Promoting Teacher Professionalism through Character Building and Technology Integration

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Abstract: Promoting Teacher Professionalism through Character Building and Technology Integration. Purpose: The purpose of this research is to identify the role of character education and technology incorporation at Teacher Education and Training Institutes in producing professional teachers as envisaged by the Teacher and Lecturer Law. **Method:** The type of research used in this study is the literature review. This entails gathering data from journals, research papers, government reports, and education policies. **Findings:** This study discovered that character education at Teacher Education and Training Institutes assists in the formation of professional teachers through the acquisition of appropriate attitudes and values. Some of these are relationships with self, the law, professional associations, students, peers, and supervisors. Some of the values include faith, openness, honesty, lifelong learning, enthusiasm, unity, togetherness, discipline, and responsibility that are useful for future teachers. Including the technology integration in the training assists in enhancing these professional values and skills. **Conclusion:** The programs of character education and integrating information and communication technology at Teacher Education and Training Institutes are useful in producing professional teachers with content and character. This assists in producing teachers who are able to impart positive values in the learners such as love for God, parents, fellow human beings, and country.

Keywords: character building, professionalism, demoralization.

■ **INTRODUCTION**

Education is important for a country's development since it defines the future generation's capacity to develop the nation and society (Malik, 2018). But what is quality education and has Indonesia attained it? Measures of education success involve assessing the behavior of youths in and out of school and the comparison of the quality of education between the national and international level (Niazov, 2018). However, it appears that Indonesia does not measure up to this level.

The current state of education in Indonesia has raised a lot of concern particularly concerning the alteration of behaviour among the young people. Such changes are suggestive of the fact that moral standards are deteriorating hence young people are less equipped to face moral challenges (Westheimer, 2019). This decline manifests itself in many forms including; increased violence, sexual misconduct, excessive gaming, increased access to pornography, disrespect, low work ethic, and reduced responsibility (Andhyka, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to establish how the standards of teacher professionalism can be enhanced through character development and use of technology. The purpose is to ensure that teachers acquire the appropriate skills and attitudes that will enable them to nurture proper character in the learners. Consequently, the teachers can convey these values to the students, as it is proven that through character building and the use of technology, moral integrity and resilience of the Indonesian youth can be revived.

Previous research has pointed out several problems concerning youth conduct and educational outcomes in Indonesia. Malik (2018) and Niazov (2018) have also noted that education has a significant role in determining the future generation's capacity to be productive citizens in their society and nation. However, these studies concentrate more on the consequences of education than the procedures that lead to enhancing teacher professionalism. To the author's knowledge, there is a gap in the literature concerning the application of character building and the use of technology in the professional development of teachers.

Westheimer (2019) has also described the erosion of moral standards among the youth observing that young people today are more violent, sexually permissive, addicted to games, exposed to pornography, rude to authority, lazy and irresponsible among other things. Although, these findings are essential, they do not offer practical approaches to solving these problems in the educational system. There has been a tendency to focus on the issue detection rather than on the suggested solution to the problem.

Andhyka (2023) discusses the aspect of moral degradation among the Indonesian youth but fails to discuss how the teacher training programs could serve as an antidote to it. Technology is a topic that has been debated regarding its use in teaching and learning but there is very little done in terms of its use in character

education and staff development for the teachers. Technology integration is considered more as a solution to enhancing students' academic performance instead of a tool for enhancing moral and ethical aspects of the teachers and students.

There is a research gap in the literature that focuses on the practical aspect of how character building and technology integration can be incorporated into the teacher training programs in a systematic manner to tackle these moral and behavioral problems. The majority of the prior studies fail to consider the relationship between character education and technological skills in developing the comprehensive notion of teacher professionalism. In this way, it is possible to design more efficient and beneficial strategies not only for the educational process and its results but also for the moral and ethical level of the teachers and learners.

This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the two-fold of character development and technology enhancement in the professional growth of teachers. This can help to offer a complete account of both the scholarly and ethical aspects of education that may help in the restoration of ethical characters as well as the psychological strength of the Indonesian youth.

■ **METHOD**

This research employs a literature review to examine the ways through which the professionalism of teachers can be promoted through character building and use of technology. The study covers several areas concerning education in Indonesia, including the present condition of education, the expected professional teachers' attitudes, the role of professional teachers, and the values that can be instilled through character education in Teacher Education and Training Institutes.

The search of the literature was conducted systematically. Some of the search terms used included; education in Indonesia, professional

teachers, character education, and Teacher Education and Training Institutes. The first search was carried out with the help of such resources as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and governmental websites that are devoted to the problem of education. The search strategy is described as follows:

Identification: The articles and documents were searched using the specified keywords. *Screening*: All the identified articles were cross-checked, and the rest of the articles were filtered out based on the title and abstract. *Eligibility*: In the current study, the articles were first reviewed and then checked for the relevance from the full-text articles. *Included*: Only those studies that fulfilled all the laid down criteria were used in the final analysis.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:
Inclusion Criteria:
1. Articles and reports that are in English or Indonesian language.
2. Researches conducted on the education system in Indonesia.
3. Studies associated with continuing professional teacher training and the teaching of character education.
4. Documents published in the last two decades.

Exclusion Criteria:
1. Articles that do not relate to Indonesia.
2. Research that involved only primary or secondary education without thinking about the teacher education.
3. Journals that are not available for full text search.

In terms of data analysis, qualitative methods were used, mainly descriptive and interpretive, in order to investigate the selected topics in detail. Qualitative information including numerical and statistical information was also used where necessary in form of figures and survey data. The qualitative data analysis gave detailed results and the quantitative data supplemented these results and enriched the study.

The validity of the data in this study is strictly maintained through a systematic method. The research incorporated valid references such as peer-reviewed academic journals, governmental publications and educational legislations to make the data sources reliable.

■ **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

As stated by the Ministry of National Education, Indonesia is still far from developed countries in terms of quality of education as highlighted by Pramana et al., (2021). There are many factors that have been described as being responsible for this educational lag. The reasons include: (1) education where the interests of organizers are prioritized to the detriment of students; (2) education oriented toward the transmission of content, where teachers' primary function is to present information, which results in low teaching quality due to the assessment methods that focus on short term retention and artificial testing; (3) the lack of consideration of the affective domain in education; (4) selective dissemination of knowledge based on the hierarchical perspective

However, not all these issues are generalizable to all students as proposed by the authors of various theories. Firstly, every student is distinct and possesses his or her strong and weak points; in addition, the standardization of the processes and the introduction of the requirements can hamper the students' individuality. Second, children possess unique learning mechanisms that are not similar to that of the adults while education practices mimic those of the adults. Thirdly, learning is play for students, but play in education delivery is missing or does not correspond to educational

paradigms. Finally, childhood is the highest point of creative development, but the educational process tends to restrain children's creativity.

Due to these problems, there is a current shift and future expectation of a paradigm change in educational management, especially in returning education to the community. Directors, especially those who are teaching, are encouraged to courageously and assiduously transform paradigms that have been in place for years.

Generally, a teacher is a person who teaches students academic and non-academic knowledge. Sobon (2018) defines a professional teacher as someone who bears the responsibility and power of educating his/her students. The professionalism of teachers is related to the Law on Teachers and Lecturers that regulates their responsibilities and demands. According to the key articles of the law, a teacher is an educator whose responsibilities include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students from the pre-school to secondary school level (Article 1, the Law on Teachers and Lecturers). Further, article 8 of the law provides that teachers should be academically qualified, competent and should hold a teaching certificate.

The other requirements for educational qualifications are elaborated in Article 9 where it is stated that a teacher must possess S-1 or D-4 degree. Based on the Government Regulation 19, Article 29, teachers for the kindergarten and elementary school should have a degree in psychology, PGTK/PGSD or any related degree. The subject teachers of junior high and high schools must have a degree in the subject specialization they teach, for example Mathematics or Indonesian Language Education (S-1 or D-4) from Teacher Education Institution or university.

The procedure of gaining a teaching certificate which serves as a proof of professionalism in teaching is not clearly provided in the Law on Teachers and Lecturers. However, according to the Law on Teachers and Lecturers, Article 1, point 11 certification means the process of awarding a teaching certificate to teachers who satisfy the set standards. Certification is important as it determines whether the concerned individuals have attained the educational requirement and competency level that is required of them as educators. It plays the role of an assessment tool which is rather broad.

According to the law and Government Regulation 19, the competencies expected of teachers comprise personal, pedagogical, professional, and social competencies. Personal competence entails having a sound psychological health, moral character, knowledge, power, and being able to set good examples to the students. Administrative competence is related to the management of educational learning, the nature of students, and educational philosophies. Professional competency, which is a subject of discussion, is defined as competence in content, while social competency focuses on interpersonal interaction within the school and society.

It is critical to integrate these competencies as they all make up the core of a teacher's professionalism. Knowledge of education principles, students, contents, and teaching methods provide teachers with the ability to perform effectively (Danijela, 2018). It also guarantees that teaching is not just an ordinary job but a noble profession enhanced by theoretical concepts and practical implementation, thus achieving positive educational impact.

When discussing Indonesian education, the requirements of a professional teacher are connected to the Teachers and Lecturers Law. Professional teacher not only conveys knowledge but also attitudes and behaviors that are expected to possess as professionals. This includes enhancing service provision, increasing know-how, offering direction and enhancing interaction

with students and the community (Baan, Gaikhorst, & Volman, 2020).

Firstly, concerning Attitude towards Legislation, teachers according to the Indonesian Teachers' Code of Ethics are required to support government policies in education (Kusumaningrum et al., 2019). The ministry of education and culture provides regulations that teachers are supposed to follow, stressing on their civil servants' duties to comprehend and apply the policies of education. *Secondly*, teachers preserve and also improve the quality of the Indonesian Teachers Association in collaboration. The Association can be described as an organized framework of teachers who strive to achieve similar objectives and participate in such activities as capacity building, training, workshops, and other forms of professional development. This commitment is not only to their initial training, but also their professional development throughout their working lives.

Thirdly, there is a need to maintain harmony among employees. Both formal and informal communication is relevant in school setting to enhance the functioning of schools. Interpersonal relationships, positive working relationships, and teacher professionalism are some of the professional demeanors that foster a positive working climate among teachers and other school personnel to enhance students' learning (Oza & Ahluwalia, 2021). *Fourthly*, teachers also focus on nurturing the students to become good Indonesians with strong spirit of Pancasila. This involves the enhancement of national education aims and values of direction to mold the students to be responsible citizens in the society.

Fifthly, creating a conducive work environment involves teachers actively engaging with parents and the broader community. Maintaining good relations outside the classroom benefits students and enhances the overall educational experience. This aligns with the ethical mandate for teachers to build and sustain positive community relationships. *Sixthly*, teachers collaborate positively with school leaders to achieve organizational goals. This includes adhering to directives, providing constructive feedback, and participating in initiatives aimed at school improvement. Cooperation with leaders ensures effective implementation of educational strategies and programs both within and outside school settings (Müller, Lude, & Hancock, 2020). *Seventhly*, the work of a teacher requires patience, attention to detail, and a deep commitment to their profession. Upholding the dignity of the teaching profession involves continuous self-improvement and dedication to serving students effectively (Wadesango, 2022). This commitment is essential for maintaining high standards of professional conduct and achieving career success.

Additionally, teachers must address contemporary student challenges, such as declining moral values and behavioral deviations from societal norms. Effective education in Teacher Training Institutions should equip future teachers with the skills and values needed to address these issues and promote positive student development.

Furthermore, beyond these core attitudes, professional teachers must embody integrity, discipline, responsibility, collaborative skills, and a commitment to personal development Singh (2019). These qualities are integral to fostering a supportive educational environment and ensuring the holistic development of students under their care.

The following table is the summary of the condition of education in Indonesia and professional teachers illustrated above.

Table 1. The condition of education in Indonesia and professional teachers

Aspect	Summary
Education in Indonesia	Indonesia faces challenges in education quality. Issues include: (1) Prioritization of organizers' interests over student needs; (2) Content-focused education leading to low teaching quality; (3) Neglect of the affective domain; (4) Selective knowledge dissemination. These issues hinder individual student growth due to standardized processes and requirements. There is a call for paradigm shifts in educational management to return education to the community.
Professional Teachers	Professional teachers in Indonesia are defined by the Teachers and Lecturers Law. They educate, guide, and assess students from pre-school to secondary levels (Article 1, the Teachers and Lecturers Law). Requirements include academic qualifications (Article 8) and specific degrees for different teaching levels (Article 9, Govt. Reg. 19). Certification signifies meeting educational and competency standards. Teachers must integrate personal, pedagogical, professional, and social competencies to effectively educate (Danijela, 2018).

Promoting teacher profesionalism through character building and technology integration

Character education builds up character which defines the character and personality of the students (Wati & Sundawa, 2018). It extends beyond the delivery of knowledge or skills to students. Besides knowledge and skills, prospective teachers in the Educational Institutions for Teacher Training are endowed with positive values right from their training. It used the term character education to mean all rounded education that includes values, attitude, enthusiasm and spirit. It seeks to inculcate positive behaviors and beliefs (habituation) so that learners behave in a manner that is in line with the values that are acquired as part of the student's character (Hakam, 2018). Ethics is the virtue or soft competency that greatly enhances one's performance in life. The author continues to explain that all technical competencies without good character are useless (Irfani, 2022).

Professionalism in the teaching profession requires character development and the use of technology in the teaching profession (Galustyan et al., 2017). Character education in the Educational Institutions for Teacher Training has the significant role in producing teachers who not only have academic competency but also moral character and proper attitudes. The character education in the institutions does not only develop the teachers' own ethical character but also equip them with strategies on how to address the moral issues that are likely to surface in a classroom (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). When technology is incorporated in teacher education, institutions equip educators with the ability to apply new teaching methodologies that embrace students' differences and increase learners' interest. These two focuses guarantee that teachers are not only skilled personnel but also caring individuals who create diverse and efficient learning environments.

The educational Institutions for Teacher Training are important in character building to produce future teachers with faith, honesty, responsibility, unity, among others (Chowdhury, 2018). These are values that are basic in creating

a positive learning atmosphere and in the development of the students. For instance, teachers with values of honesty and responsibility are portraying integrity in their dealings with students and other teachers in school thus creating a positive influence in the educational fraternity. Besides, promoting values like honesty and responsibility among the future teachers will guarantee that they will set a good example of ethical behavior in their relationships with students and other teachers, hence creating a beneficial environment in education (Campbell, 2014). These core values do not only enhance the learning environment but also enhance the student's development and social belonging in educational institutions.

Furthermore, the implementation of technology in the teacher training improves professional standards by availing to teachers modern teaching approaches and abilities in information technology. The use of technology in teaching and learning makes it possible for the teachers to teach effectively, access learning materials, and create learning communities (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). Online classes, digital assessment, and applications are some examples of how technology enhances teaching and learning practices and fosters individual learners' needs.

Thus, integrating character education and technology in the Educational Institutions for Teacher Training equip teachers to address contemporary education issues proficiently. Teachers with positive character traits and use technology are more prepared to create a positive learning environment, solve demoralization problems among students, and meet the changing educational requirements (Bakhmat et al., 2022). Furthermore, the application of technology in teacher training raises the professional quality by providing teachers with modern concepts of teaching and skills in information and communication technologies. This integration makes teaching easier, ensures the learners get

access to the learning resources in an efficient manner and the creation of supportive learning environments. Virtual classes, online quizzes and tests, as well as educational applications are examples of how technologies enhance educational processes and address learners' needs.

Therefore, the transformation of teachers to professional teachers through character building and use of technology improves their teaching ability as well as the ability to produce students who are academically sound and moral. This double preparation allows educators to be ready to influence their students' academic performance and self-fulfillment in the contemporary educational environment.

■ **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, there are challenges that have affected Indonesia education system and as a result the quality of education is not as good as that of the developed countries. Some of these challenges include; The organization's interest superseding that of the students, content delivery approaches, and lack of attention given to the affective learning area. Therefore, there is a need to embrace a new shift of education based on the community needs. The professionalism of teachers regulated by the Teachers and Lecturers Law focuses on the academic background, proficiency, and constant training. Teachers do not only teach knowledge but also teach attitude and behavior; they teach ethics, unity, and responsibility to students.

Character education in Educational Institutions for Teacher Training is very important since it helps in producing teachers with good moral character and proper teaching methods. The incorporation of technology in teacher training improves professionalism since the teachers is trained on the current trends in educating the learners as well as mastering ICT skills in the classroom to make them inclusive.

Thus, Indonesia can prepare teachers to meet the current educational needs through focusing on character education and the integration of technology in the training of teachers. Doing this prepares teachers to facilitate learning and personal development thus enhancing the responsiveness of the education system.

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