

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

In March 2020, a disease called COVID-19 and has never before infected humans (Yuliana, 2020, p. 187) began to spread widely to many countries in the world. This has caused many problems to the world for example, death rates insufficient number of medical personnel, the rise of unemployment, the decline in economy etc. One of the aspects that has also been affected is education. It has caused a complex problem in the world of education (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021, p.133).

Generally, online learning as the name implies is the study conducted by using computer and the Internet connection to broaden student's knowledge (Baig, 2011, P.28). In other words, people who study online do not have to come to class. Online learning is not something new in the world of education. However, when in-class learning is totally replaced by online learning, various effects will arise.

Online learning has widely been applied in schools and academic institutions during the pandemic period because many countries have postponed in-class education (Abidah *et al.*, 2020, p.38). This means, online learning has been popularly conducted as a way of study to minimize the spread of infectious disease. However, online learning that is undertaken by school and college students can bring certain changes. One of them is the impact on their characters.

It is true that people's characters can be influenced by the surroundings. Learning and teaching activity can indeed have an influence on the formation of a person's character (Marini, 2017, p. 117; Ratnasari, 2018, p. 34). It is necessary to realize that in fact, something new that someone does can contribute to their characteristics. Since a person's character plays an important role in their life, people need to know that certain conditions they experience can have an impact on their character.

For instance, the online learning which is totally applied in schools and campuses can be something new for school and college students. Moreover, the pandemic situation requires people to do online learning. By relating character building to the online learning carried out by people during the pandemic time, this discussion can become a significant as well as interesting study to conduct.

1.2. The Problems of Study

From the points mentioned above, this study concentrates on two problems listed as followings:

- (a) What is the concept of online learning?
- (b) What kinds of characteristics can be shaped as the impact online learning?

1.3. The Objectives of Study

Based on the problems above, this research has two objectives as followings:

- (a) to identify the concept of online learning
- (b) to figure out the types of characteristics that can be formed through online learning.

1.4 The Purpose of Study

There are at two purposes to fulfill in this research. First, theoretically, the result of the study can be considered as contribution to the development of theory in education field. This means the findings of this study are useful to complete existing theories in educational studies as well as other relevant fields such as media studies, cultural studies, psychology, etc.

Practically, this study can help improve people's understanding about the relation between online study and character formation so that people can do the right thing in conducting online learning. Additionally, this research can help parents, students, teachers, and academicians to pay more attention to characters development during the online learning period.

1.5. The Scope of Study

The respondents in this study were 22 students of the 6th semester morning class E from the Faculty of Teaching and Education, Universitas Prima Indonesia Medan. They became respondents who filled out the questionnaires that have been prepared through *Google Forms*. Due to time constraints and pandemic conditions, this questionnaire technique and the small number of respondents can be a good alternative.

The online learning discussed in this study refers to a learning system that utilizes the Internet implemented in schools. In other words, this study limits the discussion within the scope of the college students because online learning has become an inevitable choice during the

pandemic time. In other words, by using conceptual analysis, this study discusses the impact of online learning on character building in people who carry out online learning regularly, for example, school and university students.

1.6. Clarification of Terminology

Since this study discusses about the effect of online learning on character building, it is essential to understand the term ‘character building’ used in this study. People need to understand that character can be formed. It can developed through education (Dwirahayu, 2011, p. 131). This means, a person’s characteristic can change. The characteristics that undergo these changes refer to the term ‘character building’ used in this study. It also mean “a set or a group of characteristics”. An important term to clarify is ‘character’. To clearly define what ‘character’ means, the meaning indicated by the dictionary can provide an appropriate explanation. In dictionary, ‘character’ can have many meanings. Among the meanings of ‘character’ listed in *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, the meaning of ‘character’ that is suitable in this study is that ‘character’ means “all the qualities and features that make a person, groups of people, and places different from others”(Wehmeier, 2000, p. 195-196). From the definitions above, the term ‘character’ appears in this study can refer to a set of characteristics of a person.

While the term ‘online learning’ used in this study refers to the process of distance learning (carried out by school or college students) using the Internet. This kind of leaning occurs when certain circumstances in a society or country do not allow face-to-face learning. Further discussion of the online learning concept is presented in the analysis section.

A literature review has been carried out by observing several studies on online learning, for instance, Simon (2012) discussed about the role of technology in the process of forming a professional identity in higher education. There was also a study conducted by Xu and Jaggars (2013) which compared online learning and physical learning as well as its quality. Several studies such as Yusnilita (2020), Nambiar (2020), Abidah et al. (2020) and Maulana (2020) specifically focused on the impact of online learning on student’s achievement, satisfaction, and psychological effects such as stress and anxiety as well as the implementation of certain programs in online learning.

Although those researches also talked a little about the relationship between online learning and student’s characteristics, the discussion has not specifically and thoroughly

concentrated on the formation of characteristics. Therefore, this study can fill this gap by focusing on the impact of online learning on the formation of student's characteristics.