

THE ROLE OF THE PMR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN DEVELOPING SOCIAL CARE AND EMPATHY ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS AT MTS NEGERI SALATIGA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the role of the Youth Red Cross (PMR) extracurricular activity in fostering social awareness and empathy among students at MTs Negeri Salatiga. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants consisted of PMR instructors, active PMR members, and non-PMR students. The results showed that PMR activities played a significant role in developing students' social awareness through health service activities at school, first aid training, and community service activities. Students were accustomed to helping friends and were sensitive to the social conditions around them. In addition, victim handling simulation activities and communication habits when providing assistance formed students' empathy emotionally and practically. Supporting factors for the formation of social awareness and empathy include school support, instructor competence, and structured training programs. Obstacles included limited medical facilities, fluctuating motivation, and schedule conflicts with learning. Overall, PMR has a real role in developing humanitarian values in the school environment through continuous practical learning.

Keywords: PMR; Social Car; Empathy; Extracurricular Activities.

INTRODUCTION

Extracurricular activities are a strategic tool for developing student character in the modern era. One activity oriented towards increasing social awareness is the Indonesian Red Cross Youth. PMR's primary mission is to build humane character through Red Cross activities (Palang Merah Indonesia, 2020). PMR not only trains life skills, but also provides humanitarian education through first aid theory and practice, instilling the values of mutual assistance, and involvement in social activities. The learning process is through experience will quickly foster caring, social, and empathetic attitudes in students. Research conducted by Apriliyani & Sutanton (2021) demonstrated that the PMR extracurricular activity plays a significant role in instilling a socially conscious character. Furthermore, research by Nurohmah (2019) found the influence of PMR activities on increasing student empathy.

Adolescence is a crucial phase in character development, including social attitudes and empathy. The rapid pace of globalization and technology often leads to a decline in social sensitivity. Education not only demands academic excellence but also strong character development, such as social values, empathy, and a caring attitude (Suparno, 2015). Therefore, student involvement in activities that foster a sense of caring needs to be strengthened.

MTs Negeri Salatiga is one of the schools with an active PMR's program, with regular social development and service programs. Initial observations indicate that many students demonstrated increased concern after participating in PMR activities. This makes research on the role of PMR in fostering social awareness and empathy relevant. Based on the description above, this study was conducted to understand the role of PMR in developing social awareness and empathy in students at MTs Negeri Salatiga.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Approach and Type

This research uses qualitative approach with the type descriptive. This approach was chosen because the research seeks to understand the phenomenon in depth regarding the role of the PMR extracurricular activities in fostering social awareness and empathy in students based on the perspective of the subjects involved. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore students' meanings, experiences, and behaviors in the context of their participation in PMR activities.

Location and Time of Research

The research was conducted in MTs Negeri Salatiga. The research time was conducted in the month range 3-7 November 2025, adjusting the PMR activity schedule that takes place at school, namely every Friday at 10.45-12.00 WIB after school.

Research Subjects

Research subjects include:

- a. PMR Supervisor
- b. Active PMR members (grade 7,8, and 9)
- c. Non-PMR students (supporting informants)

Subject selection was carried out using the technique purposive sampling, namely determining the informants who are considered to be most knowledgeable and directly involved in PMR activities.

Data Collection Techniques

Data is collected through:

- a. Interview
It was conducted with PMR supervisors, PMR members, and several non-PMR students to explore their views on the role of PMR in forming social awareness and empathy.
- b. Observation
Observations were carried out during routine PMR activities, such as first aid training, health services during school activities, and social services.
- c. Documentation
Documentation was obtained from activity photos, PMR work program documents, and activity report archives.

Research Instruments

The main instrument in this study is human instrument. Researchers play a role in planning, collecting data, analyzing, and interpreting the results. The supporting instruments were in the form of interview guidelines, field notes, and a camera for documentation.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis using models Miles & Huberman which cover:

- a. Data Reduction
The process of sorting, selecting, and simplifying important data from interviews, observations, and documentation.
- b. Data Presentation
Presentation of data in the form of narrative text, matrices, and grouping of findings.
- c. Drawing Conclusions
Interpreting findings to draw conclusions regarding the role of PMR in fostering students' social awareness and empathy.

Data Validity Test

Data validity is obtained through:

- a. Source Triangulation
Comparing information from PMR instructors, PMR members, and non-PMR students.
- b. Engineering Triangulation
Comparing data from observations, interviews and documentation.
- c. Member Check
Reconfirm the findings with the informant to ensure they match the original statement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extracurricular activities are educational activities outside of class hours to develop students' potential, interests, talents, and character. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, extracurricular activities play a role in developing students' overall potential. Extracurricular activities are effective in shaping character because they use an approach learning through direct experience (Kolb, 2015). This is in line with the findings of Pratiwi et al. (2023) who proved that community service-based extracurricular activities are more effective in instilling character values than conventional classroom learning.

PMR is a youth development platform within the PMR that aims to develop humanitarian values, compassion, and first aid skills. PMR has three main pillars: first aid, adolescent health, and disaster preparedness. PMR first aid significantly improves students' confidence and problem-solving skills in emergency situations (Handayani & Wijaya, 2024). Parental support, whether in the form of attention, financial assistance, or emotional encouragement, has been shown to have a significant impact on student development and achievement. Motivation from parents can increase students' enthusiasm and confidence in participating in educational activities (Salsabila, Marsofiyati, & Utari, 2025). Teachers strive to become more professional through training, workshops, and the use of creative learning methods. The use of digital media and a variety of learning approaches is implemented to make learning activities more engaging, interactive, and tailored to student needs (Sitorus et al., 2025).

Social care is a person's tendency to care for and voluntarily provide assistance to others. According to social responsibility theory, social care encompasses three dimensions: cognitive (awareness of social problems), affective (feeling compelled to help), and behavioral (actual action) (Berman, 2022). Novianti & Fauzi (2023) indicate that Indonesian youth's social care still needs to be improved, particularly in the form of concrete actions rather than simply expressions on social media. Empathy is the ability to understand and feel the emotional state of others so that one can respond positively as needed. From a current neuropsychological perspective, empathy consists of three components: cognitive empathy (understanding another's perspective), affective empathy (feeling another's emotions), and empathic concern (motivation to help) (Singer & Klimecki, 2023). Empathy can be developed through meaningful social interactions. Community service-based programs are effective in increasing adolescents' empathic abilities (Davis, 2024).

PMR extracurricular implementation process

PMR extracurricular activities at MTs Negeri Salatiga are held on Fridays from 10:45 to 12:00 WIB after the teaching and learning activities are completed. Observations were conducted on November 3-7, 2025. In addition to routine training, there are additional activities such as providing iron tablets every Friday and Saturday and involving members in school and outside school social activities. The recruitment process involves the student affairs department, UKS and PMR supervisors, and collaboration with external institutions such as community health centers, the Health Service, and the Indonesian Red Cross. Interested students participate in training regularly. PMR extracurricular activities contain practice and theory, for example first aid, splinting, handling minor injuries, and training to be a ceremony officer.

The PMR instructor explained that PMR activities are designed to be as engaging as possible so that students not only understand the theory but also are able to put it into practice. Therefore, the instructor provides opportunities for members to serve in various school activities, such as acting as health workers during ceremonies, parades, after-school activities, and as peer counselors. The instructor stated that evaluations are conducted through observations of members carrying out their duties in the field and observing students' responsibility and commitment in carrying out PMR activities.

The role of PMR in fostering social awareness and empathy

Interviews with students revealed a variety of reasons for initially joining PMR, ranging from parental encouragement to curiosity about the extracurricular activity. However, after actively participating, students felt a tangible impact on their social attitudes. Students reported becoming more courageous and sensitive to the needs of others, especially when they saw someone injured or in need of first aid. The knowledge and skills gained formed the foundation for their courage to help without hesitation.

Field practice activities provide hands-on experience that fosters awareness, such as serving during ceremonies or participating in social activities and health seminars. Furthermore, students reported that involvement in the PMR expands relationships, broadens horizons, and teaches teamwork.

From the instructor's perspective, changes in student behavior are evident in increased caring, empathy, readiness to help friends, and ability to work in groups. Students who were initially passive become more confident and able to make decisions when facing simple emergencies. Thus, PMR activities not only provide technical skills but also cultivate social sensitivity and empathy through real-life experiences.

Obstacles in implementing PMR activities

Despite its positive impact, several challenges arose during the implementation of the program. Both students and instructors noted that the supporting facilities for the PMR were inadequate, preventing some practical materials from being fully implemented. Furthermore, the program was sometimes poorly organized, especially when the school schedule changed or there were unexpected events.

The instructor also stated that developing engaging and varied activities presents a challenge. To address this, the instructor strives to be creative in utilizing available facilities, conducting additional training, and providing opportunities for members to express their opinions so that activities align with students' needs and interests. Maintaining member engagement is also a priority, ensuring that students are consistently motivated and rewarded after completing tasks.

Expectations for the Development of PMR Activities

Both students and mentors hope that PMR activities will continue to grow. Students want more practical activities, seminars, and opportunities to work in the field. Mentors hope that PMR members will remain enthusiastic, able to apply their knowledge in their daily lives, and that their empathy and social awareness will strengthen with experience.

Furthermore, the mentor emphasized the need for a creative outlet for students, opportunities to express opinions, and an environment that respects the abilities of each member. With better facilities and coordination, PMR activities have the potential to become a platform for consistent social character development.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research on the role of the PMR extracurricular in fostering social awareness and empathy in students at MTs Negeri Salatiga, it can be concluded that PMR activities have a significant role in shaping the social character of its students. Student involvement in school health services, community service, and first aid practices makes them accustomed to helping friends, being sensitive to their surroundings, and being active in humanitarian activities. In addition to fostering social awareness, PMR also contributes to fostering empathy in students. Victim handling exercises, first aid simulations, and experiences interacting with students in need make PMR members better able to understand the emotional conditions of others and provide appropriate responses, so that empathy appears not only as knowledge, but as real behavior. The successful implementation of PMR activities is supported by several factors, such as school support, the competence of instructors, and a well-planned training program. The availability of health facilities, a regular activity schedule, and experienced instructors help strengthen the human values in students. However, PMR activities still face certain obstacles, such as limited basic medical equipment, the occasional change in member motivation, and scheduling conflicts with academic activities, resulting in some programs not being able to run optimally. Overall, the results of interviews and observations indicate that the implementation of PMR at MTs Negeri Salatiga is structured and practice-oriented, making it effective in fostering social awareness and empathy through direct experience and social interaction. Despite limited facilities and organizational obstacles, both instructors and students remain committed to developing activities, so that PMR continues to benefit participants and the school environment.

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