
The Effect of Distance Learning on Children's Moral Development

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Abstract: Moral is the foundation of a person when behaving and carrying out his role in society. In today's digital era, we can see a lot of decline in the values and morals that used to be embraced by society. Advances in the digital field do not necessarily bring moral to a more advanced level, especially during this pandemic which also exacerbates moral decline. The lack of direct interaction during learning makes students indifferent to moral values. The decline in the "price" of morals in the eyes of society can be a big threat to the harmony of a society. Therefore, many actions need to be taken to patch and repair this damaged, faded, and abandoned moral, for example, through learning in Social Sciences (IPS) subjects in collaboration with parental education at home during distance learning. In this article, the author discussed what can be done and what we can hope for to improve moral. The research applied mixed methods.

Keywords: Moral, Social Science Learning, Education, Distance Learning

A. Introduction

Nowadays, everything is very advanced. Advances in technology rapidly affect the way humans interact, obtain information, transportation, education, the economy, and much more. This progress brings many positive impacts on human life. Make it easy for humans to do things that were previously considered impossible. As easy as contacting other people who are far from us, facilitating communication, facilitating transportation, and reach. Technology seems to fade distance and time.

Unfortunately, progress in any field will always have a negative impact. One of the main concerns of the author is the weakening of morals in society. Changes in interaction and communication patterns in the digital era are considered a big factor in the fading of morals in society. This situation is further exacerbated by the presence of a pandemic that befell the world. All forms of education and schooling must be conducted online and remotely. Learning is currently carried out remotely and is known as Distance Learning (PJJ). The pandemic has hit all of us for the past two years and has clearly contributed greatly to the decline in moral.

Distance learning that is being carried out today can also be said to slightly exacerbate the moral decline in our midst. Quoted from the Republika.co.id news page, "The Deputy Chair of the Palu City DPRD, Central Sulawesi, Rizal, stated that the negative impact of online distance learning (PJJ) during the Covid-19 pandemic began to emerge in the children. The impact is felt by parents." Furthermore, in an article entitled "DPRD: The Negative Impact of Distance Learning Begins to Be Seen on Children in Palu", Rizal said that the quality of knowledge and moral of students in the capital city of Central Sulawesi Province is low due to the negative impact of using gadgets when implementing a distance learning away online (Nusantara, 2021).

Various kinds of problems arise as a result of moral decline. Starting from big problems to small problems that may grow in the future. Such as rampant corruption in various government circles, the brutality of law enforcement, violence in society, many dishonest acts in all levels of society, juvenile delinquency, decreased work ethic, discrimination between groups, promiscuity, misused drugs, decreased sense of politeness. Politeness to older people, and there are many more effects of this moral decline.

The things mentioned above can cause divisions and weaken the harmony in society. The article that a well-known historian named Arnold Toynbee once said that there were twenty-one civilizations in the world recorded and nineteen of them were destroyed due to the moral decay of civilized society (Nida, 2013). This indicates that moral values play an important role in maintaining the integrity and harmony of a nation. Furthermore, a scholar from the Republic of Rome once told the people of Rome that a nation begins with the strength of character of its people (Nida, 2013).

The above explanation can be said to be an urgency for us as part of society to immediately improve our moral which has begun to fade. The first aid that can be done to improve moral values in society which may be very influential, is through education. Apart from the impact of technological progress, the decline in moral values is also the result of the failure of education in instilling morals. Education is the most powerful tool or media to re-instill morals in children's heads. The education faced by children or students is not only formal at school but

also non-formal education, namely the family and the surrounding environment because education consists of three pillars family, school, and environment.

Education is considered effective for re-instilling morals in students because most of the conscious time that children spend is at school. So it will be very easy for educators to "influence" students and instill a lot of good morals into the heads of students who are expected to become permanent characters in the future. Education holds an important aspect in educating the nation's successors. That is why education must be optimized again for efforts to instill moral values so that we all have a successor who is not only academically intelligent but also has good character and morals.

The problems above make the authors want to study moral cultivation more deeply in the formal education environment. More specifically, the researcher wants to examine the role of learning Social Sciences (IPS) in instilling and developing children's morals. In the midst of the complex moral problems in society, what can be taught in social studies learning? Then the author is also interested in finding out and discussing the relationship between social studies learning and inculcating moral values in schools.

B. Research Method

This research combined quantitative and qualitative research with a combined approach. Quantitative research uses numbers and analyzes the data using statistics (Sugiyono, 2018:147). The research method applied in this research was the survey method. The meaning of the survey method is when the research uses a questionnaire as a research tool (Sugiyono, 2013:11). Furthermore, the questionnaire is distributed to a large or small population. Consequently, the data was taken from samples in the population. In this study, the researcher distributed a questionnaire/questionnaire to teachers and parents of students who are currently experiencing distance learning to get accurate data. This study also used descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis method is used to analyze data by describing the collected data without making general conclusions (Sugiyono, 2013:206).

C. Theoretical Basis

1. Moral and Its Development in Children

Moral comes from the word "*mos*" which means decency and behavior. The moral is linguistically stated in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) as "(teachings about) good and bad which are generally accepted regarding actions, attitudes, obligations, and so on; morals; character; morals". The word moral is also interpreted as good behavior, values, and norms that become the basis or standards of society to regulate the behavior of its members.

Moral, one aspect of life that is upheld by human existence and will always be like that. Moral, its use is applied as a form of human concern for other humans in life. With the existence of morals, humans are expected to be able to live a good social life. With the existence of morals, it is hoped that applicable rules and/or norms will be born and will become the basis for human in their lives as part of society. Humans are required to always

apply morals, are required to always pass on morals to the next generation, are required to learn and teach morals. Its existence is invisible but has a fundamental role in social life.

Moral development in humans, according to Santrock, is the development that has to do with the rules and norms about what a person should do when interacting with other people. Santrock also argues that moral development is a change in behavior that occurs in a child's life related to procedures, habits, customs, or value standards that apply in the surrounding community. Furthermore, Santrock explained that in its moral development, it is also concerned with the process of thinking, feeling, and behaving in accordance with applicable regulations (Santrock, 2008: 316).

Furthermore, moral development is also influenced by the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget. Piaget said that a person's cognitive development includes moral development. As his cognitive abilities develop, he will be able to reason about the social situations around him. Piaget also suggested that a person's moral development goes through very predictable or predictable stages.

Furthermore, in his book entitled *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Piaget says, a child's moral consciousness develops from one stage to a higher stage (Piaget, 1932: 9). Piaget's analogy of developmental stages is a step from one stage to the next, just as when a child wants to be able to run, he must be able to walk first. Moral development that occurs in children is that children learn to obey and obey external regulations before developing self-control based on moral values. Then Piaget concluded that children process situations regarding morality divided into two according to their developmental maturity. The first is *heteronomous morality* and *autonomous morality* (Santrock, 2003: 439).

The first stage of moral development, namely heteronomous morality, which Piaget estimated to occur at the age of 4-11 years. At this stage, the child's moral development is immature. His morality is still influenced by the adults around him. His adherence to morals is still based on what consequences he gets, not the motivation in him. At this stage, the child also considers the rules to be absolute things that restrict and cannot be changed under any conditions. Children also still think that sanctions or punishments will always be applied immediately after a violation.

Piaget said that at the stage of heteronomous morality development, children still have an immature thinking structure with egocentric and static characteristics. Egocentric in the sense that the child can still not see the difference between the personal and social aspects of a situation. This causes the child is usually difficult to listen to and receive input from others on a social situation. This shows that children are of the view that the prevailing moral rules are a rigid and unchangeable condition, not a flexible tool capable of delivering humans to achieve human goals and values. At this stage, the child has not been able to reason and assess the existing rules. He still thinks that the adults around him are the holders of power. So that children follow the rules without questioning the truth of the rules applied to them.

The next stage is the stage of autonomous morality. This stage begins at the age of 10 years and onwards. At this stage, the child has begun to be able to reason and process that rules are made by other humans. Children are also able to relate the cause and effect of an

action taken by someone. Children have been able to gain independence and the ability to carry out their roles in society in accordance with their cognitive maturity. Then at this stage, the child also begins to see the adults around him no longer as "powerful" but on the same level. Different from the previous stage, at the autonomous morality stage, children can already see that punishment will not always be applied if no one sees when he commits a violation. Children also see and practice morality based on the view that morality is a system that provides instructions for the rights and obligations of a group.

2. Education

Learning or teaching is an effort to teach learners (M. Miftah: 2013). Learning means trying to make someone learn. Binti asserts that education is life (Mudyaharjo: 2001). Education is all learning experiences in all environments, and throughout life, education is all life situations that affect individual growth.

Education is a conscious effort made by the government through teaching and/or training guidance activities at school and outside of school throughout life. To prepare students to be able to play a role in various environments appropriately in the future. Education is a programmed learning experience in the form of formal, non-formal, and informal education at school and outside school that lasts a lifetime to optimize individual abilities. Consideration of individual abilities so that in the future they can play the right role in life, professional maturity (educational ability), namely paying attention and loving attitude towards students and having sufficient knowledge about students' backgrounds and developments, having skills in using educational methods. (Benti: 2009).

Education today has lost its true soul to be able to humanize humans who live in the space of life full of the desire for education to have turned its function into a dehumanization process that runs mechanically and is developed in a living space that is detached from idealistic ideal values (Yusuf, T.H: 2018). Education is also developed in a vacuum of life that is separated from the reality (relevance and current situation) of human life.

In school-age education, which has been summarized and formed by the Curriculum Team in the field of education, especially in their respective areas, it still has a goal that not only knowledge is developed, but attitudes as human beings are also created.

3. Distance Learning (PJJ)

The current situation during the corona or pandemic covid-19 has exacerbated the scratches that should have been removed in the formation of moral development. Plus, the unpreparedness of the educators in changing styles can be said to be forced or forced. Like Google Classroom, WhatsApp groups, Zoom, and learning activities through Google Meet. Whereas distance-learning or education activities have been regulated in the 2003 National Education System Law, Section 10, Article 31, which reads:

- a. Distance education can be held in all lines, levels, and types.
- b. Distance education serves to provide educational services to community groups who cannot attend face-to-face or regular education.
- c. Distance education is carried out in various forms, modes, and coverage supported by learning facilities and services as well as an assessment system that ensures the quality of graduates in accordance with national education standards.
- d. Provisions regarding the implementation of distance education as referred to in paragraph (1), paragraph (2), and paragraph (3) shall be further regulated by a Government Regulation. (2003 National Education System Law).

And in the Circular of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 4 of 2020;

- a. Provide a meaningful learning experience for students without being burdened with the demands of completing all the achievements of the curriculum for grade promotion and graduation.
- b. Focusing on life skills education, including regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.
- c. Providing a variety of learning activities and assignments for learning from home among students, according to their respective interests and conditions, including considering the gap in access/facilities for learning from home.
- d. Provide feedback on evidence or products of learning activities from home that are qualitative and useful for teachers, without giving qualitative scores/values.

This should be able to inspire educators to pay more attention to children's morals when the distance learning (PJJ) decision is issued as a learning solution during the pandemic. But unfortunately, in reality, students are carried away by the atmosphere at home and are increasingly lazy to fortify themselves from negative impacts as long as distance learning (PJJ) is implemented.

4. Social Studies Learning as a Moral Builder

Social science (IPS) is a lesson related to values and morality. In social studies learning, students are taught an understanding of self-concept and the environment around them. Social Studies teaches students to understand and understand their role in the social sphere, the social environment. This refers to the development of social cognition fostered in social studies learning. Social cognition is a person's perspective or perspective on the surrounding environment. This social cognition can affect the morality of a student.

In its implementation, social studies learning conceptually has the following objectives: (1) to recognize concepts related to people's lives and their environment; (2) have the basic ability to think logically and critically, curiosity, inquiry, problem solving, and skills in social life (3) have a commitment and awareness of social and human values; (4) have the ability to communicate, cooperate and compete in a pluralistic society, at local, national, and global levels (DEPDIKNAS, 2006).

Social studies learning itself aims to teach students to develop their abilities in terms of adapting to the environment in which they live, developing social sensitivity so that they as part of the community are also able to solve problems well when problems occur to

themselves or their environment. Social Studies also aims to instill and develop a positive attitude when dealing with all forms of social problems. Therefore, social studies play a very big role in instilling and developing good morals in students to form community members with character in the future. Social studies learning is also said to be effective for the above because social studies learning as much as possible involves students with their social environment directly. So that social skills are formed in children.

Social studies learning is also able to be conditioned in such a way as to develop thinking skills and intelligence in various fields, such as the intelligence of judging the good and bad things. Moral intelligence, as well as social skills. After the implementation of social studies learning, it is hoped that students will be able to grow and develop as part of a society that carries out its role well in this digital, global era. It is also hoped that students will be able to meet expectations and build a brighter future for the environment or even the country where they live and grow up.

5. Moral of Indonesian Children Today and its Changes

People's daily life in an era where everything is digital and quickly reduces the contact between humans with one another. It can be said, humans in this digital era are starting to lose their human touch. Progress in the field of technology and communication is not accompanied by advances in education in the field of morals and values prevailing in society. In comparison, moral education for the community is as important as education in the field of science and technology because the lack of moral education will have a major impact on harmony in society.

Moral inequality will appear in different social classes. In general, people who grow up in poor circles or environments will have poor moral intelligence as well. And vice versa, people who grow up in a good environment will usually have moral intelligence as well. But the moral intelligence of children is not only based on the surrounding environment but also on parenting and formal education.

The importance of teaching moral values to children is stated by Nawawi, who says that moral education is a very important aspect for the establishment of a nation (Nawawi, 2011). Furthermore, Nawawi said that without moral education, it is very likely that this nation will be destroyed and divided.

D. Discussion

The author conducted a survey of elementary school students, parents, and teachers. After analyzing, 82% of primary school teachers felt a decline in the moral development of children, 63% of children's indifference to the conditions around them at home was felt by parents. The results of a survey of high school and elementary school students, 79% of students stated that they are more comfortable at home than having to socialize with other people.

The teachers stated that the biggest factor in the decline in moral development was the lack of self-motivation to do activities outside the home, spending too much time using *gadgets*. This became a major influence in meeting the behavioral needs of children. As is known, at school age, social needs are very high to meet personal development, but activity restrictions imposed during the pandemic created a new pattern that is accepted by students so that it does not fulfill what it should be.

As a result of these problems created new problems must be faced by us, especially educators and parents. Students forget how to react to an environment where many people are older than themselves, this causes the adrenaline of students to be stimulated to show that they can stand out among these situations, but they do not know how to do it well.

This should be a very serious concern, especially for parents who 24 hours supervise the development of children. This statement is supported by teachers who are now increasingly unable to monitor children's development due to activity restrictions. Teachers agree that the best solution now is parents. Parents are expected to be the key that can control children in their developmental stages because if they are not formed or directed properly, it will affect the next stage of development.

However, the parents themselves stated that it was very difficult to be a teacher as well as a housewife when the child was doing distance learning (PJJ). This was stated by the parents of the students based on the survey results. 94% of parents stated that it was very difficult to control their emotions when they saw their children unable to do learning activities properly, and 86% of parents found it difficult to understand the material given by the teacher during distance learning (PJJ). This adds to the frustration of parents when accompanying their children to study. Therefore the learning atmosphere at home becomes increasingly cloudy and cannot be formed. As a result, the child becomes increasingly difficult to learn and shows inappropriate reactions.

Based on the above statement, the authors conclude that the decline in children's moral development occurs during activities distance learning (PJJ) takes place. A learning environment that is not formed when studying at home, the delivery of material is lacking, and students' self-motivation to study is lacking, making moral needs not being met. This is what makes students create their own experiences. Therefore, the surrounding environment is another factor for the moral development of children. When the child gets an unfavorable environment, the child will likely form behavior in accordance with his environment because of the lack of needed guidance.

In other words, when distance learning (PJJ) is implemented, the quality of teachers must be improved, while parents must be encouraged so that a balanced learning environment can be established so that every step needed to meet the needs of students, both moral and knowledge can be created properly.

E. Conclusions

Distance learning, which is still being implemented, has made a change in the moral of children. Various factors can influence these changes, plus the pattern of education that

changes simultaneously worsens the situation. The moral of children experiencing changes is one result of the unpreparedness of educators in dealing with situations that occur. An uncontrolled play environment is one of the strongest factors in children's moral change. This happens because learning activities are carried out *online* and cannot be carried out optimally by educators, so children consider these activities unattractive and have no immediate benefits. The role of parents who are no less important in this regard is also the strongest factor in supervising the formation of children's behavior or morals. But unfortunately, busy work and limited knowledge of parents make learning activities at home boring for children.

The moral changes of children are now starting to be felt by parents and teachers who directly deal with children. This must be a problem that we must fix together. Character education, which must be instilled from an early age, must now be increasingly encouraged. Because children are the spearhead in the progress of the nation's life, environmental improvement and improving the quality of parental education can be one solution in dealing with problems.

This study on the effect of distance learning on children's moral development states that distance learning activities are one of the factors that cause children's morals to change because when distance learning activities cannot be carried out optimally, it can provoke other factors that can support change. Therefore, children's morals develop based on the conditions they face.

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