

**SERVICE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION
TOWARDS CHARACTER EDUCATION CURRICULUM:
A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Abstract: Amid this disruptive era, every country faces various social and moral issues, such as ethnic conflict, loss of social care, and social bullying. Due to that, the good character of each individual becomes increasingly important. However, character education in Indonesia, is yet to be optimal because the cognitive aspect still dominates and moral degradation is an ongoing issue among the younger generation. In an international context, this systematic review study provides a research map on developing character education through experience-based learning, such as service learning in higher education institutions. This literature review used the PRISMA approach. Articles published in trustworthy databases from 2013 to 2023 were reviewed, and 9 of 859 were selected for detailed synthesis and analysis. The review revealed that: a) the experiential learning model in service learning is effective in integrated character education curriculum; b) research often emphasizes values of responsibility and compassion; c) the reflection method in service learning is character education practice. This research suggests that service learning is a crucial approach to applying character education curriculum in higher education.

Keywords: service learning, character education, curriculum, higher education institution

INTRODUCTION

In this disruptive era, many nations face social and moral problems. In Japan, for example, a study indicates that bullying among students significantly impacts individuals to the extent of resorting to suicide (Iwasa, 2017). Similarly, in Indonesia, Indonesian citizens often engage in hate speech behavior which often occurs on social media platforms (Ibrohim & Budi, 2023). Opposingly, for Malaysia, Balakrishnan (2017) asserted that the hegemony of certain religions and ethnicities as the majority in Malaysia's multicultural society has the potential to give rise to disharmony in religious, ethnic, and cultural differences. Thus, character development has become an increasingly important concern in education, including higher education (Bates, 2019; Sanderse, 2013). In addition to mastery of academic knowledge and skills, character education is essential for students to develop strong desirable personal qualities as a person (Kim & Taylor, 2017; Krettenauer, 2021). Embedding proper character education in the higher education curriculum can help students become moral and ethical individuals, have a positive attitude and social responsibility, and be capable of facing global challenges (Alazmi & Alazmi, 2020). In this case, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for creating excellent and intelligent graduates that are desired by society.

However, character education implementation in HEIs are still dominated by an emphasis on knowledge and memorizing elements (Diana et al., 2020). Nagashima and Gibbs (2022) revealed that teaching students to become competent is relatively easier than teaching students to form good people. The argument is that lecturers can achieve their learning outcomes by teaching students to know and understand only character education material that were based on the curriculum. However, more action must be done to ensure good character values are instilled in each individual. Therefore, in teaching character values, HEIs currently need innovative and experience-based learning, such as service learning, where what students learn in class can be implemented in real life, particularly in society.

Service learning is an innovative teaching and learning pedagogy that integrates meaningful community service with what students have learned in class using the technique of reflection to enrich the learning experience, develop civic responsibility, and transform society (Ferdiansyah, et al., 2022; Salam, et al., 2019). In a review of service learning and its contribution to societal issues, Otten et al. (2022) states that service learning in higher education positively impacts student learning outcomes and helps with social problems in the community. In this context of increasing learning outcomes and concern for society, the following study by Tan & Soo (2020)

explores that service learning effectively enhances university students' communication and collaboration skills and social care. Meanwhile, according to Bandyopadhyay et al. (2022), service-learning programs have a role in diversity appreciation.

Furthermore, service learning contains several elements that indicate good strategies to teach university students moral or character qualities. These elements must be examined to determine which is most fitting in applying character education in higher education. As the model of character education curriculum, values preference, and service-learning methods have a considerable impact on the formation of values among students, it is crucial to understand how service-learning delivers values to university students (Mamat et al., 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend what service learning implies concerning character education in higher education institutions. Thus, this research aims to provide a research map of the role of service learning toward the educational character curriculum at HEIs as an element worthy of analysis by asking guiding research questions (RQ):

1. What were the model of service-learning programs toward character education curriculum in HEIs?
2. What were the significant values of service learning to instill in HEIs?
3. What methods in service learning best supports values for university students?

This article describes the findings of a systematic literature review conducted over the past ten years, from 2013 to 2023, to identify three critical components of service learning for character education: the curriculum, the values-based graduates, and the teaching method (pedagogy). This article used the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) reporting guidance as the analysis method. This study may benefit practitioners and policymakers in higher education in implementing innovative experiential learning methods like service learning for transferring character and moral values. This review, which examines various higher education systems, is set in a global perspective. As a result, this literature review's implications are not tied to any specific nation-state setting. This article comprises six parts. The research background is explained in Part 1, the literature review on character education and service learning is explained in Part 2, and the research methodology is covered in Part 3. Meanwhile, the finding and discussion are further elaborated in Parts 4 and 5. At the end of this article, recommendations for further research are discussed in the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character Education Curriculum in Higher Education

Awareness of the importance of character education in HEIs is a response to problems of moral or ethical decline, especially among today's young generation (Sılay, 2013). Designing the right curriculum for teaching character education in HEIs is necessary. A curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals (Betawi, 2020). Furthermore, two models of character education curriculum are implemented in many universities. According to Muthohar (2021), the approach to character education will vary from one country to another. The rationale is that each country has different ideological or fundamental factors and cultural values as guidelines or sources of learning character education in each country. Several models are commonly applied in the character education curriculum; The first model, that character education is specific as a stand-alone subject, is named moral education, character education, values education, and ethics education (Alazmi & Alazmi, 2020; Muthohar, 2021). Meanwhile, other character education models are integrated with other subjects such as religious education, civics education, languages, science, mathematics, and other subjects listed in the official curriculum at HEIs (Barry et al., 2013). Keddie (2011) states that in building value-based graduates, HEIs must instill character values in enrolled students until they graduate. Many experts agree that the higher education curriculum needs to integrate the most holistic character or ethical education programs in responding to the progress of the times (Alazmi, 2020; Keddie, 2011). Meanwhile, the character education curriculum framework can also be adapted from a policy called Ethical Understanding General Capability in 2019 in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA), which reveals that there is a requirement for educators or lecturers to include or instill character values in all subjects such as language education, mathematics, social studies, art, and so on (Arthur & Harrison, 2012; McGrath et al., 2022). The character education curriculum aims to optimize the implementation of character education in HEIs by integrating any courses (Sandarse, 2013). There are several ways of integrating character values in courses contained in HEIs, for example, integrating character values through the literature used by the study program and then integrating character values into the course learning model or method. According to Alazmi (2020), HEIs have a substantial role in student character education. Lecturers must determine which character values suit value-based graduates' learning materials. Some excellent and fundamental values, such as responsibility, mutual

respect, discipline, integrity, and love of the motherland and others, must be integrated into learning activities in HEIs (Nagashima & Gibbs, 2022).

In addition, character values can also be integrated into experiential learning; for example, students directly practice what they learn in chemistry class and apply it in society so that this activity has the potential to foster caring social responsibility and inclusive character (Arthur & Harrison, 2012). At the same time, the next model of character education can be done through the literature used during the learning process, e.g. by explaining the historical background of figures or experts who invented specific theories. Students will learn about perseverance, respect, and social responsibility characteristics from this model. Several studies reveal that integrating character values through literature can educate students fully or entirely. It is no less important that character education can also be taught through the example of the lecturer's behavior (role model) (Carr, 2017; Sandarse, 2013). From here, every lecturer or university leader is required to be a role model through good character. According to Sporre (2019) and Susilo et al. (2022), the character education curriculum's function is to build an intelligent nation with a noble culture and develop the essential potential to be kind-hearted, good-minded, exemplary, creative, independent, and loving the country (Hidayat et al., 2020; Prasetyo et al., 2019). These are fundamental values that students at HEIs need to develop to become provisions when they graduate from college.

Service Learning in Higher Education

Resch & Schrittmesser (2021) state that service-learning may appear similar to volunteer work and internships. However, in reality, it is distinct because it is more concerned with improving students' understanding of their theoretical knowledge through community service and reflection on that experience. On the other hand, the primary beneficiaries of any internship programme are the service providers, as internships strongly emphasize acquiring specific career-related skills (Buff et al., 2015). In contrast, volunteering is more oriented towards a service-oriented notion, where the recipients of a volunteerism project are the primary beneficiaries (Buff et al., 2015). From this definition, it can be underlined that service learning is a strategy of teaching and learning that is integrated in the form of meaningful service to the community with reflection of students' learning experiences, strengthening society and teaching civic responsibility.

Meanwhile, according to Salam et al. (2019), service learning refers to an educational experience based on courses and credits where students (a) involve themselves in well-organized programs in the form of services that meet community needs and (b) an essential aspect of service learning is reflecting community needs service activities in such a way as to gain a broader understanding of course content, increase civic responsibility and appreciation of a more comprehensive range of disciplines. Many readers or writers interpret service learning to be the same as other forms of experiential learning. However, in the case of community service learning, there is a clear emphasis to embed what students learn in particular subjects with its application in real world scenario (Zainuri & Huda, 2023). From this understanding, it can be analyzed that service learning has several components: credit-based, course-based, empowerment, and reflection (Case et al., 2021; Zainuri & Huda, 2023). Furthermore, reflection and empowerment are two critical components in service learning. Reflection on service-learning programs is a process in which students can think critically and analytically about their experiences and involvement in service-learning programs. It also looks at the impact the service learning program can provide to students as well as the community. According to Diana et al. (2020), reflection is a process that integrates or bridges human thoughts, feelings, or ideas with the experiences of the outside world. From this, reflection makes students become active learners. In other words, the more students reflect, the more they learn to reconstruct or develop knowledge, skills, and character values (Mironesco, 2021). At the same time, empowerment provides knowledge, skills, resources, and self-confidence to students and the community to face challenges and produce positive changes in their communities (Halberstadt et al., 2019; McDougale & Li, 2023). On the other hand, according to Balakrishnan et al. (2022), empowerment is the process of increasing society's social roles and tasks through activities such as service learning. The beneficiaries of the service learning program are balanced, namely half and half between students and the community (Mayasari et al., 2022; McDougale & Li, 2023; Resch & Schrittmesser, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis) approach was used in this systematic literature review (SLR), which examined the literature on service learning and the character education curriculum at higher education institutions (HEI). According to Moher et al. (2009), this approach includes identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (see Figure 1 for PRISMA steps in research). The initial actions in conducting SLR are to define the following: first, the objective and purpose of the review; second, the research's inclusion and exclusion criteria; third, how the study will be identified; and fourth, the analysis plan

(Nightingale, 2009). According to these steps, the second step is the most important in establishing whether the SLR is operating correctly. According to Nightingale (2009), six inclusion criteria are employed: (1) the type of research, (2) the type of participants, (3) the type of intervention, (4) the comparison, (5) the outcome measure, and (6) additional elements related to characteristics studies.

Search identification

The PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM indicates that the keywords required to search for the required research articles are determined during the early identification phases. The highest-quality publications for study aims are from different years, trustworthy databases, and PICO (Participant, Intervention, Comparison, and Outcome) principles (Santos et al., 2007). Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) databases were used in this study from 2013 to July 2023. Researchers employed both databases because they contain high-quality scientific publications that publish leading research-based articles. In this situation, the writer seeks high-quality journals rather than trends. Haseski et al. (2018) states that WoS is superior to other database in terms of database coverage depth.

Table 1

Keywords Based on PICO Principles

PICO Aspects	Keywords
Participant	“higher education students”, higher education institution”, “university students”, “lecturer”
Intervention	“service-learning”, “service learning”
Comparison	“components”
Outcome	“character education”, “moral education”, “value education”

The next step, based on determining PICO according to Cooke et al. (2012), researchers can use this principle to identify keywords for systematic reviews in various databases. The keywords used for each PICO component are listed in Table 1. Then, research articles that review service learning of the character education curriculum in tertiary institutions can be found using the keywords specified in Table 1 using Boolean Operators such as OR and AND (see Figure 1 for the search sample on Scopus). According to Seema and Sanjay (2014), Publish or Perish (PoP) software was used to search research articles for systematic reviews. At this stage, there are 858 articles from both databases.

Figure 1

Sample of Search Strategy

2 TITLE-ABS-KEY ("service learning" OR "service-learning" AND "character education" OR "character" OR "higher education") AND PUBYEAR > 2012 AND PUBYEAR < 2024
Show less ^

Article screening

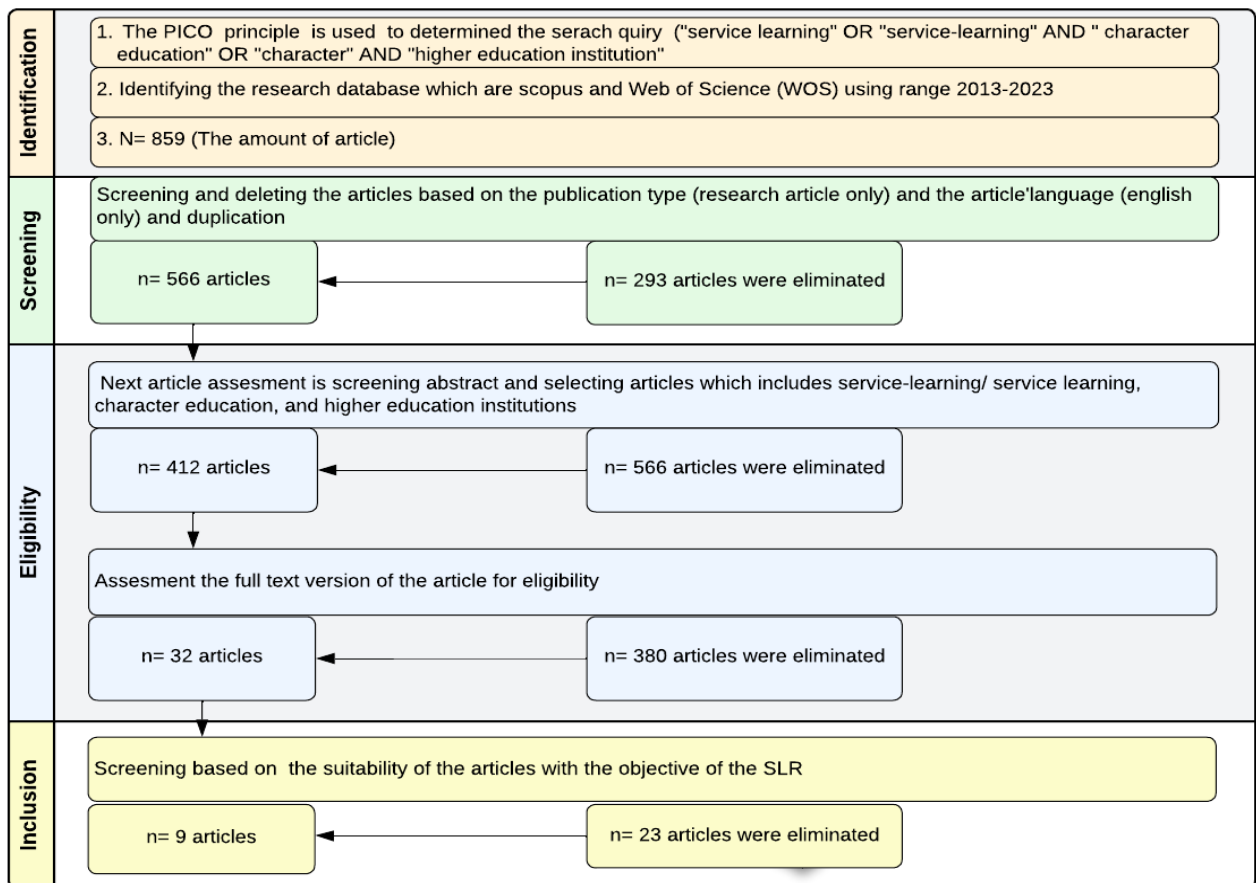
Research articles are published during this stage, regardless of the type of publication intended. As a result, several book chapters review articles and proceedings-type articles were eliminated from the list. The proceedings-type articles were not included because they have had little influence on research, are less significant, and are less up-to-date than the scientific literature (Usée, Larivière et al., 2008). In addition, according to Short (2009), review articles were also not selected because they needed to provide actual study results. Furthermore, besides the type of article, the use of language is an important criterion. At this stage, the article research selection only includes English articles. It is because articles in English are more universal and easily understood by academics for review. Duplication of articles is the last requirement. There may be an overlap between articles in the two databases because this research uses two databases worldwide. This justification resulted in the issuance of 859 articles, leaving 566 articles.

Article Eligibility and Inclusion

Based on eligibility specifications, identified articles' titles, abstracts, and keywords were reviewed and selected. The articles that had yet to be eliminated in the earlier phases were read in whole or in part in the following phase to see if they should be considered for the review based on the criteria for eligibility. Finally, we examined the identified papers' reference lists for relevant studies. The subsequent data was manually collected using a

data extraction form: country, title, year, objective, study method, respondent, and service-learning for character education. Every author read through full-text publications carefully and extracted data before evaluating any possibly pertinent ones. The three authors had a discussion to settle any disagreements. The process of studies trimmed down from the identification stage to the study outcomes can be seen in the flow chart (see Figure 2). The 13 studies were analyzed and graded depending on their objectives. The data was collected by thoroughly reading the entire articles and abstracts and then using content analysis to identify the service learning topic connected with character education curriculum in higher education institutions.

Figure 2
Design of Prisma Step



Data Analysis

Interpreting the article's objectives, theories, methods, and findings is the basis for analysis and classification. It is viewed as a limitation in systematic reviews requiring collaborative review (Xiao & Watson, 2019). Nevertheless, judgment and interpretation are essential in narrative reviews regardless of the number of authors involved (Hammersley, 2001; Torres et al., 2018). Each chosen article receives an annotated bibliography, afterwards converted to a table. The table lists the various research methodologies that were employed as well as the results of the three main themes that were examined in this systematic review from a variety of sources, such as service learning related to the model of a curriculum for character education, character values preference, and pedagogy of character values. Following that, this study relies on the findings to address research questions by demonstrating the advantages of service learning for character education curriculum.

RESULTS

Nine studies finally completed the examination after being selected from 859 results that matched the criteria for inclusion. The characteristics of these nine studies are shown in Table 2 (see Table 2), including the authors, year, country, design, and theme. The majority of the research included in the study was from Spain (3), with the rest

of the research coming from South Africa (2), the USA (2), South Korea (1), the UK (1), and Portugal (1). Regarding the year published, the duration of ten years were selected between 2013 and 2023; an article was published in 2018, and another was published in 2020. Meanwhile in 2021, there were four articles; in 2022, there were two articles, and one new article was published in 2023.

Regarding study design, most of them were qualitative (8), and the remaining were quantitative (1). Sizes varied, and questionnaires and interviews were routinely used to gather information before observations. Three significant issues regarding service learning toward character education in primary schools were presented in this systematic review. Then, the three key themes are service learning as part of the character education curriculum model, service learning values, and methodology for character education instruction in HEIs. Here are the analysis's findings in relation to the research questions, and finally, a total of 9 (nine) articles were obtained based on the PRISMA protocol's findings (See Table 2).

Table 2

Characteristic of the studies

Author Year	Country	Research Design	Instruments Used	Sample Size	Theme		
					Curricu- lum Model	Values	Methods Service Learning
Petersen & Henning (2018)	South Africa	Qualitative: Case Study	Interview Observation Document Analysis	2	√	√	√
Mtawa & Nkhoma (2020)	South Africa	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	48	√	√	√
Asenjo et al. (2021)	Spain	Quanti	Survey	207	√	√	
Choi et al. (2023)	South Korea	Quantitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	11	√	√	√
Coelho & Menezes (2021)	Portugal and UK	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	44	√	√	√
García- Rico, et al. (2021)	Spain	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	81	√	√	√

Martín (2022)	Spain	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	8	√	√	√
Mirones-co (2021)	USA	Qualitative	Interview Document Analysis	284	√	√	√
Otten et al. (2022)	USA	Qualitative	Interview Observation Document Analysis	30	√	√	√

Service Learning On Character Education Curriculum In Higher Education Institution

According to nine (9) research studies, character education should be incorporated into the experiential learning model. Mironesco (2021) revealed that many American lecturers involved in their study assumed that morality should not be taught as an independent subject but integrated within the context of experiential learning subjects, while Coelho & Menezes (2021) study revealed that the majority of lecturers in their subjects who teach experiential learning highlighted the importance of moral education through formal education. However, the research conducted by Coelho & Menezes (2021) with forty four lecturers and students in HEI found that most participants thought character education was better included in service learning or other experiential learning. This finding is reinforced by Mironesco (2021) study, which found that lecturers for service learning thought moral education could be incorporated into this field. They thought service learning was an excellent learning opportunity for interaction and collaboration not only with peer but also with society.

The value character of responsibility, helping each other, inclusion, and respect are required to live together in future society. Another study by Martín (2022) emphasized the importance of service learning as the best strategy for incorporating character education into the curriculum. However, Coelho & Menezes found that more Portugal lecturers thought that character was best taught through experience, indicating that character should be explicitly taught as a standalone subject. This finding was supported by lecturers' perspectives on character education from Portugal and the United Kingdom. According to these two (2) studies, character education is a curriculum embedded in society rather than being taught separately or integrated into other subjects. Reflecting on their conduct and attitudes toward social issues might help students develop their character.

Developing service learning values in higher education is of the utmost significance

According to the nine studies, service learning supports the values emphasized in higher education. This review is essential to foster in higher education students the values of responsibility and compassion developed through service learning programs (8 research studies). At the same time, Petersen and Henning (2018) noticed that the character values instilled in service learning are about helping students learn universal character values like responsibility and responsibility. Meanwhile, Mtawa and Nkhoma (2020) found that a sense of responsibility and compassion are often emphasized in service learning to show students with the intention that students then implement these two values in their involvement in community life. Choi et al.'s (2023) study also showed that South Korea sees responsibility and compassion as essential characteristics to acquire to behave toward people with dignity.

Meanwhile, according to Otten et al. (2022), the values of responsibility and compassion are most frequently emphasized in service learning for teaching. These values ensure that today's students and young people lack responsibility by acting immorally toward their surroundings, including their friends and teachers. Additionally, Mironesco (2021) reported that most participants who taught at American universities strongly emphasized helping students develop the characteristics of caring for parents and acting responsibly toward others. A sense of responsibility and compassion is a value that is more often instilled in these studies because moral awareness is decreasing among students or young people due to the times. In addition, there were another sixteen (16) values of service learning preferred to cultivate in students at higher education institutions. These values were; respect (5 research studies), empathy (6 research studies), tolerance (6 research studies), care (4 research studies),

discipline (4 research studies), trust (3 research studies), honesty (3 research studies), social justice (3 research studies), environmental awareness (1 research study), integrity (1 research study), humility (1 research study), social environment (1 research study), recognition (1 research study), patriotism (1 research study) comradeship (1 research study) and interdependent (1 research study).

Service learning in the pedagogy of cultivating values to higher education institution

In terms of pedagogy, service learning emphasizes integrating the learning that takes place in the classroom with the experiences that students have in the community. This educational approach promotes the development of character values as a whole. The relationship between pedagogical service learning and character education is as follows. The results of nine studies show that, for the most part, the reflection component was the most suitable method for instilling character values in service-learning programs. The process of service learning requires plenty of reflection. After engaging in experiences, students are asked to reflect on what they learned, how those experiences relate to academic material, and how those experiences have changed their points of view. More profound knowledge and character development are fostered by reflection. See Mtawa & Nkhoma (2020), who interviewed sixteen lecturers at a university in South Africa, found that when they asked students about their character development, most students answered that it was essential to learn through their reflection because they could feel and think critically from what they have done in dealing with various issues and problems in society. So that reflection made it easy to develop their character. This finding is supported by Mironesco (2021), who found that most students believe reflection in service learning can assist students in critically evaluating their service experiences and relate them to theoretical ideas and personal principles. Through this reflective process, students better understand their personalities, virtues, shortcomings, and areas for improvement. In line with this, research respondents argue that the value of their character education is fostered or obtained from daily practices embedded in students' social interactions with the community.

Choi et al. (2023), who interviewed eleven (11) students, revealed that participants in their research generally agreed that service learning connects and bridges the inner world of humans or ideas and experiences of the outside world. They become active learners in their own experiences. The more students experience, the more they can reflect and the more they will learn and progress in accumulating knowledge, skills, and disposition values (Halberstadt et al., 2019; Tan & Soo, 2020). In addition, Petersen and Henning (2018) emphasized that most students think reflection in experiential learning is the most appropriate approach by illustrating character values with the help of active learning. In service learning, students can directly involve themselves with the community and solve various problems and challenges in the community, which in turn can encourage character development and personal growth. In this case, the service learning program seeks to transform learning by instilling moral goodness in terms of practice so that students can get used to implementing good character values in their daily lives. More specifically, service learning emphasizes that students can cultivate a sense of responsibility and empathy for the welfare of their community (Asenjo et al., 2021).

As an effective method of teaching students character values, Petersen & Henning (2018) opinionated that service learning integrates reflection through establishing compassion values which begins with service learning program participants implementing it into practice and becoming habituated to respectful and caring behavior toward all persons in the community groups, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, socio economic level, or individual qualities or abilities. These various activities are carried out to foster the value of compassion between human beings. In addition, service learning structures its programs to enable students to strengthen the value of responsibility so that students can commit to continued service and recognize their continuous commitment to their community through frequent participation in service activities. The other pedagogy service learning employed to instill character values in students in higher education were community engagement (7 research studies), service experience (7 research studies), collaboration and teamwork (6 research studies), academic integration (6 research studies), collaboration and partnership (5 research studies), preparation and planning (4 research studies), assessment (4 research studies), personal development (4 research studies), and sustainability and long-term impact (3 research studies). In this study, specific justifications for pedagogical service learning have been identified. For instance, in the service learning pedagogy, lectures assume the role of the "authority" who demonstrates and emphasizes the concept of specific values for students. According to Martín (2022), the service learning agenda use collaboration to teach values because it can help students develop characteristics like emotional attachment, empathy, solidarity, self-efficacy, environmental awareness, recognition, mutual aid, and respect. Additionally, the study by Petersen & Henning (2018) demonstrated the significance of applying community-based learning pedagogy to impart real-world social values like trusting, responsibility, fairness, social justice and care to students.

DISCUSSION

The three research questions proposed relate to service learning on the character curriculum model, the essential character values taught, and the methods used. From the literature analysis, three main themes were observed. First, the literature is almost entirely optimistic about the learning models in service learning positively impacting the character education curriculum. Second, most of the literature conveys the same thing about character values that are important for university students. Third, the studies supported the reflection component of service learning to instill practical student character values. This section can provide recommendations for future researchers who are interested in exploring research on similar topics. Meanwhile, the conclusion section conveys essential implications that can be useful for policymakers and practitioners at universities.

To discuss the first research question, almost all of this literature review reveals that the role of the experiential learning model in service learning in an integrated curriculum can practically instill character values in students in higher education. From these findings, it can be interpreted that students will more easily master character education by doing and experiencing the values rather than just reading, writing, and listening to explanations of character education in the integrated curriculum. This argument is in line with the opinion of Arthur & Harrison (2012) who state that character values can be integrated into all courses through experiential learning; for example, civic learning by helping to overcome social issues in society which has the potential to foster social responsibility and inclusive character (Lapsley & Woodbury, 2016; Tan & Soo, 2020). Bleazby (2020) ; Sanderse (2013) added that the character education curriculum, integrated with all courses, requires practical learning to make them actively reconstruct knowledge of values. It is important to remember that integrating service learning into a character education curriculum can be a potent strategy to strengthen students' moral development and character, such as responsibility, compassion, empathy, teamwork, and soon (Betawi, 2020; El-Bassiouny et al., 2011). One of the studies from Choi et al. (2023) stated that a student participated in a service learning project to make science education books for mentally disabled and autistic students. She remembered having to think deeply about special education and students with disabilities because these books can be very impactful for them. Based on this example, the student was developing the character of caring for others and being responsible for the assignments given.

Since service learning allows students to interact directly with the communities they are helping, it is a fruitful way to develop students' moral values (Tan & Soo, 2020). Students are more likely to forge meaningful ties with community people when they are involved in the project conception and realization (Muhibbin et al., 2022). As a consequence, service becomes more meaningful and long-lasting. It also builds respect, empathy, and cultural understanding (Coelho & Menezes, 2021). According to Betawi (2020), reflection and empowerment in service-learning programs enable lecturers to share moral values to students (Mironesco, 2021). However, most service learning research on character education only provides data from students and lecturers and does not consider community perceptions. Only two studies from England and Portugal provided data regarding public perceptions. Therefore, further research needs to combine two data on the main beneficiaries of service learning: students and the community.

In response to the second research question, this systematic review identified sixteen (16) values that can be transmitted by service learning and social responsibility to become the most significant, followed by compassion and other essential values. This research demonstrates many character values that service-learning programs can transmit, one of the most meaningful of which is the value of social responsibility and compassion because students are immediately sensitive to societal problems. This argument is supported by Alazmi and Alazmi (2020), which states that service learning teaches social responsibility because students learn to directly interpret life in society by identifying for themselves what is needed by society; they also reflect on how their knowledge can help overcome these problems and act fully responsibility. Chankseliani et al. (2021); Lapsley and Woodbury (2016); Susilo et al. (2022) added that character education should teach students specific qualities such as compassion, caring, courage, honesty, kindness, and respect that help students think and act ethically. Therefore, HEIs are responsible for instilling fundamental values in students to create quality university graduates. These fundamental values are not only social responsibility and compassion. According to Chankseliani & McCowan (2021); Suciati et al (2023) value-based graduates are expected to exhibit integrity, respect for diversity, responsibility, empathy, self-discipline, courage, ethical leadership, collaboration, environmental sustainability, and global citizenship. So that future researchers can develop the values needed by college graduates.

In discussing the third research question, this systematic literature review shows that all literature uses reflection in service learning as the most appropriate method for instilling character values. The findings of this review indicate that students become active learners if they learn from their own experiences. The more experiences

students have, the more they can reflect, learn, and progress in reconstructing knowledge, skills, and values. This argument is relevant to Diana et al. (2020); to effectively develop character education, service learning must include reflection as a critical. It involves reflecting carefully and critically on one's experiences, deeds, and lessons learned. Through reflection, students can draw connections between their volunteer activities and the fundamental principles stressed in the character education curriculum (Case et al., 2021; Salam et al., 2019). Students better grasp these values and how they apply in the real world by examining how their behaviors match up with values like compassion, leadership, accountability, responsibility, and honesty (Buff et al., 2015; Ferdiansyah et al., 2022). It is unsurprising since it is difficult to guide the student by teaching students what to do and not do, leading researchers to conclude that knowledge of the values alone will never be sufficient to build the necessary moral character (Nagashima & Gibbs, 2022). Therefore, future research regarding service learning pedagogy for character education should focus more on the reflection component in experiential learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Three themes have been highlighted by this systematic review of the literature on service learning for character education in higher education institutions: curriculum model, values preference, and pedagogy. Experiential learning is the most suitable educational model for character education in HEIs. There are sixteen (16) values that university lecturers want to instill in their students. These values are most effectively reinforced when combined with other academic disciplines rather than as an independent subject of study, and the ideal pedagogy for implementing service learning is a reflection on the process of experiential learning. The article provides various recommendation for further studies. Firstly, incorporating experiential learning in service learning into an integrated curriculum helps encourage HEIs and policymakers to create a character education curriculum more effective. Second, the values being transmitted must be carefully chosen. The finding of this systematic literature review mandates that HEIs broaden their approach by figuring out how to connect values to the substance of their subjects. HEIs that encourage reflection on experiential learning as a teaching technique should ensure their modeling upholds the intended values. In addition to providing opportunities for students to comprehend the values taught, HEIs or lecturers must also make sure that students are aware of the values demonstrated by service learning components. However, as long as the methodology aligns with the desired character values, service learning may employ any pedagogy, including reflection, empowerment, and other pertinent teaching methodologies. Additionally, to acquire a comprehensive image of how to foster character values in HEIs, this systematic review will be a reference for those developing character education curriculum, researchers engaged in developing character values in university students, and those teaching character education.

Declarations

Conflicts of Interest: No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author (s)

Funding: The work is supported financially by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia via Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS/1/2020/SSI0/UM/02/4).

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