



Character education in the digital era: An analytical review of hate speech on social media platforms

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Abstract

The development of digital technology has changed the pattern of social interaction, especially among Generation Z who grew up alongside social media. With the existence of social media providing convenience in communication and self-expression, therefore new challenges arise in character building, one of which is the rise of hate speech. This study aims to identify the forms of hate speech committed by Generation Z on social media and examine the challenges of character education in dealing with it. The method used is netnography with a text analysis approach to social media posts and comments that contain hateful content. The results showed that common forms of hate speech include insults, defamation, defamation, unpleasant actions, provocation, incitement, and spreading fake news. This phenomenon shows that low digital literacy and lack of understanding of ethics in social media are serious problems. Other challenges faced in character education include exposure to inappropriate digital content, excessive dependence on technology, and the lack of supervisory role from parents and educators. Therefore, a solution that requires synergy from various parties such as teachers, families, government, and digital platforms to strengthen character education through increasing digital literacy, habituation of postal communication, and social media ethics.

Keywords: character education; social media; hate speech; generation Z; digital era

Introduction

The rapid development of technology has brought humans into the digital age, where the internet and social media have become an indispensable part of daily life. This scientific advancement affects various aspects of human life, from children, adolescents, to adults. One of the real impacts of technological advances can be seen in the way humans interact and communicate, especially through social media. Social media is now the face and main means of expressing oneself, channeling brilliant ideas, socializing, and expressing opinions. However, in the midst of the rapid flow of digitalization, new challenges have arisen in character formation, especially in the generation that was born and raised in the digital era (Hartono, 2022; Harahap et al., 2024). This

condition is particularly evident in the everyday behavior of Generation Z, who are closely connected to the digital world.

Generation Z, who was born and grew up side by side with technology and social media, utilizes various online platforms such as TikTok, X (Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook to find information, facilitate communication, build personal branding, and express themselves. Behind this positive potential, there are hidden threats that are often unrealized, such as the spread of hate speech and hoaxes. This phenomenon reflects a shift in the communication behavior of students who tend to be more expressive in the digital space, but also exhibit increased vulnerability to cyberbullying, intolerance, and polarizing discourse.

Advances in digital technology have transformed the paradigm of education, especially in character building. Although formal character education has long been implemented in schools, its impact appears to be insufficient in addressing moral issues emerging from online interactions. Existing models often fail to anticipate the dynamic, anonymous, and viral nature of digital communication that enables hate speech to spread rapidly and broadly. Therefore, new, more comprehensive approaches are needed, such as digital citizenship and critical media literacy programs that equip students with ethical reasoning, empathy, and self-regulation in online environments.

Previous studies have widely discussed character education in school settings and the phenomenon of hate speech separately (Fortuna & Nunes, 2018; Keen et al., 2020), but few have explored the intersection between the two, particularly how hate speech committed by Generation Z in Indonesia reflects gaps in digital-age character education. Most existing literature focuses either on regulatory/legal aspects of hate speech or the theoretical construction of moral values in education, without directly connecting them in an empirical framework involving youth digital behavior. Moreover, while the discourse on digital citizenship has emerged, it is still underdeveloped in the Indonesian context, particularly in formal character-building curricula.

This study offers a novel contribution by analyzing the specific forms of hate speech expressed by Generation Z on social media in Indonesia and critically examining the educational challenges that hinder the development of digital ethics and character among youth. By combining perspectives from media studies, moral education, and youth digital culture, the research bridges the gap between moral theory and contemporary online practice, thus providing practical insight for educational reform.

This study aims to (1) identify and classify the manifestations of hate speech on social media by Indonesian Gen Z users, and (2) analyze the structural and pedagogical limitations of current character education in responding to the ethical challenges posed by digital communication. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital-age character education models that are more relevant, responsive, and future-oriented.

Method

This study employed a qualitative netnographic method to explore the phenomenon of hate speech among Generation Z on social media platforms. Netnography, as introduced by Kozinets (2010), is an ethnographic approach adapted for the study of online communities and digital

interactions. Specifically, this research used text-based netnography, focusing on digital texts such as comments, captions, tweets, and status updates that potentially contain hate speech content. The data were collected purposively from publicly accessible social media accounts, particularly those used by individuals within the Generation Z demographic (approximately aged 13–26). The selected data consisted of posts that met the criteria of containing provocative or offensive language, often in the form of insults, discriminatory remarks, or incitements that sparked public reaction or controversy.

Data collection was conducted through digital observation and documentation techniques, including taking screenshots and recording the links of relevant posts. The analysis process was carried out using a semiotic-textual approach, wherein the researcher identified signs—words, sentences, hashtags, symbols, or images, that indicated the presence of hate speech. These were interpreted within their digital context to determine their meaning, target, and intent. Content was categorized based on the type of hate speech, its intended target (e.g., ethnicity, religion, gender), and the communicative mode used. The interpretation process followed Kozinets' (2015) cultural analysis principles in netnography, emphasizing immersion, naturalistic data collection, contextual interpretation, and reflexivity.

To ensure ethical compliance, the research applied passive netnographic protocols, meaning that the researcher did not interact directly with the account owners, and all identifiable user information was anonymized. This approach aligns with the ethical guidelines for online research and respects platform terms of service. The identification of hate speech was also guided by legal definitions and academic references, including those by Sellars (2016) and Baider (2020), who categorize hate speech as verbal or symbolic acts of provocation, incitement, or insult targeting specific social groups. Thus, this method allowed the researcher to uncover digital expressions of hostility while highlighting the implications for character education in the digital age.

Results and Discussion

Forms of Hate Speech on Social Media by Generation Z in Indonesia

The form of Hate Speech states that hate speech can be in the form of criminal acts regulated in the Criminal Code (KUHP) and other criminal provisions outside the Criminal Code, which include: (1) insult, (2) defamation, (3) blasphemy, (4) unpleasant acts, (5) provocation, (6) inciting, (7) spreading false news and all of the above actions have the purpose or can have an impact on acts of discrimination, violence, loss of life, and/or social conflict.

Hate Speech Insults

Insult is in the general sense "insult" is an attack on someone's honor and good name. As a result of these attacks, the sufferer will usually feel ashamed. The honor that is under attack here is not honor in the sexual sphere, but honor that includes good name. The crime of insult is often referred to as an honor crime. The presence of insults in the Criminal Code is intended to protect a person's honor. In an act that is considered an insult, not only honor must be protected but also a good name. Therefore, there are several provisions in the insult offense, one of the elements of the offense must be proven is the attack on honor and good name. According to Soesilo (1974, insult is an act of attacking a person's honor and good name, which usually makes the victim feel

ashamed. The honor in question is not only in the sexual field but also includes good names in general.

According to Soesilo (1974), various forms of insult include verbal blasphemy (*smaad*), blasphemy conveyed through letters or writing (*smaadschrift*), slander (*laster*), simple insult (*eenvoudige belediging*), complaining in a defamatory manner (*lasterlijke aanklacht*), and accusations made in a defamatory manner (*lasterlijke verdachtmaking*). These types of insults are categorized as *delik aduan*, meaning they can only be prosecuted if the individual who feels harmed by the insult files a formal complaint.

Two comments found in a social media post can be classified as hate speech in the form of personal insults (Figure 1). The first comment labels an individual as “the worst idol participant,” a statement that harshly undermines the person’s dignity by attaching a highly negative judgment without any substantiated reasoning. Rather than offering constructive feedback, the comment functions as a direct insult that may cause emotional harm and reputational damage. The second comment reads, “the singing never reaches the heart of the listener 🙄”. While expressed in a softer tone and accompanied by an emoji, it still diminishes the individual’s abilities and conveys a disparaging message. Both remarks contain elements of personal attack in a digital public space and can be considered hate speech under Indonesian law, particularly Article 27 paragraph 3 of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), which addresses defamation and insult via electronic media.



Figure 1. Comments that Contained Hate Speech in Instagram

Blasphemy Hate Speech

Blasphemy comes from the word *nista*, which in the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI) Edition VI (2016–2024) is interpreted as despicable, low, unpleasant to hear, reproach, or stain. Blasphemy itself is defined as the process, method, or act of blasphemy. According to Kuntarto (Kamilah et al., 2022), blasphemy is an act of denouncing an individual or institution, which is related to insulting a particular religion or belief, both verbally and in writing. In addition, blasphemy is a word, behavior, writing, or performance that is prohibited because it can trigger acts of violence and prejudice either on the part of the perpetrator of the statement or the victim of the act (Permatasari & Subyantoro, 2020). Blasphemy, when expressed publicly, especially through digital platforms, can escalate into hate speech with serious legal consequences.

One form of blasphemy hate speech is in the form of blasphemy that is rampant by netizens on social media. In the Law on the Punishment for Blasphemous Hate Speech, Article 156 of the

Criminal Code explains that anyone who publicly expresses and/or expresses feelings of hostility, hatred, or contempt for one or more groups and/or groups of the Indonesian people, is threatened with imprisonment for a maximum of four years or a fine of up to four thousand five hundred rupiah. The word group or group in this article is interpreted as part of the Indonesian people who have differences in terms of religion, place and/or country of origin, race, descent, nationality or position according to constitutional law (Article 156 of the Criminal Code). This is reflected in real cases of social media comments that meet the legal criteria for religious blasphemy.

A comment in a social media post discussing issues related to religious blasphemy was found to contain explicit elements of hostility and insult toward Christianity (Figure 2). The remark not only conveyed offensive language but also reflected a clear act of blasphemy and antagonism toward the religion. Such actions are in direct violation of Indonesian law, specifically Article 156a of the Criminal Code (KUHP), which states that any individual who intentionally expresses feelings or engages in acts of hostility, abuse, or blasphemy against a recognized religion in Indonesia may face a prison sentence of up to five years.

The blasphemous content in the comment fulfills the criteria for a criminal act under Article 156a: it was made intentionally, in a public space (in this case, via social media accessible to the general public), and directed at a religion officially acknowledged in Indonesia. As such, the available evidence from the comment can serve as a legal foundation for pursuing a blasphemy case in accordance with existing laws and regulations. Legal action in such cases is crucial to preserving social harmony and fostering mutual respect among religious communities within Indonesia's diverse society.



Figure 2. Example of Online Blasphemy in a Public Instagram Comment

Hate Speech Defamation

Pollution in the KBBI VI dictionary (2016-2024) is a process, way, act of polluting or polluting pollution (Hutabarat & Radhiah, 2025). Defamation in the Criminal Code, also known as

defamation, is the act of defamation or honor of a person through the way of stating something, both orally and in writing (Permatasari & Subyantoro, 2020). Defamation in criminal law is known as contempt. Defamation is defined as an act that tarnishes or tarnishes a person's good name. Defamation is an unlawful act that attacks a person's honor and good name so that it is polluted in public (Mauludi, 2018). This legal interpretation becomes increasingly complex when defamation is committed through digital or electronic means.

Changing the criminal threat in Article 45 paragraph (1) of the ITE Law by reducing the criminal threat below 5 years will result in no detention. However, consideration of the broad impact due to defamation using electronic technology information must also be considered so that the criminal threat remains heavier than the criminal threat in Article 310 and Article 311 of the Criminal Code. In the case of the most serious defamation offense is in Article 310 paragraph (2) of the Criminal Code, namely written defamation with a criminal threat of 1 (one) year and 4 (four) months. Then a 2 (two) year burden will be added for using electronic technology information tools, such as the Criminal Code pattern. So that the criminal threat becomes 3 (three) years and 4 (four) months. For this reason, the goal of balancing the importance of the burden in the criminal threat of pollution using electronic technology information with the aspirations of the community who demand a reduction in criminal threats under 5 years can be done (Asmadi, 2021). This becomes particularly relevant when defamation occurs in public digital spaces, such as on social media.

A social media post alleged that President Joko Widodo's diploma was fake (Figure 3). Such a claim constitutes defamation, as it has the potential to harm the reputation and dignity of the President as the head of state.

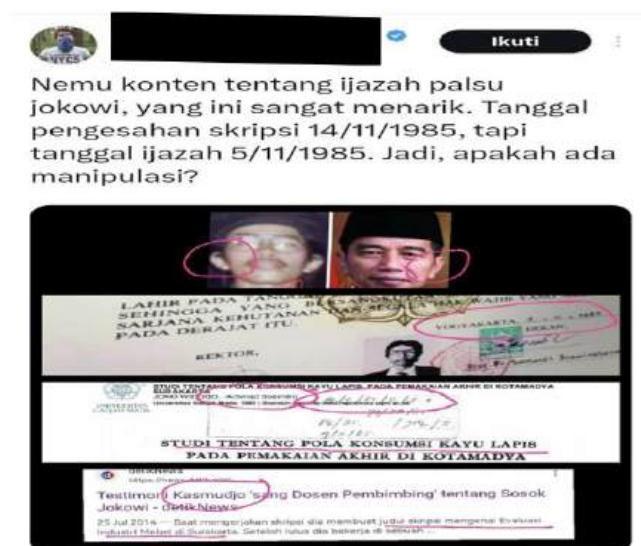


Figure 3. Example of Defamatory Social Media Content Targeting a Public Official

This action is in violation of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), particularly Articles 310 and 311, which prohibit the dissemination of false information or statements that damage an individual's good name in a public setting. Since the post was made on a publicly accessible platform, it meets the criteria for public defamation. Therefore, the statement in the post may

serve as legal grounds for pursuing a defamation case under the applicable provisions. Law enforcement in such matters is essential to safeguard the integrity of public figures and to prevent the circulation of misleading or harmful content.

Hate Speech Unpleasant Acts

According to Kamilah et al. (2022), an unpleasant act is an act that contains a threat so that the person feels that his life is unsafe, afraid, uncalm, and an act that is not good for the individual or group. Unpleasant acts occur if they carry out vulgar communication activities with other people, either directly or indirectly. Cases of unpleasant acts have been regulated in article 335 of the Criminal Code which will be applied to people who communicate verbally through social media. In addition, there is also a violation of the ITE Law in article 27 paragraph 3 which contains the content of insult or defamation. Likewise, Article 28 contains about spreading hatred. An indicator of unpleasant behavior is an unlawful act because it forces others to do, not do, and allow something by using violence which then makes someone uncomfortable (Hartini et al., 2020; Widyatnyana et al., 2023). This provision is further clarified through Article 335 paragraph (1) point 1 of the Criminal Code, which defines the legal boundaries of such acts.

It has been regulated in Article 335 paragraph (1) point 1 in the Criminal Code (KUHP) which states that: "Whoever unlawfully coerces another person to do, does not do or allows something, by using violence, or by using threats of violence, either against himself or others." In this article, it creates legal uncertainty and injustice. The phrase "another act or unpleasant treatment" has a vague meaning so that it does not provide legal certainty to the community, therefore, the punishment that will be received for violators is imprisonment for a maximum of one (1) year or a maximum fine of Rp 4,500,000.00 (four million five hundred thousand rupiah) (Sari et al., 2019). These ambiguities become more concerning when unpleasant acts take place in digital spaces, such as on social media.

Although social media is designed to share information and foster connections, it is often misused as a platform to spread hatred, one example of which is the occurrence of unpleasant acts, as illustrated in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Example of Unpleasant Acts Conducted via Social Media Platforms

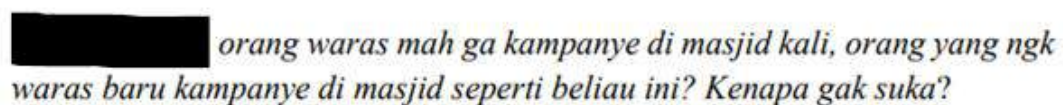
One of the social media users was on the *Twitter* or X platform which was shared with the public on February 22, 2022, by using provocative and offensive words and leading to negativity towards religious events. The word "red" when entering the month of Ramadan implies suspicion that

there is an element of injustice or conspiracy against Muslims. The phrases "what disease is the devil" and "the devil's game??" are insulting, provocative, and indirectly directed at a certain group. The word "devil" has a negative connotation and can arouse emotions or anger so that it can trigger conflict or hatred between groups. In this case, it has the potential to violate the articles that have been stated in the law in Indonesia, namely article 335 of the Criminal Code and ITE Law article 28 paragraph (2) which regulates the dissemination of information that causes hatred or hostility between individuals or groups based on SARA.

Hate Speech Provokes

According to Maharani et al (2023), provoking is an action that aims to arouse anger by inciting, provoking emotions, causing aggravation, and encouraging the provoked to think negatively and react emotionally. An indicator of a provocative or inciting action is an attempt to arouse someone's heart to anger and act according to the speaker's expectations (Widyatnyana et al., 2023). According to KBBI (Kamus Besar Indonesian) (2008) provocation is an act of arousing people's hearts to anger (fighting, rebelling, and so on). The use of provocative or provocative language on social media not only causes legal problems but also has an impact on social conflicts and SARA. The punishment that will be received if committing a provocative act is stated in the Criminal Code in articles 160 and 161, namely "Whoever in public by verbally or written incites to commit a criminal act, commits violence against a public authority or does not comply with both the provisions of the law and the order of office given based on the provisions of the law, is threatened with imprisonment for a maximum of six years or a maximum fine of four thousand five hundred rupiah". and in article 161 paragraph (1) it reads: "Whoever broadcasts, displays or pastes in public writings that incite to commit a criminal act, oppose the public authority with violence, or oppose any other thing as mentioned in the above article, with the intention that the seditious content is known or better known to the public, shall be threatened with imprisonment for a maximum of 3 four years or a fine of up to four thousand five hundred rupiah. "

In everyday life, we often come across statements intended to influence opinion or provoke anger. While they may appear trivial, such expressions can serve as a trigger for broader conflict. One such case is illustrated in Figure 5.



orang waras mah ga kampanye di masjid kali, orang yang ngk waras baru kampanye di masjid seperti beliau ini? Kenapa gak suka?

Figure 5. Example of Provocative Speech in a Public Digital Space

A social media post contains the use of derogatory language, such as the terms "sane people" and "insane," which imply references to mental illness or lack of intelligence. In addition, the post includes baseless accusations that amount to personal attacks, particularly related to alleged campaigning in places of worship. If reported, such content may be subject to legal action under Articles 160 or 161 of the Indonesian Criminal Code, as it carries the potential to incite public unrest or provoke opinion.

Inflammatory Hate Speech

According to Soesilo (1974), the act of inciting refers to encouraging, inviting, stirring up, or inflaming others' enthusiasm to commit an action. The term "incite" inherently carries an element of intent or deliberateness. It is considered stronger than mere persuasion or enticement, though not as forceful as coercion. A case of hate speech involving incitement on a Facebook platform is illustrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Example of Incitement-Based Hate Speech on Social Media

The results of the study on ADP show compatibility with the results of Syafyaha's (2018) research on hate speech in Indonesian: a study of form and meaning. Inciting hate speech is speech that the speaker intends to make people lust to be angry with a certain person or group. To incite, there is no need to do it with fire and there is no need for words that burn the will, but do not result in certain actions. In this speech, the speaker tries to incite a neutral reader to be angry at the speaker's statement that this regime is a hoax regime, but the speaker is not fiery in conveying it. There is an act of illocution in it that looks to incite readers to be angry with JKW who is considered always a hoax because he has not kept his promises during the campaign. Based on the results of the analysis of hate speech data in the form of incitement, one type of incitement character was found in this study, namely, the character of hate speech in the form of incitement that tries to make others lust to be angry with a certain person or group.

Hate Speech Spreading Fake News

One indicator of hate speech related to the spread of fake news or hoaxes is the dissemination of false or misleading information intended to create panic or unrest in society. An example can be seen in a post-dated February 5, 2022, which questioned the silence of two public figures in response to alleged corruption. The post included a reposted image of the individuals in question, accompanied by commentary suggesting their unwillingness to address the accusations. Although the comment reflected the poster's dissatisfaction, the information shared contradicted verified reports, as one of the figures had publicly clarified the matter and expressed readiness to face legal consequences if proven guilty. As noted by Permatasari and Subyantoro (2020), fake news

is not limited to empty or fabricated reports, it also includes misrepresenting actual events in a misleading manner. This is illustrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Example of Hoax-Based Hate Speech on Social Media

Challenges of Character Education in the Digital Era in Overcoming Hate Speech by Generation Z in Indonesia

Digital Content is not Compliant

Ekowarni (2022) identifies several risks faced by children and adolescents in the digital era, including exposure to violent content, access to pornographic materials, and exposure to misleading information. Meanwhile, Helmi (2021) deepened the analysis by revealing the psychological impact of exposure to inappropriate digital content, such as increased anxiety levels, risk of depression, and decreased self-esteem.

The existence of inappropriate digital content is a big challenge in the implementation of character education today, because many Generations Z imitate the bad behavior they see on social media. The lack of filters or filtering of information causes Generation Z to be exposed to content that does not conform to norms and character formation.

Inappropriate forms of digital content, such as negative comments or hate speech on social media, affect character development because Generation Z tends to absorb what they see on social media. For example, hoax or violent content is often accepted raw without a filter.

This is a challenge in character education, because they tend to capture and receive information they hear and read and then implement it directly. Therefore, when Generation Z encounters inappropriate digital content, such as comments with negative or disrespectful language, they are

more likely to use it in everyday conversations. This phenomenon is clear evidence that inappropriate digital content can affect the effectiveness of the implementation of character education.

Dependence on Technology and Social Media

The main challenges faced by Generation Z in the midst of rapid digitalization today are very complex and diverse, especially related to their dependence on technology and social media (Maturbongs, 2023; Laka, 2024). This generation grew up in an environment where almost all of their daily activities are inseparable from the use of digital devices, such as smartphones and computers, as well as very easy internet access. This condition does provide many conveniences, ranging from obtaining information instantly to facilitating communication without space and time limits. However, behind these benefits, there are a number of serious challenges to be aware of.

One of the biggest challenges is Gen Z's tendency to overrely on technology and social media in various aspects of life. This dependency makes it difficult for them to break away from digital devices, even for a short period of time. As a result, many of them experience sleep disorders due to staring at screens for too long before bed, as well as a decrease in the quality of direct social interactions. Face-to-face interactions, which were once the main means of building relationships and empathy, are now starting to be displaced by virtual communication that is instant but less in-depth.

In addition, the use of social media is very intense and also has a negative impact on the mental health of Gen Z. The comparative cultural phenomenon that develops on social media makes many young people feel dissatisfied with themselves. They often compare their personal lives with the lives of others that are ideally displayed on social media, even though often what they see is just an image. These unrealistic standards can lead to anxiety, depression, and even feelings of inferiority. The pressure to always look perfect and get recognition from the virtual environment becomes a burden that often disrupts their emotional balance.

On the other hand, social media also opens up space for negative behaviors such as cyberbullying. The high activity of Gen Z on various platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter makes them more vulnerable to being victims of online bullying or harassment. Cyberbullying can have a very bad impact on the victim's psychology, ranging from loss of confidence, trauma, to the desire to withdraw from the social environment. This phenomenon is increasingly worrying because cyberbullying perpetrators are often difficult to identify and prosecute, so victims feel that they do not receive adequate protection.

Lack of Digital Supervision and Education from Parents and Educators

Generation Z is a young generation that is closely linked to the rapid development of digital technology. As a result, many of them use technology without understanding strict boundaries. Many of the younger generation are trapped in unproductive uses such as social media addiction, online gaming, and illegal content that goes against the norm. Dependence on technology also has adverse effects such as low awareness in terms of responsibility and inhibits character development such as discipline. This is the focus of parents and educators in supervising and providing education that is useful for them.

Another challenge in character education in the digital era is the lack of supervision and digital education from parents and teachers. The lack of guidance provided by parents and educators on this issue makes the situation worse, as many of them do not understand the wise and responsible use of technology. As a result, children or the younger generation become more vulnerable to being exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world because there is no clear direction in distinguishing between good and harmful (Pratiwi, 2021). This lack of digital guidance not only affects children's understanding of technology, but also shapes how they interact and communicate in online spaces.

This condition also leads to a lack of strong values and norms in communicating online. This encourages them to express their opinions freely without considering the consequences for others. This situation has triggered the rampant hate speech behavior on social media platforms such as the use of offensive, provocative, insulting, blasphemy, defamation, incitement, spreading hoaxes, and other harmful actions. If this condition continues, communication patterns like this can hinder the growth of empathy, mutual respect, and a sense of social responsibility.

In addition, a fast-paced and instant digital culture can make the younger generation more individualistic, consumptive, and less appreciative of the process (Pradana & Pratama, 2024). Without direction and support from parents or educators, this culture exacerbates young people's tendency to communicate in a hurry. This rapid delivery often results in hate speech and provocative content being disseminated without considering human values and their long-term impacts.

Solution

The solution to the three problems above is by socializing the two-sided impact of the internet through the development of AI and social media, holding a socialization to more deeply introduce the main impact of internet use through AI and social media. Therefore, this socialization helps to provide a deeper understanding to teachers, students, and parents to know about the positive benefits and risks that will occur in the use of technology. On the other hand, AI and social media are also means that can facilitate and expand insights, but if not used wisely, it will have a negative impact on the implementation of character education. Therefore, this socialization was held to be wiser in using technology and equipping the younger generation for the progress of the development of the times in this technological/digital era.

Providing positive sentence stimulation to generation Z students who attended the socialization activity, the speaker provided stimulation which was followed by all participants who attended to provide positive thoughts. Stimulation is also important to create and encourage more active participation so that Generation Z is more active and interactive in providing positive sentence stimulation, therefore inviting Generation Z to continue to provide positive sentence direction and be more open to the dynamics of a smarter and more productive digital world.

The involvement of teachers, families, governments, and social media platforms in building a healthy digital environment and supporting character education. Some strategies that can be done include: 1) increasing digital understanding such as providing training or education to students to be able to understand ethics in social media, 2) strengthening character by instilling the values of tolerance, responsibility, and politeness through formal and informal education, and 3) wise

supervision from teachers and parents such as active mentoring and open communication to provide a space for communication between children and adult. With this approach, technology can be optimized to support the learning process, increase creativity, and build a generation of students who are ready to face the challenges of the digital era. Therefore, teachers play a very important role in integrating/striving for digital literacy and character education regarding the learning curriculum. So that teachers not only teach technical skills but also guide students to use technology wisely and teachers also become role models in using technology, critical in teaching ethics on social media, responsible in developing the time that has been given, and have an impact on the psychology of excessive consumption of digital content. The family plays a very important role because as the first parent to guide the child, they must be actively involved in supervising and accompanying the children in the use of technology and social media. Parents also need to know the existence of digital literacy knowledge to be able to become effective role models and mentors at home. In the family must also build openness in communicating and set a positive example in the use of technology, parents can be effective leaders in helping children balance digital and real life (Rofi'i, 2023). This comprehensive collaboration also requires teachers to continuously adapt their methods to the evolving characteristics of Generation Z in the digital age.

As the successor in this digital era, we as educators and teachers to understand every characteristic of generation z in the sophistication of information technology in the current era. So as a teacher, you should always choose a method that is always applied for the future and in accordance with the digital character to support a more effective and relevant learning process for students. Teachers must also be relevant and innovative in presenting meaningful and fun learning so that students continue to play an active role without pressure. However, on the other hand, teachers will also continue to be replaced by advanced technology in the current era and teachers also have the capacity to provide their perspectives on various problems, teachers also to continue to instill insightful values to equip students towards a good next generation. Therefore, it can help prevent feelings of loneliness, which negatively impact their mental health.

Conclusions

In the digital era, Generation Z in Indonesia faces significant challenges due to the intense use of social media, which, while offering platforms for self-expression and communication, also fosters the rise of hate speech stemming from low digital literacy and weak ethical awareness. Existing character education efforts have not been fully effective in addressing these issues, especially amid exposure to harmful content, overdependence on technology, and minimal guidance from adults. Therefore, a collaborative effort involving educators, families, government, and digital platforms is essential to strengthen digital literacy, promote ethical online behavior, and cultivate critical thinking. With an integrated and strategic approach, character education can shape Generation Z into responsible digital citizens who possess not only technological competence but also integrity, empathy, and social responsibility in both virtual and real-life interactions.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

All authors in this publication declare no conflict of interest regarding the title, data, location, and results of the research.

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Supplementary Materials

This study does not include any supplementary materials.

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