# The Quality of Students Character on Online Learning in The Pandemic: A Survey Study

# Kualitas Karakter Siswa pada Pembelajaran Daring di Masa Pandemi: Suatu Studi Survei

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Naskah diterima: 14 Maret 2022 Naskah disetujui: 24 Mei 2022 Terbit: 30 Juni 2022 Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic that hit parts of the world impacts on education. The acceleration and shift of learning to online mode are massively carried out. Changes in learning modes impact the character of students, so a comprehensive non-cognitive instrument is needed that can be used to measure the quality of student character. This study aims to identify the quality of students' character in online learning during the pandemic. Character qualities are identified by the manifestations of curiosity, initiative, resilience, adaptation, leadership, and ethics Respondents (N=442) consisted of teachers (N=56) and students (N=386) who applied online learning in several schools from Medan, Deliserdang, Batubara, and Bireuen. We are collecting data using a questionnaire via a google form. The questionnaire has been tested for validity and reliability. The research findings reveal that there is a change in students' character that leads to a positive path in online learning, where the presence of the teacher is crucial in the manifestation of curiosity, initiative, resilience, and adaptation to construct student character. Meanwhile, the manifestations of leadership and ethics felt by students during online learning were very meaningful to the quality of their character. Identification from the point of view of teachers and students found that ethics plays an important role in shaping students' character. This study provides the latest insight regarding identifying student character which comprehensively discusses and reveals the urgency of the quality of students' character in online learning.

**Keywords:** student character, online learning, the Covid-19 pandemic

**Abstrak:** Pandemi Covid-19 yang melanda sebagian dunia berdampak pada pendidikan. Akselerasi dan pergeseran pembelajaran ke mode online dilakukan secara masif. Perubahan mode pembelajaran berdampak pada karakter siswa sehingga diperlukan instrumen nonkognitif yang komprehensif yang dapat digunakan untuk mengukur kualitas karakter

> siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi kualitas karakter siswa dalam pembelajaran online di masa pandemi. Kualitas karakter diidentifikasi oleh manifestasi rasa ingin tahu, inisiatif, ketahanan, adaptasi, kepemimpinan, dan etika. Responden (N=442) terdiri atas guru (N=56) dan siswa (N=386) yang menerapkan pembelajaran online di beberapa sekolah dari Medan, Deliserdang, Batubara, dan Bireuen. Data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan kuesioner melalui formulir google. Kuesioner telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa terdapat perubahan karakter siswa yang mengarah ke jalur positif dalam pembelajaran online, dimana kehadiran guru sangat penting dalam manifestasi rasa ingin tahu, inisiatif, ketahanan, dan adaptasi untuk membangun karakter siswa. Sementara itu, manifestasi kepemimpinan dan etika yang dirasakan siswa selama pembelajaran online sangat berarti bagi kualitas karakter mereka. Identifikasi dari sudut pandang guru dan siswa menemukan bahwa etika memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk karakter siswa. Studi ini memberikan wawasan terkini mengenai identifikasi karakter siswa yang secara komprehensif membahas dan mengungkap urgensi kualitas karakter siswa dalam pembelajaran online.

Kata kunci: karakter siswa, pembelajaran daring, masa pandemic Covid-19.

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit several countries worldwide had a multiplier impact on different human lives, one of which was education. Various restrictions on social activities have been carried out as a policy to reduce the spread of Covid-19, which has impacted the temporary closure of learning activities in schools since March 2020. This, of course, impacts on the psychology of teachers, parents, and students because online learning modes have begun to be massive, they were applied in various schools. The shift in learning modes from face-to-face to online resulted in adjustments in attitudes, character, and noncognitive skills. Tartavulea et al., (2020) described that teachers and students must master better character skills because they must adapt to learning that utilizes information technology. Self-adjustment and development in knowledge, technology, and intrapersonal skills such as self-character play an essential role in a student's future career success (Mendez, 2015).

Student career success is reflected in cognitive aspects, but non-cognitive aspects such as character also play a role in directing the academic path to success. Character education is the knowledge that requires guidance and examples of relevant behaviors to strengthen norm values so that they can make wise decisions for their lives and the surrounding community (Bialik et al., 2015). Therefore, online learning that demands students' independence and readiness to learn requires a strong character to be consistent and committed to achieving learning goals. Character is a fundamental part of a student's attitude has been clearly stated in the Graduate Competency Standards for higher education, where students have the competence of attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013).

The World Economic Forum (WEF) describes sixteen skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including basic literacy skills, competencies, and character qualities (The world Economic Forum, 2016). Character qualities consist of engagement, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership (Bialik et al., 2015). Thus, in the context of online learning, the teacher's role is vital in promoting the quality of character during learning through five educational tools, namely exemplary, authoritative, compassionate, empowering, and educating assertiveness (Turan & Ulutas, 2016).

Earlier researchers have studied the quality of students' character in learning (Birhan et al., 2021; Fahmy et al., 2015; Ji et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2019; Lee & Huang, 2021). However, related psychological pressure in online learning due to the pandemic still has gaps for a comprehensive study to be carried out. Therefore, this study focuses on identifying the qualities of students' character in online learning. The identification analysis that was studied related to various manifests, which were majorly supported by theory and research findings (Bialik et al., 2015; Birhan et al., 2021; WEF, 2016; Turan & Ulutas, 2016) which constructed students' character, namely curiosity, initiative, resilience, adaptation, leadership, and ethics. Thus, this study aims to identify six manifests of character qualities analyzed for relevance and accuracy that can be used in the future.

## METHOD

This type of research is quantitative with a survey approach that reveals an analysis of character quality identification (Gideon, 2012; Taxman, 2016; Zhang et al., 2017) in detail based on each variable's manifest and indicators that construct character qualities. Respondents involved teachers (N=56) and students (N=386) from several Medan, Deliserdang, Batubara, and Bireuen schools. The sample was determined by accidental sampling technique using the google form to obtain a link to the instrument and provide a response. However, respondents were sorted using the criteria of teachers and students at the high school level. Therefore, the adequacy and representativeness of the sample were relevant to the research objectives (Groves et al., 2011).

Collected data using a questionnaire with the google form. The use of questionnaires in identifying the quality of students' character is very effective for collecting data that is plural and generalizable (Gideon, 2012; Mann, 1998). The questionnaire has completed the criteria for testing the quality through construct validity (Loadings>0.70; average variance extracted/ AVE>0.50) and reliability (Cronbach's>0.70) (Azwar, 2019; Hair Jr, et al., 2017; Retnawati, 2016) so that it is feasible and relevant to be used to collect data (see Table 1). The data analysis technique uses descriptive data to reveal the identity of the quality of students' character in learning online during the pandemic (Sleezer, et al., 2014).

The analysis of the identification of student character qualities in online learning involved 442 respondents consisting of 56 teachers

Table 1. Summary of Construct Validity and Reliability Testing

	Reliability	resting	
Manifest	Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's
Curiosity		0.56	0.73
Item 1	0.73		
Item 2	0.82		
Item 3	0.74		
Item 4	0.70		
Initiative		0.56	0.74
Item 5	0.71		
Item 6	0.80		
Item 7	0.72		
Item 8	0.77		
Resilience		0.57	0.75
Item 9	0.80		
Item 10	0.79		
Item 11	0.75		
Item 12	0.70		
Adaptation		0.76	0.84
Item 13	0.88		
Item 14	0.89		
Item 15	0.84		
Leadership		0.71	0.86
Item 16	0.82		
Item 17	0.90		
Item 18	0.87		
Item 19	0.78		
Ethics		0.69	0.89
Item 20	0.81		
Item 21	0.85		
Item 22	0.89		
Item 23	0.80		
Item 24	0.81		

(12.67%) and 386 students (87.33%). Characteristics of respondents dominated females as many as 299 participants (67.65%), while men as many as 143 participants (32.35%). Respondents from public schools were 343 participants (77.60%), and private schools were 99 participants (22.40%). Respondents came from various locations, including in Medan as many as 372 participants (84.16%), Deliserdang as many as 37 participants (8.37%), Batubara as many as 25 participants (5.66%), and Bireuen as many as 8 participants (1.81%). Information on the characteristics of respondents is presented in Table 2.

Initial information presents data related to character changes in students after learning online. This information is viewed from two perspectives, namely teachers and students.

The teacher reviews that there is a change in the student's character by 51.02%, which means a change in character that occurs in the middle category. In contrast, students gave a better perception of changes in character after online learning, namely 57.81% in the middle category, which was average (see Table 3). Based on two points of view, the changes in students' character after online learning are in the middle or average categories. Foremost, the character changes that occur are not harmful and not satisfactory when they experience the transition of learning from faceto-face to online. However, changes in students' character led to a good path with changes that are not so significant when they learn faceto-face.

Next, identify the quality of the student's character by paying attention to the manifest

Characterist	ics	Teachers	Students	Total
Gender				
	Male	15	128	143
	Female	41	258	299
	Total	56	386	442
School				
Public	High school (SMA)	28	279	307
	Vocational school (SMK)	3	33	36
Private	High school (SMA)	25	74	99
	Vocational (SMK)	0	0	0
	Total	56	386	442
School Origi	n			
Medan	SMA Negeri 7 Medan	10	77	87
	SMA Negeri 20 Medan	12	180	192
	SMA Swasta Islam An-Nizam	19	74	93
	Subtotal-Medan	41	331	372
Deliserdang	SMK Negeri 1 Percut Sei Tuan	3	33	36
	SMA Swasta Satu Padu Boarding School	1	0	1
	Subtotal-Deliserdang	1 0 4 33		37
Batubara	SMA Negeri 1 Sei Suka	3	22	25
	Subtotal-Batubara	3	22	25
Bireuen	SMA Negeri 1 Jeunieb	1	0	1
	SMA Negeri 1 Makmur	1	0	1
	SMA Negeri 1 Peudada	1	0	1
	SMA Swasta Islam Darul Ulum	3	0	3
	SMA Swasta Plus Al-Fata	2	0	2
	Subtotal-Bireuen	8	0	8
	Total	56	386	442

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents

Item s	Character Quality	Teachers (T)	Students (S)	
	ou feel that there has been a change in your (students) acter after online learning?	51.02%	57.81%	
-	Curiosity	83.61%	81.19%	
1	Carry the opportunity to study independently.	85.20%	81.01%	
2	Demonstrates enthusiasm for trying and learning new things.	83.67%	86.12%	
3	Present an opinion.	83.93%	82.16%	
4	Sensitivity to learn social chances in online learning.	81.63%	75.46%	
	Initiative	84.06%	80.91%	
5	Initiator.	81.12%	72.32%	
6	Driving.	84.69%	81.01%	
7	Begin with yourself and be proactive.	82.91%	79.76%	
8	Imagining how to be better.	87.50%	90.56%	
	Resilience	88.65%	86.51%	
9	Endurance to complete lessons.	88.78%	86.64%	
10	Trying to get back up using the assets in yourself.	87.76%	89.05%	
11	External support after a failure.	89.29%	86.01%	
12	Get out of trouble to reach the target.	88.78%	84.34%	
	Adaptation	90.39%	86.32%	
13	Ability to adapt to academic aspects.	91.07%	86.31%	
14	Social aspects.	88.52%	85.42%	
15	Technological aspects.	91.58%	87.23%	
	Leadership	90.11%	90.26%	
16	Self-introduction	88.52%	90.27%	
17	Self-exploration	90.31%	88.90%	
18	Self-actualization.	89.80%	87.12%	
19	Direct yourself to achieve the goal.	91.84%	94.74%	
	Ethics	92.19%	93.88%	
20	Level of justice.	90.82%	92.60%	
21	Level of respect.	91.33%	94.45%	
22	Level of responsibility.	92.60%	94.49%	
23	Level of concern.	92.09%	93.60%	
24	Level of honesty.	94.13%	94.26%	
	Mean	88.24%	86.83%	

Table	3.	Response	Analysis	of	Student	Character	Quality	Identification

variables and indicators that construct character quality. The analysis of the identification of the quality of the student's character is viewed from the perspective of the teachers (T) and the students (S) to explore their experience of online learning related to the student's character. The student's character is constructed by six manifest variables, namely: 1) curiosity; 2) initiative; 3) resilience; 4) adaptation; 5) leadership; and 6) ethics. The analysis of the identification of student character qualities based on each

manifest variable is described in detail and comprehensively as follows.

First, the curiosity manifest has four indicators, namely: 1) carry the opportunity to study independently (T-85.20%; S-81.19%); 2) demonstrates enthusiasm for trying and learning new things (T-83.67%; S-86.12%); 3) present an opinion (T-83.93%; S-82.16%); and 4) sensitivity to learn social chances in online learning (T-81.63%; S-75.46%). The teacher dominates the manifestation of curiosity (83.61%) when compared to the perception

felt by students (81.19%) regarding curiosity in learning online. These findings reveal that the teacher's role is dominant in online learning. Students passively receive online learning, which can be seen from all indicators of curiosity under the response given by the teacher to students. Curiosity reflects the state of students who lack information and lack of motivation to find out up-to-date material in learning (Litman, 2005; Noordewier & van Dijk, 2017). Thus, serious attention is needed from teachers and parents regarding students' sensitivity to learn social chances in online learning, which is very weak compared to other indicators.

Second, the initiative manifest has four indicators, namely: 1) the initiator (T-81.12%; S-72.32%); 2) driving (T-84.69%; S-81.01%); 3) begin with yourself and be proactive (T-82.91%; S-79.76%); and 4) imagining how to be better (T-87.50%; S-90.56%). Teachers have initiative (84.06%), which dominates online learning compared to students (80.91%). Thus, the role of the teacher is needed to foster student initiative so that they have a strong leader character (Bruttel & Fischbacher, 2013; Frese & Fay, 2001). Students have a higher average value of imagining how to be better when compared to other indicators. These findings reveal that students have the imagination to think of better ways of online learning, so support from teachers is needed to stimulate their learning to be more effective by using effective and relevant media or learning models used in online learning.

Third, the manifest of resilience has four indicators, namely: 1) endurance to complete lessons (T-88.78%; S-86.64%); 2) trying to get back up using internal assets (T-87.76%; S-89.05%); 3) external support after a failure (T-89.29%; S-86.01%); and 4) get out of trouble to reach the target (T-88.78%; S-84.34%). The perception of teachers (88.65%) regarding resilience is more dominant than

students (86.51%) in online learning. Students have lower resilience or vulnerability when compared to teachers during online learning. External support from teachers and parents as a protective factor for them is needed by students when they experience failure (Dalimunthe, et al., 2021; Miller, et al., 2019; Seçer & Ulas, 2020). This is indicated by the indicator's value, which is smaller compared to other indicators in the manifest of resilience. The role of teacher support is so crucial for students during online learning that it will impact the construction of their character quality.

Fourth, the manifest of adaptation has three indicators, namely: 1) the ability to adapt to the academic aspect (T-91.07%; S-86.31%); 2) social aspects (T-88.52%; S-85.42%); and 3) technological aspects (T-91.58%; S-87.23%. During online learning, teachers (90.39%) have higher adaptability when compared to students (86.32%). They have superior academic, social, and technological adaptations to prepare for learning (Affum-Osei, et al., 2019; Werners et al., 2021). These adaptations will have a positive impact on students when learning online. However, teachers' and parents' role are needed to pay attention to students' adjustment to social aspects with the smaller average value than other indicators. This finding reveals that pandemic conditions cause isolation and limitations of students in the social environment. Thus, the role of parents in studying from home is crucial to help them make adjustments to the social environment that continues to pay attention to health. In addition to adapting to the social environment, parental educational support for children in the family will help students gain confidence and the strength to face the shift in learning modes from conventional to online.

Fifth, the leadership manifest has four indicators, namely: 1) self-introduction (T-88.52%; S-90.27%); 2) self-exploration (T-90.31%; S-88.90%); 3) self-actualization (T-

89.80%; S-87.12%); and 4) directing yourself to achieve the goal (T-91.84%; S-94.74%). Students (90.26%) have a predominant perception of self-leadership compared to teachers' (90.11%). Students have the leadership to direct and actualize themselves in completing learning objectives online (Houghton & Neck, 2002). Despite having good leadership, the teacher's role is still crucial in shaping their leadership, especially in selfexploration and self-actualization (MacBeath, 2019). These findings reveal that students' selfleadership is formed automatically from themselves in actualization and direct themselves to achieve the goal, and teacher assistance to develop their recognition and exploration during online learning.

Finally, the ethical manifest variable has five indicators, namely: 1) the level of justice (T-90.82%; S-92.60%); 2) the level of respect (T-91.33%; S-94.45%); 3) the level of responsibility (T-92.60%; S-94.49%); 4) the level of concern (T-92.09%; S-93.60%); and 5) the level of honesty (T-94.13%; S-94.26%). Students' perceptions of ethics (93.88%) are more dominant than teachers' (92.19%) in online learning. Teachers have succeeded in shaping students' ethics to be superior in a dynamic online-based learning transition. Of course, behavioral and ethical adjustments are very different during conventional learning (Toprak et al., 2010). All ethical indicators of fairness, respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty is significant to students (Gülcan, 2015). Thus, all these indicators have a better average than the teacher's perception. This information reveals that ethics plays an important role in online learning, where the teacher's role is so crucial to the formation of student ethics.

Based on the identification of student character qualities in each indicator, it was found that the teacher had the best student character manifest review starting from ethics, adaptation, leadership, resilience, initiative, and curiosity, respectively. Likewise, students' perspectives have the best character manifestations: ethics, leadership, resilience, adaptation, curiosity, and initiative. Identification analysis from both points of view has the same direction of focus related to a crucial aspect of the quality of student character during online learning, namely ethics.

Further, the information in Table 3 is presented in the graphical display that are more concise and attractive. The graphical display of the analysis of the identification of the quality of students' character in online learning is presented in Figure 1.

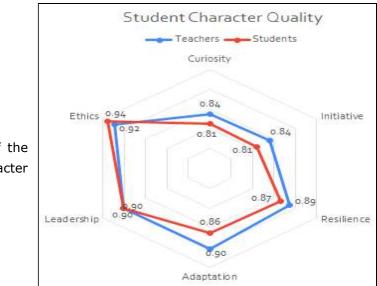


Figure 1. Identification of the Quality of Students' Character in Online Learning

Analysis of character quality identification is also presented in graphical form (see Figure 1). The graphic image with a blue line represents teacher's perception, while a red line represents students' perception on the quality of student's character. In general, the teacher's perception dominates the quality of the student's character, in which the manifest variables of curiosity, initiative, resilience, and adaptation have higher than ethics and leadership. However, the manifest variables of ethics and leadership from students' perceptions shows the above of average. The information revealed that in online learning, students' curiosity, initiative, resilience, and adaptation in learning were still weak due to the transition of learning to online mode. The teacher's role was more dominant in online learning to support student learning. Meanwhile, students' ethical and leadership aspects are superior in online learning, which means that the shift in learning mode to online does not impact to their ethics and leadership in learning.

This research found the novelty in character identification analysis information during online learning, which revealed that ethics played an essential role in the quality of students' character. These findings also complement previous studies (Bialik et al., 2015; Birhan et al., 2021; WEF, 2016; Turan & Ulutas, 2016) to consider the six manifest variables to conduct character quality assessments for students.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analysis on the identification of the student's character quality explains two points of view of students and teachers. Students dominantly feel a change in their characters, leading to a positive path in the middle or average position after completing online learning. Based on the teachers' observation shows that the "mean value" of character quality of ethics is dominant. The two reviews concluded that students felt good character changes after online learning, supported by teacher observations regarding character constructs, namely curiosity, initiative, resilience, adaptation, leadership, and ethics when online learning took place. The novelty of information on identifying student character qualities that complement previous research related to character assessments. The research findings have implications for teachers and scholars to use curiosity, initiative, resilience, adaptation, leadership, and ethics which have been shown to have intense urgency as an indicator quality of student character. Developing an assessment instrument of character quality is recommended in an online-based mode so that the affordability of respondents in the regions can take advantage of the character quality assessment.

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