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The Role of Spirituality and Religion for The Character Education of The Digital Generation

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Abstract

This research aims to discuss the role of spirituality and religion for the character education of the digital generation. In line with the purpose of national education as mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, it is to educate the life of the nation by developing the potential of students so that they become a generation of the nation with character and professionalism. The character of the Indonesian nation, which is known for being friendly, polite, and noble ethics, is now starting to fade and be replaced by the character of violence, dishonesty, discrimination, bullying, hate speech and hoaxes. On the other hand, the Indonesian nation seems to be so religious. Places of worship are often seen full of worshippers. The digital generation lives in a social condition where ethical and moral values are not in line with the behaviors of their society. In this case, spirituality and religion can make a meaningful contribution to character education for the digital generation to become a professional generation in this digital era. Therefore, this research aims to find the role of spirituality and religion in character formation, especially for the digital generation. This research uses a qualitative method of literature study, namely using books and other literature as the main object. The results of the study show that spirituality and religion are important factors in the formation of the character of the digital generation, namely a generation that can know the essence of its creation, formulate the purpose and meaning of life.

Keywords

character, digital generation, religion, spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Some experts predict that the digital generation will bring the Indonesian nation to the peak of its glory in 2045 as a form of commemoration of the centenary of building the independence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. It was emphasized that the progress or decline of this nation is in the hands of the digital generation who are known to master digital technology. In 2045, Indonesia's digital generation is aspired to be the *golden generation* because demographically 70% of the

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population is of productive age with the age of 15-65 years.[1] We all expect the digital generation to be intelligent, wise and characterful figures of the nation. We need generations with quality characters in thinking, feeling, leading, behaving and doing.

The digital generation is very proud of the massive technological developments. The benefits are truly transforming human life in this digital era; The positive and negative impacts are significant for its users. Modern technology provides convenience in the exchange of information and communication and increases efficiency in all areas of life. Innovations in the field of health for life safety and improving human life; in the economic field encourages business growth and creates jobs.

However, the use of modern technology in this digital era also has a negative impact that greatly affects the character of its users. That over-reliance on technology can create a digital divide with some communities or individuals having difficulty accessing digital resources. In addition, privacy concerns are increasing with the proliferation of hacking and phishing involving personal information. Technological advances also bring risks to cybersecurity, with potential attacks and threats to information systems.

Morality and religiosity as the foundation of the characteristics of the Indonesian nation began to fade and were replaced by actions such as violent behavior, criminality, injustice, corruption, radicalism and so on. The power of globalization has shifted the values of goodness and character of the Indonesian nation and replaced them with hedonistic, materialist, pragmatic, radicalism, instant attitudes and so on. Facing the fading of the characteristics of the nation, it is appropriate that character education be developed to restore the dignity of the nation's generation. As described above, character education is a conscious and planned human effort to educate and empower the potential of students to build their personal character so that they can become individuals who are beneficial to themselves and their environment.[2]

The conditions in which the collapse of civilization occurs indicates that man is experiencing a crisis of spirituality and a crisis of faith. Ursula King said that human

1 Alfons Seran, Evimawati Harefa, Meslina Halawa, "The Relevance of the Role of Social Communication Media for Human Fellowship and Development According to the Communio et Progressio Document," *Magistra Journal*, 2/3 (June 2024), 159-171.

2 Williams, M. M. "Models of Character Education: Perspectives and Developmental Issues," *The Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, Vol. 39 (January 2000), 32-40.

beings have lost their orientation in life or she called it spiritual poverty, therefore, spirituality is not something necessary but an imperative if we want to create a better, safe and inclusive world. The fact is that the impact of human digital technology is experiencing a crisis on all aspects of life. Likewise, the crisis of the meaning of life befalls people in this era such as the loss of life orientation, commitment and the fading of noble values of faith and morals. Ursula King reminds us of the role of spirituality in finding the meaning of life in this world and in the future. Awareness of spirituality is the key where people seek the meaning of life, give meaning to life and cultivate meaning in life. The contribution of spirituality in this case helps both individuals and organizations to increase vitality integrally and holistically in supporting well-being in a broad sense and context.

The existence of a digital generation whose daily life is inseparable from technology and social media makes more use of their time to surf cyberspace, it turns out that this generation often behaves that deviates from the values and character of the nation. Rusdiyani said that the digital generation has been dragged by the hedonistic flow of modern life, thus ignoring the nation's cultural values rooted in Pancasila. [3] Some behaviors that are popular and characteristic of the digital generation that are contrary to the character of the nation are for example appearances that contain pornographic elements on social media accounts to attract the attention of others, the habit of bullying people on social media, making prank videos that often show scenes that are not worthy of imitation, and making content that smells of sarcasm so that it causes noise in the community.[4]

The basic direction of national education is the formation of a dignified character and civilization of the nation as mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution is to educate the life of the nation by developing the potential of students so that they become a generation of the nation with character and professionalism. In line with the ideals of the Long-Term National Development Plan 2005-2025 which carries the vision of National Development, namely for the realization of a resilient, competitive, noble, and moral character of the nation based on Pancasila, which is

[3] Rusdiyani, E "Character and Morality Formation for the Young Generation Guided by Pancasila Values and Local Wisdom," *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Civic Education*, University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta (2016).

[4] I Putu Windu Mertha Sujana, Sukadi, I Made Riyan Cahyadi, Ni Made Widya Sari, "Character Education for the Digital Native Generation," *Journal of Civic Education Undiksha,* Vol. 9 No. 2 (May, 2021), 518-524.

characterized by the disposition and behavior of human beings and Indonesian people who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble ethics, tolerance, work together, have a patriotic spirit, develop dynamically and are oriented to science and technology.[5]

The formation of the character of the digital generation is very important in the long-term development of the country because the digital generation has a vital role in development. Suwendari and Sukiani gave two basic reasons:[6] (1) The younger generation is made as the next generation of traditions, which means that they must be able to adjust to the demands of their environment, in this case obeying the prevailing traditions. (2) The young generation as a generation of generation and drivers who provide solutions to various national problems; generations who fight for the fate of marginalized communities or people who do not enjoy the results of development growth. It is only possible if our education forms personalities who are characterful, knowledgeable and have faith or spirituality. Strengthening spiritual and religious values is seen as important to protect and protect individuals from the negative influence of digitalization on the one hand, on the other hand to form the character of a smart and wise digital generation in utilizing digital technology for self-development, establishing solidarity and brotherhood around the world, fostering unity between nations and improving the welfare of every citizen.[7]

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method that is a library *research* by using books and other literature as the main source. The data and information collected will be used to describe the topic of the role of spirituality and religion in the character education of the digital generation analytically, to be systematic and critical. The results of the study show that spirituality and religion are important factors in the formation of a digital generation that is characterful, intelligent, spiritual and professional.

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[5] The National Long-Term Development Plan 2005-2025 https://bappeda.ntbprov.go.id/rpjp-nasional-2005-2025/. Download October 10, 2024.

[6] Suwendri, N.M & Sukiani, N.K., "Juvenile Behavioral Deviation in Urban Areas," *Culturalistic: Journal of Language and Culture*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2020), 51-59. doi: 10.22225/kulturistic. 4.2.1892

[7] Pontifical Commission for Social Communication, *Pastoral Instruction on the Tools of Social Communication* (*Communio et Progressio*). Translated by Andreas Suparman. Jakarta: KWI-Obor Documentation and Information Department, 2019.

DISCUSSION

Getting to Know the Generation of Information and Technology Users

Generation is a term used to describe a group of people born in a specific span of time, who often share similar social, cultural, and technological characteristics. Each generation has different experiences and perspectives, influenced by important events in history and technological developments of their time.

Information Technology or beheading in English *'Information and Technology'* which is commonly abbreviated as IT is a general term for technology that assists humans in terms of creating, changing, storing, communicating and disseminating information. [8] The term IT also includes various aspects related to computers, hardware, software, network systems, and databases to store, process, and transfer information.

The generation of IT users can be grouped into two: *First,* the millennial generation born between 1981-1996. *Second, the* digital generation born between 1997-2012. Dr. Alexis Abramson on the BBC website divides the generation of IT users based on four elements: (1) Value. (2) Behavior. (3) Perception or *profile*. (4) Habits.

Indonesian Population Census data in 2020 shows that generations Y and Z contributed the most number of lives at 69.98 million people and 74.93 million people. It is estimated that the number in the Alpha generation will continue to increase. They are a very productive digital generation now and in the future because of the importance of spirituality and religion-based character education in order to become intelligent, characterful and professional individuals. Meanwhile, the number of *baby boomers* and generation X will continue to decrease and be unproductive.

Table 1: Census of Population data by generation in 2020

Indonesian Population Census Data by Generation in 2020				
Total	**270.20 million people**	**Percentage**	**Birth**	**Current age**
Gen. Baby Boomer	22.11 million people	13,43%	1940s-1950s	70-90

[8] Muhtar, "Getting to Know the Six Different Generations in Indonesia," https://uici.ac.id/mengenal-6-macam-generasi-di-indonesia-sesuai-tahun-lahir-kamu-termasuk-yang-mana/ download October 15, 2024.

Generation X	58.65 million people	21,88%	1965-1970s	54-65
Millennial Generation (Y)	69.98 million people	25,87%	1981-1996s	27-46
Generation Z	74.93 million people	27,94%	1997-2012	12-25
Generation Alpha	29.17 million inhabitants	10,88%	2013-2020s	05-11

Digital Generation Characters

The young generation which is classified as the digital generation has its own characteristics. Lancaster & Stillman views the digital generation as a generation that has a critical, realistic attitude, has a high tolerance spirit, prefers to work together rather than take orders from superiors, and is pragmatic in solving the problems it experiences.[9] In addition, Williams & Page asserts that the digital generation has an independent, assertive, emotional and intellectually expressive attitude and because of its critical attitude doubts everything. Because it likes to question everything.[10] With the basic competencies possessed above, the digital generation is also seen as a generation with a strong passion for innovation, curiosity, and lifelong learning.[11] The digital generation wants to be known and know the world. They really crave and expect them to get recognition from the people around them, so most of this generation tries to appear attractive on their respective social media in order to get as many followers as possible so that they become famous and recognized by others.

Nicky Hockly charted eight positive characters that stand out in the digital generation, namely: creative, innovative, communicative, collaborative, inclusive, adaptive, tolerant and critical. In addition, the digital generation is a connoisseur,

[9] Lancaster, L. C., & Stillman, D. When Generations Collide, Who They Are, Why They *Clash, How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work* (New York: Collins Business, 2002), 54.
[10] Williams, K. C., & Page, R. A., "Marketing to the Generations," *Journal of Behavioral Studies in Business,* 5, (2011), 1–17. http://www.www.aabri.com/manuscripts/10575.pdf
[11] Suharjo, S. N., & Harianto, A., "Differences in Healthy Lifestyle and Attitude to Food Organic from the Baby Boomers, X, and Y Generations in Surabaya," *Journal of Hospitality Management*, 5/1 (2019), 45-58. https://doi.org/10.9744/jmp

observer, disseminator of information, diverse skills, likes to flaunt privacy, do many jobs at the same time.[12]

Table 2: List of characteristics of each generation

KARAKTERISTIK				
Baby Boomer • Strong commitment • Independent, competitive • Mature character because it was forged by difficult circumstances • Conservative: keep the customs and tend to be old-fashioned. • Not liking criticism • Hardworking and unyielding for children	**Generation X** • More individualistic, pragmatic • More tolerant of diverse lifestyles and cultural differences • Dare to take risks and be responsible. • Smart, logical and problem-solver	**Generation Y** • Good level of education, tech-savvy • Bold, innovative, creative • More open to change • Career development as an important factor • Have high expectations • Instant lifestyle • Diverse skills • Able to do multiple jobs at the same time	**Generation Z** • Collaborate in work • Flexible • Like a challenge and motivated by achievement • likes to find new ways to solve problems • Tech-savvy • Like privacy • Independent and Tolerant	**Generation Alpha** • Adaptive • App-based • More time spent with gadgets • Learn to focus on skills • Collaborative • No structure required • The most digitally savvy generation

The Phenomenon of Our Character Education

One of the goals of national education is to shape students into individuals with character so that they are able to develop their potential that is useful for the progress of the nation and state. However, the character of the Indonesian nation, which is known for being friendly, polite, and noble ethics, is now beginning to fade and be replaced by the character of violence, dishonesty, corruption and manipulation. This

[12] Nicky Hockly, "The Digital Generation," *ELT Journal*, Volume 65, Issue 3, (July 2011), 322–325. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccr035

indicates that this nation is experiencing a moral and ethical decline.[13] On the other hand, the Indonesian nation looks so religious. Indonesians are diligent in carrying out religious rituals supported by faith-building institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and seminaries or educational institutions that work to serve spiritual development.

The impact of globalization and social media has shifted the values of goodness, the existence of truth, the decline of morals and the loss of symbols of virtue as often found in schools, mosques, churches and places of study, training, and education. This reality then reborn a fundamental question in the world of education. As a result of globalization and social media, it has changed the nature of education with the concept of partial, pseudo, pragmatic and materialist education.[14] As a result, education also experiences destructive values, social anomalies, dehumanization in its humanity and alienation in crowds.

Thus, character education has its own challenges today related to the phenomenon of moral and ethical deterioration that continues to occur in the midst of society and in the increasingly diverse government environment. Radicalism, criminality, thuggery, injustice, corruption, violent behavior, and others are evidence that there has been a crisis of identity and characteristics in the Indonesian nation. Hospitality, noble ethics, politeness, and religiosity that are upheld and have become the hallmark of the cultural treasury of the Indonesian nation so far seem to have become foreign and rarely encountered in the midst of society. Suraji and Sastrodiharjo said that the purpose of education mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution is to educate the nation's life in a smart sense in all aspects of citizens' lives related to culture, systems, and the environment so that it has a wide scope in national life.[15] To educate the life of the nation, it is necessary to have education that forms human beings in an integral way which concerns creation, taste and karsa for the nation's children. Integral education will produce a person with character.

[13] Robertus Suraji, Istianingsih Sastrodiharjo, "The Influence of Spirituality in Character Education," *Indonesian Journal of Education Research*; Vol. 7, No. 4, (2021), 1-10.

[14] R. Suraji & I. Sastrodiharjo, "The Influence of Spirituality, 1-10.

[15] R. Suraji & I. Sastrodiharjo, 1-10.

The Role of Spirituality and Religion in Character Education

In the Indonesian context, the modalities or bases of character education consist of: (1) Spirituality. (2) Religion. (3) Pancasila. (4) Local wisdom. (5) Employee ethics education. But this article only explores the role of spirituality and religion in character education.

Definition of Spirituality

There are various definitions of spirituality whether it is as a discipline studied and researched, as a life experience, as a spiritual experience, as a search for the meaning of life, or as living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This presentation invites us to understand the meaning of spirituality operationally , meaning how spirituality works to move and direct people in their lives.[16] The question that needs to be answered is *therefore 'what does spirituality do'* rather than *'what is spirituality'*. Ursula King said that spirituality can be related to everything related to human experience but refers more to a specific experience such as imagination, human creativity, intuition, experience of divine power, experience of mystery, relationship with Divine reality (*transcendent*), with the Spirit, with oneself, others and the universe[17].

Diarmuid O'Murchu said that spirituality can also be associated with a celebration, a feast and joy, adoration, prayer and surrender; with struggle, suffering and victory.[18] In this context, spirituality is the energy or power from within humans that moves and directs humans to the search for the meaning of life which is characterized by the fulfillment of the needs for safety, security and personal protection. In addition, Ronald Rolheiser in his work, *"Holy Longing: A Search for Christian Spirituality"* defines spirituality as *desire or power or fire or energy or eros* in man and in creation. And therefore spirituality is what we do with that desire or eros, how to direct it; how we form and discipline eros or fire or energy within us.[19] For

[16] Alfons Seran, Blessed Are You Who Are Generous Because You Will Receive Mercy: A Spirituality of Compassion (Manado: Percikan Hati, 2017), 10.

[17] Ursula King, The Search for Spirituality: Our Global Guest for a Spiritual Life. (New York: Blue Bridge, 2008), x.

[18] Desmond Murphy, *A Return to Spirit: After the Mythic Church* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997), 71.

[19] Ronald Rolheiser, The Holy Longing: The Search for Christian Spirituality (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 13.

example, a saint or saint is an ordinary human being who is able to direct ***his erotic power*** to a creativity and charitability. That is how they offer their lives to God.

Eros in the context of spirituality is a strong passion to love God unconditionally; a radical love to love God with all one's life. *Eros* is the energy of human love in seeking God's will. *Eros* in the life of devotion or religious is a way of living celibacy in which the religious are tempted (fall in love) to the beauty of Allah's love (*philokolia*) so that they have no other choice but to surrender all the power of their love to the will of Allah.[20] Celibacy or virginity is a gift from God (charisma) for those who dedicate their lives to God in and through service to others.

The Phenomenon of Nationalism

The search for spirituality today is so great not only by religious people and in religious institutions but also by those involved in the secular world and non-religious organizations. Even today there is a great tendency for people to ignore the role of religion and turn to certain forms of spirituality. Religion for those who do not live it according to its purpose has given birth to violence, conflict, war and oppression. Therefore, people's interest in spirituality in the current era is a choice over religion. It is not surprising to hear the phrase: *'religion is not'* but *'spirituality yes*' or '*I am spiritual*' but '*not religious*'.[21] Religion is no longer a necessity but spirituality is a must.

Spirituality is inherent in the expression of diversity in the form of actions, attitudes, behaviors and rituals in relation to God, others and the universe. The spirituality of this nation is in turmoil when religious practices do not carry out religious obligations according to their goals. Anarchic social conditions, intolerance, blasphemy, threats in the name of religion, ethical violations, and high corruption index indicate that on the one hand, Indonesia is known to be very religious but on the other hand has lost its spirituality aspect. When the values of humanity, honesty, justice, tolerance and harmony are torn apart, it indicates that this nation's civilization is in trouble and its citizens are losing character. This nation is required not only to be religious ritually but also spiritually. The need for unity of *exoteric* and *esoteric* aspects so that there is inner and social peace. Integrating the external and inner aspects.

[20] Samuel H. Canilang, The Way of the Heart: Gregory Palamas and the Great Spiritual Traditions of Asia (Quezon City: Claterian Publication, 2010), 17

[21] Stephen Honeygosky, *Religion and Spirituality: Bridging the Gap* (London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2006), 113.

In Indonesia, the role of God is very important in people's lives. A person must profess to believe in Allah by adhering to one of the recognized religions even though he does not necessarily practice his beliefs. Otherwise, he could be condemned and ostracized. The reality is that there are people who are very religious or religious but they never perform their worship rituals. On the other hand, there are people who are not religious but pious in their lives. Does this mean that man loses what is sacred and holy? Is it possible that a person who does not carry out his religious duties and still experiences God's presence in the profane world? The behavior of modern man who lives as if he were ignorant of Divine reality does not mean that the existence of Divine reality does not exist. It is only a matter of human consciousness that ignores the role of Divine forces in the world. The main purpose of studying spirituality is to understand the spiritual aspects of human reality in a logical relationship with God, with nature, with others and with himself.[22] The basic question of spirituality is who are humans in this universe?

Spirituality encompasses the dynamics of the experience of encounter in life; experiences relating to the body and health, feelings and souls, mind and knowledge, nature and man, and the relationship between God and man. A dynamic of experience or journey in search of fulfillment in life – a life in which there is justice, peace, self-integrity, a life shaped and moved by the Spirit in the midst of struggle, challenge and suffering. What is important here is that the understanding of spirituality today is not limited to specific concepts of traditions and religions but is more global (*secular*) and broader.

A New Perspective on Spirituality

The "New Age Movement" (NAM) or new changes brought change to the world. Changes in the field of technology and informatics have become the standard or *'spirit'* of change in the era of globalization and digitalization. NAM is the '*spirit of time*', namely the spirit of the times or the spirit of the times is the mentality of today. This is the phenomenon that shapes human consciousness. NAM is a virus in a culture that creates a world-wide change. O'murchu sees NAM as a "spirit of the age" or "*new spirituality*" [23] Spirituality according to NAM can be described as a basic human attitude that directs attention to the deepest dimensions of material things.

[22] Alfons Seran. *Blessed Are You,* 12.

[23] Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Evolutionary Faith* (Maryknoll: New York, Orbis Book), 87.

This new spirituality reveals itself in 4 dimensions in human beings:[24] (1) As an awareness of the planet and ecology. (2) Deep mystical connections. (3) Deep psychological dimension. (4) A deep sense of faith or religion in God. Ken Wilber in his '*Grace and Grit*' describes spirituality as a force that exists in the deepest recesses of the human heart, at the centre of pure consciousness where man is fundamentally one with the Spirit, one with God, one with everything that is not limited by time and space; it is eternal and unchanging[25].

Definition of Religion

Desmond Murphy in his book, *"A Return to Spirit: After the mythic Church"* divides *esoteric religions* into four types:[26] (1) Magic religion. Suitable for children aged 0-7 years. They know religion through symbols without concepts. (2) Mythic *religion*: for 7-11 year olds where belief is built through mythical stories. (3) Rational religion (*scientific religion*): Those who enter the age of 15 begin to abandon myths. Trust is built on rational thoughts – logical or not. They easily abandon their religion if they fail to understand. Belief systems are acceptable if they are intellectually logical; but loses the emotional dimension. (4) *Rational-individuated religion*: rational but already integrated with emotions or a sense of faith. The emphasis is on the influence of religion that gives value and nourishes life.

In line with Emile Durkheim's view that *"Religion is a bond of belief systems and practices related to the sacred, the sacred and the mysterious".*[27] Durkheim refers to '*beliefs*' which are the cognitive aspects of attitudes in a broader sense. Not only refers to the belief system but also the emotional aspect; affect, inspiration or inspiring deeds and practice or appreciation. Practice according to Durkheim refers to various forms of ritual (*salvation*), prayers that direct and encourage people in attitudes, deeds and words. While 'the holy, the holy and the sacred' refers to what Elide calls the dialectical relationship between the *transcendent* and the *immanent.* The sacred and the holy do not actually exist. It exists only in the relationship between the transcendent and the immanent. Immanence depends on the transcendent; On the contrary, the transcendent is manifested through immanence.

[24] O'murchu, *Evolutionary,* 123.
[25] Ken Wilber, *Grace and Grit* (Boston: Shambala. Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1991), 17.
[26] Desmond Murphy, *A Return to Spirit: After the Mythic Church* (*New York: Crossroad Book, 1997*), 51.
[27] Emile Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy* (Paris: The Free Press Reprint, 1975), 47.

Religious Phenomena in Indonesia

Data from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2021 shows that Islam remains the majority with a figure of 86.93%. This shows that the influence of Islam is very strong for the formation of the character of this generation of the nation.

Table 3: Religious percentage data in Indonesia

Official Census Data Released by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2021	
Religion	**Percentage**
Islam	86,93%
Protestant Christianity	7,47%
Catholic Christianity	3,08%
Hindu	1,71%
Buddhist	0,74%
Confucianism	0,05%
Other religions	0,03%

The Ministry of Religious Affairs released the results of a study in 2021 looking at aspects of harmony, brotherhood, nationality, humanity and solidarity, showing that tolerance between religious people in Indonesia continues to improve from year to year.[28]

Table 4: Tolerance level in Indonesia since 2021.

Official Census Data of the Ministry of Religion on the Tolerance Index		
Aspects of Tolerance	**Year**	**Percentage**
• Harmony • Brotherhood • Nationality • Solidarity	2021	72.39% or up 4.93%
	2022	73.09% or up 0.7%
	2023	76.02% or an increase of 2.93%
	2024	76.47% or up 0.45%

The Relationship of Spirituality and Religion

Man's search for God has led people to take thousands of paths as seen from the diversity of spirituality, religions, sects and cults in today's world. Religions exist as paths of truth for people to know and believe in God. But how do we find the true

[28] BPS Census., "Population Census by Region and Generation Classification" https://sensus.bps.go.id/topik/tabular/sp2020/2/0/0. Download October 23, 2024.

God? Diarmuid O'murchu said that the Bible actually tells of God's search for man and man's search for God.[29] Kees Waaijman views the reciprocal relationship between God and man as it occurs in religions as an area of spirituality appreciation that spirituality is a dynamic relationship between *divine reality* and *human reality*.[30] The purpose of the process and dynamics of the relationship between the two regions or reality is the transformation of the human being. In other words, transformation as a process of change in man must be framed in a dynamic relationship between God and man. The dynamics of the relationship between Divine reality and human reality bring about a transformation called *transformative spirituality* in the light of the Christian faith.

Regarding the transformation process, Kees Waaijman mapped out five levels of the transformation process:[31] (1) *Creation transformation*, namely from non-existent to existing. (2) *Reform* is from the formless to the formless. In the light of the Christian faith it is seen as recreation through the redemption of Christ. (3) *Conformation*, i.e. from the unsimilar to the divine. In the context of the Christian faith is the *imitation of Chris* – resembling Christ in life, spirit and ministry. (4) *Transformation in love* in which the love of man and the love of God are melted (*the man of God – the man of Christ*) is like dew falling into the infinite ocean. (5) *Transformation in glory, i.e. the* hope of faith after living in this world.

Religion articulates well the response of a community of believers to their experience of God and that expressed through rituals and symbols. Religion is rooted in one's deepest awareness and experience of God such as Jesus, Buddha, Moses and Muhammad. Then the experience is passed down through scriptures such as the Scriptures or sacred documents containing commandments and prohibitions, worship and prayer, norms and morals. These sacred documents become the norm and direction for a community of believers to seek, know and experience the presence of God. Spirituality is the deepest personal relationship with God; experiencing oneness with everything (*union*) and *inter-connectedness*. It is from that unity and connectedness that a person grows and develops in a wider life.[32] Spirituality is

[29] Diarmuid O'murchu, *God in the Midst of Change: Wisdom for Confusing Times* (Quezon City: 2012), 27.

[30] Kees Waaijman, Spirituality: *Forms, Foundations, and Methods* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 4.

[31] Waaijman, *Forms,* 22.

[32] Barbara Fiand, *A Quest for the Holy in Our Time* (London: Twenty-Third Publication, 2006), 77.

broader than religion. Without spirituality, religion loses energy from within. Religion requires spirituality and religion cannot replace spirituality.

Conceptually there are differences between spirituality and religion as described in the following table:[33]

Table 5: Differences between spirituality and religion

P e r b e d a n	
Spirituality	**Religion**
Personal	Institutional
Emotional/taste: A prompting from within one's heart by God (*internal*)	*Dogmatic/teaching*: Consists of a number of rules and responsibilities that direct people to an action or attitude (*external*)
What God does (Divine/Spirit)	What humans do
Convert; surrender	Conquer; control
Presenting Allah for mankind	Bringing people to Allah (paradise)
Can customize	Stiff
Inclusive	Exclusive

Despite the differences, religion and spirituality have a mutually complementary relationship.[34]

Table 6: the relationship between spirituality and religion

H u b u n g a n	
Spirituality	**Religion**
Is the core or heart of religion	The articulation form or outward part of spirituality.
Hidden religious aspects	Visible aspects of spirituality
Help people to experience the reality of the Divine or God	Help people to seek and know God
Refers to the Divine mystery or the work of the Holy Spirit in man	Pointing to human work and creativity under the prompting of the Holy Spirit

[33] Desmond Murphy, *A Return to Spirit*, 71.

[34] Barbara Fiand, 79.

The roots or sources of religions	The fruits of Spirituality or the work of the Holy Spirit through man

By looking at the differences and relationships above spirituality and religion are not contradictory to each other. We can conceptually distinguish between spirituality and religion but should not be contradicted because they have the same essence and purpose, namely the goodness, well-being, salvation and happiness of human beings in this world and in the future. So the doctrines and dogmas of religion actually do not hinder humans from finding the meaning of their lives but educate, direct and lead humans to the deepest desires of human beings.

Spirituality and religion find its connection in the expression of life that reflects an immanent as well as transcendent attitude. Spiritual is a spiritual, *inner being*, inner condition, that is invisible. Spirituality is the energy that emanates from the inner state. Religions are the expression of spirituality. Man experiences and feels the influence of the Spirit in his life whether at work or in encounters with others. Modern man himself creates spiritual values that elevate him, carry him and push him beyond things that are immanent or remain like matter. Spirituality is manifested in attitudes, behaviors and actions in relation to Divine reality. A person's spiritual attitude brings a combination of knowledge and affection in people's minds. Meanwhile, spiritual practices can be realized in the form of prayers and rituals. The quality forms of the human spirit are love, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, responsibility, solidarity, peace, harmony and happiness.

Religion has an important purpose of facilitating spirituality itself but also has other functions, including psychological, social, and physical functions. In contrast, spirituality focuses on the search for one specific important goal, which is sacred. Spirituality can restore the main purpose of religion if there is a distortion due to religious movements.[35] Spirituality is the deepest aspect of human beings that moves humans to seek the meaning and purpose of life. An inner *driving force*; a process towards a meaning and purpose of life; Spirituality is the spirit, motivation, desire, *eros* that gives and moves life (*life-giving force*). Ronald Rolheiser said that spirituality is concerned with how to regulate and direct eros or energy or desire in human beings.[36] Spirituality therefore transcends the boundaries of religious doctrine and

[35] O'Murchu, *God in our Midst of Change,* 89.
[36] Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*, 23.

dogma. Spirituality is one of the transitional concepts that spirituality is always *up-to-date*. While not letting go of the past but rejecting elements that are no longer relevant, meaningful and useful.[37]

Modalities of Indonesian Character Education

The Ministry of National Education (2010) stated that the values developed in the nation's character education are identified from several sources:[38]

1. *Religion:* Indonesian society is a religious society. Therefore, the life of individuals, society, and nations is always based on religious teachings and beliefs. On that basis, cultural education and the nation's character must be based on values and rules derived from religion.
2. *Pancasila:* As the basis of the state, Pancasila contributes to the principles of national and state life. This means that the values contained in Pancasila are values for character education.
3. *Local or Cultural Wisdom:* The values of local wisdom have long been principles and values for the formation of the character of the nation's generation.

The nation's character education aims to prepare students to become better citizens, namely citizens who have the ability, willingness, and application of religious values, Pancasila and culture in their lives as citizens.

The Contribution of Spirituality and Religion in Character Education

Love as A Basic Principle

There is no doubt that religion is about God and religion uses the power of Allah to direct, educate and control its adherents. Therefore, religion colors the development of human civilization.[39] In this era of globalization and digitalization, religion still has a big role in human life. Religion uses sacred documents such as Scripture, doctrine and dogma to shape the faith and morals of its adherents. The role of religion in education and character formation is to regulate, direct and discipline human beings through commandments, prohibitions and the obligation to love Allah

[37] O'Murchu, 29.

[38] Ministry of National Education, "Development of Cultural Education and National Character, School Guidelines," Jakarta: Ministry of National Education (2010).

[39] Reza A.A. Wattimena, *For All Religious: Religion in the Embrace of Philosophy, Politics and Spirituality* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2020), 2.

and others. The basic principle of character education is that human life is moved and directed by love. A person with a strong character is a person who is able to love and forgive when hurt. If love is the basis of your life, you will not insult and reproach even if you have a reason. In the state of law, every mistake has a reason because people with character in this case put every mistake on the applicable legal procedure and not the judge himself.

The basic principle of all law, ethics, morals and faith is love. The Ten Commandments of God (*dekalog*) in the Book of Moses are laws, ethics, morals, and faith that govern and direct how man loves God and loves his neighbor (Exodus 20:1-17). In New Testament times, Jesus affirmed that love is the chief law in which first and foremost is to love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And the second commandment, love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the books of the prophets (Mt 22:34-40). Paul in his letter to the Corinthians affirms that love must be the character of Christ's followers. For love is patience; love is generous; he is not jealous. He is not arrogant and not arrogant. He does not act immodestly and does not seek his own advantage. He is not grumpy and does not hold the faults of others. He does not rejoice because of injustice, but because of the truth. He covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things patiently (1Corinthians 13:4-7).

The founders of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia realized that love is the spirit that unites the various diversity of this nation. Love is also what unites all the forces of the people against colonialism and all dangers that threaten it. Because of love, this nation fights to eradicate corruption for the sake of justice and welfare for all. Love is the basic principle of Pancasila as the basis of the state. Pancasila from Sanskrit means *'five basic moral behaviors or five ways of loving'*, namely the *first precept:* loving Allah; *the second precept,* loving human dignity; the *third precept,* loving unity; *The fourth precept,* love deliberation and consensus; and *the fifth precept,* love justice.

Becoming a Loving Person

As explained earlier, the principle or essence of 'spirituality of love' is rooted in the heart of every religion, ethics, morals and tradition. The principle of love encourages people to treat each individual as we treat ourselves. Love encourages working tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of others; open the heart to others, against self-interest; respect for each creation; treat each person with fairness and respect

according to his dignity without exception.[40] Love respects all forms of differences in tradition, religion and culture; encourages us to respect all forms of religious and cultural diversity; nurtures empathy and sympathy for the suffering of all people, including those we consider to be enemies.

We are invited to promote love or compassion in the world that worries people today. Everyone is invited to put love back at the core of every religion and morality. That in politics, ideology, dogma, law and the boundaries of religion and culture, love must be the center and goal of all human actions and efforts. The qualities and character of a loving or compassionate human being is shown by Jesus in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). In that parable, love is not found among the Jews but among the Samaritans who have always been looked down upon by the Jews. This is a sharp criticism for us. We can be proud to be believers and have a religion but we can live without mercy.

Being a Kind Person

In addition to loving, the characteristic of a person with character is a kind person. A kind person always opens up or gives himself to respond to what happens to his fellow man even in difficult situations. The parable of the Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 as a model of a kind person. For Christians, it is a spiritual and moral instruction to be kind to others, especially those who are in desperate need of help. Two questions of the scribe are the point of concern in the parable: (1) What must I do to gain eternal life? (2) Who is my fellow man? The answer to question number one refers to what is written in the Torah, which is a combination of quotes from Deuteronomy (6:5; 10:2; 30:6): "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and Leviticus (19:18): "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus had philosophical, theological and sociological concepts of who is human and what is man? What and how does it mean to be an ideal human being or a true human being according to Jesus? Jesus' view of the ideal human being is that man is always in relationship with God and others. To convey his point, Jesus did not explain a definition of man but by giving the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). This story is one of the most interesting stories in the Gospels. A lawyer or teacher of the law in this parable certainly understands in detail the content, interpretation and

[40] Alfons Seran, *Blessed Are You*, 59.

moral message of the law because a lawyer is a teacher and interpreter of the law. It is evident in his answer to Jesus' question: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself" (Lk 10:27).

However, one important aspect that the scribes forget in the appreciation of the law is the human aspect. They obeyed precepts for precepts (cf. Mt 12:1-15). Therefore he asked: *"Who is my neighbor*?" Jesus responded by showing "*what a man is*" and especially "*how to be a man of character*" with illustrations. The parable of the Samaritan helping a robbery victim defines who a man is and how he should be. He did so because he was moved and moved by mercy. Because the victim is his neighbor, equal, and dignified with him. Although culturally and historically, Samaritans and Jews have always been hostile and suspicious of each other, yet love and suffering transcend the boundaries of the compartmentalized human mind. For Jesus, to be a human being is to react with compassion, kindness, compassion to the suffering of others. Without reacting with compassion, he actually destroys his identity as a human being, as did the priests and Levites who shunned and left. Compassion is God's 'way' to man and man's 'way' to others.[41]

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it was found that spirituality and religion have a central role in character formation to educate the digital generation who are characteristic, knowledgeable, spiritual and professional. Spirituality and religion encourage humans to know the nature of their creation, formulate the purpose and meaning of their lives. The role of spirituality and religion in character education by giving meaning to human life by starting from the implementation of the commandment of love.

To be a digital generation with character is to be a person who bases all words, attitudes, behaviors and deeds on the basis of love. The ideal human character is those who show compassion when witnessing the suffering of others; those who build relationships, friendships, dialogue, cooperation on the basis of love; those who feel the same fate and struggle with others; those who accept and respect differences. Spirituality and religion are here to inspire national education in the development of

[41] Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life* (Manila: Claretian Publications, 2015), 8.

Indonesian people who have faith, knowledge and character in an effort to find meaning and purpose in life.

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