

Forming the Character of a Physically Healthy Young Generation Through Military Education

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ABSTRACT

This activity aims to develop the character of the young generation with good physical health through military education at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi, West Bandung. The methods applied include the preparation and implementation of the program, involving the entire academic community. The evaluation results show that the activity went smoothly, and the participants successfully achieved the set goals, showing improvements in physical health and character strengthening through discipline and teamwork. The discussion covers the program's success, involvement of all parties, and benefits felt by the participants. Limitations in logistics and the need for more in-depth evaluation are identified as areas for improvement. Meanwhile, suggestions for further development include the application of comprehensive evaluation methods, increased inter-institutional collaboration, and the development of a more contextual curriculum. Key findings from this study include the program's success in shaping the character and health of the younger generation, highlighting the importance of military education as a means of holistic character formation at the higher education level. These findings provide a basis for the development of similar programs in the future, with a focus on the necessary improvements to enhance their positive impact.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Physical health in the young generation plays a crucial role in supporting their physical and mental development (Setyawan & Gani, 2021). The youth phase is a critical period marked by rapid growth, and optimal physical health is a foundation for the development of bones, muscles, and body organs (Mustafa & Sugiharto, 2020). Additionally, success in academic achievements can also be influenced by good physical health, as a healthy body provides energy and focus for learning (Oktaviani & Wibowo, 2021). Disease prevention aspects are also relevant, with a healthy lifestyle during youth potentially reducing the risk of chronic diseases in adulthood (Baird et al., 2017). Beyond physical benefits, physical health also impacts the mental health of the young generation, helping to reduce stress and enhance emotional well-being (Kansky & Diener, 2017). During this period, individuals begin to form lifestyle habits, so good physical health can prevent the development of bad habits and promote an understanding of the importance of maintaining the body and adopting a healthy lifestyle. By understanding the importance of this aspect, a generation of young people can be shaped who are not only physically healthy but also have mental well-being and lifestyle habits that support a productive and balanced life (Rowe et al., 2019).

Neglecting the physical health of the young generation can have serious impacts on various aspects of their lives (Akseer et al., 2017). Physically, a lack of attention to diet, exercise, and body care can impede normal growth and development, increase the risk of obesity, and trigger health disorders such as type 2 diabetes (Kanaley et al., 2022). Additionally, low physical activity can also affect mental health, increasing levels of stress and anxiety (Kandola et al., 2018). These impacts are not limited to the individual level but can also affect academic achievements, as poor physical health is often associated with a decrease in concentration and learning focus (Browning & Rigolon, 2019). Social aspects can also be affected, as poor physical health can influence self-confidence and social interactions, creating potential relationship issues with peers (Owen et al., 2017). Therefore, neglecting the physical health of the young generation can create an environment that does not support holistic growth and development, potentially having long-term effects on their quality of life in adulthood.

The primary causes of poor physical health in the young generation can be attributed to a range of factors (Varma et al., 2021). A major factor is an unhealthy lifestyle, which includes an unbalanced diet and a lack of physical activity. The consumption of fast food that is high in fat and sugar, combined with a lack of essential nutrients, can lead to health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Additionally, the modern lifestyle, which often tends to be sedentary, particularly with the widespread use of technology like computers and smartphones, can result in a lack of the necessary physical activity to maintain good physical health. Environmental factors, such as limited access to sports facilities or open spaces, can also be a barrier in forming healthy lifestyle habits. The presence of social pressure, unrealistic body perceptions, and the influence of mass media promoting an ideal body image can also trigger unhealthy behaviors, including extreme diets and unhealthy exercise habits (Fiskum et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding and addressing these factors is crucial to prevent physical health issues in the young generation (Giorgi et al., 2020).

Implementing awareness of physical health among students, especially in a university environment like Bandung University, is crucial. College students often face high academic pressures and busy lifestyles, which can negatively impact their physical health. Knowledge and practice of a balanced diet, regular exercise routines, and stress management are key aspects that need attention. By adopting a healthy lifestyle, students can improve their concentration, physical endurance, and mental well-being, ultimately supporting their academic achievements and personal development. Bandung University, as a higher education institution, plays a significant role in providing support and facilities to promote health awareness among its students. Initiatives such as providing sports facilities, nutritional counseling, and promoting a healthy lifestyle can be positive steps to help students achieve their academic and personal potential optimally.

The right solution to improve the physical health of students, particularly in the environment of Bandung University, involves a series of holistic steps. Firstly, it's important to strengthen health education, including information about balanced diets and the benefits of regular exercise. The university can initiate awareness programs, seminars, or workshops involving health and nutrition experts. Campus sports facilities need enhancement, and incentives for participation in sports activities, such as competitions or clubs, can provide additional motivation. Additionally, promoting a healthy lifestyle can be integrated into campus policies, for example by providing healthy food options in campus cafeterias or organizing regular fitness activities. Psychological support and counseling are also crucial to help students manage academic stress. By aligning these efforts, Bandung University can create an environment that supports the physical health and holistic well-being of its students, aiding them in achieving their academic and personal potential optimally.

The aim of this activity, which is to shape the character of the young generation through military education, is to create a youth who are not only physically robust but also possess positive character and values. Through military education, the young generation is taught to develop self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, and strong leadership. Its primary benefit is the formation of physical health through planned and structured physical training, enhancing body resilience and stamina. Additionally, the mental aspect is strengthened through mental endurance training and problem-solving, helping the young generation to face challenges with a calm head and strong

resolve. Military education also shapes moral character by teaching values such as integrity, honesty, and respect for others. Thus, this activity impacts not only the physical health of the young generation but also lays the foundation for a strong and positive character that can guide them towards maturity and success in various life domains.

2. METHODS

This activity, conducted in November 2023, involved 369 students, 10 program leaders, and TNI trainers at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi, West Bandung, Indonesia. The method for fostering physical health and character in the youth through military education was implemented in three stages according to Sulistyan (2020): preparation, execution, and evaluation. This approach provided a systematic and holistic framework. In the preparation stage, planning and program design were crucial, involving specific goal identification, curriculum development, and preparation of necessary facilities and resources, including the selection of qualified instructors. The execution stage was the core of the activity, where military education materials were delivered as planned, actively involving participants in physical exercises, situation simulations, and team activities. During this phase, instructor monitoring and support were key. The final stage involved a thorough evaluation to assess the achievement of set goals, analyzing participants' physical and mental performance, their response to military education, and its impact on character formation. These evaluations would inform improvements for future similar activities, ensuring structured, effective, and long-term beneficial impact on participants' holistic development.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The preparation for the activity of developing the character of the young generation through military education at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi in West Bandung is a collaborative effort involving the entire academic community, including program heads, deans, and academic staff. This comprehensive approach ensures the success and effectiveness of the program. The program heads play a critical role in formulating specific objectives and designing a relevant curriculum that integrates physical health aspects well within the academic context. The dean's support and coordination are pivotal for the preparation, providing necessary financial support, facilities, and human resources. The involvement of academic staff brings a deep understanding of students' needs and potential. Effective communication strategies are essential to clearly convey the purpose and benefits of the activity to students, fostering their active participation and motivation.

The implementation of this character-building activity in the conducive physical context of Dodik Belanegara, a military education institution, enhances the program's success. Participants experience an atmosphere aligned with military education, encompassing discipline, teamwork, and intensive physical training. Experienced military instructors provide in-depth guidance on discipline, military skills, and character development. This unique experience allows participants to immerse themselves in military life and internalize the taught values more profoundly. The formal and serious setting of Dodik Belanegara reinforces the desired character development objectives, making the experience significantly practical and supportive in achieving the goals of fostering the young generation's character through military education.



Figure 1. The Implementation of Character Building Education
Source: Results of the Activity Implementation (2023)

The evaluation of the activity showed positive results, indicating the smooth running of the program and the achievement of the set goals for developing the character of the young generation through military education. The success in execution reflects thorough planning and preparation by the academic community, including program heads, deans, and academic staff. The formation of character aligning with objectives shows the effectiveness of methods and materials used at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi, West Bandung. This includes the development of discipline, military skills, teamwork, and desired moral values. The benefits, such as improved physical health, increased stamina, and character development applicable in daily and academic life, affirm the program's significant positive impact. Positive evaluation results like these provide a foundation for continuing or enhancing similar programs in the future and underscore the importance of recognizing and providing positive feedback to all involved parties for their role in the planning and execution of the activity.

3.2. Discussion

The results of the character-building activity for the young generation through military education at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi in West Bandung were successful in achieving the set goals. The smooth execution of the activity, involving the entire academic community including program heads, deans, and academic staff, laid a strong foundation for the program's effectiveness. The participants' positive response, active involvement, and successful internalization of values like discipline, teamwork, and military skills were clear indicators of achievement. The benefits realized by the participants, including improved physical health, stamina, and character development applicable in daily and academic life, reflect the positive impact of this character-building approach. The success of this program provides a solid basis for the continuation or enhancement of similar programs in the future, with discussions on sustainability, further development, and necessary improvements to maintain the quality and positive impact of the activities. This success also exemplifies the effective collaboration between academic and military parties, serving as a model for similar activities in other educational institutions.

Building on the success of this character-building program, future considerations could focus on expanding its scope and depth. For instance, integrating more diverse training modules that encompass both physical and mental resilience could further enhance the program's effectiveness. This could include advanced leadership courses, stress management workshops, and more nuanced team-building activities. Such additions would not only enrich the curriculum but also ensure a more comprehensive development of the participants.

Furthermore, establishing a continuous feedback mechanism from participants, instructors, and academic staff can provide valuable insights for ongoing improvements. Regular surveys and discussion forums could help in identifying areas that need refinement and introducing new elements based on emerging trends and needs. This approach would ensure that the program remains dynamic, relevant, and responsive to the changing landscape of educational and military training. Such continuous evolution is crucial for maintaining the program's relevance and impact in shaping the future leaders and citizens.

4. CONCLUSION

The character-building activity for the young generation through military education at Dodik Belanegara Rindam III Siliwangi in West Bandung represents a positive step in developing resilient and strong-charactered youth. Smooth execution, full academic community involvement, and achieving intended goals are indicators of the program's success. Participants experienced physical health improvements and internalized values such as discipline and teamwork, enriching their educational experience. However, like any program, there are limitations, including logistical constraints and the need for deeper evaluation to understand the long-term impact on character development. Future improvements could include comprehensive evaluation methods and strengthened collaboration between educational and military institutions, ensuring the program's relevance and appeal to the young generation. Addressing these limitations and applying suggested improvements can further develop the program, enhancing its positive impact on participants and educational institutions in the future.

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