

Forming young citizen characters through youth organizations in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Character as an outward characteristic possessed by each individual can be formed through formal or non-formal education. In non-formal education, character can be formed through participation in non-governmental organizations such as youth organizations. The purpose of writing this paper is to explain the role of youth organizations in building the characters of young citizens. The method used is a literature study on youth organizations, the concept of character education itself, and young citizens. The results of the literature review show that the activities of youth organizations indirectly support character building in young citizens even though there are still some obstacles.

1 INTRODUCTION

Every sovereign country has a major element in its state management: citizens. These countries have an obligation to educate and equip each of its citizens with a good education in order to form *good citizens* who understand their rights and obligations. However, the state cannot only rely on political policies for this but must involve other related parties. To create good citizens or good citizenship requires a strong education on 'character', so the issue of character education is much discussed and pursued by national governments.

In Indonesia, to support achieving optimal character education, the government makes related policies or regulations. The recently issued Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017 concerning character education (RoI, 2017) states that character education is not only obtained in schools or formal education institutions but involves various parties, including families (especially parents), the community and schools. According to Lickona (1991), the concept of character education for a noble character (good character) includes knowing about kindness, being committed to kindness and finally performing kindness. Thus, it can be said that character, includes several stages, starting from someone's knowledge (cognitive), attitudes, motivations, behaviors, and skills. Character education is not only teaching knowledge on character theoretically but is about how giving a real example to children about character as well so that the children can apply it in their daily lives.

Character education is not only a matter of formal education that children or students receive in school but also the non-formal education that children get in their families and the surrounding environment. However, there is certainly a view that only families and schools are required to provide character education. What is often forgotten is the community environment, yet this also has a significant contribution to the character education itself, and mainly character education for youths. In the community, there are many youth organizations that unwittingly become the place or tool in shaping youths into good citizens of young countries and understanding their rights and obligations. In Indonesia, examples of these include youth organizations (*Karang Taruna*), youth organizations in religious fields such as Anshor and IMM (Muhammadiyah Student Association), and other organizations. As stated by Widiatmaka, Pramusinto, and Kodiran (2016), the Anshor organization (a religious organization under Nahdatul Ulama (NU)) has a role in character education, especially in forming

religious character, responsibility, independence, cooperation, tolerance, and nationalism, obtained during activities basic education and training or namely *diklatsar*.

In relation to this, this article was written to determine through literature studies the role of youth organizations in forming young citizens' characters, especially the role of existing activities. The method used is a literature study conducted by analyzing descriptive qualitative data collected from books, journals, and previous studies on character education and youth organizations.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

The method used here is a literature study conducted by analyzing descriptive qualitative data from books, journals, and previous studies on character education and youth organizations.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A school supervisor has an important role in solving problems in education quality because supervising is like a bridge between teachers and education quality. Teachers need help and solutions from a school supervisor to solve problems in the teaching-learning process. A clear learning process has become a factor for students to receive effective learning. Students who are given clear explanations in the learning process are more likely to receive high scores in examinations. Thus, the teacher is the key to successful learning for the students.

3.1 *Youth organization*

The youth organization is a forum that serves as a place for creativity and attitude and mental training. Wahjosumidjo (1992) stated that such organizations have a strong influence on social records. This strong influence is not only affected the community, but also its human resources as members of the organization that motivate active members in social change. In addition, Sudariya (2010) stated that youths have advantages related to leadership in an organization in the form of self-realization through work programs. Therefore, such organizations and youth are strongly interrelated, especially in developing and mentally training young people and maintaining social order.

In Indonesia, youth organizations exist in various forms; some formal and some informal. Formal organizations are usually certain agencies such as Scouts if at school, and a youth organization such as *Karang Taruna* in the village setting. Suharta (2009) described *Karang Taruna* as a social organization for developing young people in social welfare based on a sense of awareness and responsibility of young people in the developed village areas. Informal organizations are usually outside this, such as motorcycle clubs and soccer fans associations.

Zeldin, Gauley, Krauss, Kornbluh, and Collura (2015) stated that youth or community organizations encourage young people to explore or develop relationships between other youths or adults as well as the development of citizenship related to youth empowerment and relations with other organizations or communities. Therefore, it can be understood that youth organizations are a very important place in establishing character, because in the existing activity programs young people are forged both mentally and conceptually, can practice leadership skills and can exercise self-responsibility.

3.2 *Young citizens*

Karim (1992) explained that young people as a group are difficult to approach by political parties or other candidates for election, because of inadequate knowledge. In addition, de Vries and Wolbink (2018) stated that more attention must be paid to this group. A collaboration of several parties is needed and with different innovations.

Law No. 10 of 2008 in Chapter II Article 19 paragraphs 1 and 2 and article 28 states that Indonesian citizens age 17 years or older on election day or those who are married have the right to vote (RoI (2008)). Hurlock (2011) states that at the stage of adolescence youths experience a significant change, both emotionally, physically, and through behavior patterns, and may have experienced many life problems.

Meanwhile, Cholisin (2004) defined 'citizen' as someone with the membership of political institutions, namely the state, and citizens as subjects as well as objects in the life of their country. Moreover, taking responsibility for the sustainability of a country automatically makes a person possess rights and obligations. In line with this, Syaokani, Gaffar, and Rasyid (2003) define citizens as a group of people who are part of the population that is an element in the forming of a nation.

Thus, it can be understood that young citizens are individuals who have not completely mature views and mindsets, but usually, in terms of politics and state, they have adequate knowledge so are not easy to provoke or mobilize. They have begun to understand the rights and obligations of a citizen.

3.3 Contribution of youth organization to the character formation of young citizens

The concept of youth organizations in forming the character of young citizens is currently an interesting topic with lots of research. Character education not only relies on family or parents and formal institutions such as schools, but non-formal institutions in society also have an influence in shaping the character of children, especially youths.

Felice and Solheim (2011) stated that youth organization is considered a meaningful learning program for young people, especially in learning skills and attitudes for citizenship. Gay, Hjorth, Penderson, and Roelsgaard (2018) said that youth organizations are a place to hone or train skills especially related to one's character. Thus, each youth organization has its own role in forming the characters of young people, and this can be seen as non-formal education, which in practice is not only related to theories but direct practice in daily life.

Moore (2015) stated that organizations play an important role in the vision of peace and forming one's ideal character through each of its process and activities. Otero (2016) stated that youth organizations are able to improve youth's skills because they are considered as non-formal education. Kolano and Davila (2019) stated that young people need special non-formal institutional spaces (youth organizations) that can maintain identities, experiences, and social awareness, which will encourage leadership attitudes and good character.

From several theoretical studies of youth organizations in forming the characters of young citizens, it can be stated that youth organizations are not only beneficial to social life, but they also have a large share in forming a person's character. Lickona (1991) stated that noble character (good character) encompasses knowledge of kindness, creates a commitment to kindness, and finally performs kindness. So it can be said that character includes several stages, starting from someone's knowledge (cognitive), attitudes, motivations, behavior, and skills. Therefore, character education is not only that which provides theoretical knowledge about the character, but is also based on how the character education agent is able to educate, by giving children a direct understanding of character so they can apply it in their daily lives. From some of these concepts, it can be concluded that character education is not only related to formal education in schools but also non-formal education in families and community environments, such as youth organizations.

Youth organizations are one of the agents of character education outside formal education that favored by young people as places for forming skills, knowledge that will shape good behavior, and characters that will create good citizen attitudes and behaviors. The existing studies show that youth organizations have agendas or activities that unwittingly train and sharpen youth skills, for example, training or workshops and social service activities. This is in accordance with RoI (2017), who explains that character education is not only the obligation of one party, but various parties or agents of character education, both formal and non-formal education, starting from parents or families, schools, and the community environment.

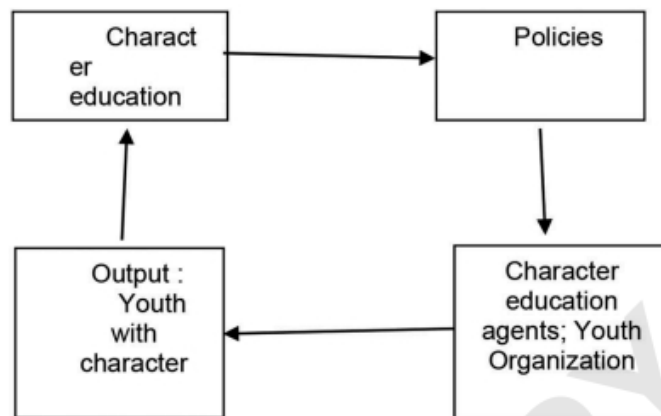


Figure 1. The character education process through youth organizations.

Thus, we should provide opportunities for young people to develop their interests and talents by participating in youth organizations, even though they must remain under the supervision of other relevant parties. Figure 1 depicts the explanation above.

4 CONCLUSION

Character education is not only formed in the family and school environment as formal education but can be formed in the community, for example in youth organizations. Young people should be given the opportunity to develop their interests and talents by participating in youth organizations that aim to shape character. Families and schools continue to play a role in providing supervision to children or young people in each of their organizational activities.

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