

## Strengthening Character Education Through E-Book During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore on strengthening character education through e-books for online or distance learning in the times of COVID-19. The present study employs a descriptive qualitative with the aim of being able to provide clear, objective, systematic, analytical descriptions and information, and critical aspect of Character Education-Based E-book for learning during the Covid 19 era in higher education. There were several steps such as collecting the required data, then classification and description were carried out. The sources of data in this study were government policies, books and articles concerning the implementation of distance learning during the covid 19 period and character education. The method used to collect research data is in the form of literary data that has been selected, searched, presented and analyzed. The application of Indonesian e-books based on character education is a solution that can be done to overcome the problems of character education during the COVID-19 era, especially regarding the use of diction and literature. In this e-book character values can be inserted in the introduction, materials, and assignments to provide character education to students. Hence, the e-book was developed based on the curriculum and the values of character education. E-books are provided in online learning and can be studied by students from their homes both online and offline. In order to draw students' attention, the e-book must be designed to be visually attractive so that the material in it can be learned and easily understood by students.

**Keywords:** E-book, Character Education, Covid-19, Higher Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to improve along with the times, but at the end of 2019 it received a severe test with the outbreak of the corona virus (covid 19) originating from the Wuhan area, China. The policy under the new captain of the Ministry of

Education and Culture is in the public spotlight, the extent to which the government is prepared to deal with COVID-19, especially in the realm of education. Considering how dangerous this virus is if face-to-face learning continues (Churiyah, 2020). The Ministry of Education and Culture had implemented a new policy, namely an independent curriculum for all levels of education, but the virus outbreak had not yet been fully implemented, so this policy had to be adapted to these conditions.

Distance learning is the solution to this problem (Azzahra, 2020), so the Ministry of Education and Culture had closed learning in schools and universities before finally implementing a learning from home policy (Rulandari, 2020). Learning from home was expected to be able to minimize the spread of covid 19, but learning continues. The uneven distribution of public facilities and the ability of students to provide the tools needed to study from home create new problems in this policy, such as laptop/smartphone devices, internet quotas, online learning facilities, and online learning materials. This problem is experienced by teachers and students.

It is undeniable that there are still teachers who are technology stuttering, but that is not the problem that is the focus. The real problem is the availability of learning resources that can be used by teachers and students in this online learning. Meanwhile, for online learning portals, teachers have used free platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, and social media such as YouTube, Facebook and WhatsApp. Although social media is not recommended because of the many distractions that can be obtained during learning (Manca et al, 2016). However, it can be an alternative considering the use of social media which is more familiar to teachers and students. Online learning or e-learning indicates that not all students will be successful in online learning. This is due to the factors of the learning environment and the characteristics of students. (Nakayama M, Yamamoto H, 2007)

According to Purwanto, et al (2020) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, namely: students feel forced to study remotely without adequate facilities from home; distance learning culture also does not exist in students in general who are accustomed to face-to-face; holidays that are too long make students bored and bored because before at school they could play with friends at school. Problems faced by students, teachers, and parents will be resolved through the provision of appropriate learning media according to the needs, facilities and learning environment of students so that learning can take place smoothly and learning objectives can still be achieved even though learning is distanced. According to Chakraborty (2014) revealed several factors that can create an interesting learning experience for online learners. The main factors are as follows: creating and maintaining a positive learning environment; building a learning community; provide consistent feedback in a timely manner; and use the right technology to deliver the right content.

The problem of education in Indonesia in recent years is the character associated with affective/attitude assessment (Retnawati, et al, 2016). Attitude assessment is generally done through direct observation/observation during face-to-face learning. However, it will be difficult to carry out online learning because the teacher cannot make direct observations. Character education is inserted by the teacher when explaining the subject matter. Additionally, in online learning, character education must be inserted into the teaching materials provided to students. It is hoped that character education would continue despite the move to online learning.

The challenge for teachers was teachers' developed teaching materials that have inserted character education values. For instance, in Bahasa Indonesia course, during the covid 19 period, there were many words, terms and dictions related to covid 19. Most of these dictions contain negative meanings that reflect character and influence other people. In addition, Indonesian is a compulsory subject for every level of education. In this subject, students are taught how to speak properly and correctly according to the rules. Indonesian language textbooks which were previously in printed form were taught by the teacher through explanations in front of the class by inserting character education in their explanations. However, this does not apply to online learning, especially if access to video meetings cannot be carried out comprehensively and sustainably for all students due to limited facilities and infrastructure.

Concerns about character education for students prompted the author to conduct research through literature studies regarding Character Education-Based Indonesian E-books for Learning during the Covid 19 period. The purpose of this study was to find out how to insert character education values into e-books for online learning. or long distance during covid 19.

## **METHOD**

This research is a descriptive qualitative research that is library research by collecting data through books and other literature as the main object (Hadi, 1995). According to Mantra 2008 Qualitative research, namely research that produces information in the form of notes and descriptive data contained in the text under study. With qualitative research, it is necessary to do descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis method provides a clear, objective, systematic, analytical and critical description and description of the Indonesian Character Education-Based e-book for learning in the Covid 19 era. A qualitative approach based on the initial steps taken by collecting the required data, Then the classification and description are carried out.

The reason the authors used descriptive qualitative methods in this study is because it is considered very suitable for studying various references about learning in the era of covid 19 and the use of e-books in distance online learning. It is hoped that through this

method solutions will be found regarding the problems expected by students, teachers and parents, especially in the realm of character education.

The source of data in this study were government policies, books and articles on the implementation of learning during the covid 19 crisis. The research data collection approach is through the use of literary data. that has been selected, searched, presented and analyzed. The data source of this study required philosophical and theoretical processing actions. The literature study here is a literature study without being accompanied by an empirical test (Muhadjir, 1998). The data collection carried out in this study was by collecting books and articles about the implementation of learning during the covid 19 period and character education during the covid 19 period. Then they were selected, presented and analyzed and processed systematically.

Data analysis is the stages in processing research data and developing it into a simple framework (Zed, 2004). The gathered data is subsequently filtered and evaluated to obtain the information needed according to the research problem (Mantra, 2008). In this study using data analysis techniques in the form of content analysis (content analysis). Content analysis is a scientific analysis of the message content of a data. So, as an analytical material and obtained from primary and secondary data sources, a comparison is made to find the data needed according to the research problem.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During the implementation of the academic year and the new academic year 2020/2021, the corona virus outbreak has not yet subsided, this has forced the Government through the Ministry of Education and Culture together with three other ministries, namely the Ministry of Religion, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Home Affairs to make policies by issuing learning guidelines during the COVID-19 period. This guide is intended to provide a sense of security to the community by opening educational units for face-to-face learning. In the guide it is explained that educational units located in the yellow, orange, and red zones are prohibited from conducting face-to-face learning processes in educational units and continuing to study from home (BDR) in accordance with the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 4 of 2020 concerning Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019.

The COVID-19 outbreak has attacked almost all regions in Indonesia, both big cities and regencies, this causes the Learning from Home policy to be implemented in accordance with the government's policy letter. The guide has explained the flow and protocol that must be applied in learning during the covid 19 era. At first teachers, students and parents were hesitant to implement this policy but after trying it finally learning from home began to be implemented. According to purwanto (2020) there are many problems that arise when online learning from home starts from students, teachers and even parents. The sources of the problems also vary, both in terms of facilities, infrastructure and the

learning environment at home which sometimes becomes a problem when studying from home.

The problem with teachers in learning during the COVID-19 period is that not all teachers are familiar with technology so that the level of proficiency in using technology is a determinant in online learning such as using internet technology or social media as a means of learning. These problems are increasingly felt in senior teachers who have not been fully able to use devices or facilities to support online learning activities and need assistance and training first. In addition, in online learning, teachers are also required to provide teaching materials that can be given to students to be studied in online learning.

According to Putra (2020) the learning process carried out by the teacher has changed, which is usually direct learning into online learning. Online learning is considered less effective for teachers, because learning is carried out online, the teacher also does not feel optimal in providing learning materials so that the material is incomplete and the use of learning media in online learning is also not optimal.

The problem with students in learning during the COVID-19 period is that students feel forced to study remotely without adequate facilities and infrastructure at home. This facility is very important for the smooth teaching and learning process, for online learning at home, facilities such as laptops, computers, tablets, or smartphones should be provided which are devices for students to use in learning from home. Another problem for students is the distance learning culture that they do not have. So far, learning is carried out face-to-face, this habit makes students less active in online learning, students also get bored quickly and get bored because at school they can interact with their friends, play and joke.

The distance learning method applied by the teacher makes students need time to adapt and each student experiences different things in the adaptation process. Some are fast, some are slow in adapting to distance learning. This is because students' learning styles must change and their learning absorption is not the same if it is carried out face-to-face. Learning from home is like a holiday for students because everything is done from home not going anywhere as well as during holidays, making students tired of being at home too long and missing the times at school.

The problem with parents in learning during the COVID-19 period is the cost of internet quota for online learning. Previously, parents only spent pocket money for their children but now it has increased, online learning requires a network connection to the internet so that learning can take place. In addition, the time for supervision of students, as it is known, parents also have work at home or at the office so that it will be confiscated in the supervision of children who are studying from home. Parents can ask for help from other people to carry out supervision but that also requires additional fees for the supervision service even though it is a relative minimum consumption during supervision.

These problems do not necessarily stop learning from home. Various policies both from the government and from private companies have contributed to overcoming these problems. However, there is another problem that is the focus of this research, namely character education during the pandemic. As is known, character education is the values

that must be inserted in learning. If in face-to-face learning the teacher can insert character education in explaining the subject matter, when online learning the character values must be inserted into the subject matter. Media and learning resources used by teachers must contain character values so that character education can run.

Based on the learning guidelines during the COVID-19 period, the Ministry of Education and Culture has listed several portal references that can be used by teachers to find references as media and learning resources in online learning, including;

1. Learning House by Pusdatin Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud): [belajar.kemdikbud.go.id](http://belajar.kemdikbud.go.id)
2. Educational TV Kemendikbud: [tve.kemdikbud.go.id/live/](http://tve.kemdikbud.go.id/live/)
3. 3. Digital Learning by Pusdatin and SEAMOLEC, Kemendikbud: [rumahbelajar.id](http://rumahbelajar.id)
4. Face-to-face online greeting program for learning house ambassadors for Pusdatin Kemendikbud: [pusdatin.webex.com](http://pusdatin.webex.com)
5. LMS SIAJAR by SEAMOLEC, Kemendikbud: [lms.seamolec.org](http://lms.seamolec.org)
6. Online application for packages A, B, C: [setara.kemdikbud.go.id](http://setara.kemdikbud.go.id)
7. Teacher share: [guruberbagi.kemdikbud.go.id](http://guruberbagi.kemdikbud.go.id)
8. Digital reading: [aksi.puspendik.kemdikbud.go.id/membacadigital](http://aksi.puspendik.kemdikbud.go.id/membacadigital)
9. Learning videos: [video.kemdikbud.go.id](http://video.kemdikbud.go.id)
10. Educational Voice Kemendikbud: [suaraedukasi.kemdikbud.go.id](http://suaraedukasi.kemdikbud.go.id)
11. Educational radio Kemendikbud: [radioedukasi.kemdikbud.go.id](http://radioedukasi.kemdikbud.go.id)
12. Family friends – Sources of information and teaching materials for family care and education: [sahabatkeluarga.kemdikbud.go.id](http://sahabatkeluarga.kemdikbud.go.id)
13. Early childhood education teacher's room Kemendikbud: [anggunpaud.kemdikbud.go.id](http://anggunpaud.kemdikbud.go.id)
14. Electronic schoolbooks [bse.kemdikbud.go.id](http://bse.kemdikbud.go.id)
15. Mobile education – Multimedia teaching materials: [medukasi.kemdikbud.go.id/medukasi](http://medukasi.kemdikbud.go.id/medukasi)
16. Equality education module: [emodul.kemdikbud.go.id](http://emodul.kemdikbud.go.id)
17. Source of teaching materials for elementary, middle, high school, and vocational students: [sumberbelajar.seamolec.org](http://sumberbelajar.seamolec.org)
18. Online courses for teachers by SEAMOLEC: [mooc.seamolec.org](http://mooc.seamolec.org)
19. Online classes for students and college students: [elearning.seamolec.org](http://elearning.seamolec.org)
20. Kemendikbud Institutional Repository: [repositori.kemdikbud.go.id](http://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id)
21. Kemendikbud online journal: [perpustakaan.kemdikbud.go.id/jurnal-kemdikbud](http://perpustakaan.kemdikbud.go.id/jurnal-kemdikbud)
22. Open-access digital books: [pustakadigital.kemdikbud.go.id](http://pustakadigital.kemdikbud.go.id)
23. Eperpusdikbud (google play): [bit.ly/eperpusdikbud](https://bit.ly/eperpusdikbud)

The media and learning resources are expected to help teachers in online learning. Whether to use the media and learning resources as a reference in developing new teaching materials or directly use them in online learning. Depending on the needs and conditions of learning, but when it comes to character education, it is understood that the characteristics of students are different, the needs of the subject matter and character values also differ between regions or schools from one another.

Teachers are expected to be able to make their own teaching materials by using media and learning resources recommended by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a reference. For example, making an e-book based on character education in which character values have been inserted according to the needs and learning environment of students. The e-book can be distributed to students and studied from home so that not only subject matter, but character values can be embedded in students. It depends on how the teacher inserts the values of character education.

Character cannot be separated from language, from a person's language a character can be identified, during the covid 19 period, new dictions or terms emerged that were used by the community in communicating both in the real world and in the virtual world. Some of these dictions or terms have meanings or similarities with negative things that will have an impact on a person's character. In addition, public literacy has also increased about covid 19, in this case related to absurd literature inspired by the study of covid 19, the themes of literary works about covid 19 and reading rhymes and poetry about covid 19 on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Considering that Indonesian language subjects are subjects that are studied at all levels of education, then this is a way to instill character education in students through Indonesian language subjects during the covid 19 period so that negative terms and literature are no longer used, besides that it will add new knowledge to students. students about terms and literature that are good and correct in the period of covid 19.

*Moral Character* and *Performance Character* can be a reference in integrating character education in subjects. Moral character consists of the policies needed to behave ethically, have positive relationships, and become responsible citizens. Moral character also respects the interests of others, so it does not violate moral values when doing something. Meanwhile, Performance Characters include (1) Supporting students to achieve high academic achievement; (2) Develop ethics, not just test scores; (3) Developing the talents of scientists and entrepreneurs; (4) Produce competitive and creative resources.

Indonesian language subjects that have integrated character education will be able to overcome the problems of words, diction, terms and literature that are negative and incorrect in society, especially students. In this subject, students are taught how to speak properly and correctly according to the rules. Indonesian language textbooks which were previously in printed form were taught by the teacher through explanations in front of the class by inserting character education in their explanations. However, this does not apply to online learning, especially if access to video meetings cannot be carried out comprehensively and sustainably for all students due to limited facilities and infrastructure. So we need an e-book that can be studied by students from home. Teachers can download e-books at [bse.kemdikbud.go.id](http://bse.kemdikbud.go.id) or other sources, but they do not necessarily contain the values of character education needed.

Teachers should compile Indonesian teaching materials or e-books that include character education values by using media and learning resources recommended by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a reference. There are several ways to insert character education values in teaching materials or e-books.

1. Introduction, in this section the teacher can provide apperception such as ice breaking and quizzes at the beginning of learning to motivate students while instilling character values such as honesty and discipline (on time) and other values.

2. Material, there are many parts of the material that can be used as a place to insert character education values. In this section, it takes foresight and creativity of teachers in compiling e-books. For example, when giving examples in the subject matter, the teacher can mix examples of the material so that it contains character values in it.
3. Assignments, in the e-book there are several tasks that can be done by students, such as daily assignments, chapter exercises, remedial, enrichment, midterm exams, semester end exams. All these sections can be a place for teachers to arrange questions in addition to measuring knowledge but also attitudes in this case the character values and skills possessed by students.

The application of an Indonesian e-book based on character education is a solution that can be done to overcome the problems of character education in the Covid 19 era. In this e-book character values can be inserted in the introduction, materials, and assignments to provide character education to students. So, the e-book is developed based on the curriculum and the values of character education that will be inserted in it. E-books are provided in online learning and can be studied by students from their homes both online and offline. In order to attract the attention of students, the e-book must be designed to be visually attractive so that the material in it can be learned and easily understood by students.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study suggests that E-books based on character education are a solution to overcome the problems of character education during the Covid 19 crisis in Indonesia today, especially in terms of diction and literature. Because it contains the values of character education, it can be inserted within the introduction, materials and assignments for the students to experience character education digitally. The e-book is then given to students in online learning and can be studied by students from their respective homes both online and offline. The general implication of the study is that educators should not neglect to impart moral values in younger generations especially today where the paradigm of education shifts to distance learning with minimal supervision on students' activities during their study.

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