

Promoting student participation skills through student organizations

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ABSTRACT

A student organization is a step used to improve students' basic norms, roles and learning functions in accordance with the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture number 155/1998. Conversely, Law number 12 of the 2012 government regulation amended in 2014 on the Implementation and management of Higher Education did not provide more details on student organizations. Student organizations under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia tend to be independent in their management with the establishment of Decree (S.K.) by the General Director of Islamic Education number 4961 in 2016. Therefore, this study aims to describe, analyze, and explore students' participation in fostering their organizations through a series of working programs. These programs were predicted to be a medium for students to participate in their communities after they had graduated from college. This is qualitative research with semi-structured interviews, observation, and literature studies as instruments to collect data from 24 informants from eight different campuses in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (D.I. Yogyakarta). The result shows that student participation in organizations includes cadre formation, leadership skills, and educational awareness. Implementing a working program is an operational concern for members on campus; therefore, it is a medium for a country to gain knowledge, prepare for the future, and self-actualize its citizens from the perspective of competency.

Article History:

Submitted : 01-09-2022

Revised : 21-09-2022

Accepted : 02-10-2022

Keywords:

organizations, participation skills, student



Cite in APA 7th:

Hidayah, Y., Fen, C. S., Suryaningsih, A., & Mazid, S. (2022). Promoting student participation skills through student organizations. *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 19(2), 213–223. <https://doi.org/10.21831/JC.V19I2.53422>

Introduction

According to number 22 of the 1948 constitution, Yogyakarta is a region famous for its title as "the city of education, cultures, and tourism." Due to its popularity as "the city of education," several institutes of higher education surrounded the region. The numerous campuses had become a magnet for students to continuously foster their education and encouraged the arrival of academic immigrants. However, there are some problems related to the existence and function of university students as cadres.

To accommodate students, their organizations set some managerial rules, which had become a reviewed and reconsidered objective for the Student Executive Board (BEM) leader at the University of Indonesia. During the 68th anniversary of the university, Zaadit Taqwa advised President Joko Widodo on the regulation of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education which is

considered to threaten the student movement. Some of these problems include cancelling a planned change of MENRISTEKDIKTI related to student organizations consisting of pros and cons.

The existence of student organizations on campuses also invited fears of radicalism which led to the regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education (PERMENRISTEKDIKTI) Number 55 of 2018 on the Ideology and Management of the Nation in conducting Student Activities. PERMENRISTEKDIKTI's existence was to foster national ideology following the Decree of the General Director of Higher Education, Department of Education No. 26 / Higher Education / KEP / 2002 on the Prohibition of the Organization in Campus Life.

The existence of various regulations on student organizations in Indonesia led to the following question, "Is there any threat from its presence?" Data from a survey analysis showed that 91% of students confirmed that they were dealing with issues of ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability. They added that students independently created their learning content in the formal curriculum subjects taught in regular classes (Borges et al., 2017). Meanwhile, research from the University of Michigan on the progress of student organizations found that there were four underlying processes of learning within an organization, as follows: a) the complexity of resource strategies, b) support of organizational structure, c) specification in the leadership election process, and d) the number and complexity of routines that increase over time (Wender, 2017). The analysis of student's perspective on workspaces is regarded as a community of practice that connects people with their beliefs, has the spirit of shared values to achieve several objectives, and real action in their activities (Borges et al., 2017).

In addition, research carried out to study the nature of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among students in primary and secondary schools produced five dimensions capable of developing their personality, namely: a) potencies, b) good character, c) school assistance, d) the internal, and e) external communities by OCB (Blondheim & Somech, 2019).

The article offers an in-depth analysis of the voluntary benefits for students based on large-scale qualitative research with 60 interviews at six Australian universities. However, some of these benefits align with the existing literature. The results showed that training, preparation, and managerial expectations could positively benefit (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2020). Research on the broader impact of testing the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and school teachers' commitment in Chandigarh and Panchkula cities showed that they are motivated and committed to work. Therefore, all possible efforts must be conducted to develop a high level of organizational support among teachers (Luxmi & Yadav, 2011).

The research by Kurt Lewin and James M Burns carried out the efforts to rearrange the organizational change in leadership. They concluded that the rearrangement of administrative change in leadership is a process of functional consequences toward alternatives to current orthodoxy (Burnes et al., 2016). Hutchinson & Hyden (2016) stated that various steps are needed by public health and community-based nonprofit organizations interested in partnering with students. These steps include realistic consideration of time, supervision efforts, skills compatibility with organizational programming, and legal requirements under federal and state laws. In the more practical field of participation in organizations, research examining the effect of Word of Mouth (WoM) on employers showed that it affects the attractiveness of companies that depend on salary, benefits, and learning opportunities for inexperienced job seekers (Patel & Dahling, 2020).

The studies above stated that student organizations supported development with properly cultivated characters. This study, therefore, discusses ways to strengthen students' soft skills through their involvement in organizations.

Method

This qualitative research used the phenomenology method to capture citizens' involvement as members of the organizations. According to Langdridge (2007), there are many advantages to using the qualitative description or interpretation of phenomena from the perspective of the subjects. Besides, phenomenology offers an opportunity to create an abstract reflection to capture information about the research subject before presenting a description.

This research was conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta or *Dhaérah Istiméwa Ngayogyakarta, Indonesia*. It is a fusion of the State Sultanate and *Paku Alaman* Regency, which resembles a province geographically located on Java Island, bordering the Indian Ocean. It consists of four districts and is called the "The City of Education" because it consists of 20 universities, 27 colleges, and 36 diplomas.

This study specializes in eight Student Executive Boards (BEM) from private and state campuses with "A" credentials under the assessment of the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education (BAN-PT). The campuses are as follows: Gadjah Mada University, State University of Yogyakarta, Sanata Dharma University, Atmajaya University, Indonesian Islamic University, Ahmad Dahlan University, Duta Wacana Christian University, and the Islamic State University of Sunan Kalijaga.

This study used a purposive sampling method to conduct an in-depth observation of members of the BEM and obtain information about citizen participation in organizations. In addition, the sampling method was used to determine informants whose experiences in the Student Executive Board (BEM) were influential, valid, and reliable in obtaining the required information (Bernard, 2017; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). This study determined informants based on several reasons: (1) intelligence, (2) administrative member of the Student Executive Board (BEM), and (3) being involved in BEM activities for more than three months. A total of 24 informants, 15 men and nine women from different majors, were chosen to carry out this research.

Table 1
Distribution of Study Subject

Demographic	Number	Total
Gender		
Male	15	15
Female	10	9
Age (in Years)	18-20	16
	21-24	8
Education level	Currently Studying to Become a bachelor	3
Department	Management	
	Psychology	1
	English Education	2
	Islamic Education	1
	Chemical Engineering	1
	Biology	2
	Architecture	1
	Education Guidance and Counseling	2
	Dance Education	1
	Biology	3
	Economic Education	3

Demographic	Number	Total
	Communication	2
	Public administration	1
	Engineering Industry	1
Total of Informants		24

The data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, observation, and literature studies. The research instruments were developed based on the questionnaires by previewing the results of previous preliminary studies. The information from the local mass media about student organizations' development on several Yogyakarta campuses was compiled.

This study compared the interview results with other administrative members of the Student Executive Board (BEM). According to Oakley (1998), interviews are recorded and analyzed to strengthen various related facts from some studies.

A licensing proposal from eight universities followed this. Interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive perspectives on citizen participation in student organizations. Before starting the discussion, the informants' readiness was ascertained by clarifying the research objectives and ensuring the security of their identity.

This research focuses on a) a variety of perspectives, b) underlying reasons, c) forms of participation and d) barriers and strategies in student organizations. The data were obtained from various theories and literature to strengthen the evidence on the topic by collecting documents such as photos, written notes from the meeting, and their work programs. Furthermore, the data were also obtained from local, national, and social media that had influenced student participation in 8 campuses in Yogyakarta to encode and draw a conclusion.

Result and Discussion

Based on the interview results, members of the Student Executive Board (BEM) construed that they were satisfied with the cooperation between the university (campus) and citizens. Steger et al. (2012) stated that many people need meaningful work. There is a direct/indirect relationship between locus of control and internal satisfaction, as well as self-efficacy and job satisfaction respectively (Borgogni et al., 2016). A representative from the BEM of Duta Wacana Christian University stated the following:

"I think the activity within BEM can develop my potency in this university. Students need to associate with the formal curriculum."

Members of BEM stated they were proud of their contribution, although a representative was democratically undergoing depoliticization (Beveridge, 2017). The representative of BEM in State Universities of Yogyakarta emphasized that their participation produced educational organizations with holistic individuals.

"The BEM can make me understand conflicts among individuals, with the feeling of being responsible, and understand the function of management in daily lives."

On the contrary, the existence of BEM indicates the importance of character-forming in the future, which is crucial in identifying and comprehending the relevance of formal learning and social lives. According to a representative of BEM from Sanata Dharma University:

"... It is possible for us to be engaged with BEM to learn and implement knowledge from the classroom. I feel that I can acquire a great benefit from its existence as my home and place of practice before graduating from this university."

During their participation, several activities in the BEM were used to determine their abilities in the working atmosphere. A critical observation has been made to gain self-adjustment in a certain condition. Besides, leadership abilities have been continuously carried out to understand leading techniques. A BEM representative from Gadjah Mada University provided the following clarification:

"... I understand that there are varieties of individuals within BEM. Therefore, their ability to lead becomes a competency that needs to be possessed by the administrative members to perform their abilities."

One of the goals of BEM is to establish civic education for university students with the ability to develop a democratic atmosphere. BEM representative from Indonesia Islamic University reported that students gained awareness of citizenship and nationality through this medium.

"... University students are prospective future leaders. Therefore, I feel this is the right time to start learning about leadership and comprehend citizens' rights and duties."

The members of BEM have understood that its existence was an effort to develop and improve the chain of success in achieving the goal of university graduates. In this regard, a representative from the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga stated the following:

"BEM has a clear working division, policy, responsibility, and private/non-private interactions for more efficient learning techniques."

Student participation presents a memorable experience, especially in learning differently from classroom activities. Some BEM members commented on an idea of learning development, such as the representative from Ahmad Dahlan University, who stated:

"For me, improving the learning experience through BEM is a solution to today's educational experience. Therefore, using some components as media for learning needs to be properly exploited."

There are barriers associated with the reflection of learning in BEM related to students who do not participate in organizational activities. The analysis of the relationship between technology and political participation has been used to identify a trend in political protest and technology over the last 15 years. This has increased comprehension of socio-technology (Neumayer & Rossi, 2016). Members also felt that it was crucial and problematic to adjunct their specific field of study obtained from classroom learning. A representative from the BEM of Atma Jaya University stated the following:

"We need a different adaptation for our subject of study! However, we enjoy participating in the BEM and are proud of it!"

Dialogue has become a complex approach for BEM members. Therefore, various methods used in the development and benefit of dialogue were felt by members, educators, and researchers. Based on this study's findings, many methods are used to strengthen students' soft skills such as their participation in organizations. Many digital participatory platforms have been created for government and citizens. Therefore, the lack of advanced technology is not a reason for ineffective citizen participation and collaboration with local authorities (Falco & Kleinhans, 2018). According to Aristeidou et al.(2017), different design approaches have been made based on the type of citizen participation and engagement of individual profiles.

Dobos & Jenei (2013) stated that engagement provides information, strengthens the community, and builds citizenship in a participatory process. From the perspective of citizenship, participation enhances the perception of trust with the ability to increase social licensing (Kelly et al.,

2019). A study investigating the effect of "Digital India-Power to Empower" as an intermediate variable between citizen involvements showed that metaphorical E-Governance has a positive influence. According to Nandal & Singla (2019), this positive attitude leads to citizens' emotional attachment to E-Governance, which increases the intention of their positive behavior to adopt its use. Student involvement in the social life context helps them realize civic engagement enforcement's ideals. Meaningful work moderates the relationship between effective disposition and involvement (Steger et al., 2013). Generally, citizen involvement in character development is oriented toward understanding civil affairs. Research carried out in Kashmir, Pakistan, showed that the level of civic involvement among youths can increase social, economic, and democratic development (Rafique et al., 2016).

The development of citizen involvement in the education context creates linearity between change and transformation discourse at the level of values, knowledge, culture, information, social life, etc. A literature analysis investigated the benefits and factors influencing the civic involvement construct. According to Marino & Presti (2019), public management has significantly increased involvement and interest in the last ten years. Democracy requires the existence of active citizens to make the components work. Therefore, there is an urgent need for citizens to be involved in the goal of educational purposes. Research conducted in Mexico to determine the dynamic process of immigrant involvement in community and family activities showed that when indigenous youth are integrated into important activities as active members, they develop a deeper understanding (Solís et al., 2013). Active citizens participate in a civil society characterized by mutual respect, without violence, and following human rights and democracy (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009).

Citizen involvement is a condition that allows people living in a country to contribute to their civil affairs. Jacoby (2009) stated that it uses skills, expertise, knowledge, values, motivation, and commitment to improving life. Furthermore, in the curricular scheme, efforts to increase citizen involvement have begun with diverse learning strategies through service learning focused on connecting learning with community needs (Durlak et al., 2011).

The transformation of students' soft skills after and during their participation in their organization was examined in previous studies. Research carried out in America on citizenship, and civic involvement showed that young people articulate status based on "privileges" and feel fortunate to be Americans (Morimoto, 2013). According to Huda et al. (2018), there are three core stages of understanding and providing insights into the importance of leadership based on civil responsibility. These include strengthening commitment to work with strategic plans in community involvement, maintaining creative thinking skills, and increasing leadership awareness through analytical problem-solving techniques. Therefore, it is time for student activities to focus on academics, with active roles in developing soft skills. In this context, "Tri Dharma Higher Education, research and community service" refers to non-academic activities such as community service.

One of the community services at the student level is in organizations widespread on campus, facilitating their ability to learn through problem-solving. The following table describes the transformation of students' soft skills during and after organizational participation.

Table 2
Soft Skills through Student Participation in Student Organizations

Community Level	Form of Activity	Soft Skills	Benefits
Individual	Online activities via social media.	Problem-solving, Responsible technology	Information Literacy. Self-management, emotional, time

Community	Offline activities such as the working program of the BEM	mastery, Soulless democrat, critical thinking, Cooperation, Togetherness	Environmental, and Organizational management, as well as Conflict resolution
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Students' soft skills through participation in organizations add to their mastery of technology and critical thinking. There is a concrete guideline for citizen participation in sustainable cultural innovation (Pellizzone et al., 2017). The relationship between members of student organizations is a map used to determine work programs in student organizations. Therefore, community involvement is seen through the influence of different ideological concepts on citizenship and political wisdom (Marinetto, 2003). The previous theoretical study on political communication between parliamentary members and society merely focused on roles, activities, and perceptions, regardless of the existence of the intermediate layer (Ben-Porat & Lehman-Wilzig, 2019).

In terms of student participation in organizations, the psychological dimension might affect their participation. Research on the impact of organizational involvement on political participation in China led to the participation of party or mass organizations with multiple benefits through official channels, with members adhering to the decisions made by their leaders (Guo, 2007). Besides, individuals can interact with each other in an organization. Therefore, they have ideas about the future. Conversely, the existence of ICT also affected the work patterns of students, with a significant contribution to social sustainability (Bouzguenda et al., 2019).

Member interaction in BEM led to the acquisition of various skills in university students as objects in the development process. Its existence became a stimulus for significant support for student participation. Therefore, researchers, practitioners, and education experts are committed to improving the quality of student organizations using a formulation between theory and practice. Research on the participation of 50 young activists living in Quebec, Canada, found that they actively participated in political parties, social communities, and other associations. According to Quéniart (2008), the practical participation of these activists matched the principle of ethical consistency and appraised compliance values individually and collectively.

Identifying festivals as media for young volunteers indicated that the activity of young people is inseparable from their engagement and participation with the information technology used to strengthen social integrity, active participation, and responsibility (Adha et al., 2019). A research overview was conducted on the involvement of experts, citizens, and professionals in the decision-making process of European policy. It consists of 81 research articles published between 1998 and 2015 on participation which indicated that professional governance in the participatory of forest policy-making process in Europe primarily involved traditional groups.

This analysis showed that management associated with citizen participation was neglected during the creation of European forest policy (Kleinschmit et al., 2018). This study discovered that student participation in organizations including cadre formation is a key in democratic countries. The use of data on the perception of citizens on government's response to their political opinions in *American National Election Studies* and *Ranney* from the party showed a strong competition for state government control with important implications for political attitudes of citizens (Flavin & Shufeldt, 2016).

The formation and development of cadres within the organization through organizational education contribute to expanding meaningful citizen participation. According to (Alizadeh et al. (2019), social media and online communication have changed how people get involved in all aspects

of life. The formation and development of cadres within organizations are training media used to maximize their participation ability and trust among people. Mishler & Rose (2005) stated that belief in political institutions was hypothesized by cultural theory for the optimal function of democracy. Some more profound reflections on the engagement of cadre development within the organization through education. Knowledge Management is often implemented by organizations as a program to promote knowledge sharing (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020). When there is an interaction in the organization regardless of differences, the principles of cooperation become straight, and the organization's function as an educational medium is utilized correctly

Conclusion

In Indonesia, Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education Article 14, paragraph 2, explains that students process curricular and extracurricular activities in college through organizations. This is further strengthened by article 77, paragraph 1, which provides for forming the Students Organization (ORMAWA). In addition, paragraph 2 also clarifies that student organizations are expected to: a) accommodate their activities, b) develop creativity, c) assist them to meet their interests and welfare, and d) develop social responsibility. Student organization management is associated with achieving educational goals based on the institutional scale.

Theoretical knowledge is insufficient when students start working; however, they can cope with various changes associated with sustainable development, which remains a major global challenge. The Institute of Higher Education is used to overcome this difficulty by developing new changes processed through the integration of sustainable development in all spheres of student activities relevant to research by Vargas et al. in 2019. Apart from the number of challenges in improving the quality of human resources, positive results associated with student development in organizations are also discovered.

Acknowledgment

The author is grateful to the University of Gadjah Mada, State University of Yogyakarta, Sanata Dharma University, State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Atma Jaya University, Ahmad Dahlan University, Indonesia Islamic University, and Duta Wacana Christian University for the permissions granted to conduct this research. And to all members of the Student Executive Board who agreed to be interviewed.

Disclosure statement

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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