The Urgency of Character Education in Nashih Ulwan's Perspective for the "Strawberry Generation"

Umi Martuti[1], Abu Dharin[2]

[1,2] UIN Prof. KH. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: In whatever environment we are in either school, home or social environment, character education is very much needed.. The education of human character can also gain glory as creation creature of Allah SWT but the Children Character now of the term popular "Strawberry Generation" is very concern. They are dependently with the gadget without being able to sort out the god and bad, and they make a strange acting and imitating anything, misconduct immorality, lying etc. This article uses a literature study approach because the autor commented on the concept of the thought of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan trought his book title Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam to answer the problem of character education "Strawberry Generation" According to him, the bacic character education in Islam must be based on Al Quran and Al Hadist. Five steps in success of education character habituation, transparency advice, giving attention, and giving punishment. In addition, the character education material that includes the education of faith, morality, physical, intellectual, mental/psychic, social and sex education must be given to children so that they are ready to live a life well. The hole concept is very relevant in answering the issue of "Strawberry Generation". At that time, the children will face competition with colleagues from various countries around the world. Demand the quality of human resources in the millennium certainly requires good character. However, character is the key individual goal.

KEYWORD: Character Education, Strawberry Generation, Tarbiyatul Aulad

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education, as a sub-system of national education, plays a significant role in contributing positively to the development of national education. Its greatest contribution lies in shaping individuals who are commonly referred to as "insan kamil" or "perfect human beings." The term "insan kamil" represents the ideal human being who is complete in terms of physical, spiritual, and psychological aspects and can live and develop normally while prioritizing devotion to Allah SWT, as well as internalizing the goodness of Allah within themselves. Explicitly, Islamic education is expected to produce individuals who are beneficial to themselves and others. Moreover, it emphasizes the practice and development of Islamic teachings, which have correlations with both Allah and humanity, while also promoting responsible stewardship of the world to ensure human well-being in both worldly life and the hereafter.

Character education, including Islamic character education, is among the types of education that have received critical attention in the Indonesian education system. However, in its implementation, character education still requires refinement. Criticism of education should focus on cognitive, psychological, and affective domains. Unfortunately, in practice, the affective domain (character) has not received the attention it deserves. Yet, upon closer examination, the affective domain holds essential principles for adhering to norms in life. Cultivating children who excel in character education with an Islamic approach is not easy and requires consistent efforts accompanied by perseverance, patience, and sincerity, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in fostering love and affection towards his companions. The Prophet also emphasized attention and compassion towards humanity by loving and caring for all.

Character education is now relevant not only in schools but also in the family and social environments. Furthermore, it is no longer limited to early childhood and adolescence but also applies to adults. This is done to address the challenges faced by our nation. One of the realities in the digital era and the rapid development of technology is the emergence of various terms, one of which is the "Strawberry Generation," often attributed to children born during the rise of digital natives and those who have interacted with digital technology since birth.

The Strawberry Generation symbolizes beautiful strawberries that are easily bruised and destroyed when stepped on. The birth of the Strawberry Generation is influenced by several factors, including the lack of parental guidance in educating and raising

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their children (Aullia et al., 2022). The generation is often associated with Generation Z, born roughly between 1995 and 2010. Although they are highly intelligent, they tend to be static in their development. They want to appear impressive but struggle to face new challenges (Rhenald Kasali, 2017, p. 4). They are obsessed with gadgets as a means of validating their existence, so much so that their daily activities revolve around smartphones or other devices. Their main objective is self-publication to let others know about their activities and behaviors, ultimately affirming their existence in the digital world. Moreover, they often misuse internet connectivity for browsing negative content such as violence, inappropriate behavior, and other harmful practices. As a result, their real-life behaviors and lifestyles are not in line with societal norms and values. Many Muslim scholars have proposed various perspectives and approaches to Islamic character education to address this issue.

Through this article, the author aims to present Abdullah Nashih Ullwan's perspective on the importance of character education as a solution to current problems. The study focuses on the following points: 1) How does Abdullah Nashih Ullwan propose the concept of character education in his book Tarbiyatul Aulad? 2) What is the relevance of the character education offered by Abdullah Nashih Ullwan in Tarbiyatul Aulad in addressing the issues of the "Strawberry Generation"? In line with these research objectives, this study intends to provide insights into character education according to Abdullah Nashih Ullwan as a reference to address the challenges faced in the education of contemporary children, known as the "Strawberry Generation."

B. METHOD

The data required to understand the above problem consists of qualitative and descriptive information. Therefore, the most appropriate approach is library exploration, which involves gathering and analyzing qualitative and textual data rather than numerical data. The library exploration method involves collecting and analyzing data from various literary sources. The literature review discussed in this study focuses on analyzing the thought process of character education as presented in the works of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, specifically his book "Tarbiyatull Aulad." By analyzing Nashih Ulwan's thought process, the key ideas and principles of character education are identified, which are then sought for their relevance in addressing the issues of character education in the "Strawberry Generation." As a result, there is no empirical field data presentation, as the emphasis is more on a detailed analysis of the study's data. The main data that becomes significant are the rational and evidence-based connections to the ideas presented.

The qualitative data available on character education by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan is gathered through a literature review and the use of books as primary sources. Verbal or written data, in written or oral form, is considered as documentary data (Prof. Dr. Sulgiolon, 2020). The intended documentary data in this study is the writings of Abdullah Nashih Ulwan himself as found in his book "Tarbiyatull Aulad," which then becomes a manual data source in the data collection process. Additionally, secondary data sources include writings from other authors that are relevant to Nashih Ulwan's ideas. Therefore, secondary data is extensively used by the researcher to discuss topics related to Islamic Education, character education, and the "Strawberry Generation." It should be noted that the specific data sources were traced through library research or the researcher's personal collection. The research process involves a technical approach, with the initial step being data analysis through reading the book "Tarbiyatull Aulad" multiple times in different editions.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
"The Strawberry Generation" and its Issues

The phrase that has recently gone viral, especially among tech-savvy individuals who actively use social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, etc., is the term "Strawberry Generation." This term is often used to refer to the younger generation, particularly those who are obsessed with gadgets. However, in practice and reality, this term has gained negative connotations and is seen as frivolous, self-centered, absurd, inappropriate, and unsuitable for their age. The "Strawberry Generation" is commonly characterized by being "alay" (overacting), narcissistic, excessively self-promoting on social media, heavily dependent on gadgets, constantly chasing trends in the virtual world, not just in the real world, engaging in early romantic relationships, and exhibiting adult-like behavior, as well as seeking attention. (Claudia, 2018)

Understanding the meaning of "Strawberry Generation" from the aforementioned description, the actual usage of this term can have significant negative impacts. Some of the problems associated with the younger generation or the "Strawberry Generation" today include misguided upbringing that leads to societal frustration, passive dependency on technology rather than being tech-savvy, meaning that the "Strawberry Generation" is limited to being consumers rather than creators, resulting in laziness, skepticism, and behaviors that deviate from positive values and tend to engage in counterproductive and inappropriate actions throughout their lives. These behaviors include a tendency towards rebellion, spreading false information, and indulging in negative aspects of social media with harmful consequences. (Wiyono, 2018)

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Concept of Character Education

Education is a process that aims to transform individual behavior, both at the individual and societal levels, through teaching, training, and development activities to achieve better and dignified outcomes. Education also involves the interaction between adult educators and young individuals (children) as learners, with educators providing guidance to learners as an effort to facilitate their journey towards adulthood based on the potential of social and cultural contexts, so that optimal adulthood and improved independent living can be achieved (Helrmawan et al., 2021).

Azyumradi Azra, as cited by AH. Choliron (2010), explains that education is the process of preparing the younger generation to face the future and to acquire more effective and efficient ways of living. The Second National Education System Law of 1989 states that education is a conscious effort to prepare learners through guidance, teaching, and training activities for their future. According to Gunawan (2014), education, from an Islamic perspective, can be seen from various aspects such as at-tarbiyah, at-taklim, at-takdzib, and ar-riyadah. Although education has different definitions, the general consensus is that education aims to lead individuals towards a better and more meaningful life.

According to Triyanto (2014), education, in a technical sense, is the effort to improve learning practices for individuals through structured programs, whether formal, informal, or non-formal, implemented both inside and outside of educational institutions and throughout various stages of life, with the aim of optimizing human potential to engage in appropriate life roles. The definition provided clearly indicates that the goal of education is to lead individuals towards a high-quality and holistic development. Fully developed individuals are those who have a harmonious relationship with nature, other individuals, and their Creator.

According to Abdul Majid and Dian Andayani, character, which originates from the Greek word "charasselin," means forming and shaping. Aulia Nur Hayati (2018) defines character as the nature, temperament, soul qualities, morals, and personal traits that distinguish each individual. Similarly, Zulbaeldi (2011) explains that character means marking and forming. Character is closely related to personality, as it encompasses the individual's nature, temperament, morals, values, ethics, and habits, making it distinctive from others.

Islam places great importance on character education, as evident in the advice of Luqman al-Hakim to his son, as mentioned in Surah Luqman (Quran, 31:12-19). These verses indicate that character education is focused on instilling goodness in the lives of individuals. Islam emphasizes the vital role of character education, which is reflected in the principles of Islamic education, such as fostering noble morals (akhlaqul karimah) based on the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, submitting to Allah's commandments, maintaining consistency in following Allah's laws, enriching knowledge, and leading individuals towards a better life according to Allah's guidance.

In other words, character education is the path to achieving "insan kamil" (a complete human being). In Islam, character education is comparable to the divine revelation and intellect. Islamic character education aligns with religious teachings and has its own uniqueness compared to Western versions of character education. The implementation of moral education in Islam is based on religious principles, guidance, and culture to promote moral behavior among the community. Divine revelation is the fundamental source of moral education in Islam, and consequently, character education is imparted through doctrinal and dogmatic approaches.

According to Dr. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan (2020), character education in Islam is fundamentally based on the Quran and Hadith. Therefore, the standards of goodness and righteousness in Islamic character can be clearly defined through the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. The judgment of whether something is good or bad in Islamic character can be determined through Islamic texts, rather than being subjective. Islamic education encompasses not only the systematic aspects of faith, worship, and transactions but also morals. Studying Islam, through the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, aims to rectify and improve the moral conduct and character of individuals in society. Islamic teachings go beyond mere rituals, worship, and transactions; they also encompass moral values. A comprehensive study of Islam, known as "kaffah," serves as a guide for the moral development of all Muslims. This approach has been exemplified through the noble qualities of Prophet Muhammad, who was known as "as-Siddiq" (the truthful), "al-Amin" (the trustworthy), "at-Tablig" (the conveyor of messages), and "at-Tafwiz" (the intelligent).

The purpose of character

Education is to cultivate individuals with noble moral values. Education is not limited to the goal of advancing the nation's future solely through intellectual development. However, in line with societal progress, educational objectives have undergone changes, aiming not only to foster national progress but also to instill good character traits (Aullia Nulr Hayati, 2018). Nata (2012) explains that character education is an educational approach that encourages individuals to practice virtues and transcend societal norms, thereby acquiring knowledge and understanding of righteous living. The objective of character education is to develop virtuous

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personalities in individuals within society, achieved through guidance and imparting essential values that should be embraced while discouraging negative behaviors.

Moral education, as viewed by Abdullah Nashih Ullwan in his book "Tarbiyatull Aullad," focuses on instilling a strong foundation of faith and Islam in the younger generation. Ullwan emphasizes the fundamental and universal nature of education, with character education being one of its key components. The values of character education, as outlined in "Tarbiyatull Aullad," include nurturing attention in children, enabling them to become more motivated learners, while parents or educators direct their attention towards appropriate activities to avoid deviant behaviors.

According to Abdullah Nashih Ullwan, character education (at-tarbiyah al-khullulqiyah) encompasses a set of principles that must be internalized by children, becoming habitual from an early age until they reach adulthood (baligh). Based on the author's perspective, the term "at-tarbiyah al-khullulqiyah" in the book "Tarbiyatull Aullad" is synonymous with character education. Ullwan emphasizes the importance of character education, and accordingly, he presents five ways that should be prepared to achieve holistic maturity, encompassing mental, moral, and physical aspects (Dr. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan, 2020). These five ways or methods are as follows:

1. Education Through Exemplary Behavior

Character education is considered crucial in addressing issues related to moral, spiritual, and social aspects of children. This is because exemplary behavior is seen as the most influential factor in shaping children's attitudes. Whatever children observe in their surroundings becomes their model for imitation. For example, many children nowadays are fascinated by K-Pop idols, as they constantly observe their surroundings, including K-Pop culture. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan encourages educators and parents to pay attention to cultivating virtuous habits.

This is vital because it provides guidance for children to navigate their future lives. Education through habituation becomes more effective when it meets certain conditions, namely: consistently promoting good habits as early as possible, providing vigilant and appropriate supervision, maintaining consistency and clarity, and eliminating mechanical and ballistic habits while listening to the child's inner voice. Molral modeling, as explained by Maragulstam (2018), indicates that individuals tend to internalize and emulate what they observe and experience. The most influential models are those closely related to individuals, such as parents, relatives, friends, and their idols. In Islam, the best role model is the beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as stated in the Quran, Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 21, which means, "Indeed in the Messenger of Allah, you have an excellent example for whoever seeks Allah and the Last Day" (Dr. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan, 2020).

2. Education through Advice

Providing advice can broaden a child's understanding of moral principles, leading to beneficial outcomes for the child and cultivating a compassionate heart with improved behavior towards others. The advice given should align with Islamic principles. It is not merely about beautiful words spoken but should come from the heart, as this will have a greater impact on children. Giving advice should be done with a calm demeanor, respecting the child's dignity and choosing the appropriate timing. For example, when a child is angry, it is better for parents or educators to offer advice when the child has calmed down or when their anger has subsided (Dr. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan, 2020).

There are many verses in the Quran that emphasize the importance of reminding one another to do good. We are familiar with the term "advice" from various verses, including Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 55, which states, "And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers." Numerous verses in the Quran highlight that a pure soul, a compassionate heart, and a sound and functioning mind readily accept and respond positively to words that touch the heart, advice that appeals, and reminders that are persistent (Dr. Abdullah Nashih Ullwan, 2020).

3. Education through Giving Attention

Education through giving attention involves cultivating a sense of attentiveness towards children and being attuned to their development. Paying attention to children is crucial as it enables immediate reminders when they become distracted or forgetful. Giving attention serves as a preventive measure against potential negative behaviors.

Maragulstam (2018) explains that moral feelings and values arise from a positive mindset. Having a positive mindset towards the good deeds performed and experiencing the consequences of those actions. Individuals feel motivated to engage in virtuous behavior because they understand and appreciate the benefits derived from it. Many individuals possess knowledge and understanding of good deeds but fail to practice them because they have not developed a genuine love and sense of the positive outcomes resulting from performing those actions.

By nurturing a culture of attention, educators and parents can create an environment that fosters a sense of responsibility and mindfulness in children. This approach helps in building their character, cultivating positive values, and reinforcing the importance of doing good deeds for the well-being of themselves and others.

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In conclusion, education through advice and giving attention plays significant roles in shaping the character of individuals. By providing meaningful guidance and being attentive to children's needs, educators and parents can contribute to their moral development and promote positive behavior in their lives.

4. Education through Punishment

Implementing punishment for children is permissible in Islam but must adhere to certain criteria. The application of punishment should be done with gentleness and in accordance with the child's behavior and should progress gradually from milder to more severe measures. Maragulstam (2018) explains that punishment requires three conditions: 1) The beginning (Al-Bidayah) that involves purification by eliminating negative traits that hinder moral development. This stage encourages individuals to yearn for their Creator; 2) Striving for goodness (Al-Mujahadah) or what is known as self-discipline, continuously refining oneself with virtues and distancing oneself from undesirable traits. This involves cultivating qualities such as sincerity, humility, patience, gratitude, and more; 3) Experiencing (Al-Mushaqah) or what is known as divine manifestation, where individuals not only fulfill God's commands but reach a level of experiencing pleasure, closeness, longing, and being in the presence of their Lord.

5. Education through Habituation

Educating through the cultivation of good habits is crucial for human life. Good habits that become ingrained in individuals can be utilized in their daily lives as positive behavioral patterns. Maragulstam (2018) explains that moral acting is achieved through consistent and habitual practice. Good habits are not limited to behavior alone but also encompass positive thinking, enabling a mindset that readily accepts change. The stages of habit formation include: Thinking, habituation, utilization, deviation, consolidation, and habit formation. If these stages are successfully navigated, character development becomes a natural outcome for Muslims because their character is shaped through their love for Allah SWT.

In summary, punishment, when applied with gentleness and adhering to the criteria outlined in Islam, can be part of education. Likewise, education through habituation focuses on cultivating good habits and positive thinking. Both approaches contribute to the moral and character development of individuals.

Character Education from Abdullah Nashih's Perspective

Abdullah Nashih Ullwan presents several aspects of character education, which can be summarized as follows: Firstly, faith education involves teaching and instilling the foundations of faith in children through the habitual use of Islamic materials. Abdullah Nashih emphasizes that faith education should not be narrowly defined but should be viewed universally. It encompasses instilling noble moral values, worship (ibadah), Islamic teachings, and other Islamic principles.

Secondly, moral education is an integral part of character education. It is the responsibility of parents to cultivate and train children in virtuous behavior in their daily lives.

Thirdly, physical education aims to promote the overall physical development and health of individuals. According to Abdullah Nashih, physical education includes providing a suitable environment for children, such as providing proper nourishment, a good place to live, and halal food. This physical care contributes to the physical development of children.

Fourthly, intellectual education involves nurturing children's intellectual capabilities and exposing them to positive knowledge. It encompasses the acquisition of religious knowledge, various academic disciplines, social skills, and creativity, with the aim of broadening children's horizons globally. Intellectual education is as important as the aforementioned aspects of education and is interconnected with faith, moral, and physical education.

Fifthly, mental/psychological education focuses on providing early education to children, starting from early childhood, by teaching them tolerance, responsibility, self-confidence, independence, problem-solving, and achieving complete moral development. The goal of mental education is to balance children's emotional well-being with their moral development, enabling them to fulfill their obligations consciously and meaningfully.

Sixthly, social education involves instilling ethical principles in children from an early age to ensure good social behavior and adherence to Islamic norms. It involves teaching appropriate behavior and manners in society through practice and habituation, so that children can interact with others respectfully, respect the rights of others, and engage with people regardless of age, position, and other factors.

Lastly, sexual education aims to provide knowledge and education about healthy and proper sexuality and to teach children about gender differences. This enables them to lead a safe life and navigate through various social strata without succumbing to impulsive desires, which is a prevalent societal issue. These aspects of character education are interrelated and must be implemented collectively to realize Islamic character education. The ultimate goal is to foster noble and dignified individuals.

D. CONCLUSION

Firstly, the character education approach presented by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, which includes five methods: habituation, setting an example, advice, paying attention, and providing fair judgments, is highly suitable to be implemented early on in children's lives to shape their character for the future. The characteristics of the "Strawberry Generation," who easily imitate others without proper discernment, can be transformed into noble individuals by instilling these five methods advocated by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan, thus ensuring a bright and virtuous future.

Furthermore, Abdullah Nashih Ulwan introduces various components of character education, including moral education, etiquette education, physical education, intellectual education, mental/psychological education, social education, and sexual education. These interconnected components form a holistic approach in cultivating Islamic character education for the "Strawberry Generation."

Moreover, character education approaches by Abdullah Nashih Ulwan remain relevant in addressing the challenges faced by the "Strawberry Generation," especially in dealing with the psychological issues arising from their immersion in the digital era. The integration of character education through habituation, setting an example, advice, paying attention, and providing fair judgments, particularly within Islamic education, such as faith education, worship education, and moral education, remains relevant and effective in addressing the problems of the "Strawberry Generation," allowing them to develop strong moral character and noble behavior from an early age.

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