



Shaping Children's Character in the Era of Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 as the Nation's Successor through Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

This research delves into character education by examining the techniques and factors influencing character building at Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo Kindergarten. It employs qualitative methods to explore how character formation strategies align with national objectives and contemporary demands within Early Childhood Education (ECE), particularly amidst the Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 era. Through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving educators, and children at TK Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo, the study seeks to understand their perspectives, experiences, and practices regarding character formation. Thematic analysis reveals key themes related to techniques such as outdoor activities, play-based learning, music, repetition, and reinforcement, along with the integration of technology like Internet of Things (IoT) to enhance character development. By uncovering effective strategies for character formation and addressing challenges faced by educators, this research contributes to our understanding of nurturing children's character in ECE settings, emphasizing the importance of holistic approaches that blend traditional values with innovative practices.

Keywords: *Character Education, Revolution 4.0 And Society 5.0, Early Childhood Education*



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INTRODUCTION

We are in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 marked by technological advancements that enable instant access to needed information for everyone (Rahayu, 2020). The Internet of Things (IoT) is synonymous with Society 5.0 in Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, which refers to a society directly connected to the internet to fulfill daily needs (Gladden, 2019). The easy access to the internet and information provides

opportunities for the younger generation to interact freely in the virtual world. Accessing desired pages or content within seconds is a characteristic of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0.

Along with the ease of access to content and websites, it shapes individual character (Jaenullah, Ferdian Utama, 2022). As observed, the phenomenon is that young children are facilitated with smartphones connected to the internet, and even proficient in using internet-connected smartphones to access desired YouTube channels, TikTok, and others. Entering the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, having a strong personality is one way to compete healthily globally (Marpuah et al., 2021). However, with the growing technology in Indonesia, there seems to be a decline in morals (Pertiwi, Folar, Farhana, & Alam, 2022). Several online and offline media outlets often present news about students' behaviors in learning, interactions that do not align with norms among peers, teachers, and within the environment. Actions depicted in these news stories include insulting educators, disrespecting peers, bullying, fights, and even criminal acts (Sugiarto & Farid, 2023).

This phenomenon has prompted the idea of the Minister of Education and Culture in the United Indonesia Cabinet Volume 2 to introduce character education as a solution to the existing problems (Futika Permatasari, 2021). Character education is a government-inaugurated education program as part of the National Long-Term Development Plan from 2005 to 2025, aimed at producing morally upright Indonesian workforce (Dahl, 2019). Having noble morals is considered a character element that aligns with the national education goals. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, the education system in Indonesia consists of pre-education, basic education, primary and secondary education, and higher education (Depdiknas, 2003). One form of pre-basic education institution is early childhood education institutions. Early childhood is the most effective age for developing various potentials in children. In line with this, Kindergarten (TK) education is one form of early childhood education within the school education pathway (Fatimatul Zuhroh, 2022). The main task of Kindergarten is to prepare children by introducing various knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, skills, and intellect so they can adapt to real learning in elementary school (Zainuddin, W., Musriaparto, & Nur, 2022).

Character education studies conducted by experts include implementation, learning methods, and character education in early childhood (Haslip, Allen-Handy, & Donaldson, 2019). Previous research focused mainly on learning that incorporates character through outlines or lesson plans. Therefore, the studies were only on the conceptual level and implementation according to the curriculum. Based on this, it can be concluded that there is a gap between the understanding of character education concepts, its implementation, and its usefulness in facing technological and societal developments.

Referring to the above description, this study aims to delve deeper into character education and early childhood education at TK Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo, as the initial foundation for character formation in Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 era. This will examine how character formation techniques in Early Childhood Education institutions align with national education goals, theories of Early Childhood Education, character education, information technology development, and society, so that character formation can align with national goals. The national education goal for character education involves the formation of individuals with

moral values, ethics, and good personalities. Character education aims to create responsible citizens who are honest, disciplined, and have empathy and tolerance towards others, which are crucial in creating a stable and harmonious society (Kamaruddin, Zulham, Utama, & Fadilah, 2023). Additionally, character education helps individuals develop a strong identity and personality, enabling them to overcome challenges and make good decisions in their daily lives. Another goal is to reinforce positive values such as honesty, loyalty, hard work, and integrity in individual lives (Nahar, Salminawati, & Zaman, 2023). By possessing strong character, individuals tend to be more motivated to learn and grow, as well as exhibit professionalism in the workplace and society. Therefore, the national education goal for character education is crucial in shaping a quality generation and a civilized society (Sujana, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach. This approach is chosen because it allows researchers to more holistically understand the context and complexity of character formation in children in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. According to Moleong, it is a study aimed at understanding the phenomena experienced by the subjects, such as behaviour, motivation, activities, and others. Holistic and descriptive, it uses words and language within a specific context and employs various scientific methods. Qualitative research pays attention to scientific data, data related to its existence. The qualitative approach also allows for deeper exploration of individual experiences and nuances in character education practices (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, 2018).

The research design used is a case study. Case studies are chosen because they allow researchers to investigate the phenomenon of character formation in children deeply at TK Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo. Through this approach, researchers can gain rich and detailed understanding of the context in which children's character formation occurs. The research subjects include teachers and administrative staff at TK Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo and parents actively involved in children's education activities. Involving various stakeholders will provide a comprehensive perspective on character formation practices at the TK. Data collection is conducted through several methods, namely interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews will be conducted with teachers and administrative staff to gain insight into the character formation techniques applied at the TK. Observations will be conducted to observe character formation practices in the TK environment directly. Data will also be collected by analyzing documents related to the curriculum, school policies, and learning materials related to character education (Basri, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character Education

Education originates from the word "didik," which means action or manner. The term education comes from the Greek word "pedagogik," meaning "Teaching to Children." Law of National Education System Number 23 of 2003 states that education is a conscious effort to realize the learning process to develop mental strength, self-control, character, intelligence, noble morality, and skills for community life for

students (Rini:2013). Therefore, education is an effort to develop spiritual potential, character, intelligence, noble morality, and skills to be used in community life.

Character education is a term used to describe the entire curriculum and characteristics of schools that promote the development of students' core values in school. Lickona (1991) emphasizes that character education includes values such as honesty, togetherness, justice, discipline, courage, mutual cooperation, tolerance, cooperation, wisdom, democracy, as well as respect and responsibility. Meanwhile, according to the Heartwood Institute, Character Education consists of seven values: respect, loyalty, honesty, love, justice, courage, and self-confidence. Table 1 illustrates the understanding of character education from various sources.

Table 1: Definitions of Character Education by Various Researchers

Researchers of Character	Concept of Character Education
T. Ramli	Character education is education that emphasizes the essence and meaning of morals and ethics so that it is able to shape the character of students into good individuals .
Thomas Lickhona (1991)	Character education is a deliberate effort to assist someone so that they can understand, improve, and embody core ethical values .
John W. Santrock	Character education is education conducted through direct interaction with students to instill moral values and provide lessons on moral knowledge in an effort to prevent prohibited behavior (W, 2003).
Anies Baswedan (2011)	Character education is education that develops human potential comprehensively, namely intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.

Character education is one of the crucial forms of education that deserves to be practiced in Indonesia. Its aim is to shape and develop the character of students to become good, noble, and morally upright individuals. Character education also plays a role in realizing Indonesia's national vision to enhance the quality of life in society and build a just and prosperous community. Character education encompasses several fundamental concepts such as character, values, and education. Regarding character education, there are various definitions and opinions depending on experts in the fields of education, psychology, and philosophy.

Character education receives widespread attention from various fields, including education, psychology, and philosophy. Definitions and perspectives on character education may vary depending on each expert's viewpoint. In the educational context, character education is often interpreted as a systematic process aimed at shaping positive attitudes, values, and behaviors in individuals, with the goal of helping them become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society. From a psychological standpoint, character education includes the formation of

psychological aspects such as empathy, tolerance, and self-control, focusing on the development of social and emotional skills. Meanwhile, from a philosophical perspective, character education has its roots in moral philosophy, emphasizing the importance of understanding and applying moral values in everyday life, with the aim of guiding individuals in making right and responsible choices. Despite variations in definitions and perspectives, the primary goal of character education remains the same: to shape individuals with good morality, strong ethics, and the ability to behave positively in society.

Character Education in Indonesia

Character education is one of the objectives of the curriculum in Indonesia. Moral values, ethics, and character education are included in the National Education System Law Number 1. On the 20th of 2003, the National Education System Law became the foundation for implementing national education. According to Article 3 of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, national education aims to cultivate the abilities and character of society and civilization that are dignified, enlighten society, and develop the potential of learners. The goal is to become individuals who are faithful, devout to the One God, noble in character, healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible.

The objectives of National Education are included in the National Education Curriculum and serve as guidelines for teachers in conducting teaching activities. The history of curriculum development in Indonesia shows that the ultimate outcome of the education process is the formation of character, morals, and love for the nation today (Muthohar, 2021). Learning in Indonesia implements the 2013 curriculum at all levels of education using a scientific approach in the learning process that touches on three educational domains proposed by Bloom: Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge.

A curriculum is a set of ideas, plans, or schemes that serve as the basis for an activity. According to Sanjaya (2008), the curriculum is divided into three forms: learning experiences, subjects, and curriculum structure. Meanwhile, according to the National Education Law, the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content and teaching materials, as well as methods used as guidelines in the implementation of educational activities to achieve certain educational objectives. The 2013 Curriculum (K-13) establishes character education as the main goal of competency-based learning through interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, and motivating learning processes. Based on basic education, elementary and secondary education develops character education as the learning objectives in the classroom. The expected outcome of learning is the growth and balance between the ability to become a good individual and the skills and knowledge necessary for a decent life.

Factors Influencing Character Education

There are several factors that influence a child's character. Among these factors, Gunawan categorizes them into two parts: internal factors and external factors.

Internal Factors:

- a. Instinct or intuition

Instinct is a characteristic that can cultivate actions that lead to a goal by first thinking towards that goal and not preceded by practicing that action.

Every human action arises from a will driven by instinct. Psychologists divide human instincts as driving forces for behavior into several parts, including instincts for eating, mating, parenting, striving, and being religious.

b. Custom or habit

One of the significant factors in human behavior is habit, as attitudes and behaviors that constitute character are closely related to habit. Habit refers to actions that are repeated so frequently that they become easy to perform. This habit factor plays an important role in shaping and nurturing character. Since habits are repeated actions that are easy to perform, humans should force themselves to repeat good deeds until they become habits and good character is formed.

c. Will

The will to carry out all ideas and intentions, even in the face of various obstacles and difficulties, and never willing to yield to those obstacles. One of the forces behind behavior is a strong will. It is this will that drives and motivates humans to behave (have character), because from this will arises a good or bad intention. Without will, all ideas, beliefs, and convictions become passive and have no meaning or influence on life.

d. Inner voice or conscience

Within humans, a power occasionally gives warnings (signals) if human behavior is on the brink of danger and wrongdoing. This power is the inner voice or conscience.

e. Heredity

Heredity is a factor that can influence human behavior. In life, we can see children who behave like their parents or even their ancestors, even if they are far removed. In general, inherited traits fall into two categories: physical traits, such as the strength and weaknesses of parents' muscles and nerves that their children can inherit, and spiritual traits, such as the strength and weakness of a certain instinct that can also be inherited by parents and later influence the behavior of their grandchildren.

External Factors:

In addition to internal factors (which are intrinsic), which can influence human character, morals, virtues, and ethics, there are also external factors (which are extrinsic), including the following:

a. Education

Education is an effort to improve oneself in all aspects. Education significantly influences character, morals, and ethics, so the goodness or badness of someone's character depends greatly on education. Education helps mature human personality so that their behavior aligns with the education they have received, whether formal, informal, or non-formal. Education is crucial because instincts in individuals can be well-developed and directed through it. Therefore, religious education needs to be manifested through various media, both formal education in schools, informal education in the family environment, and non-formal education in the community.

b. Environment

The environment surrounds a living body, such as plants, soil conditions, air, and human interaction. Human life always involves interaction with other humans or with the surrounding nature. That is why humans must interact, and in that interaction, they influence each other's thoughts, characteristics, and behaviors. The environment is divided into two parts: the material environment and the spiritual environment. The natural environment that surrounds humans is a factor that influences and determines human behavior. This natural environment can either hinder or foster the growth of an individual's talents. Then there is the social environment, which is spiritual in nature. A person who lives in a good environment, directly or indirectly, can shape their personality to be good, and conversely, someone who lives in an environment that is less supportive in shaping their character will be at least influenced by that environment.

Industrial Era Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0

Industrial Revolution 4.0 originated from the German industry in the early 2000s, marking a rapid change with the development of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS). CPS is a physical and technical system that utilizes computers and information technology to monitor, coordinate, control, and perform overall activities, changing the way people interact with each other.

According to the Commission on 21st Century Education (1996), Industrial Revolution 4.0 is followed by the development of Society 5.0, characterized by the following situations:

- a. Humans and everything will be connected to the Internet, knowledge and information will be quickly disseminated from all corners, and new values will ultimately emerge in society.
- b. Social problems arise, and society becomes free from various issues.
- c. Artificial intelligence frees humans from the burden of processing large amounts of information.
- d. Robots and machines simplify human tasks.

Salgues (2018) states that Industrial Revolution 4.0 in Society 5.0 is characterized by the power of knowledge, and society shares values, sustainability, inclusivity, effectiveness, and knowledge-sharing very easily. Therefore, individuals must have characteristics of adaptation and change, creativity, communicativeness, lifelong learning, collaboration, innovation, and agility. Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 are two concepts closely related to technological development and social change in modern society.

Industrial Revolution 4.0 refers to a wave of massive transformations in production and manufacturing triggered by digital technology, automation, and high connectivity. In Industrial Revolution 4.0, technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), big data, robotics, and cloud computing are at the core of production and manufacturing processes. This results in significant changes in how goods and services are produced, distributed, and consumed. Industrial Revolution 4.0 also has the potential to change the economic landscape by creating new jobs that require digital skills and altering the way work is done in various industrial sectors.

On the other hand, Society 5.0 is a concept that emerged from Japan, describing the vision of a future society seamlessly integrated with digital technology. Society 5.0 aims to create a society based on the utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance human quality of life. This concept emphasizes collaboration between advanced technology and human needs, with the goal of achieving a better and sustainable life. Society 5.0 places humans at the center of the digital revolution, with technology used to meet various human needs, ranging from economic and industrial sectors to education, health, transportation, and the environment (Mumtaha & Khoiri, 2019).

In the context of early childhood education, Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 play a significant role in designing relevant curriculum and learning approaches for future needs. According to the National Education Law, the Indonesian education system consists of pre-school, primary education, secondary education, high school education, and higher education. Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 28 is a stage before primary education and can be conducted through formal, non-formal, and informal education channels. Early childhood education in Indonesia takes place in various forms, including Kindergarten (TPA), Playgroups (KB), Kindergarten (TK), and Early Childhood Education (RA). Based on current regulations, PAUD is a fundamental foundation for the development of children's personalities from the age of 0 to 6 years, the age when all their potentials develop. Therefore, PAUD is based on legislation that guarantees its continuity as a fundamental foundation for individual personality development. Early childhood education needs to integrate technology and competency-based learning while still adhering to the humanitarian values and personalities held firmly in Society 5.0.

Character Education for Early Childhood in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 Era and Society 5.0

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) or preschool age is a period where children have not yet entered formal education. The early age range is the right time to develop children's potential and development. Directed development of a child's potential during this period will have an impact on their future lives (Apriliani et al., 2024). Early childhood education emphasizes the creation of foundations for physical growth (fine and gross motor coordination), intelligence (thinking ability, creativity, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence), socio-emotional (attitudes) and behavior, and language and communication according to the uniqueness and stages of a child's development (Rochanah, Muna, & Ariyanto, 2023). Based on the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 Chapter I, Part I, Article 14, which states: Early childhood education is developmental work aimed at children from birth to 6 years old, which includes provisions for educational stimuli for physical and mental growth and contributes to development so that children are prepared for further education.

Based on the results obtained from various sources, the techniques used in shaping the character of Early Childhood Education (ECE) are through play, as naturally the age of ECE is a time for play, so the activities carried out are tailored to the natural characteristics of ECE. ECE as the foundation for character formation can be done with the following techniques:

- a. Outdoor Technique : Owen proposed character formation by engaging in outdoor activities. Physical activities outdoors are done both in good and bad weather. Owen also added that music is used as a technique.
- b. Play Technique: This technique, proposed by Froebel, Issac, and Vygotsky, involves learning while playing and learning while doing something. Children are trained to develop character traits such as curiosity, creativity, responsibility, and discipline through play and various activities. They are taught to control emotions, abide by rules in every game, be sportsmanlike, and be patient while waiting their turn.
- c. Singing, Repetition, and Praise Technique: This technique, proposed by Steiner, involves singing, repetition, and praising. Singing is a favored activity among children because of its lyrical and melodic aspects, which attract them. Singing involves repetition and praise, which can be in the form of applause, direct compliments, and spontaneous expressions. This technique helps form character traits such as religiosity, compassion, social interaction, and more.
- d. Reinforcement Technique: Proposed by Skinner, this technique emphasizes reinforcement rather than rewards and punishments. It focuses on reinforcing or encouraging individuals when they do something right or show kindness, rather than punishing mistakes. This technique emphasizes rewarding good behavior and ignoring or forgetting mistakes made by individuals.

Based on the theories outlined above regarding character, ideas from experts about education and early childhood, as well as Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0, researchers focus on techniques in character formation and sustainability in that formation. As suggested, Early Childhood Education is a basic educational institution organized in formal, non-formal, and informal forms for children aged 0 to 6 years. This age is appropriate for character formation based on the physical and psychological development of individuals according to experts. The era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0, which is connected to technology and the internet, allows techniques and the sustainability of character formation to be carried out using technology.

This is based on the idea that character education is not a form of learning about a subject but emphasizes the implementation of learning that incorporates values demanded in interactions within internal and external environments. The Internet of Things (IoT) as a form of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 provides convenience in character formation according to the natural characteristics of early childhood, which are highly attracted to anything that makes sound, moves, is colorful, and rhythmic. The character formation of early childhood in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 poses both challenges and interesting opportunities. On one hand, children are exposed to digital technology from an early age, which can influence their character development by potentially disrupting direct social interactions and changing traditional values. Additionally, high levels of stress and pressure in educational and social environments can affect character development, such as mental and emotional resilience. However, on the other hand, digital technology can also effectively support character formation. Educational applications, games, and online learning platforms can be designed to teach moral

values, leadership, and empathy. Furthermore, the integration of humanistic values in the development of technology and digital media opens opportunities to create educational environments that support the development of strong and relevant characters for the future. By wisely utilizing technology and integrating relevant values, early childhood education can prepare young generations to face the challenges and opportunities in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0.

Techniques for character formation in ECE, which serve as the foundation for character education in Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 era, can be carried out through real actions, namely through activities conducted outdoors or indoors that directly involve individuals (children), or through storytelling techniques. This technique requires measuring indicators that educators can design according to the character traits they want to emphasize. The curriculum, in this case, establishes or determines its indicators to be developed by educators according to the situation and conditions in the field.

Character formation in early childhood requires an approach that aligns with the development of technology and the social dynamics that occur. Other activities have also been applied in the education process for early childhood, such as activities that integrate technology with character education. The use of educational applications designed specifically for early childhood can be an effective way to teach moral values, such as cooperation and honesty, while providing an interactive learning experience. Furthermore, facilitating collaborative activities among children through online platforms can also teach values such as effective communication and appreciation of differences. However, it is important to monitor the use of digital media to avoid excess and to select content that aligns with the values to be taught. In addition to technology-based activities, creative expression activities, role-playing simulations, and role-playing games can also be used to develop the character of early childhood. Through these activities, children can learn to express their feelings positively, develop empathy towards others, and understand moral values in contexts relevant to the current era. By integrating various activities in the early childhood education environment, we can guide children to develop strong characters that are relevant to future demands.

This research brings innovation by emphasizing the importance of technology in shaping the character of early childhood in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0. Using technology, character education can become more engaging and effective for children. The Internet of Things (IoT) is one of the technologies that can be utilized in shaping the character of early childhood, as it can provide interactive and engaging learning experiences for them. Thus, this research provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of how character education for early childhood can be adapted to the development of time and technology. By utilizing various techniques mentioned, educators can help children develop strong characters relevant to future demands.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that learning at TK Harapan Kita Condong Gading Probolinggo has played a role in preparing its students' characters according to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0. Character education initiated in Early Childhood Education (ECE) must be

measurable with indicators established by curriculum requirements. High-quality characters need to be formed and nurtured from an early age. Shaping and cultivating character require a lengthy process. Human character does not develop automatically. Although humans inherently have the potential to love goodness, character formation techniques are implemented in a pattern that is continuously developed according to the physical and psychological development of individuals. Therefore, the sustainability of individual character formation does not stop at the primary and secondary education levels but continues throughout life. Failure to instill good character at an early age will lead to problematic personalities in adulthood. The success of parents and educators in guiding their children to overcome personality conflicts at a young age greatly determines the child's personality in their adult social life. There are two factors that influence the character of early childhood: 1) internal factors, including instinct/nature, habits, will, conscience, and heredity. And 2) external factors, including education and environment.

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