

# A NEW PARADIGM OF INTEGRATING CHARACTER EDUCATION

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**Submission date:** 25-Feb-2022 01:25PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1770527193

**File name:** A\_NEW\_PARADIGM\_OF\_INTEGRATING\_CHARACTER\_EDUCATION.docx (71.31K)

**Word count:** 5684

**Character count:** 34996

# A NEW PARADIGM OF INTEGRATING CHARACTER EDUCATION WITH 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDONESIA

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**Abstract:** Massive technological developments require students' readiness to face major changes in life, at the same time, character education must be the main concern of all parties. This study aims to explore a new paradigm of character education with 21st century skills through online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach with the library research method. Research data were collected from primary and secondary sources such as books, proceedings and journals. The collected data is then analyzed using descriptive content analysis by selecting, comparing and presenting the data findings deductively. This research shows that students with 21st century character and skills will become individuals who are able to take opportunities, face the challenges of global development. The findings of this study describe that online learning is a great opportunity for teachers to instill technology-based character values. An in-depth study is needed to complete this study by discussing the role of parents and teachers in instilling character education during online learning.

**Abstract:** Perkembangan teknologi yang sangat masif menuntut kesiapan siswa menghadapi perubahan besar dalam kehidupan, pada saat yang sama, pendidikan karakter harus menjadi perhatian utama semua pihak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi paradigma baru pendidikan karakter dengan keterampilan abad 21 melalui pembelajaran online pada masa pandemi Covid-19 di Indonesia. Peneliti mengadopsi pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode library research. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari sumber-sumber primer dan sekunder seperti buku, prosiding dan jurnal. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis menggunakan descriptive content analysis dengan cara memilih, membandingkan dan menyajikan data temuan secara deduktif. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa yang berkarakter dan memiliki keterampilan abad 21 akan menjadi individu yang mampu mengambil peluang, menghadapi tantangan perkembangan global. Temuan penelitian ini mendeskripsikan bahwa pembelajaran online menjadi kesempatan besar bagi guru untuk menanamkan nilai-nilai karakter berbasis teknologi.

Perlu dilakukan kajian mendalam untuk menyempurnakan kajian ini dengan membahas peran orang tua dan guru dalam menanamkan pendidikan karakter saat pembelajaran online.

**Keywords:** covid-19; character education; technological age; 21st-century skills

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian education is increasingly being challenged by massive technological developments. Students' skills are at the center of education attention to prepare them to face the current of globalization. As a result, curriculum changes are needed according to the increasingly complex skill needs of students<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, attention to character problems must also be carried out, considering the many negative news treats related to the character of students<sup>2</sup>. Various cases such as fights between peers, brawls, bullying behavior, *hate speech*, acts of violence against peers to parents, decreased honesty, loss of sense of responsibility and empathy, drugs, sexual harassment, and others<sup>3</sup>. The moral decline of these students is a serious problem that must be resolved immediately.

The implementation of character education in the curriculum is a necessity in an effort to face the challenges of shifting the character of students today. Character generation becomes an important asset in building a nation's human resource civilization. Because the character generation has superior competence, empathy for others, strong religious values, advanced mindset, noble personality, sense of responsibility, and contributes to creating a healthy, peaceful, advanced and accomplished environment and life<sup>4</sup>. In addition, Nadiroh added that character education in the 21st-century curriculum is also oriented to developing students' talents and interests being competent in their scientific fields and understanding literacy culture well<sup>5</sup>. So that the affirmation of character education is absolutely necessary for the national curriculum as the direction for implementing learning in schools<sup>6</sup>. This character education is the main provision for students so that they can continue to exist in the global competition of the 21st-century.

<sup>1</sup> Khaldoon Al-Htaybat, Larissa von Alberti-Alhtaybat, and Zaidoon Alhatabat, "Educating Digital Natives for the Future: Accounting Educators' Evaluation of the Accounting Curriculum," *Accounting Education* 27, no. 4 (2018): 333-57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639284.2018.1437758>.

<sup>2</sup> Dana Schwieger and Christine Ladwig, "Reaching and Retaining the Next Generation: Adapting to the Expectations of Gen Z in the Classroom," *Information Systems Education Journal (ISEDJ)* 16, no. 3 (2018): 45-54.

<sup>3</sup> Siti Zubaidah, "Pendidikan Karakter Terintegrasi Keterampilan Abad Ke-21," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengkajian Ilmu Pendidikan: ESaintika* 3, no. 2 (2019): 1-24, <https://doi.org/10.36312/e-saintika.v3i2.125>.

<sup>4</sup> Krido Pramono and Margaretha Hanita, "Strategy for Strengthening Nation Character Building in Facing the Challenges of the Information Age," *Journal of Strategic and Global Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 55-70, <https://doi.org/10.7454/jsgs.v4i1.1048>.

<sup>5</sup> N. Nadiroh, V. Zulfa, and S. Yuliani, "Learning Transformation of the 21st Century Curriculum for Prospective Teacher in Term of Eco-Literacy," *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* 802, no. 1 (2021): 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/802/1/012009>.

<sup>6</sup> M. Habib Qazi, "National Identity in a Postcolonial Society: A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Pakistan's National Curriculum Textbooks and Their Social Practices in Schools for Shaping Students' National Belonging," *British Educational Research Journal* 45, no. 2 (2019): 275-97, <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3496>.

21st-century life requires metacognitive skills that must be included in the curriculum. Character education is part of four integral dimensions of a complete and balanced education in the 21st-century, namely knowledge, skills, character and metacognition<sup>7</sup>. Metacognition skills are the main aspect in growing the process of self-reflection and learning methods and can improve the other three dimensions<sup>8</sup>. Another benefit of metacognition is that it can help students clarify assignments at school, find learning difficulties and choose learning strategies to improve the quality of their learning<sup>9</sup>.

Since Indonesia contracted the Covid-19 virus in March 2020, the learning strategy has changed from face-to-face offline to online using technology. The implementation of character education in learning is a challenge for teachers as curriculum implementers<sup>10</sup>. This challenge is increasingly meaningful because teachers are required to present subject matter while paying attention to the development of student character through technology as a learning medium<sup>11</sup>. During this Covid-19 pandemic, technology is an important factor in achieving the desired learning goals<sup>12</sup>. So that technology plays an important role in the arrival of character learning to students during the Covid-19 pandemic<sup>13</sup>.

The emergence of technology allows humans to be better able to optimize their brain function in learning. Therefore, character education helps humans in optimizing brain function in accordance with the skills needed in the 21st-century<sup>14</sup>. Education is a part that must change from a classical pattern to a modern one in order to continue to play an important role in changes towards the development of globalization<sup>15</sup>. These changes are

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<sup>7</sup> Harriet Wambui Njui, "Education Reforms Towards 21st Century Skills: Integrating Character Education in Teacher Education Curriculum," *European Journal of Education Studies* 3, no. 12 (2017): 234-54, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1119107>.

<sup>8</sup> Heriyanto et al., "Character Education in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Its Relevance to the High School Learning Transformation Process," *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana* 24, no. Extra5 (2019): 327-40, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7531750>.

<sup>9</sup> Maria Luisa Sein-Echaluze, Ángel Fidalgo-Blanco, and Gustavo Alves, "Technology Behaviors in Education Innovation," *Computers in Human Behavior* 72 (2016): 596-98, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.11.049>.

<sup>10</sup> Marvin W Berkowitz, "Implementing and Assessing Evidence-Based Character Education," *Journal of Education*, no. June (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574211026908>.

<sup>11</sup> Ade Muslimat et al., "Develop Technology Based Multimedia For Indonesian Teachers," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government* 27, no. 1 (2021): 2021, <https://cibg.org.au/>.

<sup>12</sup> Apri Wardana Ritonga et al., "E-Learning Process of Maharah Qira'ah in Higher Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Higher Education* 9, no. 6 (2020): 227-35, <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n6p227>.

<sup>13</sup> Fathikah Fauziah Hanum, "Character Education in Online Learning on Citizenship Education (College Student's Perspective)," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 524, no. Icee 2020 (2021): 89-93, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210204.013>.

<sup>14</sup> Ashraf Atta Mohamed Safein Salem, "Engaging ESP Students with Brain-Based Learning for Improved Listening Skills, Vocabulary Retention and Motivation," *English Language Teaching* 10, no. 12 (2017): 182, <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n12p182>.

<sup>15</sup> Feiby Ismail et al., "Education Planning and Its Implications for Education Policy during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Studies* 3, no. 2 (2021): 110-15, <https://doi.org/10.29103/ijevs.v3i2.4441>.

very important in preparing students to live honorably and with dignity in the 21st-century<sup>16</sup>. Technological developments are used by the world of education as a means that can later establish an interaction between educators and students in realizing these goals<sup>17,18</sup>.

Many discussions of character integrated with 21st-century life skills have been carried out. The implementation of character learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is still an interesting study that requires literature. A study conducted by Masnia stated that character education is an alternative in building a better generation of the nation. In addition, character education also aims to develop the nation's next generation and minimize cultural and character problems<sup>19</sup>. Zurqoni found a strategy that can be applied by schools in character education is to provide facilities for character building and design good character development programs<sup>20</sup>. Schools carry out character education by providing role models, interventions, consistent habits, and reinforcement. However, in realizing student character, it takes parental responsibility as the first madrasa for children, teachers as role models of character in schools and society as students' social environment<sup>21</sup>. The results of character education collaborated by these three groups will provide good news for the nation and state because it prepares future leaders<sup>22</sup>. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the realization of character education can be done when participating in learning from homes such as independence, mutual cooperation, and creativity<sup>23</sup>. The content of character education above is the main provision for these students to reach their careers in the future<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Halah Ahmed Alismail and Patrick McGuire, "21st Century Standards and Curriculum: Current Research and Practice," *Journal of Education and Practice* 6, no. 6 (2015): 150-55.

<sup>17</sup> Magdalena Claro et al., "Teaching in a Digital Environment (TIDE): Defining and Measuring Teachers' Capacity to Develop Students' Digital Information and Communication Skills," *Computers and Education* 121 (2018): 162-74, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.03.001>.

<sup>18</sup> Mohammad Nehal Hasnine, Mahmoud Mohamed Hussien Ahmed, and Hiroshi Ueda, "Learner-Centric Technologies to Support Active Learning Activity Design in New Education Normal: Exploring the Disadvantageous Educational Contexts," *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning* 16, no. 10 (2021): 150-62, <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v16i10.20081>.

<sup>19</sup> Masnia, Pipit Fitriyani, and Liang Ji Bing, "Conceptual Analysis of Character Education with Integrated Quality Insight in Indonesia," *International Colloquium: Opportunities and Challenges on Education Management in 21st Century*, 2018, 33-42, <http://seminar.uad.ac.id/index.php/icocem/article/download/356/300>.

<sup>20</sup> Zurqoni et al., "Strategy and Implementation of Character Education in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 9, no. 3 (2018): 370-97, <https://doi.org/10.17499/jsser.01008>.

<sup>21</sup> Prayuningtyas Angger Wardhani et al., "Moral Literacy and Social Climate with Perception Teacher's Character Education in Elementary School," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 251, no. Acec (2018): 301-4, <https://doi.org/10.2991/acec-18.2018.69>.

<sup>22</sup> Balraj Singh, "Character Education in the 21st Century," *Ijss* 15, no. 1 (2019): 1-8.

<sup>23</sup> Anita Trisiana, "A New Paradigm of Character Education During Covid-19 Pandemic: Comparative Analysis Towards Digital Revolution," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 524, no. Icce 2020 (2021): 17-29, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210204.003>.

<sup>24</sup> Teemu Valtonen et al., "How Pre-Service Teachers Perceive Their 21st-Century Skills and Dispositions: A Longitudinal Perspective," *Computers in Human Behavior* 116, no. May 2020 (2021): 1-9, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2020.106643>.

Based on the results of the analysis of previous research that discusses the objectives and scope of character education, it is necessary to develop a study related to the new paradigm of character education during the Covid-19 pandemic as a major capital for students to face 21st-century life skills. Through this research, it is hoped that a plural and harmonious understanding will be formed. in shaping the character of students during the Covid-19 pandemic. So that the purpose of education as a place for inculcating character values for students can be realized in order to give students access to global skills in the 21st-century.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Character education has long been discoursed in the world of education in Indonesia. The main goal of Indonesian education is to form character generation that is prepared to respond to the challenges of the times. This is stated in the Law on the National Education System No. 20 of 2003 which reads that national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in the context of the intellectual life of the nation, aiming at developing the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become a democratic and responsible citizen.

Character education is a joint movement on a national and international scale in forming an ethical, caring and responsible young generation. This is a deliberate and proactive effort by schools, teachers, parents and the community to instill these ethical values which are important to students in order to easily adapt to the ever-changing environment and conditions of the times<sup>25</sup>. In fact, all forms of character education efforts aim to develop students' abilities in making good and bad decisions, maintaining goodness and realizing that goodness in everyday life and so on have been stated in the vision and mission of the school as a developer of character education<sup>26</sup>.

In addition to the above, character education is aimed at achieving five main goals. First, develop the noble attitude of students as Indonesian human resources who inherit the values of the nation's character. Second, fostering the growth and development of noble attitudes in accordance with the provisions of society and the nation's religious cultural traditions. Third, strengthen the spirit of leadership and a sense of responsibility and a sense of belonging to students towards the sustainability of the nation's human development. Fourth, provide space for students to continue to develop creativity and competence so that they can be independent and have a national perspective. Fifth,

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<sup>25</sup> Aan Komariah et al., "Participation in Character Education," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 400, no. Icream 2019 (2019): 414-17, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200130.2.12>.

<sup>26</sup> Johan Dwi Saputro and Mukhamad Murdiono, "Implementation of Character Education through a Holistic Approach to Senior High School Students," *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding* 7, no. 11 (2020): 460-70, <https://doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v7i11.2146>.

ensure the continuity of the school as a learning environment for students so that they can instill the values of honesty, creativity, nationality, and dignity<sup>27</sup>.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach. The selection of a qualitative approach was based on the researcher's desire to <sup>27</sup>comprehensively understand the meaning of character education with 21st-century skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers use the library research method with data from reliable sources, including international and national journals, proceedings, and books. Research data is collected, selected, categorized, interpreted, to be explained and described in relation to the <sup>5</sup>topic of discussion of character education in the concept of 21st-century life skills during the Covid-19 pandemic. The collected data is then processed and analyzed using descriptive content analysis by selecting, comparing and describing research data using deductive methods to find more comprehensive results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Challenges in the Implementation of Character Education During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Strengthening character education in schools requires careful focus and planning. The application of well-designed character education will produce good results <sup>24</sup>as well. In practice, character education has been degraded since the implementation of the online learning policy amid the spread of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia. This is because teachers cannot monitor the development of student attitudes directly except by using technology as a learning <sup>20</sup>medium.

Learning from home during the Covid-19 pandemic requires the synergy of parents and teachers. Teachers provide learning materials to students online and parents guide children to carry out teacher instructions well. Responding to this, Rasmitadila stated that parents also feel burdened by the implementation of online learning policies, because parents must be teachers at home, accompanying children to study and completing all homework<sup>28</sup>. The joys and sorrows of online learning are different, some parents want offline learning at school, in addition to increasing internet bills at home, spending for children's consumption is also getting bigger<sup>29</sup>. However, the positive value is that parents have a lot of time with their children, follow their child's psychological development, can monitor their children's character, worship and strengthen their emotional relationship<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Ida Umami, A. Gani, and Tejo Waskito, "Proposal of Character and Moral Education for Gifted Young Scientists in Indonesia," *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists* 7, no. 2 (2019): 377-87, <https://doi.org/10.17478/JEGYS.579560>.

<sup>28</sup> Rasmitadila et al., "The Perceptions of Primary School Teachers of Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Period: A Case Study in Indonesia," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 2 (2020): 90-109, <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/388>.

<sup>29</sup> Maman Suryaman et al., "Covid-19 Pandemic and Home Online Learning System: Does It Affect the Quality of Pharmacy School Learning?," *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy* 11, no. 8 (2020): 524-30, <https://doi.org/10.31838/srp.2020.8.74>.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel Dike, Lusila Parida, and Ivan Stevanus, "Micro Strategy And Character Educational Transformation In Elementary School During The Covid-19 Pandemic of Sintang Distric, West

In practice, the implementation of character education reaps various obstacles. Sari & Murdiono describe the obstacles in strengthening character education in the Covid-19 pandemic era including, a) the condition of teachers and students who sometimes experience illness or have activities that cannot be left behind, b) lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure for teachers and students such as technology, internet, network and internet quota, c) learning is done online so that teachers find it difficult to build student awareness, and d) not all parents have the full time to accompany their children to learn at home<sup>31</sup>. These obstacles slow down the cultivation of character values in the student learning process.

Serious steps need to be taken in an effort to minimize the obstacles to strengthening character education during online learning. The first effort that can be done is educating parents on solutions for their children's learning activities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Khotimah describe the six main steps in monitoring the development of student character education through online learning as follows<sup>32</sup>: a) Increase knowledge related to the use of the internet and online media, so that parents can monitor children's activities when using the internet as a learning medium. b) Provide education to children regarding things that can be accessed via the internet and content that is not allowed. c) Set the time for children to use the internet. d) Provide examples of good internet use for children, such as time adjustment, content accessed, etc. e) Give strict sanctions to children if they are proven to have accessed inappropriate things. f) Always communicate learning developments using the internet, the obstacles and the positive impacts of online learning. Parents play an important role in shaping the child's character at home, as well as being a remote control when the child commits a moral violation.

Conceptually, character education in schools seems to be quite well established. However, in its implementation, it faces a very big challenge. These challenges can come from the educational environment itself or from outside. Challenges from the internal aspects come from personal education and educational software (mindset, education policy and curriculum). Challenges from the external aspect in the form of changes in the global social environment that change the values, norms, and culture of a nation, are very open. These changes cannot be controlled and limited due to the development of information technology. Cheng mentioned the challenges of character implementation during the Covid-19 pandemic as follows<sup>33</sup>:

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Kalimantan Province," *European Journal of Molecular and Clinical Medicine* 7, no. 8 (2020): 775–86, [https://ejmcm.com/article\\_3196.html%0Ahttp://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=emexb&NEWS=N&AN=2010233387](https://ejmcm.com/article_3196.html%0Ahttp://ovidsp.ovid.com/ovidweb.cgi?T=JS&PAGE=reference&D=emexb&NEWS=N&AN=2010233387).

<sup>31</sup> Resti Anika Sari and Mukhamad Murdiono, "The Strategy of Civics Education Teachers in Strengthening the Character of Responsibility During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 524, no. Icce 2020 (2021): 151–60, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210204.024>.

<sup>32</sup> Husnul Khotimah, Sri Umi Mintarti Widjaja, and Heny Kusdiyanti, "Character Education Based on Cooperative Personality Values in the 2013 Curriculum During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 17, no. 1 (2021): 133–38, <https://www.jesoc.com/>.

<sup>33</sup> Xiaoqiao Cheng, "Challenges of 'School's Out, But Class's On' to School Education: Practical Exploration of Chinese Schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Science Insights Education Frontiers* 5, no. 2 (2020): 501–16, <https://doi.org/10.15354/sief.20.ar043>.

a. Challenges to Traditional Schools

The massive development of technology requires schools to transform education from classic to modern. Traditional schools that do not adapt to the times, will experience a decline in quality<sup>34</sup>. This has an effect on monitoring student character learning which cannot be accessed without using technology.

b. Challenges of Teacher Teaching Methods

The learning method chosen by the teacher determines the arrival of the subject matter to students, which ultimately realizes the expected learning objectives. Embedding character education through internet applications requires teacher skills that are not just explaining the subject matter. More than that, teachers must also master the learning field, have technology operating skills, understand student psychology, know learning strategies well<sup>35</sup>.

c. Challenges of Student Learning Styles

Students have different learning styles from one student to another. As a result, teachers' understanding of students' learning styles must be upgraded periodically. Student learning environment factors at home often affect student learning styles that are always changing<sup>36</sup>. Teachers are required to understand well the learning style of each student so that the subject matter taught reaches students and is well understood.

d. The Challenge<sup>13</sup> of Teaching Resource Innovation

Character learning during the Covid<sup>6</sup>9 pandemic has changed. In line with that, the strategy for presenting materials and the content of teaching materials has also changed<sup>37</sup>. First, the maximum transformation of conventional teaching resources into digital. Technological advances also demand the digitization of teaching resources. Second, verify the learning materials. The curriculum that took place before the pandemic needed to be changed according to conditions during the pandemic, adding materials on pandemic prevention and control, health education at home, mental health, and practical activities to fill activities at home<sup>38</sup>.

e. School Administration Challenges<sup>3</sup>

The implementation of character learning requires good planning in accordance with the conditions of the times. During this Covid-19 pandemic, teachers need to formulate

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<sup>34</sup> Živko Bojović et al., "Education in Times of Crisis: Rapid Transition to Distance Learning," *Computer Applications in Engineering Education* 28, no. 6 (2020): 1467–89, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cae.22318>.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew A Kraft, Nicole S Simon, and Melissa Arnold, "Sustaining a Sense of Success: The Importance of Teacher Working Conditions During the Covid-19 Pandemic," *EdWorkingPaper No. 20-279*, no. 20 (2020): 1–56, <https://doi.org/10.26300/35nj-v890>.

<sup>36</sup> Wahab Ali, "Online and Remote Learning in Higher Education Institutes: A Necessity in Light of Covid-19 Pandemic," *Higher Education Studies* 10, no. 3 (2020): 16–25, <https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v10n3p16>.

<sup>37</sup> Dirk Lauret and Durdane Bayram-Jacobs, "Covid-19 Lockdown Education: The Importance of Structure in a Suddenly Changed Learning Environment," *Education Sciences* 11, no. 5 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11050221>.

<sup>38</sup> Cheng, "Challenges of 'School's Out, But Class's On' to School Education: Practical Exploration of Chinese Schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic."

the documents needed in the implementation of character learning<sup>39</sup>. Coordination of schools, teachers and parents is a necessity that must be done in order to get the desired results. Collaborative learning and increasing synergy with education providers have become a routine that cannot be eliminated.

### **New Paradigm of Integrating Character Education with 21st Century Skills**

The demands for changes in the 21st-century human mindset are in line with the demands of major changes in national education. The phenomenon of national education that has been running so far is a legacy of old education which contains the activity of memorizing subject matter<sup>40</sup>. Changing the education system is not an easy job, but a complex issue that must be addressed immediately. Because the Indonesian education system plays an important role in the development of its human resources<sup>41</sup>. But this change is a must if we do not want to be crushed by the changing times.

Major changes in the impact of technological developments have highlighted the attention of many sectors, including the education sector. Partnership for 21st Century Learning develops a learning framework in the 21st-century that requires students to have skills, knowledge and abilities in the fields of technology, media and information, learning and innovation skills as well as life and career skills<sup>42</sup>. This framework also describes the skills, knowledge and expertise that must be mastered so that students can be successful in life and work. In line with this, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture formulated that the 21st-century learning paradigm emphasizes the ability of students to find out from various sources, formulate problems, think analytically and collaborate in solving problems<sup>43</sup>.

The 21st century learning framework becomes a reference for implementing the learning process in schools. 21st century learning carries the concept of long-term life in the face of challenges that may arise. The explanation of 21st century learning items can be described as follows: (a) students are formed to have critical and skilled skills in solving life problems faced both individually and in groups; (b) students are equipped with communication and collaboration skills with various parties to create good quality work; (c) students are formed into creative and innovative humans who are able to produce bright ideas; (d) students are skilled in operating technology as a communication medium that makes it easy for everyone to carry out their respective tasks; (e) students have

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<sup>39</sup> Dike, Parida, and Stevanus, "Micro Strategy And Character Educational Transformation In Elementary School During The Covid-19 Pandemic of Sintang Distic, West Kalimantan Province."

<sup>40</sup> Pepen Supendi, Palah, and Aan Hasanah, "Development of Character Education Models in Madrasah Through the Establishment of the Tahajud Prayer," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 17, no. 2 (2020): 101-18, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2020.172-01>.

<sup>41</sup> Siti Haerani et al., "Structural Model of Developing Human Resources Performance: Empirical Study of Indonesia States Owned Enterprises," *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business* 7, no. 3 (2020): 211-21, <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no3.211>.

<sup>42</sup> Partnership for 21st Century Learning, "21st Century Student Outcomes," 2015, 1-9, <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>.

<sup>43</sup> Tri Murhanjati Sholihah and Badraningsih Lastariwati, "Problem Based Learning to Increase Competence of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 14, no. 1 (2020): 148-54, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v14i1.13772>.

contextual learning competencies as part of self-development; and (h) students have skills in obtaining accurate information from various media and information sources when interacting with various parties<sup>44</sup>.

The success of implementing 21st century learning as described above, is closely related to the use of information technology as an online communication medium that continues to grow<sup>45</sup>. A number of studies on the use of information technology to support 21st-century learning have been carried out in various countries. The following are the characteristics of 21st-century learning:

Table 1: Paradigm shift 21st-century

21st-Century Characteristics	Learning Model
Information (available anywhere and anytime)	Learning is directed to encourage students to find out from various sources of observation not being told.
Computing (faster-using machines)	Learning is directed to hone students' skills in formulating problems, not just solving problems.
Automation (reaching all jobs)	Learning is directed to train students' analytical thinking, not just mechanistic thinking.
Communication (from anywhere, anywhere)	Learning emphasizes student on the importance of cooperation in solving problems.

The 21st century learning model above is also a differentiator from the learning model. In addition, a number of character-based aspects were also determined as an important part needed by humans in the midst of increasingly massive technological developments, among others: (a) leadership attitudes become the forefront which is very much needed to decide on various new breakthroughs; (b) an attitude of responsibility for every action taken either individually or in groups; (c) uphold values and ethics in socializing with the community; (d) have the basic skills needed to carry out social activities; (e) have an adaptive attitude to various kinds of changes that occur in the dynamics of life; (f) have a life principle that is the basis for doing business to achieve the desired goal; (g) accountability as an individual who has strong reasons for every decision taken; (h) have social responsibility towards the environment and society; (i) continue to strive to increase community productivity through various daily social activities<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Aam Hamdani et al., "Vocational Education in the Industrial 4.0 Era: Challenges and Opportunities," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* 520, no. Tvet 2020 (2021): 33-35, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210203.081>.

<sup>45</sup> Reza Rachmadtullah et al., "The Challenge of Elementary School Teachers to Encounter Superior Generation in the 4.0 Industrial Revolution: Study Literature," *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research* 9, no. 4 (2020): 1879-82, <http://www.ijstr.org>.

<sup>46</sup> Ezinne Eze- Ajoku, "Exploring Organizational Change In Healthcare: Understanding The Innovation Decision Process of Adopters," *Johns Hopkins University* (2019), <http://jhir.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/62284>.

Aware of the high demand for the "creation" of human resources, the education system and model must also adapt to the demands of the times. Information technology as a learning medium that is easily available today helps to realize learning goals that are in accordance with the demands of the 21st-century<sup>47</sup>. The abundance of literature which is the fruit of thought and the result of discussing the concept of 21st-century education is expected to be an inspiration for teachers and educational institutions to run the learning wheel in schools and campuses in various parts of the world.

Easy access to learning centers through the use of technology has had a very significant change in the roles of teachers and students. It is time for student-oriented learning to be applied as a reaction to changing times. The sentence "the world is my class" reflects how the whole world and its contents are a place for human learners to increase their knowledge and competence, so that the process of seeking knowledge is not only confined to the walls of the classroom. The teacher's role is no longer an "infomediary" because students can directly access sources of knowledge that have been assigned to teachers in the classroom. Teachers will function more as facilitators, trainers and companions for students who are following the learning process. Even at the extreme, it is undeniable that in a number of contexts, teachers and students together learn and acquire knowledge through the interactions that exist between them when discussing a particular material<sup>48</sup>. In addition, the implementation of teaching and learning activities must also be expanded beyond the boundaries of the classroom, by increasing the interaction of students with the surrounding environment in various forms of methodologies and approaches<sup>49</sup>.

The 21st-century globally needs teachers whose profiles are effective, professional and charming who are suitable to face the challenges of the 21st-century. Teacher competencies that have been formulated by the government include personality competencies, professional competencies<sup>34</sup>, social competencies, and pedagogic competencies that need to be contextualized in the learning process, so that they are able to prepare and predict the learning needs of 21st-century students and the demands of 21st-century society<sup>50</sup>. In the same event, teachers are also obliged to pay attention to the character of students combined with technology-based learning<sup>51</sup>.

Table 2: Combination of character education and 21st-century skills

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<sup>47</sup> Ika Rahmania, "Project Based Learning (PjBL) Learning Model with STEM Approach in Natural Science Learning for the 21st Century," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1161-67, <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i1.1727>.

<sup>48</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond et al., *Preparing Teachers for Deeper Learning*, 2019, <https://www.hepg.org/hep-home/>.

<sup>49</sup> M. Wasith Achadi and Noor Laila Fithriyana, "Integration of Pancasila Values in Student Books of Islamic Religious Education and Character at High School Level," *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 17, no. 2 (2020): 119-36, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpai.2020.172-02>.

<sup>50</sup> Adnan Hakim, "Contribution of Competence Teacher (Pedagogical, Personality, Professional Competence and Social) on the Performance of Learning," *The International Journal Of Engineering And Science* 4, no. 2 (2015): 1-12, [www.theijes.com](http://www.theijes.com).

<sup>51</sup> Muslimat et al., "Develop Technology Based Multimedia For Indonesian Teachers."

Quality of Character (Students adapt to a dynamic environment)					
Religiosity	Nationalism	Independence	Mutual cooperation	Integrity	
Basic Literacy (Students apply basic skills in daily life)					
Language	Literacy numerical	Literacy science	Literacy digital literacy	Financial	Cultural literacy and citizenship
Competencecompetent (Students solve complex problems)					
Critical thinking		Creativity	Communication	Collaboration	

The table 2 above reveals the chances of a successful combination of an application of information technology-based character education. The Covid-19 pandemic period is a great opportunity for teachers to implement technology as a medium for improving student character. Even though they cannot meet in person, teachers can still communicate with students using various media such as video calls, Zoom, Google Meet, Video Conference, Google Drive, etc. That way, teachers will still be able to provide guidance to their students.

## CONCLUSION

Children's character education should be the main priority of parents and schools that must be developed. Because children now determine the type of community Indonesia will have in the future. This research shows that character education applied in schools today is the main capital for students to face the opportunities, pressures and challenges of 21st-century life that will lead them to the gates of success in the future. Another finding of this study also describes that learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is a great opportunity for teachers to implement character education using advanced technology such as Zoom, Whatsapp Call, Google Meet, Google Drive, etc. Through strong character education combined with 21st-century skills, it is hoped that Indonesian students will be able to compete in the context of increasingly stringent global developments and be ready to take on roles through creative thinking and ideas. This research needs to be followed up by examining the role of parents and teachers in instilling character education during online learning with more comprehensive research methods, objects and samples, so that this study obtains more perfect results.

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