

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: INTEGRATING
POTENTIAL, KNOWLEDGE, AND LOYALTYRidho Azahar¹, Alfi Syahri^{2*}, Nurliyah Indah³, Fitri Irawati⁴¹ Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia^{2*} Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia³ Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia⁴ Universitas Negeri Medan, IndonesiaEmail : ridhoazahar.2023@student.uny.ac.id¹, alfisyah2501@gmail.com^{2*},
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Abstract :

The development of personal potential, understanding the urgency of science, and values of loyalty to the roles and responsibilities of students are important components in shaping character and individual competencies in higher education. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a student leadership development training programme integrated with an approach that strengthens personal potential, mastery of science, and values of loyalty in improving the cognitive and affective competencies of participants. The research method employs a quantitative approach with a one-group pre-test and post-test design involving 90 students as respondents. Evaluation instruments consisting of pre-tests and post-tests were analysed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, paired sample t-test, and one-sample t-test. The analysis results indicate that the data is normally distributed ($p = 0.200$), there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores ($t = -9.401$, $p = 0.000$), and post-test scores were also significantly higher than the reference value ($t = 3.933$, $p = 0.000$), with an average increase of 19.83 points. These findings indicate that training that integrates aspects of self-potential, knowledge, and student loyalty values is proven to be effective in significantly improving understanding and skills.

Keywords : Self-Potential, Knowledge, Loyalty, Student Leadership.**Abstrak :**

Pengembangan potensi diri, pemahaman urgensi ilmu pengetahuan, dan nilai-nilai loyalty terhadap peran dan tanggung jawab mahasiswa merupakan komponen penting dalam pembentukan karakter dan kompetensi individu di perguruan tinggi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji efektivitas program pelatihan pengembangan kepemimpinan mahasiswa yang terintegrasi dengan pendekatan penguatan potensi diri, penguasaan ilmu pengetahuan, dan nilai loyalitas dalam meningkatkan kompetensi kognitif dan afektif peserta. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain one group pre-test and post-test terhadap 90 mahasiswa sebagai responden. Instrumen evaluasi berupa pre-test dan post-test dianalisis menggunakan uji normalitas Kolmogorov-Smirnov, paired sample t-test, dan one-sample t-test. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa data terdistribusi normal ($p = 0.200$), terdapat perbedaan signifikan antara skor pre-test dan post-test ($t = -9.401$, $p = 0.000$), dan skor post-test juga signifikan lebih tinggi dari nilai acuan ($t = 3.933$, $p = 0.000$), dengan rata-rata peningkatan sebesar 19.83 poin. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan yang mengintegrasikan aspek potensi diri, ilmu pengetahuan, dan nilai loyalitas mahasiswa terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman dan keterampilan secara signifikan..

Kata Kunci: Potensi Diri, Ilmu Pengetahuan, Loyalitas, Kepemimpinan Mahasiswa.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a key competency that young people, especially students, need to possess as agents of change in society, nation, and state. In the context of higher education, students are not only expected to possess academic skills but also leadership abilities that reflect outstanding character, integrity, and commitment to collective values (Vavouras et al., 2024; Yadav & Bhatia, 2022). The development of student leadership is crucial given the strategic position of students as critical thinkers, pioneers of social change, and future leaders (Lee & Chan, 2023; Tao & Ren, 2021). Therefore, efforts to build visionary student leadership need to be designed systematically, integratively, and sustainably.

Developing student leadership is not enough by merely providing intra- or extra-campus organisational spaces; it requires an approach that can integrate three fundamental elements: self-potential, knowledge, and loyalty (Gigliotti, 2016; Todea et al., 2022). These three elements complement each other in shaping young leaders who are not only intellectually capable but also have a sense of values and social responsibility. Personal potential serves as the foundational basis that determines the direction and style of leadership (DeRuntz et al., 2022). Knowledge serves as a means to broaden horizons, sharpen strategic thinking skills, and strengthen decision-making capacity (Quinlan, 2020). Meanwhile, loyalty is a moral commitment to the organisation and collective goals that is consistently upheld (Hu & Widtayakornbundit, 2024).

Within this framework, it is important to review the conventional approach to student leadership development, which has tended to be fragmented and has not sufficiently addressed internal aspects of students. Many leadership training programmes are technical and instructional in nature (Tafvelin et al., 2019), without delving deeply into internal factors such as individual potential, motivational dynamics, and value orientation (Bailey & Scheepers, 2022; Rosch et al., 2015; Steffens et al., 2018). As a result, many students are active in organisations but do not demonstrate transformative leadership qualities. They are trapped in organisational bureaucratic routines without a deep understanding of the vision, mission, and social responsibilities of the leadership positions they hold.

First, self-potential is a fundamental aspect that needs to be recognised and developed in shaping leadership character (Sosik et al., 2019). Every individual possesses unique potential encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. According to Gardner (1987) in his theory of multiple intelligences, individual potential is not solely measured by logical-mathematical intelligence but also by interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, and other aspects. As individuals in the process of self-exploration, students need to be equipped with reflective skills to recognise their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and talents (Sosik et al., 2018). The development of this potential serves as a crucial foundation in shaping an authentic leadership style that does not blindly imitate others' leadership models.

Second, knowledge is a rational dimension of leadership that cannot be

ignored. A visionary student leader is required to understand strategic issues both on campus and nationally (Pereira, 2025; Zorlu, 2018). They must also be able to analyse situations, formulate organisational policies, and communicate ideas systematically (Buss et al., 2023). Mastery of knowledge encompasses not only the academic realm but also practical knowledge in managing organisations, leading teams, and building collaborative networks. In this regard, the integration of theory and practice is important to ensure that the learning process does not only take place in the classroom but also through real-world experiences in organisational activities and community service.

Third, loyalty is the ethical and moral dimension of leadership (Crossley et al., 2024). Loyalty cannot be narrowly defined as loyalty to individuals or groups, but rather loyalty to shared values, principles, and goals (Egorov et al., 2020). Loyalty built on an understanding of values will give rise to responsible, consistent leadership that is not easily tempted by personal interests (Hildreth, 2024). In the context of student organisations, loyalty is important for maintaining programme continuity, strengthening solidarity among members, and creating a supportive work environment. A loyal leader will make the organisation a space for collective learning, not a tool for image-building or short-term interests.

The integration of these three elements will produce student leaders who are not only technically competent, but also have strong character and clear value orientation. This approach to leadership development based on potential, knowledge, and loyalty is important in responding to increasingly complex challenges. Leadership development should not only emphasise technical aspects, but should also be directed towards the formation of identity, integrity, and moral resilience. The Indonesian government, through various educational policies, has emphasised the importance of character education as an integral part of the learning process. In this context, student leadership can serve as a strategic platform for instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and social concern.

Considering this background, this study aims to examine in depth the development of student leadership to enhance self-potential, knowledge, and loyalty as an innovative approach to strengthening character within organisations. The primary focus of the research is on how these three aspects interact and shape the profile of outstanding, transformative, and sustainable student leadership.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental research design. The design used is a one-group pretest-posttest design, which is a research model that involves only one group of subjects without a control group (Sugiyono, 2018). In this design, the same group is given a pretest before being given treatment, and then given a posttest after the treatment is given. The population in this study was students at Medan State University, with a

sample size of 90 students. The sample was taken using purposive sampling, which involved selecting participants based on the stages in Figure 1 with the criteria of being a student in a maximum of the third semester, having academic commitment and discipline, being active in self-development and competition, having soft skills and teamwork skills, and being willing to participate in the entire development programme consistently.

The instrument used in this study was an essay test. The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques. The first step was to conduct a normality test on the data to ensure that the data distribution was normal. If the data was normally distributed, a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores.

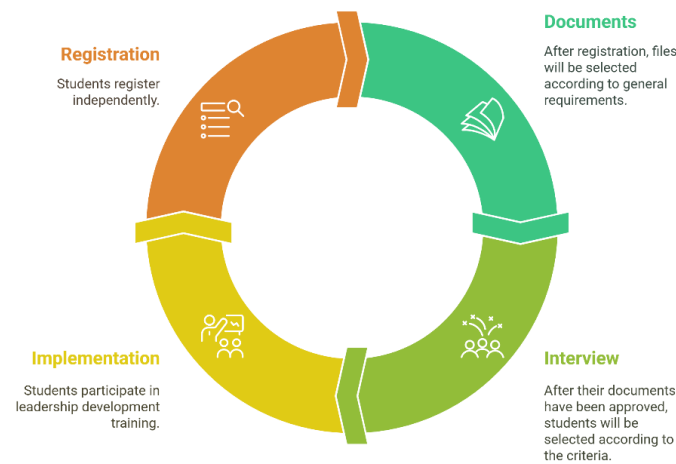


Figure 1. Research Sample Selection Process

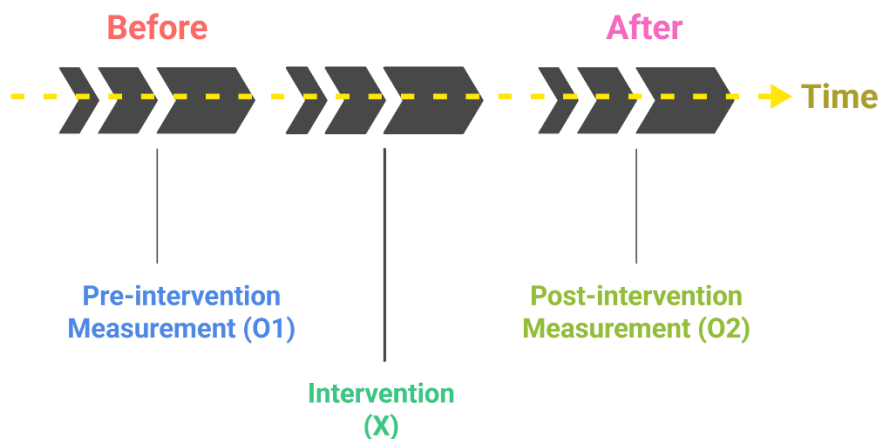


Figure 2. One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respond Data

Figure 2 shows the demographic data of students who participated in the leadership development training. The majority of participants were female (66 people), from the 2023 cohort (72 people), and mostly from the Faculty of Engineering (38 people). This data shows that the training was more popular among new students, especially female students, and was mostly attended by students from an engineering background.

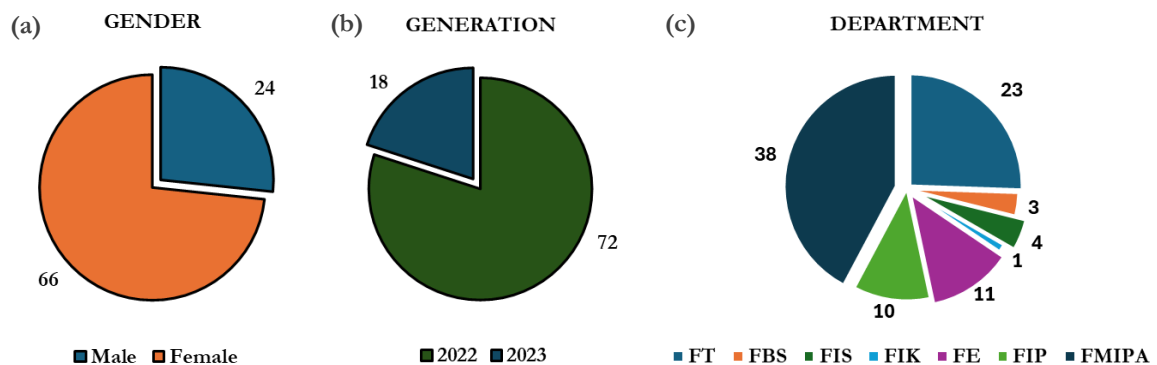


Figure 3. Respondent Data: (a) Gender Distribution; (b) Generation Distribution; (c) Department Distribution

Normality Test

Based on the results of the normality test in Table 1 on the difference between the post-test and pre-test scores using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a significance value of 0.200 was obtained. This value is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the difference data is normally distributed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the normality assumption is met, so that further statistical analysis can be performed using the paired sample t-test to test for significant differences between the pre-test and post-test values.

Table 1. Tests of Normality

Categories	Kolmogorov-Smirnova		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Difference	0.065	90	0.200

Paired Sample T-Test

Based on the analysis results in Table 2, it is known that the average pre-test score was 53.42 with a standard deviation of 17.961, while the average post-test score increased to 73.26 with a standard deviation of 7.852. This indicates an increase in scores after the intervention or training provided.

Table 2. Paired Samples Statistics

Categories	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Correlation	Sig.
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Pre-Test	53.42	90	17.961	1.893		
Post-Test	73.26	90	7.852	0.828	-0.058	0.587

Meanwhile, the results in Correlations show that there is no significant linear correlation between pre-test and post-test scores ($r = -0.058$, $p = 0.587$). This low correlation value indicates that there is no strong linear relationship between pre-test and post-test scores. In other words, the change in scores from pre-test to post-test was influenced by the treatment/intervention given, not by the direct relationship between the initial and final scores.

Based on the results of the paired samples test, the average difference between the pre-test and post-test was -19.833 with a standard deviation of 20.015 and a standard error of 2.110. The 95% confidence interval for the average difference is between -24.025 and -15.641, which does not cross zero, indicating a statistically significant difference.

Table 3. Paired Samples Test

Categories	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pre-test- Post-test	- 19.833	20.015	2.110	-24.025	-15.641	- 9.401	89	0.000

The calculated t-value of -9.401 with degrees of freedom ($df=89$) and significance value ($p=0.000$; < 0.05) indicates that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. In other words, the training or intervention provided had a significant impact on improving the post-test results.

Overall, these results indicate that the student leadership development training programme is effective in improving participants' understanding or skills, as reflected in the significant increase in scores after training compared to before training. Additionally, based on the results of the One-Sample t-Test, it was found that the t-value was 3.933 with a degree of freedom ($df=89$) and a significance level ($p=0.000$; < 0.05). This value indicates that the average posttest score is significantly different from the reference value (t-value= 70).

Table 4. One-Sample t test

Categories	Test Value = 70					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Post-test	3.933	89	.000	3.256	1.61	4.90

The average posttest score was 3.256 points higher than the reference value, with a 95% confidence interval between (1.61 to 4.90), which is completely above zero. This indicates that the difference found was not caused by chance but was statistically significant. These results show that the training or programme provided was able to produce improvements in outcomes that exceeded the established minimum standard or expectation (70). This strengthens the evidence that leadership development training interventions or

activities for students have a positive effect on the improvement of participants' competencies or performance post-training.

Student Leadership Development

A systematic process in the development and implementation of a training-based leadership model for students, designed to enhance leadership capacity through a problem-based approach in the campus environment.

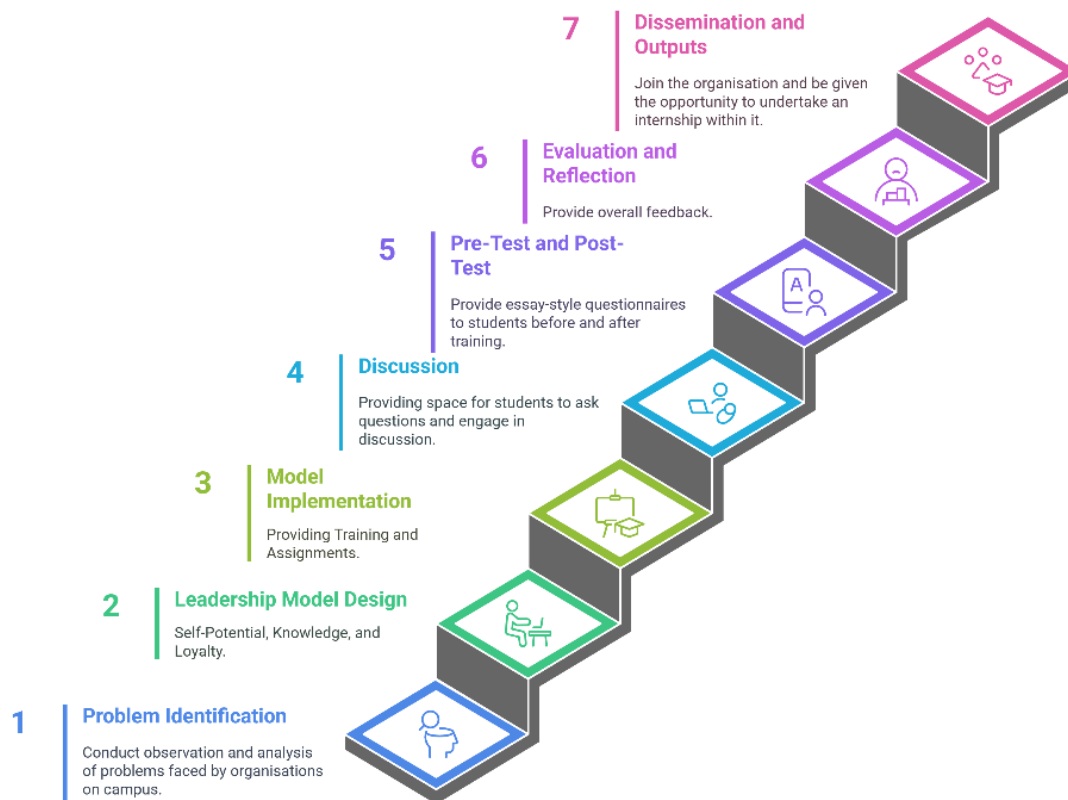


Figure 4. Student Leadership Development Process

This process begins with problem identification, involving observation and analysis of the challenges faced by campus organisations. This stage is crucial to ensure that the developed model is contextual and relevant. Next, in the leadership model design stage, the focus is on three main aspects: self-potential, knowledge, and loyalty. These form the basis for formulating the leadership framework to be implemented.

The third stage is the implementation of the model, which includes providing training and assignments to students. This aims to internalise the leadership values that have been designed previously. After the training, students are given space for discussion to encourage active participation in question-and-answer sessions and idea exchange, which also serves as a means of critical reflection. Then, pre-tests and post-tests in the form of essay questions are conducted to measure students' understanding and changes in knowledge before and after training. The results of this process are then analysed in the

evaluation and reflection stage, which provides comprehensive feedback on the effectiveness of the programme.

The final stage is dissemination and output, which involves student involvement in organisations through internships or direct participation, as a form of applying the training results in a real context. Overall, these stages reflect a holistic approach to leadership education, which not only emphasises mastery of theory but also its application in real situations, with a focus on loyalty as a foundational value. This model can serve as a framework for developing students' soft skills, particularly in shaping adaptive and problem-solving-oriented future leaders.

Developing Student Leadership Through Integrating Potential

Understanding one's potential is a fundamental element in the process of developing individual capacity, especially in the context of higher education (Lawrence et al., 2018). In this activity, students are guided to understand that the process of recognising potential is not limited to discovering strengths but also includes awareness of limitations. This awareness is important for forming a balanced and adaptive mindset, where individuals not only know their strengths but also understand the areas that require development or compensation (Kotlyar, 2018). Analogies used, such as the comparison between birds and fish, each of which has strengths and limitations in certain environments, represent that each individual has a unique context of optimal performance. In a spiritual and existential context, individuals are understood as subjects who have been endowed with a set of abilities and resources by God, each of which is unique and not uniform among individuals.

The unique talents or features that a person possesses as dominant talents serve as an initial indicator in the process of exploring potential. These talents tend to form a tendency toward certain activities that feel easy to do, enjoyable, produce high performance, and have the potential to provide material benefits. This is known in the strength-based development approach as productive activities called 4E (Enjoy, Easy, Excellent, Earn) Activities. Focusing on these activities is believed to yield more optimal learning outcomes and productivity compared to approaches that emphasise addressing weaknesses.

The learning process is designed to involve structured stages, starting with the provision of material on personal potential, the administration of interest and talent tests, interactive question-and-answer sessions, and the evaluation of understanding outcomes. These activities not only provide theoretical understanding but also reflective experiences, where participants are encouraged to evaluate their personal tendencies based on their own life experiences. It is important to understand that potential is not a static or innate entity that is fully developed, but rather the result of a learning process and life experiences that continue to evolve. Therefore, potential development requires not only initial recognition but also a long-term commitment to reflective learning and continuous exploration.

Developing Student Leadership Through Knowledge

The enhancement of students' knowledge in this activity is aimed at strengthening their understanding of science and its urgency in academic and social life. The focus of the material presentation is to increase cognitive insight and shape students' intrapersonal awareness as part of the process of forming intellectual identity and direction for self-development. Conceptually, understanding science is a fundamental foundation in higher education, preparing individuals to achieve further academic levels in facing complex global challenges. In this framework, students are positioned as active subjects in the learning process. Mastery of science is not only seen as the accumulation of information, but as part of the process of internalising values, forming academic character, and strengthening competencies in both hard and soft skills. Therefore, it is important for students to know that 'knowledge is important,' but also to understand how to relate it to social reality, their field of study, and their personal potential. This demonstrates a close connection with the previous material on integrating potential, where understanding of personal potential is developed in parallel with scientific exploration.

The presentation of the material is classified into several focuses. First, an introduction to the types of knowledge—basic science, applied science, and integrative or interdisciplinary science—is provided to show that real contributions to society often come from cross-disciplinary collaboration. Concrete examples, such as the integration of engineering and biology in a simple IoT-based project for mushroom cultivation irrigation, serve as important illustrations that science does not stand alone but rather reinforces and complements one another. This aims to build students' awareness that science is applied and solution-oriented toward real-world problems. Second, through brainstorming activities, students are encouraged to reflect that the purpose of understanding science is not merely to 'know,' but to develop a sense of identity as lifelong learners with intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, and a more meaningful sense of purpose. This approach strengthens the affective dimension of learning, which is often overlooked in conventional pedagogical approaches.

Third, emphasis is placed on the importance of science as the foundation for developing hard skills (such as logical, systematic, and argumentative thinking) and soft skills (such as scientific ethics, academic responsibility, scientific communication, and leadership). Thus, mastery of science not only impacts academic aspects but also directly influences an individual's leadership capacity and professionalism. Fourth, insights into global challenges such as the era of technological disruption, climate crisis, and globalisation are discussed to strengthen participants' sense of urgency in mastering science. In this era, only adaptive, creative, and knowledge-based human resources are able to survive

and contribute significantly. This presentation emphasises that academic abilities must be integrated with the ability to adapt to changing times.

Developing Student Leadership Through Loyalty

Student loyalty is often associated with their satisfaction, trust, and commitment to the educational institution where they study (Addai et al., 2023; Haqka et al., 2020). Loyal students generally demonstrate positive interactions with the institution, which in turn creates a conducive learning environment for leadership development. In this context, leadership development programmes in higher education play a crucial role and are designed to emphasise experiential learning, quality training, and strong systemic support (Krauss & Hamid, 2015; Soria & Johnson, 2020). Students with high loyalty to the institution tend to be more actively engaged in these programmes, thereby reaping greater benefits from the development process.

In the context of higher education, the Tri Dharma serves as a conceptual framework that forms the philosophical, ethical, and operational foundation of the higher education system in Indonesia. The three main pillars—education, research, and community service—are not only institutional mandates for higher education institutions but also noble values that should be deeply internalised by the entire academic community, especially students as the primary actors in the process of social and scientific transformation. In this activity, the material is designed to introduce the concept and application of the Tri Dharma comprehensively and contextually in students' daily lives. Through systematic stages, starting with the presentation of material, question-and-answer sessions, and the ability to reflect on and implement the values of the Tri Dharma in academic and social activities. This method is designed to cultivate reflective awareness and problem-solving capacity among students in responding to societal dynamics.

The first pillar, education, emphasises the fundamental role of higher education institutions as vehicles for the transfer and transformation of knowledge. Education is not merely focused on the accumulation of knowledge but also on character development, critical thinking, and scientific ethics. Students are encouraged not to merely be recipients of knowledge but also as disseminators and applicators of knowledge within the social sphere. Thus, meaningful education must transcend the classroom and contribute to practical applications in societal life. The second pillar, research, serves as a means for students to actualise their potential in generating new knowledge relevant to societal needs and challenges. Through involvement in research, whether in the form of academic assignments, mini-research, or innovative projects, students play a role as creators of scientifically-based solutions. Research activities conducted collaboratively with lecturers or independently serve as evidence of students' active participation in the development of scientific knowledge and the enhancement of national competitiveness. At the University of North

Sumatra, this approach has been implemented in a structured manner through various academic programmes and national competitions.

The third pillar, namely community service, is a concrete form of applying the knowledge that students have acquired. Community service activities are seen as an academic obligation, as well as an expression of social concern and a tangible contribution to community development. Programmes such as Community Service Learning, training, community mentoring, humanitarian actions, and disaster relief demonstrate that students are intellectual entities inseparable from social reality. Students' loyalty to the Tri Dharma is reflected in their active participation in both on-campus and off-campus activities. Students who uphold the values of the Tri Dharma are not only focused on achieving academic excellence but also demonstrate integrity through participation in organisations, scientific forums, written works, and social community activities. Such loyalty is a form of dedication and commitment that should be an inherent character of every student. Thus, the integration of the values of the Tri Dharma into students' lives serves as the foundational pillar in producing graduates who are not only academically outstanding but also possess social sensitivity, innovative capacity, and leadership skills relevant to addressing the challenges of the times. The process of internalising the values of the Tri Dharma is not a fleeting activity but an integral part of the formation of students' academic and moral identities as agents of change.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of an integrative training model through the Integrating Potential, Knowledge, and Loyalty approach has proven effective in fostering students' awareness of the importance of recognising their potential, strengthening their academic foundation, and cultivating commitment to the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Understanding dominant talents and productive activities (4E) serves as the foundation for enhancing motivation and productivity. Contextual knowledge presentation encourages students to become lifelong learners and agents of scientific transformation. Meanwhile, loyalty to the Tri Dharma guides students to balance academic achievements with tangible social contributions. With systematic and reflective activity design, this training is able to shape students into adaptive, collaborative, and competitive individuals capable of addressing the challenges of the global era.

The effectiveness of this approach is reinforced by empirical findings from the implementation of student leadership development training. The results of the Paired Sample T-Test indicate a significant difference between pre-test scores ($M = 53.42$, $SD = 17.961$) and post-test scores ($M = 73.26$, $SD = 7.852$), with a t -value of -9.401 and $p = 0.000$. These results indicate a significant improvement in participants' understanding or skills after attending the training. This reinforces that educational interventions focused on self-potential, integration of knowledge, and strengthening loyalty to the Tri Dharma values can effectively enhance students' competencies. Furthermore,

the results of the One-Sample T-Test on the post-test scores with a reference value of 70 yielded $t = 3.933$, $p = 0.000$, with an average post-test score of 73.26. This score is statistically significantly higher than the minimum set value, indicating that the training provided is not only effective but also exceeds the expected achievement standards.

Thus, the training programme that integrates the basic concepts of potential development, the urgency of mastering knowledge, and the implementation of the Tri Dharma has proven to have a positive impact on improving students' intellectual quality and leadership attitudes. This reinforces the urgency of implementing similar programmes within the higher education ecosystem as a systematic strategy for producing graduates who are adaptive, collaborative, and transformative in the face of global challenges.

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