

FOSTERING POSITIVE EDUCATION PRACTICES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING IN INDONESIAN POLYTECHNIC

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Abstract

The paper intends to seek the windows of opportunity fostering positive education in Indonesian Polytechnic through students' Work Integrated Learning (WIL). The approach adopts positive education that sees character traits as malleable skills that can develop with effective teaching and practices. Students' work placement in a real-world setting encourages them to apply theoretical and practical learning and, at the same time, provide them the opportunity to learn and practice life skills. Two types of data were collected for this study: a survey and interviews. Five students were interviewed on an occasion in which they were probed on how do they responded towards the aspect of WIL in the survey of student's engagement. According to Friberg et al (2003, p. 65-76), the thirty-three items of Resilience Scale for Adults results indicate that participants relatively scored high on five factors measurements on the RSA scale. It indicated that they seem to be easily more adaptable and more resilient. Whilst, the interviews confirm that student engagements in their respective field works strengthens the need for resilience and character strengths for work-related knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Positive Education, Students' Engagement, Work Integrative Learning

INTRODUCTION

Vocational education stresses hands-on experience with the fundamental element of learning outcomes on knowledge, communication, and self-reliance. Toha (2013) believes that to achieve this, the students have to engage in community or civic engagement within the community. According to Boland (2008), (Diverse nature of the concept of civic engagement, which ranging from service-learning often used in the United States and community-based learning commonly in the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Ireland. Lizzul et al. indicate "...that at the end of the service-learning project students who participated in service-learning knew more about academic content and displayed increased critical thinking skills when reflecting on their personal growth and civic."

Driscoll et al (1996) state that Community services for the students have long been identified as one of the outcomes that students need to acquire. American Association of Community Colleges, for instance, emphasize improving student's learning outcomes with service learning. Starting around the 1980s, the Indonesian government obligated higher education institutions to involve the students in the engagement where the students take part in the program to take as their credit. They are assigned in a group to engage in a particular community to live-in with the communities for one or two months. By the end of the 1990s, it is available as an elective subject. For vocational higher, Wardhani & Ubaya (2015, p 129-147) define education is more to industrial related experiences, in Polytechnic, for example, students must participate in a field visit or an internship for one until three months and write

reports based on their experiences to further complete their course. Kramer & Usher (2011) believe that this prerequisite acknowledged as work-integrated learning (WIL) often refer to a practicum of placement in the workplace. As well as WIL is intertwined with well-being and employability based on Grant-Smith & Gillet-Swan (2017) explanation and partnership with Industry Choy & Delahaye (2011); Ferns et al (2016) explained within professional practice according to Peach et al (2012); Boles & Peach (2013); and Jackson (2015). Peach & Natalie (2011) state that despite the criticism and high risk whereas well-being and WIL is intertwined and being the option in the light of Positive education is proposed as the choice on how to implement the ideas of character education which is applauded in Indonesian national goals in National Education System Law (Direktorat Pembelajaran Kementerian Riset, Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi (2017).

According to Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (2017), Polytechnic education has been linked to the Indonesia Quality Framework (IQF), which is based on that vocational higher education has to collaborate with the industry in seeing what the need can be fulfilled and met by the institution and students. To implement this idea of linking hands-on experience where the students' competence is assessed is the key where students' engagement plays the role by assessing their competence and certification on how the students developed their skills. Moeliodihardjo (2015) points that qualification framework becomes a fundamental reference for defining competence of graduates of academic, vocational, and professional education against different levels. This is where the significantly intertwined with which as described as learning outcomes, consisting of values, ethic or moral as basic components. Secondly with science or knowledge or know-how comprehension and work competency. Lastly concerning level of autonomy and responsibility in the work place. This domain closely linked to civic learning skills outlined by the ministry which embedded in curriculum which include learning process and methods.

Despite the fact that competency alone is not the goal in education. It is in line to the fact that Indonesian Education National Goals as Ahmad, Intan (2017) outlines that Indonesian higher education graduates are expected to be civilized, knowledgeable, insightful and

transparent, competitive, analytical, communicative, tolerant, entrepreneurial, responsive to the problems of the nations, and responsible is embedded in the curriculum. Cohen, J (2006) argues that "that the goals of education need to be reframed to prioritize not only academic learning, but also social, emotional, and ethical competencies".

The Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia (MORTHE) underlines there are two ways to revitalize vocational higher education which is expected to improve the skilled worker who graduated from the institution. Which bring forward utmost important mission that industry will be supplied with competent graduates from polytechnics. Whilst current situation that almost 75% employment in Indonesia requires improvement in technical skill to increase enterprise productivity and the graduates of Polytechnic are not well equipped with the knowledge and skill enabling them to start working productively or to become self-employed. MORTHE approves that students' involvement attributes to their development in critical thinking, problem solving, developing team work, ability to communicate effectively and integrity of ethics and moral. However, issue in involving students in hands-on activities within the community receive little attention during their study in teaching learning process despite has burgeoning interest on students' involvement in civic matters.

Positive Education and Work Integrated Learning

Positive Education approach sees that some character constructs can be learned, rather than being innate characters. Through field work practice, in the positive education framework, students can participate in exploring a series of topics that contribute to core character values, including resilience, flow, positive emotions, goal setting and the use of character strengths. Students will explore these themes in a practical way related to their own educational context. There have been efforts to adopt the teaching of positive education in particular of character strengths through an institutionalized education organization such as schools and higher education. These efforts embark on the statement that "at least in theory, character strengths are malleable; they can be taught and acquired through practice" by Gilham et al (2011). In this approach, Prentice & Robinson (2010) explain

positive education sees character traits as malleable skills that can be improved with good teaching and practice. In line with, "character strengths are the subset of personality traits that are morally valued. Like other personality traits, Seligman et al (2009) define character strengths are dispositions that are manifest in people's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors"

This study sees the window of opportunity to foster and adopt positive education within Indonesian higher education system, specifically in Polytechnic through students' work integrated learning. The engagement is seen as the opportunity to realize character education in light of very less and unclear practice within teaching and learning practice in classroom interventions. This is, then, encouraging practice and furthermore urging the policy to implement positive education within Indonesian polytechnic institution state by Campbell et al (2014).

Work placement in a real-world setting in WIL encourages them to apply theoretical and practical learning and at the same time, provide them the opportunity to learn and practice life skills. Furthermore, this research intends to adopt and foster positive education in Indonesian Polytechnic through students' Work Integrated Learning (WIL). This notion shares the premise that positive education can be taught (Seligman et al, 2009) within positive university. It is also drawn from Oades et al (2011) the evidence on how positive education directly related with academic mastery.

To the Indonesian education system, there are at least two arguments of why this is an important question. First, in the Indonesian education system, there is a mission to build a national character. It is clearly stated on the national education bill, yet the implementation is vague. The nation character in practice is assumed as moral values which are not implemented in real class activities. Available guideline provided by the Ministry of National Education mainly outline that the value is accommodated throughout the subject of religion and civic education which are taught in every level of education, from primary to university as core subjects. Secondly, there is a range of opportunities to implement the approach in positive education to strengthen character strength in the existing Indonesian curriculum to be practically based on positive psychology. This whole range of opportunities provides possibility of implementing positive education in Indonesian education system to the existing class

of civic education subject or any local extracurricular activities within Indonesia schools.

There has been a little study that explores work-integrated learning within the positive education framework, and this has driven further research. The study will enable to enrich the curriculum to teach critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork development, effective communication, and ethics. Besides academic development, Polytechnic as an educational institution should also be urged to accommodate character development and social-emotional learning. This has been identified as building a positive institution. The knowledge and expertise will make a significant contribution to develop a framework of positive education in the polytechnic institution.

METHOD

The research employs that "positive education is an approach to education that blends academic learning with character & well-being. It is intended for preparing students with life skills such as: grit, optimism, resilience, growth mindset, engagement, and mindfulness amongst others. The study employs interpretive research approach by Creswell (2014; Elliot & Timulak (2005); Lincoln (1985); Lincoln (2010 on integrative learning framework (Collis, 2010; McNamara, 2011; Smith & Smith, 2010) in order to investigate further the issues on how the potential of positive education which is intertwined with WIL. Merriam (1988) describes A Case study is drawn from a public polytechnic in Pontianak. Five students who have completed their fieldwork were interviewed and distributed a questionnaire.

Instruments

Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA) by Friborg et al (2003) measures six protective factors of resilience, namely perception of self, perception of future, structured style, social competence, family cohesion, and social resources. Using a five-point semantic scale in which each item has positive and negative attribution at the end, RSA is the students' ability to overcome adversity in their life.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

RSA result below shows that each participant scored high on this scale. It infers that they are psychologically healthier, better adjusted, and thus more resilient. The resilience

may be the result of the support from family and friends. The more resilient, the better adapted the participant is in any situation. However, social competence (the competence to socialize with new environment) and structure style (the ability to structure their goal, plan, and life) regulate the are two factors that require more encouragement in the school curriculum.

The result of RSA

Protective Factors	Mean	SD
Personal Strength/ Perception of Self	4	0.82
Personal Strength/ Perception of future	4	0.92
Structured Style	3	1.09
Social Competence	3	1.18
Family Cohesion	4	1.32
Social Resources	4	0.68

Based on an overall impression of each interview, five residents were characterised as having had predominantly alienating learning experiences (alienated students), while 11 residents were considered to have had mainly engaging experiences (engaged students). All five students who were identified as alienated were performing poorly academically.

Personal attributes

Analysis of the data identified four different dimensions, i.e. the institution, the workplace, home circumstances and finally personal attributes and sociodemographic background. The relationship between these four dimensions can best be depicted by an 'onion skin' model, as shown in Figure 1. As can be seen from the diagram, personal attributes, sociodemographic background and the home circumstances of each resident form the core of the model as they are characteristics and experiences were central to the learning experiences in the work environment.

Discussion

of the students understood the importance of work-integrated learning through their field practices.

is intended to explore how civic engagement within the framework of community services as an obligation in Polytechnic. This proposed research will focus largely on student's involvement in civic engagement as part of the subject of Indonesia's central mission of national

education which enforces development in the integrity of ethics, critical thinking, problem-solving, developing teamwork and ability to communicate effectively within the framework of positive education.

Looking at the data, it is clear that the impact of the relationship between the student and his or her family was generally of less importance than is the case for undergraduate students based on Friberg et al (2003). This is not surprising since postgraduate students are less likely to still be staying with their family

Our study clearly identifies the workplace as the most important level at which alienating or engaging experiences occur. Of all the workplace factors that impact upon the learning experience, it is clear that teachers are an essential role player, as also demonstrated previously by Calvin (2012).

Highlight

Engagement surveys define student engagement as involvement in activities and conditions that are linked with high-quality learning ^[37]. Students were asked to complete modified version of the AUSSE student engagement survey. This survey technique is mostly carried out in Australasia and North America to measure the involvement of students in the higher education system. The points within the scope of questions focus on WIL with the integration of employment-focused work experiences with the study.

Knowledge, skills, and employability

In the interview, which took place after the survey was completed, each student spoke about his/her engagement during their field practice. In the aspect of knowledge, skills and employability, explore how the knowledge and skills are related to the students learning in the workplace. To a certain degree, the students shared ideas that their experiences were engaging and more demanding. Four students were interviewed; Ali, Akbar, Agnes, and Windy (not real names).

One student who was interviewed expressed that his fieldwork was 'amazing', yet demanding. It was because he has to work 'under pressure', even though he is not being prepared to work under said condition. In response to the interview question on how he responded to the knowledge and skills, Ali said that he is competent but not confident. He confirmed that

competency is not only the prerequisite that he has to acquire.

Ali:

While he was not sure the field is not compatible, but he feels secure. "What I have done....in the field.... was just collecting data for people to participate in the competition. Ali noted that the demand for punctuality also demanded in his line of work. Besides competency teamwork, togetherness and discipline are most of all are required.

Akbar:

"If on campus, it is more on the theory of basics, while in the company it is taught how to make ads that can be interesting."

Industry placement, internship or work experience

Akbar:

"Prior to this, I was being told that the placement would be boring and you just get to photocopy."

"I like it and fit me just fine, I have many guidance from the supervisor and staff and bosses."

"This is very good, added values to my knowledge for I was given task on daily basis and being trained to make advertisement for newspaper and sometimes for videotron. ..."

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