



Article

# Opportunities and Challenges of Religious Character Education for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students in The Era of Society 5.0

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## ABSTRACT

Entering the era of society 5.0 has brought changes. This is great for educational institutions that rely on digital technology as a means of achieving national education goals. However, despite the many benefits of technology in the world of education, the character of students is slowly starting to be eroded due to unfriendly access to information. This creates various challenges and opportunities for teachers to provide religious character education to students through digital technology in the era of society 5.0. This study uses a qualitative library research method. Literature data was collected through various sources of books, scientific articles and using content analysis techniques. The results of the study show that the challenges of religious character education in the era of society 5.0 consist of minimal parental knowledge about character education, no parental control, limited and unequal resources, technological innovation that causes a loss of control, and no interaction and socialization. Meanwhile, opportunities for religious character education in the era of society 5.0 consist of supporting technology, teacher competence, varied strategies, and building competence, innovation and student achievement. This study recommends further research to explore character education through more diverse methods and wider research objects.

## 1. Introduction

Technology has a very big role in changing the world of education. The development of technology is a means of success for competitive educational products. Learning is supported by the ease of accessing information on the internet, making digital technology a must-have tool for 21st century students. Concerns then arise along with student behavior in the digital era which begins to describe weak moral attitudes to cyberbullying (Sukarno, 2020). Since ancient times, character education has been the main focus of both formal and informal education (National & Pillars, 2000; McElmeel, 2002; Midgley, 2003).

In the era of society 5.0 plus the Covid-19 pandemic, people have made technology a part of their lives. Some neuroscientists and psychologists say that there will be differences in mindset and activity that are different from the previous period (Maskanah & Sae, 2021). This is supported by Wicaksono et al., (2021) who states that activities of the Alfa generation will be centered on technology. This is where the importance role of parents and teachers in paying attention to character education at the age of children who like to play and have a high curiosity. The role of educators is the initial focus of building noble religious moral in children (Ambarita, 2020). Without the control over religious character, children will be easily influenced by the bad side of technology that is developing rapidly in the era of society 5.0.

The most important problem that is happening right now is the lack parental and teacher supervision in minimizing or limiting the use of technology by children who basically like to play (Fikri et al., 2021). Plus, smartphones now provide various kinds of entertainment, games, and social media. Children will have their own world when they use smartphone because it is easy to access entertainment that will make children enjoy their activities more (Susilawati et al., 2021). The complete range of features provided by digital technology such as smartphones has made it easier for users to complete activities (Ramadhani, 2021). The two sides provided technology in the form of challenges and opportunities must be the concern of educator in providing digital access boundaries.

Digital access is increasing every day from various age levels, including during the Covid-19 pandemic which shifted educational activities to be carried out online. There are no limitations in digital use because it has become a demand for work and even education. Teachers teach lessons to current students both directly at school and via a smartphone in their hand (Arif et al., 2021). The meeting was held via video conferencing and material was also provided in the video form. Currently the role of the teacher has been replaced by a machine to educate students (Fikri et al., 2021). Nastiti & Abdu (2020) in His research explains that in the field of education in the era of society 5.0, in the learning process it is possible for students to deal directly with robots specifically designed to replace educators or robots controlled by educators remotely. The process of teaching and learning without a teacher as a role model in behavior can hinder students from getting more formal character education,

such as at school. The child's character will then be educated by parents as someone who is directly involved in the child's daily life (Widianto, 2015; Adzim, 2021).

There is previous study by Nafisah & Zafi (2020) that it is more difficult for children to participate in learning activities during a pandemic because they are hampered by technology so that parents increase learning through the habit of worshipping. The obstacles felt by children in learning are due to restrictions on interaction at school, so that children are forced to study at home using technology that they do not deserve to use, so that children have difficulty participating in online learning, plus parents are not experts in using technology (Munastiwi, 2020). Children can easily access anything on the internet without the supervision of parents and teachers, so this convenience makes many children not focus on learning and even neglect their worship practices. So that children's dependence on smartphones can even make children disobedient to older people. The technology used by children greatly influences the character formation that children will highlight in society (Retnawati et al., 2016; Sukardi, 2016; Husnaini et al., 2020). Children's absorption of what they see for the first time becomes memories that can be realized in their daily life. Therefore, education and role models are needed by children in the formation of religious character that leads them to religious norms and character.

Research conducted by Widianto (2015) illustrates that character building is disciplinary training for children in the form of independence, diligent learning to train patience, responsibility in every task, obligation, words and deeds, honesty, and love for Allah SWT by involving children in various activities. religion followed by their parents. The challenges found in this research come from the environment that makes parents and teachers unable to cope in the form of non-educational viewing, dirty talk, and other bad influences.

There is previous studies which state that character education is an important aspect that must be taught both formally and informally (Gilfillan, 2008; Mislia et al., 2016; Husnaini et al., 2020; Fajrussalam et al., 2020; Kuswandi et al., 2021). Supported by methods and strategies that make children comfortable and accept character learning (Aulia & Hasibuan, 2019; Amaliati, 2020; Nikmah & Susilowati, 2020; Kurniawan & Miftah, 2021; Nugroho et al., 2021). However, along with the development of character education technology, it becomes a challenge for teachers considering its effect on children. So there needs to be a strategy from teachers in utilizing digital technology as an opportunity to educate children's religious characters. From various previous studies, the researcher conducted a special literature study discussing the opportunities and challenges of religious character education.

Character education has received public support since the 1960s (Triyanto, 2020). Character education becomes a very important aspect along with the times. The era of revolution presented complex challenges for Islamic education. Like it or not, the teacher must be able to balance his ability to face this challenge. The methods used in character education in the digital era have changed drastically. It adapts to

the impact of technology on student behavior. The freedom to access the internet and other websites makes many people worry about the future character of students. Informally the school then adopted a policy of limiting internet access for students and setting standards of virtual behavior for students (Kinanti et al., 2021). To support this, we need to create a formal program as an opportunity so that educators are able to create and use internet access or friendly technology with the formation of students' character in a deep, direct, and comprehensive manner. On that basis, critical studies are a method needed regarding the opportunities and challenges of religious character education in the digital era to prepare students who are able to adapt to the times.

## **2. Method**

The method used in this research is library research. Library data is collected through various sources of books, articles, scientific literature, previous research and others. Data is obtained by collecting, processing, and concluding the results of several literatures to obtain results from the problems studied (Sugiyono, 2019). The writing of this article is qualitative in nature because it is based on contextual assessments expressed in the form of circumstances, a measure of the quality of empirical data descriptions. It means that the research is not carried out in the field but is looking for a convincing theory regarding the opportunities and challenges of religious character education for Ibtidayyah Madrasah students in the era of society 5.0. The analysis technique used is content analysis. Namely by reading, understanding and drawing important conclusions from books, articles, news, newspapers, and broadcasts regarding the opportunities and challenges of student religious character education in depth and on target. Researchers classify related themes about the opportunities and challenges of character education in the 5.0 era through various relevant literature.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

### **Religious Character Education in Society 5.0**

Era Society 5.0 is a concept initiated by Japan. The era of society 5.0 is a development from the industrial era 4.0 which further develops technology as an offer of convenience for humans in completing their affairs. The era of society 5.0 provides big data technology, namely the Internet of things (IoT) in collecting information which is then processed by Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help human activities become better. This era has penetrated into the world of education, health, work, and so on (Rahayu, 2021).

In the era of society 5.0, learning can be done from anywhere, students can be taught by robots as a substitute for teachers or controlled by teachers remotely

(Taufik, 2020). Teachers must have skills in using technology and be creative in using various software to support today's digital learning (Naserly, 2020). In supporting the development of students, teachers are expected to be able to innovate when teaching in class.

The era of society 5.0 has accustomed people to using technology in everyday life. Not a few technologies that even affect the character of its users (Khoiroh et al., 2017). In facing these challenges, it is very necessary to have character education that is able to reawaken the community about the importance of being virtuous in society (Rohman, 2019). Character education that has been conceptualized previously needs to be developed that is relevant to this era of society 5.0.

Character education is part of education in shaping the personality of students. Character education is given in building noble morals and behavior in students through learning and habituation. Good character is expected to become the main foundation in bringing Indonesia to reach the golden generation in 2025 in the era of society 5.0. Citing the views of Anggraheni & Astuti (2020) that the era of society 5.0 technology does not only provide daily human services but is able to make life more meaningful which is supported by human-technology interaction that builds sustainable life, develops potential, a spirit of innovation, and most importantly has a spirit religion as self control. Therefore, it is important for the world of education to mature character education so that students are not eroded by the flow of technology by instilling Islamic values and making students a generation that is able to compete globally.

Citing Sarumaha's view (2021) that character education is the development of self-ability in the form of behavior that is formed on the basis of improving the concept of dealing with something to become a human being with noble and noble morals. Character education also comes from understanding and instilling Islamic values in students without specializing in character learning programs. The point is that religious character education can be given in any way.

The application of character education in schools can be started from instilling religious values to social values, this is done gradually and continuously through learning both in class and outside the classroom. Children are taught and supervised in worship or doing good with others by teachers and parents. For these good deeds the child is then given praise and gifts which will ultimately instill self-confidence and repeat these good deeds in their daily lives. From these habits and coaching, a commendable character is formed in children.

As explained by Kinanti et al., (2021) that character education is very important for schools in improving the quality and quality of schools. Because the results of education, one of which succeeded in forming the character and morals of students as a whole and balanced, so that effective graduate competencies can be fulfilled. The success of character education brings hope for the realization of a generation that has religious character and is able to bring change and glory to the Indonesian nation with the characteristics of piety from the people. At school,

character education includes all components, including the teacher and the environment which serve as role models and motivate students to apply them in everyday life to adulthood.

Various challenges and opportunities discovered by society in the era of society 5.0 demanded that education is able to reconstruct the concept of religious character education for students, especially from an early age. Instilling character in children is not only based on the children's knowledge of good or bad from birth, but there must be religious values that parents and teachers have as a model for children. In instilling noble and pious religious character, parents become the main character. This character is the basic capital for children to get more formal and structured religious character education provided by teachers at school. Noble moral capital is very important so that children can be accepted and appreciated by society (Nastiti & Abdu, 2020; Amaliati, 2020).

### **Challenges of Religious Character Education in the Era of Society 5.0**

Technology cannot be separated from humans today, even technology has become a part of human life that offers various conveniences. Human work has been assisted by robots which when examined are like a double-edged sword, some are good and some are bad. Bad technology becomes a challenge for society to be able to cause moral degradation (Utomo & Mahmudah, 2021).

Moral degradation can come from parenting children from an early age who gives smartphones to children when they cry (Adzim, 2021). Children prefer to play alone at home with their smartphone than playing with their friends. Various performances that are currently easily accessible to children influence their thinking and even put into practice what they see and hear. So shows that are not for their age can cause moral degradation in the form of deviant behavior contained in animated films such as fighting, saying rude things, and resistance to parents.

Based on the author's critical analysis, there are challenges in instilling religious character in students which are described in the following figure.

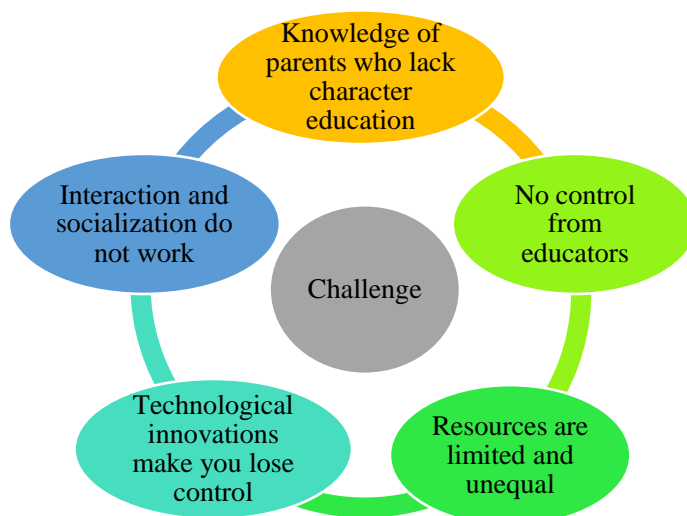


Figure 1. Challenges of Religious Character Education

Based on Figure 1, the mapping of the challenges of religious character education is divided into five points. Each point will be explained as follows. First, challenges for parents who lack knowledge about character education. Weak character education given by parents to children can cause character degradation. The lack of understanding of parents about the importance of moral and religious development can come from the previous education of their parents and the insensitivity of the surrounding environment to the importance of character education. As technology develops, it adds to the task of parents to supervise children using digital technology. Lack of parental knowledge about developing sites that are easily accessible to children makes behavioral controls not implemented. So that unsupervised children will easily access information that is not for their age. As stated by Marini et al., (2018); Nafisah & Zafi (2020) that there is no balance between parental understanding and increasingly sophisticated technological developments. This makes parents let go of their children to access any information because according to them it is independent learning. Kuswandi et al., (2021) expressed concern that parental trust that is too high for children makes parents release their hands when children use technology as long as it doesn't disturb other people. Of course this has an impact on indifference to the development and formation of children's character.

*The second challenge is there is no control from parents regarding limits on playing smartphones.* Today's people's lives have been able to reach the whole world through smartphones in their hands. The internet, which makes it easy for people to access all their needs, has made someone feel addicted. This addiction can make a person reluctant to interact directly with people in their environment. Needs can be obtained easily through online shopping applications so that inviting other people can be done with just one click and messages can be conveyed to everyone. The

entertainment and convenience offered by technology makes children dependent. Everything is easily accessible so you don't have to work harder to get what you want. With just one click, your needs will be available in no time. Hew et al., (2020) suggested that the use of technology affects the socialization of technology users. Lack of one's direct involvement with others can reduce the sense of emotional closeness that fosters caring attitudes. A lot of time is spent with digital technology which has little benefit among children due to wrong upbringing. As stated by Aulia & Hasibuan (2019) that parents tend to give smartphones to calm fussy children.

*Third challenge* is a condition of limited and unequal resources. Today's educational institutions as a whole have used digital technology to facilitate their learning and are trying to meet the needs of the times. However, in answering the challenges of the times, there is still an unequal distribution of resources in every aspect. For example, from a geographical perspective, internet network coverage is still minimal for rural areas. There are still teachers who are technology stutterers for adults to elderly teachers. In fact, not all students have parents who are able to provide smartphones, laptops and even internet packages as learning facilities for children. This limitation can make the transfer of knowledge not run smoothly and can have an impact on the character education of children whose roles are replaced by technology. Like the research conducted by Triyanto (2020) that the limited creativity and knowledge of educating teachers alone has an impact on the formation of children's character, especially coupled with technological limitations that make character education not work.

*Fourth challenge* is technological innovation makes you lose control. Technology innovates so fast in the modern world that we are always oblivious to the consequences of technological developments. Many current problems unknowingly arise as a result of a child's distorted religious awareness. Various character problems occur, including cyberbullying which seems commonplace in the school environment. Students may take time just to satisfy their curiosity and forget to worship. This is a challenge for educators to find ways to teach students to have a religious character that controls their attitudes in the digital era society. The teacher must be able to be a good role model for students so that the spectacle does not affect student behavior. Mubarok (2019) argues that humans who live side by side with technology have changed their traditional habits in building emotional closeness that is able to build character through habituation.

*Fifth challenge* is that interaction and socialization do not occur in their environment. Teachers must know the effects of technology. Excessive use of technology can affect relationships and interactions. This becomes a challenge when young people are afraid of being separated from digital technology in everyday life (Cambra & Herrero, 2013) or are afraid of losing their virtual friends (Przybylski et al., 2013). The convenience offered by technology brings practicality in human life. To meet their needs, children and adults can only request via smartphone and it is immediately available in a short time. Class communication and discussion can also



take place via video conferencing, even in group chats. Lack of interaction with other people becomes an obstacle in building student character because there is no character habituation, honesty, respect for others, listening to others, doing good together, and cooperation that is able to train emotionally. As Munastiwi (2020) found, online learning during a pandemic reduced students' awareness of learning and affected student achievement. This is also supported by the opinion expressed by Astini (2020) that new students and even lower grade students do not know much about their teachers and schoolmates due to lack of socialization.

From the explanation above, it appears that digital learning is less able to strengthen face-to-face relationships between teachers and students. The principles of honesty, respect for others, responsibility will rarely be found because of the lack of face-to-face contact. Available web access is thought to isolate students leading to a loss of social connectedness (Barbour & Reeves, 2009; Journell, 2010). Maskanah & Sae (2021) suggests that when assignments are collected via e-mail, the teacher will not be able to observe the affective aspects of students such as facial expressions and student body language.

On the other hand, some researchers suggest that digital learning can have a negative impact on students' learning, motivation, achievement and socialization (Nguyen, 2015; Rianto, 2020; Adiyono, 2021). In digital learning, the socialization aspect becomes a serious problem because students will rely on personal abilities. Whereas in conventional learning students are expected to be able to collaborate directly with their friends so that religious values and social norms can be internalized. Digital learning is considered less capable of socializing religious values in students' habits compared to conventional learning (Young et al., 2020; Kuswandi et al., 2021).

The use of technology by students needs to be taught and supervised by teachers wisely. Schools must provide a safe environment for students to access their learning. Teachers continue to provide motivation to learn with a responsible attitude using digital. Schools as a means for students to gain knowledge must also provide an environment that can respect others, familiarize students with listening to the holy verses of the Qur'an before entering class in the morning. The cultivation of noble character is a mandate for educators in schools through habituation and learning.

Studying character learning through digital technology is very important in preparing solutions to the challenges of students accessing the internet from an early age. Various studies have been conducted to find out whether digital learning provides better education than traditional learning (Nguyen, 2015; Adiyono, 2021; Fikri et al., 2021). Classes that carry out traditional learning then develop critical abilities in students. Whereas digital learning uses chat rooms for students, many important things are missed such as familiarity with the teacher, missing communication approaches, even less interaction with the surrounding environment (Bušelić, 2017).

Therefore, character learning when done digitally will not materialize properly due to the lack of opportunities to connect with other people. Based on research conducted by Abdillah (2020) and Winata (2021) that digital learning causes some students to not experience change and development because digital learning demands greater student independence and personal responsibility. Young et al., (2020) stated that the success of digital learning can be achieved if students are self-motivated to learn. Bušelić (2017) supports that students need self-discipline and good time management so that digital learning can take place properly.

### Opportunities for Religious Character Education in Era Society 5.0

21st Century Education promotes mastery of various competencies and skills which are manifested through creativity, communication, collaboration and innovation for the future. Digital technology is an antidote that is able to make this challenge an opportunity to change and enrich the world of education. Access to education in the form of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the main tool that bridges learning with educators. Digital technology has made it easy for teachers and students to be creative in expressing their own character (Maskanah & Sae, 2021).

Based on the author's critical analysis, digital learning provides a great opportunity for the success of religious character education which is described in the following figure:

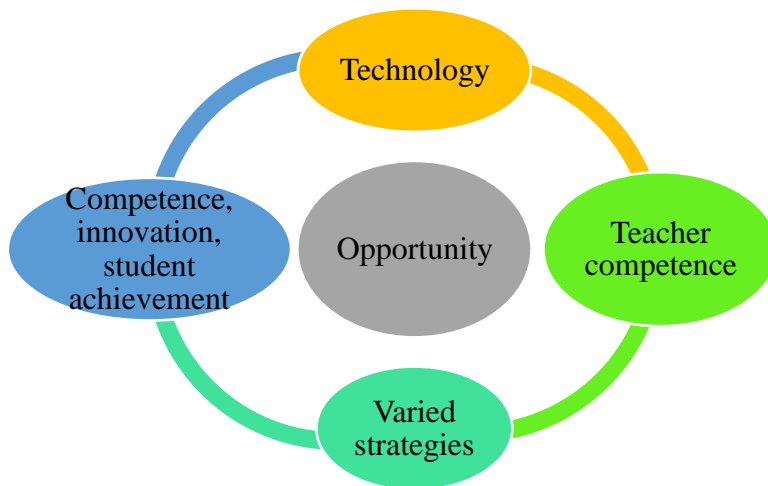


Figure 2. Religious Character Education Opportunities

Based on Figure 2, the mapping of opportunities for religious character education is divided into five points. Each point will be explained as follows. First, Opportunities come from technology that is growing and facilitating human work. Digital learning reduces broad geographical constraints. Students can now learn from

various sources on the internet based on the teacher's direction so that the teacher can still imply learning etiquette to students. The teacher continues to provide learning etiquette to students even though learning is done via video conference. Learning technologies help students train memory through visualization and hearing. Applications used by teachers to train children's comprehension are alternative learning. Teachers can send prayer videos and short letters to the class WhatsApp group for students to memorize. Provides religious riddles app to review previous learning. To train children to perform by rote recording to increase their confidence.

The cultivation of religious characters in students can be supported by comprehensive digital technology. However, nowadays digital learning is often misunderstood as learning that only uses digital tools. There needs to be a straight understanding of the concept of digital learning which makes access to technology a tool in supporting the development of teaching materials that embed religious meaning. Sur et al., (2020) in their research explained that internet access provided to students does not have a good impact before students can use technology to actively realize their ideas so that students have a good learning experience. This is a real opportunity for teachers to develop creativity using digital technology. The teacher provides the required learning materials and media with religious meaning in shaping the character of children when learning.

*Second chance* is the competence of the teacher. Facing the era of society 5.0, what must be prepared is adaptation and competence. Rohman (2019) said that as educators, teachers need 21st century life skills known as 4C (creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration). Teachers are expected to be good role models, have the skills to educate using child-friendly digital technology. Advances in artificial intelligence technology help teachers differentiate teaching methods, provide material according to student needs, and are able to analyze forms of student creativity and skills in technology-based learning

Facing the era of society 5.0, the world of education has an important role in preparing superior human resources. Schools are a place for teachers to improve their quality and abilities (Wati et al., 2021). The need for ongoing guidance is given to school principals, teachers and employees in order to respond to the challenges of the rapidly developing world of technology in the era of society 5.0.

The rapid development of technology in era 5.0 will be faced by educators by developing digital skills and critical thinking so that there are innovations in the use of technology that support learning (Fajrussalam et al., 2020). Inayah et al., (2021) in his research said that in facing the era of society 5.0, teachers must have qualified mentality and skills. Teachers can prepare themselves starting from good behavior, developing self-competence, to literacy skills that must be developed. This can be grown through the habit of integrating with the environment and providing character education knowledge. The knowledge gained will be very useful when applied in society. Through this interaction and collaboration, teacher skills and competencies will increase (Sudrajat, 2020).

*Third chance* is a varied character education strategy. Facing the development of the era of society 5.0, teachers must always find and update effective learning strategies and methods given to students. Applying the right learning model will have a significant effect in helping the development of students in dealing with society in the era of society 5.0. So that students are equipped to face global challenges both in terms of mental and moral, spiritual and social ethos.

When learning is carried out using digital technology, the teacher's main concern remains with developing students' thinking and analytical abilities. Then students are given the opportunity to develop their creations and innovations in school assignments into several works such as images, audio, video, design works related to learning materials (Ilmiani & Delima, 2021). On the other hand, teachers must create interesting learning innovations to delight students in various ways using video, audio, quizzes and online discussions. Beddu (2019) explains that fun learning can make students more active and creative.

Arif et al., (2021) in his research offers parents who do not agree with online learning plus the unavailability of laptops or smartphones for learning so that schools can carry out blended learning or online and offline integration while still complying with health protocols. Then Kuswandi et al., (2021) suggests a method that teachers can use when utilizing digital technology is to use the learning by doing method, namely applying theory and practice. Learning is carried out while still upholding Islamic values such as before the online class starts, students are expected to pray together first, when expressing opinions while maintaining courtesy and respect for others, prioritizing honesty in doing assignments, and helping each other with other students. When teachers familiarize students with Islamic behavior, religious character will still be formed in students even though learning is done online.

*Fourth chance* is to build competence, innovation, and student achievement. Religious character education in the 21st century which is carried out digitally has been able to develop students' skills in communicating and collaborating. Student creativity which is channeled through digital technology is a motivation to work and is able to increase student achievement (Buselić, 2017; Astini, 2020; Hanik, 2020). Triyanto (2020) in his research stated that digital learning provides positive opportunities for the implementation of character education. The research results of Maryati & Sianturi (2020) show that in digital learning, communication with other students is important for students in expressing their thoughts. Another study also revealed that students who use digital learning tools are more motivated to learn than students who work traditionally in a classroom environment (Nkomo et al., 2021).

From the explanation above, it can be seen that the development of education in the era of society 5.0 has utilized digital technology as a learning tool. The integration of technology and learning must be accompanied by Islamic values that can build a child's religious character from an early age. In Islam there are several approaches to character education that can be carried out by teachers. Beginning with a reading approach to reading skills through playing verses of the Qur'an using

loudspeakers at school. Ta'lim in the development of intellectual intelligence which can be done through puzzle games or riddles about religion by using a smart game application. Tarbiyah provides care and affection through supervising children when using digital technology in class. Ta'dib is related to emotional intelligence which must be properly developed through exploration of creativity and building collaboration between students through technology or social content. Tazkiyah is related to spiritual intelligence that is developed through collaboration when learning to use digital media and. Ta'dib in increasing physical and mental intelligence through the use of digital in presenting learning or for example learning the procedures for ablution with moving animations. Therefore, in the process of cultivating character in schools, teachers must continue to monitor student development. Monitoring can be done by applying disciplinary attitudes such as praying midday prayers in congregation at school, praying discipline before doing something, talking well with older people and their friends, being disciplined when playing, always doing good to others. If this has been done by the child, the teacher can appreciate it by giving rewards and praise. With this praise, children will have their own motivation to do something with discipline (Cahyani et al., 2020). Lilawati (2020) in her research said that when children imitate the behavior of their parents or friends around them who say dirty words, what must be implemented is an example of the attitude reflected by the Prophet through the habits of children who are controlled by the teacher while in the environment. school and outside school. This opinion is supported by Syarkati & Rifa'i (2021) that when the behavior of the people around them is good, the child will also reflect good character. From this generation who have Islamic morals and values, it is hoped that they will be able to control technology in a better direction without sacrificing social and human values.

#### **4. Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on these findings, the researchers concluded that the challenges of religious character education in the era of society 5.0 are the lack of parental knowledge about character education, the lack of parental control when children use digital technology, the condition of limited and unequal resources, technological innovations causing a loss of control, and interaction and socialization are not successful. While the opportunities obtained are technology supporting human work, increasing teacher competence, providing various strategies, and increasing student competency, innovation and achievement. The findings show that although challenges are significant obstacles, technology-based opportunities have fast implications for the internalization of religious character education in the era of society 5.0. This research is limited to research methods and samples, so the researchers recommend further research to explore character education through more diverse methods and broader research objects.

## 5. Author's Contribution

Khalilah developed the research concept and design. Suci collected data and presented a table, compiled discussions, conclusions and abstracts.

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