

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN RUTONG VILLAGE
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: A CHARACTER
DEVELOPMENT STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Robust positive character traits are crucial for cultivating a responsible and integrity-oriented generation. The development of character among youth is pivotal in addressing global challenges. Their active involvement in village development, in accordance with Law Number 6 of 2014, is crucial for the success of such programmes. Youth participation not only benefits the village but also enhances their sense of responsibility, social awareness, and skills. In Rutong Village, Ambon, young people play a significant role in development programmes aimed at improving their quality of life and shaping their character. This research intends to evaluate youth involvement in village development initiatives, the challenges faced, and the analysis of character development. A quantitative descriptive method was employed to understand youth participation and its impact on their character development. The results indicate that the average participation score of youth is 3.30 with a standard deviation of 1.10, reflecting a neutral or hesitant attitude towards their involvement. Several barriers encountered include a lack of time, information, family support, facilities, and engagement in programmes. Meanwhile, the average score of 3.84 with a standard deviation of 0.93 indicates approval of character formation and their moral values.

ABSTRAK

Karakter positif yang kuat sangat penting untuk membentuk generasi yang bertanggung jawab dan berintegritas. Pengembangan karakter di kalangan pemuda merupakan kunci dalam menghadapi tantangan global. Keterlibatan aktif mereka dalam pembangunan desa, sesuai dengan Undang-Undang Nomor 6 Tahun 2014, krusial bagi keberhasilan program-program tersebut. Partisipasi pemuda tidak hanya bermanfaat bagi desa, tetapi juga meningkatkan rasa tanggung jawab, kepedulian sosial, dan keterampilan mereka. Di Desa Rutong, Ambon, pemuda memainkan peran penting dalam program pembangunan yang bertujuan meningkatkan kualitas hidup dan membentuk karakter mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis keterlibatan pemuda dalam program pembangunan desa, hambatan dan analisis pengembangan karakter. Metode deskriptif kuantitatif digunakan untuk memahami partisipasi pemuda dan dampaknya terhadap pengembangan karakter mereka. Hasil menunjukkan nilai rata-rata partisipasi pemuda adalah 3,30 dengan standar deviasi 1,10, yang mengindikasikan sikap netral atau ragu terhadap keterlibatan mereka. Beberapa hambatan yang dihadapi termasuk kurangnya waktu, informasi, dukungan keluarga, fasilitas, dan keterlibatan dalam program. Sementara itu, nilai rata-rata 3,84 dengan standar deviasi 0,93 menunjukkan persetujuan terhadap pembentukan karakter dan nilai-nilai moral mereka.

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INTRODUCTION

This research underscores the significance of character in the quality of future generations, positing that strong and positive character serves as the foundation for developing responsible, honest, and integrity-driven individuals. According to Lickona (2012), character encompasses the moral and ethical qualities that shape individual behaviour. It is imperative to foster principles such as compassion, empathy, justice, and responsibility. Furthermore, respect for oneself and others is of paramount importance. Attributes such as perseverance and a robust work ethic play a vital role in cultivating good character (Angraini, Arianto, Hariyanti, & Primahardani, 2023). Consequently, the development of youth character is deemed crucial in creating a generation capable of confronting global challenges.

Participation in village development is characterised as the active involvement of the community, particularly the youth, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects. Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages (in Bahasa, Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 6 Tahun 2014 Tentang Desa) emphasises that community participation, especially that of youth, is essential for the sustainability and success of development programmes. Law Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth (in Bahasa, Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 40 Tahun 2009 tentang Kepemudaan) also asserts that youth play a role as agents of change in social development. One of the principles of good village governance is community participation in the governance process. According to Hakim (2017), there are three critical reasons why community participation is necessary: (1) it aids in obtaining information regarding the conditions and needs of the community; (2) it enhances community trust in development projects through involvement in planning; and (3) it constitutes a democratic right of the community.

Community participation is a vital strategy in addressing village development issues. According to Purwaningsih (2018), participation involves cooperation between the community and the government in the planning, implementation, and funding of development. To enhance participation, the government needs to alter its perception of development and demonstrate tolerance towards criticism and alternative ideas from the community. Purwaningsih (2018), further adds that to boost community participation, the following steps need to be undertaken: first, developing procedures that involve the community at every stage of development. Second, increasing awareness and capacity among the community, particularly farmers and the poor. Third, considering the planned socio-economic development programmes. Fourth, limiting the involvement of external agents solely to providing support. Fifth, encouraging participation through existing institutions or groups that arise from community initiatives.

According to Ukkas (2018), youth are a crucial element in society, playing a role in regeneration and community advancement. They are not only successors but also agents of change who bring ideas and innovations. Through active participation in social, economic, and political life, youth bear the responsibility of creating a better and more sustainable environment for future generations. The role of youth is critical and must not be overlooked. Various studies have demonstrated the significant role of youth in the village development process. Prabawati (2019) asserts that adolescents are not only involved but also actively participate in tourism activities, enabling them to experience direct benefits from the development of that sector in the village. Kasila & Kolopaking (2018) emphasise that youth play a key role, particularly in the implementation of activities, where effective communication is a determining factor in enhancing their level of participation. High youth

participation not only positively impacts themselves but also significantly contributes to the progress of Village-Owned Enterprises (in Bahasa, Badan Usaha Milik Desa, of BUMDes).

Lestari, Armawi, & Muhamad (2016) found that youth participation reached a staggering 70 percent, indicating their vital role in managing Community-Based Tourism (CBT). Puspitasari (2015) also highlights that young entrepreneurs in villages are not only ready to engage but are also committed to being part of the solution to various social issues, such as poverty and low service quality. Research by Pojo, Safar, & Momo (2019) indicates that youth participation is a pathway to realising their hopes and aspirations. This participation is not merely symbolic but constitutes a tangible contribution to activities that yield benefits, closely linked to the involvement expressed by Pinilas, Gosal, & Kasenda (2017). Youth participation is essential in village development and the management of social and economic aspects. Youth must be encouraged to become agents of change so that they can contribute to the fullest extent. Their involvement is not merely an obligation but also an investment in collective progress. Therefore, support and space for youth are crucial for them to play an active role in village development.

Rutong Village in Ambon City is also implementing various development programmes that involve youth. Data from the Central Statistics Agency of Ambon City indicates that youth aged 15-24 years comprise 25% of the total village population, making them an important age group in the development process. Programmes in Rutong Village are designed to enhance youth participation, including skills training and micro-enterprise development. However, there are challenges regarding youth participation in Rutong Village. Many government programmes do not operate effectively due to limited youth participation. According to Pinilas et al. (2017), several issues hinder youth participation in village development, including: first, minimal support from the village government. Second, lack of skills and knowledge among youth. Third, low awareness among youth regarding the importance of development. Fourth, limited access to education. Mikasih, Fitrianti, & Juaris (2024) found that the lack of communication between village officials and youth during Musrenbang and the implementation of development activities has resulted in limited time for youth, thus reducing their participation in village development. Sutrisna (2022) added that youth who are indifferent to the development of their village will become a burden in the process.

Furthermore, numerous previous studies related to the role of youth in village development have shown that youth are crucial in village development, despite facing many challenges. Several studies, such as those conducted by Mutamam & Shantini (2019), emphasise that different locations and methods can influence the understanding of youth and village funds. Puspitasari (2015) found that young entrepreneurs are committed to addressing social issues. Meanwhile, Pinilas et al. (2017), noted that youth often encounter obstacles such as a lack of guidance and awareness. Rosida (2014) indicated that the development of ecotourism could strengthen the resilience of village communities. Wantu, Djaafar, & Sahi (2021) highlighted the importance of youth organisations in shaping character. Nabila & Yuniningsih (2016) reported that the community has participated in the development of the Kandri tourism village to a high level of participation. Sutrisna (2022) indicated that there is a need for institutional strengthening to enhance youth participation, while Lestari et al. (2016) affirmed that youth make significant contributions to the management of community-based tourism. Kasila & Kolopaking (2018) emphasised the importance of good communication to encourage youth involvement in Village-Owned Enterprises. Prabawati (2019) noted the active involvement of youth in tourism development

in Tibubeneng Village. Overall, this research indicates the substantial potential of youth in village development despite the challenges faced.

Many previous studies have focused more on the short-term impacts of youth participation. This research aims to explore the long-term effects of youth involvement in village development, particularly in Rutong, Ambon City. The primary focus of this study is to analyse youth participation, identify the obstacles they encounter, and understand the characteristics of engaged youth. Thus, this research aims to develop effective strategies for shaping the character of youth in the future, so they can become valuable assets for Rutong Village in sustainable development. It is hoped that this study can make a significant contribution to formulating strategies to enhance youth participation, ensuring that they are not merely objects of development but also active subjects with the power to determine their future and that of the surrounding community. Research conducted by Pattimura University indicates that youth actively involved in village development programmes experience an increase in responsibility, leadership, and teamwork skills (Sulaiman, Anggriani, & Sutandra, 2019). Moreover, this participation can enhance their sense of ownership towards the village and encourage greater contributions to the village's progress. According to Mutamam (2019), the character developed through this participation includes harmonious relationships with God, oneself, family, society, and the nation. Arnstein's (1969) theory of participation posits that active involvement in social activities can enhance an individual's sense of responsibility and care for their environment.

METODE

This research adopts a quantitative descriptive design, prioritising the survey method as the primary approach. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative descriptive research aims to gather comprehensive information regarding the state of events or specific variables. In this context, Sugiyono (2019), as cited by Azizah (2022), emphasises that the survey method is an effective instrument for achieving this objective.

1. Location and Timing of the Research

The research is conducted in Rutong Village, Leitimur Selatan District, Ambon City, Maluku Province. This location was selected for the following reasons: (1) Rutong Village serves as a development village for the Research and Community Service of Ambon State Polytechnic, and (2) Rutong Village has been recognised as an intelligent village and one of the best villages at the national level. The research is carried out over a period of six months, encompassing the initial phase, the progress phase, and the final phase.

2. Research Population

In this study, the population involved consists of 30 individuals, comprising youth, village administrators, and local officials. To determine the sample size, the research adopts a Non-Probability Sampling technique with a Quota Sampling approach. According to Subhaktiyasa (2024), Quota Sampling is a method of sampling that involves the selection process based on specific proportions of predetermined characteristics of the population identified by the researcher. This technique is often applied in survey research to ensure that certain groups within the population are adequately represented, thereby allowing the research findings to reflect a more accurate and comprehensive condition of the population under study. By employing this method, it is anticipated that the researcher will obtain relevant and representative data, which will support a more valid analysis and conclusion regarding the phenomenon being investigated.

3. Types of Data and Research Variables

According to Haya (2019) data refers to information related to the research object. Thus, it can be concluded that data constitutes a collection of facts (information) generated from a measurement (numerical). In this research, the author employs two types of data: (1) Primary Data, which is obtained directly and immediately from its source by the researcher for specific purposes. This means that the data is collected directly by the researcher from relevant sources. (2) Secondary Data refers to sources that do not provide data directly to the collector (Sugiyono, 2017). This implies that the data acquired by the researcher originates from various pre-existing sources (the researcher acts as a secondary party), drawn from literature and documents relevant to village development, providing context and additional information that supports the analysis. The variables analysed in this study encompass three main aspects: first, youth participation in the development programmes of Rutong Village. This includes the extent of youth involvement in various development activities conducted in the village. Second, the barriers faced by youth in participating in village development. Third, the character development of youth, which comprises three essential components: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions.

4. Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

In this study, data collection is conducted using a questionnaire, as described by (Ischak, Badjuka, & Zulfiayu, 2019). A questionnaire is a method of data collection that involves providing a series of written questions or statements to respondents for their responses. The variables included in the questionnaire encompass youth participation in the development programmes of Rutong Village, the barriers encountered by youth in participating in village development, and the character development of youth, which consists of three critical components: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions. Subsequently, data analysis in descriptive survey research, as stated by Maidiana (2021), employs descriptive statistics (central tendency, measures of dispersion, and correlation measures). The results from this descriptive statistical analysis are expected to provide profound insights into how participation, barriers, and efforts in the character development of the youth in Rutong Village, Ambon City are manifested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 30 young individuals to understand the demographic and social characteristics that influence them. The aspects assessed include gender, age, education, and employment, which are crucial for understanding youth behaviour. The collected data reveals the proportion of males and females as well as a varied age distribution, which may affect their perspectives and life experiences. Table 1 presents the data systematically, facilitating a more effective analysis of the relationships between variables.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Aspect Assessed	Value	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	60%
	Female	12	40%
Age	15-20	16	54%
	21-25	9	29%
	26-30	2	7%
	>31	3	10%

Highest Education	Junior School	High	4	13%
	Senior School	High	22	74%
	Higher Education		4	13%
Occupation	Student		18	60%
	Employee		5	17%
	Unemployed		7	23%

Source: Research Findings, 2024

Table 1 presents the profile of respondents in this study, comprising 30 participants, with 60% identifying as male and 40% as female, indicating a gender balance despite the male predominance. The majority of respondents are aged between 15 and 20 years (54%), placing them within the productive age range. In terms of education, 74% of respondents have completed secondary education; however, a portion has yet to pursue higher education. Regarding employment status, 60% are students or undergraduates, 17% are employed, and 23% are unemployed, reflecting the challenges in labour market absorption. Despite the significant potential among the youth, there is a pressing need for more employment opportunities to enhance their contributions to rural development.

Prior to analysing the data, it is imperative to assess the reliability of the questionnaire employed. This assessment yielded a Cronbach's alpha value exceeding 0.6. Reliability reflects the consistency and dependability of the data. According to Ghazali (2015), a robust instrument should possess a minimum reliability of 0.6. If this value is higher, the instrument is deemed to be of excellent quality and effective for assessment.

Table 2. Results of Questionnaire Reliability

No.	Question	N of items	Cronbachs alpha	Instrument Quality
1	Youth Participation	10	0,9	Excellent
2	Forms of Participation	6	0,6	Good
3	Character	11	0,7	Excellent

Source: Research Findings, 2024

In this study, table 2 indicates that all variables determining the effectiveness of youth participation in the Rutong village development programme fall within the categories of good and very good. This implies that these variables can be regarded as valid and reliable tools for assessing youth participation in the development programmes within the village.

Table 3. Youth Participation in the Rutong Village Development Programme

No.	Aspects Being Assessed	Descriptive Analysis Results			
		N	Mean	SD	Level
The Role of Youth					
1	I feel engaged in the development programmes being implemented in Rutong Village.	30	3.53	1.14	Agree
2	I am aware of the information regarding the development programmes available in Rutong Village.	30	3.47	1.01	Neutral

3	I actively participate in meetings or forums that discuss the village development programmes.	30	3.30	1.06	Neutral
4	I feel that my voice is heard in the decision-making process related to village development.	30	3.17	1.29	Neutral
5	I have the opportunity to provide ideas or suggestions for the village development programmes.	30	3.03	1.19	Neutral
6	I believe that my participation in the village development programmes has a positive impact on the community.	30	3.20	1.13	Neutral
7	I contribute to social activities related to village development.	30	3.37	0.93	Neutral
Jumlah		30	3,30	1,10	Neutral

Source: Research findings, 2024

From Table 3 above, it can be observed that the participation of youth in the development programmes of Rutong Village demonstrates a high level of significance. The youth in Rutong Village exhibit considerable involvement in development initiatives, with an average score of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.14. Despite the positive trend, there remains variability in their perspectives regarding this engagement. Youth involvement is not merely a formality; they are successors with substantial potential to effect real and significant change within the community. According to Law Number 6 of 2014 concerning Villages, community participation, particularly that of youth, is essential for the sustainability and success of development programmes. Law Number 40 of 2009 concerning Youth also emphasises that youth play a role as agents of change in social development. In this context, youth participation reflects a profound sense of ownership and responsibility towards the advancement of the village.

However, when questioned about their knowledge of existing development programmes, the youth provided neutral responses, with an average score of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.01. This indicates that while they possess a basic understanding, there exists a gap that needs to be addressed in terms of information and socialisation. According to Hakim (2017), there are three significant reasons why community participation is essential: (1) it aids in acquiring information regarding the conditions and needs of the community; (2) it enhances community trust in development projects through involvement in planning; and (3) it represents a democratic right of the community. The knowledge and participation gap can be analysed through the theory of community participation. Arnstein (1969) elucidates community participation through the concept of the "ladder of participation," which illustrates various levels of community involvement in decision-making. At the lowest level, the community merely receives information without the ability to provide input. Conversely, at the highest level, the community can directly influence decisions. Many youths find themselves trapped at the lower levels of this participation ladder, resulting in gaps in both knowledge and engagement. Therefore, it is crucial to involve youth in the planning and implementation processes of development programmes, whether related to infrastructure or education, to ensure they feel more informed and actively engaged. A deeper understanding of these programmes will enable youth to contribute effectively and provide constructive feedback.

When asked about their active involvement in forums or meetings discussing village development programmes, the youth again provided responses that tended to be neutral, with an average score of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 1.055. Although some youths actively participate, many expressed doubts or a lack of opportunities to engage. Supported by data indicating that their voices are heard in the decision-making processes related to village development, the youth responded neutrally, with an average score of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 1.289. This reflects uncertainty regarding the extent of their influence on the decisions made. This finding aligns with research by Nugroho & Prabowo (2021) which indicates that many youths feel their voices are not acknowledged in the development process, which in turn diminishes their motivation to participate. Research by Sari & Mulyani (2022) underscores the importance of providing space for youth to engage in decision-making processes, noting that inclusive policies yield better outcomes for the community. Furthermore, research by Rahman & Utami (2023) demonstrates that youth involved in development programmes possess a greater potential to become agents of change within their communities. The involvement of youth in the development programmes of Rutong Village remains low, with many feeling their voices are unheard. Studies indicate that providing space for youth participation in decision-making can enhance their motivation and lead to better policies. Consequently, authorities must create an inclusive atmosphere where all youths feel comfortable sharing their opinions and ideas.

When asked about opportunities to provide ideas or suggestions for village development programmes, the youth once again responded neutrally, with an average score of 3.03 and a standard deviation of 1.189. This indicates that although some opportunities exist, many youths feel disempowered to express their ideas. Data identifies that one of the causes of youth disempowerment is the lack of safe spaces to articulate their thoughts. Many existing forums are not designed to listen to youth voices, resulting in the opinions of young people often being overlooked in village meetings dominated by adults. This situation can lead to apathy and diminish the motivation of youth to participate in village development activities. Nurhadi & Sari (2021) emphasise the importance of creating an inclusive environment that can encourage active youth participation.

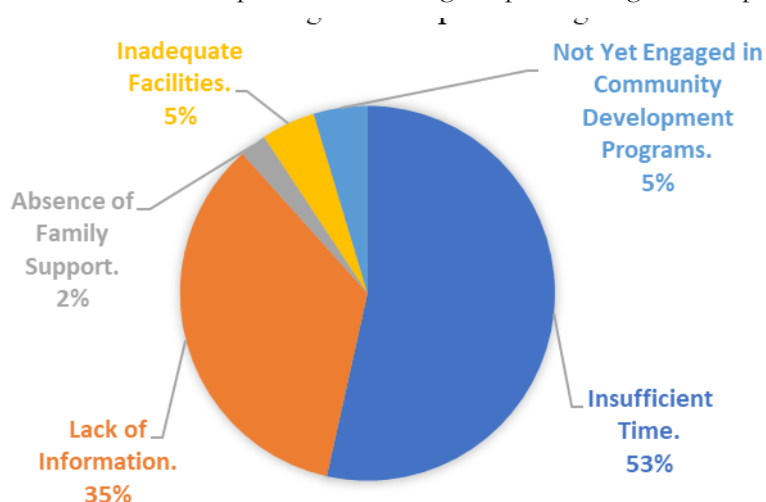
Providing opportunities for youth to convey their ideas is crucial. Youth act as agents of change capable of bringing innovation to development. By allowing youth the space to innovate, villages can harness their potential to discover more effective solutions. Rahmawati (2022) indicates that villages that involve youth in decision-making tend to be more successful in achieving development goals. Prasetyo (2023) stresses that active youth involvement can enhance the quality of development programmes and create a sense of ownership among them. For instance, entrepreneurship training programmes conducted by non-governmental organisations have successfully improved youth skills in developing small enterprises in the village, as reported by Santoso (2021). Therefore, providing space for youth to express their ideas is a vital step in creating an innovative environment that is responsive to community needs.

When asked whether they believe their participation in village development programmes has a positive impact on the community, the youth provided neutral responses, with an average score of 3.20 and a standard deviation of 1.126. This indicates that the youth feel their contributions are not always visible or acknowledged. Additionally, when questioned about their contributions to social activities related to village development, the youth again responded neutrally, with an average score of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 0.928. This suggests that although some youths are active in social activities, many still feel they lack opportunities or do not know how to contribute. This is inconsistent with the views

of Ukkas (2018), who posits that youth are a vital element in society playing a role in the regeneration and advancement of the community. They are not merely successors but also agents of change who bring ideas and innovations.

The findings from the research indicate that the average score of 3.30, with a standard deviation of 1.10, suggests that youth responses tend to be neutral or even exhibit doubt regarding their participation in the development programmes of Rutong Village. This serves as a clear signal that there is an urgent need to enhance youth engagement in the development process. Authorities and stakeholders in the village must strive to create a more inclusive environment that empowers youth to participate actively. Through increased transparency, opportunities for contribution, and recognition of youth voices, it is hoped that their participation in village development can improve, resulting in positive impacts for the community as a whole. In line with the views of Purwaningsih (2018), community participation is a crucial strategy in addressing village development issues. One way to encourage participation is through existing institutions or groups in the community, in this case, the youth. Furthermore, concerning the barriers to participation that young people encounter in village development programmes, this can be illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 1. The Obstacle to Participation That Young People in Village Development Programs



Source: Research Findings, 2024

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the data presented in the diagram, it is evident that young individuals face several significant challenges in their contributions to village development programmes. Among the total respondents involved, 23 individuals explicitly identified a lack of time as the primary barrier hindering their participation. This indicates that inadequate time management is a critical issue requiring immediate attention. Time management is one of the elements that can serve as an obstacle, particularly for many young people who must undertake employment to meet their livelihood needs. This was articulated by Mikasih et al. (2024), who demonstrated that challenges in time management often arise from economic demands that compel the youth to contribute financially.

Furthermore, an additional 15 respondents expressed that a lack of information regarding available programmes serves as a significant barrier. The inability to access relevant and transparent information can lead to misunderstandings and a sense of powerlessness among the youth. This, in turn, may diminish their motivation and willingness to participate. In their research, Kasila & Kolopaking (2018) emphasised that effective and good

communication is crucial in encouraging youth involvement in various activities and existing programmes. In other words, if young people do not have adequate access to clear and open information, they are likely to feel alienated and less enthusiastic about contributing. Therefore, efforts to enhance communication and improve the dissemination of information are essential to foster active participation from the youth.

Meanwhile, Pinilas et al (2017) noted that young individuals frequently encounter various significant challenges, including a lack of adequate guidance and awareness. One crucial form of awareness in the context of participation is the influence exerted by family. This finding aligns with research results indicating that one factor that can inhibit youth participation is the lack of support from family members. Strong and positive social support from the family has proven to be vital in encouraging individuals to actively participate in various activities. The inadequacy of such support underscores the importance of a more inclusive approach that can engage families more actively in the development process. Additionally, two other respondents expressed their views regarding facilities that are deemed inadequate, which should support their participation. This highlights the importance of having sufficient infrastructure and resources, enabling young individuals to engage effectively and optimally in various activities. Thus, attention to family support and the provision of adequate facilities becomes crucial in enhancing youth participation.

Moreover, two respondents indicated that they had not yet engaged in village development programmes. This lack of involvement can have detrimental effects, as insufficient participation in the process may reduce motivation and a sense of ownership towards the existing programmes. In line with these research findings, Ilfa, Supratman, & K.S (2021) stated that one of the factors inhibiting youth participation in village development is their non-involvement in the planning process. The formulation of work plans should ideally be conducted collaboratively, considering that every member has the right to express their opinions in the work plans to be implemented, in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 40 of 2009 concerning Youth Article 8 Paragraph 1(d) concerning youth, which emphasises the importance of equal opportunities for expression, activity, and organisation in accordance with applicable regulations.

Youth represent a valuable asset to society. In the development of Rutong village, the minimal participation of young people, compounded by various inhibiting factors, raises concerns regarding sustainable village development. Therefore, it is crucial to involve all stakeholders in addressing these issues. Equally important is the matter of the character of the youth themselves; this is due to the fact that strong character will yield individuals capable of making positive contributions to the village and serving as agents of change for social and economic advancement. Understanding the development of youth character within the context of village development programmes can be observed in the following table.

Table 4. Understanding the Development of Youth Character in the Rutong Village Development Programme

No	Aspects Being Assessed	Descriptive Analysis Results			
		N	Mean	N	Level
Character Development					
1	I recognise the significance of moral values in the development of rural communities.	30	3.73	0.828	Agree
2	I am aware of the ethical principles that must be applied in development activities.	30	3.80	0.997	Agree

3	I believe that an understanding of morality can enhance the quality of rural development.	30	3.97	0.850	Agree
4	I feel a sense of responsibility to contribute to the development of my village.	30	3.57	0.935	Agree
5	I empathise with fellow villagers who are in need of assistance.	30	3.97	0.850	Agree
6	I take pride in witnessing the progress achieved by my village..	30	4.33	0.994	Strongly Agree
7	I am actively involved in social activities aimed at supporting the rural community.	30	3.27	0.944	Neutral
8	I consistently strive to act honestly and fairly in every interaction with village residents.	30	3.80	0.847	Setuju
9	I participate in decision-making processes related to rural development.	30	3.13	1.074	Neutral
10	I believe that the youth play a crucial role in the development of rural areas.	30	4.37	0.928	Strongly Agree
11	I feel that the character of the youth in Rutong Village can significantly influence the success of development initiatives.	30	4.27	0.980	Strongly Agree
Jumlah		30	3.84	0.93	Agree

Source: Research Findings, 2024

The research findings presented in Table 4 indicate that their involvement contributes not only to physical development but also to the formation of character and essential moral values. Among the 30 respondents engaged in this study, the results of the questionnaire provide a clear picture of the understanding, attitudes, and actions of youth in the context of rural development. The data obtained reveal that the majority of respondents are aware of the importance of moral and ethical values in the development process, as reflected in the high mean scores on several key questions.

Firstly, respondents demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of moral values in rural development, with a mean score of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 0.83. This indicates that the youth in the village recognise that development is not solely related to physical aspects but must also be supported by strong moral values. Furthermore, respondents exhibited a solid understanding of the ethical principles that should be applied in development activities, with a mean score of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.00. This suggests that the youth not only possess theoretical knowledge but are also capable of applying it in practice. According to Widiatmaka et al. (2016), the participation of youth is crucial in creating community welfare, thus it is undeniable that every country strives to develop the knowledge, skills, and character of its youth. Consistent with this, one of the most intriguing findings is the respondents' belief that knowledge of morality can enhance the quality of rural development, with a mean score of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 0.85. This indicates that the youth believe that morality is not merely a set of values to be upheld but also a key factor in achieving quality development outcomes. There is a saying that whoever controls the youth will control the future (Tilaar, 1991, p. 34). Fundamentally, youth play a very important role in the progress of a nation.

On the other hand, although many respondents feel a sense of responsibility to contribute to rural development, with a mean score of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 0.94, there are indications that there is still room for improvement in their active participation.

This is reflected in the mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.94 on questions regarding involvement in social activities. This suggests that while the youth feel a sense of responsibility, they may still be hesitant or lack motivation to participate actively. This phenomenon poses a challenge in the development of Rutong village, as its role in shaping the character of youth is increasingly weakening and becoming less serious in addressing current youth issues, thereby complicating youth-related problems in Rutong village. According to Widiatmaka et al. (2016), the crisis of youth character will impact the resilience of young individuals, leading to a lack of self-confidence, strong principles, independence, creativity, responsibility, and so forth, which ultimately affects sustainable development. Therefore, efforts are needed to encourage youth to become more actively involved in social activities that positively impact the community.

Moreover, the youth demonstrate a high level of empathy towards fellow villagers in need of assistance, with a mean score of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 0.85. This is a positive indication that the youth possess strong social awareness. Additionally, when asked about their pride in the progress achieved by the village, the youth exhibited a very high mean score of 4.33 with a standard deviation of 0.99, indicating that they feel connected to the development of their village. This sense of pride can serve as an additional motivation for the youth to continue contributing to development.

However, several areas require attention, such as participation in decision-making related to rural development, which received only a mean score of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.07. This indicates that the youth may feel less involved in the decision-making processes that affect the future of their village. The youth consistently express the belief that they play an important role in rural development, with a mean score of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.93. This shows that they recognise the potential of youth to be agents of change within their communities. Furthermore, they also believe that the character of youth in Rutong village can influence the success of development, with a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.98. This indicates that the youth are not only viewed as successors but also as key drivers in the process of sustainable development. The research findings indicate that youth participation in rural development programmes has a significant impact, with a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.93, reflecting agreement on the formation of their character and moral values.

Youth are individuals with dynamic character, enthusiasm, and optimism, although their emotional control may not yet be stable. According to Mulyana (2011, p. 12), Ukkas (2018) states that the character of youth who consistently think positively will generate positive energy. When this positive energy is combined with the dynamic nature of youth, it can lead to constructive contributions. The youthful spirit within them can be directed towards positive endeavours.

Despite the challenges that need to be addressed as indicated by the research findings, such as increasing involvement in social activities and decision-making processes, overall, the youth in Rutong village demonstrate a high level of awareness and commitment to their village's development. By encouraging more active participation and providing space for youth to engage in decision-making processes, it is hoped that the character of the youth can continue to develop and contribute positively to the success of rural development in the future.

Ambarita (2013) explains that efforts to build the character of the younger generation are part of national development. The character that needs to be developed in youth includes: (1) love for God and truth, (2) responsibility, discipline, and independence, (3)

trustworthiness and honesty, (4) respect and courtesy, (5) compassion, care, and cooperation, (6) self-confidence, creativity, and resilience, (7) justice and leadership, (8) humility, and (9) tolerance, love of the homeland, and love for peace.

Widiatmaka et al. (2016) state that character development in youth through organisations is very effective, provided that all activities can be implemented optimally. Abdul Majid, according to Mutamam & Shantini (2019), adds that every individual possesses a belief system, self-image, and habits. If this belief system is correct and aligns with good character and a positive self-image, then the individual's life will proceed well. Conversely, if the belief system is not in harmony with character and self-image, the individual will face numerous problems. Adulthood is a phase where individuals have developed character traits that distinguish one individual from another. However, character formation in youth is an effort to optimise the already formed character to be more productive and directed.

According to Mutamam & Shantini (2019), the character formation of youth in rural development will ultimately enhance the capabilities of youth as part of the national development plan through participation in activities held by each village. Thus, they will be continuously involved in activities that can empower and increase the productivity of youth. Based on Law No. 40 of 2009, youth development is a process that facilitates all matters related to youth, including awareness, empowerment, and the development of leadership, entrepreneurship, and youth pioneering. The goal of youth development is to realise youth who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, intelligent, creative, innovative, independent, democratic, responsible, and competitive. Such character reflects the values associated with God, oneself, family, community, and the nation.

CONCLUSION

The findings from the research concerning youth participation in the development programme of Rutong Village, aimed at character building among the youth, reveal intriguing results. The average score obtained was 3.30, with a standard deviation of 1.10. This figure indicates that the responses provided by the youth tend to be neutral, with a noticeable inclination towards uncertainty regarding their level of participation in various development programmes implemented in Rutong Village. Several factors act as barriers for the youth to engage more actively in these programmes, including limited time availability, insufficient information regarding existing programmes, a lack of support from families, inadequate facilities, and their absence from the village development planning process. Nevertheless, there is a significant consensus regarding the importance of character formation and moral values among the youth, as reflected in the average score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.93. This suggests that despite the challenges in participation, the youth remain aware of and value the principles associated with their character development.

Therefore, it is crucial for the relevant authorities and stakeholders at the village level to undertake a series of measures or processes that can facilitate all aspects related to youth engagement. These measures should include enhancing access to relevant information, providing flexible scheduling for activities, strengthening familial support, and developing adequate facilities to support youth activities. If all these steps can be effectively implemented, the youth in Rutong Village will be able to contribute actively to the village development process. Subsequently, this will have a positive implication for the character formation of the youth, fostering individuals who are not only faithful and devoted to the Almighty God but also possess noble character, good health, intelligence, creativity, innovation, independence, democratic attitudes, responsibility, and high competitiveness.

These attributes are essential for achieving sustainable development goals that will provide benefits and positive impacts for all.

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