

Analyzing the Perceptions of Students, Lecturers, and Staff in Understanding the Buddhist Motto: Excellence and Character in Higher Education Management

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Abstract

The vision and mission are fundamental to an educational institution, but discrepancies exist among students, lecturers, and staff regarding the meaning and effectiveness of the motto "Buddhistic, Excellent, and Characterized." Additionally, there are issues such as limited facilities and inadequate curriculum development aligned with job market needs. This study aims to explore the perceptions and understandings of students, lecturers, and staff regarding the motto and to determine if there are differences in their perceptions of its effectiveness in enhancing educational quality and campus productivity. The research employs a mixed-method approach using a Sequential Exploratory Design, starting with a qualitative phase followed by a quantitative phase. The analysis at STABN Sriwijaya reveals generally positive perceptions of the motto, particularly among students, with variations among lecturers. ANOVA tests indicate significant differences in understanding and application of these values among students, lecturers, and staff. Open-ended responses suggest the need for a more pragmatic and measurable approach to implementing these values, as well as improved socialization, clear indicators, and practical elaboration. It is crucial for STABN Sriwijaya to develop strategies that effectively integrate these values into institutional policies and decision-making processes.

Keywords: mottos, education management, campus, buddhist, characterful

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions often use mottos or slogans to represent their core values. These mottos guide students, lecturers, and staff in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The tradition of using mottos in higher education began in the 13th century when the University of Paris adopted the motto "Docentium Magna Virium," meaning "In teaching, there is great power." Since then, universities worldwide have incorporated mottos into their traditions. In the United States, some of the oldest colleges such as Harvard University (1636), Yale University (1701), and Princeton University (1746)

have mottos that contain the values held by the institution. Harvard University, for example, has the motto "Veritas" which means "truth," while Yale University has the motto "Lux et Veritas" which means "Light and Truth." Additionally, some colleges also have mottos in Latin, which was considered the official language of higher education in the past. For example, the University of Oxford uses the motto "Dominus Illuminatio Mea" which means "The Lord is my light," while the University of Cambridge uses the motto "Hinc Lucem et Pocula Sacra" which means "From here, light and sacred draughts."

Overall, the use of mottos in higher education has become part of a tradition that strengthens the identity of the institution and inspires values for students, lecturers, and university staff. However, with the increasing complexity of global competition, improving the quality of education in colleges becomes very important in preparing a characterful young generation capable of competing in an increasingly complex era of globalization (Pastor-García et al., 2019). Therefore, the use of mottos can serve as a guide for higher education institutions in carrying out their duties and responsibilities to ensure the improvement of education quality (Fasa, 2017; Fry, 2018; Khairi et al., 2023; Rose, 2013). In this regard, the values held by the motto can be implemented in both academic and non-academic activities in colleges to achieve the desired educational objectives.

In an ideal condition, colleges that are excellent and have character should be able to provide quality education that is relevant to the job market needs (Maqbulah, 2021). Kurikulum yang disusun harus mempertimbangkan perkembangan terkini dan mengakomodasi kebutuhan mahasiswa (Malahayati & Zunaidah, 2021). In the learning process, lecturers must be able to implement character values and ethics as an integral part of the learning process, so that students not only acquire knowledge but also form a good personality (Dantas & Cunha, 2020; Gibson et al., 2023; Manurung et al., 2022). One of the higher education institutions in Indonesia that has a motto with the keywords excellent and characterful is the Sriwijaya State Buddhist College Tangerang (STABN Sriwijaya). STABN Sriwijaya is a state college under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. As an institution of higher education that applies Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto, STABN Sriwijaya demonstrates an awareness of the importance of religious, academic, and character values in creating graduates who are excellent and characterful and integrating Buddhist values in higher education. Literally, Buddhist refers to the teachings of the Buddhist religion that teach values such as kindness, compassion, and wisdom to be applied in daily life (Jones, 1979). In the context of higher education, the application of Buddhist values can help students develop self-quality and enrich spiritual experience.

Furthermore, the term "excellent" refers to the college's effort to create graduates who excel in academic and non-academic fields. According to Hang, (2021) and Saepudin et al., (2020), colleges must provide quality education and develop programs that support the development of skills, knowledge, and student personality to be ready to face the challenges of the job market. The word "characterful" refers to the moral and ethical values applied in the lives of students and society. Colleges should teach character values such as honesty, courage, and responsibility to form characterful graduates with high integrity. The application of character values can also help students become good and responsible leaders in community life (Darmawan et al., 2023; Irvansyah et al., 2023; Jarad et al., 2020). In implementing the motto to create a Buddhist, excellent, and characterful college, there are common problems such as difficulty in building awareness and commitment from all campus residents related to the motto, and the lack of integration between the motto with campus programs and activities. Another issue that arises is the gap between the motto and the reality on the ground, such as limited facilities, and the lack of curriculum development relevant to job market needs.

Another common problem is the lack of human resources to implement programs that support the achievement of the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto goals. This is evident from the uneven participation between lecturers and staff in being committee members for activities. Many lecturers are reluctant to participate in activities held to support the achievement of the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto. This can make it difficult for the campus to implement the desired programs, making it hard to achieve the set goals. This issue can also affect the quality of education

provided by STABN Sriwijaya campus . In the context of achieving the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto goals, there are several issues that need attention. The first problem is the absence of solid long-term planning, which can lead to ambiguity and uncertainty in achieving these goals. The impact of this issue is the failure to achieve the desired goals, thus raising doubts and mistrust in the implemented programs (Done et al., 2011; Huang et al., 2005).

Additionally, another issue that needs attention is the lack of support and cooperation from external parties such as industry and society (Bag & Pretorius, 2022). Cooperation from external parties can help achieve the motto goals, but without this support and cooperation, these goals are difficult to achieve (Sachs, 2017; Tölgyesi et al., 2022). The impact of this issue is a lack of resources and support that can slow down or even hinder the achievement of the motto goals. Another issue that needs attention is the difference in understanding and interpretation of the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto by all campus residents (Balmer, 2023; Khrennikov & Oleschko, 2020). Differences in understanding and interpretation regarding the purpose and meaning of the motto can lead to inconsistency in decision-making and implementation of programs related to the motto. The impact of this issue is the occurrence of division or disharmony within the campus environment, thus disrupting the process of achieving the motto goals. Therefore, steps must be taken to address these issues so that the goals of the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

Colleges can implement the values contained in their motto in academic and non-academic activities to achieve the desired educational goals. Furthermore, research can be conducted to see how the application of religious values in education can affect the development of self-quality and spiritual experience of students (Lin et al., 2018; López, 2018; Rose, 2013). Additionally, research can be done to see to what extent the use of the motto can affect the quality of education in colleges and how the values contained in the motto can help students develop their skills, knowledge, and personality. To achieve the goals of an excellent and characterful college, it is important to understand how students, lecturers, and staff perceive the Buddhist, excellent, and characterful motto applied by the campus. This analysis of perceptions will help colleges understand how the campus motto is understood and interpreted by all campus residents.

METHOD

This research design employs a survey methodology, selected for its ability to yield representative data from the targeted population (Schoonenboom, 2023). Survey research design is a social research method used to systematically gather information from a broad group of individuals (Moser & Kalton, 2017). This study is specifically designed to include questions formulated to assess the interpretation and acceptance of the "Buddhist, Excellent, Characterful" motto. The research design involves several key steps: firstly, the creation of the instrument, where questions are crafted to be clear and objective; secondly, identifying the population and choosing an appropriate sampling method for efficient data collection. Finally, the collected data are analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics to draw conclusions or generalize from the sample to the broader population. This structured approach ensures that the study can effectively evaluate the perceptions surrounding the motto and its impact on the community within the context of higher education, aiming to provide valuable insights into how these values are integrated and embraced.

This research design's implementation involves a meticulous process to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Following the initial steps, the research team undertakes a pilot study to test the questionnaire, allowing for adjustments based on feedback to refine questions and improve understanding (Dzwigol, 2020, 2022). This is crucial for minimizing potential biases and ensuring the instrument's sensitivity to the nuances of respondents' perceptions regarding the motto. After revising the survey instrument, the research proceeds with the distribution of questionnaires, employing both online and offline methods to maximize response rates and ensure inclusivity of diverse participant

groups within the targeted population. The choice of sampling method, whether stratified, random, or convenience sampling, is guided by the objective to achieve a representative sample that mirrors the broader community's demographic and academic profiles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study could offer valuable perspectives on the extent to which Buddhist values are integrated into higher education and how this integration impacts the educational experience of students, as well as the professional and personal development of faculty and staff. The implications may be significant for educational policy, teaching practices, and program development, suggesting pathways for institutions to more effectively incorporate these values into their core operations. Such insights could inform a broader discourse on the role of ethics and excellence in shaping the future of education, potentially leading to more compassionate, inclusive, and innovative educational landscapes.

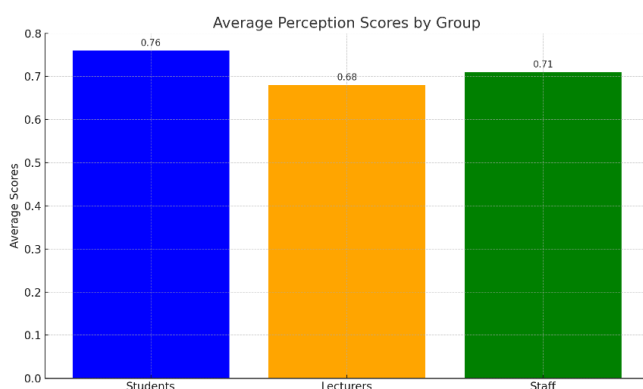


Figure 1. Average Group

Students have the most positive perception towards the motto, with the highest average score. Lecturers have a slightly lower perception compared to students and staff, with the lowest average score and the highest standard deviation. This indicates a greater variation in perception among lecturers. Staff have a slightly better perception than lecturers but slightly less compared to students. The relatively low standard deviation among students and staff indicates consistency in their perception of the motto, while the higher standard deviation among lecturers indicates a greater variation in their perception.

Average: Students, with an average score of 76%, are generally in the "Good" category. This suggests that they have a good understanding and consistent and effective application of the motto. Average: Lecturers, with an average score of 68%, are generally in the "Fair" category. Average: Staff, with an average score of 71%, are also in the "Good" category, although at the lower end of this range. Overall, the data indicates that students have a better understanding and application of the motto compared to lecturers and staff. Lecturers, although having fair understanding, still have room for improvement in understanding and applying this motto more effectively. Staff, being between lecturers and students in terms of understanding and application, tend to be closer to students in terms of the effectiveness of motto application.

Average: Students, with an average score of 76%, are generally in the "Good" category. This indicates that they have a good understanding and a consistent and effective application of the motto. Average: Lecturers, with an average score of 68%, are generally in the "Fair" category. Average: Staff, with an average score of 71%, are also in the "Good" category, though at the lower end of this range. Overall, the data shows that students have a better understanding and application of the motto compared to lecturers and staff. Lecturers, although having fair understanding, still have room for

improvement in understanding and applying this motto more effectively. Staff, while being between lecturers and students in terms of understanding and application, tend to be closer to students in terms of the effectiveness of motto application.

Tabel 1. ANOVA

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Between Groups | 6.904 | 2 | 3.452 | 10.802 | 0.000 |
| Within Groups | 33.552 | 105 | 0.320 | | |
| Total | 40.456 | 107 | | | |

In this study, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to evaluate statistical differences among groups. The ANOVA results showed a Between-Groups Sum of Squares of 6.904 with degrees of freedom (df) of 2, resulting in a Mean Square of 3.452. A significant F-value of 10.802, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000, indicates a very significant difference among the groups studied. Meanwhile, the Within-Group Sum of Squares was 33.552 with df of 105, resulting in a Mean Square of 0.320. The total Sum of Squares for the entire model was 40.456 with a total df of 107. These results indicate that the observed differences among groups are not due to random variation but indicate a real difference in the population studied, providing strong statistical evidence to support the research hypothesis that there is significant variation among these groups. Since the Significance value is much lower than 0.05, we can reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in perception among the three groups. This indicates that at least one group has a significantly different perception in understanding the "Excellence and Character" motto.

Based on the ANOVA results, with a significant F-value of 10.802 and a significance level (p-value) of 0.000, the null hypothesis (H0) can be rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference in understanding the Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful motto among the groups of students, lecturers, and staff. In other words, the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, affirming that there is significant variation in how these groups understand the motto that is the focus of the study. At its essence, the motto "Buddhist, Excellent, Characterful" embodies the meaning that every person of noble character will always strive to be the best in every field (Fry, 2018). With noble character, one will have a strong and solid character, enabling them to face all life's challenges (Alkhal H; Wong R; Rabie B, 2004). "Buddhist" signifies originating from Buddha's teachings, which espouse virtues such as love, compassion, and empathy. These virtues form the foundation of an excellent character. "Excellent" means possessing a quality that is superior to others (Aich, 2013). Superior quality can be achieved by optimally developing one's potential in academic, non-academic, and spiritual fields. "Characterful" means possessing good and noble qualities, which can be manifested in daily behavior, such as being honest, fair, responsible, and caring towards others (Wilhelmus, 2020)

The implementation of the "Buddhist, Excellent, Characterful" motto is already very well known among the members of STABN Sriwijaya (Adebayo, 2020; Fry, 2018). Although there is variation in responses, as indicated by the standard deviation analysis of this research survey's results, the majority of responses lean towards a positive perception. The campus community's perspective is very positive, despite a minority with less positive views (Baba-Nalikant et al., 2023; Barnhardt et al., 2018). In a more detailed analysis, it appears that Buddhist values are considered to be well implemented by the majority of respondents. Similarly, in the aspects of excellence and character, the majority provide positive assessments of the commitment to excellence, innovation culture, and other character aspects. However, despite high ratings in various aspects, there is still room for improvement, particularly in enhancing understanding and implementing these values more broadly and deeply.

Additionally, the descriptive analysis reveals that students consistently have the most positive perception, indicating the effectiveness of communication and the application of Buddhist, Excellent, Characterful values among them. However, a greater variation in lecturers' perceptions indicates that more specific and in-depth strategies are required to address their needs and understanding. Staff, positioned in the middle of the spectrum, may require a balancing approach between students and all employees. It is crucial for STABN Sriwijaya to adjust communication and education strategies about these values, to ensure that the entire community not only understands the motto but also can implement it in their daily lives, thus fostering a stronger and more integrated institutional culture.

Furthermore, findings from variance testing or ANOVA show that the understanding and application of the values contained in the "Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful" motto significantly differ among students, lecturers, and staff. Factors causing these differences include educational background, experience, and daily interaction with the motto. Based on open responses regarding the application of values in the "Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful" motto, it can be concluded that there is a need for more concrete and measurable implementation. Some negative responses highlight the lack of actual action and integration of these values into organizational practices. Suggestions emerging include expanding the socialization of these values to the entire academic community, creating clear indicators to measure excellence, and elaborating further on how the values of the STABN Sriwijaya motto can be applied. Overall, these responses indicate the need for a more structured strategy to realize this motto in real and measurable actions.

There is a gap between the idealized value and daily practice. Despite a strong desire to integrate the values of the motto, actual implementation is lacking. Systematic and strategic efforts are needed to bridge this gap (Darmawan et al., 2021, 2023; Hidayat & Syahid, 2019). Although there are good intentions, there is still a shortfall in the practical application of these values. This indicates the need for a more pragmatic approach in translating values into measurable and observable actions. Furthermore, differences in perception regarding the extent to which this motto has been implemented were found. While some respondents see a shortfall in achieving excellence, indicating the importance of objective and regular evaluation of excellence achievements. The need to enhance understanding of the motto among the academic community is evident. A better understanding will facilitate more effective application of these values, potentially improving the institution's quality.

The motto "Buddhist, Excellent, Characterful" encapsulates the aspiration towards superior quality through the cultivation of noble character, drawing from Buddha's teachings that advocate virtues such as love, compassion, and empathy. This integration aims not only for academic and non-academic excellence but also for the development of good and noble qualities manifested through daily behavior. The significant variance among groups as indicated by the ANOVA suggests that while the motto is widely recognized, its interpretation and application vary, highlighting areas where further improvement is needed to ensure a deeper and more widespread understanding and implementation of these values.

The research indicates that students tend to have the most positive perception, suggesting effective communication and application of these values among this group. However, the varied perceptions among lecturers highlight the need for more focused strategies to cater to their specific needs and understanding. For staff, a balanced approach is needed to align their perceptions more closely with the overall objectives of the institution (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). This necessitates STABN Sriwijaya to refine its strategies for communicating and educating its community about these values, ensuring comprehensive understanding and application in daily life, thereby fostering a stronger, more cohesive institutional culture (Lo Bianco, 2010).

The findings from variance testing underscore the differences in understanding and application of the motto's values among the groups, attributed to factors like educational background, experience, and daily interaction with the motto. The feedback calls for a more tangible and measurable implementation of these values, pointing out the discrepancy between the idealized value of the motto

and its practical application. The community's suggestions for expanding the socialization of these values, creating clear indicators for excellence, and delineating how the values can be practically applied, indicate a need for a structured strategy to actualize the motto in concrete and measurable actions.

Addressing the gap between idealized values and daily practices requires systematic and strategic efforts. The study highlights a general consensus on the importance of integrating the motto's values, yet it also points to a shortfall in practical application. This suggests a need for a pragmatic approach to translating these values into measurable and observable actions. Moreover, differences in perception about the motto's implementation suggest a need for objective and regular evaluation of excellence achievements and a reinforced understanding of the motto within the academic community. Enhancing this understanding is crucial for more effective application of these values, which could lead to improvements in the institution's overall quality.

CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis of responses related to the "Buddhist, Excellent, and Characterful" motto at STABN Sriwijaya reveals a generally positive perception, with the majority of respondents providing high scores reflecting familiarity and a good understanding of its values. Although there is variation in responses, particularly among lecturers, this analysis shows the effectiveness of implementing these motto values among students and indicates the need for more focused and specific approaches for lecturers and staff. The ANOVA test results demonstrate significant differences in the understanding and application of these values between the groups of students, lecturers, and staff, necessitating more targeted responses and different communication strategies for each group. Furthermore, open responses indicate the need for a more pragmatic and measurable approach in applying these values, bridging the gap between idealism and the reality of implementation. There is a need for increased socialization, creation of clear indicators to measure excellence, and further elaboration on the practical application of these values. It is crucial for STABN Sriwijaya to develop strategies that support the integration of these values into institutional policies and decisions, strengthening the effective implementation of the motto, and ensuring its impactful influence on all community members.

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