



Empowering Youth with Brain, Beauty, and Behavior: A Development Economics Perspective

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Abstrak

Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk mengintegrasikan konsep *Brain, Beauty, and Behavior* (3B) dalam pembentukan karakter mahasiswa sebagai generasi berkualitas, khususnya melalui pendekatan edukatif dalam bidang Ekonomi Pembangunan. Pengabdian ini dilaksanakan melalui seminar interaktif yang ditujukan kepada peserta ajang pemilihan Akang-Teteh Ekbang, yaitu mahasiswa terpilih yang berperan sebagai duta jurusan. Seminar ini membahas ruang lingkup ilmu ekonomi pembangunan, prospek karier, serta pentingnya penguatan daya pikir kritis (*brain*), kepercayaan diri dan komunikasi (*beauty*), serta etika dan tanggung jawab sosial (*behavior*) sebagai satu kesatuan dalam membentuk profil lulusan yang unggul dan adaptif. Metode yang digunakan meliputi pemaparan materi dan diskusi reflektif. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan motivasi akademik dan pemahaman peserta terhadap peran strategis jurusan Ekonomi Pembangunan. Temuan ini merekomendasikan perlunya penguatan program serupa sebagai bagian dari strategi pembinaan karakter dan akademik mahasiswa secara terpadu.

Kata kunci: *Ekonomi, Karakter, Motivasi*

Abstract

This community service activity aims to integrate the concept of Brain, Beauty, and Behavior (3B) into the character development of university students as a foundation for shaping a high-quality generation, particularly through an educational approach within the field of Development Economics. The activity was conducted through an interactive seminar targeted at participants of the "Akang-Teteh Ekbang" selection event, namely selected students who serve as departmental ambassadors. The seminar covered the scope of development economics, career prospects, and the importance of strengthening critical thinking (brain), self-confidence and communication skills (beauty), as well as ethics and social responsibility (behavior) as an integrated foundation for forming excellent and adaptive graduate profiles. The methods applied included material presentation and reflective discussion. The results indicated an increase in academic motivation and participants' understanding of the strategic role of the Development Economics major. These findings suggest the need to strengthen similar programs as part of an integrated strategy for student character and academic development.

Keywords : *Economics, Character, Motivation*



Introduction

In the context of national development, shaping a generation with excellent character is an essential prerequisite for achieving sustainable progress. This aligns with the vision of *Indonesia Emas 2045*, which mandates the emergence of high-quality human resources who are ethical, competitive, and globally competent (Hamdani, Nurhafisah, & Silvia, 2022). This vision highlights the importance of character formation that encompasses not only intellectual and physical aspects but also solid ethical and moral behaviour as the foundation of national resilience (Ahsan & Muchammad Hifni, 2023).

Such character development is implemented through continuous and integrated education, aimed at fostering future generations with positive attitudes, essential mindsets, normative commitments, and competency-based abilities grounded in IESQ (Manullang, 2013). Character education plays a crucial role in shaping the so-called *golden generation* of 2045 who are not only excellent but also grounded in national identity (Hamdani et al., 2022). The cultivation of honesty, empathy, and patriotism is a vital step toward developing individuals who are morally sound and forward-thinking in the 21st century (Khumairoh, 2022). The adoption of these values through diverse teaching methods ensures that students develop not only academically but also morally and ethically. A serious, continuous, and balanced approach to character education is needed to produce students who are strong, independent, and have integrity (Zulfikar et al., 2020).

As the nation's future leaders, university students are expected to possess competencies that go beyond academic knowledge, including non-academic skills that prepare them to face real-world challenges. Soft skills such as communication abilities, self-confidence, and ethics are vital in complementing academic success. Soft skills are key contributors to professional career success, as they relate to personality traits, behavior, and interpersonal abilities. One approach to developing soft skills is the concept of Brain, Beauty, and Behavior (3B), which emphasizes the integration of intellectual capacity (brain), professional and presentable appearance (beauty), and ethical behavior aligned with social norms (behavior). Research by (Gorbatov, Khapova, & Lysova, 2019) shows that personal branding development, which includes intelligence, appearance, and behavior, can enhance employability and career satisfaction. Thus, the 3B concept may be viewed as a comprehensive self-development strategy for students.

Development Economics is a branch of economics that analyzes the causes and solutions to welfare issues, ranging from poverty, inequality, and unemployment to sustainability—emphasizing the role of public policy, institutions, and human capital in developing countries. Unlike Management, which focuses on business operations and organizational functions, Development Economics is more policy-oriented and evidence-based. Therefore, graduates are expected to master applied econometrics, policy analysis, and policy communication—skills that are relevant for careers in government, international organizations, think tanks, and private sectors engaged in development and ESG-related fields. Within the context of Development Economics students, especially those in the early semesters, the need to strengthen soft skills becomes increasingly urgent. These students are expected not only to understand theoretical concepts of economic development but also to build personal branding and character as future leaders capable of thriving in the professional world.

In terms of implementation, the urgency to strengthen both character and competencies becomes particularly evident in the target group of this community service activity: students from the Development Economics Study Program (especially early-year students) participating in the *Akang-Teteh Ekbang* (Student Ambassador) selection process. Initial coordination with the department and student association, as well as observations from department introduction activities, revealed several challenges: limited understanding of the essence and career prospects of Development Economics compared to Management or other economics disciplines, unclear career paths and limited academic portfolios, inconsistent professional presence, and the need for enhanced academic ethics and digital literacy. These conditions indicate the necessity of capacity-building activities that not only focus on knowledge but also emphasize self-confidence, communication, and behavioral integrity.

In response to these needs, this community service activity was designed in the form of a seminar and training session titled "*Keekbangan: Empowering Youth with Brain, Beauty, and Behavior: A Development Economics Perspective*". The objective is to strengthen students' capacity to integrate intelligence, appearance, and behavior so that they can emerge as smart, confident, and character-driven individuals—ready to become agents of change in national development.

Implementation Method

This community service activity employed a descriptive-qualitative method using a participatory webinar approach. The principle of reflective learning was adapted to an online format through brief presentations, case examples, and practice-based exercises. The focus of the session was to provide a comprehensive introduction to Development Economics and to strengthen students' Brain-Beauty-Behavior (3B) capabilities in both academic and professional contexts. The target participants were students of the Development Economics Study Program, Universitas Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, particularly those in their early semesters. The webinar was conducted synchronously via the Zoom platform in the webinar "*Pembekalan Akang Teteh: Berkembang Bersama dalam Keragaman guna Melahirkan Figur Jurusan Ilmu Ekonomi Pembangunan yang Harnomi dan Gemilang*" on 26th October 2024 and all materials and resource links were shared at the end of the session.

The primary participants or target audience of this program were students engaged in the *Akang Teteh Ekbang* selection process (student ambassador pageant), who were identified as key partners due to their role in representing the department publicly. These participants were selected through coordination between the academic department, and the student association, based on their involvement in promotional and leadership activities related to the Development Economics program.

The service method used was a combination of preparatory coordination, interactive counseling, and guided training. It employed participatory webinar techniques that incorporated brief theoretical presentations, real-world case discussions, and self-reflective exercises. The principle of reflective learning was adapted into an online format to ensure active engagement despite the remote setting. Technical preparation included script design, material preparation, moderator and speaker briefing, and distribution of Zoom links and documentation templates.

Success indicators were measured through both process and output variables. These included the timely execution of the session according to the planned agenda, a high attendance rate of at least 80% of registered participants, active engagement during the webinar (evidenced by chat activity and verbal participation), the availability and distribution of presentation materials, and reflections from both speaker and moderator.

The evaluation method employed a qualitative and process-based approach, considering the nature of the activity as an introductory session. No quantitative pre-post tests were conducted. Instead, evaluation focused on documentation of participant attendance, chat transcripts, session recordings, and a post-session internal debrief between the organizing team and speakers. This informal reflection served as the foundation for designing more advanced and assessment-oriented follow-up sessions in the future, should they be deemed necessary.

Result and Discussion

This program was implemented through a series of interactive training sessions and webinars designed to integrate the three aspects of Brain, Beauty, and Behavior (BBB) in a balanced manner. The first component is the *knowledge of development economics*. The core of the Brain aspect focused on strengthening both theoretical and practical understanding in the field of development economics. This session included concept-building on poverty and inequality trends, fiscal and monetary policies, sustainable development, as well as contemporary issues in global and national development economics.

Development economics curricula typically cover topics such as growth theory, poverty, inequality, human capital, and institutions (Mckenzie and Paffhausen, 2015). Community service programs also often serve as a medium for knowledge transfer from universities to society, including in strengthening local economic capacity and sustainable development (Asiah, David, & Widiastuti, 2020; Brower, 2011; Indriwati, Sulasmi, & Sulisetijono, 2020). The training encouraged students to analyze development economics problems from multiple perspectives and formulate innovative solutions. Individuals with high intellectual capacity tend to be more capable of making effective decisions and resolving complex situations. Brain-Based Learning also emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that engage students actively and promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills to enhance conceptual understanding (Funa, Ricafort, Jetomo, & Lasala, 2024).

The *Behavior* aspect aimed to instill ethical values, integrity, and foster prosocial behavior relevant to students' roles as agents of social and economic development.

1. Ethics and Integrity in the Economics Profession. This included discussions on ethical dilemmas in the workplace and the importance of integrity in decision-making. Professional ethics education is essential across various fields to enhance compliance with ethical codes (Chory & Offstein, 2014; Mahdavinoor, Jadidi Miandashti, & Mahdavinoor, 2021)
2. Character and Moral Development. Through group activities and case studies, students were guided to reflect on and develop positive character traits such as responsibility, empathy, cooperation, and social concern. Service-learning

programs have been shown to help build students' social compassion (Sya'roni Hasan, Ch, & Padil, 2021)

3. Responsible Digital Citizenship. Training focused on ethical and productive use of social media, as well as the importance of avoiding hoaxes and hate speech. The concept of digital citizenship emphasizes competent, confident, responsible, and ethical use of technology, grounded in respect for others and democratic values. Studies show that university students often have insufficient knowledge of the essential components of good digital citizenship, including information verification and the reporting of irresponsible behavior (Al-Abdullatif & Gameil, 2020)
4. Prosocial Behavior and Community Engagement. The program encouraged students to participate in volunteer work and community-based initiatives as a form of applying their knowledge of development economics and fulfilling social responsibility. Engagement in community initiatives can develop professional social responsibility attitudes and promote prosocial behavior (Alfirević, Arslanagić-Kalajdžić, & Lep, 2023).

The strength of this program lies in the *integration of all three aspects*. Strong intellectual capacity (*Brain*) provides a foundation for deep understanding of economic issues and the ability to make effective decisions. However, this knowledge must be complemented with *Beauty*—the ability to present oneself professionally and maintain a positive self-image, which is essential for networking and career success. Finally, *Behavior*—strong character, ethics, and prosocial conduct—ensures that knowledge and self-presentation are channelled toward the greater good, shaping responsible leaders who contribute to sustainable development (Ayaya, 2021).

Through this integrated approach, the community service activity not only facilitated knowledge transfer, but also empowered students holistically, preparing them to become competent, competitive, and ethical individuals—ready to become agents of positive change in society and the workforce, in alignment with the national development vision.



Figure 1. The implementation of the webinar “Pembekalan Akang Tete: Growing Together in Diversity to Foster a Harmonious and Excellent Profile of Development Economics Students.

Conclusion

The webinar titled “Pembekalan Akang Tete: Berkembang Bersama dalam Keragaman guna Melahirkan Figur Jurusan Ilmu Ekonomi Pembangunan yang Harnomi dan Gemilang” successfully achieved its introductory objectives. The core content of

Development Economics was effectively delivered, participants actively engaged in micro-practice sessions (including one-paragraph memos and elevator pitch exercises), and learning artifacts were provided (slides, templates, and practice summaries). At this stage, the observable impact was an increased awareness and initial motivation among students to cultivate 3B capabilities as essential assets for both academic and professional development.

These process findings are consistent with existing literature, which emphasizes that career readiness depends not only on hard skills but also on soft skills—such as communication, self-confidence, and integrity—that collectively shape professional personal branding (D & Nova Sari, 2020; Ningsih, Hariadi, Marniati, & Rijanto, 2021)). Therefore, the integration of 3B is highly relevant in the context of Development Economics graduates, who are expected to be policy-oriented, evidence-based, and grounded in strong academic ethics and responsible digital citizenship.

A key limitation of this program was the absence of quantitative measurement of learning outcomes. In light of this, we propose that a deeper evaluation is needed, consider applying brief pre–post assessments or conducting focused follow-up clinics. This step will not only enhance the accountability of the program, but also support the sustainability of 3B capability development within the academic environment of the study program.

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