

The Challenges of Educators in Post-Pandemic Moral Improvement

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ABSTRACT

The current situation and condition of the Covid-19 pandemic have affected the system of human life, especially in the field of education. Education that was originally implemented with a face-to-face system in schools had to turn into an online or distance learning system. Online learning actually makes students experience a moral decline because educators cannot provide moral education directly. In the learning that is carried out, educators are more inclined to the success or achievement of subject competencies, resulting in a lack of attention to moral education. This study aims to find out what moral education is, the urgency of post-pandemic moral education and an analysis of the challenges of educators in improving morals after the pandemic. This research applied a qualitative method with a literature review approach. The data were obtained through reference books, journals, and previous studies that have a relationship with what the author is doing.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the human needs, along with the need for clothing, food, and housing. Education is actually an effort taken by humans to change behavior so that humans become better and more knowledgeable. Education given by a person is a learning process, and the result is a positive change in human life. The impact can be felt not only personally but also by the community around the individual (Khaironi, 2017). Therefore, the existence of educated people is, of course, very important and very calculated and not to be underestimated. This shows the participation of educated people in community activities and organizations.

In social life, everyone is required values and norms. Value is considered meaningful as motivation in all behavior and actions of a person. So, a person's actions and attitudes can reflect that person's character. On the other hand, a norm is a set of provisions to control the bonds between members of society. These two things are a benchmark for the occurrence of positive behavior and behavior in life (Saifuddin & Hanik, 2020). These two aspects are then embodied through actions called morals.

Moral education, or the same as character education, is a good attitude or behavior that must be reflected in the hearts of students, which is then applied in the form of actions. In line with that, Mahmud (2014) explained that moral education is the main key in shaping human life towards civilization and a noble personality. Of course, in this case, educators have an important role in improving the morality of students, especially after the pandemic.

We all know that various countries, including Indonesia, are experiencing symptoms of the Covid-19 outbreak, which of course, has a huge impact on all aspects, including education. The pandemic caused all experiences and habits in the education sector to become dysfunctional. To continue teaching and learning activities, distance education is the only alternative for educational institutions (Blankenberger & Williams, 2020). Since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, all learning in Indonesia has shifted online. Based on government instructions through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), carrying out various educational adjustments that do not burden teachers and students but are full of personality strengthening values along with the growth of the Covid-19 emergency status. The most difficult aspect for students to achieve in online learning is attitude. Both social and spiritual attitudes are shown by noble character behavior as a result of learning and habituation taught in schools.

Online education is indeed very influential on the morale of students. Teachers should be able to make efficient educational strategies related to this moral

cultivation. If teachers always instil morals in online education, it can minimize the formation of moral degradation. However, in this online education, teachers are more indifferent to the transformation of moral values in students. They are more likely to be concerned with what they teach than conveying or inserting the moral messages being taught (Saifuddin & Hanik, 2020). Furthermore, Prasetyani & Zafi explained that the absence of meetings between educators and students in the room caused this moral teaching to not work and face-to-face learning (Prasetyani & Az-Zafi, 2021).

Character education, ethics and morals are not new in the education system, and the urgency of character education is now increasing and becoming a concern as a reaction and problem, especially the moral decline of special students in the middle of the current pandemic (Fatiha & Nuwa, 2020). The phenomenon of moral decline in students can be seen or often encountered from the rampant cases of student behavior deviations such as theft, sexual harassment, fights, drugs, illegal racing, speech that should not be said and fun playing online games. The Covid-19 pandemic has posed certain moral dilemmas for everyone involved in education (Le Grange, 2020). This is, of course, a special concern for educators, parents, government and students themselves so that they always give extra attention and supervision to children. Those who become the foundation and hope of the nation in the future must be equipped with good morals.

Then according to the presentation above, this study seeks to provide input and solutions for post-pandemic moral improvement. The aims are to find out what moral education is, the urgency of post-pandemic moral education and an analysis of educators' challenges in moral improvement after the pandemic.

METHOD

The research focused on the challenges of educators in improving morality using a qualitative approach with the type of literature review. According to Ufatin (2015: 24), qualitative research is research that is intended to understand what phenomena are experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and others, holistically and descriptions in the form of words and language. This method is a study that investigates or critically examines knowledge, ideas, or findings that are academically oriented and formulates theoretical and methodological contributions on a particular topic. Data obtained from this study through reference books, journals and previous research results have a relationship or continuity with what the author did and was taken over the past ten years. The data obtained by the authors were then analyzed to obtain discussion and research conclusions. The nature of this research is descriptive analysis, which

regularly describes the data and provides understanding and explanations so that the reader can understand them.

Result and Discussion Moral Education

Character, morals, and ethics always adorn human life in all aspects of everyday human life. The terms and meanings of *akhlak*, character, morals and ethics are often used interchangeably. At first glance, these four terms have the same meaning or understanding. However, if studied from the root (origin) of the word, barometer, philosophy, and application of these four terms can be distinguished. These four terms are quite interesting to study, considering that these four terms talk about good and bad, right and wrong, or what should be done and what should be left behind. However, each of these terms can be distinguished.

This difference is based on the argument that the meaning of each of these terminologies, when associated with the word education, means that character education is more comprehensive. As for moral and ethical education, it tends to convey the right values and wrong values that rely on the norms of society. Meanwhile, moral education aims not only to form a positive personality for the child. It is more towards the realization of the child's mental attitude (Reksiana, 2018).

Moral education is the basis of character education. Moral education further shapes oneself and affirms himself so that one can be called a moral person. Moral education and character education have something in common because they both set values. Freedom as part of individual appearance to perfect oneself is based on moral values that are getting deeper and more qualified (Arifin, 2016). Of course, in forming or fortifying themselves to have strong morals, a strong motivation is needed. Rest in Gurusamy & Thambu says that students must have moral motivation to take moral actions by prioritizing moral principles and avoiding useless problems (Gurusamy & Thambu, 2018).

According to Syaparuddin & Elihami, morality is also the embodiment of ethical values, depending on the person. This moral assessment of human actions include all livelihoods, in this case, the human relationship to His creator, to oneself, to society and to the natural surroundings. Human actions are judged morally if the action is based on moral awareness. Therefore, ethical values become guidelines for human behavior and actions in carrying out daily life. These ethical values are normative and human behavior leads to them (Syaparuddin & Elihami, 2019).

In the relation between morals and *akhlak*, Rohendi said that morals and *akhlak* are a unity that cannot be separated because they have a mutually bound

relationship. It is explained that moral education is an effort to bring towards the realization of an inner attitude that encourages the birth of good behavior in a person (Rohendi, 2016) spontaneously. This good behavior must be cultivated from a young age so that in society, this moral behavior can be felt because there has been guidance or moral cultivation from an early age. According to Craig & Oja, individuals who have true morals will: 1) be responsible for the decisions and actions that have been taken, 2) commit to moral principles, 3) prioritize moral values in all actions, 4) prevent negative events that provide personal benefits, 5) have the attitude to act based on moral and ethical elements and 6) feeling always supervised by God (Gurusamy & Thambu, 2018).

Moral education is also very influential on the formation of the character of students, as research conducted by Ahmad Rifa'i showed that there is a positive and significant effect of Moral Education on Character Building at SMP Manba'ul Ulum West Jakarta. This is evidenced by the results of the correlation coefficient (r_{y1}) of 0.835 and the strength of influence (coefficient of determination) R^2 of 0.697 or 69.7%. Simple regression shows the regression equation $Y = 24.795 + 0.864 X_1$, which means that each increase in one unit of moral education score will affect the increase in student character formation scores of 0.864 (Tenrere et al., 2020).

The Urgency of Moral Education in a Time of Pandemic

Today the flow of technology and information development cannot be dammed in the midst of society. Globalization brings people to the demands of increasingly high age. These situations and conditions inevitably have an impact on the mobility of people's lives. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic is happening all over the world. Of course, this has a significant impact on the pace of life in all aspects. This impact can be felt in various sectors of society, including in the teaching and learning process. Education in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic actually experienced a decline in moral education for students, and this was due to the lack of planting carried out by educators in the learning process. Schools that are supposed to be placed for the transformation of the cultivation and learning of moral values are constrained by the online learning system. So, in this pandemic period, every educator has a responsibility for the moral education of students. Learning that uses an online system is a challenge for educators to keep paying attention to the delivery of moral values for students, not only focusing on achieving the competencies of the subjects being taught. In contrast, the task of educators is to improve the morale of students. As explained by Surur (2010), the task of educators is to help children reach a high stage of moral development (moral perfection).

Attitude development in students during the Covid-19 pandemic faces many obstacles due to major cultural changes around the world. Strengthening student competencies is needed in the implementation of education. With a variety of personalities and different moral values from each student, appropriate learning methods and media are needed so that students' morals are maintained to resist changes in culture and student behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic (Santoso et al., 2020). So actually, moral education in the midst of the current pandemic is not only carried out by educators but also must be supported by the community and also parents, who in particular have a major contribution to the development of students. This is reinforced by the statement of Cahyaningrum et al., who provide real examples that can simply be done by parents and the community in the midst of the current limitations. It is one of the important things to improve children's morale in order to overcome changes in student behavior and attitudes in everyday life (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017).

The true function of education is as a forum for developing the identity of students in terms of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, and all of this can be developed through moral education by educators. Jalaluddin & Hartati (2020) explains three important reasons for implementing moral education in schools, namely: 1) the need for good morals to become an integral part of humans which includes a deep mind, heart and quality desires such as honesty, politeness, sensitivity, tenacity, perseverance, and moral encouragement. Strong character to be able to work with love as a sign of maturity in life, 2) school is a better and more conducive place to carry out the learning process, and 3) moral education is very useful for developing quality human resources for society with integrity.

Analysis of Educators' Challenges in Post-Pandemic Moral Improvement

Before the Covid-19 pandemic hit Indonesia, teaching and learning activities (KBM) was carried out in a school. Schools are places for students to carry out activities, but now moral education must be done through an online learning system. According to Moore, Dickson & Galyen, "online learning is learning that uses the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring up various types of learning interactions" (Moore et al., 2011). Read more about Gikas & Grant, quoted by Firman & Rahayu (2020) argues that "online learning in its implementation requires the support of mobile devices such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops that can be used to access information anywhere and anytime."

Indeed, educators have a very important role in moral improvement, not only the responsibility of religious education teachers but also the responsibility of all

teachers in the institution because teachers are “guided and imitated” by example and imitated. In addition, the role of parents is also very necessary for moral improvement. Parents must always be sensitive to the changes and behavior of their children. In its implementation, the teacher can link or insert moral education into the subjects being taught, such as giving an understanding of commendable attitudes and encouraging students not to carry out immoral activities.

Moral education is very helpful for students to grow themselves and get along with the community. Morality is a self-improvement decision. This is because after morality is formed within one's self, one can explain all activities to oneself, others, and especially to God Almighty. Moral issues are problems that affect people everywhere, in both developed and underdeveloped societies, because the moral corruption of one person disturbs the peace of another (Sinulingga, 2016).

During this pandemic, a lot of moral declines occur among teenagers who are students. In print or electronic media, we always find crimes committed by teenagers such as smoking, sexual harassment, brawls, gambling, illegal racing and even the use of illegal drugs. Coupled with the rise of negative content that is easily accessible via the internet and also social media. This indicates that there is a moral decline in the midst of a pandemic situation, so the contribution of teachers and parents here is very influential. Indeed, teachers and parents must also think about the concept of formal education that must be done in an effort to prevent moral decline.

In the development of this moral development, there are several supporting factors in the development of a positive atmosphere at school as well as in relation to the family environment, especially in terms of the moral development described by Jalaluddin & Hartati (Jalaludin & Hartati, 2020), including:

1. Participation factor: if teachers or parents do not give children the opportunity to express their ideas and feelings or are too controlling, it can hinder the emotional development that is needed to work together with others.
2. Leadership factor: leadership is a dynamic process that develops. Not only teachers and parents but also children have a big role to play. There are two functions for groups to function effectively: the task function and the social-emotional function. The task function helps the group achieve academic goals, and the social function helps maintain unity and increase intimacy.
3. The friendship factor: the group of children must be guided to act constructively and productively. Children act non-constructive and unproductive when schools and families are filled with fear, violence and

suspicion. An atmosphere that does not foster creativity and productivity is characterized by friendship rather than malice.

4. Norms: norms are provisions that affect the involvement of children in work and the quality of interpersonal bonds. School and family rules must be flexible, as there are many comparisons between each child. The sporty class and family atmosphere lead to a tolerant treatment of comparisons of people.
5. *Cohesiveness*: in other words, it is the joy of group members to stay in the group. School or family cohesion refers to the child's feelings towards all school friends, all school members, or all family. Group members who are united are loyal to the group and tend to pay more attention to group members' feelings, such as the feelings of school teachers and friends and the feelings of all families at home.

With the development of moral education carried out by educators and parents, later an attitude and noble values will be formed as described by Abdul Basir written by Laksana (2015), such as 1) the character of God's love and all of His creation, 2) independence and responsibility, 3) honesty and integrity, 4) respect and courtesy, 5) generous, humble. And like to help, 6) confident and principled, 7) form leadership spirit, 8) kind and reliable, and 9) character of tolerance, peace, and unity.

In this moral improvement, the moral education taught later must emphasize the formation of basic potentials such as 1) building faith, 2) cultivating morals, 3) education based on interests and talents, and 4) education based on prayer *riyadha* (Jahroh & Sutarna, 2016). Moral education is a very important aspect and plays an important role in determining the realm that determines the sustainability of a nation, including Indonesia, although in practice implementing this moral education is not easy to implement. So there must be synergy and collaboration between teachers, parents and also the community for the realization of a characterized society.

The rise of cases the immorality that occurred among students indicated that there was a decline in morale, especially during the pandemic. Coupled with the lack of parental participation in supervising their children, there are so many cases such as *klitih*, theft, brawls and the motorcycle gang that is troubling the community. Therefore, the important task is to master education in accordance with what is expected and desired by society. Further adapting behavior to social expectations without being constantly directed or monitored. This is why the role of parents, educators, and the community is very much needed in moral improvement during and after the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Basically, the Covid-19 pandemic has an impact on all sectors, especially in the education sector. Education, previously a learning system carried out offline at school during the pandemic, had to proceed through online learning. Online learning actually makes students experience a moral decline because educators cannot provide moral education directly. In the learning process, educators focus more on the success or achievement of subject competencies. This results in the absence of direct moral education by educators. Moral education can only be obtained through religious education subjects, which we know are not necessarily sufficient for moral improvement. In addition, the role of parents here is also very large, but parents rarely pay attention to the condition of their children. Parents may be busier and more concerned with their work than the moral development of their children. In addition, the rapid development of technology has resulted in children being more inclined to play technology such as online games rather than using their devices to learn or do more positive things. So, this is a challenge for educators in improving the morale of students. It is hoped that this moral education can be carried out by all subject teachers and not only by religious teachers. Moreover, in the post-pandemic learning process, cooperation from all parties is needed to stabilize the psychological condition of students to be ready to learn face-to-face again. That way, the moral education process will run more effectively.

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