



EXPLORING THE EVOLUTION OF FAIRNESS TRAITS AMONG STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN CENTRAL JAVA AND LAMPUNG PROVINCE

Ashari Mahfud¹, Indah Lestari^{2*}, Edris Zamroni³, Pramita Sylvia Dewi⁴, Santoso Santoso⁵, Sucipto Sucipto⁶

^{1,4}Universitas Lampung, Lampung

^{2,3,5,6}Universitas Muria Kudus, Kudus

Corresponding Email: indah.lestari@umk.ac.id

Abstract

This research aims to elucidate the evolution of fairness character among students in Central Java and Lampung, while also investigating the impact of the environment on this developmental process. Employing a quantitative descriptive method and ANACOVA test, the researchers examine how the environment (domicile) influences the development of students' fairness character. The data collection encompasses various aspects of fairness character development, as defined by experts, including 1) utilization aspects; 2) appreciation aspect; 3) obedience; and 4) open attitude. The instrument used for assessing fairness character development in students underwent prior testing by experts to ensure alignment with the research subjects' characteristics. The study includes 553 students from Central Java province and 576 students from Lampung province. The research unfolds through stages involving instrument distribution, data collection, and subsequent analysis and interpretation. Results reveal a robust commitment in both Central Java and Lampung to character education, particularly emphasizing fairness. The majority of students demonstrate positive fairness character development. Notably, students in Central Java exhibit stronger characteristics in transparency (open thinking), whereas students in Lampung excel in the attitude aspect aligned with social roles. The development of fairness is intricately linked to the norms and customs prevalent in students' living environments. This underscores the significance of understanding local norms and customs, offering valuable insights for educators. Such insights contribute significantly to fostering fairness character development among students in Central Java and Lampung..

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Introduction

The issue of injustice among students in schools is increasingly prevalent. Acts of injustice, such as intimidation, isolation, discrimination, bullying, and the like, are on the rise. The Indonesian Central Statistics Agency records show that in 2022, there was a significant increase, with a total of 15,972 cases. This is a cause for collective concern, with the hope that there will be a decrease in such incidents in 2023. One effort that educators can undertake in schools is to strengthen the character of students through character education. This character development will serve as an asset for students, helping them steer clear of issues related to injustice.

One of the characters expected to be possessed by a child is the character of fairness (Ali, Rohmadi, & Hj., 2017). Fairness means not exploiting the weaknesses of others for personal gain, valuing equality among individuals, playing roles according to rules, being

transparent, and treating others fairly (Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015). The character of fairness is manifested through a child's attitude of treating individuals without discrimination. A child with this strength of character does not let their feelings influence a negative view of others. The child gives everyone an equal opportunity to strive and applies the same sanctions according to their mistakes (Bastemur, Dursun-Bilgin, Yildiz, & Ucar, 2016).

Fairness is one of the seven virtuous characters that a child should possess and develop (Berman, Jackson, Miller, Kowalski, Kolm, & Luks, 2018). The child will strive to create a healthy social and community life with harmonious interactions among individuals and groups through this character (Book, Volk, & Hosker, 2012). Acting justly and applying pluralism principles to others without considering intuitionism is part of this character (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). Based on these expert opinions, it is evident that this character is crucial for every child to possess. Therefore, character education is necessary.

Various problems can arise in a child when the character of fairness does not develop well within them (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Coyne, Gopaul, Campbell, Pankász, Garland, and Cousans conveyed in their research results that the character of fairness has a significant relationship with the risk of bullying, intimidation, aggression, and other violent behaviors in children at school (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). However, a child with this character will be able to be fair to themselves and their environment, considering themselves as equals to others. Thus, individuals with this character are less likely to engage in violent behaviors such as bullying.

The same sentiment is also conveyed by Book, Volk, and Hosker, as presented in their research findings that bullying is negatively correlated with the character of fairness (Cardoso, Savickas, & Gonçalves, 2019). This means that the higher the level of fairness in a child, the lower the risk of bullying behavior occurring in that child. Conversely, the opposite holds true.

In a research summary by Hilliard, Bowers, Greenman, Hershberg, Geldhof, Glickman, and Lerner, the relationship between fairness and bullying is explained (Chow et al., 2016). The results suggest that bullying behavior in adolescents fundamentally arises from a lack of understanding and attention to the well-being or justice (fairness) of others. Therefore, to reduce instances of bullying and similar unjust attitudes, efforts should be made to enhance the character of fairness in adolescents, in this case, children.

Research on interventions to reduce bullying behavior conducted by Yang, Sharkey, Chen, & Jimerson found that fairness plays a mediating role in the formation of bullying behavior (Collins, Arthur, Brown, & Kennedy, 2015). Hence, to decrease bullying behavior, it is necessary to first improve the character of fairness. A similar viewpoint has also been expressed by Pala, stating that fairness is one of the characters needed by children and is fostered through character education processes (Coyne, Gopaul, Campbell, Pankász, Garland, & Cousans, 2019). In other words, this character serves as a significant asset for children as they grow and mature, enabling them to meet their personal needs through means and efforts sanctioned by the norms and ethics prevailing in society.

The meaning of justice sought in the embodiment of the Fairness character has been previously reviewed in a psychological analysis by Faturochman (Faturochman, 1999). The realization of justice often faces interventions driven by personal interests. Consequently, there is a perception that a sense of fairness will emerge only if the concept of fairness benefits one's own interests (DeBlaere, Singh, Wilcox, Cokley, Delgado-Romero, Scalise, & Shawahin, 2019). This, in turn, leads to a justification for bullying behavior or similar unjust behaviors towards other children in school. Bullying behavior, in some studies, is considered adaptive behavior because it serves as a survival

mechanism for individuals to defend their existence, maintain their dignity, and fortify themselves before facing oppression from the environment (DeBlaere, Singh, Wilcox, Cokley, Delgado-Romero, Scalise, & Shawahin, 2019). Therefore, in cultivating the Fairness character, an understanding of justice assessments must be established early on as a foundation for children, preventing unfair behavior from recurring (Crumb, & Haskins, 2017).

However, the current prevalence of unfairness in children is a shared concern. Signs of unfairness include the widespread occurrence of injustices, such as bullying among children (Fleuridas, & Krafcik, 2019). The Indonesian Child Protection Commission states that 87% of children have experienced violence, including bullying. The National Consortium for Character Development states that bullying occurs in almost every school with negative effects. Based on gender, bullying behavior is almost equally experienced by females (50.5%) compared to males (Gollwitzer, & van Prooijen, 2016). Kustanti provides an overview of bullying behavior in the city of Semarang from a descriptive research study showing that the majority of children at all educational levels have experienced disturbance from peers. At the high school level, the percentage is highest, reaching 70%. This data is concerning if left unaddressed (Gysbers, & Patricia, 2006).

Therefore, in support of the above efforts, it is important to understand the developmental characteristics of fairness in students according to their educational levels. This will contribute to educators in formulating strategic efforts to develop fairness in students according to their educational levels and the characteristics they possess in their environment. Thus, violent/bullying behavior can be avoided by students independently, especially within the school environment.

Method

This research employs a quantitative descriptive approach. The subjects involved are students attending formal educational institutions ranging from elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), to senior high school (SMA) in the provinces of Central Java and Lampung, using cluster sampling techniques. The subject distribution in this study includes 553 students from Central Java and 576 students from Lampung. The measuring tool used by the researcher is the fairness character instrument previously developed by Mahfud (2023), which includes four indicators: "exploitation," "appreciation," "social role," and "open behavior." This measuring tool was previously developed based on the characteristics of students in Indonesia using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with good validity evidence (<0.03) and sufficiently good reliability, with a calculated internal consistency alpha Cronbach value of 0.84. Thus, it is sufficiently representative for use in this research. Some example statements in the instrument include: 1) I try to fulfill responsibilities independently according to my abilities, 2) Weaknesses in others are not reasons for me to exploit them, and many other statements with five alternative responses that respondents can choose from: (a) very suitable, (b) suitable, (c) uncertain, (d) not suitable, and (e) not suitable at all.

The research stages involve the distribution of instruments, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. Quantitative descriptive data analysis is conducted to analyze each aspect of the development of fairness character. Furthermore, to examine the influence of the environment and educational levels on the development of fairness character in students, ANCOVA analysis is performed. The results of the analysis in this study will depict the characteristics of the development of fairness character in students attending formal educational institutions in the provinces of Central Java and Lampung for each aspect (indicator) of the fairness character, as well as the influence exerted by the environment and educational levels on these variables.

Result and Discussion

The analysis process, utilizing the SPSS software, has been completed. Quantitative descriptive analysis and main effect tests were conducted to examine factors that may influence the development of fairness in students in the provinces of Central Java and Lampung. The results of the quantitative descriptive analysis have been carried out, revealing differences in the strength of each aspect of the development of fairness character among students in Central Java and Lampung (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results of Students' Fairness Character Development in Central Java and Lampung Provinces

Domicile	Group	Fairness Character Aspects							
		Utilization		Appreciation		Obedience		Open-Mindedness	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Central Java	Elementary	23,56	1,64	33,67	4,49	43,56	1,64	63,67	4,49
	Junior High	33,44	3,72	55,33	5,78	53,44	2,72	65,33	7,78
	Senior High	43,71	5,91	60,57	7,37	63,71	3,91	70,57	8,37
Lampung	Elementary	42,44	1,27	36,67	2,72	53,44	1,27	46,67	2,72
	Junior High	43,67	2,41	47,89	4,65	63,67	2,41	57,89	4,65
	Senior High	55,25	3,64	59,50	5,07	71,25	2,64	59,50	7,07

The analysis above reveals that the majority of students exhibit good development in the fairness character. In Central Java, students demonstrate a stronger development characteristic in the aspect of being transparent (open-minded). Meanwhile, in Lampung, the most robust development characteristic of fairness is found in the aspect of adhering to social roles (compliance). A main effect test was then conducted to examine whether the factors of educational levels and students' domicile (environment) influence the level of fairness character development among students in Central Java and Lampung. The results indicate that domicile (environment) and educational levels significantly influence the development of students' fairness character. This is evident from the results of the ANCOVA test conducted (Table 2). This implies that the development of fairness character is influenced by the norms and customs present in the environment where students reside, and the educational level and development of students also play a role in shaping that development.

Table 2. Results of the Main Effect Test (ANACOVA)

<i>Effect (Fairness)</i>	F	Df	P
Educational Level	50,89	1	< 0,05
Domicile	21,59	3	< 0,05
Educational Level*Domicile	18,65	4	< 0,05

The main effect test results indicate that the characteristics of student groups based on environmental conditions and educational levels all have an impact on the development of fairness characteristics in students in both Central Java and Lampung. Therefore, it is important to understand various covariate factors that can influence the development of fairness in students in both Central Java and Lampung. Several studies supporting the theory of positive psychology significance have been conducted. An experiment by Peguero and Bracy (2015) found that the development of justice character in students cannot take place by relying on a single factor but should involve all aspects within the adolescent's immediate environment. Wilbur et al. (2020) found that the most commonly used strategy in the development of justice character is an approach based on adolescents' cognitive aspects, while the least used is the multicultural approach.

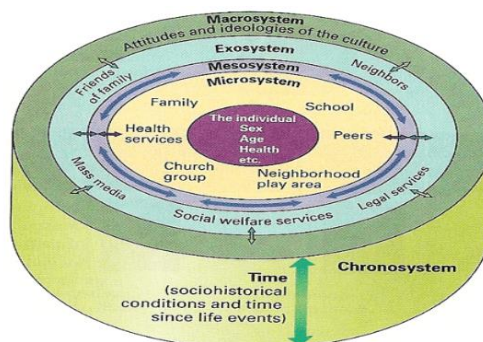
The research conducted by Biçer and Polatcan (2015) also supports these findings. They found that strategies involving a social justice approach can be used as a learning strategy for adolescents in developing fair behavior. This is because students will be provided with an understanding of fair behavior that is acceptable to everyone before they change their behavior. Saydam (2018) determined the frequency of justice behavior learning strategies found in a set of textbooks used as teaching materials for politics-nationalism subjects and references for adolescents.

In Indonesia, research has been conducted to enhance justice character (Suparwi, 2014). However, there are still some limitations in its implementation, including the rationalization of the research subjects in developing justice character within themselves. This aligns with the findings of Fall, Holden, and Marquis (2017), stating that one problem according to cognitive-oriented counseling theory is caused by disruptions in the cognitive system in the form of distortions or cognitive disorders.

Positive psychology developers have tried to examine several factors that can influence the development of character strengths. Seligman (2019) explains that based on experience, there are several conditions that can shape character strengths, including learning and working opportunities; a supportive and consistent family; a comfortable environment and school; political stability and democracy; along with the emergence of mentors, role models, supportive peers, and family, which play a direct role both inside and outside the home.

In line with positive psychology theory, Ecological Theory also shares a similar understanding of child development introduced by Uri Bronfenbrenner, a psychologist from Cornell University in the United States (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Ecological Theory views human development as influenced by environmental contexts. The reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment shapes the individual's behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Information about the child's living environment helps describe, organize, and clarify the effects of varying environments. Ecological Theory attempts to examine human interactions within systems or subsystems. Simply put, these interactions can be seen in the following diagram:

Figure 1. The concept of ecological theory



The above diagram explains that these recurring important factors can shape character strengths and are interesting to study. These factors include positive parenting, positive role models, and close relationships with family and peers (Lopez et al., 2018). These factors are considered intriguing because, within the scope of psychosocial development and environmental psychology, individuals grow and develop into adolescents with the indispensable roles of three other significant individuals: parents, peers, and teachers (Seligman, 2019). In the home environment, adolescents often interact with their parents, while in external environments such as school, adolescents interact with peers and teachers.

The results of this research emphasize the importance of paying attention to the development of students' characters from an early age. This aligns with counseling theories that emphasize a positive approach, suggesting that a student's character will later become a significant asset in the learning process and problem-solving. As part of the character education process, counseling services should prioritize an understanding of the characteristics of fairness character development in students. This is because a student's character development is influenced by various factors, especially the environment in which the child is growing.

However, this study only discusses the characteristics of fairness character development in students in Central Java and Lampung. Therefore, the obtained results are limited to those regions. Hence, further research is needed in other areas to uncover the characteristics of fairness character development in students in those regions.

Conclusion

Most students exhibit good development in fairness. In Central Java, students show a stronger development characteristic, particularly in the aspect of being transparent (open-minded). Meanwhile, in Lampung, the most robust development characteristic of fairness character is found in the aspect of adhering to social roles. The development of fairness character is influenced by the norms and customs present in the environment where students reside. This is evidenced by the main effect analysis results. Therefore, this condition contributes as valuable information for educators to understand the norms and customs in the environment. It serves as a significant contribution to promoting the development of fairness in students in Central Java and Lampung. Considering the importance of understanding diverse characteristics of fairness character development in each region, further research is needed to identify the characteristics of fairness character development in children in other provinces.

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Author Contributions Statement

This research took place through the collaboration of all researchers from Lampung and Central Java provinces. AM was responsible for leading the data collection in Lampung. Subsequently, the data was analyzed together with PSD. Meanwhile, data collection in Central Java was led by IL and then analyzed by EZ. Following this, AM and IL jointly compiled the field findings into a scientific article ready for publication.

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