Influence Character Education for Youth Morality in the Millennial Generation

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The millennial era, characterized by rapid access to information through technology and its positive and negative impacts, presents problems for character education in Indonesia. Therefore, character education is essential to overcome these negative impacts, with systematic intervention from the government. Indonesia is still lagging behind neighboring countries in terms of character education, focusing more on academic achievement. Education should not only provide knowledge, but also build character, in line with the national values enshrined in the 1945 Constitution. In the context of globalization, technology can socially isolate people, even though technology facilitates access to information. Teachers, especially those who teach character-centered subjects, must act as role models and facilitators for students who are heavily influenced by information from smartphones. Character encompasses behavior, personality, and the application of good values, so education should be geared towards forming responsible and socially engaged individuals.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with the importance of educating the nation's noble generation, character education has become a top priority in Indonesia. This era requires the younger generation to remain critical, creative and cultured, despite being exposed to various external influences. Therefore, it is important to formulate a character education model that is able to answer the needs and realities of the times, by utilizing information technology as a learning tool. Thus, the education method focuses on character development based on the principles of humanity and constructive relationships in addition to academic achievement (Iqbal, 2022).

Bullying, drug abuse, free sex, and fights are just some of the many complicated problems facing the millennial generation in this era of globalization. Teenagers' morals and personality are greatly influenced by character education (Purwantiningsih & Permana, 2019).

Education is one of the most important aspects in building a nation, and character is now highly valued because people judge a person not only based on their level of education or degree, but also based on their personal character. In accordance with the goals of the Indonesian state as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, namely to educate the nation's life, and to participate in implementing world order based on independence, lasting peace and social justice, this shows how important character education is in the context of increasingly advanced globalization. Therefore, character education in Indonesia today is urgently needed

to overcome these negative impacts and help people from the millennial generation grow into people with good morals, as well as being intellectually talented, so that they are able to face the challenges of the times wisely (Qurrota'ayun & Guru, 2021).

Education is an important effort to mature humans in various aspects of life, where any experience that has a formative impact can be considered an educational process. In Indonesia, education is divided into several stages, ranging from preschool to university, which are implemented through various institutions and methods, both formal and non-formal. However, existing educational practices tend to be more oriented towards the development of hard skills, i.e. technical skills that focus on improving IQ. The development of soft skills, such as emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ), still receives less attention. This has led to the impression that academic progress is assessed solely based on exam results, without regard to students' character or moral attributes. As a result, character education is becoming increasingly important in the curriculum, so that children can compete academically while interacting ethically and morally with society (Bahri, 2015).

Indonesia, as a country rich in social, cultural and religious diversity, has its own challenges in maintaining unity amidst differences. This diversity is a gift from God that we should be grateful for, as it creates harmony in the life of the nation. However, in recent years, a worrying trend has emerged among the millennial generation, especially in higher education, where some of them tend to support radical actions. This shows a lack of understanding of religious moderation, which should be the foundation for tolerance and mutual respect. This intolerant attitude among the younger generation can lead to inter-religious tensions and threaten national unity. Instilling religious moderation in millennials can promote peace and harmony in Indonesia, in line with the ideals of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, which prioritizes unity in diversity. By strengthening the understanding of religious moderation, it is hoped that the millennial generation can be at the forefront of tackling radicalism and creating solidarity in society (Dwi Fitriatun Aisyah, n.d.).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methodology. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with various resource persons, including educators, parents, and community leaders, to gain a comprehensive insight into the daily lives of young people. In addition, direct observations were made in educational and community settings to understand the dynamics of behavior and social interactions among youth.Data analysis was thematic, with patterns emerging from the interviews and observations. The results of this analysis are then compared with relevant literature to strengthen the research arguments and findings. This research will help young people understand the importance of character and morals, and how the ideals of Pancasila and local wisdom can be incorporated into modern life.

RESULTS

Character education in Indonesia has decreased significantly, even though the main role of education is to transfer knowledge and shape the character of adolescents. The development of critical thinking, creativity, and social skills as the basis for student character building is very important. Although many students have good academic achievements, many of them have not shown attitudes and behaviors that reflect good character, indicating that in addition to intellectual aspects, character education should be a top priority (Hakim, 2023).

The development of adolescents today is overshadowed by various deviant behaviors such as skipping class, dressing untidily, and improper use of mobile phones during class hours, which indicates a lack of early cultivation of character education. A review of the literature confirms that character education is an important endeavor that must involve individuals and the environment to shape ethical attitudes and good morals. Existing social conditions show that many teenagers are unaware of the negative impact of their behavior, such as the habit of skipping class and not doing assignments that have the potential to harm their future. In order for the next generation of the nation to grow into people who are not only intellectually intelligent but also moral, polite, and useful for society, character building needs to be done through formal and informal education. Adolescents who receive quality character education will grow up in an environment that supports moral and ethical growth, so that they are ready to face future challenges. To create an environment that fosters character education, educators, parents and the community must work together (Ahmad, Een, Fitriyah, & Muhammad, 2022).

Teenagers can be taught to use digital media responsibly through structured character education, which will help them strengthen their identity and make constructive contributions to society. Research shows that important values such as honesty, accountability and caring can help develop good character. By understanding and applying these values, teenagers are expected to be able to better face the challenges of the digital age. Community involvement in supporting character education is also very important, where community activities

that focus on character development can provide a positive environment for children to learn and interact (Sukatin, Ma'ruf, Mardani Putri, Giawi Karomah, & Hania, 2021).

Adolescent morality in the digital era is strongly influenced by character education, as moral principles such as accountability, honesty and integrity serve as important pillars that support adolescents in overcoming the adverse impacts of the digital world. Adolescents who receive good character education tend to be able to critically assess information and interactions, thus reducing the risk of falling into negative behaviors that are often triggered by the influence of social media and unfiltered digital content. Character education is an essential investment to create ethical and responsible individuals in an increasingly complex and digitalized society, as well as a strong foundation in building youth morality in the future (Kasingku & Sanger, 2023).

The morals of millennials are greatly influenced by Islamic education, especially when moral and ethical principles are embedded in the curriculum, which emphasizes both academic and spiritual subjects. A deep understanding of Islamic teachings offers a strong moral foundation, empowering the next generation with values such as justice, tolerance of diversity, and compassion for others, all of which are important in an increasingly interconnected and complex world. Islamic religious education not only educates children with good morals, but also motivates them to lead with integrity and make constructive contributions to society. In this case, character education sourced from Islamic teachings becomes an important tool to foster strong moral character, so that the millennial generation can become moral pillars of society and positively impact social and cultural progress in the future (COVID, 1983).

This research shows that moral decadence among millennials in Indonesia is heavily influenced by the dominance of foreign culture, which causes an identity crisis as young people tend to adopt outside lifestyles and values that often contradict local norms. In this situation, character education plays an important role in shaping a solid and ethical personality, by teaching responsibility, discipline, and religious values as moral guidance. Character education not only improves individual competence in facing global challenges, but also strengthens morality and ethics in daily life. In order for future generations to have a solid moral foundation, it is important to incorporate character education into the formal and informal curriculum. In order for the millennial generation to become internationally competitive individuals while maintaining high integrity and ethics for a brighter future of the country, families, schools and communities must work together to instill strong character qualities to overcome moral decline (Umairoh, Furnamasari, & Dewi, 2021).

Research shows that character education in Indonesia faces significant challenges in the millennial era, especially in shaping the morality of young people who are exposed to various information through technology. As a result, many teenagers have difficulty distinguishing valid information from hoaxes, so character education needs to prioritize not only academic aspects but also social skills. The current education system in Indonesia tends to focus more on science, often neglecting the importance of moral values, which risks making millennials lose their way in building identity and social responsibility. Therefore, the government and educators must methodically work together to create a curriculum that emphasizes the development of strong character alongside knowledge. It is hoped that by prioritizing character education in Indonesia's education system, it will produce a millennial generation that is not only knowledgeable but also has strong morals and integrity, is able to face adversity in a global society, and can make a constructive contribution to society (Efendi, 2021).

Moral decadence among millennials in Indonesia is influenced by a variety of significant factors, ranging from family influence to social environment. Children's morals are heavily influenced by their families, yet despite the fact that moral education is the primary responsibility of schools, many parents believe that moral teaching is best left to the classroom. Children often go astray and are more prone to deviant behavior when the family does not set a positive example. As formal educational institutions, schools have an important duty to educate children, both intellectually and morally, in addition to the family. Research shows that schools that regularly run character education programs are beneficial in reducing negative behaviors among students, and that curricula that place a high priority on character education can help children develop their moral potential. Another influencing factor is the social environment and peer influence; millennials who tend to be risk takers are more prone to be influenced to commit negative acts. Therefore, collaboration between families and schools is essential to create an environment that supports the moral development of millennials, so that they can have a strong and positive character in facing global challenges (Amelia, Mistriana, Aprilia, Andriani4, & Noviameli, 2022).

Ethical and moral degradation in the millennial generation is influenced by key factors such as family stability, social environment, and technology use. Unstable families are often less able to provide adequate moral guidance, while negative social environments tend to shape weak characters in the younger generation. In addition, the use of technology without wise control makes millennials vulnerable to exposure to negative content and inaccurate information, which worsens their ethical condition. To face these challenges, character education that integrates ethical and moral values in the curriculum is necessary so that millennials can be more aware of the impact of their actions and have a strong moral foundation. Through systematic character

education, the younger generation can be strengthened in facing the challenges of the times. In order for millennials to acquire strong ethics and values, which will ultimately help create a better society, cooperation between families, schools and communities is essential (Revalina, Moeis, & Indrawadi, 2023)

The influence of globalization and the influx of foreign cultures that often clash with the noble values of the nation have contributed to the decline in the morals and character of Indonesia's young generation today, especially in the application of Pancasila values. This situation shows the need for Pancasila-based character education, which is not just a slogan, but must be implemented in all aspects of the lives of the younger generation. For this reason, the community, family, and educational institutions must work together to create an atmosphere that supports the growth of moral character. With this approach, the younger generation is expected to promote the values inherited by their predecessors and play their role as agents of positive change, maintain the nation's cultural identity in the midst of globalization, and strengthen the morality and ethics needed to face today's challenges (Rusdiyani, 2015).

Advances in information technology have a significant impact on the moral education of the millennial generation, where many of them prefer virtual interactions to real social interactions, so the values of moral education are often neglected. Easy access to information also triggers the spread of unethical behavior, such as hoax news and cyberbullying, which indicates a moral crisis in society. Therefore, it is important to introduce a comprehensive understanding of the concept of morality and provide good role models in the surrounding environment to prevent rampant hedonistic behavior. It is hoped that character education will improve the understanding and application of moral principles, providing millennials with a solid moral foundation that will enable them to handle the difficulties of the disruptive era more wisely and responsibly"(KHOIR, 2022) .

In the book "Learning Transformation of the Millennial Generation," it is outlined that the unique characteristics of the millennial generation, such as adaptability to technology and an open mindset to change, affect the way they learn and interact in educational settings. Therefore, an effective learning system for this generation should cater to their dynamic needs, with interactive and technology-based approaches essential to increase learning engagement and motivation. In this context, the millennial generation's learning behavior characterized by a desire for exploration and collaboration also contributes to the formation of good character. It is hoped that incorporating character education into the education process will improve the morals of adolescents, prepare them to be able to better deal with various problems of the modern world, and produce humans who are not only academically intelligent but also have integrity and high moral standards (Hardika, Nur Aisyah, & Gunawan, 2019).

In this study, it was found that millennials have a unique way of understanding and internalizing religious values amidst the flood of information, creating a tension between tradition and modernity as they search for meaning in religious teachings that are relevant to everyday life. Despite showing a high interest in religious studies, this generation tends to question and discuss the teachings critically, resulting in a complex psychological dynamic between the demands of tradition and the need to adapt to changing times. A change in attachment to religion is also evident, where they not only rely on religious institutions as a source of truth, but also seek spiritual understanding independently through various information platforms. Therefore, educational institutions and religious communities need to understand the mindset and behavior of the millennial generation to provide appropriate support. The results of this study confirm the importance of an inclusive and adaptive approach in religious education that not only encourages deep understanding, but also respects the millennial generation's need to interact critically and creatively with information, so as to form a strong character and high morality in facing the challenges of the digital era (Tulung, Marie, Syahid, Janis, & Kalampung, 2019).

Through the implementation of Islamic values, millennials are expected to develop good character personally and benefit society, therefore, it is imperative to incorporate these ideals into the social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of life. This research emphasizes that the consistent implementation of Islamic values can help millennials face the challenges of the times and form a character that is in accordance with Islamic principles, which in turn contributes positively to adolescent morality and forms individuals with strong character and oriented towards goodness in society (Kurjum, 2022).

Ideal leadership for the millennial generation should reflect characteristics that are relevant to the times, combining traditional values with modern innovations to answer the challenges of the times in a unique and creative way, making it important to develop an adaptive and responsive leadership style according to the needs and expectations of the millennial generation, because good character education in this context will produce leaders who are not only effective but also have a positive impact on adolescent morality, forming individuals with integrity and able to contribute to society(Saputro, 2022).

The values of Pancasila play a very significant role as the foundation of character and moral education for the millennial generation, where through education based on Pancasila, the younger generation can understand and internalize noble values such as justice, unity, and a sense of responsibility, which in turn can reduce cases of moral deviation and help overcome the moral crisis that is being faced by adolescents today (Ainun, Dewi, & Furnamasari, 2021).

The phenomenon of youth idolizing public figures rather than role models such as the Prophet Muhammad contributes to the loss of identity and morality, making them like a driverless vehicle that cannot drive well; therefore, the implementation of effective social control efforts and character education that emphasizes good moral values is very important, so that youth can build strong attachments, commitment to positive values, and involvement in constructive social activities, so that they can overcome challenges and improve morality in this fast-paced era (Aufa & Sofie, 2022).

Bambang Suryadi revealed that the moral crisis in this nation shows alarming symptoms, with the declining character of the nation, which is reflected in rampant corruption practices at various levels of government, weak social responsibility among leaders, and lack of humanity in society; Therefore, to successfully create a millennial generation that is noble and responsible and able to face moral dilemmas in the future, character education must involve all aspects of society through a comprehensive and holistic approach (Suryadi & Bangsa, 2015).

Character development is an important foundation for creating a moral and responsible millennial generation in an increasingly complex and technologically challenging world. The process of character development occurs both directly and indirectly, so that students have a deep understanding of moral principles that they can use in their daily lives. In this rapidly growing information age, critical and ethical thinking skills are essential to prepare students to deal with moral dilemmas (MUSLIMIN, MISDAH, & WAHAB, 2021).

Regarding character education in the millennial era, effective leadership should not only concentrate on administrative tasks, but also on developing the character of youth, which is especially important given the difficulties posed by globalization and technology. Prophet Muhammad's integrity and strong moral character can serve as an example for educators in building a positive atmosphere, and motivation and effective communication between principals and teachers foster a positive learning environment. To overcome obstacles in education, leaders must have strong emotional intelligence, and innovative and creative teaching strategies are needed to attract students' attention. Therefore, principals can use Prophet Muhammad's leadership qualities as a guide to improve the management of character education and create a generation that is not only morally good but also intellectually gifted, making this character development a long-term investment in future national development (Aziz & Zakir, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Character education has a vital role in shaping adolescent morality in the millennial generation in Indonesia. In the midst of globalization and rapid technological development, millennials are faced with complex moral challenges, including the influence of foreign cultures and unfiltered access to information. Through character education, adolescents are not only trained to master academic knowledge, but also to understand and apply ethical values, social responsibility, and good leadership. Systematic character development in the family, school and community can help reduce deviant behavior and increase awareness of the importance of integrity and empathy for others.

In addition, good leadership in educational institutions, which prioritizes role models, effective communication and innovation in teaching methods, is very influential in creating a positive learning climate. Thus, character education is not just the responsibility of formal education, but requires the collaboration of all elements of society to create a millennial generation that is not only academically smart but also has high morality and is ready to face the challenges of the future. In this conclusion, it can be emphasized that efforts to strengthen character education will contribute greatly to the formation of adolescent morality, resulting in individuals who are noble and useful for society.

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