

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Humans are always faced with the challenges of everyday life. From birth to adulthood, there are developmental tasks that must be passed to be successful in living life.¹ These daily challenges and difficulties are also experienced by students studying in tertiary institutions.

Entering the world of higher education is not an easy thing for every student. There are many challenges that students must overcome to succeed in college. The challenges that arise lasted from the beginning of the lecture period until graduation. For students in their early years, they need a process of adapting to changes in the learning system, recognizing new environments, mingling with new friends, and having demands to excel independently.² In the following years, they were faced with the challenge of managing time between studying, developing social networks, as well as determining and building careers.³

In addition to the demands at each stage of development, students are also faced with various demands, namely academic and social challenges. Various academic demands on students, including the demands of families to excel academically, doing college assignments, competition with friends to get good assessments, and also related to changes in the education system that demands more

¹ Papalia, D.E., Old, S.W., and Feldman, R.D., *Human Development (Psikologi Perkembangan)* (Jakarta:Kencana, 2008), p.134

²Stallman, H.M., *Prevalence of Psychological Distress in University Students: Implication for Delivery Service.* (Australian Family Physician, 2009), p. 37.

³Stallman, H.M., *Prevalence of Psychological Distress in University Students: Implication for Delivery Service.* (Australian Family Physician, 2009), p.673-677.

independence.⁴ Other academic challenges are related to career success and future, teaching, and lecturing activities themselves.⁵ In addition to academic demands, students are also faced with demands in social relations, such as establishing good relationships with classmates, working together in groups, participating in student organization activities, and finding potential partners.⁶

The variety of academic and non-academic demands that students must go through can interfere with psychological well-being. This statement is supported by the findings which state that the level of psychological distress in students tends to be higher than the working population of the same gender and age.⁷ High levels of psychological distress are associated with feelings of anxiety and depression, low self-esteem, as well as low abilities to concentrate, overcome difficulties, and engage in social relationships.⁸ If not resolved, psychological stress can hinder the ability to learn and pay attention, which in turn can interfere with student academic performance.

Not only that, due to educational methods that are too focused on the subject of science and do not pay attention to moral or character education, cases that are out of the ordinary have emerged. For example, a student who challenged his teacher when he was

⁴ Misra, R & Castillo, L.G., *Academic stress among College Students: Comparison of American and International Students*. (International Journal of Stress Management, 2004), p.132-148

⁵ Santrock. *Life Span Development*, (New York: Mc Graw Hill, 2008). p.11.

⁶ Ross, Niebling, & Heckert. *Sources of Stress among College Students*. (College Student Journal, 1999), p.312-318

⁷ Verger, et al. *Psychological distress in first-year university students: socioeconomic and academic stressors, mastery, and social support in young men and women*. (Social Psychology Epidemiology, 2009), p.643-650.

⁸ Goldberg, D. P., & Williams, P. *A user's guide to the general health questionnaire*. (London: Nfer-Nelson. 1991), p.24

reminded by his teacher that he was smoking, beatings up, anarchist demonstration, online prostitution, the death of a female student who gave birth in a boarding house, cases of murder and rape.

Violence cases that occur among students occur due to several factors, including the lack of a teacher's role in developing student character. This should be of particular concern because education is not only about being educated but also about teaching good character values.

However, the fact is that in the scope of formal education, character education is still relatively low compared to theoretical education. Although several universities in Indonesia have included character education as a subject, theory alone is not enough without application.

At IAIN Parepare, several courses teach about the importance of character in education, namely; English Learning Physiology, Ilmu Pendidikan Islam, Ilmu Jiwa Umum dan Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan. These courses can help students develop their character, especially prospective educators.

Character education is an effort to help the development of children's souls both physically and mentally, from their natural nature towards human and better civilization. It can be put forward for example suggestions or instructions for children to sit properly, not shouting so as not to disturb others, clean body, tidy clothes, respect for parents, love the young, respect the elders, help friends, and so on. That is a character education process. In connection with that, several things must be carried out in character education, namely to realize, realize, and do.

Character education among students is very important, but from the perspective of habituation in the campus environment or society, character education

is still lacking or minimal. This can occur due to a lack of character education during the lecture process. In practice, there is more emphasis on the aspects of academic achievement, thus ignoring character building among students.

The process of education in simple language is to change people to be better in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Therefore, character education is the main task of the family, but the university is also responsible for the failure to build character among students because the culture is the responsibility of the university.

This has also been regulated in UU No. 20 Tahun 2003 concerning the National Education System, that education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere of learning and the learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious-spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the necessary skills himself, society, nation and, state.

There are three aspects to be achieved in National Education, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. In the cognitive aspect, education is expected to be able to educate the nation's life, which is one indicator of increasing knowledge. In the affective aspect, education is expected to be able to print the nation's children into human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are democratic and responsible. Meanwhile, from a psychomotor perspective, education must make humans capable, creative, independent, and healthy.

Character strength is a positive trait consisting of good character that is generated by individuals to face certain conditions, such as when experiencing difficulties.⁹ Good character is a quality of an individual that keeps the individual

⁹ Peterson, C., dan Seligman, M. E. P, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. (New York; Oxford University Press, 2004), p.24

morally good. This positive character can be seen from the feelings, thoughts, and behavior of the individual.

The character strength is also called a set of codes of behavior that it displays when an individual or his behavior is judged by others. For this reason, the classification of good and bad is always used in assessing a person's characteristics. Furthermore, it is said that character is an ethical concept and is defined as the personality that is evaluated.

A study shows that the strength of character is a positive trait in a person who can make a positive contribution, one of which is making people happy and healthy, fostering good self-acceptance, guiding life, competence, mastery, physical and mental health, social networks who are rich and supportive, are valued and respect for others, provide job satisfaction, material sufficiency, and a healthy community and family.

Theoretically, a person's character can be observed from three aspects, namely; knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good. Character education is not just educating right and wrong but includes a process of getting used to good behavior so that students can understand, feel and want to behave well so that good character is formed. According to Islamic teachings, character education is identical to moral education. Although moral education is often called unscientific because it does not appear to be secular character and spirituality are closely related. In practice, moral education is concerned with ideal criteria and sources of good and bad character while character education is concerned with operational teaching methods, strategies, and techniques.

Based on the explanation above, as an English education student and also a prospective teacher, students should have good character strength to help the education process in their environment and also in Indonesia.

Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing the character strength of English Department students at IAIN Parepare to help students understand their respective characters and also to find their most dominant and lowest character strengths to be used as a basis for improving themselves to become competent prospective educators.

Furthermore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study to find out “The Analysis of Character Strength on Students' English Department at IAIN Parepare”

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background explanation above, the researcher formulates the research question as follow:

1. How is the character strength of students at English Department IAIN Parepare?
2. How is the difference in the character strength of students' English Department based on gender?

1.3 The Objective of the Research

Related to the problem statement above, the objectives of the research are to:

1. Analyze the character strength of students' in English Department at IAIN Parepare.
2. Identify the difference of character strength on student English Department IAIN Parepare based on gender.

1.4 Significances of the Research

The benefits of this research classified into two parts, theoretically and practically.

1.4.1 Theoretically Benefit

For theoretical significance, this research may become a useful literature for the next related research. The finding of this research is intended to contribute in understanding the character strength of students' in English Department at IAIN Parepare.

1.4.2 Practically Benefit

1. For the Researcher to help provide information about the character strength that exist in students' in English Department at IAIN Parepare.
2. For Students they can apply educational characteristics and can apply them to friends, family, society and so on.
3. For English Teacher it can help the teacher to know the character of students, so the English teacher can treat the student based on their character.