Student Character Building in the Era of Digital Transformation

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Abstract. This research discusses student character development in the midst of digital transformation, with a focus on the role of digital technology in shaping their character in the higher education environment. The research method used was a descriptive qualitative approach, involving literature study, questionnaires and interviews with Indonesian Literature students at the Faculty of Language and Arts at Medan State University. The research results show that the majority of students have a high level of understanding about student character development in the digital era, with a few having a low level of understanding. The impact of digital transformation on student character development, in the students' view, is generally positive, although there are a small number who see the impact as negative. Universities are seen as providing good support in character development through digital technology, although there are also those who feel that this support is still lacking. The conclusion of this research is that digital transformation has a significant positive impact on student character development, and universities have an important role in integrating character education into digital learning environments. Apart from that, the role of parents is also important in shaping student character in the digital era. This study provides insight into how digital technology can be used to build good character among students and shows the need for further efforts to strengthen support from higher education institutions in this regard.

Keywords: Transformation, Digital, Character Development, Students.

1   Introduction

By the year 2022, education in Indonesia is progressing through increased early childhood education places, teacher innovation in learning, and school creativity in creating interesting learning models. Key factors of influence involve teacher qualifications, curriculum, budget and education regulations, with quality improvement supported by teacher performance, student morale and stakeholder support. The Ministry of Education and Culture is reinforcing this through four key strategies in 2021, namely infrastructure and technology development, policy and budgeting strengthening, community and cultural leadership, and curriculum pedagogy and assessment improvement [1].

The aim of higher education is to produce young people who have quality, in-depth knowledge and good character. Efforts to strengthen character education for students involve various factors, including communication using effective language. This is in accordance with the contents of Article 3 of Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that national education aims to develop, strengthen and shape the character and civilization of a civilized nation in order to increase the intelligent life of the nation [2].

In a lexical context, the term character refers to innate traits, inner voice, soul emanation, identity, personality, manners, behavior, personality, character, character, temperament, or disposition (Azis, 2019: 308). In terminology, character definitions vary but have almost the same substance. Character refers to a set of attitudes, behaviors, motivations, and skills. A person who has good character has good personality, behavior, traits, habits and character. Individuals with good character tend to have good thoughts, good feelings, and good actions [3].

Building the character of the nation's generation has also been emphasized as a goal of National Education, as regulated in Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. In this law, there are functions and objectives of national education which include the following:

"National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens."

It is important to recognize that education in Indonesia aims to develop the individual potential of students so that they can become human beings who have good character, based on faith and piety, personality, noble morals and independence .Educational institutions, including universities, have a strategic role in shaping the character of students so that they become a superior, noble and characterful generation [4].

From a philosophical perspective, building national character is a fundamental need in the process of a nation's existence, because only with strong character and identity can a nation exist. In the ideological dimension, character development aims to actualize the values of Pancasila in national and state life. [5] Normatively, building national character is a real step in achieving state goals, namely protecting the entire nation and the bloodshed of Indonesia, improving general welfare, encouraging quality education, and participating in creating world order based on independence, eternal peace and social justice. From a historical perspective, the development of national character is an ongoing dynamic in the national process, both during the colonial period and during the era of independence. Meanwhile, in a social and cultural context, building national character is a necessity for countries that have rich cultural diversity [6] .

Building national character is a big idea proposed by the nation's founders because as a nation consisting of various ethnic groups with strong cultural diversity, Indonesia needs a common view regarding culture and overall character as a national identity. This has important significance because it involves uniform understanding, views and steps in realizing prosperity and prosperity for all Indonesian people [7].

According to the Ministry of National Education [8], character education involves all individual potential, including cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects, and takes into account interactions that occur within the family, educational unit and society. This psychological and sociocultural totality can be grouped according to the picture shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Scope of Character Education

According to the picture above, value grouping is based on the understanding that behavior that reflects a person's character is the result of the potential of the human individual as a whole, including cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects, as well as socio-cultural interactions in the context of the family, educational unit and society that take place. throughout life [9]. Character configuration in the context of the totality of psychological and socio-cultural processes can be grouped into: (1) spiritual and emotional development; (2) intellectual development; (3) physical and kinesthetic development; and (4) affective and creative development [10].

Student character development in the midst of digital transformation presents several additional aspects that need to be considered in this research. Digital transformation has changed the way we communicate, learn and interact in everyday life. Digital transformation has influenced the way students interact with technology [11]. Therefore, it is important to examine how technology can be used as a tool to build good character, such as developing a sense of responsibility in the use of technology, promoting fairness in technology access, and supporting awareness of digital issues and online ethics [12]. Apart from intellectual intelligence, it is also important to consider the development of emotional intelligence and digital intelligence. Students need to be able to manage their emotions in a digital environment that is often full of pressure and fast interactions [13]. They must also understand the concept of digital ethics and how to behave wisely in the online world. With online learning becoming increasingly common, it is important to examine how character education can be integrated into digital learning environments. How lecturers can facilitate discussions, reflections, and interactions that promote good character through online platforms is something that needs to be studied. Digital transformation also influences the role of parents in shaping student character [14]. How parents support their child's character development in the digital era, including supervising technology use and providing appropriate guidance, is an important aspect to consider. Like other things, increasingly advanced information technology in the current digital era also has positive and negative effects [15] .

In the ongoing digital era, technological development has become something that cannot be avoided, and its influence has penetrated all aspects of life, including education. High fluctuations in information flows in this digital era are difficult to control [16]. Even though this advancement in information should be able to provide convenience in the education sector in Indonesia, in reality this is not always the case. The heavy flow of information does not always have a positive impact. Like other things, increasingly advanced information technology in the current digital era also has positive and negative effects [17].

Students easily increase their knowledge and skills, but they are very limited in internalizing the values of character education. As a result, students' behavioral patterns experience many changes. The values of good manners and manners that were previously respected in local culture tend to be forgotten. In fact, students do not understand ethics and karma, often forget the values of honesty, often violate discipline, lack respect for differences, lack enthusiasm for self-development, and the integrity between their words and actions decreases [18].

Thus, although learners face obstacles in internalising the values of character education, the application of Firkins, et al's (2007) genre learning model and Oradee's (2012) conversational skills learning technique can be a solution to improve students' speaking literacy and character building [19].

Firkins, et al's (2007) genre learning model and Oradee's (2012) conversational skills learning technique provide a foundation for the development of students' speaking literacy and character building. Through text modelling, combined text construction and independent text construction, students learn to understand the structure and conventions of different types of texts [20]. Activities such as discussion, role play and

problem solving are integrated to enhance interpersonal communication skills. Discussions provide opportunities for students to respect different views, build empathy, and strengthen their ability to argue politely. Role-playing helps them understand others' perspectives and develop empathy, while problem-solving involves critical and creative thinking to overcome challenges [21].

2   Methods

The research method used is a qualitative descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on literature study and interviews. Indonesian Literature students class 2020-2022 as research subjects. They will be involved as respondents and key informants in filling out questionnaires distributed via Google Form. Data will be collected through literature studies, questionnaires and interviews. Data was collected through literature analysis to understand concepts related to digital transformation, student character development, and approaches used by universities. This research will describe the results of data analysis, including findings regarding the impact of digital transformation on student character, the challenges faced, and the strategies used by universities.

3   Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher will describe the results of the research that has been carried out through questionnaire data in the form of a Google form, and on future occasions interviews will be carried out with 3 key informants, namely students from 3 different classes to get clearer answers. The following is a description of the results of the research analysis:

3.1   Evaluation of Student Knowledge of the Era of Digital Transformation

This research involved 100 respondents, all of whom were students of Indonesian Literature, Faculty of Languages and Arts (FBS) at Medan State University (UNIMED). The majority of respondents were women, with a percentage of 83.3%, while men only accounted for around 16.7% of the total respondents. The age range of the majority of respondents was between 16 and 20 years, covering 92.9% of the total population. As many as 83.3% of respondents were in semester 3.

Table 1: Evaluation of the Role of Digital Transformation in Student Character Development

No	Question	Very low	Low	Fairly Low	Tall	Very high

1	Level of understanding of student character development in the midst of digital transformation	15 %	5%	20%	50%	10%
2	The impact of digital transformation on student character development in the tertiary environment	2%	5%	18%	70 %	5%
3	Support provided by universities in character development through digital technology	30%	5%	23%	32 %	10%

From the table above, it can be seen that:

1.   Level of Understanding

The majority of respondents (60%) have a high or very high level of understanding about student character development in the midst of digital transformation. This shows that most of the students have good knowledge of this concept. A small number of respondents (20%) had a fairly low or low level of understanding, which could indicate a need for more in-depth understanding of this concept.

2.   Impact of Digital Transformation on Character Development:

Most respondents (88%) have a positive view of the impact of digital transformation on student character development. Although there are some respondents who see this impact as negative (7%), their percentage is relatively small.

3.   Higher Education Support in Character Development through Digital Technology:

The majority of respondents (42%) felt that universities provide good or very good support in character development through digital technology. However, there were some respondents (35%) who felt that the support provided was insufficient or very inadequate. This shows that there is still room to increase support from universities in this regard.

Overall, this research shows that UNIMED Faculty of Languages and Arts students generally have a good understanding of the role of digital technology in building student character. They also see the impact of digital transformation as a positive thing. However, further attention is needed to the support provided by universities to ensure

that digital technology is truly used effectively in developing student character. Higher education institutions may consider further efforts to increase support and integration of digital technology in the curriculum and learning activities.

3.2   Digital Transformation can Help Improve Student Character Development

In this case, the researcher attempted to interview several students of the Indonesian Literature Study Program, Medan State University, who came from various different generations. However, in this case the focus and key informants in this research are 3 Indonesian Literature students from Stambuk 2020-2022. The reason the researchers used these three students as key informants was because in their daily activities these students were known to actively write and provide their works to the public domain and were also active in using digital technology. The following are the results of the interviews of the three students:

Table 2. Interview Results on the Role of Digital Transformation in Improving Student Character

Key Informant	Class Year	Main View	Important Aspects
1	2020	The presence of this Digital Transformation era is very helpful and beneficial for us students, especially me, because with this I can access many positive things in the digital world, including the closest thing is helping to increase skills in this world of technology.	Supports the formation of skills and abilities that suit each individual.
2	2021	Digital transformation has helped me become more independent and adaptive. With easy access to online learning resources, I learned to manage my time and overcome challenges with problem-solving skills.	Helps manage time so that it can be utilized appropriately.

		This also increases my sense of responsibility in self-management, because I have to be disciplined in following my own study schedule.	
3	2022	For me, digital transformation is the key to developing global understanding and insight. International learning resources and access to news from around the world have helped me understand the diversity of cultures and world views. This broadened my horizons and increased my tolerance and understanding of different perspectives.	Understanding information sources enriches knowledge regarding global insight and information in the international realm.

From the results of interviews with three key informants representing different year groups, it can be concluded that digital transformation has a significant role in improving student character.

The first informant, who came from the class of 2020, described that digital transformation had provided great benefits for students. They see the ability to access a variety of information sources and online training as a valuable tool for improving their technology skills. Furthermore, they consider digital transformation to support the formation of skills and abilities that match personal interests and talents.

The second informant, representing the class of 2021, highlighted that digital transformation has helped them become more independent and adaptive. Easy access to online learning resources has enabled them to develop time management skills and the ability to solve challenges. In addition, these informants felt increased personal responsibility in managing their own study schedule, which became important in character development.

Meanwhile, the third informant, who came from the class of 2022, emphasized the role of digital transformation in expanding global understanding and insight. They feel that access to international learning resources and global news has helped them understand diverse cultures and world views. Digital transformation, in their view, has increased tolerance for different perspectives and enriched their knowledge of global insights and international information.

Thus, it can be concluded that digital transformation makes various positive contributions to student character. This includes increased skills, independence, time management, as well as a broader understanding of diverse cultures and world views. Digital transformation helps students to be better prepared to face ongoing changes in the future and become more knowledgeable individuals.

4   Conclusion

Higher education has an important role in developing student character, which is the main goal of Indonesian national education. Character development includes aspects such as personality, noble character, independence and creativity. Digital transformation has influenced many aspects of life, including education, and it is necessary to understand how this affects student character development.

This researah shows several important findings, namely:

1. Students have a good level of understanding about student character development in the midst of digital transformation. Most of them see the impact of digital transformation as positive, although there are some who see it as negative. This shows that students have accepted the role of digital technology in their character development.

2. Digital transformation provides benefits for student character development. Students experience improvements in technology skills, independence, time management, and understanding of diverse cultures and world views. In this context, digital technology has helped them to become more knowledgeable, independent and adaptive individuals.

3. It is important for universities to provide better support in character development through digital technology. There is room for improvement in the integration of digital technology in the curriculum and learning activities. Colleges can also consider ways to help students manage their emotions in stressful digital environments and to understand the concept of digital ethics.

Overall, building student character in the midst of digital transformation is an important challenge. Higher education has a strategic role in shaping the character of students so that they become a generation of excellence, faith, noble character and character. Digital transformation allows for better character development if managed wisely, and this research has identified important aspects to consider in this endeavor. Digital transformation is not an obstacle to character development, but an opportunity that needs to be utilized well.

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