

## CHARACTER EDUCATION TO RESPOND TO THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY SKILLS CHALLENGES: A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

As has been studied by experts, it has created challenges that have an impact on the occurrence of a crisis in the field of character. The purpose of writing this article is to answer the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through character education. Daniel Bell as quoted by Mochtar Buchori mentions there are six challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; namely integration of economy, fragmentation of politics, interdependence, high technology, and new colonization in culture. Character education as mentioned above, among others, is aimed at the emergence of attitudes and concerns to command the good and stay away from the bad. The method used in this research is literatur review. Character education in order to answer the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the nation is something that needs to be done. Through such character education, it will be possible to produce cadres of national leaders who have a strong commitment to advancing the nation and state, have a clear identity, and are not carried away by globalization.

**Keywords:** 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, character and education

### I. INTRODUCTION

Discussing “Character Education to Respond to the Skills Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” is very important, for the following reasons.

First, the 21<sup>st</sup> century that we are currently experiencing, as studied by experts, has created challenges that have an impact on the occurrence of a crisis in the field of character. Daniel Bell as quoted by Mochtar Buchori mentions there are six challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; namely integration of economy, fragmentation of politics, interdependence, high technology, and new colonization in culture.[1] The six challenges posed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century either directly or indirectly have an impact on the occurrence of a crisis in the field of character. Integration of the economy (unification in trade), causing the emergence of a free market (free market) which is full of unfair competition. In order to fight over the market, economic behavior can justify any means, such as usury (interesting money unreasonably), ghurur (cheating), maysir (gambling-speculation), control over assets and opportunities (monopoly) which kills small business groups; hoarding goods so that there

is an imbalance between supply and demand which causes an unreasonable increase in the price of goods and services, and so on. Furthermore, the fragmentation of politics in order to demand more democratic, fair, humane and egalitarian treatment, sometimes leads to excessive democracy and acts of anarchism. Meanwhile, interdependence (mutual dependence) in order to gain recognition from other countries (social recognition), sometimes has the effect of creating a strong state hegemony over a weak state. Meanwhile, the use of high technology in the form of computers and digital technology is sometimes misused to provoke, slander, fight each other, kill characters, and so on. Meanwhile, the existence of new colonization in culture causes moral decadence or culture shock, especially among the young generation. Pragmatic, transactional, hedonistic, materialistic, and secularistic patterns and views of life, causing people to become hard-hearted, less interested in spiritual values and tend to follow lifestyles and tastes that indulge lust, and to get all of that they can justify all means such as selling self, and so on.

Second, there are signs of the times that can destroy the nation's future. Thomas Lickona, Professor from Cortland University, as quoted by Masnur Muslich said, there are 10 (ten) signs of a nation heading for destruction, namely: (1) increasing violence among teenagers; (2) deteriorating use of language and words; (3) strong peer-group influence in acts of violence; (4) increased self-destructive behavior, such as the use of drugs, alcohol, and casual sex; (5) the blurring of good and bad moral guidelines; (6) decreased work ethic; (7) less respect for parents and teachers; (8) low sense of responsibility of individuals and citizens; (9) the culture of dishonesty, and (10) the existence of mutual suspicion and violence among others. If digested, it turns out that the ten signs of the times already exist in Indonesia.[2]

Third, there are some people who have mental block (mental illness), namely the way of thinking and feeling that is hindered by illusions that actually prevent us from moving towards success. The symptoms of mental block include: (1) complaining; (2) has a malicious virus; (3) inner conflict; (4) no change in life, and (5) not willing to take risks. Mental block occurs due to, among others: (1) because of a bad view of one's own abilities (bad self-image); (2) bad experience (bad experience); (3) bad environment (bad environment); (4) bad references (bad references); and (5) poor education (bad education). These destructive viruses include: blaming others, looking for excuses, looking for justifications, promoting prestige, being lazy, afraid to take risks, tending to wait, not being confident and having bad thoughts.[3] Mental Block like that, the symptoms are evenly distributed among the community, even in schools, and are closely related to the birth of ten signs of the times that can destroy the nation's future. Among other things, this can be solved through religious education.[4]

Fourth, there is a distortion of the notion of character or morals. Character or morality is often interpreted as an ingrained attitude or behavior, which consists of good and bad behavior. People who are diligent in worship,

praying in congregation in the mosque, fasting obligatory and sunnah, performing the pilgrimage, likes to read or memorize the Qur'an, give tausiyah, speak softly and politely, respect parents, neighbors and others, cheap smile, and like to give charity and so on are often called people who have good morals. However, people with good morals also commit acts and acts that are not commendable, such as destroying forests, conducting illegal trade, paying interest, committing corruption, accepting bribes, and even committing adultery. Thus, people who are said to have good morals are not directly proportional to the ability to distance themselves from actions that are prohibited by religion, ethics, morals, culture and law. Such a person has been able to carry out good deeds (*amar ma'ruf*), but has not been able to distance or prohibit bad deeds (*nahyi al-munkar*). Thus, at this time there has been a kind of distortion of the understanding of character, so that the character does not succeed in overcoming the damage in the moral field, especially those related to dishonesty.

Fifth, currently there is a transactional legal practice in all areas of life, namely that the services or goods received by a person must be proportional to the money paid. This situation is not only in the economic field, but has also penetrated the political, social, educational, and even religious fields.[5] In the political field, the goal is no longer to fight for ideals or ideals that reflect the interests of the community, nation and state, but rather to personal interests, parties, groups or groups. In the social field, it is no longer based on the spirit of helping which is based on humanity and sincerity, but rather driven by the interests of take and give. This can be seen, for example, in the household life of some artists who are married and divorced, or divorced amicably, because each partner is no longer able to satisfy economically and financially. Transactional law in the field of education, for example, can be seen in the attitude of the people who view the cost of education as investment capital that must be returned and profitable by means of graduates who promise jobs that can make it easier to earn money. As a result of such circumstances, educational programs that are not

marketable are no longer in demand by the public. In addition, the educational costs incurred must also be balanced with the availability of complete and good facilities, satisfactory service from lecturers and administrative staff, and various other facilities, according to the costs they incur. Education is currently no longer carrying the mission of national character education, but rather as part of a business venture that seeks profit, without paying attention to national character education. In today's education, according to Fethullah Ghulen, many graduates are born as "scorpions ready to bite with their dangerous venom." [6] That is why it is not surprising that nowadays, various criminal acts and violations of laws, religious norms, and morals abound. carried out among students in particular and society in general. [7]

Sixth, that the formulation of national character education in schools is currently fading. Some students who are believed to be in contact with the development of the nation's character, such as Pancasila Moral Education (PMP), Citizenship Education, Character Education, and Courtesy Education are increasingly less attractive. Likewise, religious education related to the development of noble character is trapped in the provision of cognitive religious knowledge. These various subjects are shifted by subjects related to the development of scientific and technological insights and skills that are directed at producing intelligent and skilled humans and strong hard skills, but are not balanced with subjects related to national character education that lead to strengthening soft skills, such as honesty, tolerance, humanism, egalitarian, polite, hard work, discipline, friendly, and so on.

The formulation of character education in order to answer the challenges of the 21st century in educational institutions from elementary to tertiary levels, both formal and non-formal with various aspects: vision, mission, goals, curriculum, teaching materials, methods and approaches, educators and staff education, infrastructure, management and evaluation and others, must be formulated with a starting point on the problems mentioned above. [8]

## **2 METHODS**

The literature review (LR) was chosen to conduct this study, Because literature review is one of the simpler research methods compared to other more complicated methods, for example systematic review or meta-analysis.

## **3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Definition Of Character Education**

Character education can literally be interpreted as changing or shaping a person's character, behavior, temperament, character, and personality according to specified criteria. [9] While essentially character education is an effort to help the development of children's souls both physically and mentally, from their natural nature towards a better human civilization [10]. Character education has a higher meaning than moral education, because character education is not only related to the problem of right and wrong, but how to instill habits (habits) about good things in life, so that children/students have high awareness and understanding. , as well as concern and commitment to apply virtue in daily life. [12]

Character education is carried out with the aim of improving the quality of educational processes and outcomes that lead to the formation of character and noble character of students in a complete, integrated, and balanced manner, in accordance with the competency standards of graduates in educational units. [13] In addition, character education is also directed at developing moral intelligence (building moral intelligence) or developing children's moral abilities which is carried out by building moral intelligence, namely the ability to understand right and wrong, namely having strong ethical beliefs and acting on these beliefs. , so that people behave properly and honorably. [14]

Thus, character education is related to understanding, appreciation and attitudes towards values that are considered noble which are manifested in good behavior related to God, humans, and nature. To realize such a situation, character education requires the

support of moral education[15], value education (manners, manners and morals),[16] religious education[17] and civic education.[18]

National character education as described above is currently in an alarming state. This can be shown, among other things, by the increasing practice of violating the law, such as drug abuse, having sex outside of marriage, corrupt practices, collusion and nepotism, brawls between classes, social conflicts, thuggery, violent acts, murders and so on.[19] Such a situation causes human life to become increasingly uncomfortable, creates a sense of anxiety and fear, and is increasingly concerned about the future of the nation.

### **3.2. Vision And Mission Of Character Education**

The vision and mission of character education in the 21st century must be directed at efforts to improve mental block (mental illness) as mentioned above.[20] In addition, character education must also be directed at efforts to help the development of the soul of students from their natural nature towards a humane and good civilization. Character education is higher than moral education, because it is not only related to right and wrong issues, but also instills habits (habits) about good things in life as a nation, so that students have high awareness and understanding, as well as concern and commitment to apply virtue in daily life as a nation.[21]

Character education in the 21st century can further be understood as an effort to instill, train about the practice of understanding, appreciating and practicing values related to the character of the nation, so that the character becomes his identity, personality, mindset, perspective, identity, and at the same time his love and pride as a nation, and believes that character values as the most suitable for the life of the Indonesian nation. The values of national character education are described and elaborated from the ideology and philosophy of life of the Indonesian nation, Pancasila[22], the 1945 Constitution, as well as various thoughts and views expressed by

Indonesian national figures who are recognized for their credibility, loyalty, commitment, love and responsibility. seriousness in advancing the Indonesian nation.

Through these various references, the character of the Indonesian nation can be described, as a character who has God Almighty, has a just and civilized humanity; strives to maintain and maintain Indonesian Unity, holds a populist view Led by Wisdom of Wisdom in Representative Deliberations, and Strives to realize Social Justice for all Indonesian People. With the belief in God Almighty, a person with Indonesian character will become a religious nation, having a transcendental vision, prioritizing moral and spiritual values, above transient and profane values. With humanity, he will try to carry out the mission of humanization and liberation, and avoid anarchic, violent, and intimidating ways of fighting for something. With the spirit of Indonesian unity, he will appreciate and respect the existence of diversity (plurality) and consider it a grace, gift, and wealth that must be synergized and managed wisely so that it becomes a very powerful cultural and cultural capital. With a populist attitude led by wisdom in deliberation/representation, he will prioritize democratic ways, deliberation and a family approach that is full of politeness in solving various problems, and abstain from ways that show hegemony and dictatorship in solving problems. and by upholding social justice for all Indonesian people, he will have a commitment to the welfare of the people of Indonesia, as well as avoiding monopolistic methods, or various fraudulent actions that are detrimental to the Indonesian nation.[23]

In addition, someone who has an Indonesian personality is also a personality who loves and is proud of Indonesia by dedicating all his abilities to the progress of Indonesia. At the same time, he will also display an attitude of maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation, looking at the Unitary State of Indonesia, with the spirit of the Youth Pledge, namely love for the Indonesian homeland, the Indonesian language, and the Indonesian nation.

This effort is shown, among others, by advancing the social, economic, political, cultural, educational, health life of the Indonesian nation based on the values of Pancasila. In addition, it is also aimed at being willing to secure and defend the Indonesian state and nation from infiltration and hegemony of foreign countries, whether in the form of politics, economy, culture and so on. This effort is carried out by contributing ideas and thoughts, engaging directly in overcoming the problem in accordance with the field, profession, position, position and authority possessed. In addition, it is also carried out by showing significant achievements and contributions to the progress of the nation and state.

Character education in the 21st century is also closely related to efforts to understand, appreciate and practice the cultural values of the Indonesian nation that grows and develops in Indonesia, such as the value of mutual cooperation, kinship, friendly, polite, tolerance, friendly, mutual respect and mutual respect. respect, promote deliberation in solving problems, obey religious teachings, and various values that grow and develop in various regions in Indonesia, hereinafter known as local wisdom. These various cultural values are used as the basis for shaping attitudes, mindsets, paradigms, mindsets, perspectives and actions of the entire Indonesian nation.

### **3.3.Purpose Of Character Education**

Character education as mentioned above, among others, is aimed at the emergence of attitudes and concerns to command the good and stay away from the bad. This statement shows that in character education there is a strong message to produce humans who have the awareness to build history, culture and civilization, as has been done by world leaders, or Indonesian national figures in the past.[24] Thus, the purpose of national character education is to produce people who have historical, cultural and civilization awareness. To be able to realize such a nation, it must also be accompanied by efforts to create a national character that has a strong intellectual tradition, namely characters who: (1)

love the truth (not seek justification); (2) honesty and originality; (3) respect for science; and (4) a cosmopolitan attitude.[25] This intellectual tradition was practiced by Muslims in classical times, when Muslims appeared as guides for the history, culture and civilization of mankind in almost all over the world, in a period of more than seven centuries.

### **3.4.Various Character Education Methods And Approachs**

There are a number of thoughts and ideas related to the methods and approaches of character education in the 21st century in schools and in various other educational institutions that are believed to bring success. E. Mulyana. for example, states that the keys to successful national character education in schools are: (1) understanding the nature of national character education; (2) socialize appropriately; (3) create a conducive environment, (4) support it with adequate learning facilities and resources; (5) foster student discipline; (6) select a trustworthy school principal; (7) create teachers who can be nurtured and imitated, and (8) involve all school members. While the learning model is (1) habituation; (2) exemplary; (3) habituation of student discipline; (4) contextual teaching learning (CTL), (5) role playing, and (6) participatory learning.[26]

In line with that, there are also those who provide the idea of national character education in schools and educational institutions by (1) teaching; (2) exemplary; (3) determine priorities; (4) priority praxis, and (5) reflection. This method is supported by implementing a character education locus in schools, the steps of which are: (1) making schools a vehicle for value actualization; (2) every encounter is a moment of value education; (3) wiyatamandala insight during school orientation; (4) class management; (5) enforcement of discipline in schools; (6) guardianship assistance; (7) religious education for character building; (8) physical education; (9) aesthetic education, (10) using an integrated curriculum; and (11) volitional education and experience.[27]

Another strategy that can be done in character education in the 21st century is to look

for the causes of the poor character of the nation. Abdul Halim Mahmud, said that in addition to the causes that arise from oneself, namely the influence of uncontrolled lust, it is also from outside, namely from those who deliberately instill values that are contrary to the values adopted by the nation.[28 ]

Character education in the 21st century can also be done by changing the paradigm of character education to a more substantive one. That is not a character that only appears on the surface, but deeper, as something that is born from an inner calling, contains a spiritual and transcendental dimension based on faith in God, as well as an awareness that everything humans do is always supervised by God, and in the future will be held accountable in the hereafter. Such faith is reflected in the personality of the Prophet Muhammad, Caliph Umar bin Abdul Azis, Hakim Shurayh, and a woman named Ghamidiah.[29] They already have noble character, such as generous, polite, tolerant, fair, but honest and firm. All of this happened, because while carrying out his mandate and life he always felt supervised by God. They have an effective and transformative faith, which is a faith that has vibration and resonance, and always influences their thoughts, actions and actions.

Character building in the 21st century in schools can also be seen from the ways in which other nations in the world are classified as having good character, such as Japan, New Zealand, Turkey, Iran and so on. They are well-known as a nation that currently has good morals and soft skills, which in turn can maintain the image of the nation, and bring progress in various fields of life.

In addition, character education in the 21st century can also be pursued by realizing democratic education by fulfilling the following requirements. First, educational practice always emphasizes equality and justice; Second, the learning process must lead to the development of cultural abilities in students. These abilities include self-awareness, understanding and respect for other cultures, being able to help cooperate with various cultural differences. Each student as an individual continues to be given the opportunity to develop awareness of his ethnic

identity. [30]

Character education in the 21st century in schools is further directed at efforts to foster a Muslim personal work ethic, the characteristics of which include: (1) having a leadership spirit, (2) always introspecting; (3) value time; (4) never feel satisfied in doing good; (5) develop a life-saving and efficient; (6) have an entrepreneurial spirit (entrepreneurship); (7) have a healthy competitive spirit; (8) the desire to be independent; (9) thirst for knowledge and experience; (10) macro insight (universal); (11) pay attention to health and nutrition; (12) tenacious, never give up); (13) productivity oriented; and (14) enriching the friendship network.[31]

Furthermore, to be able to carry out various methods and approaches to 21st century character education in schools and other educational institutions, it can also be done by revamping the character of the school itself, or revamping the educational institution as a whole. As it is known, that the current school system is also difficult to expect to be able to give birth to human beings with character, which is because the character of the school itself does not support the nation's character education. Some things that can be identified as bad character schools include: (1) there are still schools that allow dishonest practices in achieving achievements, such as allowing students to cheat on each other in answering exam questions, or even leaking exam questions. to students in exchange for a sum of money; (2) determination of evaluation results which only emphasizes the cognitive, intellectual intelligence and skills, without being balanced with moral and spiritual intelligence; (3) the practice of bribery and catabelece in the admission of new students; (4) there are unscrupulous teachers who commit sexual harassment and acts of violence, (5) the absence of school culture and culture that encourages the growth of a critical, independent, and responsible attitude, and (6) there are even a number of school principals and university leaders who become a suspect in a corruption case.[32]

The character of the school which is expected to shape the character of the nation can

also be done by applying the following two things. First, by implementing democratic and multicultural education in schools. Democratic education is a process in which students participate in decision-making that will affect school life. Through this participation, students will interact with other teachers and educators to create better learning conditions. While multicultural education is education that provides attention, service, and tolerance to students who have various backgrounds, including various strata of socioeconomic status. This diversity of socioeconomic status is another challenge for teachers. The attention and assistance of teachers which is manifested in carrying out learning that is full of appreciation of the existing differences in socioeconomic status will be very meaningful for students, especially students who are in low socioeconomic status.[33] Second, by applying a conducive school culture or culture, namely in the form of application, habituation and civilizing noble values, such as honesty, discipline, work ethic, achievement, respect for differences, tolerance[34], quality-oriented, and sincere.[35] This school culture will not only become an identity, it will also be a source of inspiration, cognitive frame work, and guide values that direct the entire school community, so that as a whole they become individuals with good character, even great ones. person (people who excel).

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

Character education in order to answer the challenges of the 21st century in the nation is something that needs to be done. Through such character education, it will be possible to produce cadres of national leadership who have a strong commitment to advancing the nation and state, have a clear identity, and are not carried away by the flow of globalization which tends to prioritize short-term, hedonistic, individualistic and materialistic. This 21st century character education must, among other things, be based on the noble values contained in the teachings of Islam, Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, the spirit of the Youth Pledge, the views and thoughts of credible national leaders, values that grow and develop. in various islands in Indonesia.

The implementation of such character education is currently in a less conducive state, even in a critical state. The prevalence and culture of various acts of corruption, horizontal conflicts, brawls between students, radicalism, terrorism, drug trafficking and use, environmental destruction, and prostitution, shows that the implementation of national character education in schools is still not running effectively. This situation also shows that schools or educational institutions currently lack the ability to implement such character education, which is because these schools or educational institutions no longer have good character. In addition, democratic education, multicultural education, and a superior culture (great culture) that supports the implementation of education in educational institutions have also not grown as they should.

In order to support the implementation of character education in order to answer the challenges of the 21st century, the following things are needed. First, applying an emancipatory humanist teaching and learning approach, namely methods and approaches that emphasize modeling, reflection, problem solving, insight development, and objective assessment; Second, by involving all elements in educational institutions; Third, improve the character of educational institutions; Fourth, implementing Islamic and Indonesian democratic education in educational institutions; Fifth, implementing multicultural education in educational institutions, and sixth creating a culture of schools and educational institutions that lead to the production of superior human beings (great person) both physically (hand), intellectually (head), moral, emotional, social and spiritual (heart). which is based on the noble values of the Islamic teachings of the nation's culture.

In this way, the implementation of national character education in schools and educational institutions in order to answer the challenges of the 21st century will be seen in the reality of life, and not something that is purely theoretical. For this reason, habituation, guidance, and example are part of the strategy for implementing character education in the 21st century in educational institutions.

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