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# Character Development Trough Physical Education: AN Indonesian Perspective

*Dimyati*

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta
*Correspondence: E-mail: dimyati@uny.ac.id

## A B S T R A C T

Concerned with many of the abuses ascribed to students and athletes, an increasing number of administrators, physical educators, coaches, and observers of sports believe that it has the potential to shape character. The potential impact of sports and physical education on character development is discussed in program administration and teaching/coaching behavior. Specific practices such as conditional scholarships, non-graduation of athletes, gender bias, modeling, drill, explanation and demonstration, encouraging athletes to play when injured, "running up the score," and performance evaluation are addressed. If students and athletes are essential in sports and physical education, then character development should be an important aim of sports and physical education.

## 1. Introduction

Challenges faced by Indonesian people, especially by educational institutions, are getting more complex and more complicated, especially in preparing the young generation to cope with various dynamic changes that move fast. Those changes deal with the dynamic changes in science and technology and touch society's moral and value degradation. Such moral decadence and bad character shown by teenagers have become a common part of social life in Indonesia nowadays. Violence and brutality practiced by the students are getting more worrying, like the burglary and brutal action conducted by the students united in Nero Genk (Nero stands for *neko-neko dikeroyok* or if you make us angry, we will beat you), and many other violent actions. The Nero Genk is probably just one portrait of many similar Genks in our society formed by the students. Like the iceberg phenomenon, similar situations may have happened in other schools but were not exposed by the media. Such phenomena of moral issues spreading among adolescents like "tawuran" (gang or mass fight), drug use, pornography, damaging the property of others, seizure, etc., have become a social problem and until now not yet been successfully solved if not getting worse. A report from the Head of the National Narcotics Agency (BNN) states that in Indonesia, nearly 15,000 teenagers die yearly from abusing narcotics, psychotropics, and other additives (Kompas et al. 24, 2006). Therefore, the Minister of National Education has recently stated that character development must be implemented consistently in the national education system.

Character crisis in our teenagers should be viewed as a severe problem because it deals with the future of our nation. It needs genuine efforts to develop the young generation with solid character, i.e., the teenagers who are mentally tough, honest, disciplined, courageous in action, full of initiative, thoughtful, and ready to struggle in finding and improving progress and advancement. Adolescents with such characteristics are desperately needed by Indonesian people nowadays. Actual character building can be pursued through formal education in schools. However, implementing education as a nation and character-building vehicle faces many obstacles. The problem most closely related to character building for adolescents is mass media's antagonism concerning education's values. How the wind of consumerism and hedonic lifestyle blown out by mass media such as the internet, TV, and magazines are more prevalent among adolescents than the values of productivity developed by educational institutions.

This reveals the weak position of educational institutions in developing teenage characters. In the context of formal education in schools, one of the reasons could be that education in Indonesia focuses primarily on intellectual development and ignores the other aspects or potentials available to the student, i.e., the affective and moral virtues. Koesoema (2009) confirms that integrating education and character-building constitutes the weak point of national education policy. This situation has been realized and understood by the Government, in this case by the Minister of National Education. The Minister expressed the concern and longing of many parties to re-strengthen the education on character building and national cultures. The Government is committed to strengthening the character and national cultures through school education (Kompas, January 15, 2010).

Efforts to build character can be carried out through formal education in schools and other activities and programs that can develop the teenage character and the nation's

children. Various studies validate that sports and physical education are powerful character-building tools. Baron Piere de Coubertin, the Initiator of the Modern Olympic Resurrection, states that the ultimate goal of sports and physical education lies in its role as a unique instrument to character perfection and as a vehicle to form a strong personality, good character, and noble character (Mutohir and Lutan, in (Lutan, 2001: 1). Starting from on the background, this paper will try to reveal in more details the role of sports and physical education as an integral part of character building to educate the character of athletes and students at the schools.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 The Concept of Caracter Development

The term "character" and its numerous definitions contribute to character development's complexity. Often, character and other related terms, including "ethics," "morals," and "values," are used interchangeably. Therefore, the following definitions seek to clarify the terminology and demystify the character concept.

Character is defined as the "combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another" (American et al. of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000). While character is generally assumed to be positive, the formal definition of character does not imply whether or not the distinguishing qualities or features are positive or negative. "Values" is another non-prescriptive term that does not necessarily indicate a positive or negative association. Values signify to others what one "deems as important and critical as individuals and as participants in relationships with others." (Hight, 2003: 6). The term "morals" actually distinguishes the "goodness or correctness of character" and the definition of the term ethics refers to "a theory or system of moral values" (American et al. of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000). Therefore, a person demonstrating character has developed ethics, or a system of values, consisting of those ideals deemed as correct and essential to his/her existence and to his/her relationship with others.

To understand the terminology further, one must also consider the two-dimensional nature of the character. Character consists of an intellectual dimension and a behavioral dimension. Within the overall character concept lies 1) a core value and belief system and 2) the behavior or actions that support that core system (Kelly & Gibson, 1996). It is also essential that the intellectual dimension incorporates a value and belief system relying on social and self-responsibility. The behavioral dimension consists of sustained activities reflecting a standard of living rather than isolated events. "Character does not consist of a single statement or as a random act, but of those qualities and dispositions that we practice consistently … as Aristotle said, we are what we repeatedly do" (Schwartz, 2000, p. A68).

### 3.2 Can Sports and Physical Education Builds Character?

The idea that sports and physical education provide effective means for promoting character has been around for a long time, at least since the Ancient Greeks. In modern history, the British boarding schools of the nineteenth century gave new impetus to this theme. Believing that muscles and morals develop simultaneously through involvement in team sports, these schools' administrators encouraged or required their students to participate in sports. The idea soon crossed the sport and became popular in U.S. schools

and culture. Sport builds character became a famous cultural saying providing the rationale for including sports programs in various educational institutions. Even today's highly commercialized big-time collegiate sports programs are often justified by appealing to the idea that these programs contribute educational value to the athletes by nurturing positive character traits. On the other hand, opponents of sports often cite anecdotal evidence of sport-related cheating, aggression, self-aggrandizement, disrespectful behavior, and corruption to suggest that sports have the opposite effect—they undermine positive character. These possibilities exist within the sports environment.

The sport environment is often viewed as unreal - as just a game. As Tod & Hodge (2001: 309) state, "Athletes perceive sport as different from real life." Nevertheless, sports participation surpasses reading, discussions, and role-playing environments because it is "experienced," and sport provides spontaneity - unplanned, unforeseen, and unique situations. Responses are based on applying concepts, and accountability becomes real, mirroring the agency found in real life. Sports participation is valued because it mirrors real life in that psychological states are attached.

Pursuing sport may be unique because the activity provides a logical connection to morality and the opportunity to reveal/produce numerous desirable qualities (Arnold, 1999). Sports participation can reveal a person's positive/negative character traits. Sports can establish perceptions about what character is, and it can contrast virtuous behavior with non-virtuous behavior.

Some professionals in higher education consider character development an essential aim of education in general (Oelstrom, 2003) and sport participation in particular (Arnold, 1999). Concerned with many of the abuses ascribed to school sports (Bandsuch, 2002), an increasing number of administrators, physical educators, coaches, and observers of sports stress the importance of ethical principles in guiding conduct and describe sport as an enterprise that has the potential to enhance moral development or shape character (Gough, 1997). If sport attempts to "build" character, what are some of the areas or practices in it that ethics should influence? Two areas seem important: character education program and teaching/coaching behavior.

### 3.3 Program Administration

Those who believe sports and physical education should be concerned with character development should look at each specific practice with a teleological focus. What is the ultimate end of any instructional process? How does it affect or contribute to the development of teachers, coaches, students, and athletes as human beings? These two questions are the kind that should guide one's view.

One aspect of the character education and implementation of a physical education or sports program that can be important for its potential to build character is leadership. Those involved in sports and physical education, which considers character development necessary, should strive to be models who lead those less knowledgeable toward truth - truth about what is rational and right in sport and life. Physical educators and coaches who are exemplary models often possess the power to produce effects more significant than those they lead can engender by themselves.

The paramount importance of leadership is ethics. Indeed, leadership should be governed by ethics or, more precisely, good ethics (Kretchmar, 2002). Each act should be guided by reason to do what is right. A leader concerned with character development should be an individual who guides others toward virtue, someone who inspires others to act virtuously. Randolph Feezell (1995: 152) alluded to the importance of virtue in

leadership and sport when he observed: There is a movement in contemporary moral philosophy, attempting to return our attention to thinking about the centrality of virtue in moral life. Until recently, the language of virtue had seemingly fallen into disfavored in our 20th-century philosophizing about moral matters. We heard much talk about the naturalistic fallacy, verifications, the expression of attitudes, prescriptively, the general habit, the principle of utility, and the like, but little talk about being a certain kind of person, having certain dispositions or characteristics that we have always thought to be central to living life in a civilized moral community.

For the school administrator, teacher, and coach concerned with character development, any unethical practice is cause for concern. Presently, unethical practices plaguing students and athletes (e.g., illegal recruiting, acrogenic drug use, and sub rose incentives) deserve immediate attention. Indeed, one might question whether some character education programs should remain because they contain many practices almost antithetical to ethical tenets that foster moral development. If sport and physical education should enhance character development, then one of its primary purposes should be to teach its participants to do what is morally right.

The management of most character education programs involves dealing with a considerable number of issues and practices. However, three of the most important are conditional scholarships, non-graduation of athletes, and gender bias.

Conditional scholarships based on sports performance raise interesting questions for those concerned with character development. Similar to the non-graduation of athletes, conditional scholarships may imply that some individuals' education or access to education depends more on athletic rather than academic performance. Conditional scholarships suggest that sport receives too much emphasis on student and athlete. To those who argue that awarding sports scholarships (albeit conditional) provides an opportunity for individuals who sometimes come from" disadvantaged" economic circumstances to experience the benefits of a school and sports education, others could reply that this practice is still out-of-balance and suggestive of a message that "sport" is more important than "school."

Non-graduation of students and athletes is an outcome that may be incredibly distasteful to those concerned with character development because many of them see school as an institution whose mission is the intellectual and moral development of students. Although graduation may not represent how much learning or development occurred, it may be a more potent sign that they were not attained. Moreover, non -graduation also raises concerns about the exploitation of athletes.

Gender bias is among the most important of all the issues in school sports, especially for those concerned with the moral implications of policies and practices. It can be argued that gender bias is unethical because it is imprudent, unjust, and unreasonable to favor one gender over another. Moreover, unequal access or bias based on gender may prevent those discriminated against from realizing their full potential as human beings and achieving balance in mind, body, and spirit.

## 3.4 Theories of Character Development

### 3.4.1 Approaches of moral reasoning

Two views about moral reasoning in general and attitudes and behavior in sports, in particular, have been extensively reported in the literature (e.g. Bredemeir & Sheilds, 1993; Weiss & Bredemeir, 1990). These approaches explain how the individual learns to carry out

an act defined as "right" or "wrong." This paper defines moral reasoning as "the decision process in which the lightness or wrongness of a course of action is determined."

### 3.4.2 The social-learning approach

According to the social-learning approach, which is mainly based on Bandura's (1977) work, an individual learns how to make a "moral" decision" by (a) watching what others do and do not do, (b) perceiving reinforcement and penalties provided for one's behaviors, and (c) exhibiting behaviors to fit in with one's peer or comparison groups (Wienberg & Gould, 2003).

Social learning theorists contend that environmental cues, including modeling and reinforcement, influence behavior. Children then internalize the behaviors that influential agents, such as parents, teachers, coaches, and peers, convey as socially acceptable. Therefore, exposure to role modeling and direct reinforcement from significant others shapes moral development. Supporters of the structural-developmental position assert that the child undergoes an active cognitive process of reorganizing patterns of thoughts and behaviors through social interactions. The environmental cues and the individual's continual mental restructuring of social interactions systematically derive new cognitive processes. Hence, cues in the external environment that creates a temporary cognitive disequilibrium and subsequently enhance the cognitive process may influence moral development.

### 3.4.3 The structured-developmental approach

In contrast to the social-learning approach, the structured-developmental approach emphasizes the internal process more than the observed actions of an individual. Two structured-developmental approaches noted as Kholberg's and Hann's models have been discussed in the physical education and sports sciences (see Bredemeir & Sheild, 1993; Wienberg & Gould, 2003; and Weiss & Bredemier, 1990). Although Piaget (1965) and Gilligan (1977) also provided structured–developmental explanations for moral reasoning, Kohlberg's and Haan's models are more accepted by researchers and educators in the motor domain. Kohlberg (1984) states that there are six stages of moral development. In each six-stage sequence, the individual progresses in her/his ability to take the role of others, e.g., to understand others' needs and judgments. Weiss and Bredemeir (1990) not only described Kohlberg's model in detail but also provided sports illustrations for each stage of the model.

Haan's model of moral development was developed based on research on people's interactive behavior in everyday life situations and simulated game contexts. Haan proposed a five-level model in which the individual progresses in three perspectives: moral balance, dialogue, and moral levels. As pointed out earlier in Haan's model, Weiss and Bredemeir (1990) provided unique sports examples for each model level.

Although both models were not initially developed for explaining moral development in sports situations, sports psychologists and sociologists have used the six-stage model of Kohlberg and the five-level model of Haan to describe moral sequences in sports activities. These two models and the social learning approach also assisted researchers in the areas of sport psychology and sport sociology in examining moral development in empirical queries.

### 3.4.4 Teaching/Coaching Behavior

For those in sports who stress the importance of character development, one of the most significant roles as a teacher or coach can model coach is that of a spiritual mentor. The role of a spiritual mentor embodies educational tenets (Gulley, 1964) that specifically focus on character development. Three of the most important are the following:

3.4.4.1. Teaching and coaching are cooperative arts. In other words, students and athletes learn from teachers and coaches by applying self-evident principles to certain competitive situations and, in turn, arrive at knowledge of things they did not previously know. Hopefully, this knowledge leads to the pursuit of virtue.

3.4.4.2. Physical education teachers and coaches do more than just stimulate students and athletes. While players possess an inborn potential for knowledge and good behavior, coaches help them actualize this potential. Thus, by giving suitable examples physically, mentally, and morally, coaches should attempt to teach athletes to practice, compete, and live in a way that maximizes their full potential.

3.4.4.3. Teaching and coaching are centered on truth. Just as certain principles of practice and competition produce victory, they should also create good conduct. Physical educators and coaches should be significantly involved in teaching these truths (principles).

While many sports coaches differ in methodology, only some use drills. Advocates of character development in school sports should approve of drills as a coaching method, primarily when drills focus on or involve a game's mental and moral aspects. The more the coach emphasizes the use of mental faculties in sports, the more she or he trains the athlete's mind to make rational decisions based on the stimuli presented in each situation; the more advocates of character development might approve. Thus the football coach, who trains his quarterback to make effective, rational decisions when reading defenses and modifying the play called, can, to some extent, be "setting the stage" for character development. If the player carries over this rational thinking to his/her off-the-field, personal life and acts morally right, character development proponents should approve even more so.

The carryover of an athlete's behavior into the moral realm is vital because the coach concerned with character development can sometimes be a moral cause of learning. A physical education teacher or coach can cause moral learning in several ways - for example, modeling, persuasion, guidance, and encouragement.

Coaches frequently use explanation and demonstration. Both these methodologies might be favorably looked upon by the physical educator or coach concerned with character development since they can encourage an athlete to use mind and body to produce knowledgeable, efficient, and rational behavior, and the more one uses one's reason to guide action, the more moral behavior can become.

Encouraging athletes to participate when injured may be controversial, but it is still too familiar in school sports. Most advocates of character development in sports would probably believe this practice has questionable merit because it often involves irrational or reckless behavior. Nature has laws that can guide and govern human conduct. These natural laws are exhibited in men and women when they employ common sense. Playing when substantially injured could be similar to consuming too much alcohol – both may violate natural laws involving reason, proportion, and balance. Just as a hangover suggests that

nature's scale of balance is demanding payment for too much pleasure, a chronic medical condition may be nature's price for playing when injured.

On the other hand, playing when injured might be acceptable if the potential benefits of playing outweigh the risks of injury. Some of those concerned with character development might view playing with an injury as an opportunity to use the pain or discomfort experienced when injured in order to become a moral person. The sport could be seen as sublimation, a creative outlet for aggression, a means by which athletes can become better beings. Thus, a coach who teaches athletes about the importance of discipline and self-sacrifice involved in playing when injured could be favorably viewed by some advocates of character development in sports.

While "running up the score" is a practice considered not to be "intrinsically wrong" by some observers of sport (Dixon, 1995), many proponents of character development in students and athletes might see it as unreasonable and unethical. It could be considered unreasonable because it may suggest that the outcomes of collegiate sports contests receive too much attention or that sports competition is more important in school life than it should be. Suppose one believes that a school is a community where individuals should seek knowledge that leads to discovering truth and an institution whose mission is to educate the "whole person". In that case, too much emphasis on victory in sports may need to be more balanced and balanced. "Running up the score" might be seen as unethical or lacking in virtue because it is not prudent, courageous, or temperate to do so or humiliate one's opponent in the process.

Whether an individual in sports and physical education is concerned with a character education program or teaching/coaching behavior, if she or he wants to foster character development, it must be a primary focus of any activity undertaken. Thus how "good" or "bad" students and athletes are should not only be evaluated by the conventional criteria related to successful performance but also by the degree to which their performance enhances their moral development.

### 3.4.5 Strategies for Teaching Character and Moral Values

Character is vital in sports and life. Coaches and physical educators involved with athletes and students are responsible for teaching them character and reinforcing moral reasoning. Moral reasoning is the systematic process of evaluating personal values and developing a consistent and impartial set of moral principles by which to live (Lumpkin et al., 2003). One way that coaches and teachers can show their commitment to teaching values and keep winning in perspective is to adhere to a code of ethics.

The competitiveness of sports provides a natural setting for "teachable moments" when coaches can teach their athletes what is right and wrong and model what they should do when faced with ethical challenges. Coaches serious about teaching athletes right and wrong should stop the action during a practice or competition and correct unethical behavior. Only if moral values are explained and reinforced will young athletes internalize these values.

Lumpkin (2008) states that respect is also vital in all sports. Teaching children to respect their compatriots in sports can be a major task, especially when the actions of others sometimes give little cause for respect (Selleck, 2003). Coaches and physical educators should demand that their players show respect for teammates, officials, opponents, and

coaches at all times during practices and games. It should be explained that respect includes: keeping promises to others; showing an eagerness and enthusiasm to learn; working to improve fitness levels and sports skills; putting forth maximal effort to help the team; never boasting or drawing attention to themselves; and never doing anything to embarrass themselves, the team, coach, or school (Brown in Lumpkin, 2008).

Lumpkin (2008) states that a respectful sense of community within a class is vitally important. This process begins with coaches and physical educators demonstrating respect for students and athletes regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, socioeconomic status, or individual characteristics or abilities. Teachers and coaches must be unbiased in how they respond to their students' various levels of skill and ability. Although it can be more challenging to teach a student with less innate abilities, the capability of each student should be developed to the fullest extent possible. Noddings (1992) advocates that moral education is based on teachers and coaches showing students and athletes that they care for them as unique individuals. Teachers and coaches who care show respect for their students by being sensitive to and considerate of their feeling. Civility inside and outside the classroom requires teachers and students to respect and care about others. Respect is earned by treating others how you would like to be treated. When teachers and coaches treat students and athletes respectfully, they receive respect.

Absolute respect requires teachers and coaches to care for those students toward whom they might not have a positive feeling. Teachers and coaches who model respect will always appreciate each student, even when some behaviors may be less than worthy of this respect. One way to teach and reinforce the importance of respect is to let others know that their unique characteristics enrich their lives.

Responsibility is another valuable trait that coaches need to instill in their players. Coaches and physical educators should stress that athletes and students should be attentive and follow instructions, concentrate on what they are doing, listen to constructive criticism, take the initiative and become self-starters, make no excuses or blame others, accept the consequences of their actions, ask for help when needed, and try never to let their teammates down (Brown, in Lumpkin, 2008).

Lumpkin (2008) states that physical educators and coaches demonstrate responsibility by being morally accountable for their actions and fulfilling their duties. When teachers and coaches create and sustain a positive learning environment and focus on providing educational services to students/athletes and society, they act responsibly. They act responsibly by helping to optimally develop the psychomotor, cognitive, and affective abilities of their students/athletes. Responsible teachers and coaches are well-prepared for each class and provide prompt and constructive feedback to students to help facilitate the learning process. Teachers and coaches also show the importance of responsibility when they model health-related physical fitness, good nutrition, and the absence of drug abuse.

Don Hellison's (2003) approach to teaching responsibility through physical activity and sport has proven successful. He works with at-risk adolescents to help them learn to respect the rights and feelings of others, show self-discipline through their participation and effort, help others, and then apply these behaviors in other aspects of their life. Hellison believes teachers can encourage students to take greater personal and social responsibility for treating others.

Coaches and physical educators are also charged with the task of teaching sportsmanship by stressing that athletes and students refuse to taunt their opponents; compliment opponents on their play; accept officials' calls; never cheat or take unfair advantage; be unflappable and always under control; pursue victory with honor; and accept winning with humility and losing with grace (Brown, 2003, in Lumpkin, 2008). Sportsmanship is nothing more than shaking your opponent's hand after the game or not whining when you lose, but sportsmanship is "the willingness to tolerate difficult circumstances without complaining" (Selleck, 2003).

Selleck (2003) states that there are seven crucial actions that good sport needs to implement to create the kind of sportsmanship necessary to revolutionize sport and improve its influence on society. These steps are: (a) know how to lose, (b) understand the difference between winning and success, (c) respect others, (d) cooperate with others, (e) sow integrity, (e) exhibit self-confidence, and (f) give back.

### 3.4.6 Enhancing the Sport Experiences of Athletes and Students by Teaching Values

The character of students and athletes can be developed by teaching moral values and always doing the right thing. The following are suggested methods for coaches and physical educators to enhance the sports experiences of students and athletes by focusing on teaching moral values and ensuring positive experiences (Lumpkin, 2008).

3.4.6.1 Develop athletes' sports skills: Teach and emphasize learning fundamental skills before helping athletes develop more advanced skills and game strategies.

3.4.6.2 Develop physical fitness: Teach how to properly develop and maintain cardiorespiratory conditioning, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility.

3.4.6.3 Emphasize teamwork: When all athletes work together and contribute their best, the team will be successful, regardless of the final score.

3.4.6.4 Teach dedication and self-discipline: Stress that learning and improving sports skills, developing and maintaining fitness, and contributing to the team occur when athletes work hard and put forth their best efforts.

3.4.6.5 Build athletes' self-confidence: Give positive reinforcement when athletes display progress in developing their sports skills, play by the rules, contribute to the team, or demonstrate values-based behaviors.

3.4.6.6 Develop athletes' character: Teach values and ethical conduct such as respect, responsibility, and sportsmanship by explaining, demonstrating, modeling, and reinforcing these and related values.

3.4.6.7 Nurture friendships among athletes: Make sports enjoyable experiences that are enriched because they are shared with teammates.

3.4.6.8 Keep winning in perspective: Reward athletes' efforts and improvement rather than the outcome of any competition.

3.4.6.9 Make sports fun: Emphasize that sports are games to be enjoyed by the athletes.

## 4. Discussion

Students and athletes can learn values only if coaches and physical educators dedicate themselves to achieving this goal. The starting point should be to develop and implement a student/athlete-centered philosophy. Coaches and physical educators should emphasize the positive benefits of sports participation for all students and athletes; teach, model, and reinforce moral values to their students/athletes; and commit to developing the moral reasoning of their athletes. In their pursuit of victories, coaches and physical educators have contributed to many problems for students and athletes. This can be changed by adhering to an athlete and student-centered philosophy that focuses on fun, skill development, and learning positive character behaviors. Coaches and physical educators who teach and model moral values and require their students/athletes to behave in alignment with these values will lead programs characterized by playing by the letter and spirit of the rules. One of the models suggested by Seleck (2003) and methods recommended by Lumpkin (2008) may be adapted to an Indonesian context and then adopted as guidelines for coaches and physical educators to enhance the sports experiences of students and athletes by focusing on teaching moral values and ensuring positive experiences.

### 4.1. Limitation

Based on the characteristics and potential of three Islamic boarding schools in Pasuruan Regency, a SWOT analysis was conducted. SWOT analysis was conducted to determine the supporting factors and obstacles to the development of business units, mainly based on a sustainable creative economy in Islamic Boarding Schools. The following is an analysis of internal and external factors for the development of business units, mainly based on a sustainable creative economy in Islamic Boarding Schools in Pasuruan Regency.

## 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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