Profile of "UPGRIS" Character Values in Campus Culture Development

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Abstract: This study aims to explore and analyze the profile of UPGRIS character values within the context of campus culture development. A mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, was employed. The quantitative analysis focused on identifying which UPGRIS character values—Unggul (excellence), Peduli (caring), Gigih (persistence), Religius (religion), Integritas (integrity), Sinergis (synergy)—are most prominent among students, utilizing percentage analysis. The qualitative approach involved a more in-depth examination through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to elucidate the meaning and manifestation of these values. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 2,554 students from seven faculties. Data were collected through psychological scales and FGDs. The findings indicate that the most pronounced character value, based on quantitative data, is religion, while excellence ranks the lowest. Notably, persistence is the highest-rated value in first-year students, whereas character traits such as excellence, caring, and integrity peak in the fifth semester. Conversely, it was observed that nearly all character values, including excellence, caring, persistence, religion and integrity, show a significant decline by the seventh semester. These results provide crucial insights into the fluctuations in character development across different stages of academic progression, offering implications for future educational and institutional interventions.

Keywords: Campus culture; Character values; UPGRIS; Educational development; Student progression

1. Introduction

Currently, the Indonesian nation has experienced a decline in character development among the younger generation (Harmadi et al., 2022). If this is not immediately addressed, it will cause big problems in improving the quality of human resources in global competition. Character problems in the younger generation need serious attention because most of the character crises occurred among young people. Thus, overcoming this requires the education sector to continue making efforts to improve and implement character education systematically and sustainably (Al-Ansi et al., 2023).

The cultivation of character education promoted by the government involves not only the secondary education but also the higher education (Astin & Antonio, 2000). According to Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010, Article 84, Paragraph 2, the primary goal of higher education is to foster individuals who are devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, and are healthy, knowledgeable, critical, creative, innovative, and independent. Furthermore, these individuals should exhibit confidence, entrepreneurship, tolerance, social and environmental awareness, and a democratic and responsible attitude (Theroux & Furukawa, 2022). To achieve this goal, a strategy is needed to develop character formation in all activities in the campus environment. Character education in higher education must be involved with the daily lives of students on campus so that it becomes a campus culture

(Baturina & Simakov, 2023). Character development in campus culture can be integrated into four types, namely adaptive culture, family culture, achievement culture, and bureaucratic culture (Kezar & Eckel, 2002).

Based on the four types of campus culture above, the development of character education in higher education leads to the formation of individuals who have moral integrity. Character education in higher education transforms the character values of each individual (student) in campus life, thereby enabling the graduates to become complete and true human beings (Lee, 2004). Therefore, support for campus culture and university policies is needed. To achieve the moral integrity that a university aspires to, it must determine the priority values it wants to develop by involving the entire academic community, including lecturers, staff, and students. Sternberg (2016) stated that every university must have a pattern for forming student character through the vision and mission, as well as the characteristics of the university. PGRI Semarang University is part of one of the universities that carry out the mandate of developing character education through the priority values formulated in the word UPGRIS, namely excellence, caring, persistence, religion, integrity, and synergy (Desy, 2023).

The achievement of priority values developed in character education is influenced by the right strategy. The implementation of character education in higher education is based on five pillars, including (a) higher education, which is integrated into educational activities, research, and community service with character; (b) college culture, namely getting used to daily life in college; (c) student activities, which are integrated into student activities, such as scouting, sports, written work, and other activities; (d) daily activities, namely the application of habits to daily life in the campus environment; and (e) academic culture, namely the perspective of total character values in academic culture (Du & Zhang, 2019).

The five pillars above have been used as guidelines for PGRI Semarang University in implementing the development of UPGRIS character values in students, expecting that its graduates will not only master knowledge but also have good character (Schulz, 2008). The importance of soft skills: Education beyond academic knowledge. The development of character education for students in tertiary institutions is an inseparable link between the goal of developing Indonesian people as a whole and Indonesian society as a whole. Success in this endeavour is evidenced by graduates who are not only academically qualified with character values but also possess competitive advantages and are prepared to contribute productively across various sectors (Qiu et al., 2021).

Even though PGRI Semarang University has tried to instill UPGRIS character values in students in an integrated manner in various campus cultural activities on an ongoing basis. However, discrepancies between expected values and actual student behaviour remain evident (Martin, 2021). This is demonstrated by, among other things, students not greeting older people/lecturers or employees when they pass each other or are in the same lift; leaving rubbish scattered anywhere; not turning off the electricity, or LCD after the lecture is finished; making many excuses for not coming forward to present assignments; delaying collecting assignments from lecturers; having low motivation in learning; and being late for lectures and so on. Therefore, this study aims to describe and analyze the profile of UPGRIS character values in the development of campus culture.

2. Methodology

This study uses a mixed research approach, namely a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, aiming to make them complement each other from existing hypotheses (Hadi et al., 2023). The quantitative method emphasizes more on the technical analysis of statistical tests so that the data is more accurate. The qualitative techniques emphasize the analysis of the inductive thinking process related to the dynamics of the relationship between observed phenomena by using scientific logic.

In Figure 1, it can be seen that this quantitative research uses percentage analysis based on data obtained from respondents, which begins with the validation of the measuring instrument by expert judgment. In addition, the qualitative research describes the research data as an interpretation result to draw overall conclusions regarding the portrait of character values. The UPGRIS character values for the students in PGRI Semarang University in developing campus culture were analyzed in this study (Wei, 2022). The research sample was 2,554 students from seven faculties. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The data were collected using a psychological scale and FGDs. This research was conducted at PGRI Semarang University with students in semesters 1, 3, 5, and 7 starting from August to December 2019.
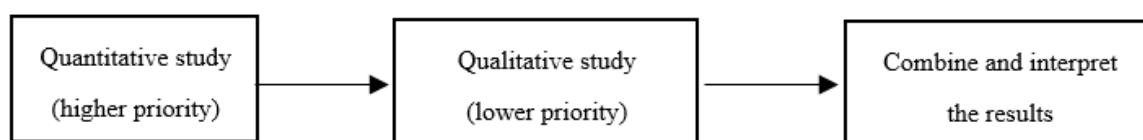
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┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Quantitative study │ ───▶ │  Qualitative study  │ ───▶ │ Combine and interpret│
│  (higher priority)  │      │  (lower priority)   │      │    the results       │
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Figure 1. Research methodology

2.1 Quantitative Method

The quantitative research uses percentage analysis based on data from respondents. The initial step is crucial,

which is the validation of the measuring instrument by expert judgment (Hadi et al., 2022).

2.1.1 Validation of the measuring instrument

Several experts with in-depth knowledge of the research topic and the concepts measured in the instruments were selected. These experts are academics or practitioners in relevant fields. Then these experts assessed the measuring instrument (e.g., questionnaires or tests) to ensure that each item or question truly reflects the concept being measured. This validation aims to ensure content validity, namely the extent to which the measuring instrument covers all aspects of the concept being studied. Based on the feedback provided by experts, either in the form of approval, suggestions for improvement, or criticism of the items in the measuring instrument, the measuring instrument was revised to improve its quality, making it more valid and suitable for use in research (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008).

2.1.2 Data collection

After validating the measuring instrument, data from respondents were collected in the form of a questionnaire or survey using the refined instrument. In data collection, a scale (e.g., the Likert scale) is often used to measure the responses of respondents because it makes it easier to conduct percentage analysis later (Tharaba et al., 2021). Therefore, a scale was used in this study.

2.1.3 Percentage analysis

The data collected was processed using a statistical method (percentage analysis) to calculate the percentage of respondents who gave certain answers and describe the distribution of responses or characteristics of the population being studied. After calculating the percentage, the results were interpreted to draw conclusions related to the objectives of the study, such as the percentage of respondents agreeing with a particular statement or having certain characteristics.

2.1.4 Conclusions and final validation

The final results of the percentage analysis were re-validated by considering the existing literature, relevant theories, and the research context. This ensures that the research results are not only statistical but also theoretically and practically meaningful. This process helps ensure that the instrument used in the research is appropriate and the results obtained are valid and reliable.

Table 1. Demographics of the research sample

No.	Faculty	SMT 1	SMT 3	SMT 5	SMT7	Total
1	FIP	125	111	109	97	442
2	FPIPSKR	90	78	110	109	387
3	FPMIPATI	87	76	98	78	339
4	FPBS	98	108	76	67	349
5	FH	57	96	78	70	301
6	FTI	67	70	107	78	322
7	FEB	125	140	89	60	414
		649	**679**	**667**	**559**	**2,554**

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the most respondents who filled out the questionnaire came from the Faculty of Education (FIP), followed by the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), the Faculty of Social Sciences and Sports Education (FPIPSKR), the Faculty of Language and Arts Education (FPBS), the Faculty of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Information Technology Education (FPMIPATI), the Faculty of Engineering and Informatics (FTI) and the Faculty of Law (FH).

2.2 Qualitative Method

In qualitative research, the process of describing the data obtained is very important because the results are the basis for interpretation and drawing conclusions. The following is an overview of the process of the qualitative research (Jensen, 2013).

2.2.1 Data collection

Qualitative data is usually collected through in-depth interviews, observations, or document analysis. Data collection tools such as interview guides or field notes are often used to obtain rich and in-depth data. In addition, the sample selection is purposeful, namely respondents or participants are selected based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives.

2.2.2 Data processing

Data obtained, especially from interviews, is usually transcribed into written text to facilitate analysis. The data are examined to understand the context, themes, and patterns that have emerged, involving rereading the transcripts many times to understand the essence of the data.

2.2.3 Data analysis

Data is marked with codes that represent certain themes, concepts, or categories. Coding can be done manually or using qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti. After coding, key themes emerging from the data are identified. These themes become the primary focus of data interpretation. Similar themes are grouped into broader categories to provide structure to the analysis.

2.2.4 Data interpretation

Data are interpreted by considering the context in which the data are generated, as well as the meanings given by participants to the phenomena being studied. The interpretation is then connected to relevant theories to strengthen or develop the theory. The analysis process is often critically reflected on to ensure that the interpretations made are unbiased and consistent with the data.

2.2.5 Conclusion drawing

Conclusions that reflect the key themes are formulated and interpretations are made. These conclusions involve the findings and their meaning and implications. The validity of qualitative results is often tested through data triangulation, discussions with participants, or comparisons between the findings of this study and those of previous studies. This process helps ensure that complex qualitative data can be processed into meaningful information and are used to draw in-depth and contextual conclusions (Hadi & Sutono, 2024).

A source triangulation method was used in this study. Specifically, data sources were obtained through interviews, observations, documents or archives, using 35 informants from diverse backgrounds, comprising 7 faculty leaders, 14 students, and 14 members from youth and society. Additionally, data collected from interviews and observations were compared with existing documents and archives. Table 2 shows the sample demographics of the qualitative research.

Table 2. Sample demographics of the qualitative research

No.	Element	Number of Informants
1	Faculty leaders	7
2	Students	14
3	Youth and society members	14
		35

3. Results

3.1 Quantitative Research Results

The instrument concerning the UPGRIS character values was distributed to 2,554 students at PGRI Semarang University. The respondents were composed of 531 students in the first semester, 441 students in the third semester, 463 students in the fifth semester, 498 students in the seventh semester, and 621 people from the organizations (Ormawa and Lemawa). According to the number of respondents, it was concluded that about 1,482 people (58.04%) at PGRI Semarang University had good UPGRIS character values, about 1,065 people (41.70%) had very good values, about 7 people (0.26%) had fair values, and there were no people with behavior less or very less than the UPGRIS values.

The results of the data analysis showed that the highest character value was religion with a score of 88.69. This value was described through sub-indicators consisting of (a) obedient attitudes and behavior in carrying out the teachings of the religion one adheres to; and (b) respecting people of other religions and not forcing the teachings of the religion one adheres to on others. Meanwhile, excellence achieved the lowest character score of 74.03 with sub-indicators consisting of (a) being open to other people's thoughts; (b) being firm in one's stance; (c) critical thinking skills; and (d) innovation and creativity regarding the knowledge being pursued.

Based on the semester levels, excellence has the highest average (74.58) at the fifth semester level and the lowest average (73.07) in the first semester level. The caring character value has the highest average (79.36) in the fifth semester level and the lowest average (77.78) in the seventh semester level. Persistence has the highest average (78.59) in the first semester level and the lowest average (75.79) in the seventh semester level. Religion has the highest average (89.41) in the third semester level and the lowest average (87.85) in the seventh semester level. Integrity has the highest average (82.65) in the fifth semester level and the lowest average (80.74) in the seventh semester level. Synergy has the highest average (78.97) in the third semester level and the lowest average (77.51)

in the first semester level.

3.2 Qualitative Research Results

Based on the FGD results regarding the UPGRIS character values of participants consisting of 42 students and 28 campus organizers, excellence was described as (a) critical thinking ability; (b) being firm in one's stance; (c) being willing to change one's stance based on challenging considerations and arguments; (d) being open to other people's thoughts; and (e) innovation and creativity in the knowledge being studied. After taking part in several campus activities, students gained greater knowledge and attitudes and obtained better skills. The data obtained showed that after participating in campus activities, respondents felt that their knowledge had increased; they knew about what was going on campus, such as campus rules and regulations, as well as their ability to recognize themselves. Regarding attitudes, the respondents felt they understood more about responsibilities in an organization, practiced independence, respected others, became disciplined, were motivated to become active and outstanding students, were able to control their emotions, and dared to start new things. Regarding experiences/skills, respondents felt that the activities allowed them to get to know many people and communicate, including being able to practice speaking in public. These activities generally also teach how to be a leader, how to develop potential, manage time, make oneself more "attractive," control emotions, and provide experience in making decisions.

Regarding the caring character value with indicators of maintaining the campus environment both physically and socially, data showed that students generally did not want to damage campus facilities or throw rubbish carelessly, thereby maintaining cleanliness inside and around the campus. Only a small number of students responded in detail by saying not to scribble on-campus tables and chairs, turn off the water faucet when not using it, turn off the LCD, not carry or use the campus alma mater in negative ways, dress politely, speak kind words to others, apply the three rules (greetings, politeness, and manners), maintain good relations with campus residents, and respect each other.

Persistence was shown in the completion of a large number of academic and non-academic assignments by students at the same time. For academic tasks, as these were considered a primary responsibility, students typically adopted a sequential approach, prioritizing tasks either based on difficulty or importance. Strategies such as paying in installments or time management techniques, including the creation of assignment schedules, were employed to avoid procrastination. As for a group assignment, students tried to share with others for cooperation. Non-academic assignments, often collaborative by nature, were also managed using a priority scale and time management skills to ensure completion without delay. Technology was utilized to facilitate the timely completion of tasks. As for organizers, respondents also realized that even though they were leaders in student organizations, they still prioritized their coursework. Although organizational activities were viewed as complements to their academic work, respondents indicated that academic tasks were prioritized. Organizational tasks were completed after fulfilling the academic tasks with good time management skills. Moreover, students completed organizational tasks as a team and coordinated with each other because those tasks are group tasks.

Religion was shown when hearing the sound of the call to prayer. Almost all respondents said that when the call to prayer was playing during a lecture, students were quiet and listened to the call to prayer until it was finished. Some students even asked permission to remind the lecturer to stop for a moment to listen to the call to prayer. Some students also reflexively calmed the class. Some of them were more fanatical and asked the lecturer for permission to go to the mosque. Meanwhile, based on observations during the lecture, adherents of other religions also did not have a problem taking a short break during the lecture to listen to the sound of the call to prayer.

In terms of integrity, respondents apologized, introspected themselves, and would not repeat the mistake when they made mistakes. In terms of synergy, when an agreement was in place and a new participant sought to alter it, respondents initially defended the original stance, especially if it represented a group consensus. However, respondents remained open to the new viewpoint, inquiring into the reasons for the proposed changes and bringing the matter back to the forum for collective deliberation. The emphasis was placed on prioritizing consensus and joint decision-making.

4. Discussion

Based on the analysis results of the profile data, the character values in developing campus culture are inspired by the word UPGRIS, which is an abbreviation of six words (excellence, caring, persistence, religion, integrity, and synergy). The basic philosophy of implementing character education at PGRI Semarang University is its vision and mission, with the mission aiming to foster education, research, community service, and exemplary conduct to cultivate intellectuals and leaders who are superior with national character, with the ultimate aim of benefiting both individual lives and society at large.

The cultivation of people with national character needs to be realized in campus activities. If those activities can be carried out repeatedly, they are called campus culture, which is defined as the values held, attitudes held, habits

displayed, and actions shown by all campus academics who form a special unit of the higher education system. This condition is reflected in the research results that, in general, 1,482 people (58.04%) have good UPGRIS character values. This indicates that students from PGRI Semarang University conform to the UPGRIS character values. A person with good character is related to knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good (acting the good). In particular, both regular and organizational students have the highest character values for religion, accounting for 88.69% (2265 people) and 86.03% (620 people), respectively. However, the former is higher than the latter.

As for religion, students always kept quiet and listened to the call to prayer during a lecture. In addition, the Nurul Huda Mosque on campus is always so full during Friday prayer time that it cannot accommodate all of the congregation. Therefore, some people perform Friday prayers on the streets around the mosque. However, based on the research team's reflections, it was discovered that during the obligatory prayers outside of Friday prayers at the mosque, there were only three rows, which made the mosque look quite empty. Some students only wore headscarves when participating in activities on campus, showing that there is no consistency between their words, attitudes, and behavior.

As an indicator of excellence, critical thinking ability includes the skills of analyzing arguments, making conclusions using inductive and deductive reasoning, assessing/evaluating, making decisions, or solving problems. Meanwhile, based on the cognitive psychology approach, critical thinking is a mental process, strategy, and representation used by a person to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts, which further emphasizes that critical thinking is the use of skills or strategies to increase the likelihood of an outcome.

Critical thinking and problem-solving are important elements if people want to survive in the 21st century. However, critical and innovative thinking skills are not given, but must always be taught from an early age to get optimal results. Critical thinking ability includes various components, such as identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating issues, as well as the capacity to express and defend opinions and the ability to listen actively.

It is known that private universities, including PGRI Semarang University, are not the first choice of universities for every student. Thus, it is normal that the input conditions at private universities are not as good as at state universities and their students may not have the best cognitive abilities.

What deserves attention is that almost all of the character values are lowest in the seventh semester. Based on the research team's reflections, when academic activities (such as the KKN briefing) other than lectures took place, students had to meet in a large room. It was very difficult to enable seventh-semester students to take part in the briefing in an orderly manner because they did not seem to care about the information presented.

On the other hand, the fifth-semester students have most of the highest character values (excellence, caring, and integrity) because those students already know campus culture well with these values internalized in their lives. Meanwhile, the seventh-semester students no longer have many lecture activities. Therefore, the interaction between lecturers and students, through which lecturers form the character of students, is somewhat neglected. In addition, there are many other activities outside campus. This condition is reflected that the principles used in developing character education include sustainability (Syakur et al., 2022). This means that the process of developing character values is a never-ending process until they graduate from an educational unit or even until they enter society. The same thing was conveyed by Javed that standards of behavior and moral values can change from time to time, from generation to generation, due to cultural and environmental factors. In line with this, the research results show that religiosity and good self-control prevent teenagers from engaging in negative behavior that is not allowed by social norms. Thus, when individuals are in a condition of low religiosity, they are very likely to do things that are not allowed by social norms.

One more interesting thing is that the first-semester students have the highest persistence. This was shown by their completion of a lot of academic and non-academic assignments at the same time because the new status of "students" made those students very enthusiastic about studying. This condition is supported by external motivation from each first-semester lecturer as a basis for forming UPGRIS character values. Apart from that, first-semester students are generally not involved in non-academic tasks or organizational tasks, which makes them more focused on academic tasks.

Activist students have the highest character score in religion and the lowest score in excellence. However, they have higher scores in excellence than regular students. This is natural considering that activist students can gain a lot of experience from their organizational activities.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded as follows:

(a) The profile of students' UPGRIS character values in developing campus culture shows that, based on quantitative data, the highest character value is religion and the lowest character value is excellence. However, it was found that the reality did not correspond to religious indicators.

(b) The first-semester students have the highest persistence, which is shown by their completion of a lot of academic and non-academic assignments at the same time.

(c) The fifth-semester students have most of the highest character scores of excellence, caring, and integrity.

(d) The seventh-semester students have almost the lowest character values of excellence, caring, persistence, religion and integrity, which deserves attention.

(e) The activist students have the highest character score in the religion and the lowest score in excellence. However, their excellence score is greater than that of regular students.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that PGRI Semarang University provide basic policy lines for its education implementation. This aims to seek academic facilities and infrastructure related to the cultivation of UPGRIS character values and assess the effectiveness and productivity of the implementation of those values. The leadership of PGRI Semarang University should facilitate the realization of UPGRIS character values by issuing policies regarding instilling UPGRIS character values, including reviewing the university's statutes to embody the UPGRIS character values and reviewing the campus activity schedule. For example, lectures that start at 7:30 am can be changed to 7:00 am so that the lecture break time exactly begins at 12:00 pm, providing an opportunity to carry out worship properly. Strict sanctions can be provided to academics when they violate applicable regulations. Leaders should also be role models for the academic community in implementing UPGRIS character values in communicating, acting, and behaving. In addition, the academic community (especially lecturers and employees) at PGRI Semarang University should be the role models for students.

Data Availability

The data used to support the research findings are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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