



The Transformation of Character Education in Digital Children's Literature

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Abstract. The digital world has permeated various fields, one of which is children's literature. Digitalization in children's literature has transformed textual narratives into multimodal literary experiences that integrate images, text, audio, video, and various digital features. This study aims to analyze the transformation of character education in digital children's literature using a descriptive qualitative approach. The data in this study consist of ten digital children's stories on the BUDI (Indonesian Digital Books) platform of the Ministry of Education and Culture, comprising digital stories, videos, audio, and digital comics. The findings reveal three forms of transformation in digital children's literature. First, the instillation of character education has shifted from a dominance of verbal narratives toward multimodal representations that integrate visual, auditory, and textual elements. Second, the instillation of character education has shifted from the explicit delivery of moral messages to moral experiences that engage the reader's emotional aspects. Third, digital children's literature transforms the reader's passive role as a recipient of character values into that of an active, multimodal meaning-maker. The results of this study indicate that the digitization process does not alter the educational function and didactic value of children's literature. However, digitization does change the pedagogical mechanisms for constructing and internalizing character education values among young readers. Thus, digital children's literature holds strategic potential as a medium for character education relevant to the literacy practices of the digital generation.

Keywords: digital children's literature; transformation; character education; multimodal; BUDI



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1. Introduction

Character education through children's literature has long been confined to conventional mediums. Nurgiantoro (2019) states that children's literature is literature that can be emotionally and psychologically responded to and understood by children, rooted in concrete facts that are easily grasped by children. In the era of digital advancement, this creates a disconnect from the digital ecosystem of the current generation. All aspects have undergone digitalization in their dissemination. Digitalization is accepted not merely as a format but as a new ecosystem that transforms how character values are produced, disseminated, and internalized. This study seeks to open a new paradigm by examining the use of digital children's literature platforms that serve as a new medium for instilling character education. This aligns with Apriyani's (2024) assertion that digital children's literature plays a strategic role as an educational medium in the era of modern literacy.

One of the official digital children's literature platforms with a large user base is BUDI. BUDI is the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This site is dedicated to hosting a variety of digital children's stories that are easily accessible and free of charge. BUDI offers a wide range of digital children's stories covering diverse themes. As noted by Novitasari (2025), the digital children's stories featured on the BUDI website have the potential to serve as a medium for character education for children. These include themes such as Indonesian children, nature and the environment, art and culture, folklore, the inclusion of children with special needs, and many more. This study examines how digital children's literature platforms can serve as adaptive spaces for character education.

Through discourse analysis of social issues, this research aims to reveal that digital literature does not merely transfer text to a screen but reconstructs how human values and global character are taught in an immersive and contextual manner. Digital children's literature conveys character values through multiple modes of interpretation. Young readers do not merely read text but engage more complexly by observing illustrations, colors, character expressions, layout, and various digital interactions. Thus, character education does not appear as a moral lecture but as a reading experience that is more visual and contextual to the world of children today. Literature exists within the realm of the author's creativity and freedom within social relationships that encompass norms, ethics, ideological interests, and even religious doctrines (Rohinah, 2011).

The orientation of character education in the 21st century has shifted with the emergence of the digital native generation, who were born and raised in the digital technology era. This situation has created a generation that acts as skilled and familiar users of digital activities. Digital children's literature enters the comfort zone of young readers, allowing the internalization of values to occur organically rather than through instruction. Digital children's literature is more accessible and spreads rapidly. This indicates that messages conveying character values can reach a broader and faster audience compared to printed books with limited distribution.

Therefore, what needs to be emphasized is not merely the presence of character values, but the fact that digital media makes these values easier to integrate into children's reading spaces, so that digital literature is not merely text but also a channel for disseminating values. Kusumaningrum (in Hatima, 2025) states that character education is a crucial aspect of a holistic educational system, aimed at instilling core values and positive behaviors in individuals. Based on this, children are no longer merely passive consumers of information but are constantly exposed to the complex digital reality. The educational content found in literature—as a complex entity—is always connected to one's intellect and moral reasoning as a member of society. It is this educational content that emphasizes character education (Andayani, 2014).

The cultivation of character education has also extended into the digital world, particularly in children's literature. One of literature's roles is as an educational tool. This aligns with the function of literature as "dulce et utile" (pleasant and beneficial). The benefit in children's literature is conveyed through the messages it conveys. These messages take the form of moral values consistent with character education (Udasmoro et al., 2012). Therefore, children's literature is often viewed as an effective instrument for character education because it allows children to understand life values through narrative experiences without needing direct instruction. Lickona (in Ardiyanti, 2021) argues that character is not an innate trait but is developed over time through exposure to various media and experiences, with children's literature serving as a highly effective tool.

This approach goes beyond purely academic learning about instilling good character. The process of fostering social and emotional intelligence through children's literature can prepare children to become ethical and responsible members of society. In line with Farahiba's (2017) view, children's literature provides an idealized model of life—namely, the example of a person of character. Digital children's literature tends to convey character values in a more subtle and non-preachy manner. In digital literature, character education does not always appear as an explicit message but rather through scenes, visuals, symbols, and simple plotlines. Thus, the focus

is not merely on the presence of character values but on how those values are shaped and conveyed through digital media.

In Indonesia, efforts to strengthen character education are currently being actively promoted. Children are facing various social challenges related to character. Low levels of empathy, intolerance, bullying behavior, a lack of social responsibility, and a declining interest in local culture indicate that character development remains a relevant need. At the same time, today's children interact far more with digital media than with print media. Conventional tools for instilling character education, such as children's literature in print form, are beginning to face a pedagogical gap. This gap is evident in the reality of life for the digital native generation. Wahyuni (2023) explains that another aspect of character education theory is its emphasis on the role of literature as a didactic medium. Conventional children's literature is indeed designed to be didactic, but the approaches used often get trapped in rigid, linear, and contradictory moral simplifications.

The transformation of character education in digital children's literature is not a transformation of values, but rather a transformation of mechanisms. The transformation of children's literature in the digital realm has led to a transformation in the mechanisms for instilling character education. The educational function in digital children's literature remains intact, but the mechanisms for carrying out that function have undergone adaptive changes—adjustments to new media and the literacy patterns of the digital generation. This demonstrates that digital children's literature holds a strategic position as a meeting space between digital technology, literacy, and character education in contemporary society. Astuti (2024) argues that digital children's literature explores enhanced visuals and interactive elements, thereby serving as a strategic medium to strengthen literacy and character education.

This study is based on the assumption that the transformation of character education in digital children's literature does not lie in the change of the values taught, but rather in the change in how those values are constructed. Sasita (in Faidah, 2018:126) states that children's literature makes a significant contribution to the development of a child's personality in the process of growing into adulthood. Conventional children's literature relies on verbal narratives that dominate. In contrast, digital children's literature presents various modes of representation simultaneously through a combination of audio, text, illustrations, video, and supplementary visual elements.

This means that the instillation of character values is not only conveyed through the plot and character dialogue but also through the visual and auditory experiences that accompany the reading process. Therefore, a key issue for research is not merely the character values contained in digital children's literature, but how the digital medium transforms the mechanisms of conveying and internalizing character values to young readers. Understanding arises through exploration of life, discovery, and the portrayal of various human characters that provide information enriching readers' knowledge and understanding (Waryanti, 2015).

Most previous research has treated digital literature as a mere transition to static visual media without delving into the depth of its content. Research on character education in children's literature remains dominated by studies focused on identifying the character values contained within the text. In the study by Latuconsina et al. (2022:2), children's literature is viewed as playing a crucial role in character formation and the development of children's personalities. However, not all literary reading materials are suitable for children. This study aims to describe the characteristics of children's reading materials that align with children's intellectual development and the positive values they contain. Research conducted by Novitasari (2025) also revealed character education values in digital children's literature.

This study drew data from BUDI, which identified character values such as compassion, empathy, courage, tolerance, cooperation, and self-acceptance in digital children's stories themed around children with special needs. Another study was conducted by Jumadi (2017), who sought to explore the role of literature education in schools. This study found that efforts to intensify the role of literature education in schools to build students' character were deemed effective.

This aligns with Sarumpaet (2017), who states that no matter how much children's literature is intended to entertain, it remains educational in nature. Various studies have sought to analyze the presence of character values in texts, but have not explained how these values are constructed and received by child readers within the context of the digital media environment. Therefore, this study offers a different perspective by positioning the medium as a crucial component in the character education process. This study brings a novelty by examining how the instillation of character education values undergoes transformation in digital children's literature. Social issues are integrated into digital children's literature as stimuli for dynamic moral reasoning. Digital children's literature within this ecosystem no longer dictates to children through moral imperatives but engages them in dialogues about realities such as environmental crises, inclusivity, and morality through adaptive and immersive presentations.

Based on this background, this study aims to identify, map, and describe the forms of representation of contemporary social issues and the transformation in the cultivation of character education in digital children's literature. The emergence of digital children's literature not only bridges the pedagogical gap between literature and children's real-world experiences but also effectively reshapes how character values are internalized independently and critically by young readers. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the multimodal elements in digital children's literature that play a role in building, conveying, and reinforcing character values to young readers. This study is expected to contribute to the development of digital children's literature studies while expanding understanding of character education practices within the digital media ecosystem.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using content analysis. According to Gani (2019), qualitative research is a research procedure that generates data in the form of words—spoken or written—as descriptive data or through observable behavior. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study focuses on understanding the meaning, representation, and mechanisms of character education embedded in digital children's literature. This study aims to reveal how digital media transform character education mechanisms through the integration of various modes, such as text, illustrations, audio, and video.

The data sources for this study consist of ten digital children's stories available on the BUDI (Digital Books) platform managed by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia. The BUDI platform was selected based on several considerations. First, BUDI is an official digital children's literature platform that provides a variety of children's stories accessible in full and for free. Second, this platform offers various new media formats aligned with the multimodal characteristics of digital children's literature. Third, the stories on this platform feature diverse themes related to character education and children's social lives.

The research data utilized ten digital children's stories available on the BUDI platform: **I Want to Be Special Too**, **Dudung Loves Sack Races**, **Rapping at the Floating Market**, **The Origin of Kotabaru**, **Nana Is No Different**, **Dung Trek Trek Dung**, **Poku the Nail Germ**, **Danang's Apam Cake**, **Dare to Say It**, and **What's Wrong with Mom?**. The ten selected stories represent various forms of digital literature, such as digital books, audio stories, video stories, and digital comics. This diversity of forms aims to enrich the character education mechanisms present within the digital children's literature ecosystem.

Data collection began with the identification and selection of appropriate digital children's literature works. This was followed by an intensive reading process to identify sections containing representations of character values, whether emerging through text or through multimodal elements. Data analysis was conducted in stages through an interactive analysis comprising data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During the data reduction stage, all findings related to character education were identified and classified based on specific categories. In the data presentation stage, findings that reveal relationships between character values, forms of representation, and digital media are organized and analyzed. The next stage is data interpretation through multimodal analysis. Through this stage, the researcher

identifies patterns of transformation in the mechanisms of character education that emerge in digital children's literature.

3. Results and Discussions

The analysis conducted on ten digital children's stories on the BUDI platform indicates that character education remains one of the primary functions of Indonesian children's literature. The research findings reveal that digital media is a new medium that does not merely transfer printed text to a digital space. Digital media has transformed the mechanisms and delivery of character values to young readers. This can be observed through the character values constructed and conveyed to the readers.

This change is not evident in the types of character values taught, but rather in the representational mechanisms used to build readers' moral experiences. Based on data analysis, three forms of transformation were identified in the mechanisms of character education in digital children's literature: (1) the transformation from verbal narrative to multimodal representation, (2) the transformation from moral instruction to moral experience, and (3) the transformation from passive readers to multimodal readers.

3.1 Transformation from Verbal Narrative to Multimodal Representation

Initial findings indicate that the cultivation of character education in children's literature is no longer built solely through contextual narratives. Digital children's literature has transformed the dissemination of values from a textual-instructional (conventional) approach to a multimodal-organic (digital) one. The interpretation of stories is no longer limited to text alone but occurs through a combination of various complementary modes of communication. In the story **Dudung Loves Sack Races**, the values of sportsmanship, hard work, and courage are not conveyed solely through the narrative of Dudung's efforts to participate in the race. Rather, these values are reinforced through visual illustrations that depict the characters' expressions, body language, and the setting and atmosphere during the competition.

The presence of illustrations in digital children's literature allows readers to understand the characters' emotions more vividly than if conveyed solely through textual narration. A similar phenomenon is found in the story **Kue Apam Danang**. The values of family harmony and togetherness, as well as respect for tradition, are not only built through the plot but also through visual representation. This is evident in the process of making apam cake, which shows the situations and interactions among the story's characters. In this instance, the meaning of the characters is not only conveyed through verbal narration but can also be interpreted through the visualization of the cultural activities depicted.

In video-based stories such as *"Berpantun di Pasar Apung," "Nana Tidak Berbeda," "Poku Si Kuman Kuku,"* and *"Berani Katakan,"* the process of instilling character education becomes more complex. Video-based stories present visual and audio elements simultaneously as reinforcing tools. Visual movements, vocal intonation, background music, and character expressions all contribute to building meanings related to values such as courage, tolerance, social responsibility, and personal accountability. In audio stories such as *I Want to Be Special Too* and *What's Wrong with Mom*, sound elements play a central role in shaping the reader's emotional experience. Sound serves as the primary key to reinforcing the character-building message within the story. Variations in intonation, storytelling tempo, and emphasis in narration are key indicators.

Based on these findings, it is evident that character education in digital children's literature is built through multimodal relationships that allow a single character value to be represented through various channels of meaning.

3.2 The Transformation of Moral Delivery Toward Moral Experience

The transformation occurring in digital children's literature is also evident in the changing methods of conveying character education to readers. Digital children's literature does not merely teach character values but creates an experience that allows readers to feel and interpret those values. In conventional children's literature, moral values are communicated through the

narrative. Readers are guided to understand specific messages through the plot, character dialogue, or the narrator's explanations regarding good and bad characters. Through this approach, the character education process occurs via cognitive activities centered on understanding the text's content. Character values in digital children's literature remain present in the story, but they are not presented as messages that must be understood conceptually.

Digital children's literature presents character values as an experience that readers can feel, observe, hear, and live through. Thus, digital children's literature shifts character education from a process of receiving moral messages toward a process of experiencing moral situations. This transformation is evident in the story **I Want to Be Special, Too**. The process of self-acceptance and self-confidence isn't built through advice. The story doesn't directly preach about the importance of self-respect. Instead, it gently guides readers through the journey of a character who feels she isn't special enough. Feelings of comparing oneself to others and a desire to be validated by one's environment. Through the character's inner monologue and depiction of their emotions, readers share in the discomfort, anxiety, and doubt experienced by the character.

Through this situation, character values are instilled as a result of emotional experience, not as explicit moral lessons. A similar approach is evident in the story **Nana Is No Different**. The value of tolerance toward differences is not conveyed through definitions or normative appeals. Instead, this story presents a social situation that allows readers to witness how a difference is viewed and understood by the characters in the story. Visual depictions of the characters' expressions, social interactions, and the sequence of events make the message of tolerance emerge as a concrete social experience that can be felt. Readers are invited not merely to know that respecting differences is a good deed, but also to be able to embody that attitude in their daily lives. Through the story **Berani Katakan**, a similar pattern of transformation is evident.

The value of moral courage is built through conflicts that place the character in situations demanding a decision. In this instance, readers are not merely presented with the positive character trait of courage, but are drawn deeper into the lengthy process leading to the act of being brave. The various doubts, considerations, and consequences faced by the character can be internalized by readers, much like when the character chooses to speak the truth. Through this mechanism, courage is understood as a complex social and emotional experience, not merely an abstract moral concept. Based on these findings, it is evident that digital children's literature fosters a character education approach that goes deeper than mere moral instruction. The approach in digital children's literature is also experience-based.

Values are no longer viewed as a mandate or message to be passively received, but as an emotionally engaging experience that builds profound meaning. In the context of character education, this shift is significant because experiences have a stronger and more effective influence than the mere transmission of information. When young readers become emotionally engaged in a story, the process of internalizing values becomes deeper and more contextual to their real-life experiences. Thus, the transformation that occurs is not a change in the character values being taught, but a change in the pedagogical strategies used to foster moral understanding.

3.3 The Transformation from Passive Readers to Multimodal Readers

Another transformation evident in digital children's literature is the shift in the child reader's role from a passive reader to a multimodal reader. The digital medium encourages child readers to engage multiple senses in interpreting the character's messages within the story. In conventional children's literature, children's interpretation is primarily derived from reading the text. Some books include illustrations as supplementary elements. However, the majority of the interpretive process still relies on the ability to read and interpret verbal language. In this context, the text serves as the primary source of meaning, guiding the child reader toward the story's message. Digital children's literature comes in various formats, such as video, audio, and audiovisual. These diverse story formats indicate that the interpretation process no longer occurs solely through verbal language.

Interpretation can be more varied by integrating various forms of information to fully understand the story's message. Therefore, readers in digital children's literature no longer function as text readers but as multimodal readers. This transformation can be observed in the story **Berpantun di Pasar Apung**. The interpretation of cultural values is not derived solely from the narrative. Readers are invited to visualize the pantun-singing activity at the floating market through the characters' speech and expressions, the atmosphere of social interaction, and the story's supporting audio elements. Each element contributes to shaping meaning, so that character education values emerge through the representation of multimodal relationships. In the story **Poku the Nail Germ**, the concept of personal hygiene is conveyed through a combination of visual illustrations, narration, animated movements, and the characters' behavior.

Young readers will develop an understanding of the importance of maintaining hygiene not only through the information they gain from the story. Young readers will observe the cause-and-effect consequences visualized in the story. Images and visual movements play a crucial role in supporting the textual narrative. In audio-based stories like **Ada Apa dengan Ibu**, the process of reading text shifts to a process of listening. In this format, young readers construct understanding through the narrative, tone of voice, intonation, tempo, and vocal expressions used by the storyteller or narrator. The process of meaning-making is no longer shaped entirely by written words, but also through the interplay of sounds and words. In this activity, the ability to instill character values through stories involves auditory skills that are often not found in conventional print-based children's literature.

The results of this study indicate that digital children's literature shifts the child reader's role from passive to an active participant in the meaning-making process. Multimodal readers are not only able to discern what is good and what is not, but more deeply, they can think and feel as the characters in the story do. Child readers are engaged in the process of simultaneously connecting verbal, visual, and auditory information to understand the story and interpret the character values embedded within it. This process provides a more complex literacy experience compared to conventional children's literature.

Discussions

Based on the results presented, the transformation occurring in digital children's literature does not alter the didactic essence as the fundamental function of children's literature—namely, a means of character education. The transformation of character education in digital children's literature is not a transformation of values but a transformation of mechanisms. Based on the analyzed data, various character education values were identified, such as courage, compassion, cooperation, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and cultural preservation. These results reinforce the position of children's literature that prioritizes its didactic function. This function remains intact and is preserved even as the medium for storytelling shifts from conventional to digital.

Digital children's literature not only contains character education values but also changes how those values are presented, understood, and experienced by young readers through a more visual, concise, and digitally-oriented multimodal format. One of the main contributions of this study is to demonstrate that multimodality serves as a new mechanism in the process of internalizing character values among young readers. In digital children's literature, text is no longer the sole vehicle for conveying formative messages. The process of meaning-making is constructed through the interplay of verbal, visual, and auditory elements that complement one another. This is undoubtedly more complex and dynamic. Digital books, as one platform of digital children's literature, integrate text and illustrations more intensively than conventional printed books.

Video-based stories combine visuals, sound, movement, and narration to create a holistic reader experience. Audio-based stories utilize tone, intonation, and vocal expression to build an emotional atmosphere. Meanwhile, digital comics rely on the relationship between visual panels

and text to convey the story's message. This diversity of presentation allows the process of instilling character education to be understood through various sensory pathways. Young readers interpret not only through the characters' actions but also through their expressions, vocal intonations, and by observing the concrete consequences of behavior. This creates a richer process of meaning-making. It also demonstrates that the effectiveness of character education in digital children's literature depends not only on the quality of the story but also on the digital medium's ability to provide a multimodal experience that supports the process of meaning formation.

The research findings prove that new media technology is not merely a process of medium transition but is more complex—acting as an agent of transformation in children's character education in today's fully digital era. Digital children's literature plays a role in reproducing the character and social values prevalent in society. However, unlike conventional children's literature, which often conveys values explicitly, digital children's literature builds these identities through multimodal experiences that are closer to children's daily lives. This study found that the shift in medium from conventional children's literature to digital literature results in a change in how character education is conveyed to young readers. In conventional children's literature, character education occurs through the process of reading and understanding the story text.

The textual narrative plays a crucial role in this process. In contrast, digital children's literature integrates character education through various modes of representation, enabling young readers to gain more complex experiences. This results in a transformation that occurs not only at the level of content but also at the level of pedagogical mechanisms. The ten children's stories in this study address diverse themes. However, a consistent pattern emerges in the social constructs attempted through the stories. All stories guide young readers toward the figure of a child expected in contemporary Indonesian society. This can be described as the construction of an ideal child figure in Indonesian digital literature. Values such as self-acceptance, tolerance of differences, caring for others, the courage to express opinions, responsibility for health and the environment, as well as attention to and appreciation of local culture are showcased in the stories.

Thus, the presence of digital children's literature functions not merely as a medium for entertainment and learning, but more profoundly as a space for the formation of children's social identity. The transformation from verbal narrative to multimodal representation indicates a shift in the ecosystem of digital children's literature. This shift moves from the dominance of verbal narrative in conventional children's literature toward multimodal representation. Digital children's literature presents a multimodal space that integrates textual narrative, visual semiotics, and auditory stimulation, actively constructing character values for young readers. In the story **Dung-Trek-Trek-Dung** and the comic **Asal Mula Kotabaru**, young readers cannot fully grasp the integrity of the message by merely reading the textual sequence of words.

In digital children's literature, young readers are guided to activate critical literacy skills to construct meaning and interpret signs. The values of cooperation and social harmony in **Dung-Trek-Trek-Dung** are not conveyed through informative sentences with lengthy narratives, but rather through the harmony between visual symbols of traditional musical instruments, digital rhythmic beats, accompanied by simple, concise text. Digital children's literature successfully optimizes young readers' cognitive processes in response to visual-audio stimuli. The shift from moral instruction toward moral experience, aligned with the multimodal literacy of digital media, empowers young readers to elaborate on meaning more richly through visual and textual collaboration.

While conventional children's literature positions young readers as passive recipients of information who accept the moral truths presented by the author, digital children's literature transforms this role. Children's moral experiences, enhanced by audio and video within the stories, demonstrate sensory engagement. This is akin to hearing the emotionally charged

intonation of voices in the stories **What's Wrong with Mom?** and **I Want to Be Special Too**. These elements trigger a deeper affective response in young readers than written narrative descriptions alone. Consequently, character values are no longer accepted as abstract concepts but are internalized as emotional memories. The transformation of children's reading roles from passive readers to multimodal readers in this study sheds light on critical literacy competencies in the era of digital media.

A multimodal reader is someone who possesses the literacy skills to interpret, understand, and integrate information from various modes of communication or formats simultaneously. This involves understanding not only written text but also images, graphics, videos, audio, and even sign language to construct a complete meaning. Child readers are guided to actively construct meaning through various modalities such as visual, auditory, and narrative storytelling. Character education in digital children's literature is understood as a process of negotiating values between text, medium, and reader. In the context of character education, the shift in the child reader's role has significant implications. Young readers are engaged in the process of connecting various modes of representation and do not merely receive moral messages. They actively participate in building and constructing their understanding of the messages they receive.

Therefore, character education in digital children's literature unfolds through a more active and participatory interpretive process. Young readers are no longer passive recipients of moral messages but become active meaning-makers who play a direct role in the internalization of character values. When young readers encounter narratives of local wisdom, such as in the stories of *Asal Mula Kotabaru* and *Kue Apam Danang*, they do not merely consume the stories but actively process their understanding of cultural identity through visual symbols. This transformation in digital children's literature is one of the positive impacts of global digitalization. The development of digital children's literature is closely linked to changes in literacy practices. Conventional children's literature places greater emphasis on the ability to read text.

Digital children's literature, however, aims to enhance the ability to comprehend various forms of representation simultaneously. This indicates that young readers are not merely interacting with written language. Young readers encounter texts that are always accompanied by images, animations, sounds, and various other elements that enrich the interpretation of the story. Digital children's literature educates character not by lecturing, but by presenting moral experiences in visual and narrative forms that are easily accessible to children. Therefore, character education in digital children's literature cannot be separated from the development of multimodal literacy. Character development occurs in tandem with the development of multimodal literacy skills. The results of this study may have implications for awareness and acceptance of the digitization of children's literature.

This process will be embraced as part of more optimal documentation and dissemination aimed at enhancing children's literacy. This study indicates that research on character education in children's literature must move beyond the identification of character values toward an analysis of representations and the process of meaning-making. The findings reveal that digital media plays an active role in children's understanding of character values. Practically, this study demonstrates that digital children's literature can be utilized as a relevant source of character education tailored to the needs of the digital generation. Educational practitioners can leverage the multimodal characteristics of digital children's literature as a means to provide more contextual and engaging learning experiences for children. The cultivation of character education no longer relies on static, textual, and verbal indoctrination methods.

The presence of character education in the digital media era is not merely a process of conveying character values. Character education in digital children's literature is related to young readers' ability to construct meaning from various information sources available in the digital environment. Digital children's literature demonstrates that the optimal transmission of values

can be achieved through a medium that not only presents but also speaks the language of the digital native generation

4. Conclusions

This study reveals that digital technology and new media in digital children's literature have initiated a reconstructive transformation in the mechanisms of children's character education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the transformation of character education mechanisms in Indonesian digital children's literature. The results indicate that the transformation in digital children's literature does not lie in changes to the character values being taught. The transformation occurs in the way character values are represented, constructed, and internalized by child readers. The character education values contained in the ten BUDI digital children's stories include compassion, courage, responsibility, tolerance, appreciation of cultural values, and self-acceptance. The digital medium introduces new mechanisms for conveying character education that differ from conventional children's literature.

This study identified three types of transformations present in digital children's literature. First, character education has shifted from a dominance of verbal narrative toward multimodal representation that integrates audio, video, text, illustrations, and digital comics. Second, character education is not presented as rigid, informative moral messages. Character education is presented as a moral experience that guides young readers to become emotionally engaged in the events experienced by the characters. Third, digital children's literature transforms the position of young readers from passive recipients focused on text into multimodal readers who construct meaning through simultaneous interaction with various modes of representation.

Based on these findings, it can be argued that digital children's literature is not merely a new form of conventional children's literature but a representation of shifting literacy practices in the new media era. This also underscores that the digital medium functions not only as a vehicle for storytelling but also as an integral part of the character education mechanism itself. In the future, the term "child reader" may no longer be relevant to denote the target audience of children's literature. "Work appreciators" might be a term that offers a broader scope for multimodal users of children's literature.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Aulia Novitasari, Sabhan, and Arum Murdianingsih; methodology, Arum Murdianingsih; software, Sabhan; validation, Aulia Novitasari, Sabhan, and Arum Murdianingsih; formal analysis, Aulia Novitasari.; investigation, Arum Murdianingsih; resources, Sabhan; data curation, Aulia Novitasari; writing—original draft preparation, Aulia Novitasari; writing—review and editing, Aulia Novitasari; supervision, Sabhan; project administration, Aulia Novitasari. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data in this study that were analyzed and generated during the research can be accessed via: <https://budi.kemendikdasmen.go.id/>

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in the writing of this manuscript.

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