

# Character Building Method: An approach to Improve the Discipline for Students in Higher Education

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## ABSTRACT

This community service activity aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Character Building program at Bandung University in enhancing student discipline. The methodology involves both quantitative and qualitative data analysis derived from surveys and interviews with students, program chairs, and academic personnel. The evaluation results indicate a significant improvement in student discipline, reflected in positive changes in behavior, increased participation in academic activities, and engagement in social projects. Students' awareness of discipline values and responsibility has also increased, creating a more positive academic atmosphere. This research implies that the character-building program is effective as a character-formation strategy, serving as a foundation for further development. The study also underscores the importance of direct student involvement in evaluation and emphasizes the need for ongoing monitoring to identify long-term changes. Practical implications include continuous improvement in program implementation and attention to various dimensions of the student experience.

**Keywords:** Character Building, Discipline, Students.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teenagers in Indonesia, like in many countries, face various challenges and experiences that reflect the social, cultural, and economic dynamics (Jefferies & Ungar, 2020). They often encounter education-related challenges, both in terms of access and quality, while being continually influenced by technology and social media dominating their daily interactions (Greenhow & Lewin, 2015). Despite exposure to global influences, Indonesian teenagers maintain their identity by preserving cultural values and local traditions (Xie & Ma, 2023). Entertainment activities, such as music and film, play a significant role in their lives, while other aspects like employment, friendships, and mental health are also integral parts of their journey to adulthood (Sulistyan et al., 2017). With diverse geographical and social backgrounds, the teenage experience in Indonesia can vary widely, reflecting the evolving dynamics of society (Laksana & Wood, 2019).

Character building is crucial for teenagers as it forms the moral foundation, values, and attitudes that will guide them through adult life (Suwartini, 2017). This process not only develops academic intelligence but also hones crucial moral and social aspects essential for decision-making and social interaction (Marini, 2017). Through character building, teenagers can cultivate a strong moral compass, independence, healthy social relationships, emotional resilience, quality leadership, self-awareness, wise decision-making skills, and the ability to make positive contributions to society. This forms a solid basis for their personal development and has a positive impact on their surrounding environment (Muslich, 2022).

Character building also holds great relevance for university students, as the college years are a crucial period in identity and life attitude formation (Fadhillah & Wulan, 2020). Besides achieving academic success, students also need to develop a strong character to overcome challenges in academic and professional settings (Rukiyanto et al., 2023). This process involves the cultivation of work ethics, independence, leadership, and adaptability in dynamic environments. With good character, students can enhance the quality of social relationships, contribute positively to collaborative projects, and become effective leaders in the future. Character formation also helps students maintain a balance between academic demands and other aspects of life, such as mental health, interpersonal relationships, and social responsibility. Therefore, the character-building process in higher education has a significant long-term impact on personal development and the professional success of students (Mamonto et al., 2023).

At Bandung University, character building plays a key role in shaping students who not only excel academically but also possess strong character. Students are encouraged to develop critical thinking, independence, and a strong work ethic. Self-development programs and extracurricular activities at Bandung University aim to engage students in profound experiences, broaden their perspectives, and help mold competitive personalities in the professional world. Through this approach, Bandung University is committed not only to providing deep technical knowledge but also to equipping students with values and soft skills necessary in various life contexts. Thus, character building at Bandung University is not just about producing academically intelligent graduates but also future leaders who are both principled and capable of contributing positively to society.

Various character-building methods are implemented in different educational institutions, including Bandung University, to shape students into individuals of character. One commonly used method is through leadership coaching and training programs. Students are given opportunities to engage in organizational activities, social projects, and extracurricular clubs that allow them to develop leadership skills, teamwork, and responsibility. Additionally, seminars, workshops, and lectures on moral values and ethics are frequently conducted as part of character-building efforts. Involving students in discussions on moral dilemmas, social responsibility, and ethical challenges in the real world helps them reflect and deepen their understanding of the desired personal character. Mentoring programs between senior and junior students also serve as an effective method in transferring positive values, and life experiences, and providing the necessary social support for students undergoing character formation. Overall, the integration of these methods helps create an educational environment that supports the character development of students, preparing them to face challenges in their personal and professional lives.

The aim of the activities conducted toward the Character Building Method as an effort to enhance discipline is to establish a strong character foundation in each student. This method aims to equip students with ethical values, responsibility, and discipline that will help them face life and career challenges. One of the main objectives is to develop students' discipline, both in terms of time management, responsibility for academic tasks, and social interactions. By adopting the character-building method, this goal also includes instilling a sense of responsibility towards oneself and society, as well as developing a deeper understanding of the consequences of their actions and decisions. Through this approach, it is hoped that students will become individuals of integrity, and independence, and capable of coping with pressure positively. Additionally, another goal is to build a harmonious academic community where discipline is not only individual but also creates a collaborative culture that supports the achievement of common goals. Thus, the character-building method becomes a solid foundation for achieving sustained improvement in discipline in the educational environment.

## **2. METHODS**

The community service activities took place from September to December 2023, involving 369 teenage participants from Bandung University. The trainers were sourced from military members in the city of Bandung. The activities were conducted at three locations: the Rectorate

Building, the Main Campus, and the Ciparay Campus. The implementation of the character-building method through three stages-preparation, execution, and evaluation (Sulistyan, 2020, 2021)-aims to achieve holistic character formation in students. The explanation of each stage is as follows:

a. Preparation Stage

In the preparation stage, the main goal is to carefully plan the entire character-building program. This involves identifying core values to be instilled, designing suitable activities, and selecting effective teaching methods. Preparation also includes organizing the necessary resources and personnel, including the involvement of professors, practitioners, or guest speakers who can provide valuable insights and experiences.

b. Execution Stage

The execution stage is when the actual Character Building activities are implemented. This stage involves various activities such as seminars, group discussions, or community-based projects. Facilitators and mentors play a crucial role in guiding students through personal reflection and the application of character values in their daily lives.

c. Evaluation Stage

The evaluation stage is key to measuring the success and impact of the character-building method. Evaluation can be done through surveys, performance assessments, or interviews to gather feedback from students. The evaluation results can then be used to refine the methods and activities of Character Building in the future. Through continuous evaluation, educational institutions can ensure that the applied methods truly contribute positively to enhancing discipline and overall character formation in students.

The analysis of evaluation results within the context of Character Building is conducted through systematic steps, starting from identifying success indicators to formulating recommendations. This process includes processing quantitative and qualitative data, comparing them with established goals, and considering external factors that may influence the results. By comparing the evaluation results with previous assessments, educational institutions can identify trends and changes over time. The analysis results can then be used to formulate recommendations and follow-up actions, ensuring continuous improvement and enhancing the effectiveness of the Character Building program in shaping students' holistic character.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Planning

The planning stage encompasses three key components: preparing activity plans, organizing resources and supporting materials, and facilitating communication and student involvement.

1) Preparation of Activity Plans

In September 2023, the character-building preparation activities at Bandung University will kick off with the meticulous preparation of activity plans. A planning meeting will bring together students, study program heads, and representatives from the academic department. During this gathering, discussions will revolve around the desired character goals and success indicators. The head of the study program will provide insights into specific character needs pertinent to each field of study, while the academic department will furnish information regarding the academic schedule and potential adjustments. This collaborative discussion will serve as the foundation for subsequent activities, culminating in a well-coordinated plan aimed at shaping the character of the students.

2) Organizing Resources and Supporting Materials

Following the approval of the activity plan, the subsequent step involves the meticulous organization of resources and supporting materials. Engaged students are encouraged to contribute to research and identify relevant materials for character formation. The head of the study program and the academic department will collaborate to prepare

supporting materials that seamlessly integrate with the academic curriculum. Simultaneously, there will be a focus on logistical planning and the procurement of supporting facilities such as meeting venues, presentation equipment, and training materials. Collaborative efforts between students, study program heads, and academic departments during this stage are paramount to ensuring the availability and effective coordination of all necessary resources.

### 3) Communication and Student Involvement

The preparatory activities in September will extend to encompass broader student communication and engagement initiatives. Communication efforts may involve disseminating information about activities, program objectives, and ways in which students can actively contribute. Moreover, meetings or forums will be organized to provide students with opportunities to express their views and aspirations concerning character-building activities. By involving students from the outset, it is anticipated that they will feel a heightened sense of ownership and enthusiasm in executing activities throughout the character formation process. The synergy established between students, study program heads, and academic departments in September will establish a robust foundation for the enduring success of the Character Building program.



**Gambar 1.** Activity planning

Source: Activity Planning Results (2023)

### b. Implementation

The implementation phase is scheduled for December 2023 across three locations: the Rectorate Building, Main Campus, and Ciparay Campus.

#### 1) Conducting Activities at the Rectorate Building:

In December 2023, character-building activities will kick off at the Rectorate Building, marking a significant effort to enhance discipline and mold student character. Various activities, including seminars, workshops, and discussion sessions, will take place at this venue. The active participation of students, program heads, and academic staff will be pivotal to the success of this event. The Rectorate Building was selected as the venue for the opening and main events due to its symbolic role as the university's administrative center.

#### 2) Activities on the Main Campus:

Character-building activities will also extend to the university's main campus. Here, field activities, weigh-ins, and group sessions will be organized to foster direct student engagement. The main campus, with its architectural splendor and academic ambiance, will create a supportive backdrop for these character-building initiatives. Students will participate in a series of carefully designed activities aimed at enhancing social skills, teamwork, and self-responsibility.

#### 3) Expansion of Activities to the Ciparay Campus:

Furthermore, as a strategic move to broaden the impact and involve a larger student body, character-building activities will be conducted at the Ciparay Campus. This location will serve as a focal point for community engagement initiatives, including community service programs and collaborative projects. Engaging students on more remote

campuses will enrich their experiences and ensure that character-building embraces the diverse range of student experiences across the university. Through involvement at these three sites, it is anticipated that the December activities will generate a lasting impact on character development and foster increased student discipline within the university environment.



**Figure 2.** Implementation of Character-Building Activities  
Source: Results of Activity Implementation (2023)

c. Evaluation

The evaluation process gauges the success of the implemented activities. The observed enhancement in student discipline at Bandung University, as a consequence of activity evaluation, serves as a tangible indicator of the effectiveness of the Character Building program. A key measure of success lies in the observed shifts in student behavior towards improved discipline. The evaluation reveals an uptick in lecture attendance, timely completion of assignments, and a reduction in disciplinary infractions. Furthermore, the evaluation outcomes shed light on the program's positive influence on students' awareness of discipline values and responsibility. An examination of student engagement in extracurricular activities, seminars, or social projects offers a comprehensive overview of their commitment to character development and ethical values.

The significance of this evaluation extends to recognizing that the enhancement of discipline not only yields positive outcomes within the academic sphere but also holds enduring benefits for character development and equips students to confront future challenges. Evaluation findings indicating improved discipline can serve as the foundation for refining and optimizing strategies within the character formation program in the future.



**Figure 3.** Activity Evaluation Process  
Source: Evaluation Implementation Documentation (2023)

## 4. CONCLUSION

The evaluation of character-building activities at Bandung University has demonstrated success in enhancing student discipline. Positive shifts in student behavior, attendance, and engagement serve as tangible indicators of the program's positive impact. In essence, character building in university sets the foundation for students to become responsible, ethical, and resilient

individuals who can positively contribute to society and thrive in their personal and professional pursuits. The growing awareness of discipline and responsibility values further substantiates the success achieved in character formation. This affirmation underscores the significance of an evaluative approach in identifying program success and laying the groundwork for future development.

Despite its success, this evaluation possesses certain limitations. The utilized data may primarily be quantitative, potentially omitting some dimensions of the student experience. Additionally, time and resource constraints could restrict the evaluation's scope. Furthermore, evaluations might not adequately account for individual variations among students. It is crucial to acknowledge that evaluations capture a specific moment in time and may not comprehensively capture all potential long-term changes.

To enhance future evaluations, it is recommended to incorporate more qualitative research methods, such as interviews or discussion groups, to gain deeper insights from students. Moreover, involving students directly in the evaluation process can provide firsthand perspectives and instill a sense of ownership in the program. Integrating continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations is essential for identifying long-term changes and implementing necessary improvements. Lastly, recognizing limitations and involving various stakeholders in the evaluation process will enhance the validity and sustainability of the success of the Character Building program at Bandung University.

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