



The Formation of Digital Culture in Building The Character of Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the concept of cultivating digital culture as a means of character building in schools. Digital culture represents a transformation brought about by human habits, shifting from traditional practices to more conducive approaches that foster positive changes in the learning process within educational settings. This research employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing descriptive data analysis through interviews conducted via WhatsApp, alongside other supporting data to enrich the findings. The results indicate that digital culture can effectively contribute to the development of students' character through its integration into the teaching and learning process. Consequently, digital culture introduces transformative aspects in education, such as the use of projectors, online attendance systems, and digital literacy initiatives. These innovations can revitalize the learning experience in schools. Furthermore, the incorporation of digital culture will yield new impacts, serving as promotional media that enhance school effectiveness and improve the overall quality of education in an effective and efficient manner

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INTRODUCTION

Social issues emerging within communities are frequently attributed to school graduates who exhibit a lack of character (Zulkarnaen et al., 2023). Character development, which can be effectively facilitated in educational settings, is critical in shaping students' moral and ethical values (Salabi et al., 2022; Winoto, 2022). Schools serve as essential environments for imparting education that fosters character growth. To promote a digital culture conducive to character development, various initiatives can be implemented, such as workshops, digital literacy programs, engagement in extracurricular activities, and the encouragement of reading habits (Luchoro-Parrilla et al., 2024).

Despite these efforts, many graduates fail to demonstrate positive personality traits or character, a phenomenon influenced by multiple factors, including environmental and familial contexts. Consequently, the integration of character education within school curricula is paramount. Many students exhibit unwise usage of smartphones, often dedicating excessive time to gaming rather than effectively utilizing digital resources. This trend underscores the dual nature of technological advancements, which can benefit and harm educational institutions. Addressing these challenges is essential for enhancing the overall educational experience and fostering well-rounded, responsible individuals. (Fitzsimmons-Craft et al., 2024; RG & Mahmud, 2017).

The implementation of digital culture with character can be observed through an individual's behavior and personality during the learning process at school. However, students' character can be assessed by observing their digital footprints, which often reflect new habits or cultural practices among students who frequently use digital media in their teaching and learning activities. The establishment of character through digital culture brings about several changes in the educational landscape, such as the transition to digital attendance tracking and the promotion of reading habits before lessons begin (Hasnadi, 2019). This process fosters character development, highlighting the interconnection between digital culture and character, as well as the transformation of traditional practices into more efficient new cultural norms. (Meilani, 2014).

At SMA N 1 Sei-Suka, the implementation of digital culture to develop students' character has been systematically integrated through digitized learning methodologies. The technological advancements at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka are noteworthy, as students engage with technology in accordance with pedagogical guidance provided by their educators. Programs designed to cultivate character development in the context of digitalization encompass literacy initiatives, workshops, and various activities aimed at enhancing students' creativity and skills. Through the cultivation of digital culture, students are empowered to develop their creativity and serve as exemplars of positive character traits.

This research aims to investigate the contribution of digital culture formation to developing students' character. A comprehensive understanding of digital media utilization in educational settings and its application within academic institutions is critical in influencing character development. Various methodologies can be employed to foster character in students, including extensive reading, participation in workshops, and attendance at seminars (Puruwita et al., 2022). Consequently, both educational institutions and parents can provide critical insights regarding social media and its potential for disseminating information about the educational landscape (Schechter et al., 2021).

Digital culture signifies a systematic evolution in cognitive processes in response to the transformation of information within digital media. At the same time, character pertains to an individual's intrinsic traits or personality characteristics that are relatively stable over time. Therefore, digital culture is pivotal in shaping students' character. While a substantial body of research has explored character development, this study presents a novel perspective by focusing on distinct concepts and contexts and incorporating approaches (Soratna et al., 2023).

The application of digital culture in classroom learning employs media-based pedagogical strategies, including the use of projectors, PowerPoint presentations, and other digital media (Alromaihi & Hamdan, 2022; Habeeb & Eyupoglu, 2024). Familiarity with digital culture can substantially enhance the educational experience. One effective character development strategy involves participating in various activities or socialization events, such as seminars and workshops. In this regard, digital culture is a facilitating factor, and its integration is essential for reinforcing character development in future generations . (Miftah Nurul Annisa, 2020).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing descriptive survey techniques to gather data from teachers and the principal involved in the educational process at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka, located in Batu Bara. The determination of information is based on the data needs related to the theme of digital culture. Data collection was conducted through interviews, utilizing communication platforms such as WhatsApp and other supporting media to enhance the robustness of the research. The findings indicate that digital culture has a significant influence on education, emphasizing the importance of effectively utilizing technology as a controlled tool and medium. This approach serves as a resource for accessing information related to the educational landscape, thereby enhancing knowledge and developing competencies in technology use among educators and students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital culture encompasses the methodologies through which individuals interact, behave, think, and communicate within a society that leverages internet technology. This culture is shaped by various elements, including religious and political systems, customs, language, attire, and artistic expressions. Furthermore, the advancement of digital technology in education has increasingly become a trend integrated into the learning process. This integration is evidenced by the transition from traditional to contemporary cultural practices, which enhances the overall effectiveness of educational institutions (Sulianti, Safitri, and Gunawan, 2019).

Character distinguishes one individual from another. In this context, character building can be defined as the process of shaping or sculpting an individual's moral and ethical framework, rendering it unique and appealing in comparison to others. Just as each letter in the alphabet possesses distinct characteristics, individuals with strong character can be differentiated from those who lack such traits or exhibit negative characteristics.

According to Desyandri, character encompasses the values and behaviors of individuals in relation to God, themselves, others, the environment, and the nation. These values are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions that are informed by religious norms, laws, etiquette, culture, and customs (Armansyah et al., 2020). Character is an intrinsic quality deeply rooted in an individual's personality, serving as the driving force behind their actions, behaviors, speech, and responses to various situations (Desyandri, 2016).

Building on the aforementioned discussion, data analysis was conducted to investigate how digital culture contributes to character development among students at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka. The methodologies employed in this research included an analysis of the school environment based on experiential insights within the institution. Additionally, data were gathered through interviews conducted via WhatsApp, enhancing the robustness of the research findings. This approach facilitates broad student participation in various activities, such as digital literacy programs, storytelling sessions, and the use of technology-based media, which collectively foster self-confidence and support character development through the application of digitalization, now established as a cultural norm at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka.

Digital culture is a concept that suggests technology and the internet significantly shape an individual's mindset within the school environment. Today, our daily lives are deeply intertwined with the role of digital technology across various fields, including education, social interactions, information dissemination, and transactions. Meanwhile, character education is the process of instilling and developing noble character traits in students, enabling them to embody these qualities and apply them in their lives, within their families, as members of society, and as citizens.

Currently, the utilization of digital culture is widely implemented in accordance with its intended use, while remaining under the supervision of teachers and other mentors. At present, 80% of students are able to leverage digitalization to build their character, using it as a platform for promoting educational content that fosters students' enthusiasm in character development.

Character education is an effort to instill values and enhance the quality of education in the learning process. John Dewey stated that the implementation of character education in Indonesia has become a common practice to ensure that future generations possess good character. This aligns with initiatives in the United States, where the Secondary Education Renewal Commission appointed by the National Education Association issued a historic statement regarding the goals of general education. This statement later became known as the "Seven Key Principles of Education," which include: 1. Health, 2. Mastery of fundamental processes, 3. Being a useful family member, 4. Employment, 5. Citizenship (Biesta, 2014; Supriani, 2022).

Character education is an educational approach that instills values and enhances the quality of education in the learning process. John Dewey stated that it has become common practice in Indonesia to implement character education in schools to ensure that future generations possess good character. This can also be seen in the United States, where the Secondary Education Renewal Commission appointed by the National Education Association issued a historic statement regarding the goals of general education. This statement is historically known as the "Seven Key Principles of Education," which include: 1. Health, 2. Mastery of fundamental processes, 3. Being a useful family member, 4. Employment, 5. Citizenship. (Ningsih, 2019).

Table 1. Comparative Analysis

Aspects of behavioral observation	Student character in senior high school	Student Character in Madrasah	Analysis
Communicate	National	Religious	There is a need to integrate the religion curriculum with citizenship.
Ability	General	Ability to master religion	There is a need for collaboration between learning materials.
Get dressed	General	Tertutup	There is a need for school rules.
Attitude	Less polite	Sopan	There needs to be a program to build students' character.

Table 1 describes that the character of students in high schools and the character of students in Madrasahs show significant differences. This can be demonstrated by the various teaching methods and regulations implemented in the schools. The application of a digital culture system in schools aims to enhance the effectiveness of educational methods that are entirely digitized. As a result, schools can provide

activities related to the use of existing technology and keep pace with developments in the digital era.

Character education is understood as the education of values, ethics, morals, and character, with the goal of developing students' abilities to make good and bad decisions, to uphold what is good, and to embody that goodness in their daily lives wholeheartedly. The education of culture and national character aims to prepare students to become better citizens, who possess the ability, willingness, and apply the values of Pancasila in their lives as citizens.

Culture is recognized as a truth that no human being living in a society is unaware of the cultural values acknowledged by that community. Indicators in character education include developing cultural values such as discipline, honesty, democracy, and patriotism, which can serve as a foundation for providing meaning to concepts and interpretations in communication among community members. (Pandie, 2022).

Aspects of Digital Culture in Educational Institutions

Digital culture is a system of change in human thinking patterns in response to the transformation of information within digital media. Therefore, digital culture also serves as a driving factor in building students' character. Digital culture brings new impacts to the school environment. Learning conducted in classrooms has already shown changes through the use of various digital tools. This leads to several factors that positively influence the formation of students' character, such as environmental factors, where education is assessed based on these factors and is obtained collectively. Additionally, the roles of family, peers, and mass media also have a significant positive impact on the formation of students' character, while schools do not have as much influence on character development. (Zahra et al., 2020).

Digital learning offers significant opportunities for success in character education. There are several advantages of digital learning compared to traditional learning. First, digital learning can reduce many geographic barriers. Students can now access online videos that provide instruction on various topics at different skill levels and participate in video conferences with teachers located in different places. Second, advancements in artificial intelligence technology now enable teachers to differentiate their teaching methods, providing extra support and tailored materials to students whose knowledge and skills are either well below or above grade-level norms. The latest "smart" tutoring systems can not only assess students' current weaknesses but also diagnose why students make certain errors. (Naufal, 2021).

Digital culture can provide three important aspects in educational institutions. The renewal of old culture into a new culture will enhance students' enthusiasm in carrying out learning by utilizing advancements in digitalization. The aspect of understanding digital culture can be grasped by observing the development of

information and communication technology, which is viewed as an open and dynamic process in communication. There are three key aspects in building digital culture: 1) participation, 2) remediation, and 3) bricolage. Educational institutions play a crucial role in creating a digital culture in schools by implementing various activities, such as encouraging students to read books before engaging in learning. (Pertiwi et al., 2021). The strengthening of character education within digital culture will have a positive impact on the school environment. Digital culture provides benefits such as offering education in the learning process and utilizing digital advancements that bring about social change in the school environment.

Strategies for Character Development through Digital Culture

Strategies are comprehensive plans that guide learning experiences, subjects, or modules. Schools will implement various strategies to shape students' character through the utilization of digital culture. This will facilitate the search for information and enable the use of digitalization as a means to obtain educational learning through various social media platforms. (Wijaya & Arismunandar, 2018).

Strategy is a conscious effort to prepare students to become well-rounded individuals with noble character in all their roles, both now and in the future, while maintaining and improving student behavior. Digital character education greatly assists students in achieving the competencies that have been established. However, there is still a lack of understanding among teachers regarding digital learning. Digital character education is often merely interpreted as learning through the use of digital tools.

Therefore, the implementation of this learning must be carefully and thoroughly designed so that students can develop their potential and be productive through independent learning. Thus, learning strategies need to be fully developed to positively address the personality aspects of students. (Apiyani, 2022).

Strategies for character development have been widely implemented using various methods such as workshops, literacy culture, storytelling, and activities that shape character through the utilization of digital culture. The strategies or methods for character development include: modeling, spontaneous activities, reprimands, and environmental conditioning along with routine activities. The strategies that educators can use to build character are as follows: 1) Implementing learning methods that actively involve student participation; 2) Creating a conducive learning environment; 3) Teaching essential social and emotional skills; 4) Using technology media to facilitate the search for information related to the subject matter, thereby creating an active classroom atmosphere. (Hidayati et al., 2020).

Thus, within the framework of character development strategies, it is imperative to establish positive habits in the application of elements that contribute to character formation through digital culture. Consequently, collaboration among educators and school stakeholders is crucial in cultivating a culture that enhances the overall

effectiveness of the institution and serves as a model for best practices in other educational settings. This collaborative approach can lead to a more cohesive educational environment that promotes the values and competencies essential for student character development.

Model Character Development through Digital Culture

The models used for character development through digital culture include: The VAK learning model prioritizes exclusive and engaging learning experiences for students. Learning occurs through direct engagement in three modalities: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), and kinesthetic (motion and emotion). This approach makes the VAK model a frequently applied learning method, as it is based on various teaching strategies that enhance students' enthusiasm for learning. Therefore, the application of the VAK model extends beyond traditional learning methods, fostering a more dynamic and interactive educational environment that supports character development. (Diyan Nurvika Kusuma Wardani, 2020).

However, there are other models used in schools, such as the utilization of smartphones and projectors (infocus) in the learning process. One essential step is to instill a sense of nationalism in students during the teaching and learning process. Additionally, leveraging digital culture through the use of projectors as a supporting factor can enhance the effectiveness of character education in the learning process. By using this technology, teachers can present materials in a more engaging and interactive manner, thereby increasing student involvement and motivation to learn, while also reinforcing the desired character values. (Hasan, 2019).

The character education model based on the utilization of smartphones and projectors (infocus) represents an enhancement that can be directly observed in the field to assess the effectiveness of its use in the learning process. This can help both students and teachers enjoy the advancements in other technologies. According to indications from the school, the character education process has been implemented by teachers, who play a key role in explaining character education to students. The digital culture model is often utilized to facilitate data collection processes and its application in teaching and learning. The school has also provided various digital tools that are in use, such as projectors, computer-based learning, digital literacy, and digital attendance for teachers. The utilization of digital culture is very beneficial in the school environment and has become a new habit to interact with the developments in digital culture, ensuring that the school keeps pace with the advancements in digital culture.

Hasil Penelitian ini secara komperensif sudah melakukan berbagai penelitian untuk dapat menghasilkan data-data yang akan menyempurnakan penelitian ini. Pembentukan budaya digital dalam membentuk karakter di SMA N 1 Sei-Suka sudah lah diterapkan disekolah. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan adanya perubahan atau

pembaharuan yang dilakukan semenjak setahun kedepan seperti lebih memanfaatkan digital dan menjadikan sebuah budaya baru dengan mengikuti berbagai aktivitas yang telah di programkan agar membentuk karakter peserta didik di SMAN 1 Sei-Suka. Adapun kegiatan yang dilakukan seperti literasi digital serta pemanfaatan teknologi digitalisasi untuk menjadi sebuah promosi sekolah.

The research highlights the successful implementation of a digital culture at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka, emphasizing its role in character development among students. Over the past year, the school has witnessed significant changes, including increased use of digital tools and participation in various activities designed to foster character building. Activities such as digital literacy and the integration of digital technology have also been utilized to promote the school effectively.

To achieve its vision of producing outstanding graduates, the school serves as a facilitator that requires collaboration among teachers and school members to cultivate a supportive digital culture. This new culture aims to inspire students to enhance their creativity and engage with the evolving landscape of education. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of abandoning outdated practices in favor of innovative approaches that align with the needs of students and the advancement of technology, ultimately aiding in the accessibility of educational resources. (Jalil, 2012).

The research study identifies an ideal pattern for the use of technology, which consists of several prioritized stages. The first stage focuses on enhancing students' competencies through digital utilization, while the second emphasizes the improvement of technological infrastructure to establish a new culture. Activities that incorporate educational learning are aimed at shaping students' character.

The process of establishing a digital culture at SMA N 1 Sei-Suka has proven to be effective and efficient. However, challenges have arisen following the implementation of digital culture programs aimed at character development. Therefore, guidance and explanations regarding activities that promote character formation are necessary. This digital culture is reflected in the enthusiasm of students as they engage in activities that encourage creativity and the development of innovative ideas for making digital culture more appealing and accessible through various social media platforms.

Research by Hasan indicates that digital culture can be achieved by implementing digital literacy in schools to shape character, while Ali's study reveals that digital culture is fostered through activities that broaden knowledge and positively utilize technology. In contrast to Ahmad and Ali, Jono et al.'s research shows significant results, indicating substantial improvements over the past year. (Hasan, 2019).

Model Novelty

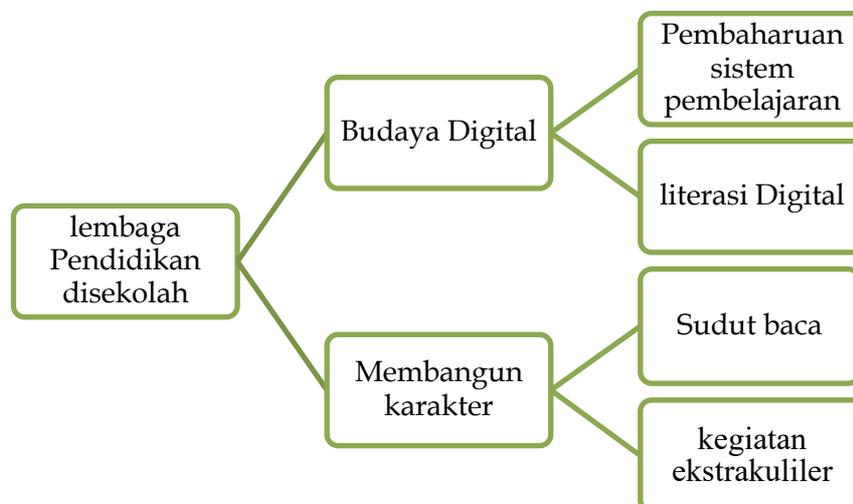


Figure 2. Novelty

Based on the novelty model, digital culture has the potential to transform old habits into new ones. The application of technology in educational institutions brings renewal to the learning system and facilitates the use of digital media that supports the teaching and learning process. The establishment of digital culture can shape the character of students, provided they are guided and supervised in their use of smartphones. This digital culture serves as a strategy for renewal within educational institutions, encompassing various activities designed to motivate students to act with sincerity. Programs such as reading corners and digital literacy are implemented to support the broader development of digital culture. These initiatives aim to create a more innovative and responsive learning environment in line with technological advancements.

The utilization of digital tools in learning presents both positive and negative impacts. Therefore, teachers must supervise students in their smartphone usage during educational activities. Collaboration between teachers and students is essential to create a conducive learning environment that facilitates access to information through digital media. The formation of digital culture aimed at enhancing students' character education has led to updates in the learning system. This is evident in the adoption of technological advancements that have become trends in education. Consequently, shaping students' character in an increasingly digitalized era can drive social change within both school and family environments. Character education serves as a safeguard, helping students prioritize effectively.

Educational institutions optimize the integration of digital culture within both academic and extracurricular activities. This approach has the potential to significantly enhance character development among students. The strategy for cultivating learners' character through digital culture entails active participation in diverse activities and organizations that promote interpersonal relationships and

expand knowledge. Such engagement not only enriches the educational experience but also contributes to the overall improvement of school accreditation. This holistic approach underscores the importance of digital culture as a vital component in fostering well-rounded individuals prepared for the complexities of the modern world.

CONCLUSIONS

The digitalization era became a trend in the education sector. This was evidenced by the utilization of digitalization in building students' character through programs implemented within the school environment. This digital culture served as a reinforcement in developing the character of that generation, and the establishment of digital culture had already begun through planned programs aimed at improving the quality of human resources in schools. The application of digital culture in building students' character was implemented by starting new habits while also anticipating the impacts that arose from implementing digital culture in schools. The research recommended that schools create programs or seminars that provided education on the establishment of digital culture to develop students' character, thereby enhancing school effectiveness and improving the quality of education, which positively impacted the advancement of the school.

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