



The Principal's Leadership in Strengthening Character Education in the Digital Literacy Era: A Study at Vocational School

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ABSTRACT

Objective: 1) How is the leadership strategy of the Head in strengthening character education in the digital literacy era?; 2) How is the curriculum that contains strengthening character education in the era of digital literacy?; 3) How can the environment of strengthening character education in digital literacy be collaborated/integrated into: curriculum, learning, intra and extra coaching, culture and school environment, so that it becomes an example for school residents?; 4) How are the results and impacts of the implementation of digital literacy era character education. **Method:** This research is exploratory with techniques of (1) in-depth interviews, (2) participant observation, and (3) document studies. This research data validity technique uses four kinds of criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability criteria. **Results:** The integration of character education within digital literacy at 1 Buduran Vocational School presents a holistic model encompassing curriculum, classroom learning, intra- and extracurricular activities, and school culture. This approach ensures students develop technical skills alongside positive values and ethical behavior in using digital tools. The curriculum emphasizes both technical and ethical aspects of digital literacy. Interactive and collaborative classroom methods, with character values embedded in all subjects, create an environment conducive to character development. **Novelty:** It presents a holistic approach that incorporates character education into all aspects of school life—curriculum, classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and school culture—ensuring pervasive character development. The study highlights the pivotal role of the principal in promoting ethical digital practices, showcasing how effective leadership can reinforce character education in the digital era.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of character education for students has even become the main spirit in education. So that in learning it is emphasized that strengthening character education can be implemented in each subject. By implementing character education in every line, it is hoped that the character of students can always be controlled by the school. The three components of good character are moral knowing or knowledge of morals, moral feeling or feelings about morals, and moral action or moral actions (Bajovic & Rizzo, 2021; Critcher et al., 2020; Pio & Lengkong, 2020; Susilo et al., 2022; Taja et al., 2021). If students have the three components mentioned earlier, then these students already have good character. Character is a combination consisting of morals, ethics, and morals.

Meanwhile, based on the results of PISA 2018 in, the score obtained by Indonesian students in the field of literacy reached 371 while the average OECD score was 487. This means that the competence of Indonesian students in literacy is still below the average of OECD participants. For this reason, there needs to be a paradigm shift in learning, as stated by Mr. Nadim Makarim, minister of education and culture at the end of 2019. The new paradigm includes in the field of student literacy. The literacy of

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