

## Strengthening Character Education Based on Online Learning for University Students Pasca Covid-19

Asdar\*<sup>1</sup>, Yuriatson Jubhari<sup>2</sup>, Taufiq Natsir<sup>3</sup>, A.Vivit Anggreani<sup>4</sup>, Luana Sasabone<sup>5</sup>, Tuan Nordin bin Tuan Kechik<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,4</sup>Universitas Bosowa, Makassar, Indonesia, <sup>2</sup>Politeknik Sandi Karsa Makassar, Indonesia, <sup>3</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia, <sup>5</sup>Universitas Kristen Paulus (UKI), Makassar, Indonesia, <sup>6</sup>Pusat Pengajian Bahasa, Literasi dan Terjemahan, Universitas Sains Malaysia

### Correspondence\*

E-mail:

[asdar@universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:asdar@universitasbosowa.ac.id)

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### Abstract

This study aimed to strengthen character education based on online learning for university students pasca covid-19. This study applied the qualitative research. This study was carried out at Universitas Bosowa students and lecturers. Results of study showed that character education is implemented pasca Covid-19 epidemic utilizing a distance learning approach (online), which was internet-based. The incorporation of character education based on online learning has an impact on attributes like religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, peace-loving, social obligation, and responsibility. Character education based on online learning can have an impact on how children develop their moral beliefs, integrity, critical thinking, independence, participation in other activities, and responsibility. It can be concluded that a distant learning method (online) was used to implement character education under the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. Although there are some technical issues with using this system, and overall it can be used successfully.

**Keywords:** Character Education, Covid-19, Online Learning, University Students

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a learning process with the aim of developing talents in children, both it is personality, intelligence, spiritual and religious (Juliya and Herlambang, 2021). Education can also be interpreted as a systematic conscious effort to achieve a

better life (Sujarwo, et al., 2021). In simple terms, education is a valuable lesson for children which makes them human beings who are more critical in thinking so that they can create the character desired by their teachers and their parents. Education is structured to train learners to become contributing members of society who possess the intellectual capacity to advance or invent science, technology, and the arts (Sukmawati, et al., 2021). Through a learning process that fosters independent learning capacities, these skills are developed. Today's children lack the critical thinking abilities necessary to think for themselves and take initiative to solve challenges. While the world of work generally requires people to have the ability to work collaboratively or in a group and to generate novel ideas, students typically receive a variety of knowledge that requires memory.

Education has long been regarded as the prime means of producing outstanding human beings. Every person is motivated by this conviction to be equipped to handle the difficulties of the world. This conviction also serves as the fundamental underpinning for the world's prediction that Indonesia would be a highly strong country in all sectors in 2045, or 100 years after the country's declaration of independence (Rokhman, & Syaifudin, 2014).

In line with that (Defi, 2020) So crucial is the position of character in the learning process that the teacher must really be able to touch the roots of this character, which is included in the learning process that has been proclaimed by the teacher concerned in accordance with the definition of education according to the Law No. 20 Years concerning the national education system namely, Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by them , society, nation and state (Suriadi, et al., 2021).

Character education is the creation of a school environment that helps students in developing ethics, responsibility through models, and teaching good character through universal values (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005:7 as cited in Santika, 2020 ). With learning that is carried out outside the school environment, in this case using online learning which is remote in nature, provides extra assignments and responsibilities as well as challenges for teachers to be able to create a learning environment in an effort to develop the ethics, responsibilities and character of these students (Akhiruddin, et al., 2022). Because one of the evaluation methods of character education is direct observation by the teacher, who observes new attitudes or changes in attitudes that arise in students. Not to mention the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing online learning such as mastery of technology (Sujarwo, 2020; Nurhikmah, et al., 2023), internet network constraints and innovations in integrating character education into online learning which seemed to be booming when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred (Suhaimi, et al., 2021).

As a result, character education needs to be of higher quality. The development of pupils' noble characters is the foundation for an honorable and high-quality education (Asdar, et al., 2021). A student with character is one who possesses a certain personality, mannerism, or character. A person's personality is a trait or trait

of a trait that they acquire from their social environment or from the influence of their family. However, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, online learning was disregarded to promote students' character education (Bokayev, et al., 2021).

It is crucial for character education to become a cornerstone of formal, non-formal, and informal education in Indonesia (Aswat, et al., 2022). Parenting practices and pupils' innate dispositions are two factors that have an impact on how youngsters develop their character. Family members' parents are responsible for forming their children's character from an early age, even while they are still in the womb (Mithhar, et al., 2021).

Furthermore, character education is not a new program. It has been a component of human life for many years. In fact, education is a means of acquiring the knowledge and wisdom needed to lead fulfilling lives and make the world a better place for people. Education terminology refers to the process of acquiring good information, attitude, and behavior, which is related to character education. Education begins with building the awareness, feeling, caring, intension, knowledge, believes and habits formation.

According to the data and information gathered, Universitas Bosowa's PGSD study program efforts to strengthen character education through online learning have not been successful. Additionally, information was discovered based on preliminary research findings that character development in students has not generally been successful. Numerous students lacked concentration, and some occasionally engaged in gaming while learning. This is in line with the teacher's data that there was a change in the character of students during the distance-learning (online) process during and pasca the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **METHOD**

This research approach is qualitative since it attempts to comprehend people's feelings and experiences (Creswell, 2012). As a crucial tool, this technique is used to assess the status of natural objects and researchers (Simamora, et al., 2011). Interviews and direct observation were used to gather data, which was then triangulated and analyzed using qualitative-inductive methods. The emphasis of the outcomes of the qualitative research was on meaning rather than generalization. This study was carried out at Universitas Bosowa. Two lecturers and 15 students participated in the study as participants. Several methods are used to acquire data, including interviews, observation, and document analysis. The qualitative research process was used for doing the data analysis.

To gather study information on the integration of character education in the learning process in forecasting character education, interviews with the principals and students in Universitas Bosowa were performed. The focus of this research is on turning teachers into role models for putting local wisdom's character ideals into practice. The implementation stage of character education based on local wisdom is taught online by teachers and practiced in the learning process, despite the fact that Covid-19 has already spread around the world.

In keeping with that, researchers looked at how character values were implemented in Universitas Bosowa in accordance with conventional knowledge and how character education was being implemented online during the Covid-19. The semester based course plan (RPS) that teachers employ to direct the teaching and learning process were also examined.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, campus and school policies have temporarily suspended the face-to-face system face directly replaced by a system in the network or online. This policy must be accepted by all stakeholders so that learning activities continue even if they use technological media, be it through E-learning, Teleconference, WhatsApp Group and various other applications (Faiz, 2021). Online learning or BDR (Learning from Home) demands the maximum application of information and technology applications (Purwati, Faiz, Widiyatmoko, & Maryatul, 2021). Educators are required to continue to facilitate learning activities so that they remain active and meaningful even without face-to-face meetings.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, students cannot engage in the face-to-face learning that typically takes place in schools with teachers and peers. Students must conduct their home studies. As a result, educators must also provide resources that let children learn at home. Due to this circumstance, the instructor will need to modify their approach to the teaching and learning process.

Learning throughout the home learning program greatly benefits from the use of suitable teaching methods, as well as teacher conduct and attitudes in controlling the teaching and learning process. All of this was done to give pupils access to education during the Covid-19 emergency period without regard to time or space constraints. The concept of distance learning as a kind of education is not new. It originally began with written courses before becoming formal higher education.

In order to promote human competitiveness as individuals and to contribute to the empowerment of local communities, the country, and the global community, education is a process that fosters the mastery of knowledge, technology, skills, the arts, and morality (character). Character is the collection of values, precepts, and institutions that are particular to a given group of people. In order to preserve the nation's character and integrate it into the educational process, every community should ideally take an active role.

Distance learning can be done in a variety of methods, one of which is online learning using video streaming communication. Through the use of video teleconference platforms and applications like Google Meet, Microsoft Team, Cisco Webex, Skype, and Zoom, the learning process is conducted online. Not just during the Covid-19 Pandemic but also in the future to develop larger connection without boundaries, many uses of this technology are desperately needed and have become a crucial platform in the online learning process. Aside from these tools, some instructors additionally include supplemental software into the classroom, such as WhatsApp, Google Forms, Google Classroom, Google Drive, YouTube, WhatsApp Groups, Tuweb, Web Blogs, Edmodo, and others.

The need for teachers and students to be proficient in the usage of current information technology presents a barrier to the online learning process. The findings of the study indicate that different online media are the most widely used. According to the agreement between parents, children, instructors, and local governments, there are many different distance learning programs that are typically utilized by teachers and students. According to the responses from the respondents, among other programs, WhatsApp, Ruang Guru, Zoom Meeting, and Google Classroom are often utilized.

Interviews with a variety of sources. Among them were students who used WhatsApp Groups to obtain educational materials and occasionally used Zoom Meetings when their teachers needed to clarify something. Lecturers made a similar statement, stating that they "almost daily receive material from teachers through WhatsApp Group, it is in the form of explanation videos, there are modules, there are power points and information related to learning materials." Based on the idea that the media is more usable and convenient for kids and parents to use, WhatsApp is used as an online learning tool.

A government initiative called Strengthening Character Education involves three educational units, namely schools, families, and communities, and aims to improve students' character through the integration of heart, mind, and sport. Then came the Minister of Education and Culture's Regulation No. 20 of 2018 about Strengthening Character Education. Strengthening character education, namely implementing Pancasila-based character education (Benawa et al., 2019).

However, character education is undergoing a distortion in the contemporary Covid-19 Pandemic period. Why not? Character education needs to be restricted and diverted from online delivery and should instead be absorbed through the direct learning process in schools, families, and communities. The internalization of standards and values in online character education reveals a challenge. This is caused by a number of things, such as limited internet network connection and the inability of teachers and students to be creative when evaluating values and norms using an online system. In addition, due to the swift transition from classroom learning patterns to virtual learning patterns, the learning tradition.

Some previous studies stated that SD Ihsaniyah's PPK online learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic was accomplished through: morning routines involving all academics; curriculum integration in accordance with the school's vision and mission; additional learning through home visits; and the role of parents in fostering children's learning (Aeni, & Astuti, 2021). The findings indicated that a total of 292 schools dispersed over 8 districts and 44,949 pupils were actively utilizing online learning. During online learning, programs like WhatsApp, Zoom Meeting, and Google Classroom are frequently utilized. The adoption of online distance learning has affected students' character education, including their development of religious, nationalist, independent, mutually cooperative, and integrity qualities (Mithhar, et al., 2021). The findings of these research provided important insights for teacher training programs, but there was little discussion of how Islamic character education should be implemented.

Curiously, modern virtual schooling also poses implementation problems for this idea. Therefore, in this study, we offer a model of Islamic character education cultivation that makes use of an e-learning approach in a classroom setting (Mustofa, et al., 2020).

Thus it can be concluded in this study that the strategy in strengthening character education after the Covid-19 pandemic includes morning habituation activities by involving all academicians who are integrated into the curriculum. The media used in habituation are through zoom meetings, Google class, videos. In addition, the lecturer also conducted interviews with students to measure the level of student understanding and student learning readiness in distance learning. Besides that, the results of observations that strengthening character education also need to be strengthened by the role of parents in accompanying children because at this time the role of parents is important and plays a central role in education at home.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Character education is implemented pasca Covid-19 epidemic utilizing a distance learning approach (online), which is internet-based. Character traits such as religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, peace-loving, social duty, and responsibility are affected by the integration of character education based on local culture. It is advised that the integrated model of character education be adopted as a best practice for use in other Indonesian universities and educational facilities.

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