

THE DILEMMA OF ONLINE EDUCATION IN BUILDING STUDENT CHARACTER

Moh. Hafidurrahman

Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan
hafidzbarizi@gmail.com

Samsul Arifin

Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan
coelzlamboe@gmail.com

Ach Sholehuddin

Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan
Sholeh34@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This scholarly article critically evaluates the impact of technology, with a particular focus on online education, on students' morals and character. The research is designed to understand how online education, due to technological development, affects students' morals and character and to seek strategies to strengthen these aspects. The research methodology involved a comprehensive literature review, with data collected from various journals and the author's observation of the online education phenomenon. The results show that online education brings new challenges for students, including teachers' need for more direct guidance and the monotony of learning methods. This has an impact on the decline of students' morale and character. This article provides new insights into how technology affects students' morale and character, particularly online education. The study also highlights the importance of character and ethics education in the current education system and how online education can be customised to strengthen these aspects. In modern education, which is increasingly influenced by technology, this study contributes to understanding the challenges and opportunities posed by online education. As such, this article serves as a valuable resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers who seek to maximise the potential of online education while minimising its negative impact on students' morals and character.

Keywords: Educational Dilemma; Building Character; Student Morals



INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, education has to face the challenge of accommodating technology in online learning. This situation makes young people more interested in social media than academics, which can lead to moral decline and social problems.

The rise of online platforms raises new ethical considerations regarding plagiarism, cheating, and the appropriate use of information (Martínez et al., 2020). Educators and policymakers must navigate these complexities to ensure that online education provides knowledge and instills the values of integrity, honesty, and respect for others. Several strategies can be implemented to address these challenges (Chang & Chou, 2015).

Schools and educational institutions should integrate ethics and character education into the online curriculum by incorporating moral dilemmas and ethical discussions into online learning (Astutik & Adwitiya, 2020), encouraging critical thinking and reflection on ethical issues, educators should create a supportive and inclusive online learning environment that encourages collaboration and respectful communication (Aslani, 2013).

Students can fully internalize the value of responsibility by implementing character education in teaching activities. Nitte and Bulu (2020) asserted that the implementation of character education should be reflected in every learning process in the classroom through modeling and habituation. This statement aligns with the view of Rosad (2019), who explains that implementing character education involves sharing values to familiarize students with the practice of responsibility values. This approach aims to improve behavior and shape students' character as a whole so that meaningful changes occur in students. Farid (2023) supports this idea by emphasizing that character education aims to experience self-transformation as a whole.

Implementing character education with a holistic and integrated approach in learning activities is considered the best method to shape the character of responsibility in students. This view is also in line with the argument of Fathurohman (2019), who states that a holistic and integrated approach in the implementation of character education effectively helps students understand values cognitively, appreciate values emotionally, and apply these values in daily actions so that there is a comprehensive change in students.

While there is much research on online education, there is little in-depth research on the effectiveness of online learning in building students' morals and character. In addition, specific strategies to overcome these challenges must also be studied.

One solution that teachers can use is to design innovative learning media using online media. Although direct interaction between teachers and students is limited, teachers can utilize various online platforms (Sulastri et al., 2020), such as Zoom meetings, Google Classroom (Yuliani & Saputri, 2021), learning videos (Habibi, 2020), discussion forums, or even virtual mentoring sessions, to still communicate knowledge and minimal instillation of moral values and build student character.

The effectiveness of online learning in building students' morals is of great concern, and this should be the primary focus (Parma et al., 2023). Educational institutions must develop holistic and integrated strategies to support students' moral development in online learning environments (Farid, 2023). This could include curriculum development incorporating learning about moral values, training teachers to integrate moral values in online learning, and parental involvement in supporting moral education at home (Dewi et al., 2023).

The main point of this article is the importance of discussing the effectiveness of learning in building student morale through online education. This article provides an in-depth look at the strategies teachers and educational institutions can use to continue building students' morals effectively in online learning. Character education is a tool to shape students' characters to act according to appropriate ethical values. Bahri (2015) explains that character education can help shape students' character by introducing ethical values. From this understanding, it can be concluded that students' responsible character can be formed through character education that guides students to realize themselves as responsible actors before Allah SWT (Nikmatin, 2016).

This article is expected to give you a better understanding of the challenges and solutions of online learning in building students' character and morals. As a reference, educational institutions and educators can use this article to strategize more effectively in supporting moral education in the digital world.

RESEARCH METHOD

My research uses the literature review method to explore the chosen topic. A literature review is a process of searching and analyzing various literature sources relevant to the research topic. This method aims to understand the latest knowledge developments, identify related theories, and evaluate previous findings that other researchers have conducted.

In this research, I reviewed various scientific articles, books, journals, and other literature sources related to the topic under study. The steps involved identifying the research topic, collecting relevant literature sources, reading and analyzing the material, and synthesizing and interpreting the findings.

Using the literature review method, this research can provide a solid theoretical foundation and a deep understanding of the context and issues relevant to the research topic. The results of this literature review will be used as a basis for formulating a conceptual framework, identifying research problems, and designing an appropriate methodological approach for further research.

DISCUSSION

1. Character Education

The development of the times and technological advances in the 4.0 era can make it easier for humans, especially teenagers, and students, in their activities, and this is an achievement in itself for humans in developing themselves, but this must also be balanced with character education for teenagers and students.

Indonesia is a developing country (with a population of more than 200 million) that is experiencing setbacks in the fields of economy, education, and moral crisis. This is reflected in immoral behavior, as well as juvenile delinquency, that is usually shown in the media.

A standard tool known as morality is needed to measure the rightness or wrongness of behavior; in Islam, the standard to reference right or wrong is called akhlaq. Al-Ghazali defines akhlaq as a trait that becomes a habit and is embedded in the soul that forms attitudes, behaviors, and easy actions without having to require consideration; there are two internal factors in the formation of akhlaq; the first is from innate factors or genetic factors and the second arises through training, habituation which in the end the habit is embedded in the soul. In contrast, external factors that play a role in forming akhlaq or character are the environment, association, technological advances that are misused, and the lack of embedding character education.

Character education has been regulated by the government in Law Number 20 of 2003, in which it is mentioned that national education functions to develop skills and build character and a dignified human civilization to educate the nation's life, but the implementation is very lacking.

Character education is a system of instilling ethical values in the madrasah/school community, which includes knowledge, awareness, willingness, and action to carry out these duties and values, both towards God Almighty, social fellow, self, environment, as well as nation and state so that it becomes *insane Kamil* (Novan ardy wine: 2012).

Character education has three main functions. First is the function of forming and developing potential. Through character education, students' potential is formed and developed so that they have good thoughts, good hearts, and behavior according to the philosophy of Pancasila. Second is the function of repair and strengthening. Character education helps improve and strengthen the role of families, educational institutions, communities, and governments in participating and taking responsibility for developing the potential of citizens and building the nation toward progress, independence, and prosperity. Third is the filter function. Character education filters the nation's own culture. It filters other nations' cultures that are not by the cultural values and character of a dignified nation (Zubaidi, 2011: 18). Thus, the formation of the nation's character must involve synergy between the three components of education, namely informal, formal, and non-formal education.

Further explained, there are four fundamental reasons why the education system in Indonesia needs to emphasize character education. These reasons are as follows: Many traditional and non-traditional families do not implement character education. This points to the need for schools to play a role in shaping children's character.

The role of schools is not only to form academically intelligent children but also to form morally and characteristically good children. A child's intelligence only has substantial meaning if it is based on goodness. In other words, intelligence that is not balanced with good character will not have an optimal positive impact. Shaping students to have a strong character is not just an additional task for teachers but a responsibility inherent in their role as educators.

With character education integrated into the learning process, the learning has a deeper meaning. It creates capabilities functional for learners' lives, both for further learning and contributing to problem-solving in the community.

2. Factors of moral and character degradation

Some factors that cause moral degradation are: 1). Lack of religious education that causes children to lose their grip on values; 2). Lack of parental knowledge about education; 3). Lack of utilization of free time; 4). Unstable socio-economic and socio-

political conditions; 5). Mental and moral decay of adults; 6). The amount of reading and movies that are less educational; 7). poor education at school; 8) lack of public concern for children's moral education. From these several factors, it can be concluded that formal, informal, and non-formal education plays a significant role and supports each other in character building; the three education sources must optimize their role over a long time and through a complicated process. (Sari & Bermuli, 2021)

Meanwhile, according to (Aulia Azzahra, 2021), the factors that cause moral degradation from the point of view of technological progress in the 4.0 era are as follows.

a. Smartphone

In Sawyer and Williams (2011), Lohr states that a smartphone is a cellular telephone equipped with a microprocessor, memory, display screen, and built-in modem. Humans are facilitated by smartphone technology that can be used for long-distance communication, but if not used wisely, smartphones can cause many negative things.

b. Internet

The internet (inter-network) is a network that combines several computers in an internet protocol (IP) that covers the whole world. The network carries information and several services such as email, chat, file transfer, web services, etc. (Utomo & Syafrudin, 2009)

c. Social Media

Social media is a web-based social networking site that allows individuals to build public or semi-public profiles in a restricted system, list other users with whom they are connected, and view and explore their list of connections made by others with a system (Henderi, 2007).

d. Online games

In the opinion of Samuel (2010), online games are internet-based games that are a network of interaction between one gamer and another in the virtual world. Online games are applied through computer or smartphone media played online/using access.

In society, there are several kinds of institutions, including educational institutions. We hope that the existence of educational institutions can be a mojarra medicine that can cure social diseases for adults and especially for teenagers. However, in reality, we cannot expect much from the world of education outside

pesantren because of the lack of character cultivation and the formation of akhlaq, as well as the lack of figures who can be used as role models to be used as examples in behavior, so that pesantren are used as an alternative by parents in realizing their dreams of educating their children to be competent in the fields of science, berachah, and character (Mahbubah, Mastuhah, Nisa, Laili, & Mudmainnah, 2021).

The condition of social society, both from norms and morals, is increasingly worrying; the number of events in the world of education carried out by specific individuals who tarnish the world of education and degrade human dignity is questionable to what extent education can solve problems that occur in society, character education serves to evaluate education in a society dominated by modernist thinking that is positivistic which makes one's soul dry due to the impact of industrialization which shifts norms, spirituality, and humanity.

According to (Fauzan, 2017), that character from a religious perspective is very close to the meaning of Moral and moral. Character is related to moral strength, which has a positive meaning. So, it can be assumed that people with character have positive (certain) moral qualities.

Amid empty physical activities, education, on the other hand, also brings changes in moral values. So, educational institutions need other alternatives that need to be studied in online education. This is needed in order to increase Morale as well as in the formation of the students' personalities. The success of educational institutions in educating their students is not a coincidence. However, some values are instilled that are not sufficiently conveyed through cell phones, WA text, voice, VC, etc. However, it needs to be modeled and modeled by teachers who can be exemplified directly. These moral values ensure the formation of culture and are the basis or foundation for change in personal or group life.

Education is not just a means to transfer knowledge; more broadly, it is a means to civilize and transmit values. Children should receive an education that considers the basic dimensions of humanity. As explained by (Muslich, 2011, p. 69), the human dimension includes three most basic things.

In implementing online learning, students have to study at home without meeting friends or teachers in person. This can have an impact on students' psychological well-being. Students may experience psychological changes due to constantly being at home, including:

- 1) Lack of learning effectiveness due to a different learning environment from school and distractions that may arise at home.
- 2) Lack of social interaction with peers, which may lead to loneliness or feelings of isolation.
- 3) Sluggish academic and emotional development due to lack of social stimulation and limited learning environment.
- 4) High anxiety due to the uncertainty and changes in online learning.
- 5) Weak immune system due to lack of interaction with the outside environment and physical activity.

All of these things happen because students have to adjust to a new learning environment and lack interaction with the outside environment they usually experience at school. Therefore, special attention from the school and parents is needed to help students overcome the psychological impact that may arise during online learning.

Online learning not only affects students' psychological well-being but can also have an impact on students' character. Based on the results of research (Suriadi et al., 2021), some student actions or characters that are influenced by online learning are as follows:

1. Irresponsible: Online learning is conducted online without direct teacher supervision. This makes students tend to postpone assignments or even ignore them and be too lazy to do assignments because they feel no one is watching them.
2. Confusion to stress: Online learning is a new experience for students that is not like usual and not directly supervised by the teacher. This can cause students to feel confused and stressed, resulting in a loss of interest in reading and more interest in games on the phone.
3. Uncontrolled: Students with busy parents become more unruly because teachers do not directly supervise them and are accompanied by parents, so they tend to behave at will.
4. Online learning, although utilizing technology, does not always run smoothly due to several obstacles that may arise, including:
 - a) Limited mastery of information technology by teachers and students.
 - b) Inadequate facilities and infrastructure to support online learning.
 - c) Limited internet access for some students.
 - d) Lack of readiness to provide a budget to support online learning.

All of these factors can become obstacles in implementing effective online learning and negatively impact students' character and well-being. Therefore, there needs to be a more

planned and integrated effort from all relevant parties to overcome these challenges and ensure online learning can run well.

Behavioral Changes of School Children in the Digital Age: Challenges and Impacts

The behavior of schoolchildren has changed along with the rapid development of the digital era. In some cases, a child's initially innocent and sweet character can turn into a precocious character. According to Lickona (2013), there are ten symptoms of moral degradation in school children, namely: Criminality or crime, Unsporting behavior, Theft, Breaking the rules, Engaging in brawls between students, Lack of respect for others, Self-destructive attitudes, Sexual desires outside of marriage, Use of foul language, Use of illegal drugs or drugs.

Education should be the primary solution to address these issues, with teachers playing irreplaceable roles as role models and motivators. Here, we offer some solutions that can be implemented in the classroom:

1. Build a strong relationship between teachers and students by modeling good moral behavior.
2. Organize discussions and reflection activities that address moral and ethical values in daily life.
3. Implementing a learning program that integrates character education into the curriculum.
4. Provide attention and support to students experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties.
5. Involving parents in their children's character education process through meetings and discussions.
6. Organize extracurricular activities that promote cooperation, respect, and social responsibility.
7. Provide guidance and counseling for students who need it to address behavioral issues.
8. Organize social and charitable events that teach about empathy and caring for others.
9. Praise and reward students who demonstrate good moral behavior.
10. Providing learning resources that support character development, such as moral stories, inspirational movies, or interactive learning materials.

By implementing these solutions consistently, it is hoped that it can help overcome moral degradation in school children and build a strong and positive character amid an ever-

evolving digital era. In overcoming this, education must be present with the teacher as a role model and an irreplaceable motivator. Here, we offer several solutions in the classroom:

1. Utilizing Class Meetings for Group Discussions

Building a positive classroom community starts with focusing on character in the classroom. Here are five essential tips that can be easily implemented with your students. Class meetings do not have to be extended to be effective. Many teachers start the day by sending a morning message with a journal for students to complete when they arrive in class. Starting the day with a routine like this can be very calming. Once all students have arrived, it is time to reflect on the day's goals, events, and positive experiences at home and work on character in the classroom (Abdullah, Halim, & Ali, 2023).

2. Building a Positive Classroom Community

The steps we take at the beginning of the year will shape the direction of the rest of the year, so this is the perfect time to build a positive classroom community. You might ask, is it essential to make it fun? In my opinion, the answer is yes. Students need to leave their comfort zone and get to know their classmates. They must realize that every class member has valuable values, feelings, knowledge, and opinions. To feel safe together, you need to trust your friends, and to have trust in someone, you need to know them. However, this is a challenge because education is conducted online. (Kesumawati, 2018)

3. Community Building Activities

The fundamental question is what we can achieve by building a learning community. Is a learning community limited to the classroom? The answer is no. As teachers, we need a learning community that offers all the traits of a classroom. Teachers need a learning community that offers all the same traits (safe, trusting, supportive, etc.). Even teachers need to feel valued. No matter where you work, teams can make a difference. To build community, you can organize fun activities throughout the year to help students feel valued and part of the whole. Here are some ideas you can try.

As Abdul (Muin, 2020) expressed in his journal on Learning Organizations to Build Adaptive Corporate Culture, forming an empowered society will result in the formation of adaptive characters and appropriate corporate culture. With organized learning activities, students can gain hands-on learning about the correct way of social life that can be recognized in society. However, this is a challenge as education is conducted online.

4. Building Positive Working Relationships

Building a positive classroom community starts with focusing on character within the classroom. This post includes some essential tips that can be easily implemented with students. For example, the role of the class president has significant influence as the class leader. We can influence children with our words and actions, and it is essential to remember that body language plays an important role. If we are having a difficult day, there is nothing wrong with openly stating that we are facing challenges and not at our best, and if we are genuinely friendly, caring, and concerned about our children, that is all that matters. However, this is a challenge because education is online.

CONCLUSION

This article discusses the challenges educational institutions face, especially teachers, in carrying out their role in shaping and fostering student morals in online education. Educational institutions have an essential role in shaping students into individuals who are noble, knowledgeable and independent and behave according to religious norms. However, challenges arise when education moves into cyberspace, where direct interaction between teachers and students is limited. This makes it difficult for educational institutions to influence students' morality directly. Therefore, this article emphasises the need for more creative and planned efforts to strengthen moral education in the era of online education. This includes using technology to provide learning that imparts moral values, strengthening cooperation between educational institutions, families and communities, and emphasising character building through extracurricular activities and personality development programmes.

This article demands how educational institutions can balance online education and students' moral and character building. The hope is that students will be able to behave according to character values after they become alumni of these educational institutions. To create and produce cadres of the nation in science and technology and imtaq who are truly noble, one of the programmes of academic institutions must be in the environment where students are. From this, educational institutions must build student character. Madrasah/schools need to make breakthroughs that can be done to instil a basic understanding of morals and character in students. This activity needs to be promoted through online learning KBM by providing more moral and moral materials, online role models given to students, online good advice, and online educational punishments. It is undoubtedly a significant challenge to carry out the above educational mandate, which can

be handled by academic institutions/teachers alone and parents who play the most vital role. Further research is needed to explore the best strategies and methods of implementing character and moral education in the context of online education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdullah, W., Halim, A., & Ali, R. F. (2023). THE INFLUENCE OF BLENDED LEARNING ON LEARNING OUTCOMES. *GAHWA*, 2(1), 51–66.
- Aslani, G. (2013). Identification and management of ethical challenges in e-learning systems. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 83, 214–218.
- Astutik, I., & Adwitiya, A. B. (2020). The Roles of Schools and Teachers in Building Students' Character in Digital Era: The Students' Perspective. In *International Conference on Community Development (ICCD 2020)* (pp. 279–282). Atlantis Press.
- Aulia Azzahra, H. (2021). Hambatan Pembelajaran Daring Dalam Membangun Karakter Siswa Sekolah Dasar Di Tengah Pandemi. *Jurnal Pendidikan Terbuka Dan Jarak Jauh*, 21(1), 33–38. <https://doi.org/10.33830/ptjj.v21i1.1553.2020>
- Bahri, S. (2015). Implementasi pendidikan karakter dalam mengatasi krisis moral di sekolah. *LAIN Tulungagung Research Collections*, 3(1), 57–76.
- Chang, C.-M., & Chou, C. (2015). An exploratory study of young students' core virtues of e-character education: The Taiwanese teachers' perspective. *Journal of Moral Education*, 44(4), 516–530.
- Dewi, A. C., Ramadhan, B., Fadhil, A. A., Fadhil, F., Idris, A. M., Hidayat, M. R., & Yusrin, M. A. D. (2023). Pendidikan Moral dan Etika Mengukir Karakter Unggul dalam Pendidikan. *IJOCE: Indonesia Journal of Civic Education*, 3(2), 69–76.
- Farid, A. (2023). Literasi Digital Sebagai Jalan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di Era Society 5.0. *Cetta: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6(3), 580–597.
- Fathurohman, O. (2019). Kontribusi Pendidikan Karakter dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional. *Eduprof: Islamic Education Journal*, 1(1), 1–28.
- Habibi, I. (2020). Implementasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Berbasis Daring (Whatsapp Group, Google Classroom Dan Zoom Meeting) Di Smp Mbs Al Amin Bojonegoro. *Cendekia*, 12(2), 161–178.
- Kesumawati, F. (2018). Hubungan Antara Karakteristik, Tingkat Kecemasan, dan Ketergantungan dengan Penerimaan Diri Pasien Keterbatasan Gerak Akibat Stroke di RSUD Koja Jakarta Utara. *Journal Scientific Solutem*, 1(1).
- Mahbubah, L., Mastuhah, M., Nisa, S., Laili, S. N., & Mudmainnah, M. (2021). Kreatifitas Guru Pai Dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Siswa. *Tarbawi*, 9(02), 1–12.
- Martínez Martínez, J. M., & Tudela Sancho, A. (2020). Interactions between virtual spaces and schools: A collective case study. *Future Internet*, 12(12), 217.
- Nikmatin, Z. (2016). Hubungan pola asuh orang tua dengan agresifitas anak (studi empiris pada anak agresif usia 5-6 tahun di TK segugus VI Kecamatan Manyar Kabupaten Gresik). Universitas Negeri Malang.
- Nitte, Y. M., & Bulu, V. R. (2020). Pemetaan Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah Dasar se-Kota Kupang. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran*, 6(1), 38–47.
- Parma, P., Singgih, A., & Amin, A. (2023). Inovasi Dalam Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam untuk Meningkatkan Karakter dan Etika Siswa. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(6), 7208–7219.
- Rosad, A. M. (2019). Implementasi pendidikan karakter melalui manajemen sekolah. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan*, 5(02), 173–190.
- Sari, S. P., & Bermuli, J. E. (2021). Pembentukan Karakter Tanggung Jawab Siswa pada Pembelajaran Daring Melalui Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan*

- Pembelajaran*, 7(1), 110. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v7i1.3150>
- Sulastri, D., Maula, L. H., & Uswatun, D. A. (2020). Pemanfaatan platform digital dalam pembelajaran online selama masa pandemi Covid-19 di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 11(02), 219–229.
- Yuliani, E., & Saputri, R. K. (2021). Perbandingan Penggunaan Platform Google Classrom dan Grup Whatsapp Dalam Pembelajaran Online Selama Pandemi Covid-19. *Jurnal Educatio Fkip Unma*, 7(1), 238–243.