Strategic Leadership of School Principals in Enhancing Character Education in the Digital Literacy Era

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This research aims to explore the strategies employed by school principals to enhance character education through digital literacy at 3rd Sidoarjo State Senior High School, providing detailed insights into goal-setting processes and strategies. **Method:** The study utilizes a qualitative approach, involving informants such as school principals, vice principals, subject teachers, and education staff. Data collection includes interviews, field notes, and other relevant materials. Systematic data analysis is performed by categorizing, synthesizing, and identifying patterns to derive meaningful findings. **Results:** The findings reveal significant positive impacts on students, teachers, parents, and the school environment. Students show improved discipline, reduced delinquency, and enhanced digital responsibility. Teachers display better attendance and a deeper understanding of their role as role models. Increased parental involvement in school activities fosters a collaborative atmosphere. The school's management and community engagement have also improved, contributing to a supportive educational environment. **Novelty:** This study uniquely integrates character education with digital literacy, demonstrating a holistic approach to educational enhancement. It highlights the interconnectedness of ethical digital behavior and character development, offering a comprehensive model for other schools to emulate. The research underscores the importance of continuous evaluation and the inclusion of diverse perspectives to sustain and evolve effective character education programs in the digital age.

INTRODUCTION

National education aims to be able to develop the potential of students so that they can become human beings who believe, fear God Almighty, have noble character, capable, independent, creative, and become democratic and responsible citizens. The national education system in Indonesia is run by referring to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution which prioritizes noble character and morals. The strategy of implementing character education through portfolio-based multiple intelligence can accommodate theories about the four pillars of education that view learning as a process, how to know, how to do, how to be and how to live together which are used as the basis for developing student learning capabilities (Fan et al., 2021; Saepuddin, 2023; Septiani et al., 2020; Tur et al., 2023; Yawisah et al., 2019).

Multiple intelligence is needed to understand what students know for, what they learn for, what they do for, and how to benefit themselves and benefit their environment. By understanding this, it is expected that students will not only do learning with a sense of compulsion just to obey what has been conveyed by their teacher, but they are expected to really understand the purpose of learning, so that learning can be more meaningful (Banoğlu et al., 2022; Critcher et al., 2020; Muhammad Ilham, 2021; Ritonga, 2022; Susilo et al., 2022; Tołwińska, 2021).

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