Policy Framework on Personal Growth Initiative : Empirical Evidence in Higher Education

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Abstract	Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is a concept that refers to how an individual actively and intentionally engages in self-development and personal growth. The paper aims to design a policy framework to accelerate PGI in UNNES students. This study employed the qualitative method with both primary and secondary data collection. We used Stakeholder Analysis to construct a policy framework. We found five groups of key and priority stakeholders for accelerating PGI in UNNES students: Academic and Research, Communities, Business Sector, Government (National and Regional), and Media Partners. The Stakeholders that have a high influence are Academic and Research, Communities, and Government institutions. Meanwhile, Business Sector and Media Partners have a medium influence. Each Stakeholder makes an essential program to accelerate PGI in higher education
Keywords	personal growth initiative; policy framework; higher education; stakeholder analysis; UNNES students

INTRODUCTION

Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is a multidimensional construct considered an essential part of a person's life. It is designed as a set of skills that help individuals develop consciously in the face of challenges, changes, experiences, and stressors in life (Verdoodt et al., 2024). In a university setting, personal growth involves cultivating self-awareness, fostering self-acceptance, and building resilience. These aspects are crucial for students to effectively deal with challenges, setbacks, and difficulties, enhancing their psychological and emotional well-being. (Song, 2024). PGI can be seen as a set of skills that help individuals engage in self-change across various aspects of their lives (Robitschek, 2003). PGI demonstrates a positive association between the use of appropriate coping strategies and emotional, social, and mental well-being. PGI also shows a negative association between inappropriate coping strategies and the emergence of feelings of anxiety, depression, and high levels of stres (Weigold et al., 2013). PGI is a self-development initiative that includes changes in certain aspects of their lives and academic achievement (de Jager-van Straaten et al., 2016).

University life is a highly demanding period in which students face and adapt to challenging responsibilities, balancing new and unfamiliar tasks, contexts, and relationships. Therefore, the transition process may be even more difficult for newcomers to the universit (Mohd Noor et al., 2020). PGI has become the focus of university leaders in various parts of the world at this time because it can equip students to face multiple obstacles/problems and encourage students to make positive changes in themselves for future success. (Patanapu et al., 2018)

Higher education institutions play a specific and crucial role in shaping students' self-esteem by implementing appropriate interventions and providing a supportive environment to foster sustainable personal growth. UNNES, as a state-owned university, has endeavored to promote student personal growth through self-development programs encompassing academic and non-academic aspects. This policy involves multiple stakeholders to optimize student personal growth. This paper aims to design a policy framework to accelerate PGI (Introduction to Indonesian Language and Literature) for UNNES students. This paper includes an introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Basic Concepts of Personal Growth Initiative (PGI)

Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) is essentially defined as "the active and deliberate desire to grow into a better person" or, more fully, as "active and deliberate participation in the process of personal growth." This concept indicates how a person consciously and actively engages in their self-development. PGI is considered a collection of valued skills that a person possesses, which influence their ability to seek and exploit personal growth opportunities throughout their lifespan. Furthermore, PGI shares similarities with the tendency to achieve self-actualization but uniquely emphasizes a person's active and deliberate participation in their change and development (Patanapu et al., 2018; Verdoodt et al., 2024; Weigold et al., 2013). A quality PGI will make individuals easily adapt to the situations they experience, be able to deal with stress, be grateful for the life they live, find it easy to find solutions, and have positive thinking in life (Olatunde Mabekoje & Ogunyemi Sesan Ola Mabekoje, 2007).

The core concept of PGI is (a) activeness and awareness in seeking opportunities to grow and develop, (b) a continuous process in learning new things, and (c) growth in various aspects of oneself, such as mental, spiritual, social, and emotional relationships. A student with a higher level of PGI has demonstrated higher academic performance because a higher level of PGI can increase the contribution and achievement of students in life. Individuals with a high PGI are more involved and concerned about changing themselves in the direction they want (Oluyinka, 2011).

PGI describes four main elements: Readiness to Change, Planning, Resource Usage, and Intentional Behavior (Song, 2024; Verdoodt et al., 2024). The cognitive component of PGI includes Readiness for Change, which relates to cultivating an open mindset to new ideas, experiences, and challenges and understanding the innate need for growth. Furthermore, there is Planning, which is defined as setting clear goals, creating a structured plan for personal growth, and breaking larger goals into manageable steps. A person's behavior is shaped through resource utilization, namely the active use of various available resources, such as educational opportunities, mentoring, relevant literature, online materials, and support networks. This component is supported by intentional behavior, which includes engaging in actions and attitudes aimed at self-improvement and involves the practice of self-reflection, self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-regulation. Table 1 shows the dimensions and descriptions of Personal Growth Initiatives.

Table 1
The Dimensions and Descriptions of Personal Growth Initiatives

Dimention of PGI	Component	Descriptions
Readiness to Change	Cognitive	Developing an open mindset to new ideas, experiences, and challenges, recognizing the need for growth, and being willing to step outside the comfort zone.
Planning	Cognitive	Set clear goals, create a roadmap for personal growth, and break down big goals into manageable steps.
Resource Usage	Behavior	Actively utilize educational opportunities, mentoring, literature, online materials, and support networks.
Intentional Behavior	Behavior	Engage in intentional actions and behaviors that align with personal growth goals; practice self-reflection, self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-regulation.

Sources : (Patanapu et al., 2018; Robitschek, 2003; Song, 2024; Verdoodt et al., 2024; Weigold et al., 2013)

Challenges in Promoting Personal Growth Initiatives in Higher Education

University students generally experience high levels of stress, which can contribute to the development of common mental disorders such as anxiety and depression. In the Indonesian context, studies show a high prevalence of psychological distress among university students, with reported stress levels ranging from 37% to 50%, depression prevalence between 18.8% and 25%, and anxiety prevalence as high as 51%. 2 Compounding this gap, there is a recognized gap between the number of available mental health professionals and the number of students in need of psychological intervention in Indonesia (Andriani et al., 2025). Difficulties with self-regulated learning (SRL) skills also hinder PGI. Students may struggle with fundamental aspects such as setting realistic goals, maintaining consistent motivation, and managing their time effectively. (Swandewi Dhiasa & Adi Nugroho, 2025)

Other challenges faced by students in increasing their Personal Growth are : (De Freitas et al., 2016; Susiswilujeng & Saraswati, 2023; Whittaker & Robitschek, 2001) Factors such as academic procrastination, mental health issues (stress, anxiety, depression), and self-regulation difficulties are not isolated issues but instead form a complex and interconnected network. For example, increased stress and mental health disorders can directly impair the cognitive functions necessary for self-regulation, leading to increased academic procrastination. This condition, in turn, can exacerbate feelings of stress and decrease overall motivation, creating a detrimental feedback loop. This complex interaction requires a holistic and integrated approach to student support, simultaneously addressing psychological well-being and academic skill development.

Gaus (2024) found that barriers to student self-development at Indonesian universities stem from individual student characteristics and are significantly influenced by systemic and socioeconomic factors. Low gross enrollment rates, economic needs that force many students to choose direct employment over higher education, and gaps in curriculum design and teacher training regarding self-directed learning collectively create an environment that actively hinders personal growth efforts. These conditions suggest that effective strategies to foster student self-development in Indonesia must go beyond individual-level interventions and include comprehensive policy reforms and institutional changes that address structural barriers. For example, if students are forced to work due to economic pressures, their ability to plan and utilize resources for academic and personal growth is limited. If the curriculum and faculty training does not support self-directed learning, students' readiness for change and intentional behavior in their self-development may not be achieved.

METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative approach to design a policy framework to accelerate the Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) for Semarang State University (UNNES) students. Qualitative methods were chosen for their ability to explore complex and multidimensional phenomena, such as policy development and the dynamics of personal growth. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of various stakeholders and the specific contexts that influence PGI in higher education settings. Qualitative design is well-suited for research to develop new frameworks or models, as it allows flexibility in data collection and analysis to capture the nuances and interconnections between elements.

This study used a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected to gain direct insights from key stakeholders relevant to the acceleration of PGI at UNNES. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), or qualitative surveys designed to elicit key respondents' views, experiences, and recommendations. Primary data collection focused on identifying each stakeholder group's roles, influence, and potential contributions to the PGI initiative. Secondary data identified data related to academic and non-academic achievements as material for evaluating the policy framework for accelerating PGI for UNNES students

The data analysis in this study focused on Stakeholder Analysis, which is a systematic method for identifying, analyzing, and mapping individuals or groups with an interest in or

influence over a project or policy. This process involves the following steps: (Sadovska et al., 2024),

First, Stakeholder Identification. Identify all individuals, groups, or organizations relevant to the acceleration of PGI at UNNES. Based on the abstract, five main groups have been identified: Academic and Research, Community, Business Sector, Government (National and Regional), and Media Partners.

Second, Interest and Influence Analysis. Evaluate the interests (what they care about) and level of influence (their ability to influence outcomes) of each stakeholder.

Third, Stakeholder Mapping. Visualize the relationships between stakeholders and relevant issues. Fourth, Development of Engagement Strategy: Formulate a strategy to effectively engage each stakeholder in the development and implementation of the PGI policy framework. Stakeholder engagement is crucial for the success of strategic planning in higher education and for bridging the gap between theory and practice..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Stakeholder Analysis Matrix for Accelerating Personal Growth Initiatives (PGI)

This section presents the findings from the stakeholder analysis, which is a crucial step in designing a policy framework to accelerate the Personal Growth Initiative (PGI) for UNNES students. This analysis identifies key stakeholder groups, evaluates their level of influence, and details the essential programs or contributions they can make.

Table 3
Stakeholder Analysis Matrix for Accelerating Personal Growth Initiatives (PGI) at UNNES

Stakeholder Groups	Level of Influence	Essential Contribution
Academic and Research	High	Be a leader in student development and growth
Improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education institutions
Develop data-driven interventions for student success
Improve curriculum that promotes self-development
Identify and eliminate systemic inequities in access to educational services.
Provide knowledge and skills to students
Provide facilities to support student development and growth
Build independent learning skills (SRL) and a supportive learning environment.
Community	High	Critical multi-stakeholder partnerships
Enhance students' theoretical understanding and practical skills;
Provide moral support and connections to students;
Encourage increased self-confidence that can foster academic performance, persistence, and good mental health.
Goverment	Medium	Launch programs such as "Independent Campus" or "impact programs" to improve the capacity and quality of higher education.
Encourage students to master various skills to increase graduate competitiveness.

		Promote a national education policy framework focusing on access, quality, synergy with industry, and industry linkages.
Business Sector	Medium	Industry mentoring program to develop professional networks and career paths
		Valuing core skills such as digital literacy, problem-solving, organizational, decision-making, and goal-oriented skills.
		Providing space for students to create and innovate
Mitra Media	Sedang	Social media platforms increase academic engagement
		Expand the reach of education and facilitate collaborative learning environments
		Provide a space for students to express their thoughts and ideas

This analysis confirms that accelerating PGI for UNNES students requires a collaborative approach involving various stakeholders. Highly influential groups—Academics and Research, the Community, and the Government—play a fundamental role in shaping the environment and policies that support PGI.

Academics and Research have a high influence because they are the core of higher education institutions. They are directly responsible for the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning environment that can foster or hinder PGI. Universities provide all physical and human resources to encourage student growth. UNNES provides various services to students to help them succeed academically and non-academically. In the academic field, UNNES provides all facilities in supporting teaching and learning activities, such as comfortable lecture buildings, journal access, quality lecturers, guardian lecturers, and curriculum. In the non-academic field, Unnes encourages students to excel both at the national, regional, and international levels, empower the community, and contribute to the development of science and technology in the community. . This result consistent with Borden & Torstrick (2025), university promote student success through data-driven, equity-focused interventions in college, graduation, and career readiness.

The community is highly influenced because it provides support beyond the campus environment. Partnerships with the community can bridge the gap between theory and practice, offer new experiences for students in the real world, and foster a sense of belonging essential for student well-being and persistence. In encouraging the role of the community, UNNES established cooperation to improve students' self-development so that they could practice their knowledge in the community by understanding the problems and proposing solutions to them. This result consistent with Perrin (2014) & Allen et al (2024), Community partners can work together to create interesting learning experiences and how students can feel empowered through experiential learning programs.

The government has a high influence because it sets the policy framework and provides financial support that shapes the overall higher education landscape. "Independent Campus" and "impact programs" directly influence students' development opportunities and readiness for the workforce. Kemendiktisaintek provides various programs such as funding grant programs for students (Program Kreativitas Mahasiswa, Program Pembinaan Mahasiswa Wirausaha dan Program Pengembangan Kapasitas Organisasi Kemahasiswaan) Talent event programs consisting of dozens of competitions in the fields of science, technology and social humanities.

The Business Sector and Media Partners have moderate influence, but their contributions remain vital. The business sector influences PGI by providing opportunities for employability development and career pathways. Their involvement ensures that students develop skills relevant to job market needs, which can motivate career-oriented personal growth. Challenges in student participation in employability development activities highlight the need for more innovative integration into university curricula. UNNES established cooperation with the business sector with "prigel" which provides opportunities for students to have real experience in the industrial world, business, and the world of work, encouraging the role of the community. UNNES established cooperation to improve students' self-development so that they could practice their knowledge in the community by understanding the problems and proposing solutions to them. (Sadovska et al., 2024) concluded that non-academic stakeholders refer to private firms that are focused on the acquisition of knowledge with the objective of achieving a competitive advantage. Media partners, particularly through digital platforms, have significant potential to expand the reach of PGI initiatives and facilitate interactions that support learning and development. They can increase program visibility and promote collaborative learning environments beyond the classroom. The media provides opportunities for students to write their ideas and ideas related to the problems faced by our country.

Stakeholder Engagement Model in Accelerating Personal Growth Initiatives (PGI)

This model developed based on stakeholder analysis and related literature, describes the stakeholder engagement process in the context of accelerating Personal Growth Initiatives (PGI) in higher education, specifically at UNNES. The model outlines three main stages: Context, Engagement Process, and Impact. The results of this model (figure 1) are derived from the Model of Stakeholder Engagement in Education developed by Sadovska et al (2024).

The Context stage forms the basis for why this stakeholder engagement is necessary. It encompasses the Drivers and Motivations underlying the PGI acceleration initiative. Drivers are external and internal factors demonstrating the urgency and need for PGI. For example, university students are in a challenging and demanding phase of young adulthood, which inherently offers opportunities for developing their full potential. Challenges such as academic procrastination, mental health issues (stress, anxiety, depression), and difficulties with self-regulated learning (SRL) skills are also key drivers. Furthermore, there are systemic challenges in Indonesian higher education, such as the low gross enrollment rate (GPR) and student disparities based on geographic location and socioeconomic conditions.

Motivations are why various parties want to engage in the PGI initiative. The primary motivation is recognizing that PGI is crucial for optimal individual functioning, psychological well-being, academic success, and career readiness. Higher education institutions are motivated to ensure competent and effective practices and serve public and private needs. The government is encouraged to improve the capacity and quality of higher education and the competitiveness of graduates. The business sector is motivated to attract future talent with relevant skills.

The Process of Engagement phase outlines how stakeholders interact and collaborate. This is the model's core and involves a series of interrelated steps. This process consists of three stages: (a) Contact Initiation. This is the starting point of engagement. Contact can be initiated through various channels, such as Professional Networks, which leverage existing relationships between individuals or organizations. University Managed: Programs or initiatives directly organized by the university to reach stakeholders (e.g., student development programs). Intermediary: A third party that facilitates connections between universities and other stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is crucial for strategic planning in higher education and bridging the gap between theory and practice.
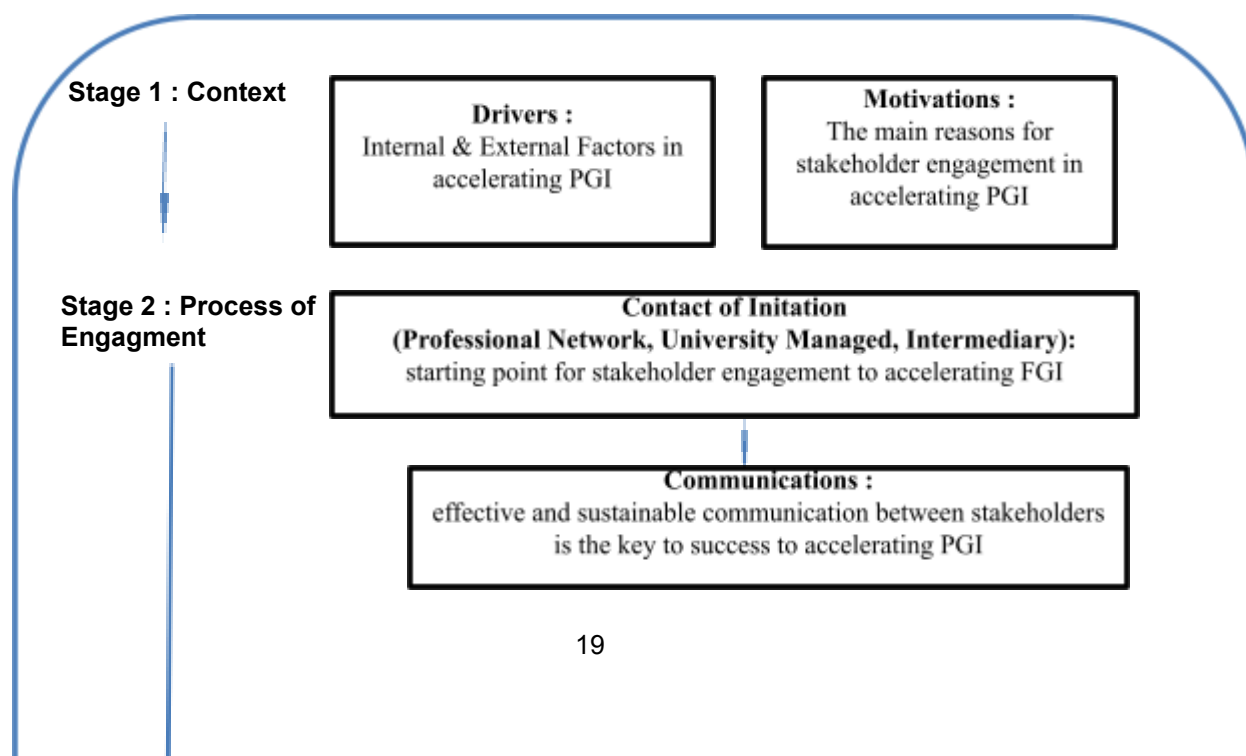
(b) Communication: Once contact is initiated, effective and ongoing communication is key. This way involves two-way dialogue, information exchange, and building stakeholder trust and commitment. Social media platforms, for example, can enhance academic engagement and
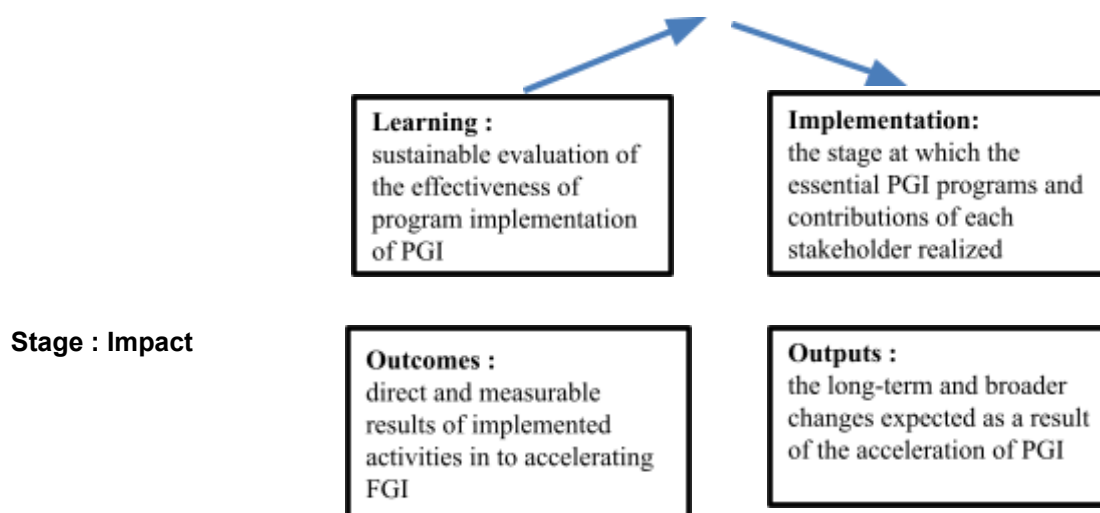
student-teacher interactions, expand the reach of education, and facilitate collaborative learning environments. (c) Implementation: This is the stage where each stakeholder's essential programs and contributions are realized. For example, Academics and Research will focus on curriculum improvement and developing data-driven interventions. The government will launch and support programs like the "Independent Campus." Communities will engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships and provide moral support. The Business Sector will offer industry mentoring programs and job opportunities. (d) Learning: The engagement process is not linear but cyclical. The learning stage involves continuous evaluation of implementation effectiveness, identification of areas for improvement, and adaptation of strategies based on feedback and observed outcomes. This result ensures that the policy framework remains relevant and effective over time.

The Impact phase focuses on the outcomes and outputs of the stakeholder engagement process. This section reflects the ultimate goal of the PGI initiative. Outputs are the more direct and measurable results of implemented activities. Examples include changes in university operations, increased student participation in self-development programs, or the business sector's acquisition of talented students as future employees. Universities with student mental health programs have successfully promoted the strengthening of student mental health. Various competitions held by the government, community, and business sectors have encouraged increased student participation and confidence.

Outcomes encompass the long-term and broader changes desired due to the PGI acceleration. These include improved student psychological well-being, higher life satisfaction, academic performance, and career readiness. The goal is to cultivate well-rounded, optimally functioning individuals who can contribute positively to society. This model emphasizes that the success of PGI acceleration depends heavily on strong and synergistic collaboration among all stakeholders, with a clear understanding of their respective roles and a commitment to the shared goal.

Stage 1 : Context

> **Drivers :**
> Internal & External Factors in accelerating PGI

> **Motivations :**
> The main reasons for stakeholder engagement in accelerating PGI

Stage 2 : Process of Engagment

> **Contact of Initation**
> **(Professional Network, University Managed, Intermediary):**
> starting point for stakeholder engagement to accelerating FGI

> **Communications :**
> effective and sustainable communication between stakeholders is the key to success to accelerating PGI

Figure 1
**Model of Stakeholder Engagement in Accelerating Personal Growth Initiatives (PGI)
developed from** Sadovska et al (2024)

CONCLUSION

PGI is a form of self-development initiative that includes changes in certain aspects of their lives and also includes academic achievement. The paper aims to design a policy framework to accelerate PGI in UNNES students. We used qualitative approach to design a policy framework to accelerate the PGI. The analysis method consists of the Stakeholder Matrix and the Model of Stakeholder Engagement. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Academics and Research and community have a high influence to accelerate PGI in UNNES students. Higher Education have directly responsible for the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning environment that can foster PGI. Community offer new experiences for students in the real world. Government, Business Sector and Media Partners have moderate influence to accelerate PGI in UNNES students. We propose Model of Stakeholder Engagement in accelerate PGI developed by Sadovska et al (2024).

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