

CHARACTER BUILDING ON YOUNG PEOPLE: INVESTMENT TO BE A TOUGH LEADER

Arundati Shinta, Dewi H. Harahap & Eny Rohyati
Psychology Faculty, Proklamasi 45 University
Yogyakarta – Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Process of building character on young people started from the habit changing and the provision of activity meaning. The habit changing was applied through conducting ordinary activities among young people i.e. sport / physical recreation, skill training, community service and adventure / expedition. Those 3 former activities should be conducted continuously at least 6 months, during 60 minutes / activity / week, whilst the adventure / expedition should be conducted at least 2 days till 14 days, based on the character changing level (bronze, silver, and gold). Those activities were under the IAYP (International Award for Young People) program. The provision of activity meaning was the participant's interpretation whether these activities were burden or challenge. When the burden interpretation occurred, participant would be likely to tell a lie, lazy, broken his or her commitment to accomplish the activities, and try to find creative apology to cover the laziness. When the challenging interpretation occurred, participant would be likely to have good characters i.e. tough, internal self-regulation, honest, interpreting disability as opportunity, high commitment, and patient. This character building on young people is a precious investment to be a tough leader.

Method of this research was monitoring student's self report on accomplishing those 4 activities under the IAYP program. Monitoring meant reminding (motivating) participant toward his or her commitment, instructing participant to repeat those activities from the initial start when he or she was lazy, and reminding participant to choose middle risk adventure activity instead of high or low risk activity. There were 13 participants (6 girls, 7 boys), university students, mean age was 20. All of them wanted to achieve the bronze award. Those students participated to the IAYP individually; therefore their completion time was dissimilar. By the end of research (month 11), 4 students succeeded in achieving bronze award. One participant was drop out because had other commitment, whilst the rests (8 students) were still in progress. Two of those 8 students should repeat again their activities from the initial start, since they broke their schedule commitment.

Key words: Young people, character, changing habit, continuously.

INTRODUCTION

Being a leader, one has to be a model for her or his members on every aspect such as behavior, attitude, even belief. A leader has to be a behavior model for members since one its function was to lead others. A group usually has goals, and those goals would be achieved when all members agreed to achieve them in a similar way. When it occurred, then members will certainly behave cohesively, and act similarly. The harder goals to be achieved, the group should be more cohesive. Members' cohesiveness could be achieved when they were able to see that their leader was care to their well being. Therefore, a leader and members should work harmoniously.

The usual problem in leadership topic was that there were limited leaders with tough characters. Generally, people demanded their leader should has certain characters such as honest, visionary, competent, wise, open minded, determine, unequivocal, and introspective (Kompas, July 31, 2013). Other scholars (Spreitzer, De-Janasz, & Quinn, 1999) explained that a good leader should have certain psychological requirements such as able to signify the group's tasks (meaning), competent, self-determination, have good impacts on members, innovative, able to influence the upward, able to inspire members, and always monitor group's social environment.

Certainly, there were too many requirements to become a good leader. Even people perceive impossibly that a leader should have character as good as a god. Javanese people mentioned that their impossible leader would be called as the *Ratu Adil* (the Wise King). Ironically, there was no Wise King currently. There was not any satisfying ending on the Wise King debate. Plausible, the Wise King was only a mythology. It was more productive when discussion was addressed to the strategy on how to grow tough leadership character on young generations. It was because the young generation, not the old generation, would lead the world. The research question was: what kind of program that could cultivate the good characters as a foundation for leadership.

In order to grow leadership character, we have to know the leadership definition. Actually leadership definition contained two concepts i.e. process and possession (Moorhead & Griffin, 1995). As a process, leadership meant

that one was using her or his encouragement to influence others to achieve the group goals. Others voluntary did what their leader had instructed. This was a kind of influencing process. As a possession, leadership meant that one has more series of distinguished characters than others. These distinguished characters would make others dependent on that supreme people.

Strategy to possess those distinguished characters surely was not an instant process. It was result of endlessly social learning. Actually the learning process was establishing series of good habits. In this research, habit meant that the behavior has manifested with less cognition aspect (Jager, 2003). This less cognition aspect signified that one would behave automatically (rapidly, even without prolonged thinking process). This process would appear clearly when the individual was in the middle of stable situations, and therefore that certain behavior would be reliable. It was called as a habit. Thus habit was behavior repetition when the individual was in the middle of stable situation. Example of habit was drinking coffee and reading newspaper in the morning. In this research, forming good characters and then becoming habit was through participating in the IAYP program.

What was the IAYP?

IAYP (International Award for Young People) was a character building program which centered in England. Head of the program was HRH The Duke of Edinburg, and Kurt Hahn (1886-1974), a famous German educator, was the founding father. The program was founded by the year 1956 and was accepted in 144 countries in the world. Beneficiary of these unique activities would be addressed to young people aged 14-25 who wanted very much to achieve brighter futures. Kurt Hahn's legendary philosophy was that adolescent possessed an innate decency and moral sense but corrupted by society as she or he aged. Education could prevent this corruption if student was given opportunities for personal leadership and to see the results of her or his own actions. Those activities actually were a modification from the out door activities conducted at the Salem School in Western German and the Gordonstoun School in Scotland. This was a

voluntary program; there was no coercion for student to participate in this program (Veevers, 2006). In Indonesia, those activities were under the IAYP program.

Young people around the world who participated in the IAYP program were said having strong characters such as discipline, honest, tough, brave, willingly to serve the unfortunates, and have high commitment. Even those strong characters were reflected on their face. In their schools, they usually have outstanding achievements such as winning scholarships and actively in extra curricula. They became excellence human resources whom having better personal qualities than other young generation (Shinta, 2013).

Essentially, participating in the IAYP program meant people learnt to defeat themselves. People learnt to defeat their laziness, cowardice, and dishonesty. This was a kind of competition to defeat us and the winner would be awarded three IAYP award levels i.e. gold, silver, and bronze. Here was detailed explanation about the level.

- For the bronze award, participant was asked to complete three weekly activities for three months, one specialization weekly activity for three months, and an adventure activity for 2 days 1 night.
- For the silver award, participant was asked to complete three weekly activities for 6 months, one specialization weekly activity for six months, and an adventure activity for 3 days 2 nights.
- For the gold award, participant was asked to complete three weekly activities for 12 months, one specialization weekly activity for 12 months, and an expedition activity for 4 days 3 nights. Especially for the gold award, participant should also complete additional activity i.e. living in a project area for at least 5 days 4 nights.

What kind of IAYP activities? For the bronze award, essentially, a participant was asked to complete 3 weekly activities i.e. sport or recreation, skill, and community service. These activities should be done at least during 60 minutes / week for 3 months or 12 time activity. After that one should complete the specialization activity; it was either sport, or skill, or community service. This specialization activity was also conducted for 60 minutes / week for 3 months or 12 time activity. The last activity was an adventure.

Examples of the sport activities were taekwondo martial art, basket ball, foot ball, swimming, and all sport activities except playing chess and bridge. A participant was asked to choose one of sport hobby, and therefore she or he was enthusiastic to complete the activity. This sport activity should be weekly progressed either in time or duration. This activity should also be instructed by adults who were credible either in sport education or experience, and therefore she or he could evaluate participant's progress.

Examples of the skill activities were i.e. taking language course, cooking course, writing course, crochet course, etc. Activity instructor would be the teacher course. Instructor should signed participant's form after finishing the activity, as the proof of activity completion. Further on, examples of the community service activities were cleaning the house worship, assisting the orphanage caretaker, reading book for the blinds, teaching children either on school subjects or extra curricula subjects, etc. The most important requirement of this community service activity was that the participant will not be paid in assisting others.

What was benefit for young people to participate in the IAYP program? Indeed, output of this program was more likely to be intangible. It was because having good character was an abstract concept. However when young people received the award, her or his selling value would certainly increase. Most of prestigious organizations in more than 144 countries recognized the IAYP award. In Indonesia, there were 33 schools which adopted the IAYP program as one of their prestigious trademarks. Once participant got the award, then her or his achievements would also be recognized at the international level. Participant would be easier to enter those organizations either as scholarship recipients, or being a student, or being a worker. Indeed this IAYP award is prestigious; it's more likely a ticket to reach brighter futures.

IAYP and Leadership

As a matter of fact, completing those IAYP activities were very difficult. It was because one would be demanded to show the discipline, honesty, toughness, caring, and courage behaviors. However, the activity completion was achievable. This program trained participant to harden her

or his own previous commitment. When participant could not be able to meet her or his own commitment (i.e. being lazy), then the activity should be repeated from the earlier week. Therefore in order not to repeat the activity, participant must show the written proof toward her or his IAYP leader. Example of the proof was the doctor's letter for participant who was unable to do the activity routinely because of sickness reason.

Relationship between completing all IAYP activities and leadership was strong. It was because participant was trained to be tough, discipline, having high commitment to fulfill own schedule, honest, courage, having healthy physic, caring the unfortunates, and competent. Let us look in detail about each activity. The sport activity was not aimed to achieve the sport champion although being a sport winner obviously supported the program. In fact, objective of this sport activity was to motivate young people to exercise their physic routinely. Healthy physic would certainly lead to brighter opportunities in the future.

Based on Havighurst's in 1972, (in Rice, 2001) explanation, the first development task among adolescents was accepting one's physique and using the body effectively. In order to accept one's physique, young people have to care for their health and to use their bodies effectively in many outdoor activities. Completing outdoor activities was the first requirement of the IAYP program. It meant that the IAYP program was on line with psychology development. Beside that, being a leader one has to be active on tying personal relationship with members. Therefore having a good health physique would certainly support important requirement for being a leader.

The second IAYP activity was exercising skill. Objective of the exercising skill activity was to train participant's competence. It could be on language or other cognitive skills. Relating to one of leadership requirements, being competence was very crucial. Most of members expected that their leader should be more competence, having more skills, and more able to lead group's goal through her or his skill. Indeed, it could not in people mind if their leader was unskillful or incompetent. Beside that, the skill exercised was relevant to second development task according to Havighurst's (in Rice, 2001) on adolescent stage. That development task was about preparing for an economic career. Therefore, a skillful adolescent would have huge probability to be a leader in her or his future working organization.

The third IAYP activity was community service. Objective of this activity was to exercise participant's caring behavior to the unfortunates. This objective was also on line with Havighurst's developmental task i.e. desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior (Rice, 2001). The adolescent future leaders should be prepared to care for the unfortunates. At that stage they were aware and therefore they would be disturbed by the injustice and social inequities in the plural world. Especially among girls, a voluntary civic action would help them to be seen and heard in the community. Activities around civic action would provide girls with the experience to service community (Baric et al., 2009). They would be recognized as a novice social leader.

The fourth IAYP activity was adventure. Objective of adventure activity was to motivate young generation to explore the environment which had not known before, to fulfill one's curiosity, and to practice one's survival skill. They engaged this activity without their guardian (parent, teacher, or other significant adults) presence. Engaging this adventure should be followed with certain preparations such as healthy physics and sufficient skills. Actually, engaging this adventure activity meant fulfill the independence development task as Havighurst's explanation (Rice, 2001). Havighurst mentioned one of the development tasks among adolescent was achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults. When engaging adventure activity, one learned about how to decide many things properly and situational accepted. Indeed, this deciding skill was a good foundation to become a leader.

In IAYP program, one has to fight ourselves routinely to fulfill the early commitment. Really, this was a good exercise to have good habit. Participant's self-regulation would be formed. Group of good habits would be addressed to the good characters, and good characters were a solid basic to be a tough leader. The proof was shown from a research on the impact of adventure education in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming between 1995 and 2005. The number of participant was 41 (22 boys, 19 girls), and aged 16-22 years old. It was revealed that most of students were able to learn some difficult courses they met in their adventure, years after completing the activity. Their leadership ability, self confidence, a desire to be in the outdoors, teamwork, and an appreciation of nature were obviously trained well (Sibthorp, Furman, Paisley, & Gookin, 2008).

These IAYP activities were a trigger to form good habit. Routinely, frequently, and willingly conducting similar activities for long time (three months), would certainly form habit. This habit would be presented as behavior or stable characteristic (Aarts, Verplanken & Van Knippenberg, 1998). Those good habits and behaviors would be a good foundation for leadership.

METHOD

There were 13 university students participated in this research (6 females, 7 males), mean age was 20 years old (ranged from 18 years 2 months to 22 years 1 month). They wanted to achieve the bronze award. They registered themselves voluntary to the IAYP Indonesia in Jakarta, and pay the fee. This program was not free in order to confirm their commitment. They have already understood on how to run the activities. Period of this research was 11 months. It took prolonged time because those participants committed to the IAYP individually.

In order to ensure their commitment, all participants should be monitored closely by the IAYP leader. This leader was adult (aged more than 25 years old) who has already trained to be a leader and received a leader license form the IAYP Indonesia. Alongside monitoring, the leader should also motivated and be a good model for all participants on every aspects such as behavior, attitude, achievement, and interpersonal relationship. Trough psychological counseling with the leader, participants could discuss about their problems relating to the completion IAYP activities. After completing all activities, the leader should send the report to the IAYP Indonesia in Jakarta in order to be approved. The IAYP Indonesia staff in Jakarta would arrange the appropriate time to give the award in a ceremony.

Instrument for the monitoring process was the participant's report to the leader. The reporting system was through email whilst the psychological counseling was conducted directly. Leader would check the report accomplishment according the date and time. If leader hesitated, then she or he could ask to the participant's activity instructor. Through the instructor report, participant's report would be proved by leader. If participants did not fulfill their commitment without any logical reason, then the leader would ask them to repeat again at the initial start.

RESULT

From participant’s activity report, it was shown that four participants have succeeded completing all IAYP activities, whilst the rest were still in process. The detailed data was shown at the Table 1.

Table 1 showed that there were only 13 students participated voluntary in this program or it was about 6% from all university students. It meant that most of students were less likely to commit in this character education program. It demonstrated that was only few students who wanted very much to plan their future with this international level program. The university staff has already informed to all students about this precious program extensively, such as in the welcoming new student ceremony. However, most of them ignored this information. Implication of this data was that there were a few students who wanted to have good foundation to be a tough leader.

Table 1. Subject’s identity and percentage of activity completion by the end of research, for bronze award.

No	Name	Age to start (year, month)	Gender	Time to start (month)	% of activity completion
1	Br	19, 3	Female	1	100%
2	El	22, 1	Female	3	100%
3	Li	18, 2	Female	3	57%
4	Pa	19, 8	Male	3	89%
5	El	--	Male	3	0%
6	Rw	20, 3	Male	3	100%
7	An	20, 0	Female	4	100%
8	Mo	20, 0	Female	4	93%
9	Nl	20, 2	Female	6	30%
10	Sn	20, 1	Male	6	93%
11	Sg	21, 21	Male	8	55%
12	Ir	20, 5	Male	9	42%
13	Yn	18, 6	male	9	28%
Average		20 years	---	---	68%

Note: 100% meant that participant had already completed 49 IAYP activities for the bronze award i.e. 12 times of sport activity, 12 times of skill activity, 12 times of community service activity, 12 times of specialization activity, and one adventure activity.

It was only four from 13 participants who succeeded in this program by the end of research (month 11). They were able to complete 100% activities, whilst the average of activity completion was only 68%. It meant that those participants engaged the program individually. Participant's time to start the program was different to each other. It was also shown that one participant has none of activity completion. He was likely to drop out the program, although he had already registered himself. Even he did not report his age and payment proof. Apparently he registered the program because of his peer influence (external motivation). After conducting several weeks of sport activity, he dropped out of the program.

By the end of this research (month 11), it was revealed some participant's personal characteristics (see Table 2). Table 2 showed that those participants were 6 females and 7 males. Although the number were less than males, but females' achievement exceeded males. There were 3 females and 1 male who have completed 100% IAYP activities by the end of research (month 11). It meant that they would receive the international bronze award from the IAYP in England.

Table 2. Ideal and factual completion (month), reason for delaying, reporting problem to the IAYP leader, and other personal characteristics

No	Name	Time to start (month)	Ideal month of activity completion	Month of completion	Reason for delaying, reporting problem & other personal characteristics
1	Br	1	8	11	Discipline in completing sport, skill, and adventure activities, but hesitating in choosing the community service activity. Her self regulation about time was not good. Conducting most of community service activities have to be warned.
2	El	3	10	11	Discipline in completing all IAYP activities, but juggling with working schedule outside of Yogyakarta.
3	Li	3	10	---	Could not able to report regularly to the leader, since having communication problems with the leader. She has to repeat the sport & adventure activities.
4	Pa	3	10	---	Neglecting all IAYP activities since having obligation to care his dying father for several months.
5	El	3	10	---	Only registering, but refusing to continue. Difficult to commit his own schedule. Refusing to discuss with the IAYP leader.
6	Rw	3	10	10	Very discipline in completing activities and reporting to the IAYP leader.
7	An	4	11	11	Discipline in completing all activities, but less commitment in reporting to the IAYP leader.
8	Mo	4	11	---	Discipline in completing all activities, but less commitment in reporting to the IAYP leader.
9	Nl	6	13	---	Discipline in conducting all activities, but juggling with working schedule outside of Yogyakarta, and less commitment to report to the IAYP leader.
10	Sn	6	13	---	Very diligent in conducting & reporting all activities. Not finished yet conducting activities. Self-regulation about time was good. Less creative.
11	Sg	8	15	---	Very diligent in conducting & reporting all activities. Not finished yet conducting activities. Self-regulation about time was good.
12	lr	9	16	---	Diligent in conducting all activities, less commitment in reporting. Not finished yet conducting activities. Difficulties in managing his work and study schedules.
13	Yn	9	16	---	Very diligent in conducting all activities, less commitment in reporting to the IAYP leader. Not finished yet conducting activities.

There was still a nuance of completion behavior among those students such as:

- The first female participant, Br, was discipline in completing the sport, skill, and adventure activities. Her interest was in taekwondo martial art. Her achievements were good i.e. having the Dan 3 black belt, and winning 3 international taekwondo competitions. Therefore her sport activity was doing fitness with a personal trainer whom having national level certificate. Her skill activity was doing taekwondo with the technical emphasizing. Unfortunately, her community service activity was likely neglected. She chose to assist small traders along the tourist roads through writing their promoting strategy. She gave some promotion inputs and then be published in a student's blogsite. Her self-regulation about time was not good. Even she has to be warned to complete her writing schedule. Her characteristics for being a tough leader should be improved. It was expected that her leadership would be improved in the silver level.
- El, the second female participant, was a little bit late (one month) in completing the schedule. It was because she also has a tight working schedule. She was a writer (journalist in a magazine). However she was clever in fulfilling the skill activity i.e. attending a critique meeting on every essay she made in her office. For community service activity, she assisted her IAYP friends to edit and publish their essays at the student's blogsite. Because of going outside of Yogyakarta to hunt news, therefore she was late to accomplish the IAYP activities. She has a good character to be a leader.
- An, the 7th female participant, was discipline in completing all activities, but less commitment in reporting to the IAYP leader. This ignorance behavior should also be improved at the silver level.
- Rw, the 6th male participant, was very diligent completing activities and also reporting to the IAYP leader. He has a good character to be a taough leader. Apparently he also received two scholarships. Indeed, he was an outstanding student.
- The 3rd and 8th participants, Li and Mo, have to repeat again their adventure activities. It was because they failed to fulfill the report

commitment to the IAYP leader. Their adventure activities were more likely to be dangerous (caving and mountain climbing), whilst their physical preparation was limited and the instructors did not have adequate certificate. The IAYP leader has already warned to cancel the activity, but it was ignored. Mo has also to repeat the social activity because she went to her homeland without any permission to the IAYP leader. She neglected the on going social activity. It was very rude to the community who has high expectation toward her. Indeed this was not a good foundation to be a tough leader, and it should be improved.

- The rest 6 participants, Pa, Ni, Sn, Sg, Ir, and Yn, were on going activity completion. However, it was only Sg, the 11th participant, who has clearly good characteristics to be a good leader. He was very diligent in conducting and reporting all activities to the IAYP leader. His self-regulation about time was good.

DISCUSSION

Good character as a foundation to be a good leader was a result of an endless learning process. Adolescence stage was a suitable time to cultivate good characters, since the young people, not the old one, would likely to lead the world. Beside that, decision to have high commitment on most of skills was often made during adolescence stage (Patrick et al., 1999).

This IAYP program was only a simple road to cultivate good characters as a basis for being a good leader. Actually there were numerous roads to be a good leader. When completing this IAYP program, one's characteristics were clearly manifested in behaviors. During the completion process, participant's commitment was tested. The lazy participant was more likely to be creative to arrange a suitable reason to cover the laziness (Shinta, 2013b). It was likely the defense mechanism. Frequent defense mechanism was not suitable for cultivating good characters among young people as a basis for being a good leader.

Implication of this study was that cultivating good characters should be conducted endlessly. In order to maintain those young people's commitment, adult people (parent, teacher, or other adult significant figure) should be a good model for them.

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Note:

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