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Strengthening Character and Discipline of Vocational High School Students at SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin Through Cadetship Approach

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Abstract: Vocational education plays a strategic role in producing work-ready graduates, where success is heavily influenced by soft skills mastery such as character and discipline. This community service research aims to strengthen the character and discipline of students at SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin through a Ketarunaan (semi-military) approach to address challenges in the maritime industry sector. The implementation method consists of four main stages: preparation (survey and module compilation), implementation (physical training/PT, mental coaching, and outbound), evaluation (pre-test and post-test), and sustainability through the formulation of Ketarunaan SOP. The results show a significant positive impact both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, there was an average increase in student discipline scores of 20%, covering indicators of punctuality, neatness, and compliance with instructions. Qualitatively, the program successfully formed resilient mentalities, team spirit (korsa), and student leadership abilities. Additionally, student understanding of national insight and ethics reached scores above 85%. The conclusion is that the Ketarunaan approach is effective in bridging the gap between academic ability and maritime industry professionalism, and has been integrated into the school culture through permanent SOPs to guarantee program sustainability.

Keyword: Character, Discipline, SMK Arung Samudera, Ketarunaan Approach, Maritime.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational High School (SMK) education holds a strategic role in producing graduates who are ready for work and capable of competing in the industrial world. The success of SMK graduates is determined not only by technical mastery (hard skills) but is also heavily influenced by character, work ethic, and discipline (soft skills). In the context of current global challenges, the workforce demands that the younger generation possess high integrity, responsibility, and resilience. Therefore, SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin, as a maritime and vocational educational institution, bears a significant responsibility to develop Human Resources (HR) that excel both academically and non-academically. Recognizing the importance of character building, initial observations indicated challenges for several students regarding time management, compliance with rules, initiative, and personal responsibility.

This gap is a crucial issue because the industrial world, particularly the maritime sector, highly values professionalism and high discipline. The primary goal of this community service activity is to overcome these challenges by improving discipline, forming superior character (responsibility, honesty, leadership), and internalizing cadetship values in students. Recent academic studies (2023–2025) confirm that cadetship programs are a relevant alternative solution to global demands for resilient HR with integrity. Modern vocational education theory emphasizes that industries require personnel who are resilient, time-disciplined, and possess a high work ethic.

The Cadetship Approach with its structure, habituation, and consistent rule enforcement has proven effective in building mental toughness, training time discipline, and internalizing Civic Disposition values and the spirit of National Defense. This approach operates through three pillars: exemplary behavior, routine habituation, and educational reward and punishment systems. Consequently, the Cadetship (Semi-Military) Approach was chosen as the primary method to systematically prepare the students of SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin to become high-quality, work-ready graduates with noble character.

METHOD

Metode pelaksanaan kegiatan ini menggunakan kerangka empat tahap: Persiapan (Survei dan Modul), Implementasi (menggabungkan Latihan Fisik/PBB, Pembinaan Mental, dan Praktik Lapangan/Outbound), Evaluasi (Pre-test/Post-test dan Observasi), dan diakhiri dengan Keberlanjutan program melalui perumusan SOP Ketarunaan, sehingga hasilnya dapat terintegrasi ke dalam budaya sekolah secara permanen.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of character and discipline reinforcement through the Cadetship approach at SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin has shown measurable and significant positive impacts. Quantitatively, pre-test and post-test results showed an average increase in student discipline of 20% across indicators such as punctuality, neatness, and obedience to instructions. These findings are supported qualitatively by the success of the program in fostering mental resilience, esprit de corps (teamwork), and initiative.

This effectiveness aligns with modern vocational education theories (2023–2025), which state that routine habituation and consistent rule enforcement are key to forming the resilient character required by the maritime industry. Although initial resistance occurred among some students, it was successfully addressed through personal approaches and mental coaching. Overall, the Cadetship program has proven to be an effective and applicable strategy in preparing students to be professional and disciplined graduates.

Table 1.1. Results and Analysis of the Cadetship Program

No.	Fokus Pembahasan	Focus of Discussion	Analysis and Theoretical Relevance
1.	Time Discipline & Obedience	<i>Time Discipline & Obedience: An average increase of 20% in discipline scores was observed (from pre-test to post-test). Students demonstrated higher compliance with morning assembly schedules and basic military drill (PBB) routines.</i>	<i>Effectiveness of Habituation: In accordance with the "Three Pillars of Cadetship" principle (Routine Habituation), which systematically transforms compliant behavior into conscious self-awareness.</i>
2.	Character and Leadership	<i>Character and Leadership Development: A significant increase was observed in Esprit de Corps (team solidarity), personal initiative, and self-confidence</i>	<i>Soft Skills Strengthening: Field activities successfully built resilient character and leadership competencies, which are key elements demanded by the modern maritime industry (2023–2025 Studies).</i>

		<i>when leading small groups (Outbound Observation results).</i>	
3. Knowledge Insight	<i>Knowledge Insight:</i> <i>The average scores for National Insight, Ethics, and Public Speaking comprehension reached above 85%.</i>	<i>Knowledge Transfer:</i> <i>Educational modules and Mental-Spiritual Development were effective in internalizing Civic Disposition values (citizenship attitudes) as a foundation for character building.</i>	
4. Supporting Factors and Obstacles	<i>Supporting Factors and Obstacles:</i> <i>Full support from the school authorities and the professionalism of the instructors served as the primary supporting factors. Initial student resistance was successfully addressed through a personal approach.</i>	<i>Program Synergy:</i> <i>The success of the program was heavily influenced by the synergy between the Implementation Team and the institutional commitment (SMK), ensuring that the development process remained educational in nature.</i>	

Source: Processed Data, 2026

The results of the character and discipline strengthening program through the Cadetship Approach at SMK Arung Samudera Banjarmasin demonstrate highly positive and measurable outcomes. Quantitatively, there was an average increase in discipline of 20% across indicators of obedience, punctuality, and mastery of drill (PBB), which confirms the effectiveness of the habituation method.

Qualitatively, the program successfully developed superior character traits, characterized by an increase in mental toughness (resilience), esprit de corps (solidarity), and student leadership abilities during field practices and daily tasks. At the institutional level, the program's output includes the provision of a Cadetship SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) framework. This serves as a foundation for the school to guarantee systematic program sustainability, ensuring that discipline is permanently integrated into the school culture to produce professional, work-ready graduates who meet the demands of the maritime sector.



Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 1.1. Morning Assembly on the Field Before On-board Activities



Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 1.2. The Teaching Team of Arung Samudera Maritime Vocational School Banjarmasin



Source: Processed Data, 2026

Figure 1.3. Activities on Board for the Nautical Department

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this community service project, it is concluded that the Cadetship Approach is effective in improving the discipline and character of students at SMK Arung Samudera. A 20% increase in discipline was achieved across indicators of punctuality, neatness, and obedience. Qualitatively, the program successfully fostered mental toughness (resilience) and esprit de corps. These results align with modern vocational education theories. This approach bridges the gap between academic learning and maritime professionalism and will be integrated into the school culture through the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

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