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Implementation of Character Education Before and After The Covid-19 Pandemic: Obstacles, Challenges, and Solution

Sapriya¹, Acep Supriadi², Muhammad Arief Rakhman³, Retno Ayu Hardiyanti⁴, Sri Wahyuni Tanszil⁵, Tarekh Febriana Putra⁶

^{1,2,3,4} Study Program of Social Studies Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

^{5,6} Department Civic Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract— *Post-pandemic social change requires transformation in every element of education. Transfiguration in the structure of character education is one form of educational transformation. There are various differences and changes in the implementation of character education before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This article will present a comparison of the implementation of character education during face-to-face learning and distance learning. In the discussion, it will explore the analysis of the obstacles and challenges of character education, then propose a solution idea as a form of character education transformation. The approach used in this research is a mix method approach with descriptive and literature review analysis. The research subjects were students, teachers, and principals at SMPN 14 Bandung. The findings of this study in conclusions; 1) there are differences in student perceptions of the implementation of character education before and after the Covid-19 pandemic; 2) the habituation-based character education process becomes a promising alternative solution as an effort to transform the character education model.*

Keywords— *Character Education, Learning Models, Distance Learning*

Correspondence . tarekh.febriana11@gmail.com

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A. INTRODUCTION

The contextuality of achieving educational goals has been severely tested. The situation is growing with the existence of a social change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be interpreted that social change after the pandemic has the potential to cause an extreme social change or also known as *dynamic social impact*. Hengselmann (1996, p. 12) reveals that *dynamic social impact* is a condition that requires major changes to physiological conditions, motives, cognitions, beliefs, and

values in individuals as a result of the presence of a phenomenon or the actions of other individuals. In the context of character education, the change is in the aspect of understanding students, determining decision making on the implications of the character education model used.

Since the issuance of Government Regulation no. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards as amended by Government Regulation no. 32 of 2013, the process of implementing national education must be implemented by

functioning national education standards as the basis for planning, implementing, and supervising education in the context of realizing quality national education. In the context of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, national education standards were not implemented optimally. Graduate competency standards in terms of grade promotion, for example, during the pandemic learning period are no longer focused on complete curriculum achievements as a whole. According to the Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 1 In 2021 the final school exam (UAS) can be carried out in the form of a portfolio, assignments, offline and/or online tests, and other forms of activity determined by the education unit. This certainly affects changes in content standards, process standards, management standards and technical assessment standards.

Several situations and problems as described, it can be concluded that the implementation of education in general is not optimal. The implementation of character education which initially relied on several methods with direct interaction also experienced difficulties in adapting to this situation. This is because character education basically requires the involvement of optimal environmental interactions. As explained by Intania & Sutarna (2020, p. 130) who explain character education as something that students must always grow in themselves both within the school environment, family, and in the community. The process of internalizing character values is difficult to meet the appropriate and appropriate method. This has the potential to cause problems for the character situation of the students.

In some arguments, it cannot be denied that character education is in fact the responsibility of the school. Schools are the parties that have the most impact in developing character education curricula, because they are the bodies that hold the most authority on this matter. This argument is reinforced by the explanation of Milliren & Messer, M. H. (2009, p. 19) that the truth is that the job of developing

character is often relegated to the school counselor presenting a class on character once a month or the school adopting a “character” word of the week or month.

However, the problem as described is important to immediately get a response in the form of implementing good character education, especially considering the urgency of implementing character education. In any situation, character education must be a concern for every element of education, because character is part of the estuary of an educational goal. This statement is supported by several opinions. Character education as a way of adjusting the behaviors of the students, in order to become good citizens of the future (Hoge, 2002, p. 103). Respect and responsibility are two fundamental values schools should teach, along with such others as honesty, fairness, tolerance, cooperation, and self-discipline (Lickona, 1991, p. 119). The statement as explained above is sufficient to convince about the importance of implementing character education. By comparing the problems and the urgency of the existing problems, the authors take steps regarding the importance of character education transformation in formulating solutions to the ineffectiveness of character education during a pandemic

B. METHOD

This research uses approach *mix method*. The data analysis in this study is a qualitative analysis of the literature review and descriptive data analysis of quantitative research data. The literature review was conducted using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) method. From this definition, the PRISMA method goes through the workings of data processing as follows; 1) A systematic review is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review, and; 2) Statistical methods (meta-analysis) may or may not be used to analyze

and summarize the results of the included studies. Meta-analysis refers to the use of statistical techniques in a systematic review to integrate the results of included studies (Moher et al., 2009, p. 97).

In order to ensure that the data process is carried out properly, the researchers hereby determine several categories and procedures for taking only articles with good accreditation quality. Literature selection was carried out by limiting several qualifications for the needs of the article. Through this method, it provides limitations on the literature, so that the study will focus on topics that are important and relevant to the needs of research data. This can be an important role in solving problems by explaining, synthesizing, and assessing quantitative or qualitative evidence as reported (Ahmadi et al., 2018, p. 145). The following will explain how the process of selecting a literature review source is carried out in this study.

Search Strategies

Several topics were chosen to test the qualifications of articles, namely articles with relations on the topics of 'character education', 'models of character education', and 'the relationship between character education and the implementation of distance learning'. Researchers conducted a search on accredited journal pages. Among the search results were SAGE Journals

(3247), Google Scholars (193), Springer (6), Emerald Insight (2238), Routledge (316), Wiley Online Library (2264). The keywords used in the process of refining the article are 'character education', 'models of character education', and 'distance learning'. The articles searched through the selection stage were publications in the period October 2012 to October 2021. Using this search strategy, 46 articles were taken and put into the application of managing citation, Mendeley. Articles that have been collected are selected through a selection process based on the inclusion-exclusion criteria method.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To obtain scientific data with a good level of accuracy, inclusion-exclusion criteria are carried out. At this stage, the selection of articles is carried out to obtain the criteria for articles that are discussed more seriously. With this method, it will autonomously place a limit on articles that have qualifications and suitability with the research theme to be carried out. The qualitative criteria and feasibility test was carried out by making classes on the articles that had been collected. However, the controversy centers on how broad or narrow the selection process should be (Meline, 2006, p. 21). Technically, the following table will show the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as follows.

Table 1. The Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria in
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English 2. Publication time from August 2012 to August 2021 3. Empirical research published through international conferences and international journals 4. Related to the topic of character education, distance learning, models of character education. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using other than English 2. Publication time since before August 2012 Non-scientific-based articles, chapter reports, chapter book types 3. All scientific disciplines except in relation o of character education, distance learning, models of character education.

Based on the selection of existing articles, it produces a list of scientific literature, new (timely), empirical, published in an accredited academic publication system, and has a relationship with the topics studied in this study, namely character education, models of character education, and distance learning. During this stage, irrelevant articles have been removed. Overall, there are 17 articles that match the inclusion criteria and are relevant to this literature review research objectives.

Data Extraction and Analysis

The next stage after determining the literature to be studied is to extract and analyze the literature articles that have been determined to be studied. The data extraction includes a study of the aims and objectives of the research in the article. In addition, data analysis includes a review of the findings of the article, and practical implications. Analysis of the literature will be grouped from the types of existing articles. The criteria that then become a concern in the classification process as a form of analysis are the year of publication of the article, the context of the discussion in the article, the type of article whether it is a journal or proceedings. After analyzing and reviewing, data extraction and analysis was carried out on 17 articles with the formation of 1 international handbook, and 16 journal articles. The time limit for article publication is from August 2012 to August 2021. However, it is still carried out in accordance with the PRISMA method although choosing the right article requires a lot of time but because of its special structured nature of this method, it was sure that the most appropriate and relevant articles related to the subject of this literature review have been selected (Amelia et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the data analysis used in this study is also *Quantitative Data Analysis* (QDA). From QDA's inception, its developers compiled the best available

sensory practices and knowledge of human sensory measurement, and expected the method to evolve as practices and knowledge base grew (Stone et al., 2008, p. 112). This is in line with the aim of describing how the obstacles and challenges of implementing character education from an implementation point of view.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This section will describe how the process of data collection. The data that has been grouped will be presented specifically. The data groupings include the year of publication, the topics discussed, and the type of data collection. This grouping intends to objectively convey how the condition of the literature review is presented, to describe the actual conditions.

The frequency of articles published during the last several years

The articles reviewed in this discussion are 17 articles. This number represents 36.9% of the total articles that have been included in the search keywords of the journal portal as described in the search strategy section (**figure 1**).

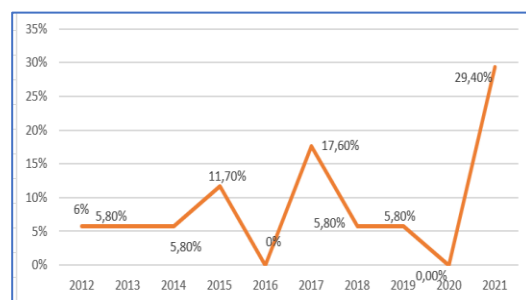


Figure 1. Frequency of articles based on publication year

The graph above provides an explanation of the distribution of the publication year data for each article. Significantly, the number of articles with the year of publication in 2021 dominates with a percentage of 29.40%. The second dominance is occupied by articles in publications in 2017 with a percentage of

17.60%. Furthermore, the distribution of publication years tends to be stable at 5.80%. Meanwhile, articles in 2016 were not included in the articles reviewed in the literature review process. The distribution of data by year as described is relevant to the needs of the article, to compare how the implementation of character education before and after 2019 (the year of the pandemic).

Articles distribution based on context

This section will provide guidance on the classification of articles based on the topics studied in each article. This section has a function to provide an understanding of what topics often appear as material for this literature review. It will be presented as follows.

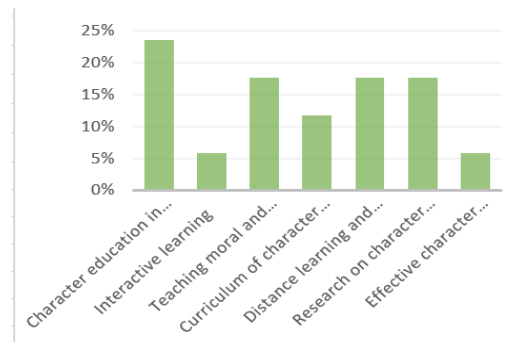
- Character education in schools (Tsai, 2012, p. 163); (Diggs & Akos, 2016, p. 4); (Singh, 2019, p. 11); (Jones et al., 2021, p. 17)
- Interactive learning (Brinkhurst et al., 2016, p. 7)
- Teaching morals and character (Van Fossen et al., 2021, p. 17); (Hyland, 2013, p. 129); (Althof & Berkowitz, 2014, p. 495)
- Curriculum of character education (Banicki, 2017, p. 30); (Dahlbeck, 2018, p. 921)
- Distance learning and character education (Aristeidou & Cross, 2021, p. 263); (Batdı et al., 2021, p. 67); (Cheng et al., 2017, p. 473)
- Research on character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2015, p. 341); (Clement & Bollinger, 2017, p. 119); (Serdyukov, 2021, p. 101)
- Effective character education (Berkowitz, 2015, p. 341)

The author will present the classification above through a graph distribution, to better describe the actual conditions as follows.

Figure 2. Article distribution based on context

Based on **Figure 2**, it can be concluded that the content in the articles

studied includes studies on character education in schools 24%. Interactive learning 6%. Teaching morals and character 18%. Curriculum of Character



Education 12%. Distance learning and character education 18%. Research on character education 18%. Effective character education 6%. The distribution of article types based on context with the above comparison shows a fairly even distribution.

DISCUSSION

Term and The Concept of Character Education

Character education is an educational concept that has been developing for a long time. As is known, that character education and moral education develop in tandem with the development of social studies and citizenship education. This development is in order to formulate answers to the development of character education. Snook (2007, p. 83) even describes how the beginning of value education was started in thinking about value needs in 1960 to 1970. In the following, the author will quote a statement in more detail.

“During the 1960s and 1970s there were new demands for what was variously called Moral Education; Personal, Social and Moral Education; Citizenship Education; and Human Development and Relationships. Among theorists there was an acute awareness of the problem of indoctrination and about the importance of “neutrality” or at least “impartiality” in the handling of moral and religious values”.

Some experts provide a definition of the concept of character education. The word character in ancient Greek means “to engrave,” which emphasizes the engraved traits will affect us to behave in certain manners. Character education is not a new idea. The idea of schooling as implanting virtues is as old as schooling itself (O’Sullivan, 2004, p. 87). We assume that if we talk about a character trait, like responsibility, for example, it will come to pass. Nothing is further from the truth. We assume that if we talk about a character trait, like responsibility, for example, it will come to pass. Nothing is further from the truth (Milliren & Messer, M. H. (2009, 23). The central goal of character education is the development of character in students. Therefore, before we address the research on effective character education, we address to consider what we mean by character and its development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2015, p. 343). Komalasari (2017, p. 107) defined character education as a habit so that in doing character formation is in desperate need of a community like family and school. Komalasari & Sapriya (2016, p. 109) confirm that character Education defines character aspects in two aspects: “character is a congenital condition that humans cannot reject” and “character is the ability of individuals to master these conditions”.

Models of Character Education

In the implementation dimension, character education is a part of contextual teaching. The meaning is, that character education is carried out with great attention to how and when the teaching is carried out. Character education certainly needs to be done by making students a center (*student centered approach*). The flexibility of student conditions and the environment is also an element that gets special attention in the implementation of character education. The contextuality of character education is carried out in order to achieve its actual goals. By minimizing deviations in methods and materials to the condition of students, it will further increase the possibility of

achieving a good character education program.

Singh (2019, p. 12) mentions, within the field of character education, there are numerous approaches to best practices discussed in a variety of ways. Singh's sentence can be interpreted, that in order to achieve a contextual character education system as described above, the experts provide a very broad range of character education models. There are several things that need to be considered in order to ensure a character education can achieve its goals. Both are relevant to expanded learning youth programs. School-wide Character Education Program Implementation Based upon research done on successful character education programs, organizations have formulated the best practices in implementing character development within the schools and community (Singh, 2019, p. 13).

Habituation as a Models of Character Education

Specifically, this article examines the concept of habituation as a model that has been objectively proven to be one of the effective models in the implementation of character education. Habituation becomes a model of character education that can pay attention to the good interaction between teachers and students. Habituation provides an alternative form of effective learning communication by involving students as a whole, but also maintaining the integrity of educational interactions through the involvement of teachers as directors.

In fact, John Dewey as an influential figure in character education defines character as the 'interpenetration of habits' and the effect of consequences of actions upon such habits. This behavioral orientation has an important legacy for the development of the field (Althof & Berkowitz, 2014, p. 498). The above statement further suggests that, in imlikatif, character education is associated with a process of habituation (*habituation*). The urgency of the relationship between character education and the habituation

process is very important by looking at Dewey's attention to the habituation process in the character education process.

Habituation is defined as a behavioral response decrement that results from repeated stimulation and that does not involve sensory adaptation/sensory fatigue or motor fatigue (Rankin et al., 2009, p. 135). In their research, Rankin et al., (2009, p. 137) showed that long-term habituation is likely to involve qualitatively different cellular mechanisms than those involved in short-term habituation, as well as a more prolonged time course.

Comparison of character education before and after the Covid-19 Pandemic

The development of science and technology has a great influence on society. One sector that is heavily influenced by the development of science and technology is the education sector. Implementatively, education is adaptive in accepting information disclosure, including the development of science and technology as a phenomenon. Education as an organized communication always develops its implementation in terms of improving the quality of education itself. In the context of contextual education, a good educational process is an educational process carried out in accordance with actual situations and conditions.

As the principle of contextual learning, character education needs to be carried out according to the needs and conditions of students and the environment. However, the contextuality of education at this time also needs to pay attention to more than just the condition of students. More complex than that, character education during the pandemic needs to pay attention to the curriculum situation, political policies, and education policies carried out by the government.

There are several differences in the implementation of character education before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The following will explain how the comparison of character education before and after the pandemic will be explained. This section will describe the comparison between opportunities and challenges such as what

happened to character education before and after the pandemic.

Some of the problems that are usually faced in character education before the pandemic include the problems of students' internal situations. Tsai (2012, p. 163) describes these problems range from the students showing defiance to the necessary authorities, stubbornly refusing, or rejecting the prescribed behavioral lessons of that period. This situation illustrates that the tendency of character education problems in the pre-pandemic period was related to the internal situation of students.

In a pandemic situation, the problems that arise are slightly developing, including as explained by (Aristeidou & Cross, 2021, p. 265) that acknowledging the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on distance learning students led us to investigate how the disruption has affected the frequency with which they engage in their study activities. The problem that arises is about how difficult it is for teachers to be able to monitor students in the character education process.

Students' perceptions of the implementation of character education after the pandemic also showed an unfavorable situation. The dominance of students views that the quality of character education implementation in terms of habituation, conditioning, and example is less than optimal during distance learning. Student perceptions said that the interaction of character education that was built was not optimal as it was implemented before the pandemic. The following will be explained through the graph in **Figure 3** below.

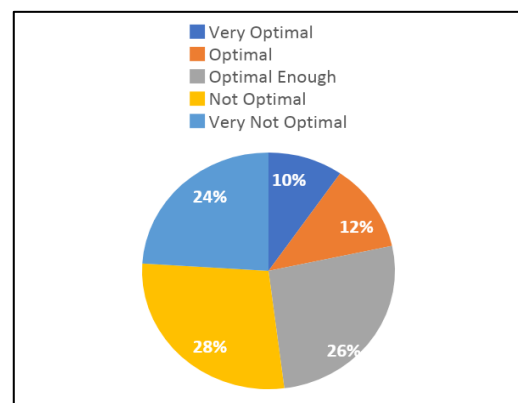


Figure 3. Students` Perception of The Character Education Process When Learning Distance

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that more than half of the students view that the implementation of character education is not optimal as it should be. This is because the role of interaction between teachers is less than optimal, and student achievement standards have declined in line with the pandemic situation. This situation illustrates that the problem of implementing character education needs special attention to be immediately transformed. Transformation of character education is needed to ensure that every goal of implementing moral and character education can be implemented, even in a pandemic situation.

After conducting several interviews with research subjects, there are several ideas that might be a solution to the problem of less than optimal character education during the pandemic, which are described in the next section.

Habituation: Solutions for implementing character education in a daily journal-based distance learning system

In fact, there are several alternatives for developing a character education model through a distance learning system. One option is to make the technology available through existing learning centers in some local learning centres. These local learning centers can be located in existing colleges or schools, or in several other places. However, this alternative has several weaknesses, including as described by Gallagher (in Bourdeau & Tony Bates, 2013, p. 369), among the weaknesses are as follows: 1) cost, much needed because each center must have learning tools, even in the form of software; 2) security, which technically if located in another place is difficult to protect against loss, theft or damage; 3) management, it is necessary to spend a lot of energy to control advanced reservations, thereby increasing administrative costs, and reducing the ease of student access; 4)

flexibility, which allows a lot of regulation due to the process of adapting to services. However, these developments must of course be in accordance with the rules of the existing character education model. In this study, the authors found one implementation of a fairly good idea, namely the development of a habituation model in character education in the distance learning process.

It is undeniable that habituation is, in fact, part of a character education model which in some situations is considered effective to do. Traditionally, habituation has been distinguished from sensory adaptation and motor fatigue by the process of dishabituation; however this distinction can also be made by demonstrating stimulus specificity (the response still occurs to other stimuli) and/or frequency-dependent spontaneous recovery (more rapid recovery following stimulation delivered at a high frequency than to stimulation delivered at a lower frequency) (Rankin et al., 2009, p. 139). The situation as described above provides an understanding that conceptually habituation can indeed be an effective character education model.

Balkenius (2000, p. 171) mentions although theories of habituation and conditioning have originally been developed to explain the learning of motor and emotional responses. This is very closely related to the implementation of character education. That character education is structured to build the mentality and response of students who can show a positive attitude, so that it becomes a habit that forms the inherent character of students. The next question is, how to implement the habituation model in character education during a pandemic or distance learning?

There are various models that can be used to answer the above questions. However, one model that can be a solution is daily journal-based habituation. In this model, students are involved in the evaluation situation of the implementation of character education. The involvement of students with supervision, control, and guidance from the teacher allows a character

education to be carried out interactively. The interactive learning situation will further enhance the possibility of successful character education being implemented. Technically, character education through this habituation journal model can be done online, involving the application of existing learning technology.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded several things. First, it turns out that there are differences in the situation of implementing character education before, during, and after character education. The difference concerns how students' perceptions show that character education according to them is considered less effective when online-based learning. In fact there are various solutions that can be done to be able to answer this problem. The essence of the solution is to build a contextual character learning. So the second point is that one of the solution models that can be an alternative answer to the problem of implementing character education is daily journal-based habituation that can create interactive character learning between teachers and students

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