To ensure that moral education is effective, educators must give students all the support they need, especially at a time of the Movement Control Order where students are kept at home and online learning is encouraged.
MORAL education has been taught in all Malaysian schools (primary and secondary) since 1983. The aim behind moral education is to ensure that every student who undergoes the curriculum in formal and informal setting would be able to reason out, have empathy and resolve moral dilemmas in any situations.

Now with the Covid-19 pandemic spreading, it is a good situation to analyse if moral education has achieved its original objectives. Let’s analyse the situation from three different perspectives.

First is to see the positive effects of moral education. I see that many children and adolescents are law-abiding, and keep to the rule of staying at home, keeping themselves clean and occupied while being at home.

Some are very constructive. They are part of some NGOs and help prepare food for the needy or the poor families. I am amazed at how energetic and proactive they are when it comes to helping others. That is really moral education in action.

Now to analyse the negative effects of moral education, which should not take place in the first place, if effectively taught in schools.

There are young students who are frustrated being at home during this pandemic period. They may go to the parks nearby their home or take their motorcycles for a joy ride. As a result, they get into trouble with the authorities, some to the extent of being fined or put into prison.

There is another group of individuals who keep spreading false news about the Covid-19 pandemic. They would have heard a suggestion or a comment, add some “spice” to the entire issue and forward it to others.

Some use their mother tongue to create chaotic moments in the lives of others. Such individuals are more dangerous than Covid-19.

For the above examples, moral education has failed to make them individuals who are holistic.

Instead, they have become hedonistic and cause a lot of trouble.

The final category of students or individuals form the majority of society. They neither are proactive nor deemed a nuisance.

But they love to play the wait-and-see game. At times they are influenced by the proactive group. At other times, they are swayed by the negative attitude of immoral individuals.

To ensure that moral education is effective, educators must be good role models.

During the current crisis, educators should be in communication with their students online, giving them all the support they need and providing them with hope.

Currently e-learning is the main tool for students in schools and universities. But are moral education teachers and lecturers doing their part in ensuring that students are provided the platform to express their thoughts, feelings and how to cope in the current crisis?

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