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## Generation Z character education in facing the challenges of globalization and the digital era: systematic literature review

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**Abstract.** *The lives of Generation Z are greatly influenced by the development of globalization and digital transformation, especially in terms of moral, social, and character education. However, as digital natives, they face a number of problems, including addiction to electronic devices, online harassment, moral decadence, individualism, and low social concern. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the role of character education, Pancasila education, and Islamic education in facing the moral challenges of Generation Z in the digital era. This study uses secondary data from various national and international articles relevant to the theme of character education and Generation Z. The results of the study show that character education has an important role in building integrity, goals, and moral values. Technology-based learning, family and community collaboration, strengthening school culture, implementing character values in the curriculum, and developing digital literacy are some of the strategies that are well evaluated. In addition, it is proven that Islamic education and Pancasila function as a moral filter in dealing with the negative effects of globalization. Most studies, however, have not demonstrated thorough empirical implementation, and most remain theoretical. Therefore, more contextual and collaborative learning innovations are needed so that character education is able to answer the challenges of the Society 5.0 era.*

**Keywords:** Character Education, Generation Z, Globalization, Digital Era, Islamic Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the development of digital technology have significantly changed people's life patterns, especially in Generation Z. This generation was born and grew up in a digital environment so that they are known as digital natives who are very familiar with the internet, social media, and information technology (Prensky, 2001). Technological developments provide easy access to information, increase creativity, multitasking skills, and technology adaptation in the younger generation (Wajdi et al., 2024). In the field of education, digital transformation also encourages a paradigm shift in learning from conventional systems to technology-based learning and digital media.

However, globalization and digitalization not only have a positive impact, but also pose various moral and social challenges such as cyberbullying, the spread of hoaxes, individualism, low social empathy, and gadget addiction (Sadiman, 2006). In addition, the flow of foreign cultures that enter through digital media can affect the cultural identity and local values of the younger generation. According to Giddens (2002), globalization causes very rapid social change so that people are required to be able to adapt without losing moral values and cultural identity (Giddens, 2003).

This phenomenon shows that technological progress is not always accompanied by the development of good character. Therefore, character education is very important to form a generation that not only excels in technology, but also has strong morals, ethics, social responsibility, and spirituality. Lickona (1991) stated that character education is the process of helping individuals understand, love, and apply moral values in daily life (Anderson et al., 1992). Several studies show that globalization brings foreign cultural influences that can erode local values and nationalism of students. Research by Nisak et al (2025) shows that digital culture leads to gadget dependence and decreased interest in local culture (Nisak et al., 2021). Although schools have integrated character education through curriculum and religious activities, there is still a gap between moral knowledge and the real practice of students.

In addition to character education in general, Pancasila education and Islamic education are also important instruments in building the morals of Generation Z. Pancasila education plays a role in strengthening nationalism, tolerance, and love for the homeland amid the influence of digital globalization. Meanwhile, Islamic education is considered effective in building morals, digital ethics, and social responsibility through the integration of spiritual values in learning (Fadhilah et al., 2025).

In the era of Society 5.0, character education is no longer enough to be done through conventional approaches. Education needs to integrate technology, digital literacy, interactive learning, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities (Alfikri, 2023). Therefore, a systematic study of various studies related to Generation Z character education is important to obtain a comprehensive picture of the challenges, strategies, and effectiveness of its implementation. Based on this background, this article aims to analyze various studies related to Generation Z character education in facing the challenges of globalization and the digital era through the Systematic Literature Review approach.

## **METHOD**

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The SLR method is a research approach that is carried out systematically to identify, evaluate, and synthesize various research results that are relevant to a certain topic (Kitchenham, 2004). This approach is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of Generation Z's character education in the digital era and globalization. The research stages include problem identification, literature search, article selection, data analysis, and synthesis of research results. Articles are obtained from various scientific sources, such as Google Scholar, accredited national journals, and international journals that discuss character education, Islamic education, Pancasila education, Generation Z, globalization, and the digital era.

The inclusion criteria in this study include: (1) articles that discuss Generation Z character education, (2) articles published in the 2023–2026 range, (3) national and international articles that are relevant to the digital era and globalization, and (4) articles in the form of empirical research and literature studies. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria include: (1) articles that do not discuss Generation Z, (2) articles that are not related to character or moral education, and (3) non-scientific articles or popular opinion. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques to identify the main themes, important findings, advantages, weaknesses, and contributions of each research to the development of Generation Z character education.

According to Hanna Snyder (2019), literature review is a research method that helps researchers understand and develop theoretical concepts more broadly through the process of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of previous research (Snyder, 2019). This method can also be used to identify theoretical developments, find research gaps, and develop a systematic conceptual framework. Based on this, the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method is considered appropriate to examine the urgency of character education in the digital era because it is able to examine various studies systematically and objectively. Through this method, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the importance of character education in dealing with technological developments, social media, and changes in the behavior of the younger generation in the era of globalization.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Characteristics of Generation Z in the Digital Era**

According to Wajdi et al. (2024), Generation Z has different characteristics compared to the previous generation because it grows and develops in the midst of the rapid development of

digital technology (Wajdi et al., 2024). This generation is very familiar with the internet, social media, and various digital devices that affect the way they think, communicate, and learn, generation Z tends to be creative, adaptive, innovative, able to multitask, and fast in accessing and disseminating information. In addition, they also have a fairly high social concern for various social issues and global developments. However, these characteristics are also accompanied by a high dependence on technology and social media which can affect the patterns of social interaction, behavior, and character formation of the younger generation. The excessive use of technology has the potential to cause individualistic attitudes, lack of direct communication, and weak self-control in the use of digital media.

Therefore, an educational approach that is in accordance with the characteristics of Generation Z is needed, especially through strengthening character education so that they are able to use technology wisely, responsibly, and still adhere to moral values in their daily lives.

The development of the Society 5.0 era has had a huge influence on the lives of Generation Z, especially in communication patterns, social behavior, and the use of digital technology. A. W. Alfikri (2023) explained that rapid technological advances have given rise to various new challenges, such as identity crises, declining moral values, reduced direct social interaction, and increasing individualism among the younger generation (Alfikri, 2023). The ease of access to technology makes Generation Z spend more time in the digital world, so that social relationships in the real environment are becoming less and less. If this condition is not balanced with strong character education, then technological developments can have a negative impact on students' attitudes, behaviors, and personalities.

In line with this, I. Wati (2025) in her research explained that the development of the digital era presents various challenges for Generation Z, such as cyberbullying, the spread of hoaxes, gadget addiction, and low ethics in the use of social media (Wati & Andini, 2025). This phenomenon suggests that uncontrolled use of technology can affect the emotional, social, and moral development of the younger generation. Therefore, character education needs to be integrated with digital literacy so that students are able to understand ethics in social media, think critically about the information received, and use technology wisely, positively, and responsibly in daily life.

### **The Role of Character Education in Facing Globalization**

Character education has an important role in shaping the integrity, social responsibility, empathy, and moral awareness of Generation Z. Research by Nisak *et al* (2025) shows that schools have implemented character education through curriculum, religious activities, and extracurriculars (Nisak et al., 2021). The results of the study show that the school culture-based character education approach is able to help students understand moral values contextually. However, the biggest challenge comes from the influence of digital culture and globalization that cause a gap between moral understanding and real implementation in everyday life.

Andayanie et al. (2025) explain that the success of character education is influenced by collaboration between teachers, school culture, and families (Andayanie et al., 2025). Values such as integrity, empathy, and social responsibility can thrive if the educational environment provides a consistent example. According to M. Triantoro and R. Shodiqin (2026), conventional moral education is less effective for Generation Z because they grew up in the digital era that is close to technology and social media. The lecture and memorization method is considered less interesting and less able to shape the character of students optimally. As a solution, they offer new approaches such as digital literacy, project-based learning, technology-based ethical simulation, digital parenting, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). This approach makes moral learning more interactive, contextual, and appropriate to the lives of young generations. Through digital literacy, students learn to use social media wisely and responsibly. Meanwhile, project-based learning helps students understand moral values through real-life experiences and social cooperation. Thus, it is important to revitalize moral education so that Generation Z is not only technologically savvy, but also has good character and ethics.

### **Pancasila Education as a Strengthening of Nationalism**

According to research by Setiawan et al (2025), Pancasila education has a strategic role in instilling national values and overcoming moral decadence among Generation Z in the digital era. The research shows that globalization and the massive entry of foreign cultures can lead to the fading of national identity (Setiawan et al., 2025). Therefore, Pancasila education is an

important means to foster a sense of love for the homeland, the spirit of unity, and an attitude of tolerance towards Indonesia's cultural diversity. However, this study also found that less innovative learning methods are an obstacle in the process of internalizing Pancasila values. Therefore, Pancasila learning needs to be developed with a more interactive, creative, and technology-based approach to better suit the characteristics of Generation Z in the digital era.

### **Islamic Education as a Solution to the Moral Crisis**

Several studies show that Islamic education has a great contribution in overcoming the moral crisis of Generation Z. Research by Sari et al. (2024) explains that Islamic education can be a moral filter against the influence of foreign cultures and permissive lifestyles (Sari et al., 2024). The application of Islamic education is carried out through the integration of Islamic values in the curriculum, teacher example, religious habituation, and the use of technology as a da'wah medium. In addition, the study also found that Islamic education is able to shape students' morals, digital ethics, critical thinking skills, and social responsibility so that it can help Generation Z face moral challenges in the digital era.

According to the research on the Role of Islamic Education as a Solution to the Moral Crisis of Generation Z in the Era of Digital Globalization, Naylatul Fadhilah et al. (2025) explained that the moral crisis experienced by Generation Z in the era of digital globalization is characterized by a decline in social empathy, an increase in individualism, and a weak sense of social responsibility among the younger generation (Fadhilah et al., 2025). This condition is influenced by the development of digital technology, excessive use of social media, and the entry of global culture that is not always in accordance with moral and religious values. In facing these problems, Islamic education is considered to have an important role as a solution in shaping the character and morals of students. Islamic education not only focuses on aspects of religious knowledge, but also instills the values of spirituality, morals, digital ethics, and social concern in daily life. Therefore, Islamic education needs to be developed holistically through learning that is relevant to the times, so that it is able to form Generation Z who are not only intelligent in utilizing technology, but also have religious character, good social attitudes, and strong moral responsibility.

### **Analysis of Research Advantages and Disadvantages**

Based on the results of the literature synthesis, most of the research has advantages in discussing the urgency of character education that is relevant to the development of the digital era and the challenges of globalization. Research by Nisak et al. (2025) provides a real picture of the implementation of character education in schools through interviews and field observations (Nisak et al., 2021). The research shows that character education has an important role in shaping students' attitudes of discipline, responsibility, and social concern amid the influence of globalization and the development of digital technology. In addition, the involvement of teachers, the school environment, and the habituation of positive values in daily activities are important factors in the success of character education for Generation Z.

Meanwhile, literature study-based research has advantages in strengthening the theoretical foundations regarding morality, nationalism, and character education in the digital era. The study is able to integrate various concepts, theories, and results of previous research so as to produce a deeper understanding of the moral challenges faced by Generation Z. Literary approaches also contribute to explaining the importance of character education as a means of forming attitudes of discipline, responsibility, nationalism, and social ethics of students. However, most of the research still has limitations in the form of a lack of empirical data and a lack of optimal evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation of direct character education programs. In addition, the focus of research that tends to be centered on the school environment causes the role of family and society to not be comprehensively discussed. The formation of Generation Z's character actually requires the involvement of various parties through collaboration between schools, families, communities, and digital media so that the internalization of moral values can take place in a sustainable manner.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), it can be concluded that globalization and the development of digital technology have a great influence on the character and morals of Generation Z. Technological advances present various challenges such as

individualism, low social empathy, gadget addiction, cyberbullying, and weak digital ethics. Therefore, character education is very important in shaping the integrity, social responsibility, discipline, and moral awareness of the younger generation. The results of the study show that character education, Pancasila education, and Islamic education have an important role in facing the moral challenges of Generation Z in the digital era. Character education helps build moral values and social responsibility, Pancasila education strengthens nationalism and tolerance, while Islamic education plays a role in shaping students' morals, spirituality, and digital ethics. The implementation of education needs to be supported through technology-based learning, digital literacy, school culture, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities. However, most of the research is still theoretical and has not shown much empirical implementation in general. Therefore, educational innovations that are more contextual, interactive, and adaptive to the development of the Society 5.0 era are needed so that character education is able to form Generation Z who are not only smart in technology, but also have strong morals and social responsibility.

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