The role of youth and scouting education in enhancing student character development

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Abstract
This study investigates the role of Youth and Scouting Education (PGMK) in strengthening student character and identifying the driving and inhibiting factors affecting this process. The research utilized a descriptive approach with a qualitative method, conducted at Universitas Negeri Semarang, focusing on outbound learning for PGMK subjects. The data collection techniques used in this research included interviews, observations, and documentation, while the validity of the data was tested through informant review, member check, and triangulation. Data analysis was conducted interactively by collecting, reducing, displaying, and drawing conclusions from the data. The study found that PGMK played a significant role in developing the soft and hard skills necessary to strengthen participants' character. However, this process was both encouraged and hindered by various factors such as the example of tutors, the curriculum design, the PGMK committee's commitment, stakeholder support, equalization of perceptions among participants, conducive learning situations, learning models, tutors' capacity building and competence, learning intensity and duration, internet connection, and the environment. These findings suggest the importance of considering these factors in designing and implementing effective character education programs for students.

Keywords: character education; scout, students; the young generation

Introduction

A nation's greatness cannot be solely measured by its military strength or the size of its naval fleet. Rather, a nation's true greatness lies in its national character, which is essential to determining its strength. The national character is not inherited but rather cultivated through

continuous effort. The strength of an individual's character within a community indicates the nation's overall character. As a crucial determinant of a nation's strength, it is imperative to instill and foster the development of national character in the younger generation who are not only the future owners but also the agents of national change.

In the past, national character development was an integral part of a child's upbringing. However, today's younger generation has not had the same opportunity to internalize and socialize the values of the nation's character from an early age. This is a concerning issue as it may lead to a weak foundation in building the nation and state. The fourth industrial revolution has also played a significant role in shaping the character of today's younger generation. The advent of advanced technology has facilitated the younger generation with unprecedented access to smartphones, which has significantly impacted their character.

A recent study conducted by Siste et al. (2020) highlights that the current younger generation spends an average of 11.6 hours a day using their smartphones. These changes are visible in their lives, and it is crucial to recognize the impact of these changes. Therefore, it is vital to adapt to the changing times and find new ways to cultivate and instill national character values in today's younger generation.

The younger generation of Indonesia is currently in a dilemma of technological sophistication. Wahyudi (2020) explained that the younger generation is currently in the rotation of information technology hegemony. This rotation leads them too difficult choices, changes in character values, and changes in behavior patterns. These technological advances have an impact on the presence and development of moral degradation among the younger generation, namely the case of planning murder done by a child against his friend. Not only the rampant moral degradation in Indonesia but also shown by the number of obscene acts done by minors. Morals that should be the controller in behavior are increasingly being eroded by technological advances in the 21ˢᵗ century. This is because the younger generation is considered superior in terms of intellectual intelligence and physical strength, but it is constrained in terms of emotional and spiritual intelligence (Wahyudi, 2020).

The younger generation nowadays is part of the 21st century convergent knowledge society. This society needs individuals with creativity to pioneer a new future and lead change in this global era (Florida, 2014; IBM Institute for Business Value, 2016). However, there is also an additional need for talented individuals who can cooperate with others to promote a sustainable society, people of wisdom, morality, and character (Sternberg, 2003; Sternberg & Kaufman, 2018).

This is a sign that education plays an important role in overcoming these problems. Education is a medium to achieve knowledge and wisdom in living life and creating a prime life for humans. Lampă et al. (2013) explain that all countries can achieve their sustainable development goals only through education. Sustainable development in a broader context can be described as the growth and development of the character of a nation that can provide benefits in the short, medium, and long term. Therefore, character education is very important for the younger generation. This is because character education is believed to be the most appropriate effort to get out of the problems globally nowadays (Kesuma, et al, 2011). This is in line with the findings of Lee & Huang (2021) explained that character strength, including a group of individual characteristics that have moral values and lead to good virtues plays an important role in the participation of the younger generation in society.

Related to character education, educational terminology is referred to as the process of accumulating good knowledge, attitudes, and actions. Education begins with building awareness, feeling, caring, seriousness, knowledge, belief, and habit formation. Character education is not a new program. It has been a part of human life for centuries. Heidari et al., (2016) explain the term "character" refers to basic moral values namely caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others. Meanwhile, according to Termini & Golden (2014), character education is a systematic, comprehensive, and planned approach to teaching moral values. Character education is the goal of schools and families (Chingos &

Peterson, 2011). Ariyati and Dimyati (2018) explain that character education will run effectively and intact if it involves three institutions, namely family, school, and society. This has implications for the fulfillment of character content for the younger generation, both in the family, school, and social environment.

At the school level, character education must be integrated into all subjects in school so that students get real experience to practice character education (Rokhman et al., 2014). This is very important because good character is the core of moral competence that makes individuals desire and pursue goodness (Park & Peterson, 2006). Character education refers to formal and regular lessons provided in schools by applying to the relevant curriculum to improve the moral character of students (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004; Smagorinsky & Taxel, 2005). Character education broadly tries to teach positive morals, values, respect, citizenship, pro-social skills, a sense of justice, and more (Bohlin et al., 2001). Character education can be optimized to improve teaching and learning competencies (Tettegah, 2005) and to reduce bullying and peer victimization in schools (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

The purpose of character education is to form individual self-improvement continuously and train self-ability to lead to a better life (Juliardi, 2015). This means that character education is directed to be able to make a person develop and grow in fostering values and character continuously. Meanwhile, Lickona in Setiawan (2013) states that every character education must consist of three components of good character, namely moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. These three components are fundamental components in character education. Moral knowledge is needed to provide cognitive provisions, to be able to distinguish between moral, amoral, and immoral actions. Moral feelings will be a provision that humans have the feeling to be involved in the atmosphere of moral spirituality so that it will guide the individual. Moral action is a real action that becomes the output of character education.

Was et al. (2006) evaluated the need for character education programs to be an important issue across different countries. This is because if there is no character education, school violence, truancy rates, and the number of dropouts will increase. Therefore, the concept of character education should be an effort to form habits rather than teaching, for instance by internalizing values, choosing good choices, doing it as a habit, and setting an example. In addition, the concept of character education, particularly for students, they must involve in the situation and pay attention to the condition of the student. Therefore, the teacher plays an important role. Ülger et al. (2014) believed that teachers who provide education must have competence, both in the field of teaching and in the field of character education to educate a quality generation.

In the policy direction and priorities of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia in the period 2020-2024, character education is emphasized as an inseparable part of efforts to achieve the national development vision contained in the Long-Term Development Plan (RPJP) 2005-2025. This means that character education must be in line with national education priorities, as can be seen from the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) at every level of education, including higher education. Character education in higher education has its challenges. This is because educating students who are at a vulnerable age from pre-adolescent to adolescent adults is very different from children in general. This challenge has prompted various university policies and curricula to be designed in such a way as to accommodate these needs, one of which is at Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES).

In general, there is the content of character education in UNNES student courses. This is implemented through General Couses (MKU), Basic Education Courses (MKDK), and Study Program Courses (MKPS). One of the study programs at UNNES that has a curriculum design with an emphasis and approach to character values is the Pancasila and Civic Education (PCE) Study Program undergraduate level. The PCE UNNES organizes compulsory Young Generation Education and Scouting (PGMK, in Indonesia language) courses for semester 1 students. PGMK

courses are held inbound and outbound, however, during this pandemic, the implementation of PGMK lectures underwent several activity adjustments. In 2020, PGMK was attended by 93 participants for 13 meetings with the theme "Forming Tough PGMK Cadres with Pancasila Character and Potential for Outstanding PCE".

PGMK equips participants with character values through a variety of material content namely Marching Line Regulations (PBB), Flag Ceremony Procedures (TUB), rigging, tents, passwords, semaphore, gymnastics, column sticks, First Aid in Accidents (P3K), bushcraft, throwing knives, throwing axes, survival, compasses, mapping, protocol, cooking skills, Search and Rescue (SAR), public speaking, leadership, and so on.

As a subject that prioritizes values and character approaches, research related to the implementation of PGMK lectures needs to be done. This is to find out how far PGMK can contribute to strengthening the character of UNNES students. Although several studies have determined that there is a major contribution of character education to the improvement of students' social competence (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2015), one fundamental research question remains, namely "How does character education impact school climate and culture, and student behavior?" (Stoppleworth, 2011). This is because Howard, Berkowitz, and Schaeffer (2014) consider that research in this area is very vague and limited when one considers the number of character education programs that exist. Therefore, this study focuses on efforts to discover the role of PGMK in strengthening student character and identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors of PGMK in strengthening student character.

Method

The type of research used is descriptive with a qualitative approach that contains descriptions of quality and can be accounted for. Qualitative methods are often referred to as naturalistic or natural setting methods. Auerbach and Silverstein in Sugiyono (2017) describe qualitative research as research that analyzes and interprets texts and interview results intending to find the meaning of a phenomenon. Qualitative research is research in which the interpretation of the results does not use numbers, but in this study, it does not mean that it is not allowed to use numbers at all.

The instrument in qualitative research is the researcher itself (human instrument). To become an instrument, researchers must have broad theory and insight, so that they can ask questions, analyze, take pictures, and construct objects under study more clearly and meaningfully. The location in this study is UNNES, while the research unit is outbound learning for PGMKorganized by the PCE. The data sources used in this study include (1) informants consisting of Committees and Lecturers of PGMK Courses and Coordinators; (2) events that occur at the location of the data source; and (3) available documents.

The techniques used in collecting research data include interviews, observation, and documentation. Meanwhile, the tools used in data collection included interview guidelines, field notes, and observation sheets. Testing the validity of the data is done by informant review, member check (peer check), and triangulation. Triangulation carried out is a triangulation of sources (informants, events, documents) and a triangulation of tools (interviews, observations, document studies, and documentation). The data analysis technique uses interactive analysis with steps of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions.

Results and Discussion

The role of younger generation education and scouting as strengthening student character

The PGMK course is an obligatory subject for students studying PCE UNNES. One of the primary objectives of the PGMK course is to shape participants' personalities by bringing about positive changes in their attitudes and behaviors. According to Wiratomo (2021), PGMK is a course that aims to develop both soft and hard skills for students, especially those who are aspiring educators, by integrating scouting into the curriculum. The course seeks to instill character in the younger generation, focusing on values such as love for the homeland,

discipline, responsibility, honesty, innovation, creativity, inspiration, humanism, care, sportsmanship, fairness, and more. Inbound and outbound courses, which are unique to the PCE Study Program, are an essential part of the PGMK curriculum.

The primary objective of PGMK lectures is to build the character of students and provide them with scouting skills. This is because PCE teachers have a significant role to play in shaping the character of the younger generation. Additionally, many PCE teachers in schools are appointed as scout coaches, so students with character and scouting abilities are of added value. Inbound and outbound PGMK lectures are held to provide participants with a better learning experience. Lecturers aim to help participants learn not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom so that they can develop soft skills and hard skills required to become successful educators. During the Covid-19 pandemic, outbound PGMK activities were held online and offline. Some students living in Semarang participated in offline activities on campus while following strict health protocols.

The reinforcement of student character is one of the fundamental roles of younger generation education and scouting, which encompasses four key roles. *First,* it serves as a medium for developing the soft and hard skills of participants. Self-development and self-improvement involve the development of both soft and hard skills, which are critical components of character education. Soft skills such as discipline, honesty, integrity, caring, tolerance, problem-solving, etc., and hard skills like analytical skills, writing skills, public speaking, etc., are all essential for comprehensive character development based on real-life, applicable, comprehensive assessments, and personal formation. Although it may not encompass all values, the PGMK has exhibited comprehensive character teaching that covers both soft and hard skill development. For instance, the material covered in the 2nd meeting included the Row Rules (PBB), which encouraged participants to learn about the values of discipline, integrity, and honesty while complying with rules and paying attention to instructions. Another example is the scientific paper writing, which emphasizes honesty, integrity, and the ability to analyze, synthesize, and reconstruct ideas. Some studies suggest that exemplary reinforcement and habituation are important for students to understand and reflect on behavioral character values (Astuti et al., 2021). The importance of shaping student character as an anticipatory step to decrease moral distortions among high school students and the effectiveness of the principal's transformational leadership role in optimizing implementing character education strengthening programs in schools

The *second* role of younger generation education and scouting is to equip participants (PCE students) as prospective scout coaches. Education is a vast domain that provides various types of knowledge, including formal, non-formal, and informal education. Scouting education is included in the non-formal education pathway and is enriched with the values of the scouting movement in the formation of a personality with noble character, patriotic spirit, law-abiding, disciplined, upholding the noble values of the nation, and life skills. According to Tijan (2021), PCE teachers are often assigned as Scoutmasters who play a vital role in putting PCE theories into practice through scouting. PGMK serves as a development forum for prospective scout coaches since PCE graduates are often asked to become scout coaches who have integrity and good values when they enter schools.

The *third* role of younger generation education and scouting is developing the moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior of participants. PGMK also emphasizes the importance of three components of good character, namely moral knowing or knowledge of morals, moral feeling, or feelings about mental and moral actions, and moral actions as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Components of Good Character Diagram
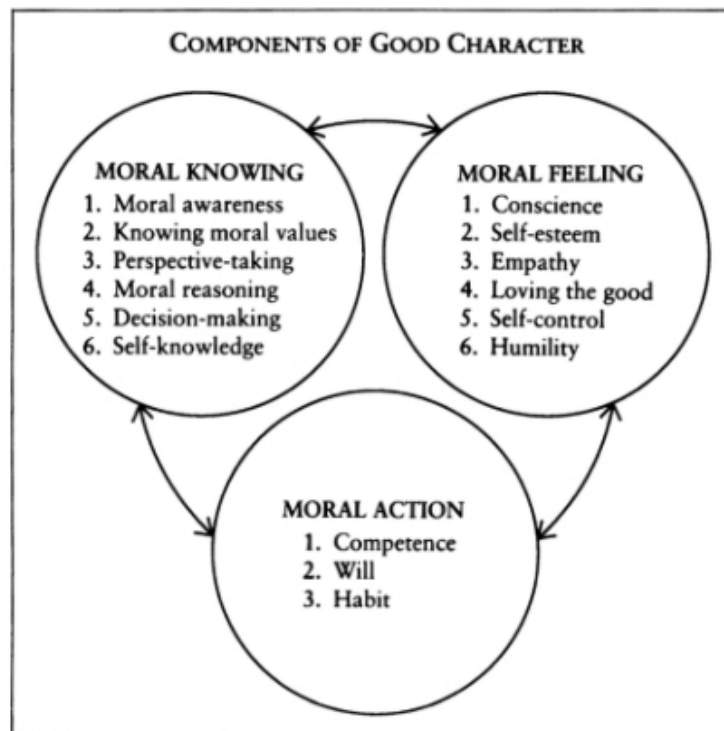
Source : Setiawan (2013).

In order for participants to fully understand and embody the values of virtue, several components must be included in character education. One crucial aspect is moral knowing, which encompasses six key elements: moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective taking, moral reasoning, decision making, and self-knowledge. Additionally, moral feeling must also be instilled in participants as a source of motivation to act in accordance with moral principles. This includes six emotional aspects: conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility.

Ultimately, the goal of character education is to translate moral knowledge and feeling into action. This requires cultivating three additional aspects of character: competence, will, and habit. By understanding and developing these dimensions of character, participants can become individuals who act with integrity and moral purpose.

As part of the formal education curriculum, the PGMK serves as a forum for optimizing the various dimensions of character education. PGMK includes four interrelated dimensions: the ethical dimension, literacy dimension, aesthetic dimension, and kinesthetic dimension.

The ethical dimension, which focuses on the "process of the heart," involves activities that teach participants to understand and appreciate their spiritual context, religious values, and beliefs. The literacy dimension encourages critical thinking and responsiveness to one's surroundings, with the goal of fostering intellectual excellence. The aesthetic dimension emphasizes the importance of moral integrity, artistic sensibility, and cultural awareness. Finally, the kinesthetic dimension involves physical activities that help develop a sense of discipline, teamwork, and personal responsibility. By incorporating these various dimensions, PGMK can effectively develop the character of its participants and help them become well-rounded individuals.

Supporting factors for younger generation education and scouting to strengthen student character

The role of PGMK in strengthening student character at UNNES is driven by several factors. *First* and foremost, exemplary character education from the tutors is crucial for successful knowledge and value transfer. Through field observations, students can see the

importance of being punctual, present in every activity, dressing modestly even in virtual learning settings, and prioritizing familial relationships over rigid structures.

Secondly, the curriculum design for PGMK supports the development of character education as an integral part of the lectures. Outbound PGMK activities have been standardized with a focus on character values and building. The curriculum design has gone through a series of trials and discussions to ensure its quality and effectiveness in achieving the goals of character education.

Thirdly, the commitment of the PGMK committee to internalize values is paramount. The committee's efforts to internalize values encourage full commitment to organizing activities. The PGMK committee understands the positive impact this course can have on participants, as evidenced by the changes in self-character reported by the chairman of the PGMK 2020 committee. As students are forged to become more disciplined and responsible individuals, this commitment is instilled in them, and they become determined to facilitate and provide good character learning.

Finally, stakeholder support is critical in implementing PGMK as a medium for character education. The study programs, departments, faculties, and universities all fully support the implementation of outbound PGMK. This support takes the form of funding, moral motivation, guidance, and more.

In conclusion, the success of character education through PGMK is driven by exemplary tutors, a supportive curriculum, a commitment to internalizing values, and stakeholder support. These factors are crucial in developing well-rounded students who will become responsible and disciplined individuals in their personal and professional lives.

Inhibiting factors in youth and scouting education as strengthening student character

Character education, which includes value and moral education, faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness in strengthening student character. The *first,* one of the major obstacles is the lack of common perception among participants about the importance of character education for the younger generation. Field observations reveal that the overall awareness of attending lectures among participants is still low, which hinders the full transfer of knowledge and values to PGMK participants.

Second, the difficulty of presenting a conducive situation for lecture participants is another challenge. PGMK lectures carried out offline and online can create disparities and dichotomy in the management of participants. Class management carried out offline is easier in conditioning participants, while those who join online will be more difficult to reach because they only rely on visual and audio platforms. To overcome these obstacles, collaboration with all components such as lecturers, committee chairpersons, and Komdis is essential to jointly set good examples for PGMK participants, so that lectures can shape the character of the participants.

The *third* challenge is the less varied learning models in character education. The current PGMK learning model is still not able to connect the discussion of the concept of core ethical values as the basis of character with the participants' daily lives. To address this, several development steps in the preparation of character education models need to be identified, explored, contextualized, pedagogically realized, and evaluated.

The *fourth* factor that causes PGMK to be not fully optimal in strengthening the character of students is the lack of capacity building and competence of tutors. Increasing the capacity and competence of tutors is necessary to create an optimal learning climate.

Fifth, the intensity and duration of learning are relatively short, which is another obstacle in character education. The schedule for organizing PGMK which is only two hours a week is

considered insufficient if it is oriented towards character building. Therefore, real-time monitoring by the committee and lecturers is necessary to create optimal outputs.

Sixth, not every area has a good internet connection, which impacts the inability and the emergence of signal stability disturbances when PGMK participants will be connected in virtual learning.

Finally, a less supportive environment is another challenge. Participants who have joined virtually may be unable to focus and concentrate on joining the learning process because they are busy with one thing or another. To overcome this, it is necessary to create an environment that supports character education and promotes the importance of character education for the younger generation.

Conclusion

This study highlights three main findings regarding the role of PGMK) in strengthening student character. *Firstly,* PGMK plays a significant role in developing both soft and hard skills of participants, equipping them as prospective Scout coaches, and optimizing various dimensions of character education. *Secondly*, the driving factors that reinforce PGMK's impact on student character include the example set by tutors, curriculum design, the PGMK committee's commitment, and stakeholder support. *Lastly*, the study identifies several factors that hinder PGMK's effectiveness, including the lack of uniform perceptions among participants, difficulties in presenting conducive learning situations, limited learning models, inadequate capacity building and competence of tutors, short learning intensity and duration, poor internet connection in certain areas, and unfavorable environments. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators on how to improve and optimize character education through PGMK.

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