



## The Role of Scouting Education as a Medium for Character Formation among Physical Education Teacher Candidates

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### Abstract

#### Background

Scouting education is recognized as an effective extracurricular activity for instilling values of discipline, responsibility, and leadership among students. At STOK Binaguna Medan, scouting activities are integrated into student development programs to strengthen leadership character.

#### Objectives

This study aims to analyze the implementation process and identify the benefits of scouting education as a medium for leadership character formation among students of STOK Binaguna Medan.

#### Methods

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation during scouting activities. The study focused on how scouting practices contribute to leadership character development.

#### Results

Findings reveal that scouting education applies a learning-by-doing approach through structured activities such as opening and closing ceremonies, pioneering, marching drills, and nature exploration. These activities instill discipline, foster responsibility, and enhance social adaptability. Students demonstrated improved self-leadership, accountability in group tasks, and cooperative teamwork, all of which reflect strong leadership character formation.

#### Conclusion

Scouting education at STOK Binaguna Medan plays a significant role in shaping student leadership character. It provides practical opportunities for students to internalize values of discipline, responsibility, and collaboration. Institutionalizing structured scouting programs with systematic leadership rotations is recommended to maximize its impact on student development.

**Keywords:** Scouting Education, Leadership Character, Extracurricular, Higher Education

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## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping individuals and society, as it is not only a means of transmitting knowledge but also a medium for cultivating values, attitudes, and character. According to Joseph (2005), education is a conscious effort to develop human potential through structured learning processes. This aligns with the Islamic view, which emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge as a lifelong obligation for every Muslim.

Character education has gained significant attention in recent decades, given the increasing challenges faced by younger generations. Marzuki and Hapsari (2015) argue that character can be nurtured and developed through systematic educational efforts, making character education essential in preparing students to become responsible and ethical members of society. Schools and higher education institutions are therefore expected to integrate character-building programs both within curricular and extracurricular activities (Lysa, 2015).

Scouting education, in particular, has been widely acknowledged as an effective medium for character formation. The Indonesian National Scout Movement (2011) defines scouting education as a practical educational process conducted outside the classroom and family, primarily in outdoor settings, through activities that are enjoyable, challenging, healthy, and well-structured. The ultimate goal is to foster personality, moral character, and life skills. Dewey (2012) also emphasizes that experiential learning, or “learning by doing,” is fundamental for internalizing values and translating them into daily behavior.

Leadership character is one of the essential values emphasized in scouting education. Leadership is defined as the ability to influence others toward the achievement of collective goals (Robbins in Badeni, 2004). It involves not only authority and decision-making but also responsibility, discipline, and social interaction. Minarti (2016) further explains that leadership, as a form of applied social science, functions to mobilize people voluntarily for shared purposes. Therefore, leadership is not merely positional but also developmental, beginning with self-leadership and extending to guiding others.

Given this context, scouting activities provide a strategic platform for students to practice leadership through concrete experiences such as organizing ceremonies, leading group projects, and participating in outdoor challenges. Previous studies highlight that scouting education effectively fosters discipline, responsibility, and cooperation (Muhlisin, 2016; Syafar, 2017). However, research on its role within higher education contexts, particularly among physical education teacher candidates, remains limited.

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the implementation and benefits of scouting education as a medium for leadership character formation at STOK Binaguna Medan. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on character education and provide insights for integrating scouting more effectively into higher education extracurricular programs.

## METHOD

### Participant

The study was conducted at Sekolah Tinggi Olahraga dan Kesehatan (STOK) Binaguna, Medan, North Sumatra, in June 2025. Participants consisted of scoutmasters and student members who were actively involved in scouting activities. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select individuals considered capable of providing relevant and detailed information regarding the role of scouting education in leadership character formation.

### Research Design

This research employed a qualitative descriptive design, focusing on the implementation and benefits of scouting education as a medium for character development. The design was chosen because it allows an in-depth exploration of social phenomena, emphasizing meaning, context, and participant experiences. Data were collected through three main techniques: observation of scouting activities, semi-structured interviews with scoutmasters and student participants, and documentation of institutional records and scouting events.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using an inductive approach, following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, data triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. Implementation of Scouting Education

Scouting activities at STOK Binaguna Medan were implemented through structured programs designed to foster leadership character among students. The scoutmasters applied a *learning-by-doing* approach, where students first observed examples provided by their leaders and then practiced these behaviors in real activities. Core activities included opening and closing ceremonies, pioneering projects, marching drills (PBB), and periodic nature exploration. These practices enabled students to internalize values of leadership, discipline, and responsibility in practical contexts.

#### 2. Development of Leadership Character

The findings show that scouting education significantly contributed to character formation in three main aspects:

- a) **Self-Discipline** – Students learned to manage themselves by attending activities punctually, following rules, and adhering to schedules. Discipline encouraged them to lead themselves before leading others.
- b) **Responsibility** – Student leaders were given the responsibility to direct group activities, maintain attendance records, and oversee the completion of tasks such as pioneering projects. These responsibilities strengthened their accountability and decision-making skills.
- c) **Social Adaptability** – Scouting activities fostered teamwork and cooperation. Group leaders practiced democratic leadership by engaging members in decision-making, while participants developed communication and collaboration skills during tasks such as pioneering and games.

### 3. Overall Impact

The overall impact of scouting education was evident in the enhanced leadership qualities of students. They displayed greater confidence in leading groups, improved problem-solving abilities, and stronger interpersonal relationships. The structured nature of the scouting program allowed for consistent character reinforcement, making it an effective medium for leadership development in higher education settings.

### Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that scouting education serves as an effective medium for character formation, particularly in fostering leadership qualities among students at STOK Binaguna Medan. The implementation of scouting activities through structured and experiential learning aligns with Dewey's (2012) concept of *learning by doing*, which emphasizes that values are best internalized when students actively engage in practical experiences. By observing role models, practicing leadership tasks, and reflecting on their actions, students were able to gradually develop self-discipline, responsibility, and social adaptability.

The role of scouting in shaping leadership character is also consistent with previous research. Marzuki and Hapsari (2015) highlight that character formation can be meaningfully achieved through extracurricular activities that encourage responsibility and moral decision-making. Similarly, Muhlisin (2016) found that scouting activities foster discipline and responsibility among students, which are fundamental aspects of leadership. The present study extends these findings by demonstrating how scouting at the higher education level not only builds individual character but also prepares students—particularly future physical education teachers—to assume leadership roles in educational and community contexts.

The leadership qualities developed through scouting, namely self-discipline, responsibility, and social adaptability, resonate with Robbins' (in Badeni, 2004) definition of leadership as the ability to influence a group toward achieving common goals. The structured roles within scouting activities, such as leading ceremonies or directing pioneering projects, provided authentic opportunities for students to practice such influence in real settings. Moreover, the democratic practices observed during group tasks reflect Minarti's (2016) perspective that leadership involves mobilizing others through voluntary cooperation rather than coercion.

An important implication of this study is that scouting education can serve as a model for integrating character education into higher education extracurricular programs. As students increasingly face complex social and professional challenges, character-based leadership development becomes essential. The structured and experiential nature of scouting provides a framework that can be adapted to other educational contexts, particularly in cultivating responsible, disciplined, and collaborative future leaders.

However, this study also acknowledges certain limitations. The findings are based on a single institution and a relatively small group of participants, which may not fully capture the diversity of scouting experiences across different educational settings. Future research could expand the scope by comparing multiple institutions, exploring gender differences in leadership formation, or examining the long-term impact of scouting on professional development.

### CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that scouting education plays a crucial role in developing leadership character among students at STOK Binaguna Medan. Through structured activities such as ceremonies, pioneering, marching drills, and nature exploration, students internalized essential values of self-discipline, responsibility, and social adaptability. The implementation of a learning-by-doing approach allowed participants to practice leadership in authentic contexts, reinforcing their ability to guide others while first leading themselves. Overall, scouting education proved to be an effective medium for character formation,

particularly in preparing future physical education teachers to become responsible and competent leaders. Therefore, it is recommended that scouting programs be systematically integrated into extracurricular frameworks within higher education institutions, with structured leadership rotations to provide equal opportunities for all students to lead. Additional training modules focusing on leadership skills, teamwork, and problem-solving should also be incorporated to enhance character development outcomes. Furthermore, future studies are encouraged to expand across multiple institutions, examine the long-term impact of scouting on professional life, and explore the influence of gender and cultural contexts on leadership development. By institutionalizing scouting as a consistent and structured program, higher education can maximize its potential as a powerful tool for leadership character formation and holistic student development.

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### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed substantially to the completion of this study. Gita Nurgaya Br Tarigan led the research design, data collection, and drafting of the manuscript. Ramadan and Elfian Damai Zai assisted in data analysis and interpretation. Simon Petrus Zebua and Open Rejeki Zebua contributed to the literature review and theoretical framework. Vivi Dwita Sari supported the preparation of research instruments and documentation. Tio Wahyu Pratama assisted with editing, formatting, and finalizing the manuscript for submission. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for its content.

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There is no conflict of interest

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