

## STRATEGY IN IMPLEMENTING CHARACTER BUILDING DURING THE ONLINE LEARNING

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**Abstract.** *The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all aspects of life, including the learning system. Learning is done online in most schools. When online learning is implemented, there are difficulties in building the characters of students. This paper aims to describe the strategy in implementing character building during online learning. Method: This paper is a narrative literature review. Articles were searched from Science Direct and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were research and review articles. Exclusion criteria were unavailable full-text and not peer-reviewed articles. The results of the literature review revealed that strategy in implementing character building during online learning can be done by implementing open discussion forums and homeroom communication during online learning. Teachers and parents should collaborate to motivate students. OSIS as a student organization can also be used as a special tool for building character among students. In conclusion, building characters need collaboration from students, teachers, and parents. The media can be OSIS, open discussion forum, and homeroom communication.*

**Keywords:** Character building; COVID-19 pandemic; Online learning; Strategy.

### A. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all aspects of life. The first case of COVID-19 infection in Indonesia came from the 31-year-old woman who met a Japanese citizen at a dance club. From the first case, other cases grew quickly until they became pandemic in the world (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected all sectors of life, including the learning systems (Bowdle & Munoz-Price, 2020). Learning is done online in schools in the world, including Indonesia. This policy is taken to reduce the possibility of infection. When online learning is implemented, there are difficulties in building the characters of students (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

Before the pandemic, schools are considered as the ideal places for learning skills and knowledge. However, schools need to develop the character of the students. It is hard to be implemented during online learning. The technology mastery and infrastructure limitations make online learning more difficult. There is a dilemma among students and teachers because building characters in online learning needs special strategies and techniques (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020). There are also problems in online learning itself due to less infrastructure availability. These problems are worsened due to the difficulties in character building during online studies (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Online learning in Indonesia was implemented with the help of some learning applications such as google classroom, zoom, cisco webex, etc. Online learning should create a system that facilitates interactivity, connectivity, and flexibility (Rahmah et al., 2021). Therefore, there might be some ways and strategies to build the character of the students by the online learning system.

This paper aims to describe the strategy in implementing character building during online learning.

## **B. METHOD**

This paper is a narrative literature review. Articles were searched from Science Direct and Google Scholar. Inclusion criteria were research and review articles. Exclusion criteria were unavailable full-text and not peer-reviewed articles. Articles were read twice to reduce the bias. The selected articles were narrated descriptively.

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The advantage of online learning is giving autonomous rights for the students to learn anywhere and anytime. Education has dynamic nature. It is developed based on the latest situation and the local environment. Online learning should be supported by fast internet connectivity and the ability of to implement information and communication technology from teachers and students (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020). Teachers and students should master the technology usage in online learning to reduce boredom and increase interest during learning (Syahri, 2021).

Online learning also connects students with learning resources without any physical contact. Interaction and collaboration can be built through online learning (Sadikin & Hamidah, 2020). There are three kinds of online learning, namely Web Supported E-Learning, blended learning, and fully online learning. The web contains learning objectives, summaries, assignments, and tests. Blended learning is done by mixing online learning and face-to-face learning systems (Rahmah et al., 2021).

A blended system is also called a hybrid system. Based on the study at Raudhatul Muttaqin Islamic Elementary School, Bekasi, face-to-face effectiveness in character building was 90.5%, hybrid 82%, and online 70.6%. However, further studies are needed to improve the learning system based on various approaches (Handayani & Utami, 2020).

The strategies to increase the interest of the students in the learning process are giving clear and brief material. The multimedia should be interesting and simple. Evaluation is regular. Students should feel fun learning together with their friends (Sutarto et al., 2020). One of the interesting methods in learning is augmented reality learning media. A 4-D model was developed for learning acid-base during learning in public senior high school in North Toraja Regency. The result revealed that this method was feasible and effective (Paembonan & Ikhsan, 2021).

There are some obstacles that arise during online learning. Those obstacles are a lack of awareness, interest, and training in online learning. Other challenges are lack of interaction and spirit. Some teachers only give assignments without assistance and explanation. However, not all parents can accompany the children in the learning process due to work (Rahmah et al., 2021). Cultural, attitudes, and mindset are some issues that need to be developed during online learning (Livari et al., 2020).

A character is a reference for interaction among people. The good characters are described as respect, cooperation, happiness, love, responsibility, tolerance, and unity. The character is a complex thing to be resolved. The character can be affected by any situation, environment, physical, and non-physical factors. The character also describes a nation. It is also as an identifier and differentiator among nations. Therefore, it is important to include the character in the educational process. The character refers to knowledge, attitude, and skills. The character determines the quality of human resources. The qualified human resources depend on the educational process (Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020).

Character education is an important thing to be considered during online learning. The dream is to build generations who are responsible and compassionate. When children have been used to ethical values, good habits will continue in the future. Respect others, honest, and discipline are some good characters. It is a bit difficult to implement character building during online learning. The impact of character building will be longer on the children's morals. Character building can be carried out in families and schools. Teachers and parents can be role models for children (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

A study in SMA Negeri 20 Bandung showed that an online learning system could run well when it was planned and attractively packaged. Curricular, habituation, and extracurricular activities can include character building during the programs. However, it was difficult to be done

during online learning. Integration activity is one of the alternatives to build character during online learning. Praying before learning and greetings can be implemented in online learning to build character (Rahmah et al., 2021).

The implementation of character-building values during online learning can be integrated with the learning material. The values include religious values, health, tolerance, caring, hard work, responsibility, and like to read. Responsibilities of delivering the character building for children are shared between teachers and parents (Daga, 2021).

In general, there are five characters to be developed, namely personal, national, social, intellectual, and natural piety (Hidayatullah, 2021). In detail, those characters can be described as following (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020):

- a. Discipline is important for character building because it affects the commitment to the goals.
- b. Persistence is also important. It means students can study diligently without any force from other people.
- c. Resilience means the patience and courage to do new things.
- d. Accountability  
Accountability means although parents give independence, children should be consistent and responsible in their words and acts. This character makes the children can be trusted in their future life.
- e. Modesty  
Modesty means children should not be too proud in social interaction. They should not underestimate others because everyone has own their strengths and weaknesses.
- f. Manners.  
Manners is related to behaving well. Children should be taught how to select the good manners than the bad ones.
- g. Honesty.  
Children should be taught to live honestly.
- h. Love of Allah.  
Religious activities should be taught from early childhood.

### **1. The Parents' Role in Character Building**

Character education is an important thing to be considered during online learning. The dream Parents have critical roles in developing children's character because they know the children's characteristics since baby. It is good to spend time during online learning with children. Parents can use this opportunity to manage the children's learning method and give character education (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

The steps of building characters are instilling the concept of kindness and persistence by giving real actions. Persistence is related to working hard and never giving up attitude. Various examples can be given to the children. Telling stories about good characters is also a good habit. Children can be told about the good reasons for doing good deeds and the positive meaning inside. Gratitude and punishment should be given proportionally based on their attitude and performance (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

Character building is informal education, but it is the most important one to be developed. Progress can be assessed by continuous monitoring. Daily activities are useful to control discipline. The activity is started from morning wake-up, then it is continued to school hours, eating, and speaking habits. A reward can be given when the children are doing well. Encouragement is important for children (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

### **2. Teachers, parents, and environment have the roles in shaping the children's character**

Children spend longer time at home than in school, therefore character-building needs to be strengthened at home. Children need to socialize with good characters. The environmental factors shape the children's character. Children tend to imitate their idols by singing and acting. They get all of the idols' news online. Therefore, teachers and parents should collaborate. When children are accustomed to watching obscene dances, fights, or dirty talks, this condition will

deteriorate the character building. The bad characters are usually transmitted among friends. This behavior has negative effects (Erviana, 2021; Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

The media development affected the children's behavior and characters. There are positive and negative impacts of media. Therefore, a filter is needed when letting children watch the internet, television, or any entertainment video. Character is associated with real action during daily activities (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

Character education is in line with education goals at first, children might feel burdensome in fulfilling the duty of being good, but they will get used to it after a long time. The punishment should not be violence for the children. Parents may keep their favorite toys or games for a couple of days as punishment. Emotional intelligence is important besides intelligence quotient. Emotional intelligence is important to tackle all challenges in the future (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020). Character education grows good personalities for students that are important in their future life. A sign of good character is students can ask independently for learning material during online learning (Intania & Utama, 2020).

In addition, students can ask for a consultation with the teacher about learning subjects at night. During this time, teachers can assess and build character also. A sense of responsibility is shown when the students try to finish the assignment on time. Parents should not cover up the mistakes of their children during the character-building process (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Parents' role is very essential to motivate their children during online learning. Group of homeroom among teachers, students, and parents should be made for building communication. Parents can be good partners for teachers because parents accompany the learning process at home. However, this double role is difficult when parents' work is busy and they must take care of other siblings (Rahmah et al., 2021).

### **3. The signs of character deterioration**

There are some signs of character deterioration as follows (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020):

- a. violence among teenagers
- b. deterioration of languages
- c. self-destructive behavior (drug use, free sex)
- d. reduced work ethic
- e. lower respect for others

Character formation is associated with the right brain function. It is related to knowledge, feeling, and action. Habituating the good characters in daily life should be done explicitly. Children should know the good, reasoning, feeling, and acting the good. Children are taught the reasons to be good. The consequences of any action are explained, so children will choose the good acts every day. Kindness is practiced when doing good deeds. Understanding can increase the growth of the characters (Ruzaini & Nurhalin, 2020).

The aggressive behavior among students is associated with moderate intellectual disability. There is no difference between male and female students. Intervention should be provided at private and public schools (Jacob et al., 2021). The negative behaviors when using a smartphone for learning are addicted to online games, saying bad words, and cannot concentrate on learning. Therefore, the usage of smartphones in learning should be accompanied by parents (Wajdi et al., 2021).

### **4. Challenges in Character Building during Online Learning**

Challenges of building the character during online learning are some students consider online learning merely as formality and only approximately 25% of students are serious about online learning. In general, critical thinking and character building are needed for the future career. Therefore, teachers and parents should cooperate to overcome the challenges together (Rahmah et al., 2021). Some important competencies need to be developed, namely Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaborative, and Creativity. These competencies can be implemented in a discussion, extracurricular activities, and debate sessions (Partono et al., 2021).

Discussion is important to allow social interaction among students. The students improve critical thinking skills during discussion. Collaborative group work is an opportunity to practice

planning, negotiating, implementing, and evaluating. Critical thinking skill is correlated to the ability in making a decision based on rational judgments, evidence, and situation (Saekawati & Nasrudin, 2021).

## **5. The School and Teachers' Role in Character Building**

The OSIS (Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah) is one way to develop character building during online learning. OSIS is an organization that consisting of students that develop their creativity and talents in many activities. Teachers and students can collaborate through many programs of character building through OSIS (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Giving open questions to be discussed during online classes is one strategy to increase the students' competence and adaptation. Problem-solving cases are better to be given based on cases or daily life examples. However, motivation and courage decline during online learning. Gestures, touch, and feeling are hard to be observed during online learning. Stimulating quiet students to be active is a challenge for the teacher (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Making a learning group for collaboration can be used as one alternative way of building character. Students learn to build tolerance and appreciation. They need to respect differences. However, in many cases, the project is done only by one person in a group. This is not an ideal condition, because the goal of forming a learning group is to create an area for growing and developing. Teachers can stimulate the students by saying that creativity will determine the grades. The initiative of the students is also appreciated. Online competition can be held to encourage the students' motivation. However, this activity should be supported by active parents, otherwise, it will not work well (Rahmah et al., 2021).

The abrupt changes from face-to-face learning into online learning force the teachers to be more creative and innovative. Teachers should try to understand students and give encouragement. Increasing the skills in operating computers and doing presentations are good ways to boost the students' interest. Interactive applications (quizzes) can be used to enhance interaction (Hamid et al., 2020; Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020).

The subject of learning will be meaningful when it is applied in daily life. The most difficult and important subject should be delivered in happy and interesting mode. In this way, students will remember the subject meaning for a longer time. Learning should be fun. During the teaching process, teachers also learn. The reciprocal condition can develop the characters of students and teachers. Students may give updated information to the teachers. Teachers can become facilitators. Recent cases should become the topic of learning. For example, the teachers can use the COVID-19 pandemic as the topic of discussion in the classroom (Rahmah et al., 2021).

The method of learning is better student-centered than teacher-centered. This is important to make students ready for facing real-life after graduation. The habit of a student-centered learning system is integrated into the subjects of learning. Case studies and role-playing are some examples of the assignments that can be given to the students. During the discussion, teachers can observe the character of the students. Counseling is given to handle complaints and criticisms. The counselling can be in the form of a questionnaire, direct interview, or any form. These counseling methods are important to make all the parties comfortable. Otherwise, there will be a lot of students who feel stressed and disappointed. Therefore, guidance and counseling will be provided. The learning process should give a good impression to students and stimulate the students' critical thinking. The strategies should be flexible based on the students' needs (Rahmah et al., 2021; Saman et al., 2021).

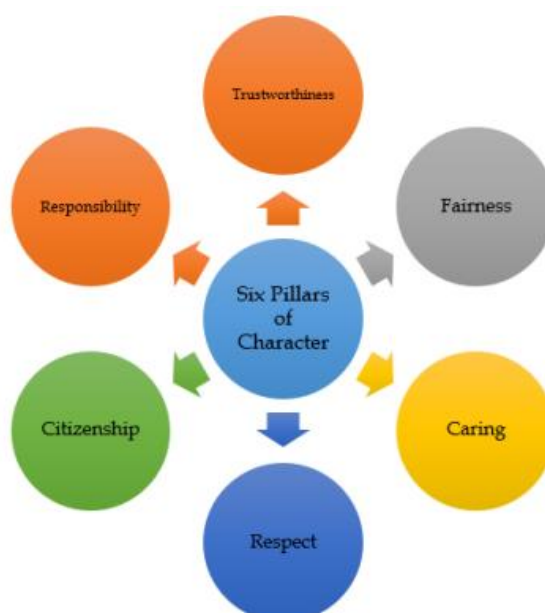
There are some evaluations for online learning. Those evaluations are there should be flexibility for teachers in using the suitable platform to teach, using the platforms alternately to prevent boredom, the sum of assignment should be limited to give students some chances to review the material, and students should be given the chance to ask question and discussion. Students can become moderators in a discussion. There are some topics to be explored during the discussion, such as Kartini Day, COVID-19, mental health, etc. Students can discuss any public figures or heroes who are inspiring and have a good impression. On this occasion, students learn how to express their opinion and lead a good discussion. Social service, Instagram competition, drawing, or storytelling competitions can be held (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Intelligence is not the only goal of learning, but education should emphasize the morale of students. It is important for preparing the students to enter society. Character education is as important as intelligence education. Teaching virtue is essential because it is critical to shape the students' character. Building a smart generation is needed for the future of nature civilization. Good character education will change people's lives in the future (Rahmah et al., 2021).

The character is related to personal characteristics and behavior. It is considered good character when the behavior is within the normal values and norms. A character is relatively stable. It is hard to be changed in a short time. Character is the accumulation of thinking, feeling, and intention. It also affects the quality of life and daily activities (Rahmah et al., 2021).

Six pillars form the basis of character building as it is shown in Figure 1. Those pillars are as follows (Rahmah et al., 2021):

- a. Trustworthiness is important to shape an integrated and honest person.
- b. Caring is social sensitivity in taking care of the surrounding.
- c. Respect
- d. Citizenship is associated with obeying the laws and regulations
- e. Responsibility is related to discipline and sincerity in doing anything.
- f. Fairness



**Figure 1.** Six pillars of character building (Rahmah et al., 2021).

The character building will be easier if the teachers understand the students' backgrounds. A good character is needed to survive in a difficult situation. A teacher should try to become a good role model. A good teacher is sincere. He/she is wise in delivering knowledge. The responsibility of the teacher is in cognitive, psychomotor, and affection sides. There should be reformation in the learning process. All of the teachers' strategies and programs should be supported by parents and the community. Otherwise, it will be useless. Character building can be used as a tool to conquer problems. Meaningful learning is accompanied by character-building (Rahmah et al., 2021). Integration can be implemented by giving character values in every learning subject for the students. Synergy should be done among parents and teachers (Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020).

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

The strategy in implementing character building during online learning can be done by implementing an open discussion forum and homeroom communication during online learning. Teachers and parents should collaborate to motivate students. OSIS as a student organization can also be used as a special tool for building character among students. In conclusion, building

characters need collaboration from students, teachers, and parents. The media can be OSIS, open discussion forum, and homeroom communication

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