



Development of a Spiritual Character-Based Curriculum to Improve Learning Quality in the Digital Era

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Abstract: The development of a curriculum based on spiritual character is crucial in improving the quality of learning in the digital age. In the context of education increasingly influenced by technology, there is a challenge to ensure that students are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong moral and spiritual character. This study aims to examine the importance of integrating spiritual character values into the education curriculum and the wise use of technology to support holistic learning. The method used in this research is library research, which involves a literature study from various sources, including books, articles, and journals related to character education, spiritual character-based curriculum, and the use of technology in education. The spiritual character-based curriculum is designed to shape students who are not only competent in academics but also possess noble morals, empathy, and social responsibility. Through this approach, technology can be used as an effective tool to convey positive character values, such as through digital platforms, educational apps, and social media that are relevant to the lifestyle of today's students. The expected outcome of this curriculum development is to create a generation with a balance between intellectual intelligence and the strengthening of spiritual character, which in turn can help students face increasingly complex global challenges. As part of educational reform, the implementation of a spiritual character-based curriculum needs to be a priority in various educational institutions in Indonesia to ensure that education focuses not only on academic aspects but also on the formation of students' morals and character.

Keywords: Spiritual Character-Based Curriculum, Character Education, Technology In Education, Quality Of Learning, Digital Generation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in national development, aimed at shaping individuals who are well-rounded intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. In the digital era, the development of technology has significantly changed the paradigm of education. Digital technology provides access to various sources of information and facilitates the learning process. However, alongside these advantages, new challenges arise, particularly related to the degradation of students' moral values and character. Phenomena such as individualism, dependence on



technology, and the reduction of direct social interaction have become crucial issues that need to be addressed (Gunawan, 2023).

The digital era has brought transformation to the education system. Learning, which was once conventional, is now shifting towards a digital technology-based approach, utilizing online platforms, educational software, and social media. According to Prensky (2022), today's students are "digital natives" who have grown up amidst technological advancements, making digital learning an unavoidable necessity. However, the use of technology in education often focuses only on developing students' cognitive abilities, while the strengthening of spiritual character has not yet been prioritized. In fact, spiritual character education is an essential foundation in shaping individuals with integrity, responsibility, and high moral awareness (Wiyani, 2022).

The development of a spiritual character-based curriculum is one solution to address the challenges in education during the digital era. Spiritual character encompasses values such as honesty, discipline, empathy, gratitude, responsibility, and religiosity. The goal of spiritual character education is to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess moral and spiritual strength, which can serve as a guide in facing various life changes and challenges (Lickona, 2022). Therefore, integrating spiritual character into the education curriculum is a strategic step to improve the quality of learning holistically.

Furthermore a spiritual character-based curriculum is highly relevant to the needs of 21st-century education. According to UNESCO (2022), 21st-century education emphasizes the development of competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and character building. In this context, spiritual values can be integrated into various subjects and learning activities by utilizing technology as a supporting medium. Technology is not only a tool for delivering content but also a means of instilling deep character values.

The importance of spiritual character education in the digital era is further reinforced by previous studies. Research by Rahman and Jamilah (2023) shows that strengthening spiritual character can enhance students' motivation to learn and help them build discipline and responsibility. Students with strong spiritual character are more likely to use technology wisely and productively. This is important, given the widespread misuse of technology among students, such as gadget addiction, access to negative content, and consumeristic behavior.



The development of a spiritual character-based curriculum aligns with the Indonesian government's policy emphasizing the importance of character education in the national curriculum. Through Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 on Strengthening Character Education (PPK), the government strives to integrate character values into all aspects of learning. Spiritual character values such as religiosity, integrity, and social responsibility are central to efforts to strengthen student character. This indicates that a spiritual character-based curriculum has a strong policy foundation and is relevant to the current educational needs.

However, in its implementation, there are still many challenges in developing a spiritual character-based curriculum in the digital era. One of the main challenges is the lack of understanding and skills among teachers in integrating spiritual values into technology-based learning. According to research by Surahman et al. (2023), most teachers are still focused on delivering academic content and have not fully optimized technology to shape students' character. Additionally, the limited resources and technological infrastructure in schools pose significant obstacles.

Systematic and comprehensive efforts are needed in developing a spiritual character-based curriculum that aligns with the development of the digital era. This curriculum development must involve various parties, including the government, schools, teachers, parents, and the community. Furthermore, the approach used in curriculum development should be integrative, innovative, and contextual. The curriculum should accommodate the needs of students as digital natives while instilling spiritual values that can guide their lives.

Technology such as e-learning, educational videos, and educational apps can be combined with content that contains spiritual character values. Learning materials can be presented in the form of inspiring stories, case studies, or simulations that emphasize the importance of honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Through this approach, students not only gain academic knowledge but also experience meaningful moral and spiritual learning (Mahfud, 2023).

Additionally, the evaluation and assessment in the spiritual character-based curriculum should also be aligned with holistic learning goals. Assessment should not only focus on cognitive aspects but also encompass affective and psychomotor aspects related to the development of students' character. According to Sadiman et al. (2023), the use of portfolio-based evaluation



methods, observation, and reflection can be an effective alternative in assessing the development of students' spiritual character.

In the context of globalization, the development of a spiritual character-based curriculum also has a positive impact in preparing the younger generation to become future leaders with integrity and high moral awareness. According to the World Economic Forum (2023) report, character traits such as integrity, empathy, and honesty are key competencies needed in the future workforce. Therefore, spiritual character education plays a strategic role in creating high-quality and competitive human resources.

Based on the background, this research aims to develop a spiritual character-based curriculum that can improve the quality of learning in the digital era. This research is expected to contribute to the development of educational theory and practice and serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and researchers in the effort to shape a generation with strong character and integrity in the face of rapid technological development.

METHOD

This research uses the library research method. This method involves collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various written sources that are relevant to the topic of developing a character-based curriculum to enhance the quality of learning in the digital era. According to Zed (2014), library research aims to explore information in depth from various literatures, such as books, academic journals, articles, research reports, and other official documents. This method allows the research to build a strong theoretical foundation in understanding the phenomenon being studied and offers critical and comprehensive perspectives.

The first stage of this research is identifying data sources. The data sources used consist of primary and secondary literature. Primary literature includes books by educational experts, the latest academic journals, and previous research results discussing curriculum development, spiritual character, and challenges in learning in the digital era. Meanwhile, secondary sources include online articles, research reports, and recent academic publications. The researcher emphasizes selecting credible and up-to-date sources to ensure the data used is relevant to the development of education in the digital era.



The next stage is data collection. Data is gathered through systematic searches on various platforms and scientific databases such as Google Scholar, ProQuest, ResearchGate, and internationally indexed Scopus journals. In addition, sources from university repositories and digital libraries are also utilized. Sugiyono (2022) states that in library research, the selection of sources must consider validity and authenticity to ensure the research findings can be scientifically accountable. Therefore, the data collection process is carried out systematically and planned to obtain authoritative sources.

The next stage is data analysis. The analysis technique used in this research is content analysis. This analysis is performed by identifying, classifying, and evaluating the content from the collected sources. The analysis process follows the steps proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out to select and filter information that is relevant to the research focus. The selected data is then presented descriptively-analytically to find patterns and relationships that can answer the research problems.

The final stage is data interpretation and synthesis. The results of the data analysis are interpreted to provide an in-depth understanding of how the development of a character-based curriculum can enhance the quality of learning in the digital era. The researcher synthesizes various theories and relevant findings to formulate comprehensive conclusions. Furthermore, the research results are also linked to the challenges and opportunities of implementing technology-based learning in the 21st century. This process is carried out to generate a comprehensive understanding and contribute significantly to the development of education.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, the researcher conducts source triangulation by comparing data from various references used. According to Creswell (2019), triangulation in library studies is important for verifying the accuracy of information from different sources, ensuring that the research results have a high level of validity. With this approach, the data presented will be more structured, systematic, and scientifically accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education is a crucial element in shaping individual character and the advancement of a nation. With the rapid development of digital technology, the education system faces new



challenges in creating a curriculum that is not only academically sound but also focused on character development. A character-based curriculum, rooted in spiritual values, can be a solution to improve the quality of learning in the digital era (Huda, 2023). By leveraging technological advancements, character-based education is expected to produce a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also has a strong and good personality (Muhaimin, 2023).

In the context of education, spiritual character refers to moral and spiritual values that serve as the foundation for guiding an individual's behavior and decisions in daily life. A character-based curriculum aims to instill values such as honesty, empathy, discipline, and responsibility, which are essential for students' personal development (Suhardi, 2023). Integrating spiritual character into education is highly relevant in the face of globalization and digitalization challenges, where young generations are often exposed to information that can shape attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with noble values.

Technology in Character-Based Learning

In the digital era, technology plays a significant role in the learning process. Technological advancements have opened new opportunities in education, enabling more interactive, flexible, and widely accessible teaching methods. However, uncontrolled use of technology can have negative effects, such as the development of characters that do not align with the desired spiritual and moral values (Nugroho, 2023). Various digital platforms and social media can influence students' attitudes and behaviors, potentially worsening their morality if not used wisely. Therefore, it is essential to develop a curriculum that not only focuses on academic aspects and digital skills but also on the formation of students' spiritual character.

The development of a character-based curriculum that integrates technology is highly relevant in addressing the challenges of the digital age. This aligns with Dewey's (1916) concept of character education, which emphasizes that education should not only aim to develop students' cognitive abilities but also shape their morals and character. Character education based on spiritual values can help students develop intellectually while also becoming individuals with good morals who can positively contribute to society. Technology, in this regard, can be an effective tool to support spiritual character education, offering approaches that are more engaging and relevant to students' everyday lives.



Character-based spiritual education also includes the use of technology to reinforce positive values in learning. Wise use of technology can support the delivery of character education more effectively and efficiently. For example, gamification in character education can be an effective method to engage students in learning moral and spiritual values (Sutopo, 2024). By incorporating game elements such as points, levels, and challenges, gamification can make learning more engaging and enjoyable for students. This can also enhance motivation and involvement in character education, making it easier for students to internalize these values in their daily lives.

Technology also allows character education to be delivered in more interactive and enjoyable ways, increasing students' involvement in learning (Ismail, 2023). For instance, by using apps or digital platforms that provide videos, interactive quizzes, and group discussions, students can become more actively engaged in learning about moral and spiritual values. Technology also enables students to interact with learning materials in various formats, such as audio, video, and animations, which can help them better understand and apply the values being taught. Moreover, technology can enrich the students' learning experience by presenting real-life examples or case studies relevant to their lives, allowing them to better connect moral and spiritual concepts with real-world situations.

However, it is important to remember that the use of technology in character-based spiritual learning must be done carefully and purposefully. Without proper supervision and planning, technology can be easily misused and may even worsen the quality of character education. Therefore, educators must ensure that technology is used wisely and combined with appropriate pedagogical approaches to achieve the goal of fostering students' spiritual character.

In this context, educators must also be trained to understand how to effectively integrate technology into character education. They should have a deep understanding of the importance of spiritual character in education and how technology can be used to support these values. Teacher training in the use of technology that supports character education is crucial so that they can manage and utilize various digital platforms effectively, creating a positive learning environment for students.

Overall, technology has great potential to support character-based spiritual learning, provided it is used wisely and purposefully. Proper use of technology can enrich the character learning process, making it more engaging, interactive, and relevant to students' lives. Thus,



technology can not only enhance students' academic skills but also help shape a strong spiritual character, which is essential in facing life's challenges in this digital era.

Challenges and Implementation of a Spiritual Character-Based Curriculum

In implementing a spiritual character-based curriculum, there are several challenges that must be faced by educators, students, and society. One of the main challenges is resistance to change. This is often caused by a limited understanding of the importance of character education, especially in the digital context. Many parties, including teachers and parents, may not fully realize that character development in students not only involves traditional moral education but also requires an adaptive approach, particularly with the ongoing technological advancements. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to have a deep understanding of the importance of spiritual character in shaping students' personalities (Marzuki & Fajrin, 2024). In this regard, teachers play a critical role as agents of change who can shift the educational paradigm, especially in integrating spiritual character into every subject taught.

Moreover, training and development for teachers are also essential so they can integrate spiritual character values into the subjects they teach. Teacher competency development in this area is not only related to teaching skills but also to a deep understanding of how to guide students in developing attitudes and behaviors in line with spiritual values. Without strong understanding from educators, it is difficult to achieve the optimal goals of spiritual character-based education.

Character education in the digital context also requires a more adaptive approach. Today's students are very familiar with technology, which has become an inseparable part of their daily lives. Therefore, the use of technology to convey spiritual character values is highly relevant. For example, using digital platforms to deliver spiritual character values through videos, apps, or social media can help students internalize positive character traits in ways that are more aligned with their lifestyle (Rahman, 2023). Technology allows spiritual character materials to be delivered in a more engaging and easily understood way, as well as providing opportunities for students to engage in more interactive and dynamic learning.

It is important to design a curriculum that integrates character education elements with technology. This will ensure that students receive a holistic education that not only develops academic and digital skills but also fosters a strong spiritual character. With a technology-based



curriculum, students can learn spiritual character values flexibly and beyond formal class hours, providing them with more opportunities to internalize these values in their daily lives.

Some studies show that character education can significantly impact students' moral and social development. Hidayati (2023) emphasizes the importance of character education in shaping better student morality. Likewise, Abdurrahman (2023) explains that character education for the digital generation must involve the development of spiritual aspects in order to form strong character amidst the growing influence of technology. Spiritual-based character education can also help students maintain integrity and develop empathy towards others, which is crucial in facing current social challenges.

In this context, the development of a spiritual character-based curriculum is a strategic step to create a generation that is not only intelligent but also virtuous. Therefore, it is important to ensure that this curriculum can be implemented effectively at various educational levels. One key to its success is integrating technology into the learning process, making it more relevant and engaging for students.

The importance of integrating technology in character education is increasingly recognized, given the dominant digital nature of students' lives today. Fitriani (2024) and Hasanah (2023) emphasize that technology, if used wisely, can be a very effective tool in supporting spiritual character education. Technology enables more flexible learning, where students can access materials anytime and anywhere. This gives students the opportunity to continue developing character values even outside class hours.

The application of a spiritual character-based curriculum also plays an important role in shaping students' personalities so that they are able to compete in the global era. In addition to intellectual intelligence, students with good spiritual character will be better equipped to face the increasingly complex challenges of life. The spiritual character-based curriculum is also expected to strengthen the relationship between schools, families, and communities in building strong moral and spiritual values among the younger generation (Junaedi, 2024; Ramli, 2023). Thus, the application of this curriculum can create an educational environment that supports the overall development of students' character and prepares them to be individuals with integrity and quality to face the challenges of the times.



CONCLUSION

The development of a spiritual character-based curriculum in the digital era plays an important role in enhancing the quality of education and shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally virtuous. Amid rapid technological advancements, the integration of character values in all aspects of learning becomes increasingly relevant. When used wisely, technology can be an effective tool in delivering and strengthening spiritual character education. Therefore, a spiritual character-based curriculum is not just about conveying academic material, but also preparing students to become individuals capable of facing the increasingly complex challenges of the world, both socially and spiritually.

By integrating character values into everyday learning, students are expected to develop positive attitudes and behaviors that will shape a strong personality. Through a holistic approach, where intellectual and spiritual intelligence develops in balance, this curriculum provides space for students to grow not only as successful individuals in the academic world but also as members of society with empathy, responsibility, and integrity.

As part of educational reform, the development of a spiritual character-based curriculum must be a priority for every educational institution in Indonesia. This is crucial to prepare a generation that is not only competent in technical aspects but also strong in moral and spiritual aspects, which are essential in facing the challenges of the increasingly digital era. Thus, the development of a spiritual character-based curriculum will be a strategic step in building a future generation that is intelligent, virtuous, and ready to face the future.

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