social dynamics of

Indonesian learners is both a challenge and a strategic opportunity in shaping the nation's generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and socially resilient. Social complexity characterized by cultural diversity, digital media expansion, and social pressure, requires the national education system to reorient its approach in instilling character values. Character education strategies can no longer be normative-cognitive, but must be contextual, reflective and transformative.

Strengthening the nation's character requires an approach based on the integration of Pancasila values as an ideological foundation, inclusiveness as a social principle, and local wisdom as a cultural foundation. The three complement each other in creating an education system that is adaptive to the changing times but still rooted in the nation's identity. Therefore, synergy between schools, families and communities is absolutely necessary to create an educational ecosystem that encourages comprehensive, sustainable and meaningful character building.

REFERENCES

Ardiyanti, S., & Khairiah, D. (2021). Hakikat Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Diri Pada Anak Usia Dini. BUHUTS AL ATHFAL: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Anak Usia Dini, 1(2), 167-180.

Bribin, M. L. (2024). Analisis Perkembangan dan Dinamika Pendidikan Karakter dan Budaya Bangsa Indonesia. Pendidikan Karakter dan Budaya Bangsa: Konsep dan Implementasi di Indonesia, 31.

Keban, Y. B. (2022). Pentingnya pendidikan karakter di era Society 5.0. Jurnal Reinha, 13(1), 56-67.

Mahendra, S. (2025). Peran Media Sosial Terhadap Pembentukan Identitas Nasional Mahasiswa di Era Digital. LANCAH: Jurnal Inovasi dan Tren, 3(1), 13-16.

Mokhtar, M. M. B. M., & Hassan, H. B. (2021). Pengaruh Faktor Persepsi Negatif Dan Budaya Tular Terhadap Buli Siber Di Media Sosial Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Dan Golongan Muda: The Influence of Negative Perception Factors and Viral Phenomenon against Cyber Bullying on Social Media among Students and Youngsters. International Journal of Humanities Technology and Civilization, 7-15.

Naila, T. M., & Rohimi, P. (2024). Konsumsi Media Dan Identitas Budaya Di Kalangan Remaja Juwana, Kabupaten Pati. Al-Jamahiria: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Dakwah Islam, 2(2), 136-147.

Saputra, E., Nurdin, B., & Juliardi, B. (2022). PPKn Teacher's Strategy in Overcoming Deviant Behavior of Students at SMPN 14 Sarolangun. Jurnal Pendidikan Amartha, 1(2), 32-37.

Suarningsih, N. M., Santika, I. G. N., Roni, A. R. B., & Kristiana, R. J. (2024). Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia Dalam Berbagai Perspektif (Definisi, Tujuan, Landasan dan Prakteknya). Jocer: Journal of Civic Education Research, 2(2), 61-73.

Sudrajat, A. (2011). Mengapa pendidikan karakter?. Jurnal pendidikan karakter, (1), 122343.

Tsauri, S. (2015). Pendidikan Karakter Peluang dalam membangun karakter bangsa. Jember. IAIN Jembar Press.

YUSLAINI, Y. (2019). PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER DI INDONESIA: DALAM KONTEKS PENDIDIKAN ISLAM (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Raden Intan Lampung).