PROFILE OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE CHARACTER OF EFL STUDENTS

Syukron Fajriansyah[1], Niken Saraswati[2]
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia[1], Monash University[2]
syukron.fajriansyah@upi.edu[1], nsar0024@student.monash.edu[2]

Abstract

The objective of this research study is to examine and describe the strength of character in the virtue of wisdom and knowledge among students who aspire to become English teachers. Specifically, the study aims to assist students in comprehending their individual character profiles, identifying their predominant and weakest character strengths. This study uses a survey method involving 91 respondents of prospective English teachers at one of university in Bandung, Indonesia. The data was gathered through the utilization of VIA-IS instrument which was then analyzed using the Rasch Model. The results of the study indicate that the activity of reading scientific books to fill spare time is a character that is difficult for students to do. Meanwhile, the character will continue to find out about the information that is of interest, which is a character that is easy to implement. There are about 50.5% of respondents who tend to have a strong character in wisdom and knowledge, about 36.2% tend to be simple and 13.1% tend to be weak. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the process of strengthening the character of the virtue of wisdom and knowledge for prospective English teachers. These findings serve as a foundational basis for personal growth and self-improvement, empowering students to evolve into competent and proficient educators in the future.

Keywords: *Students' Character, Wisdom and Knowledge, Rasch Model*

Introduction

The character strength of students plays a crucial role in their learning process and overall success. Character strength refers to a favorable quality possessed by an individual that positively influences various aspects of their emotional, cognitive, and practical domains in a student's life (Niemiec, 2013). It influences various aspects of their lives, including personal achievements, career development, social interactions,

and educational endeavors. Consequently, understanding and nurturing one's character is essential for achieving success as a student and future graduate.

In the pursuit of higher education, students encounter specific challenges and circumstances that require strong character traits to overcome. To excel at the university level, students must possess qualities such as diligence, optimism, discipline, curiosity, love for learning, and honesty. These character traits need to be cultivated to ensure success in their academic journey.

Numerous studies highlight the role of character in influencing student achievement and progress. Optimistic people, even though they have low competence, exhibit greater success in their professional endeavors compared to those who demonstrate high competence but hold pessimistic attitudes (Ma et al., 2008; Park et al., 2006). Other study also stated that students who consistently maintain an optimistic outlook in their academic pursuits exert an influence on their level of academic achievement (Bevel & Mitchell, 2012). Research by Roellyana & Listiyandini (2016), stated that Optimism plays a crucial role in fostering resilience among students who are in the last year of their academic program. The character of curiosity contributes to students' knowledge and language development (Tang & Salmela-Aro, 2021; TULGAR, 2018). Then the character of creativity is also related to the success of students as prospective teachers (Pishghadam et al., 2012; Yilmaz, 2021).

Character strength serves as a valuable and practical framework and perspective that has the potential to enhance personal, group, and institutional functioning (Lavy, 2020). The connection between character strength and virtue values is emphasized by Peterson and Seligman, as virtues are cultivated based on individual character strengths. Within the realm of cognitive function, knowledge and wisdom stand as primary values. Peterson and Seligman identify five specific strengths associated with knowledge and wisdom: creativity, curiosity, love of learning, critical and open thinking, and perspective (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The strength of character is a valuable quality in individuals, enabling them to make positive impacts (Niemiec, 2013). One such impact involves promoting

happiness and well-being among others, fostering self-acceptance, guiding personal growth, developing competence and mastery, enhancing both physical and mental health, establishing supportive and enriching social connections, showing appreciation and respect for others, ensuring job satisfaction, attaining material sufficiency, and contributing to the well-being of both the community and family. According to Noronha & Campos (2018), character strengths play a significant role in human development as they contribute to the enhancement of self-confidence and social responsibility.

Drawing from the aforementioned explanation, it is crucial for students, particularly those pursuing English education and aspiring to become teachers, to possess character strength that contribute to the educational process both within their immediate surroundings and in the wider context of Indonesia. Consequently, researchers are interested to examine and describe the strength of character in the virtue of wisdom and knowledge among students who aspire to become English teachers. Specifically, this study aims to assist students in comprehending their individual character profiles, identifying their predominant and weakest character strengths. The findings can then serve as a foundation for personal growth and self-improvement, enabling them to develop into competent future educators. By understanding their individual character profiles and identifying their predominant and weakest character strengths, students can lay the foundation for personal growth and self-improvement, ultimately enabling them to become competent future educators. This research article seeks to contribute to the understanding of character strength in the context of English education and its significance in the Indonesian educational landscape.

Materials

The virtue of knowledge and wisdom has several strengths, they are creativity character, curiosity character, love of learning character, critical and open mind character, and perspective character (Hidayat et al., 2018; Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Creative Characters

Fajriansyah, S, et al. (2023). Profile of Wisdom
and Knowledge Character of EFL Students.

Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 6 No. 2 (September 2023) pp. 79-89
ISSN 2721-2130

In the theory of character strengths, creative will think about novelty and productive ways to do things (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The formation of creative characters can be characterized including full of initiative, lots of ideas, and innovation. Creativity allows individuals to overcome problems faced in everyday life (Hidayat et al., 2018; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One of the results of original product creativity or wise ways in solving problems faced by humans.

Curiosity Character

The strength of the character of curiosity is interest, openness in looking for something new and one's intrinsic motivation for new knowledge and experiences (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This strength can be identified from the interest in seeking updates, seeking information, and being open to new experiences. Peterson and Seligman state that the strength of the character of curiosity is characterized by a strong interest, support for always seeking renewal, being open to new experiences (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Continuing this power, one can undertake exploration and discovery.

Open-Minded Character

The character of open-mindedness is the ability to make judgments and think critically. Following this power, people are able to think comprehensively, thoroughly and deeply regarding various cases, examine and confirm from all angles and consider all adequate evidence. According to Peterson and Seligman, open-minded people tend not to be hesitant, eloquent, realistic, or permissive and dare to take risks. An open-minded individual considers exactly where the evidence against a belief should be examined and weighed (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Love Learning Character

The power of loving learning causes a person to master new skills, themes and knowledge. This strength can be obtained either through self-study or in an official educational institution. Someone who has the power to love learning is always willing to continue to learn and develop himself to be better. Individuals who have the power to love learning usually gaining positive emotions while acquiring skills, satisfying curiosity, expanding existing knowledge, and acquiring new knowledge (Krapp, 2000).

In this context, the power is a positive feeling regarding new things and the belief that the individual is still working so that someone can understand the things he is learning. The individual has a strategy to find out the unknown (Renninger & Hidi, 2002). To have the power to love learning can be realized with perseverance to read (Kumfer, 1999).

Perspective Character

Individuals with this power look at things from various points of view and give wise opinions as can be accepted by themselves and others and regardless of personal interests (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Methods

This study adopts a quantitative methodology through a survey approach (Fowler Jr, 2013). The survey instrument employed is the VIA-IS or the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths instrument, adapted from the work of Park et al. (Park et al., 2006). The number of items in the research instrument is 12 items, they are 2 items of Creativity Character, 2 items of Curiosity Character, 2 items of Open-mindedness Character, 4 items of Love of Learning Character, and 2 items of Perspective Character. The inventories were distributed to 91 students who are prospective English educators at one of universities in Bandung, Indonesia. Subsequently, the data underwent analysis utilizing the Rasch model approach to provide a description of the profile of student character strengths (Bond et al., 2020; Sumintono & Widhiarso, 2015).

Results

The findings of the investigation of the character of wisdom and knowledge of students as well as prospective English teachers are presented in Figure 1.
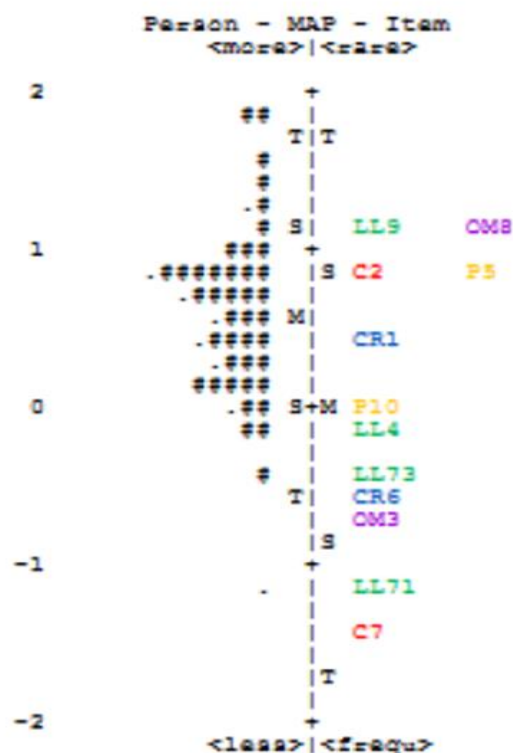
Figure 1. Item Map of Character virtues of Knowledge and Wisdom

The provided illustration suggests that item LL9 or Love Learning (*rarely reads scientific books to fill spare time*), which pertains to the character trait of Wisdom and Knowledge, presents challenges in terms of implementation. This observation implies that the respondent has a fondness for reading books during leisure hours. While item C7 or Curiosity (*Will continue to find out about the information of interest*) is the most effortless character trait of Wisdom and Knowledge to cultivate among the respondents, indicating that the respondents like to seek information about what they are interested in as displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the knowledge and wisdom students Character

Coding	Item	Measure (Logit)
C7	Will continue to find out about the information of interest	-1.42
LL71	I enjoy mastering new skills	-1.21
OM3	I only make decisions if I have all the facts	-0.65
CR6	I have no desire to produce anything new	-0.51
LL73	I like to master science topics both formal and informal	-0.37

Fajriansyah, S, et al. (2023). Profile of Wisdom
and Knowledge Character of EFL Students.

Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 6 No. 2 (September 2023) pp. 79-89
ISSN 2721-2130

LL4	I take my time to go to a place to study	-0.13
P10	Other people rarely come to me for advice	-0.03
CR1	When someone tells me a way to do something, I automatically think of another way to do it	0.45
P5	Many people say that I look mature beyond my age	0.80
C2	I rarely feel bored	0.87
OM8	If I like one option, then I won't think about the other options	1.09
LL9	I rarely read scientific books to fill my spare time	1.13

The presented table reveals that the character trait C7 or Curiosity, also known as Curiosity, is the most easily cultivated by the respondent. On the other hand, the character trait LL9 or Love Learning, referred to as Love of Learning (rarely reading scientific books to fill spare time), poses the greatest challenge for the respondent to embody.
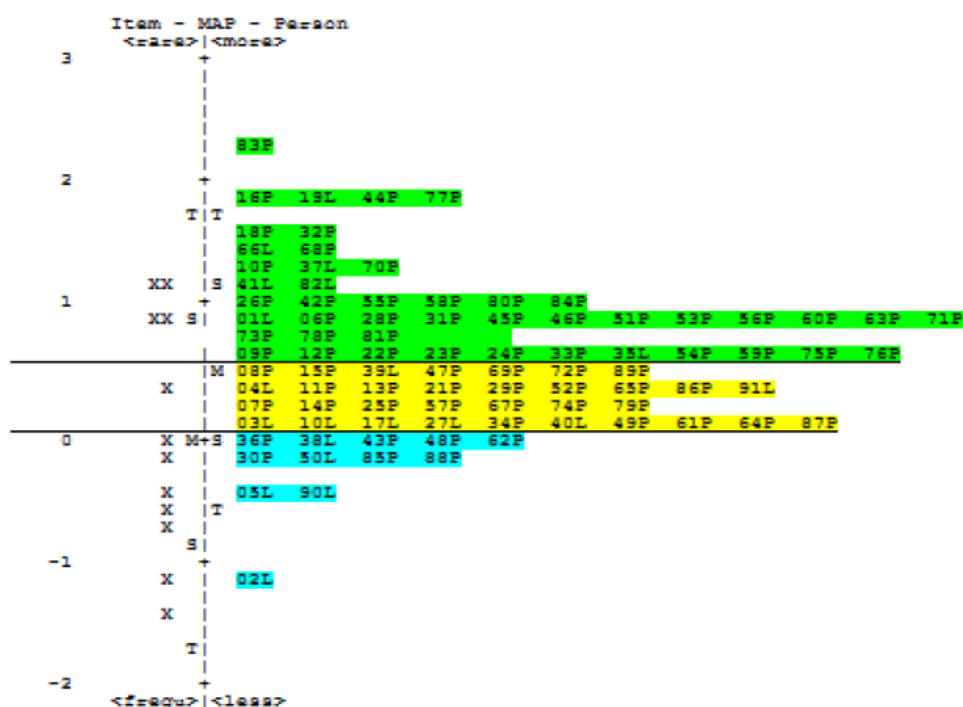

Figure 2. Map Person of Wisdom and Knowledge Character

The picture above shows that of the 91 total respondents and the most dominant (Green) 50.5% of Wisdom and Knowledge characters. Meanwhile, stable respondents (Yellow) are 36.2% and the number of respondents who are less (Blue) in Wisdom and Knowledge characters are 13.1%.

Discussion

The present study aimed to assist students in comprehending their individual character profiles, identifying their predominant and weakest character strengths. The findings of the study revealed that curiosity emerged as the most common and predominant character strength among the students. These findings are in line with the research conducted by Hidayat & Lawahid (2020), who similarly identified curiosity as one of the dominant characteristics among students. The findings also align with the study by Gustems & Calderon (2014), where participants displayed high scores in the character trait of curiosity.

Furthermore, the results of the study conducted by Abasimi & Xiaosong (2016), support the findings of the present study, highlighting the challenges students face in developing the character strength of love for learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was revealed from the findings of the study that character of curiosity is the predominant character streangths of students. Besides that, love learning is a character that is difficult for students to do. The identification of curiosity as the predominant character strength among students aligns with the importance of fostering curiosity in the educational setting. Curiosity plays a vital role in promoting active learning, knowledge acquisition, and intellectual development. It stimulates students' intrinsic motivation to explore and discover new ideas, enabling them to become lifelong learners. By recognizing curiosity as a prominent character strength, educators can design pedagogical approaches that capitalize on students' natural curiosity, fostering engagement and deeper understanding.

On the other hand, the challenge of developing the character strength of love for learning highlights the need for interventions and strategies to cultivate this trait among students. The love for learning encompasses a genuine passion for acquiring knowledge, embracing intellectual challenges, and seeking personal growth through education. Educators can foster this character strength by creating a positive and inspiring learning environment, encouraging autonomy and self-directed learning, and emphasizing the relevance and real-world applications of the knowledge being taught.

References

Abasimi, E., & Xiaosong, G. (2016). *Character strengths and life satisfaction of teachers in Ghana*.

Aswad, M., & Sardi, A. (2023). The Discourse Analysis of Diction Effects on Teachers Used in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, 15(2), 2647-2654.

Bevel, R. K., & Mitchell, R. M. (2012). The effects of academic optimism on elementary reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *50*(6), 773–787.

Bond, T., Yan, Z., & Heene, M. (2020). *Applying the Rasch model: Fundamental measurement in the human sciences*. Routledge.

Ermawati, E., Nurchalis, N. F., & Sardi, A. (2021). Online EFL Teaching and Learning: Different skills, Different Challenges. IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning. Linguistics and Literature, 9(1), 373-382.

Fowler Jr, F. J. (2013). *Survey research methods*. Sage publications.

Gustems, J., & Calderon, C. (2014). Character strengths and psychological wellbeing among students of teacher education. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, *3*(3), 265–286.

Hidayat, W., Ahmad, J. Bin, & Hamzah, M. I. Bin. (2018). Nilai keutamaan pengetahuan dan kebijaksanaan dalam konteks pendidikan karakter bangsa. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, *22*(1), 82–91.

Hidayat, W., & Lawahid, N. (2020). Academic Dishonesty of Muslim Students Using Rasch Model Measurement. *Proceedings of The International Conference on Environmental and Technology of Law, Business and Education on Post Covid 19, ICETLAWBE 2020, 26 September 2020, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia*.

Krapp, A. (2000). *Interest and human development during adolescence: An educational-psychological approach.*

Kumfer, K. L. (1999). factors and processes contributing to resilience: the resilience framework M. *Resilience and Development: Positive Life Adaptation. FL: Kluwer Academic*, 179–224.

Lavy, S. (2020). A review of character strengths interventions in twenty-first-century schools: Their importance and how they can be fostered. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *15*, 573–596.

Fajriansyah, S, et al. (2023). Profile of Wisdom
and Knowledge Character of EFL Students.

Inspiring: English Education Journal
Vol. 6 No. 2 (September 2023) pp. 79-89
ISSN 2721-2130

Ma, M., Kibler, J. L., Dollar, K. M., Sly, K., Samuels, D., Benford, M. W., Coleman, M., Lott, L., Patterson, K., & Wiley, F. (2008). The relationship of character strengths to sexual behaviors and related risks among African American adolescents. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, *15*, 319–327.

Mujahidah, M., & Sardi, A. (2021). A Handbook YOUR BASIC GRAMMAR For Beginner (Non-Native Speakers).

Niemiec, R. M. (2013). *Mindfulness and character strengths: A practical guide to flourishing*. Hogrefe Publishing GmbH.

Noronha, A. P. P., & Campos, R. R. F. De. (2018). Relationship between character strengths and personality traits. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas)*, *35*, 29–37.

Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). Character strengths in fifty-four nations and the fifty US states. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *1*(3), 118–129.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.

Pishghadam, R., Nejad, T. G., & Shayesteh, S. (2012). Creativity and its relationship with teacher success. *BELT-Brazilian English Language Teaching Journal*, *3*(2).

Rahayu, R., Iskandar, S., & Abidin, Y. (2022). Inovasi Pembelajaran Abad 21 Dan Penerapannya Di Indonesia. *JURNALBASICEDU*, *6*(2), 2099–2104.

Renninger, K. A., & Hidi, S. (2002). Student interest and achievement: Developmental issues raised by a case study. In *Development of achievement motivation* (pp. 173–195). Elsevier.

Roellyana, S., & Listiyandini, R. A. (2016). Peranan optimisme terhadap resiliensi pada mahasiswa tingkat akhir yang mengerjakan skripsi. *Prosiding Konferensi Nasional Peneliti Muda Psikologi Indonesia*, *1*(1), 29–37.

Sardi, A., Haryanto, A., & Weda, S. (2017). The Distinct types of diction used by the efl teachers in the classroom interaction. International Journal Of Science and Research (IJSR), 6(3), 1061-1066.

Sardi, A., Surahmat, Z., & Nur, S. (2022). The Washback of Intensive TOEFL Training Program (ITTP) on Student's Learning Motivation. ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities, 5(4).

Sumintono, B., & Widhiarso, W. (2015). *Aplikasi pemodelan rasch pada assessment pendidikan*. Trim komunikata.

Tang, X., & Salmela-Aro, K. (2021). The prospective role of epistemic curiosity in national standardized test performance. *Learning and Individual Differences*, *88*, 102008.

TULGAR, A. T. (2018). The effects of curiosity on second language learning in terms of linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic development. *Adnan Menderes Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, *9*(2), 59–72.

Yilmaz, A. (2021). The effect of technology integration in education on prospective teachers' critical and creative thinking, multidimensional 21st century skills and academic achievements. *Participatory Educational Research*, *8*(2), 163–199.