



The Strategy of Internalizing Character Values through Distance Learning from the Perspective of Prospective Teachers

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Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic had brought significant impacts on many aspects of life, including in the education sector in which learning activities have to be held online. In one hand, there are numerous benefits of online learning, but it also raises drawbacks on the other hand. One of the flaws is the lack of character values that teachers can instill through distance learning. Thus, the purpose of this research is to address the shortcomings of online learning by focusing on four issues: the types of character values internalized to students, the strategies used by teachers to internalize values, the evaluation of value internalization activities, and the obstacles faced by teachers when cultivating character values. The researcher employs a descriptive narrative inquiry method to investigate these four issues. In-depth interviews are conducted with 17 outstanding teachers from West Java Province. Data analysis reveals that teachers apply 30 strategies to internalize 17 values based on 15 principles. Internalization materials, methods, and principles are typically drawn from religion, philosophy, and culture. Teachers face challenges in internalizing values, particularly in the terms of network connection, finances, tool reliability, and lack of communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges that teachers face in carrying out their duties during the Covid-19 pandemic is the difficulty in instilling the students character values through online learning (Purandina & Winaya, 2020). Although some teachers believe that cognitive learning materials can be successfully taught to students via online such as using media from the YouTube channel (Bergdahl et al., 2020; Fakhruddin et al., 2020; Smith & Colton, 2020), in fact, it is not the case with affective learning. Is online learning relevant to instill these affective values in students?

This question arises because values basically are beliefs, cognitive standards, and mental representations of individual

or social preferences (Coward & Jackendoff, 1994; Reyna, 2021). In accordance with the context of time and situation, the value directs the owner to a choice or action toward objects, people, and oneself (Ponizovskiy et al., 2019; Vermeir et al., 2020). People learn and cultivate certain values through socialization, parenting, and social interaction with the society (Safsouf et al., 2020). It also can take place through other influential sources such as formal education, mass media, or the internet (Antyukhova & Kasatkin, 2021; Damsa & Ludvigsen, 2016; Juhaňák et al., 2019). However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the process of socialization and social interaction is limited and even avoided in order to prevent virus transmission (Kim

et al., 2021; Raza et al., 2021; Resmi & Hasanah, 2020).

To address the issues raised above, it is necessary to conduct research on strategies for instilling character values in students. This research will look into the strategies that the outstanding teachers use to instill character values in their students. A framework of thought and theoretical basis on the character value-instilling strategies proposed by experts will be used to understand the strategies used by teachers.

Shimabukuro (2008) emphasizes the importance of teachers to firstly understand such character values before instilling those to students. Understanding the mental development and experience of the child's character, being contemplative, showing a generous spirit, and having interpersonal sensitivity when interacting with students, fellow teachers, school principals and parents are some values that should belong to teachers. In this sense, teachers are required to have to enthusiastically engage when teaching by using specific learning models in order to activate students' character values.

Shimabukuro's proposed learning model actually can be found in a variety of scientific articles based on research findings. Several of those, for instance, are shown in Syihabuddin's research (Syihabuddin, 2016, 2017; 2019), that introduces the various models of value internalization, those of which are the M-3 Instructional-based Model (Munazarah, Mudzakarrah, and Muhasabah), the Prophetic Approach, the Qur'an-based models, and the integrative model (Falah, 2019).

If paying attention closely, we can see that the findings of the previous study are based on a spiritual pedagogic model. The sources of this model are based on religion, culture, and personal experience. It describes experience, knowledge, and intuition through tafakkur, tadabbur, discussion, and reflection in order to produce noble values to motivate,

encourage, enlighten, and serve as the foundation for individuals to do the roles as teachers or parents. Religiousness, sincerity, discipline, compassion, responsibility, patience, hard work, and consistency are the examples of the spiritual values (Syihabuddin, 2017).

The preceding model is consistent with the Value Clarification Technology (VCT) model used in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning (Harto, 2015). According to Yusrizal & Hariati (2022) the VCT model is quite effective and efficient in instilling students' religious values. In this case, students are invited to clarify and express their attitudes and opinions toward the cases presented by the teacher using this model.

The two models presented above are linked to religion which becomes the main source of character values. This is in accordance with the views of Crick & Jelfs (2011), stating that practicing the virtuous characters entails acknowledging the existence of religious experience and being inclusive to the other different perspectives of religion. Apart from it, the other model is cultural in nature. In this respect, Miller & Athan (2007) introduce a model known as the Spiritual Awareness Pedagogy (SAP), which is a spiritually based pedagogical framework. This model enables students to recognize the creator's presence through learning in the class, to present spirituality in student interactions, to pay attention to each student's spiritual development, and to view the classroom as a spiritual space regardless of religious backgrounds. As its process, it begins by fostering the awareness of prospective teachers so that they can apply it as a foundation for their profession in the future.

In this spiritual model, students are invited to bring stories about their life experiences, specifically related to their own personal stories. People may ignore such kinds of experiences and even consider them as an unimportant thing. However, through this way, the teacher

and students are able to discuss the story's influence, acceptance, and elimination of excesses from the environment and from other people. In this context, direct and imaginative experiences are prioritized to foster dynamic discussions in the class.

In addition, Grace also proposes another model that is similar to the SAP model (Grace, 2011). He presents a contemplative pedagogical model that aims to increase student self-awareness through investigation, or research on the students themselves as well. through this step, character values can emerge within themselves. Practices of meditation such as compassion, mindfulness, yoga, observing nature, self-inquiry, and other practices are some examples of the contemplative teaching practices. It is worth noting that contemplative pedagogy is not about objectives, outcomes, or even effort, but it is also about a lifelong path of humans, so that the practitioner's presence can benefit all beings.

In addition, Ives & Cyprys (2016) also developed a values-based parenting (VBP) model that was specifically used to help children internalize the noble values. This model is divided into four stages, which are as follows. The first is the vision stage (concept) which is the stage of introducing ideas or values to children that will be internalized, such as the value of politeness. In this sense, parents or teachers have to explain to children the concept of politeness, how to apply it, and the consequences of ignoring it. The success of internalization much relies on the child's comprehension of parents or teachers explanations toward the values.

The second, authority (role model) stage in which the teachers or parents demonstrate the actual model. Positive attitudes and behaviors must be imitated, and, conversely, negative attitudes and behaviors have to be avoided by children. This model also can be presented in the form of fiction or history. The third, in the life (action) stage, teachers or parents associate values with the reality of life.

This step is taken to ensure that there is a connection between certain values and real-life situations. For example, parents can begin by cultivating the value of politeness in their children's birthday party. The fourth, during the utterance (slogan) stage, teachers or parents create short slogans in the form of words or phrases about the main values that children can easily remember. Slogans are intended to reinforce the concept of certain values.

Deci & Ryan (1991) present a self-regulation model for internalizing the values. This model is divided into four stages. The first, it is known as the external regulation which means that a behavior is externally controlled by the threat of punishment or rewards as well. The second, it is intrajectory regulation, which means that the values are not fully internalized by the children. However, the behavior is still controlled externally. The third, regulation identification in which individuals accept values as their own because those are necessary for them. The fourth, it is an integrated regulation, in which values are instilled in children and then integrated with previously values, goals, and individual motives.

In this respect, the internalization model is applicable not only to students, but also to teachers. According to Cheng & Chan (2021), the lesson study method is able to help the teachers internalize metacognitive learning and socialize how to design learning when implementing a competency-based curriculum.

Based on the various models as above-mentioned, which model can help children internalize the character values? According to Hardy et al, (2008), there are three determinant factors which can influence the internalization of adolescent moral values. The first, parents have to participate in the growth and development of their children's life. The second, parents also should encourage their children to make them independent and responsible. The third, children will be

given information and guidelines to help self-regulation.

Can the models as described above be implemented through distance learning? Do teachers, particularly the outstanding teachers, have their own models for helping students internalize character values? What are kinds of the materials that can support internalization of character values? What is the outcome? What are the challenges that teachers face in process of internalization of character values?

Many previous research merely focused on explicating the strategy of instilling the character values during the Covid-19 pandemic. Najmuddin & Aprilianty (2020) investigated learning strategies for the character development of students in an integrated Islamic school in Mataram during the pandemic. The study revealed that the learning strategy used was a combination of online and

offline learning to incorporate character values into lesson materials.

While the previous study much focused on the strategy of character value integration in lesson materials, this current study highlights the perspective of the prospective teachers on the strategy of internalizing character values. The perception of the prospective teachers may be used as an additional point to the blueprint of lesson material for distance learning. Thus, the whole experiences of the teaching-learning practice hopefully would fulfill to both teacher and student.

METHOD

To address the issues above, a descriptive narrative inquiry method was employed. Research on the model of internalizing character values in students was conducted following the information as presented in Figure 1.

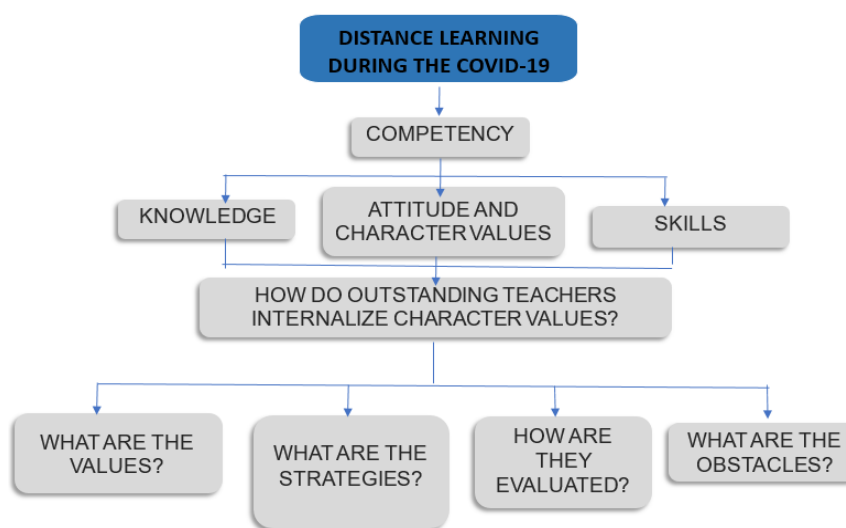


Figure 1. The Four Issues Guiding the Research

Moreover, in-depth interviews were conducted with 17 outstanding teachers from West Java Province. From March to June 2022, the research was carried out in Bandung. This study's respondents were the outstanding teachers in the provincial level. The selection of the respondents was based on the fact that their expertise has been recognized by the government,

imitated by other teachers, and valued by their students.

The purpose of this research is to develop the means, methods, strategies, techniques, or activities used by the outstanding teachers to internalize character values during the Covid-19 period. The researcher employs the term strategy to represent these various terms.

Heigham & Croker (2009) describe Garold Murray's opinion related to the narrative inquiry as a method in qualitative research to achieve this goal. Narrative inquiry is an interdisciplinary study of various activities in regarding of generating and analyzing stories about life

experiences, such as history, interviewd, journals, diaries, autobiographies, and biographies, followed by research report. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the 17 outstanding teachers, whose characteristics are listed in the Table 1.

Table 1. Data Source Characteristics

| Respondent's Identity | Respondent's Description | Details | Total |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------|
| Achievement | County/City | 13 | 17 |
| | Province | 3 | |
| | National | 1 | |
| Sex | Male | 10 | 17 |
| | Female | 7 | |
| Education | S1 (Bachelor's degree) | 8 | 17 |
| | S2 (Master's degree) | 9 | |
| Teaching experience | 10 - 15 Years | 11 | 17 |
| | 15 – 20 Years | 4 | |
| | More than 20 Years | 2 | |

Text codes, field notes, and collaboration between researchers and respondents were used to analyze the collected data. The data were organized into groups based on the study's focus, the tendency of the respondents' views, and descriptions of the respondents' views or concepts. The concepts were also identified as research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study question is comprised of four issues: (1) values internalized by students; (2) strategies employed by

teachers to internalize values; (3) evaluation of value internalization activities; and (4) obstacles faced by teachers when internalizing values. Based on the collected data, the teachers provided other possible answers. There are teachers who suggest a variety of values internalized by students, a variety of strategies, a variety of ways to evaluate activities and obstacles faced. Therefore, the most significant, dominant, or most-voted subjects are included in the graph below. The four issues are depicted in the graph that follows.

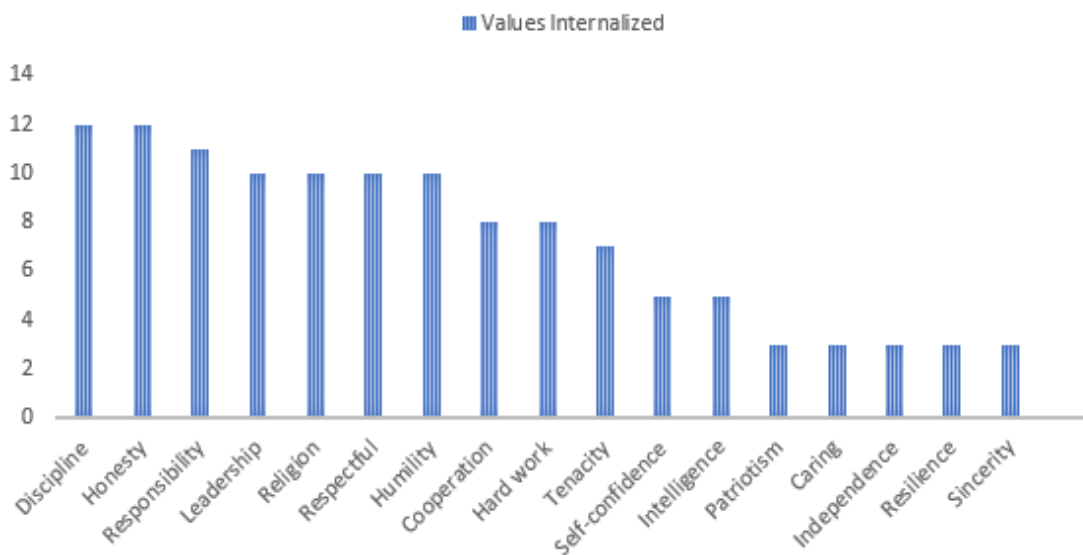


Figure 2. Values Internalized by Teachers

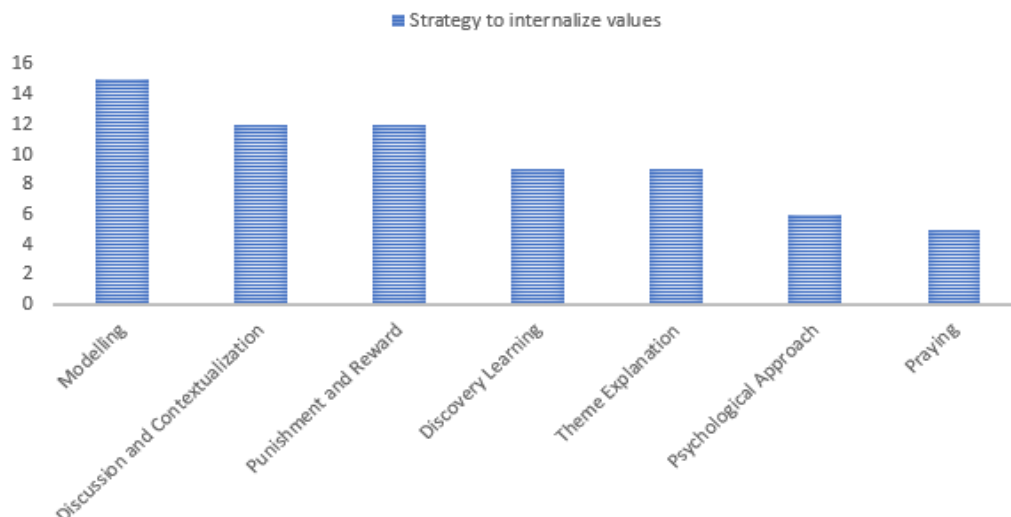


Figure 3. Strategy to Internalize Values

The teachers proposed the values as internalization material, namely discipline (12), honesty (12), responsibility (11), leadership (10), religion (10), respectful (10), humility (10), cooperation (8), hard work (8), tenacity (7), self-confidence (5), intelligence (5), patriotism (3), caring (3), independence (3), resilience (3), and sincerity (3). The strategies to internalize values proposed by the teachers were found to include modelling (15),

discussion and contextualization (12), punishment and reward (12), discovery learning (9), theme explanation (9), psychological method (6), and praying (5).

How does a teacher determine whether students have internalized character values or not? Teachers evaluate their performance in establishing values in a variety of methods, as depicted in Figure 4.

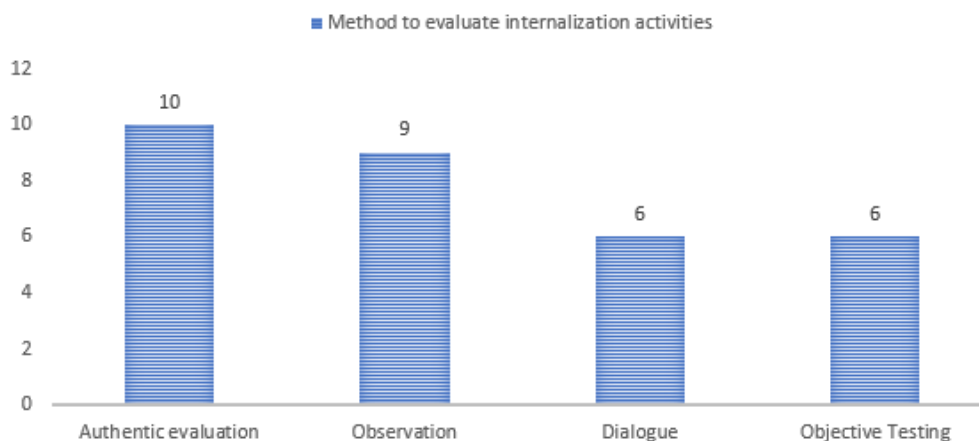


Figure 4. Method to Evaluate Internalization Activities

Figure 4 presents four methods proposed by the teachers to evaluate internalization activities which include authentic evaluation (10), observation (9), dialogue (6), and objective testing (6).

There are four main obstacles experienced by the teachers when

internalizing values in students. The obstacles include internet connection (17), device compatibility (17), absence of parental support (15), and time restrictions (9).

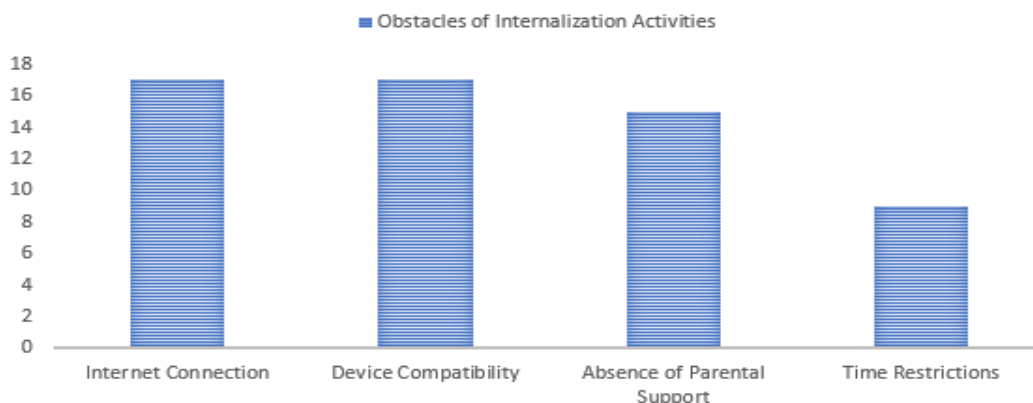


Figure 5. Obstacles of Internalization Activities

Internalization Values

There are 17 character values that the outstanding teachers believe students have to internalize. Teachers express these values in broad terms such as character values, attitudes, and morals. However, some teachers use specific terms to describe it, such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, respectful, and so on.

The values presented in the findings are consistent with the findings of Syihabuddin's research, which states that there are values of good and strong character, namely sincerity, honesty, courage, humility, and resilience, that teachers should instill in their students.

Teachers assume that these values are still external to students and have not been internalized. Thus, teachers have to assist students in internalizing them. Dillard et al. (2008) defines internalization as an activity that involves presenting or allowing experiences from outside the student's self to enter, settle, and become ingrained in a person, and then the value emerges as a clear figure over time.

The preceding internalization material is consistent with the religious character, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation emphasized in Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No. 87 of 2017. According to this regulation, strengthening character education aims to strengthen students'

character through the integration of heart, sense, exercise, thought, and exercise.

The 17 values can also be internalized by using guidance programs to create student morality based on four Ghazali's criteria: the power of knowledge, the power to control rage, the power to control lust, and the power to act reasonable (Gustini, 2016). According to Sukino & Failasufah (2019), scientific attitudes which are referred to character values in this study, can also be internalized by students through learning activities on various subjects, including Qur'an-Hadith, *Fiqh*, Islamic Cultural History (SKI), and *Aqidah Akhlak*. Meanwhile, Amri et al. (2019) concluded that there are eight behaviors that can be used to instill noble characters, namely habituating smiles, *salaam*, tolerance, sunnah fasting, performing the Dhuha prayer, performing *zhuhur* prayers, reciting the Quran, congregational prayer, and becoming accustomed to almsgiving.

Internalization Strategy

Teachers adhere to the philosophical foundations, principles, values, or concepts that guide them in carrying out their profession when teaching, educating, and internalizing values to students. The findings on internalization strategy show that outstanding teachers use a variety of methods to educate, teach, and internalize values to their students. Moreover, some of the findings above correspond to the

methods established by the government in the 2013 Curriculum. Discovery learning, scientific methods, cooperative learning, web-course creation, contextualizing lessons, modeling, communication, and dialogue are some parts of these methods. This can be interpreted as teachers in schools responding positively to the method or method set by the government in the 2013 Curriculum.

Internalization of values can be accomplished in a variety of ways in accordance with the value application model. Praying, being a role model for students in applying values, educating with the heart, guiding with a sincere heart, educating with compassion, not using violence, praying before studying, asking students to pray in congregation, and reminding students repeatedly are some of these ways.

The method described above is consistent with the findings of Syihabuddin's research, which concludes that character values are derived from Islam's primary sources, namely the Qur'an and Al-hadith. Furthermore, these values are consistent with the personality of Pancasila, which is internalized through a strategy that combines example, monitoring, explanation, and storytelling.

Methods, strategies, models, and principles are used by teachers to express how they internalize character values. Theoretically, those terms should not be called methods, models, or strategies. As a result, researchers refer to those as the strategy which is an operational, practical, and actual method used by teachers in schools.

Internalization of Evaluation

The teacher evaluates student achievement, learning effectiveness, and internalization success using the techniques and principles such as cognitive, attitude, and psychomotor aspects; the efficacy of the teaching and learning process; the principles of honesty, openness, and impartiality; the

principles of fairness, honesty, and objectivity; and authentic evaluation.

According to the findings above, evaluation is carried out not only on student learning outcomes, but also on the learning process, both the learning process passed by the students and the teaching process carried out by the teachers. The activities carried out by the teachers are critical, particularly in determining the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Evaluation is also carried out thoroughly, covering cognitive, attitudes, and psychomotor aspects.

Two principles must be followed when conducting evaluation activities. The first, ethical principles such as honesty, openness, and non-favoritism; followed by the principles of fairness, honesty, and objectivity. The second, the theoretical principle, which states that the test must be valid, reliable, and fair.

Some respondents emphasize the importance of authentic assessment when it comes to assessing learning outcomes or instilling values. One of the benefits of this assessment method is the ability to measure student performance realistically. This assessment is appropriate for assessing value internalization.

Internalization Obstacles

Based on interviews with respondents, the challenges that teachers faced when implementing the internalization strategy include reduced frequency of online meetings, insufficient time for online learning, the presence of students whose internet access is limited, inadequate device, the mindset of some parents who entrust their children's education to the school, lack of parental or guardian support, lack of parental involvement in education, and financial difficulties.

These findings suggest that online meetings become less common. This is in line with Hong et al. (2021) that examines online learning ineffectiveness in high

schools. The ineffectiveness is due to several factors such as the time constraints that are mechanical, measurable, and rigid impediments to delivering the material. This means that a number of materials have not been delivered or explained, but time has run out, or the internet connection has been lost, or the internet quota has been exhausted. This incident was caused by a number of factors, including a lack of quota preparation, students who were not disciplined enough to arrive on time, or the teacher was late, or the equipment was damaged.

The shortcomings listed above can be mitigated with the help or attention of parents, who can remind their children about lesson times, quota availability, and tool readiness. In fact, respondents believe that some parents completely abandon their children's education to the school and do not support their children's learning activities. This generally applies to some members of the lay community who are experiencing financial difficulties. In summary, the study's findings indicate that online learning is less effective than face-to-face learning (offline).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the previous paragraphs that there are 17 values that can be internalized. The strategies used by teachers to internalize religious values are effective. There are four methods to evaluate internalization activities, and that there are four obstacles encountered by the teachers when internalizing values in students. The 17 character values are consistent with Pancasila, religion, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation. Online meetings are deemed insufficient due to time constraints, students who are not disciplined enough to attend at the appointed time, teachers who are late to join or whose equipment is damaged, and some economic issues. Moreover, it is

suggested that future research more focus on evaluating the outcomes of value internalization, the types of evaluations used, the challenges encountered in implementing these types, and the evaluation results for the connection between the evaluation tool and the objectivity. The results was of interest to the world of teaching, but the research on it was almost close to none.

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