

Parental Navigation in Character Education in the Digital Era

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to explore effective strategies for implementing character education in the digital era by focusing on the roles of schools, parents, and students. It addresses the evolving challenges faced by parents as primary educators in shaping student character amidst rapid technological advancement.

Methodology: The research adopts a qualitative case study approach and is supplemented by a questionnaire to gather data. It captures the general understanding and perspectives of parents and students regarding character education in the digital context.

Results: The findings show that parents possess a high level of awareness and commitment to digital character education for high school students. Many parents understand their responsibilities and view technology positively as a supporting tool. Nevertheless, issues such as inconsistent digital supervision and varying levels of parental involvement present ongoing challenges. Some parents attempt to manage this by setting rules and limiting gadget use at home.

Applications/Originality/Value: This study highlights the critical role of collaboration between schools and parents in promoting digital character education. It emphasizes that active parental involvement not only supports students' academic performance but also contributes to their social-emotional development. The insights offered may inform the development of structured programs to enhance parent-school cooperation, although the study's findings are subject to the limitations inherent in self-reported data.

Introduction Section

Technology has become a crucial part of everyday life in our rapidly evolving digital era. It changes how people interact, learn, and seek information. One significant effect of this transformation on the educational landscape is the education of moral and ethical values, which is the focus of character education [1]. The fast-paced flow of information and the influence of digital technology present new challenges for character education. The aim is to foster a generation that embodies values such as honesty, empathy, and social responsibility [2]. In this context, the role of parents as their children's primary teachers becomes increasingly complex. Parents must not only serve as moral guides but also help educate their children on navigating the challenges of the digital world, which can have both positive and negative effects [3].

The teenage phase—especially at the secondary school level—is an important period in character development amidst these social changes [4]. At this point, students are beginning to learn about their identities and are exposed to a lot of digital content, which can influence their attitude development. Therefore, parents and schools must work together to ensure that children receive proper guidance, especially in terms of integrating character education into their digital lives [5], [6]. However, there is a gap between the increasing role of technology and the readiness of parents to do so. Therefore, a better understanding is needed on how parents can function well to teach their children's character in the computer and internet era, especially in high school [7].

Digital technology has many benefits for learning and access to information, but it also poses problems for character education for students, especially those who are still in the adolescent development stage [8]. Parents, who have traditionally been responsible for morally educating their children, now face a new problem: how to cope with their role in a world dominated by technology [9]. Many children spend a lot of time in the digital world, from online learning platforms to social media, which can influence their behavior and values. However, this digital influence can interfere with the formation of character that should be instilled early on if parents are not active and helpful. Parents often have difficulty keeping up with the digital world and their role as character educators, especially considering the complexity and speed of technological development [10].

The main challenge for parents today is how to help their children develop good character in the digital age, especially for middle school students who are figuring out their morals and values [11]. Many parents feel they are not ready and don't have the right tools or knowledge to deal with the growing influence of technology, which makes it hard to teach their kids good character [12]. This gap can make it tough for both home and school to provide effective character education, especially when it comes to watching over and guiding how students use digital technology [13].

At Ahmad Dahlan Junior High School (SMP), character education is very important for creating students who do well in their studies and also have strong moral values. Because technology is changing so fast, character education is becoming even more important to help students deal with the negative effects of too much information [14]. SMP Ahmad Dahlan, which is based on religious values and technology, wants to teach character through a mix of classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and a supportive social environment. This plan aims to help students become honest, disciplined, responsible, and able to use technology wisely.

Parents play a crucial role in supporting character education at SMP Ahmad Dahlan during the digital age. Since parents are the closest people to their children outside of school, they are key role models in shaping their kids' character [15]. When it comes to digital technology, parents should guide their children on how to use it properly, like helping them find positive content and teaching them how to behave ethically online. SMP Ahmad Dahlan also works with parents through programs like digital literacy and parenting seminars to help them understand and actively participate in their children's character development. When the school and parents work together, character education can be more effective and lasting in this digital age [16]. The digital era presents new challenges for character education at SMP Ahmad Dahlan. The use of technology, such as the internet and social media, is often a double-edged sword, where students can easily be exposed to content that is not in accordance with the values taught in school [5]. Therefore, SMP Ahmad Dahlan focuses on developing digital literacy as part of character education, by providing students with an understanding of digital ethics, cybersecurity, and responsible use of technology [17]. In addition, teachers and school staff actively utilize technology to facilitate character learning through digital platforms, ensuring that students remain connected to moral values in every aspect of their lives, both inside and outside of school [18][19].

In addition, most existing research does not offer practical solutions for parents in facing these challenges, leaving a gap in the literature regarding operational guidelines that can be applied in everyday life [20]. Thus, there is a significant gap in our understanding of how parents can engage effectively in character education in the digital age [21]. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing new insights focused on how parents can address the challenges of character education in an increasingly digitalized world, particularly in the context of secondary schools.

This study aims to explore and understand the role of parents in teaching character to high school students in the digital age. With rapid technology changes, it is important to see how parents can help their children stay strong in their moral and ethical values despite the influence of digital technology [22]. The main goal of this study is to explore the challenges parents face in balancing their role as character educators while their children are using more technology and digital media. Additionally, this study wants to find practical solutions that parents can use to help guide their children in the digital age, so character education can still be effective.

Specifically, this study hopes to provide new ideas on how parents can support high school students' character development in today's digital world. It also aims to identify how parents and children interact when using digital technology and how these interactions affect character development [23][24]. The results of this study are expected to give a better understanding of the role of parents and provide useful recommendations to help parents and educators face the challenges of character education in the digital era.

This study is special because it highlights how parents play a role in character education and how digital technology influences secondary school students, which has not been studied deeply before. As access to technology and digital media increases, this study gives a new perspective on how parents can help connect the digital world with their children's character development [25][26]. The uniqueness of this research is its focus on secondary school students, who are at an important stage of developing moral values and personal identity, as well as finding practical solutions for the challenges of the modern digital world [27]. The justification of this research is also very strong, considering the urgency of character education issues in the increasingly complex digital era. Not only does it offer theoretical insights, this research also provides practical contributions for parents, educators, and policy makers in formulating better strategies to accompany students in facing digital influences. Thus, this research has the potential to provide substantial contributions to the literature in the field of education and character development, as well as support efforts to improve the quality of education in the digital era. The results of this study are expected to be the basis for the development of intervention programs that help parents and schools optimize their roles in character education, especially among high school students.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative case study design assisted by a questionnaire to respondents to obtain data in the form of responses that represent the general understanding of parents and students. The results obtained are described to explore more deeply the experiences, perceptions, and views of parents and students regarding character education in the digital era. This type of research is a case study. This was chosen to obtain a deep and contextual understanding of character education in the digital era in the SMP Ahmad Dahlan school environment. The respondents in this study were all seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students totaling 158. The research sample used a stratified random sampling technique to select representative respondents from each class. The number of samples was 73 parents and 72 students. The researcher used two questionnaire instruments for parents and students to obtain data related to understanding. The instrument was in the form of a measurement using a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Researchers use odd likert scales to provide respondents with neutral response options for respondents to choose from if they do not want to answer from the extreme choices. 5-

Point Likert Scale with five answer options. Questionnaire measurement using scores of 1,2,3,4, and 5. Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5. The collected data from the Likert scale questionnaire were analyzed using Ms. Excel and SPSS applications.

Results

Explanation of the research results from the questionnaire instrument to parents and students consisting of several sub-topics.

3.1 Explanation of the results of the parent questionnaire instrument assisted by the Likert scale is divided into four sub-topics: the role of parents in character education in the digital era, challenges and strategies of parents, involvement of parents and schools, the influence of digital technology and parental expectations.

There are four statements related to the role of parents in character education in the digital era, each statement is viewed as: average: the middle value of all respondents' answers for each question, standard deviation: how spread out the answer data is from the average. Minimum value: the lowest value given by respondents, and maximum value: the highest value given by respondents. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of the understanding of the role of parents in character education in the digital era (table 1).

Table 1. The role of parents in character education in the digital era

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	4.47	4.64	4.66	4.63
Standard deviation	0.65	0.48	0.58	0.57
Minimum value	2	4	2	3
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Conclusion of the data average high value, the average value for all statements ranges from 4.47 to 4.66. This shows that respondents have a positive view of the role of parents in character education in the digital era. From the data above shows low variation, a relatively low standard deviation (0.48 to 0.65) indicates that the majority of parents give consistent assessments. This indicates that the majority of respondents agree with the importance of the role of parents in character education. Seeing the minimum and maximum values shows variation in the views of respondents, but the maximum value reaching 5 in all statements indicates that there are respondents who strongly agree with the statement. The highest statement about, teaching good values or attitudes to my child is very important in the digital era, has the highest average (4.66), indicating that respondents feel very confident in the active role of parents in shaping children's character in the digital era.

As in the role of parents in character education in the digital era, in the challenges and strategies of parents there are also four statements related to the legal understanding test, each statement is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of the challenges and strategies of parents (table 2).

Table 2. Parents' challenges and strategies

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	3.37	4.48	4.38	3.27
Standard deviation	1.05	0.60	0.54	1.04
Minimum value	1	3	3	1
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Based on the data in table 2 shows the average value varies, the average value for the statement varies from 3.27 to 4.48. This shows that respondents have diverse views on the challenges and strategies faced by parents in educating children's character. Higher variation is indicated by a higher standard deviation (0.54 to 1.05) showing greater variation in respondents' assessments. This indicates that respondents have different experiences and views regarding the challenges faced. Highest and Lowest Statements, Statement 2 (I try to make sure my child does not spend too much time using a cellphone or the internet at home) has the highest average (4.48), indicating that many respondents feel positive about the strategies that can be implemented by parents. Conversely, Statement 4 (I find it difficult to control the content my child sees online) has the lowest average (3.27), indicating significant challenges in this context. Analysis of the minimum and maximum values shows variation in respondents' views, with the lowest minimum value reaching 1. This indicates that there are respondents who strongly disagree with some of the challenges faced by parents.

Explanation related to Parental Involvement with Schools, there are four statements related to the impact understanding test, each statement is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of students' understanding of parental involvement with schools (table 3).

Table 3. Parental involvement with school

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	3.68	4.34	4.10	4.40
Standard deviation	0.78	0.77	0.82	0.81
Minimum value	2	2	2	1
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

The analysis results on Parental Involvement with Schools showed a generally positive trend, with mean scores ranging from 3.68 to 4.40 and moderate standard deviations ranging from 0.77 to 0.82. The statement on the importance of parental involvement in school activities received the most positive response with an average of 4.40, although there were some challenges as reflected by the lowest mean score of 3.68 on Statement 1 (The school provides me with information or guidance on how technology can be used safely by children). Although overall showing a positive view, the variation in minimum to maximum scores indicates a diversity of perspectives among respondents regarding various aspects of parental involvement in character education at school.

Explanation related to the influence of digital technology and parental expectations, there are four statements related to the impact understanding test, each statement is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics from parental understanding of the influence of digital technology and parental expectations (table 4).

Table 4. Influence of digital technology and parental expectations

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	4.15	4.05	4.52	4.55
Standard deviation	0.81	0.78	0.58	0.53
Minimum value	2	1	3	3
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Analysis of the influence of digital technology and parental expectations showed a very positive response, reflected by the high average value between 4.05 to 4.55, with a relatively low standard deviation (0.53 to 0.81) indicating consistency of views among respondents. The highest optimism was seen in statement 3 with an average of 4.52, which illustrates the respondents' high hopes for the role of digital technology in supporting children's character education. However, the fairly wide range of minimum to maximum values, with a minimum value reaching 1, indicates that a small number of respondents still have concerns or are skeptical about the influence of digital technology in character education, although overall the majority of respondents showed a positive and optimistic attitude towards the potential of digital technology in shaping children's character.

The following is an explanation of the results of the questionnaire with student respondents assisted by a Likert scale divided into four sub-topics: parental involvement in the use of technology, teaching values and ethics in the digital world, parental involvement with schools related to technology, students' views on parental guidance in the digital world.

There are four statements related to the role of parents in character education in the digital era, each statement is viewed: average: the middle value of all respondents' answers for each question, standard deviation: how spread out the answer data is from the average. Minimum value: the lowest value given by respondents, and maximum value: the highest value given by respondents. The following are the results of descriptive education from students' understanding of the role of parents in character education in the digital era.

Table 5. The role of parents in character education in the digital era

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	4.08	3.79	3.32	3.54
Standard deviation	0.88	0.96	1.12	1.13
Minimum value	3	2	1	1
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Analysis of parental involvement in the use of technology from the perspective of students showed quite diverse results, with mean values ranging from 3.32 to 4.08, indicating a generally positive view. The highest level of agreement was seen in Statement 1 with a mean of 4.08, reflecting students' appreciation of parental involvement in supporting their education through technology. However, the lowest mean in Statement 3 (3.32) suggests a gap in some aspects of parental

involvement, especially in monitoring and assisting in the use of digital tools. The quite significant variation in views is reflected in the relatively high standard deviation (0.88 to 1.13) and the range of minimum (1) to maximum (5) values, indicating a wide range of experiences among students regarding their parents' involvement in the use of technology for education.

Explanation related to teaching values and ethics in the digital world, there are four statements related to the impact understanding test, each statement is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of students' understanding of teaching values and ethics in the digital world (table 6).

Table 6. Teaching values and ethics in the digital world

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	4.54	4.32	4.06	3.93
Standard deviation	0.69	0.84	0.90	0.98
Minimum value	2	2	2	1
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

The results of the analysis on teaching values and ethics in the digital world show a very positive response from students, with a high average score ranging from 3.93 to 4.54, and a relatively low standard deviation (0.69 to 0.98) illustrating the consistency of views among respondents. The highest level of agreement was seen in statement 1 with an average of 4.54, reflecting students' deep awareness of the importance of education on values and ethics in the digital context. Although Statement 4 had the lowest average (3.93), its value still shows a positive view, but also suggests that there is room for improvement in the practical aspects of teaching digital ethics. The range of minimum (1) to maximum (5) scores indicates that although the majority of students show a high appreciation for teaching values and ethics in the digital world, there are still a small number of students who may need a different approach in understanding the importance of ethical aspects in the use of technology.

As in teaching values and ethics in the digital world, in parental involvement with schools related to technology there are also four statements related to the legal understanding test, each of which is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of students' understanding of parental involvement with schools related to technology (table 7).

Table 7. Parental involvement with schools regarding technology

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	3.29	3.43	3.72	3.85
Standard deviation	0.98	1.05	0.89	0.91
Minimum value	1	1	1	1
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Analysis of parental involvement with schools in the context of technology showed moderate results, with mean scores ranging from 3.29 to 3.85, indicating significant room for improvement in involvement. Statement 4 achieved the highest mean (3.85) reflecting students' positive views of parental support in the use of technology in schools, while the lowest mean for Statement 1 (3.29) suggested gaps in some aspects of parental involvement related to educational technology. Substantial variability in responses was evident from the standard deviations ranging from 0.89 to 1.05, as well as the range of minimum (1) to maximum (5) scores, indicating heterogeneity in students' experiences in terms of their parental involvement with schools in the context of technology, implying the need for more comprehensive strategies to enhance collaboration between parents and schools in supporting technology-based learning.

Explanation related to students' views on parental guidance in the digital world, there are four statements related to the impact understanding test, each statement is seen: average, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. The following are the results of descriptive statistics of students' understanding of students' views on parental guidance in the digital world (table 8).

Table 8. Students' views on parental guidance in the digital world

Statistical results	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4
Average	4.01	4.10	4.18	3.82
Standard deviation	0.97	0.84	0.74	0.91
Minimum value	1	2	2	2
Maximum value	5	5	5	5

Analysis of students' views on parental guidance in the digital world showed positive results, with mean scores ranging from 3.82 to 4.18, indicating students' appreciation of the role of parents in guiding the use of technology. The highest level of agreement was seen in statement 3 with a mean of 4.18, reflecting students' significant recognition of the value of parental assistance and guidance in certain aspects of the digital world, while statement 4 with the lowest mean (3.82) suggested potential for development in terms of practical guidance on the use of technology. The variability of responses reflected in the standard deviation between 0.74 and 0.97, and the range of minimum (1) to maximum (5) scores, indicated a diverse spectrum of experiences among students regarding parental guidance in the digital world, although overall showing a positive tendency towards the role of parental guidance in the context of digital technology.

Discussion

Parental Awareness and Commitment in Digital Character Education

High Awareness of the Role of Parents

Based on the analysis that has been conducted, it appears that parental awareness and commitment in digital character education are at a very high level. With an average value ranging from 4.47 to 4.66, and a low standard deviation (0.48-0.65), it appears that parents consistently understand the importance of their role in teaching good values and attitudes in the digital era. The highest score (4.66) highlights particular attention to this urgency, reflecting a collective agreement among parents. This shows that they are not only aware of this important role, but are also committed to implementing it consistently. In accordance with the explanation. Zhao et al., (2023) said that parents are aware of the importance of character education in the digital era, parents have full commitment and implement character education consistently

Expectations and Optimism towards Digital Technology

In addition, expectations and optimism towards digital technology are also very positive, with average ratings ranging from 4.05 to 4.55. Parents showed high optimism in utilizing technology to support character education, with the highest average reaching 4.52. The low variation (SD 0.53-0.81) indicates a strong consensus regarding the benefits of technology in this educational process. This alignment shows that, in addition to being aware of their role, parents also have high expectations for technology as an effective supporting tool in digital character education. In contemporary parenting, with parents showing significant awareness and commitment to the formation of children's character. However, reality shows that there are complex variations in its implementation, which are influenced by various factors such as differences in levels of understanding, socio-economic conditions [29].

Implementation Challenges and Strategies

Gaps in Digital Surveillance

Based on the analysis, it was found that the challenges in digital supervision and its implementation strategies showed quite high variability. The mean scores ranging from 3.27 to 4.48 indicated significant differences in parents' ability to supervise their children's online activities. The greatest difficulty lies in controlling online content, with the lowest mean score at 3.27. In response, the strategy of limiting screen time emerged as the main solution, reflected in the highest mean score of 4.48. This highlights the urgent need to implement more effective approaches in addressing the challenges of digital supervision. The strategies parents adopt, the content they restrict, the rules they set, the potential exposure to inappropriate content [31]. The impact of parents' computer literacy on their children's internet safety so that there is a gap in parental supervision is a challenge in character education[32].

Parental Involvement in Digital Practices

In addition, parental involvement in digital practices in the school context showed a moderate level, with a mean value between 3.29 and 3.85. The high variation in involvement experiences, indicated by a standard deviation between 0.89 and 1.05, reflects significant differences in the level of parental participation, ranging from a minimum value of 1 to a maximum of 5. This finding underscores the importance of increasing parental involvement consistently and evenly in order to support more effective digital education. Parents have different thoughts about the use of gadgets for children - some think it is good for learning, some worry that it can be distracting, and some see it from the perspective of their family culture. The way children use gadgets is greatly influenced by how their parents set an example, regulate their use, and determine what the gadgets are used for [33].

Students' Perspectives on Digital Tutoring

Appreciation of the Role of Mentoring

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be seen that students' perspectives on digital guidance show some interesting things. In general, students have a positive view of the role of guidance, with average scores ranging from 3.82 to 4.18. This indicates a fairly high appreciation from students for the guidance provided. However, there are differences in

appreciation for certain aspects, with the highest score reaching 4.18, indicating a greater emphasis on these specific aspects.

On the other hand, we need to make digital guidance better because it got the lowest score of 3.82. This shows that there is a chance for people in charge to make the guidance more helpful and useful for students. In the future, schools will use more technology in learning. They will use new and creative tools and methods for teaching and helping students with technology [31].

Guidance Experience Variations

The experiences that students have with guidance are very different from each other. The standard deviation shows that there is a moderate difference, ranging from 0.74 to 0.97. This means that some students accept guidance very well while others do not. The scores go from a low of 1 to a high of 5. This shows that we need to make guidance more personal so that it can help each student better. Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) also say that online teachers should use digital tools to help students stay engaged and do better in their studies, especially since students come from different backgrounds.

Implications for the Development of Digital Character Education

Strengthening School-Parent Collaboration

Based on the analysis conducted, several important implications emerged for enhancing digital character education. One crucial aspect is improving collaboration between schools and parents. The analysis reveals that students have a relatively high awareness of digital ethics, with average scores ranging from 3.93 to 4.54. However, there is a significant need to boost parents' practical involvement in this process. Creating a more effective communication strategy between schools and parents is essential for fostering stronger support for digital character education.

These findings align with research by Chima Abimbola Eden et al. (2024), which indicates that effective parental involvement includes various dimensions, such as engagement in their children's academic journeys, participation in school activities, and advocacy for educational equity. When parents are actively involved in their children's education, students tend to show improved academic performance, better attendance, and enhanced social-emotional development.

Program Development Recommendations

Further, it's important to consider recommendations for developing specific programs. Providing digital supervision skills training for parents can help them manage the challenges of monitoring their children's online activities [34]. Additionally, strengthening the support system within schools for implementing technology is crucial so that they can offer more comprehensive infrastructure and guidance. Creating a structured and practical digital guidance manual could also help ensure the consistency and effectiveness of the guidance programs offered to students [35].

Conclusion

This study found that parents are very aware and committed to teaching good character in a digital world for secondary school students. They understand how important character education is in today's technology-driven society and generally believe that technology can be a helpful tool. However, there are challenges with supervising digital use and different levels of how involved parents are, which means we need better strategies to support education. For example, parents often set time limits and make specific rules for using gadgets at home.

The findings show that parents and schools need to work together to develop digital character education. When parents are actively involved, it helps students do better in school and grow emotionally. These ideas suggest ways to strengthen the connection between parents and schools and offer guidance for creating better programs.

Some limitations of the study include how parents responded and the experiences students had with digital supervision and guidance, which could change the results. So, more research is needed to understand what encourages parents to get involved in digital character education.

In conclusion, this study highlights the need for everyone involved, especially parents and schools, to work together for the best educational results in today's digital age. What this study contributes is important for creating more effective and relevant educational strategies that address today's challenges.

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