



# The Academic Demoralization of Students in Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Academic moralization, which has been internalized through educational institutions with teacher supervision at schools, now falls into a decline in line with the implementation of distance education due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This article aims to show that an educational system that does not offer in-person teaching leads to students ignoring the values of academic morality, such as plagiarism, discipline, and responsibility. This article employs a qualitative descriptive method by relying on online news mapping data as a secondary source and verified data from interviews with elementary school students as the primary source. The results of this study indicate that online education as a learning solution during the pandemic has caused students to plagiarize, cheat, rely on others to complete their tasks, and lose an overall sense of discipline and responsibility. This study suggests a new direction of moral education that does not only rely on teacher supervision but rather builds the wisdom of students' independence upon learning.

**Keywords:** academic demoralization, moral education, online learning, COVID-19 pandemic, elementary school

## INTRODUCTION

The global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has brought about major changes to educational institutions (Salkiah, 2020). Academic moral education, which has been the responsibility of educational institutions (schools) (Muassomah et al., 2020; Nurlaila et al., 2021), now begins to be neglected along with the shift in the concept of education from school-based to technology-based education due to social distancing policies. The moral values conceptualized in the curriculum applied in the learning process, such as discipline, a sense of responsibility, independence, and honesty, are fading in online education when it prioritizes flexibility and freedom (Abdullah, 2018; Magfirah, 2020; Saimroh, 2020; Setiawan and Aden, 2020). The concept of technology-based education implemented at home leads to a decline in students' academic morality.

The adopted approach to instill moral values within students has so far presented three tendencies. First, academic moral education is built and instilled through the subject in the core curriculum of the education unit (Kasim and Tamuri, 2010; Suwito, 2012; Wening, 2012; Putri, 2013; Supranoto, 2015; Dianti, 2016). Morality building through literature and literacy is also highly effective and efficient to internalize good grades for students in their teens

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(Muassomah et al., 2020; Robi and Abidin, 2020). Similarly, subjects such as mathematics and social studies (IPS) are also effective in instilling character values (Dewi, 2015; Irfandi, 2019). Second, the local content curriculum approach is another way to teach students character values (Asriati, 2012; Basari, 2014; Subali et al., 2015; Puspitasari, 2016; Siti, 2018). According to Nafisah (2016), local content can shape the nation's character to love regional local values as self-defense in the midst of swift globalization. Saepudin et al. (2020) noted that moral education through national insight can strengthen the nationalism of the nation as Indonesia consists of various ethnicities, races, and different skin colors. Third, the extracurricular approach can build students' character in the midst of incessant modernity (Aji, 2016; Lestari, 2016; Yanti et al., 2016; Dahliana, 2017). Taekwondo, as an extracurricular activity, has educated children to have a strong physique and soul, trains their discipline and respect for others, and encourages honesty and a lack of cheating (Setianto et al., 2017). Scout activities also help foster independence, discipline, mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and tolerance for others (Ajhuri, 2016). Those three approaches in building student's character reinforce the student morality, which is highly dependent on the presence of institutions and teachers as figures and supervisors in the learning process.

Studies have been viewing the school as a fundamental forum for growth and instilling moral values among students. Along with the shift in the learning system from school to home, moral education finds obstacles in its application and loses its platform. The responsibility for academic moral education is still fully delegated to schools. Moral education in the online education system has not been a concern of education experts. This article aims to map the academic demoralization of students in attending online classes during the pandemic.

This article is rooted in the argument that the current pandemic, which has generated social and physical distancing policies, results in the shift of the concept of personal-based education to the instrumental-based one. Moral education has seen disruption and neglect along with changes in the learning traditions from the school to the home. Moral values that used to be related to school locations with in-person teacher control are now less relevant to the learning system at home and with parental assistance. Therefore, the degradation and neglect of moral education requires a new orientation adapted to the online learning system.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Online Education During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Pandemic

The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic hit Indonesia in early 2020 and continues to affect various aspects of life from people's health, the economy, society, culture, and education (Agarwal and Kaushik, 2020; Shah et al., 2021). The pandemic has brought about a crisis in education due to an abnormal shift in the system. The pandemic requires working from home (Shareena and Shahid, 2020) to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Bhattacharjee, 2020). Correspondingly, an online education system should be implemented to replace in-person learning (Al Lily et al., 2020;

Heng and Sol, 2020). Online education requires the use of technology, such as cellphones, laptops, and tablets (Al-Salman and Haider, 2021), as well as internet data, Wi-Fi connections, and strong signals (König et al., 2020). In addition, it also requires the ability to use technology (Almazova et al., 2020). Online education is defined as "independent education" without the presence of teachers and friends (Sudiana et al., 2017). In other words, the sudden implementation of online education has shocked all parties, including teachers, institutions, parents, and students who are not prepared, so there are some aspects that go neglected, including moral education.

Online education, which turns the education system from a school-based to a home-based one, has generated new problems and obstacles in the world of education (Besser et al., 2020; Rafiq et al., 2021; Shaukat and Naveed, 2021). The problem can be mapped in terms of three important influencing factors. First is infrastructure: students find learning difficulties due to inadequate networks and bandwidths (Sreehari, 2020). In addition, some students cannot afford technological devices, data packages, and internet access in certain areas (Efriana, 2021). This condition makes students experience obstacles in attending the class session. Second is the inability to meet face-to-face: students feel a lack of supervision in carrying out learning tasks (Khan et al., 2021). The teachers who are initially able to control the tasks directly and discipline students in the teaching and learning process are now only receiving the learning outcomes or the results of the assignments. They can no more take a part in the students' process of learning (Arifin, 2017). With the implementation of online learning during the pandemic, student learning success is determined by internet accessibility (Adnan, 2020) not professional teachers. Third, the absence of friends during learning may lead them to boredom (Anugrahana, 2020) and demotivation because friends are competitors who can inspire enthusiasm in learning (Evans et al., 2020). In addition, students need to play with peers to learn about many things (Pratiwi, 2017). Thus, the education system policy during the pandemic still leaves a lot of work that needs immediate improvement by responding to the obstacles and difficulties of several parties.

### Moral Education

Morality is defined in the Indonesian Dictionary as ethics, morals, and characters that adorn the individual personality (Indonesian Dictionary, 2008, p. 625). It refers to anything related to one's actions, either in actions or words, to others. Moral values are closely related to the prevailing culture within society. A person is perceived to have good morals if he or she follows the values accepted within society, but this also works both ways. Morality is a product of religion and culture, so each religion and culture have different moral values according to the value system that applies in the community.

Educational institutions convey moral education in line with the belief that the Indonesian nation should be built on noble values. Educational institutions are considered to play a central role because of their strategic position in interpreting moral values (Sudrajat, 2011; Sukitman, 2012; Sutyitno, 2012; Ilma, 2015; Supranoto, 2015). Moral education is not only given formally, such as in schools, but it is also included in informal

education. The three styles of educational institutions together can play an active role in shaping the character and morals of the community (Ilma, 2015). Educational institutions have an increasingly important role in line with concerns about dysfunctional educational institutions on one hand and the increasing moral crisis that is happening in society on the other hand. These two things are important to acknowledge how the formation of national morality can be carried out systematically and with precision.

## Moral Values

Character and moral values are means with which to develop one's ability to decide what is good, maintain goodness continuously, and realize that goodness in life (Komara, 2019). These moral values are embedded and reflected in thoughts, emotions, and behavior (Rawana et al., 2011). In practice, moral values can be instilled and manifested in three ways: aspects of knowledge (cognitive), awareness or willingness (affective), and action (psychomotor) (Herpratiwi et al., 2018; Juraid Hamzah et al., 2019). According to Ubaidillah et al. (2020), the cultivation of character and moral values can be made through cultivation models, such as planting, which consists of the following: goal setting, seed selection, land cultivation, seed planting, maintenance, and fertilization. The education system is specifically a means to realize this model. The process of inculcating character and moral values through school institutions and self-development is called a microprocess, while families, schools, and communities become the macrocontext (Santoso et al., 2020). Moral cultivation can also be carried out only at the level of standard concepts without involving social processes and practices (Latifah, 2021). In this way, the resulting character and morality will be missing the expectations because the person will not find the experience and opportunity to adopt the values he or she has learned (Abdullah et al., 2019).

In this case, the development of affective potential is applied to individuals as citizens who are positioned as inheritors of the nation's moral values (Umami et al., 2019). This value is closely related to noble habits and behavior. According to Umami et al. (2019), it goes in line with the universal values and religious traditions of the nation because character and morality are personal qualities that shape one's life (Suprayitno and Rois, 2019). However, although the elements of character are similar, the application of individual characters, attitudes, and behaviors can differ from one country to another country (Ugurlu, 2014) due to differences in sociocultural, economic, and religious beliefs that also influence different perspectives on certain core values. The application of local wisdom values also becomes an alternative in shaping civilized human beings and as a guide in attitude, so that knowledge and character are created (Uge et al., 2019). In the end, the character and moral values become the provisions and life skills of each individual (Lee, 2016; Nurtanto et al., 2019). For this reason, when the character values are declining, efforts can be made to reconstruct the philosophy of life by rebuilding the principles of life, so that they can be explored and developed by the current generation (Nurnaningsih, 2015).

## METHODS

The academic demoralization of students in the technology-based learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic was selected for many reports confirming that children who should study online from home experience a decline in oral academic learning. Students who cheat are undisciplined in doing assignments and irresponsible. The technology-based education has brought about a lack of student concentration due to time flexibility. In addition, children have missed teachers as learning resources, so they do not have a complete understanding of the material and assignments given. It invites children to commit academic cheating. Online education is a precedent for children's academic demoralization, which has been internalized through schools.

This study is qualitative descriptive based on online news mapping, strengthened by data from in-depth interviews to listen to the students' experiences in learning by using technology at home. Online news is mapped by types and themes that are relevant to the evidence in this study. The results of online news mapping are used as material for preparing interview questions for children. The data needed for this study are as follows: (a) the experience of students undergoing the learning process at home; (b) their experience in doing the tasks given by the teacher; (c) their experience in solving exercises; and (d) their experience working on mid-semester and end-semester assessment questions. The series of questions are important in this study.

The participants involved in this study are elementary school students who learn *via* technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. In total, 19 students are selected by random sampling from several different schools, representing grades 1–6 and two students from grade 1 are reluctant to speak up because they are shy and afraid to meet and talk to unfamiliar people. Therefore, the remaining respondents are from grades 2–6 (as shown in **Table 1**). They are interviewed regarding their experiences in learning and doing assignments with technology. They have provided information consciously and under their willingness to share their experiences.

This study is conducted due to the rise of teachers' complaints about the behavior of students who gradually become disorganized and undisciplined when attending online classes. Students do not respond to teachers who ask questions on Google Meet and Zoom. They are passive in discussions; some do not submit the assignment on time and some others ask for help from parents or people they are close to. Teachers experience obstacles and difficulties in controlling the students learning process conducted at a distance. The report is the basis for writing this study, through interviews from May to early June 2021. Interviews are conducted several times to complete data on children's experiences of technology-based learning. Online news mapping is also carried out to support data generated from the field through observations and interviews.

The data from online news mapping and interviews are then processed through data reduction, data display, and data verification (Huberman, 1990). The data are reduced by selecting and sorting the results based on themes related to the decline

**TABLE 1** | Data of respondents.

No.	Respondent	Age	Grade	School
1	R1	11	5	SDN Kotalama
2	R2	12	5	SDN Sukoharjo
3	R3	8	2	MI Atraroqqi
4	R4	12	6	SD Muhammadiyah 9
5	R5	10	4	MI Nurul Huda
6	R6	10	4	SDI Suryabuana
7	R7	8	2	SD Smart School
8	R8	12	5	MIN 1 Malang
9	R9	9	3	SD Muhammadiyah 8
10	R10	9	3	SD Percobaan
11	R11	13	6	MI Ma'arif
12	R12	9	3	SDN 1 Tumpang
13	R13	12	5	SD Muhammadiyah 9
14	R14	10	4	SDN Kasin
15	R15	11	4	MI Hidayatul Mubtadiin
16	R16	9	3	MI Khodijah
17	R17	11	5	SDN Sukoharjo

in students' character values in the online learning process. Further, online news data are presented in tabular form, while the interview data are displayed in narration. They are then verified by checking the authenticity and agreement of the data with the theme. The next stage is data analysis in three steps: first, data restatement, by explaining and describing the results that have been obtained; second, data description, by looking for patterns and trends from the data results; third, data interpretation, by providing the explicit or implied meaning of the data. The entire data are carefully examined in a textual and contextual framework, so a sharp analysis is made.

## RESULTS

Coronavirus disease 2019 is a precondition for a paradigm shift in education from offline to online, which results in the neglect of student character education. Students have experienced character decline, as learning is carried out at home by technology. The fact that school and teacher supervisions have been replaced with parents and information technology has decreased students' character, which used to be internalized when learning was conducted conventionally in schools. The neglect of character education in online learning during the pandemic has caused academic dishonesty and undisciplined among students. In addition, it also leads them not to be responsible for themselves and learning tasks. The three forms of neglect of character education are described as follows.

### Academic Dishonesty

Online learning has caused students to miss the explanations of professional teachers when they experience difficulties in understanding lessons. As a result, they find other ways, including cheating. They cheat in doing the assignments and examinations, as illustrated in **Table 2** from online news.

**Table 2** shows that technology-based education policies have made students score oriented, not competency and quality oriented. Students find it difficult to understand the material so they are compelled to cheat in every task they do, even in the mid-term and final semester. Academic dishonesty, as shown in **Table 2**, can be divided into two sections. First, there is plagiarism in which students cheat the answers to the assignments given by the teacher. Even in working on mid-semester and final semester examinations, they search for answers from various websites and materials sent by the teachers. The problem written in the online news is confirmed through the interviews. According to R1, "I always search for the answers in Brainly or in the browser if I do not know the answers to the assignments given by teachers." R2 strengthened, "I love the fact that final examination is conducted online, as I can cheat by searching for the answers from practice questions." This shift in educational traditions makes it easy for children to cheat and not to be honest about their desired achievements.

The second dishonesty is the help of parents and family. Students always ask for help from their parents once they find it difficult to answer the exercise and do the assignments, as shown in **Table 2**. Correspondingly, R3 noted, "Besides asking for help to my brother in doing Math problems, I also use a calculator to do the Math [sic]." R4 said, "I do not understand local language lessons, so I always ask my mom to answer the questions." Further, R5 admitted, "I always ask my mom for help whenever I have difficulty to complete my task [sic]." The students' statements prove that technology-based education has made children dependent on learning.

One of the challenges in the technology-based education system during the pandemic is related to academic honesty. Learning without the supervision of teachers and schools opens up opportunities for students who want to get good grades to find and justify various ways, such as cheating behavior and asking for help in doing the assignment. This condition was confirmed by R6, "Almost all the tasks given by my teacher are done by mom. I do not know what the task is." R7 also admitted, "I am not good at reading. I do not understand the teacher's orders, and the questions are completed by my mother." **Table 2** and the interview results show that the children's morality experience decadence.

### Indiscipline

Learning at home through technology eradicates the discipline of student activities strictly regulated in the conventional education system. Students have been taught to come and go home on time and to do assignments with teacher assistance and guidance. However, the current situation happens differently. Technology-based learning that emphasizes effectiveness and flexibility, without any limitation by specific space and time, results in students' ignorance of discipline upon learning, as shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3** shows that students experience disciplinary setbacks in the online learning process during the pandemic. They should initially fulfill school rules with rewards and punishment, so high discipline is successfully created both at school and home. Along with the implementation of the online education

**TABLE 2** | Academic dishonesty performed by students.

Forms of academic dishonesty	Source	Motive
<p><i>Budaya menyontek menjadi fenomena yang lumrah dalam pembelajaran online di masa pandemi, siswa tidak mau bersusah payah berfikir dan membaca sumber, tetapi langsung menyontek dari web/internet (Rangga, 2021).</i></p> <p>“The culture of cheating is a common phenomenon in an online learning during the pandemic. Students are unwilling to work hard thinking and reading sources, but they directly cheat from the website/internet (Rangga, 2021) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://www.kompasiana.com/ranggarestura/5ffd79d28ede48160e34cd72/budaya-menyontek-mewabah-ditengah-pandemi-covid19">https://www.kompasiana.com/ranggarestura/5ffd79d28ede48160e34cd72/budaya-menyontek-mewabah-ditengah-pandemi-covid19</a></p>	Plagiarism
<p><i>Pembelajaran daring sangat rentan menyontek, sebagaimana yang dituturkan Airin, “kami tidak ingin PJJ ini membuat pintar orang tua dan ibunya, bukan siswa (Hambali, 2020).</i></p> <p>“Online learning is very vulnerable to cheating, as stated by Airin, “we don’t want the distance learning to make parents and mothers smart, not students (Hambali, 2020) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://megapolitan.okezone.com/read/2020/09/04/338/2272574/siswa-rentan-mencontek-saat-belajar-daring-airin-siapkan-langkah-antisipasi">https://megapolitan.okezone.com/read/2020/09/04/338/2272574/siswa-rentan-mencontek-saat-belajar-daring-airin-siapkan-langkah-antisipasi</a></p>	Plagiarism
<p><i>Belajar online telah melahirkan kerawanan siswa menyontek, hingga nilai kejujuran telah hilang dalam diri siswa (Riadi, 2020).</i></p> <p>“Online learning has raised students’ vulnerability to cheating, so the value of honesty among students is lost (Riadi, 2020) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://wartakota.tribunnews.com/2020/10/28/belajar-online-bikin-rawan-siswa-menyontek-ini-cara-tanamkan-nilai-kejujuran-pada-anak-saat-pjj">https://wartakota.tribunnews.com/2020/10/28/belajar-online-bikin-rawan-siswa-menyontek-ini-cara-tanamkan-nilai-kejujuran-pada-anak-saat-pjj</a></p>	Plagiarism
<p><i>Kecurangan akademik marak terjadi saat pembelajaran online di masa pandemi (Muhammad, 2021)</i></p> <p>“Academic fraud commonly happens in the online learning during the pandemic (Muhammad, 2021) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://www.republika.id/posts/12422/utamakan-kejujuran-bukan-hanya-nilai">https://www.republika.id/posts/12422/utamakan-kejujuran-bukan-hanya-nilai</a></p>	Plagiarism
<p><i>Orang tua seringkali mengerjakan tugas anaknya, saat PJJ diterapkan (Abdi, 2020)</i></p> <p>“Parents often do their children’s work when distance learning is implemented (Abdi, 2020) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1857884/belajar-daring-ada-orang-tua-kerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anaknya">https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1857884/belajar-daring-ada-orang-tua-kerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anaknya</a></p>	Parents’ help
<p><i>Orang tua awalnya hanya membenatu sesekali saja dalam menyelesaikan tugas anak, namun lama kelamaan orang tua harus mengerjakan tugas dan soal ujian yang diberikan guru. biar cepat selesai, karena anak gak faham, gurupun tak mengerti cara memehamkan siswa (Paramita, 2021).</i></p> <p>“At first, parents only provide an occasional help to complete their children’s assignments, but over time, they have to do assignments and exam questions given by the teacher so that they finish it quickly because the children do not understand while the teacher does not know how to make them understand (Paramita, 2021) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://skata.info/article/detail/887/orang-tua-mengerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anak-pengaruh-beban-sekolah-daring">https://skata.info/article/detail/887/orang-tua-mengerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anak-pengaruh-beban-sekolah-daring</a></p>	Parents’ help
<p><i>Anak saya tidak faham sama sekali tugas yang diberikan, kalau saya gak bantu bagaimana nilai yang diperoleh anak?, kan saya juga yang merugi (Paramita, 2021).</i></p> <p>“My son does not understand the task at all. If I don’t help him, how will he get grades? I am also the one who loses (Paramita, 2021) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://skata.info/article/detail/887/orang-tua-mengerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anak-pengaruh-beban-sekolah-daring">https://skata.info/article/detail/887/orang-tua-mengerjakan-tugas-sekolah-anak-pengaruh-beban-sekolah-daring</a></p>	Completed by parents
<p><i>Seringkali anak lalai dan abai mengerjakan tugas sekolah, hingga orang tua turun tangan untuk mengambil alih mengerjakan tugasnya (Maria, 2020).</i></p> <p>“Often children neglect to do schoolwork until parents intervene to take over doing their work (Maria, 2020) [sic].”</p>	<p><a href="https://lifestyle.kompas.com/read/2020/10/22/191033120/anak-lalai-kerjakan-tugas-sekolah-daring-orangtua-harus-apa?page=all">https://lifestyle.kompas.com/read/2020/10/22/191033120/anak-lalai-kerjakan-tugas-sekolah-daring-orangtua-harus-apa?page=all</a></p>	Parents take over the task

system, they are demanded to study independently without any direct supervision from teachers and schools. It has made children careless without any specific target so that they are indifferent to a series of learning processes. Students are often not serious about attending the virtual session, manifesting in turning off Zoom videos, not responding to the teachers when called upon, and not being active in any discussions or activities. The loss of student discipline is getting worse in virtual learning systems.

Distance learning requires students to learn individually. Students lose their learning friends, which causes them to be

too demotivated to carry out a series of tasks provided by the teacher, including memorizing short verses of chapter 30 in the Quran. R8 stated, “I have a lot of debt in memorizing the verses. In the past 4th grade, I owed three verses. In the fifth grade, there were four verses that had not submitted [sic].” R9 added, “It took me a very long time to memorize verses since I studied from home, so the submission was incomplete.” R10 also said, “I have not memorized the targeted letters and prayers in grade 3 because I have no spirit in memorization and I find no one to memorize with together [sic].” In other words, the indiscipline in memorizing the Quran verses among children is caused by

**TABLE 3** | Forms of student indiscipline.

Form of indiscipline	Online source	Motive
<p><i>Di sekolah anak harus sudah masuk pada jam 7. Sekarang vicon yang sudah dijadwalkan guru, banyak yang terlambat (Hambali, 2020).</i></p> <p>"At school, children must have entered the classroom at 7 o'clock. Now, many of them are late on the teacher's scheduled vicon (Hambali, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://megapolitan.okezone.com/read/2020/09/04/338/2272574/siswa-rentan-mencontek-saat-belajar-daring-airin-siapkan-langkah-antisipasi">https://megapolitan.okezone.com/read/2020/09/04/338/2272574/siswa-rentan-mencontek-saat-belajar-daring-airin-siapkan-langkah-antisipasi</a>	Indiscipline
<p><i>Daring telah berjalan setahun lebih, ada pelajaran yang hilang dari siswa yakni tentang disiplin, sopan santun, dan tata krama (Supriadi, 2020).</i></p> <p>"Online class has been running for more than a year. There are lessons missing from students, which are about discipline and manners (Supriadi, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/03/04/190940078/bupati-jember-sekolah-online-pelajaran-disiplin-dan-tata-krama-hilang?page=all">https://regional.kompas.com/read/2021/03/04/190940078/bupati-jember-sekolah-online-pelajaran-disiplin-dan-tata-krama-hilang?page=all</a>	Loosing discipline and morals
<p><i>Guru (Ws) mengaku banyak anak/siswanya tidak mengumpulkan tugas yang telah diberikan. Dan diantara siswa pun ada yang tidak gabung saat online learning (Ayobandung, 2020).</i></p> <p>"The teacher (Ws) admitted that many of his children/students did not submit the assignments given. And some of them did not join the online session (Ayobandung, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/q9qjh71318000/kesiangan-hingga-tak-peduli-alasan-siswa-bolos-belajar-online">https://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/q9qjh71318000/kesiangan-hingga-tak-peduli-alasan-siswa-bolos-belajar-online</a>	Ignorant to the teachers' instruction
<p><i>Ada anak yang tidak bergabung tanpa memberikan alasan, ada juga yang mengaku bangun kesiangan, bahkan kurang peduli (Ayobandung, 2020).</i></p> <p>"There are children who do not join the class session without any reason. There are also those who claim to wake up late, and even don't care (Ayobandung, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/q9qjh71318000/kesiangan-hingga-tak-peduli-alasan-siswa-bolos-belajar-online">https://nasional.republika.co.id/berita/q9qjh71318000/kesiangan-hingga-tak-peduli-alasan-siswa-bolos-belajar-online</a>	Careless
<p><i>Seorang guru mengatakan bahwa siswa/orang tua seringkali terlambat setor hafalan surat-surat pendek dan pelaksanaan shalat dhuha (Mulyon, 2020).</i></p> <p>"A teacher said that students/parents are often late in submitting the memorization of short Quran verses and implementation of the Dhuha prayer (Mulyon, 2020)."</p>	<a href="https://www.tagar.id/hikmah-belajar-daring-dibalik-wabah-corona-bantaeng">https://www.tagar.id/hikmah-belajar-daring-dibalik-wabah-corona-bantaeng</a>	Indiscipline
<p><i>Tidak jarang keterlambatan setor tugas siswa, padahal absensi kehadiran ditentukan dengan setoran tugas (Mulyon, 2020).</i></p> <p>"It is common to find students late in submitting the task, even though attendance is dependent on the task submission (Mulyon, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://www.tagar.id/hikmah-belajar-daring-dibalik-wabah-corona-bantaeng">https://www.tagar.id/hikmah-belajar-daring-dibalik-wabah-corona-bantaeng</a>	Late in submitting the assignments
<p><i>Siswa mulai mengalami kejenuhan belajar, disebabkan terbatasnya ruang gerak, dan monoton serta monolog, yang berakibat pada ketidakdisiplinan dalam menunaikan tugas-tugas nya (Nelliani, 2020).</i></p> <p>"Students begin to fed up in learning due to limited space for movement, monotonous, and monologs, which result in indiscipline upon doing the assignment (Nelliani, 2020) [sic]."</p>	<a href="https://www.ajnn.net/news/pandemi-dan-kejenuhan-belajar-daring/index.html">https://www.ajnn.net/news/pandemi-dan-kejenuhan-belajar-daring/index.html</a>	Delay on working the assignment

the loss of friends who play as motivators and competitors in learning.

Flexibility in technology-based learning makes students tend to be lazy and delay in doing the assignments. Some teachers admitted that many of the students are late in submitting assignments. There are even some students who do not submit assignments, despite the threat that attendance is dependent on the submission of the assignments. The results of the interviews with students also show that the task of art and culture subject is often late in submission because they have to buy and prepare all the skills or crafts to complete (R11). Likewise, in the task of making clippings from used newspapers, a student admitted that he had several delays in doing the news collection (R12). The unstandardized structure of online learning has made children procrastinate on the tasks to complete.

## Decline in Students' Sense of Responsibility

The technology-based education that students experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has led them to lose a sense of responsibility. In the past, children are happy to do every single task that the teacher gives. Now, they start to ignore the learning process and are reluctant to complete assignments. The sense of responsibility that used to be instilled by teachers through various activities at school is now faded along with the learn-from-home policy. **Table 4** lists the news regarding the loss of students' responsibility and interview results with students.

The shift in the tradition from face-to-face, school-based education to home-based learning by way of technology causes students to lose their teachers, making it harder to understand the lessons. Besides, they also lose their friends, which causes

**TABLE 4 |** The loss of students' responsibility.

Forms of academic dishonesty	Online source	Motive
<i>Banyak siswa tidak mau menyelesaikan tugas-tugasnya (Azizah, 2021).</i> "Many students do not want to complete their assignments (Azizah, 2021)."	<a href="https://kumparan.com/shofi-nur-azizah/permasalahan-kurikulum-2013-di-masa-pandemi-COVID-19-1vb6vlxzEHH/full">https://kumparan.com/shofi-nur-azizah/permasalahan-kurikulum-2013-di-masa-pandemi-COVID-19-1vb6vlxzEHH/full</a>	Giving up
<i>Siswa mengaku tidak bisa konsentrasi belajar, karena suasana belajar di rumah bising, suasana dan ruang kurang mendukung. Hingga tidak dapat menyerap ilmu, dan ujungnya tidak dapat menjalankan tugas (Aini, 2020).</i> "Students admit that they cannot concentrate on learning because their home are noisy. The atmosphere and space are not convenient that they cannot absorb the knowledge, and in the end they cannot complete the assignment (Aini, 2020) [sic]."	<a href="https://yoursay.suara.com/news/2021/05/19/141953/kualitas-belajar-menurun-selama-masa-pandemi-setuju">https://yoursay.suara.com/news/2021/05/19/141953/kualitas-belajar-menurun-selama-masa-pandemi-setuju</a>	Lots of distractions until they neglect the task
<i>Siswa tidak memberikan respon sama sekali di platform pembelajaran (Masduki, 2020).</i> "Students do not respond at all on the learning platform (Masduki, 2020)."	<a href="https://edukasi.sindonews.com/read/265180/212/dampak-pandemi-COVID-19-indonesia-alami-stunting-pendidikan-1607695945">https://edukasi.sindonews.com/read/265180/212/dampak-pandemi-COVID-19-indonesia-alami-stunting-pendidikan-1607695945</a>	Ignorant
<i>Miris, 40 persen orang tua mengatakan anaknya tidak memiliki semangat belajar di masa pandemi (Rossa, 2020).</i> "So sad that 40 percent of parents said their children are not motivated to learn during the pandemic (Rossa, 2020)."	<a href="https://www.suara.com/health/2020/12/16/141248/akibat-pandemi-40-persen-pelajar-indonesia-kehilangan-motivasi-belajar">https://www.suara.com/health/2020/12/16/141248/akibat-pandemi-40-persen-pelajar-indonesia-kehilangan-motivasi-belajar</a>	Demotivated
<i>Hanafi menyatakan bahwa banyak siswa menggunakan waktunya dengan bermalas-malasan dan enggan mengerjakan tugas dari guru (Kemendikbud, 2021).</i> "Hanafi stated that many students spend their time to be lazy and reluctant to do assignments from the teachers (Kemendikbud, 2021) [sic]."	<a href="https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2021/04/dampak-negatif-satu-tahun-pji-dorongan-pembelajaran-tatap-muka-menguat">https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2021/04/dampak-negatif-satu-tahun-pji-dorongan-pembelajaran-tatap-muka-menguat</a>	Lazy to study
<i>Belajar dengan gadget membuat anak malas belajar, lebih cenderung bermain games, dan membuat anak sulit terlepas dari gadget (Fadhurrohman, 2021)</i> "Learning with gadgets makes children lazy to study. They tend to play games, by which they are dependent and addicted to the gadgets (Fadhurrohman, 2021) [sic]."	<a href="https://respons.id/sekolah-daring-jadikan-anak-malas/">https://respons.id/sekolah-daring-jadikan-anak-malas/</a>	Lazy to study
<i>Megan Alen menuturkan: banyak anak sulit beradaptasi menjalani metode baru pembelajaran di masa pandemi (Rossa, 2020)</i> "Megan Alen said: many children find it difficult to adapt to new methods of learning during the pandemic (Rossa, 2020)."	<a href="https://www.suara.com/health/2020/09/21/185257/anak-sulit-konsentrasi-saat-belajar-online-simak-7-kiat-berikut?page=all">https://www.suara.com/health/2020/09/21/185257/anak-sulit-konsentrasi-saat-belajar-online-simak-7-kiat-berikut?page=all</a>	Ignorant to the learning process

them not to be enthusiastic about learning. This condition causes them to give up easily with the burden of learning tasks they are responsible for. Suara.com reported that 40% of students have experienced a decline in enthusiasm for learning. This report was confirmed by R13, "I am getting bored with studying at home, so I am lazy to do complex tasks [sic]." Further, R14 said, "I am reluctant to memorize multiplication. Right now, I have a calculator and you can also ask brother to do it [sic]." Distance education makes children lazy to find a way to understand the material, yet encourages them to give up and use shortcuts.

The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, which requires face-to-face interaction with technology, has made children addicted to technology. Technology, apart from being a medium for children's learning, is also used to play games. Children even have a longer time span of using technology to play games rather than to learn. R16 added, "Now, my learning time is short. I am more interested in playing with my cellphone." Also, R17 told, "I used to spend about 8 h studying at school (07.00–15.00) everyday. Unlike the current conditions, my study time is shorter, but I am reluctant to read the material sent by the teacher [sic]." Online

learning has made students feel bored, so they are lazy about reading and are less skilled at writing.

Studying at home causes a lot of distractions. R15 stated, "I am tempted to watch a TV that is always on, while I am studying until I do the tasks carelessly, above all it is done [sic]." R3 added, "I could not concentrate on studying. While I study, my mom called me to take care of my younger brother, so I fell asleep playing and could not do my homework [sic]." The distractions at home let students hard to concentrate on studying and even reluctant to be asked to study.

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that the centralization of the online learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic has raised new educational problems in terms of morality. The decline in the moral character of education includes the rise in plagiarism culture, a decrease in the learning interest, and a low sense of responsibility in carrying out assignments, which has been exacerbated by the involvement of external parties in the process

of working on school assignments. This condition shows that the moral character of learning instilled in the world of education has not been successfully internalized in shaping the character of the learner. Moreover, the neglect of the morality of the learning process is seen as a matter of course and it has even become a culture where “the existence is likely accepted.” Justification for the above culture can slowly but surely undermine the building of morality in the world of education as the basis for building human character, as well as the noble missions in the philosophy of education as a process of character inculcation (Latifah, 2015). The decline in morality in the learning process not only indicates a downturn in the internal world of education but also becomes a general picture of morality in general in social life (Santoso et al., 2020).

Plagiarism is still perceived as a common excusable mistake. The permissive attitude toward plagiarism causes the culture of plagiarism to continue to grow; ironically, it is common for people with intellectual backgrounds to do so. It is not only an activity of cheating but is also associated with integrity (Bettawinda and Nurmina, 2019). The decline in morality and integrity in academics, which appears in daily life both real and virtual, is an important part that hinders the transformation of moral values and strengthens character education. In the midst of instant culture, humans are competing to get something they want instantly, regardless of violating the norms, ethics, or rules. Instant culture has penetrated various sectors such as careers, politics, economics, and even education (El Syam, 2020). Instant culture is getting stronger in the life of people who are oriented toward pseudoprestige. Awards are no longer based on merit, but rather on popularity and image for which many people compete even though they often violate norms. The image developed within instant culture and hedonism has permeated society and threatened the morality of children (Setianingsih, 2018).

The hedonistic culture, instant priority, mediatization of the learning process, and lack of supervision lead to low morality in learning. The demoralization in the learning process, which is indicated by the widespread culture of cheating and the low responsibility of students, strengthens the assumption that children learn from their environment, as suggested in Watson's theory of behaviorism (O'Donohue and Kitchener, 1999). An environment that is permissive to the culture of cheating, for example, the physical absence of teachers as a source of role models in the learning process, reduces the ethics of online learning. The lack of physical interaction in online learning causes the learning process tedious and it makes students disoriented. The learning process that relies on gadgets decreases student motivation because it competes with entertainment features, which have been suggested to avoid during the learning process. Before the pandemic, cellphones were often banned in the classroom, whereas during online classes, cellphones are not only sources of learning media but also the main reference points for information and a source of knowledge. The massive use of digital media in online learning is not balanced with the strengthening of literacy culture. The low literacy culture is also a trigger for the development of plagiarism behavior.

The decline in the students' academic morality in the online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic—such as being too lazy to study, lack of discipline to complete school assignments, and

lack of sense of responsibility—is caused by the students' feeling of losing professional teachers. For elementary school students, teachers are perceived as a source of learning who can guide them to understand subjects. In addition, teachers are also perceived as figures whose orders are heard. The miss of teacher assistance brings about the loss of students' hope. Therefore, teachers should lead children to understand that the shift in learning traditions requires them not to depend on teachers and school any longer. Besides, teachers also need to emphasize their independence and learning broader knowledge, not just that which is found in textbooks.

The use of the academic demoralization concept in this study has made it possible to understand the students' constraints of online learning during the pandemic in addition to the significance of technology. The changes in the learning system require not only understanding the shift in learning traditions but also requires us to pay attention to the moral values to ensure students internalize them. Education is still perceived as a conventional tradition, which has to be conducted face-to-face with teachers, in the same class with other friends. Technology, as a prerequisite for education during the pandemic, has encouraged the students' independence from teachers in developing competence, especially in learning. Technology has offered broad and unlimited information that allows students to be independent and more competent than their teachers in certain fields.

This study is limited only to elementary school students focusing on academic demoralization in the online education system. Therefore, the information and data produced cannot describe the overall demoralization in the world of education in Indonesia. Additional data about the experience of children in the online session during the pandemic from different levels are needed, such as junior high school, senior high school, and university. Further study may produce this data by comparing one education level with another so that students' experiences as study data are more complete and this might be further employed for future analyses of educational policies.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MM conceived the study, took responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis, and responded to the Reviewers comments. IA designed the study, drafted the manuscript, took responsibility for the revision of the manuscript, and critically revised the manuscript for important



intellectual content. UH collected the data and data analysis, and critically evaluated the manuscript. DD did the analysis, wrote the first draft of the manuscript, and did the interpretation of data. AAS collected data and resumed the data, read and commented on the draft and collected additional materials, and critically evaluated the draft. LR interpreted data for the work, took responsibility for the revision of the manuscript, and critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content. All authors gave final approval of the version to

be published and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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