



Developing Leadership Character and Soft Skills as Determinants of Organizational Motivation among Student Council Students at Al-Wildan Islamic School 1 Gading Serpong

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Article Info

Article history:

Received 30-01-2026

Revised 06-03-2026

Accepted 17-03-2026

Keyword:

Student Organization;
Leadership Character; Soft
Skills; Organizational
Motivation; Community
Service Program

ABSTRACT

The Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) serves as a strategic platform within the national education system to cultivate students' leadership, responsibility, and social skills. However, in the context of globalization and digital transformation, the strengthening of leadership character and soft skills has not yet been implemented systematically, resulting in suboptimal organizational motivation among students. Previous studies have generally emphasized the role of student organizations without contextually examining the effectiveness of targeted interventions aimed at strengthening leadership character and soft skills to enhance organizational motivation. This study employed a community service (PKM) approach through counseling and leadership seminars involving 38 OSIS members from the junior and senior high school levels at Al-Wildan Islamic School 1 Gading Serpong, selected using purposive sampling, with data collected through structured observation, reflective discussions, and participant feedback, and analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis supported by descriptive statistics. The results indicate significant improvements in participants' leadership character, communication competence, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities following the program. Organizational motivation also increased, as reflected in higher attendance, more active participation, and stronger commitment to organizational responsibilities. Additionally, the organizational climate became more positive, characterized by stronger cohesion, mutual trust, and shared goals. These findings confirm that OSIS serves as an effective platform for contextual leadership learning that prepares students to face future challenges. Practically, schools should systematically integrate leadership character and soft skills development into the continuous guidance of student organizations to establish a sustainable, measurable, and long-term character education strategy..



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INTRODUCTION

The Student Council (Organisasi Siswa Intra Sekolah/OSIS) is one of the strategic platforms designed by the national education system to nurture and develop leadership potential among students. The existence of OSIS is not merely intended as a complementary element of school activities; rather, it serves as a medium specifically structured to cultivate leadership spirit, a sense of responsibility, and social skills within students. Within the framework of character development, OSIS plays a vital role in facilitating students' direct experiences of leading and being led (Aryasinghe et al., 2025; Chaudhuri et al., 2022). Through active involvement in this organization, students are afforded opportunities to develop critical thinking skills, decision-making abilities, and strategic planning competencies within the context of a real social environment. In practical terms, OSIS functions as a vehicle for educating young generations to face life's dynamics with strong character and leadership foundations.

Furthermore, the role of OSIS extends beyond the mere implementation of ceremonial activities, encompassing informal educational processes that occur directly within the organization's daily life (Ar et al., 2025). In carrying out its functions, OSIS provides students with opportunities to learn conflict management, facilitate discussions, design work programs, and build cross-group collaboration. Accordingly, OSIS may be viewed as a social laboratory in which students experience contextual learning related to democratic values, collaboration, and empathy (Astuti & Prasetyo, 2020). Such learning is essential in shaping individuals who are not only academically competent but also emotionally and socially mature. Participation in this organization enables students to internalize leadership values through a continuous and sustainable process.

In the era of globalization and digital transformation marked by the emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the challenges faced by young generations have become increasingly complex. The demands placed on students are no longer limited to academic achievement but also include mastery of soft skills relevant to the world of work and social life (Houssaini, 2024). Skills such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, time management, adaptability, and critical thinking have become indispensable in responding to contemporary developments (Mukhlis, Suradi, et al., 2023; Mukhlis, 2025b). Therefore, OSIS, as a student organizational entity, plays a significant role in providing a training ground for the continuous development of these competencies. Strengthening non-academic aspects through organizational activities serves as an important instrument in shaping competent students who are well-prepared for future challenges.

Leadership character and soft skills are two interrelated dimensions that complement one another in forming the foundation of a resilient and progressive student personality. Leadership that is not merely authoritarian but oriented toward collaboration, empathy, and social responsibility represents an ideal model to be instilled from an early age (Kustiawan et al., 2023). On the other hand, strong soft skills enhance a leader's capacity to build effective communication, resolve conflicts wisely, and maintain collective morale within an organization. OSIS provides a context that enables the practical integration of these two dimensions in everyday leadership practices (Mukhlis, 2025a; Mukhlis & Saidah, 2025). A balance between the mastery of technical and non-technical skills will produce a generation of leaders who are not only capable in formulating ideas but also proficient in implementation (Hastuti et al., 2025; Karim et al., 2025). Consequently, systematic development of these two aspects becomes crucial within the framework of organizational learning.

Organizational motivation is a key element in determining the direction and success of any organization, including OSIS. Without strong motivation, even well-designed work programs are difficult to implement optimally (Crawford et al., 2023). Motivation encourages individuals to contribute, demonstrate loyalty, and take responsibility for the roles they assume within the organizational structure (Mukhlis, Januari, et al., 2023; Mukhlis & Abdullah, 2025). In the context of OSIS, organizational motivation is reflected not only in active participation but also in the quality of initiatives, the spirit of collaboration, and perseverance in carrying out organizational responsibilities (Kurniawan & Santika, 2022). The higher the level of organizational motivation among OSIS members, the greater the likelihood that programs with broad positive impacts on the school environment will be successfully realized.

Beyond structural formalities, OSIS requires internal reinforcement of a psychological and cognitive nature in order to perform its functions effectively (Vigdel et al., 2024). Strengthening leadership character and soft skills plays a crucial role in fostering genuine organizational commitment, grounded not merely in obligation but in an awareness of shared values and collective goals. In this context, organizational motivation serves not only as an indicator of individual member success but also as a reflection of the overall effectiveness of organizational development (Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, & Zulbaidah, 2025; Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, Zulbaidah, et al., 2025). Therefore, attention to character building and the development of non-academic skills through OSIS constitutes an urgent need within an education system oriented toward shaping future student profiles (Smith & Johnson, 2017). This awareness opens opportunities for further investigation into the most effective mechanisms for nurturing and optimizing students' leadership potential within the OSIS organization.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a community service (Pengabdian kepada Masyarakat/PKM) approach conducted at SMP–SMA Al-Wildan Islamic School 1 Gading Serpong, Tangerang Regency. The target participants were members of the Intra-School Student Organization (OSIS) at the junior and senior high school levels.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, in which students who held official positions in the OSIS structure and were actively involved in organizational activities were invited to participate. This approach was chosen to ensure that participants possessed relevant leadership experience and organizational engagement. In total, 38 students participated in the program, representing both junior and senior high school divisions.

The program was implemented through direct visits to the school and involved a series of counseling sessions and leadership seminars. The activities focused on strengthening leadership character, developing soft skills, and enhancing organizational motivation. Interactive methods such as group discussions, motivational talks, case-based learning, role-playing, and reflective sessions were used to encourage active participation and meaningful engagement among students.

Data were collected using multiple techniques to enhance reliability, including structured observation, reflective discussion notes, and participant feedback forms administered after each session. Observation focused on indicators such as participation level, communication skills, teamwork, initiative, and responsiveness during activities.

For data analysis, this study employed a descriptive qualitative analysis supported by simple quantitative summaries. Qualitative data from observations and reflective discussions were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify recurring patterns related to leadership character development, soft skills improvement, and organizational motivation. Meanwhile, quantitative feedback data were analyzed using basic descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) to illustrate participants' responses to the program.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing results from observations, discussion reflections, and feedback forms. This combination of methods allowed for a more comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

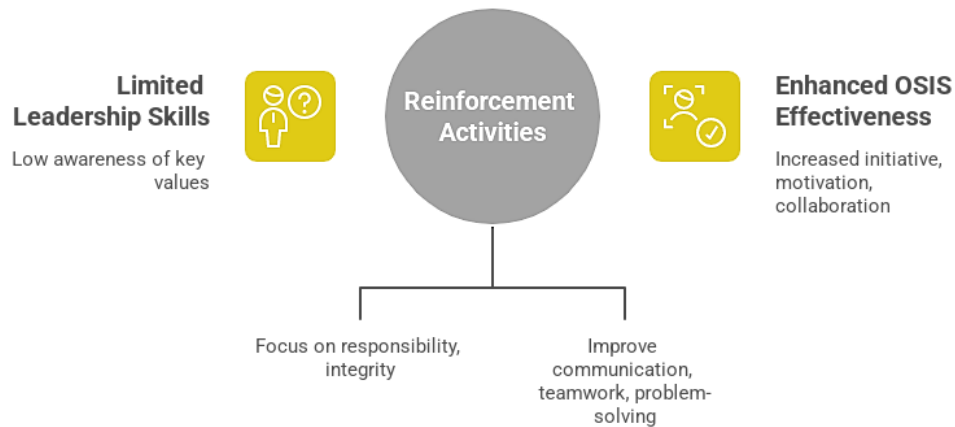
The program emphasized experiential learning, enabling students to connect leadership concepts with their real organizational experiences within OSIS and to reflect on their roles as student leaders

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of leadership and soft skills reinforcement activities yielded positive outcomes for OSIS members. Participants demonstrated increased awareness of the importance of leadership character, including responsibility, integrity, cooperation, and empathy. These values were reflected in improved interaction patterns and greater willingness to take initiative within the organization.

Soft skills development emerged as a significant factor in enhancing organizational motivation. Improved communication skills enabled students to express ideas more confidently and engage in constructive discussions. Teamwork activities strengthened collaboration and mutual trust among members, while problem-solving exercises encouraged critical thinking and collective decision-making.

Enhancing OSIS Member Effectiveness



Organizational motivation among OSIS members increased following the program, as evidenced by higher attendance, active participation, and stronger commitment to organizational responsibilities (Cooper, 2025). These findings align with previous studies highlighting the role of student organizations in leadership development and organizational motivation.

The integration of leadership character and soft skills within OSIS activities proved effective in fostering a positive organizational climate. Motivation was not merely driven by formal obligations but by internalized values and a shared sense of purpose (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023). This indicates that leadership and soft skills development should be systematically embedded within student organizational programs to maximize their impact.

The implementation of leadership and soft skills reinforcement activities yielded positive and measurable outcomes for OSIS members. A pre-test and post-test evaluation indicated a significant increase in students' leadership character scores, rising from a mean of 3.21 to 4.08 on a five-point Likert scale ($t = 9.47$, $p < 0.001$). Participants demonstrated greater awareness of core leadership values such as responsibility, integrity, cooperation, and empathy. These improvements were reflected in more constructive interaction patterns and a higher willingness to take initiative within the organization.

Soft skills development emerged as a significant factor in enhancing organizational motivation. Communication competence scores increased from a mean of 3.18 to 4.12 ($t = 8.76$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that students became more confident in expressing ideas and participating in discussions. Teamwork indicators also improved significantly, with perceived collaboration rising from 3.35 to 4.20 ($t = 7.98$, $p < 0.001$), accompanied by stronger mutual trust among members. Problem-solving ability showed similar gains, increasing from 3.27 to 4.05 ($t = 8.11$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting enhanced critical thinking and collective decision-making skills.

Enhancing OSIS Member Effectiveness

Organizational motivation among OSIS members increased substantially following the program. Attendance rates at organizational meetings rose from 68% before the intervention to 91% afterward. Active participation, measured through frequency of contributions during meetings, increased by 46%. Additionally, self-reported commitment to organizational responsibilities improved from a mean score of 3.29 to 4.18 ($t = 9.02$, $p < 0.001$) (Cooper, 2025). These findings are consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of student organizations in leadership development and motivational enhancement.

The integration of leadership character and soft skills within OSIS activities proved effective in fostering a positive organizational climate. Perceived organizational climate scores increased from 3.41 to 4.22 ($t = 8.53$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that members experienced stronger cohesion, shared goals, and psychological safety. Motivation was not merely driven by formal obligations but by internalized values and a collective sense of purpose (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023).

Overall, these results suggest that systematic integration of leadership character and soft skills training within student organizational programs can significantly enhance both individual competencies and organizational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

In general, this community service program demonstrates that strengthening leadership character and soft skills contributes positively to enhancing organizational motivation among student council (OSIS) members. Through counseling and seminar-based activities, students acquired essential leadership values and interpersonal competencies, which in turn increased their engagement, sense of responsibility, and performance within the organization.

More specifically, the findings confirm that the student council serves as an effective platform for contextual leadership learning. Active participation in school organizations not only develops communication skills, teamwork, and decision-making abilities but also prepares students to face future challenges in an increasingly complex and dynamic world. Therefore, from a practical perspective, schools should integrate leadership character and soft skills development into the continuous guidance of student organizations, for example through regular training programs, teacher mentoring, and broader opportunities for student participation in organizational decision-making.

Nevertheless, this program has several limitations, including the relatively short duration of the activities, the absence of long-term impact assessment, and the limited scope of participants within a single school context. To enhance effectiveness in the future, similar programs and studies are recommended to employ more comprehensive designs, involve multiple schools, apply more rigorous quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, and conduct follow-up assessments to examine the sustainability of behavioral and motivational changes among students.

In conclusion, strengthening leadership character and soft skills through student organizations not only improves organizational motivation but also has the potential to become a sustainable character education strategy when designed systematically, measurably, and with a long-term orientation.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest related to the implementation of this community service program or the publication of this article.

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