



Character Achievement Beyond Medals: Toward a New Assessment Paradigm in Scouting Education

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Abstract

Scouting has long been recognized as a character-based educational movement; however, contemporary evaluation practices frequently emphasize visible achievements such as medals, rankings, badges, and competitive accomplishments. This tendency creates a conceptual disconnect between the developmental purposes of scouting and the indicators commonly used to assess educational success. Despite extensive scholarship in character education, Positive Youth Development, experiential learning, and motivational psychology, limited attention has been devoted to conceptualizing achievement beyond performance-oriented outcomes in scouting education. This conceptual paper addresses this gap by developing the Character Achievement Framework (CAF), a multidimensional model that reconceptualizes achievement as sustained developmental growth rather than competitive superiority. Drawing upon an integrative synthesis of character education, Positive Youth Development, experiential learning theory, Achievement Goal Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, the framework organizes character achievement into six interrelated dimensions: integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development. The study contributes to theory by introducing a developmental architecture linking internal character assets, relational character assets, and self-development as an integrative outcome. The framework advances understanding of educational success in nonformal youth education and provides a foundation for future research on developmental assessment, character growth, and youth leadership formation.

Keywords

character achievement; scouting education; positive youth development; character education; developmental assessment; experiential learning

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1. Introduction

Scouting has long been recognized as one of the world's most influential forms of nonformal education for fostering character, citizenship, leadership, and social responsibility among young people. Since its inception, scouting has sought not merely to develop practical skills or recreational competencies but to cultivate individuals capable of contributing positively to society through service, integrity, responsibility, and cooperation. This educational mission aligns closely with the broader tradition of Positive Youth Development (PYD), which emphasizes the promotion of strengths, thriving, and contribution rather than merely preventing problematic behaviors (Catalano *et al.*, 2004; Damon, 2004; Lerner *et al.*, 2005; Reinders & Youniss, 2006).

The educational philosophy of scouting is grounded in the assumption that young people learn most effectively through active participation, meaningful responsibility, teamwork, and experiential engagement. Learning outcomes are expected to emerge through authentic experiences rather than through formal instruction alone. Consistent with experiential learning theory, participation in structured outdoor activities, community engagement, and challenge-based programs has been associated with improvements in self-confidence, resilience, leadership, and social competence (Darts, 2006; Grocott & Hunter, 2009; Hattie *et al.*, 1997; Hayhurst *et al.*, 2015). Longitudinal evidence further indicates that scouting participation contributes positively to developmental trajectories related to character formation, civic engagement, and social contribution (Wang *et al.*, 2015).

Despite these educational aspirations, contemporary scouting practices in many contexts appear increasingly influenced by broader performance-oriented cultures that prioritize visible achievements, rankings, and competitive success. Competitions have historically served important pedagogical purposes by motivating participation, encouraging skill development, and promoting sportsmanship. However, competitive outcomes are increasingly becoming dominant indicators of success within scouting organizations. Troop performance is often evaluated through championship records, schools frequently celebrate scouting accomplishments primarily through competition results, and parents may perceive achievement largely through medals and trophies earned by their children. Consequently, educational success risks being redefined in terms of competitive superiority rather than developmental growth.

This tendency reflects wider societal patterns in which educational quality is frequently assessed through measurable outcomes, rankings, and comparative indicators (Biesta, 2009). While such indicators provide useful information regarding performance, they may inadequately capture deeper educational outcomes that unfold over time. Character-related capacities such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, self-regulation, civic commitment, and service orientation are often less visible, more context-dependent, and more difficult to quantify than competitive achievements (Berkowitz, 2022; VanderWeele, 2022; Walker, 2022). As a result, educational institutions may unintentionally privilege what is easiest to measure rather than what is most educationally valuable.

Recent developments in Positive Youth Development scholarship reinforce these concerns. Contemporary PYD research increasingly emphasizes thriving, intentional self-regulation, purpose development, and contribution as key indicators of successful youth development (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Lerner *et al.*, 2021; Linver *et al.*, 2022). These developmental outcomes are often expressed through sustained patterns of behavior rather than isolated performances. Consequently, evaluation systems that rely heavily on competitive achievements may overlook many of the developmental capacities that youth programs are designed to foster.

The dominance of competition-centered evaluation also raises important questions regarding motivation. Achievement Goal Theory distinguishes between mastery-oriented goals

focused on personal growth and performance-oriented goals focused on outperforming others (Ames, 1992; Elliot & McGregor, 2001a). Research consistently suggests that environments emphasizing mastery and self-improvement tend to support persistence, engagement, and adaptive learning, whereas excessive emphasis on comparative performance may encourage social comparison, fear of failure, and external validation. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory argues that sustainable development is most effectively supported when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness rather than relying primarily on external rewards and recognition (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). When scouting success becomes closely associated with trophies and rankings, intrinsic educational values may become overshadowed by extrinsic indicators of accomplishment.

These concerns are particularly significant because the foundational principles of scouting emphasize self-development rather than social domination. The scouting method promotes learning by doing, teamwork, leadership development, outdoor experiences, community involvement, and progressive personal growth. Within such a framework, success should ideally be evaluated by comparing an individual's current development with previous levels of growth rather than with the performance of others. From this perspective, a scout who becomes more trustworthy, responsible, service-oriented, or capable of leading others has achieved meaningful educational progress regardless of whether formal awards or competitive recognition are received.

Character education scholarship similarly argues that educational excellence cannot be reduced to performance outcomes alone. Character formation involves the cultivation of virtues, dispositions, and habits that guide behavior across situations and throughout the life course (Curren, 2016; Lickona, 1996; Morgan *et al.*, 2015a). More recent scholarship has further emphasized that meaningful assessment should capture patterns of character development, flourishing, and moral growth rather than isolated demonstrations of competence (Berkowitz, 2022; Kretzschmar *et al.*, 2023; VanderWeele, 2022). Nevertheless, despite growing advances in character education and Positive Youth Development research, limited attention has been devoted to developing assessment frameworks specifically designed for scouting education.

This limitation is noteworthy because scouting occupies a unique position at the intersection of character education, experiential learning, youth leadership development, civic engagement, and community service. Existing assessment systems frequently emphasize participation records, skill achievements, merit badges, and competition outcomes, yet provide limited guidance regarding how broader character accomplishments should be conceptualized and evaluated. Consequently, there remains a need for a more comprehensive framework capable of capturing the deeper developmental outcomes that scouting seeks to promote.

In response to this gap, this conceptual paper proposes the Character Achievement Framework (CAF) as an alternative paradigm for evaluating success in scouting education. Rather than defining achievement primarily through medals, rankings, or competitive victories, the framework conceptualizes achievement as sustained character growth reflected through six interrelated dimensions: integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development. By repositioning character formation as the central indicator of educational success, the proposed framework seeks to align assessment practices more closely with both the original educational mission of scouting and contemporary scholarship in character education, Positive Youth Development, and human flourishing.

The remainder of this paper proceeds as follows. First, the theoretical foundations of character achievement are examined through the lenses of character education, Positive Youth Development, experiential learning, and motivational theory. Second, existing

approaches to assessing success in youth development and scouting contexts are critically reviewed. Third, the Character Achievement Framework is introduced and elaborated as a conceptual model for evaluating educational outcomes in scouting. Finally, the implications of this framework for scouting practice, leadership development, assessment innovation, and future research are discussed.

2. Theoretical Foundations of Character Achievement

2.1 Character Education as the Foundation of Educational Success

Character education has increasingly become a central concern in contemporary educational theory due to growing recognition that academic achievement and technical competence alone are insufficient for preparing young people to navigate complex moral, social, and civic challenges. While traditional educational systems have often prioritized cognitive outcomes and measurable performance indicators, character education emphasizes the cultivation of virtues, dispositions, and habits that enable individuals to act ethically, contribute positively to society, and pursue meaningful lives (Curren, 2016; Lickona, 1996; Morgan *et al.*, 2015b).

From a virtue-based perspective, educational success cannot be reduced to external accomplishments alone. Rather, education is expected to foster stable patterns of moral judgment, ethical behavior, and personal responsibility that influence actions across diverse contexts and throughout the life course. Character is therefore understood not merely as a collection of desirable traits but as an integrated system of virtues including honesty, integrity, compassion, courage, perseverance, and responsibility that guide both individual conduct and social relationships (Sanderse, 2013; Walker, 2022).

Recent scholarship has further emphasized that character development is inherently developmental and relational. Virtues are not acquired through direct instruction alone but emerge through repeated practice, reflection, social interaction, and participation in communities that reinforce shared values and moral expectations (Dabdoub *et al.*, 2024). Consequently, character formation should be understood as a long-term educational process rather than a short-term instructional outcome.

This perspective carries important implications for educational assessment. If character develops gradually through experience and habituation, then educational success cannot be adequately captured through isolated performances or single achievement indicators. Berkowitz (2022) argues that meaningful character assessment requires attention to sustained behavioral patterns, moral commitments, and the consistent enactment of virtues across situations. Similarly, VanderWeele (2022) suggests that flourishing-oriented assessment must move beyond narrow performance metrics to encompass broader dimensions of human development and well-being.

The limitations of performance-centered evaluation have become increasingly evident in contemporary educational systems. Educational institutions often privilege outcomes that are visible, measurable, and comparable, while developmental outcomes such as integrity, responsibility, empathy, and moral commitment remain comparatively neglected (Biesta, 2009). Yet these less visible outcomes frequently represent the very capacities that enable individuals to thrive in society and contribute constructively to their communities.

This argument is particularly relevant for scouting education. Since its inception, scouting has been designed primarily as a character-building movement rather than a performance-oriented institution. The ultimate purpose of scouting is not simply to produce skilled participants or successful competitors but to cultivate responsible citizens who embody positive values in their everyday lives. Therefore, any attempt to redefine achievement within scouting must begin by recognizing character development as a primary educational outcome rather than a secondary consequence of participation.

2.2 Positive Youth Development and Strength-Based Perspectives

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework provides a complementary theoretical foundation for understanding character achievement. Emerging as an alternative to deficit-oriented models of adolescence, PYD rejects the assumption that youth development should be understood primarily through the prevention of risks and problem behaviors. Instead, it emphasizes the identification, cultivation, and mobilization of strengths that enable young people to thrive and contribute positively to society (Damon, 2004; Reinders & Youniss, 2006).

A central proposition of PYD is that all young people possess developmental potential that can be nurtured through supportive relationships, meaningful opportunities, and positive developmental contexts. Consequently, youth should be viewed not merely as individuals who must avoid negative outcomes but as resources capable of leadership, contribution, civic engagement, and social innovation (Catalano *et al.*, 2004; Lerner *et al.*, 2021).

This perspective is reflected in the Five Cs model of Positive Youth Development, which conceptualizes thriving through competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Bowers *et al.*, 2010). When these developmental assets are successfully cultivated, young people are more likely to demonstrate a sixth outcome contribution which reflects active engagement in family, community, and civic life. Character occupies a particularly important position within this framework because it represents the moral dimension of thriving and provides the ethical foundation for positive social contribution.

Contemporary developments in PYD theory have expanded beyond the original Five Cs framework by emphasizing intentional self-regulation, purpose development, and self-awareness as mechanisms through which young people actively shape their developmental trajectories (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Geldhof *et al.*, 2014; Mertens *et al.*, 2022). These perspectives suggest that development is not merely something that happens to young people but also something they actively construct through reflection, goal setting, adaptation, and personal agency.

Research further indicates that developmental assets such as self-regulation, purpose, and responsibility are associated with higher levels of well-being, contribution, and adaptive functioning (Linver *et al.*, 2022). Importantly, these outcomes often emerge gradually through sustained participation in developmental experiences rather than through isolated achievements. Consequently, PYD challenges assessment systems that prioritize short-term performance outcomes while overlooking long-term developmental growth.

For scouting education, PYD provides a strong justification for moving beyond trophy-based conceptions of success. If scouting seeks to foster thriving, leadership, citizenship, and social contribution, then assessment systems should evaluate the developmental capacities that support these outcomes. Character achievement can therefore be understood as a manifestation of positive youth development expressed through sustained personal growth and meaningful contribution to others.

2.3 Experiential Learning and the Educational Logic of Scouting

The educational philosophy of scouting is deeply rooted in experiential learning. According to experiential learning theory, meaningful learning occurs through a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflection, conceptual understanding, and active experimentation (Reinders & Youniss, 2006). Knowledge is not simply transmitted from instructor to learner but constructed through direct engagement with authentic situations.

This educational logic aligns closely with the scouting method. Activities such as camping, outdoor expeditions, community service, leadership assignments, patrol-based teamwork, and problem-solving challenges provide opportunities for participants to learn through action.

These experiences require young people to exercise judgment, assume responsibility, cooperate with others, and reflect upon the consequences of their decisions.

Research across adventure education, outdoor learning, and experiential education consistently demonstrates positive developmental effects associated with such experiences. Participation in challenge-based programs has been linked to improvements in self-esteem, resilience, teamwork, leadership, and personal growth (Grocott & Hunter, 2009; Hattie *et al.*, 1997; Hayhurst *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, service-learning research has shown positive impacts on civic responsibility, empathy, social awareness, and community engagement (Celio *et al.*, 2011; Compare & Albanesi, 2024; Lin, 2021).

Importantly, many of these outcomes are developmental rather than competitive in nature. Participants may experience substantial growth in responsibility, perseverance, leadership, or service orientation regardless of whether they receive formal recognition or achieve competitive success. This distinction challenges assumptions that educational achievement should be evaluated primarily through comparative performance indicators.

Experiential learning therefore supports a developmental conception of achievement. Educational success is reflected not only in what participants accomplish but also in who they become through participation. From this perspective, the value of scouting lies not merely in the activities themselves but in the character-forming experiences those activities create.

2.4 Motivation, Self-Development, and the Limits of Competitive Achievement

The relationship between achievement and motivation provides another important foundation for understanding character achievement. While competition can generate challenge and engagement, educational psychology suggests that excessive reliance on external rewards may undermine deeper developmental goals.

Achievement Goal Theory distinguishes between mastery-oriented goals, which emphasize learning and self-improvement, and performance-oriented goals, which emphasize demonstrating superiority over others (Ames, 1992; Elliot & McGregor, 2001b). Research consistently indicates that mastery-oriented environments are associated with greater persistence, adaptive learning strategies, resilience, and long-term engagement. In contrast, environments dominated by comparative evaluation may increase anxiety, fear of failure, and dependence on external validation.

Similar conclusions emerge from Self-Determination Theory. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), human development is most effectively supported when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Motivation becomes increasingly sustainable when actions are aligned with internal values and personally meaningful goals rather than external rewards. Ryan & Deci (2020) further argue that intrinsic motivation is closely associated with well-being, engagement, and long-term developmental outcomes.

These insights have important implications for scouting. The movement seeks to cultivate lifelong values and commitments rather than temporary performance outcomes. However, when success becomes heavily associated with medals, trophies, and rankings, participants may gradually shift their attention toward external recognition rather than internal growth. Under such conditions, achievement risks becoming disconnected from the developmental purposes that scouting was originally designed to serve.

Broader critiques of measurement-oriented education reinforce this concern. Biesta (2009) argues that contemporary educational systems often privilege what is measurable at the expense of what is educationally meaningful. Character, citizenship, moral responsibility, and personal formation are frequently marginalized because they are more difficult to quantify than performance outcomes. Yet these dimensions represent some of the most significant purposes of education.

Taken together, Achievement Goal Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and contemporary critiques of measurement-oriented education converge on a common conclusion: authentic educational achievement should be understood primarily as self-development rather than social comparison. This insight provides a crucial foundation for reconceptualizing success within scouting education.

2.5 Synthesis: Toward the Concept of Character Achievement

Across the four theoretical traditions reviewed above, a common conclusion emerges. Character education emphasizes virtue formation and moral development; Positive Youth Development emphasizes thriving and contribution; experiential learning emphasizes growth through meaningful experience; and motivational theories emphasize self-development over external validation. Although these traditions originate from different scholarly domains, they converge in their rejection of purely performance-based conceptions of educational success.

Collectively, these perspectives suggest that the most important outcomes of education are developmental rather than competitive. Educational effectiveness should therefore be evaluated not solely by visible achievements but also by the extent to which individuals become more responsible, ethical, service-oriented, self-regulated, and capable of contributing positively to others.

Although originating from different scholarly traditions, the theories reviewed in this study converge around a shared developmental logic. Their integration provides the intellectual foundation for reconceptualizing achievement as character growth rather than competitive accomplishment.

Table 1. Theoretical Foundations of the Character Achievement Framework

Theoretical Perspective	Core Concept	Educational Emphasis	Contribution to CAF
Character Education	Virtue formation and moral development	Ethical behavior and character growth	Provides the foundation for integrity and responsibility
Positive Youth Development (PYD)	Thriving, strengths, and contribution	Positive developmental outcomes	Supports service, brotherhood, and contribution orientation
Experiential Learning Theory	Learning through experience and reflection	Development through meaningful participation	Explains how scouting experiences generate character growth
Achievement Goal Theory	Mastery versus performance orientation	Self-improvement and learning goals	Justifies developmental rather than competitive achievement
Self-Determination Theory	Autonomy, competence, and relatedness	Intrinsic motivation and self-regulation	Supports self-development as a long-term developmental outcome

Source: Developed by the author based on the theoretical synthesis presented in this study.

Table 1 demonstrates that multiple theoretical traditions converge in rejecting purely performance-based definitions of educational success. Together, they support a developmental understanding of achievement centered on virtue formation, personal growth, social contribution, intrinsic motivation, and lifelong self-development, which collectively underpin the CAF model.

This convergence provides a strong theoretical foundation for developing an alternative framework capable of capturing the broader developmental outcomes that scouting seeks to promote. Building upon these foundations, the next section critically examines existing assessment approaches and identifies the conceptual limitations that necessitate a new paradigm of character achievement assessment.

3. Critique of Existing Assessment Approaches in Scouting and Youth Development

3.1 Assessment as a Driver of Educational Priorities

Assessment systems do more than measure outcomes; they communicate what educational institutions value. Across educational settings, indicators selected for evaluation frequently become implicit definitions of success, shaping participant behavior, organizational priorities, and stakeholder expectations. Consequently, assessment frameworks play a powerful role in determining not only how achievement is recognized but also how educational purposes are interpreted and pursued (Biesta, 2009).

Within youth development programs, including scouting, assessment has traditionally relied on visible indicators such as participation records, merit badges, certificates, rankings, and competition results. These indicators offer several practical advantages. They are relatively easy to document, compare, standardize, and communicate to external stakeholders. Furthermore, recognition systems can motivate participation, reinforce effort, and provide participants with tangible evidence of accomplishment.

However, educational assessment literature increasingly cautions against equating what is measurable with what is educationally valuable. The dominance of quantifiable indicators may unintentionally narrow educational priorities by directing attention toward outcomes that are easiest to observe while neglecting developmental processes that are more difficult to measure (Biesta, 2009; VanderWeele, 2022). In such situations, assessment systems risk becoming instruments of simplification rather than comprehensive representations of educational growth.

This concern is particularly relevant for scouting education. Although scouting was originally established to foster character, citizenship, leadership, and service, many contemporary recognition systems continue to emphasize achievements that are publicly visible and readily documented. As a result, there is a growing possibility that performance-based indicators become proxies for educational success, even when they only partially reflect the broader developmental objectives of the scouting movement.

3.2 The Dominance of Outcome-Based Recognition

One of the most persistent features of educational assessment systems is their reliance on outcome-based recognition. Achievement is frequently represented through awards, certificates, rankings, badges, and competitive accomplishments that signify successful performance under specific conditions.

Such recognition mechanisms are not inherently problematic. Achievement Goal Theory suggests that challenge, feedback, and opportunities for accomplishment can positively influence motivation and competence development when appropriately structured (Ames, 1992; Elliot & McGregor, 2001b). Likewise, scouting traditions have long incorporated advancement systems and merit recognition as educational tools designed to encourage participation and skill mastery.

The problem emerges when these forms of recognition evolve from educational instruments into primary indicators of success. Under such circumstances, educational value becomes increasingly associated with visible accomplishments rather than developmental transformation. Success is judged according to who wins, who receives awards, or who achieves the highest level of recognition rather than according to who demonstrates the greatest growth in responsibility, integrity, service, or leadership.

This tendency reflects a broader cultural orientation toward performance and accountability that increasingly characterizes contemporary educational systems. Sugarman (1987) argues

that reward-centered environments may inadvertently encourage compliance and performance-seeking behavior rather than genuine engagement with learning. Similarly, Biesta (2009) warns that educational institutions often become preoccupied with measurable outcomes at the expense of deeper educational purposes such as personal formation, democratic participation, and moral development.

Within scouting contexts, outcome-based recognition may therefore create a conceptual tension. While awards and achievements can support development, they may also unintentionally redefine educational success in ways that prioritize competitive accomplishment over character growth. This creates the risk that scouting becomes evaluated according to indicators that are more visible than meaningful.

3.3 3.3 Assessment Bias Toward Visible Achievement

A second limitation concerns the tendency of assessment systems to privilege visible achievements over less observable forms of development. Educational institutions naturally favor indicators that can be documented, standardized, and compared across individuals or groups. Yet many of the most significant outcomes of youth development programs do not possess these characteristics.

Recent scholarship on character assessment highlights the multidimensional nature of human development. Character involves patterns of behavior, moral commitments, dispositions, motivations, habits, and relationships that unfold across contexts and over time (Berkowitz, 2022; Walker, 2022). These dimensions cannot be adequately represented through isolated performances or single achievement indicators.

The distinction between achievement and development is particularly important. Winning a competition may demonstrate competence under specific conditions, but it does not necessarily indicate honesty, empathy, humility, service orientation, or ethical leadership. Conversely, individuals who never receive formal recognition may nevertheless demonstrate substantial developmental growth through everyday acts of responsibility, cooperation, perseverance, and care for others.

Character education scholars have repeatedly emphasized that virtues are expressed primarily through consistency rather than exceptionality. Acts of integrity, responsibility, compassion, and service often occur in ordinary situations where formal recognition is neither expected nor available (Curren, 2016; Morgan *et al.*, 2015a; Sanderse, 2013). Consequently, assessment systems that rely predominantly on visible achievements may systematically underestimate the developmental capacities that educational programs seek to cultivate.

This assessment bias creates a fundamental paradox. The outcomes that are easiest to measure are not necessarily the outcomes that matter most educationally. At the same time, the outcomes most closely aligned with educational purposes are frequently among the most difficult to assess. This paradox is particularly consequential for scouting because character formation constitutes its central educational mission.

3.4 The Developmental Invisibility of Character Growth

A further challenge arises from the developmental nature of character itself. Unlike competition outcomes, which are often immediate and observable, character development typically occurs gradually through repeated experiences, reflection, and social interaction.

Positive Youth Development research consistently demonstrates that developmental assets such as character, caring, self-regulation, purpose, and contribution emerge through long-term interactions between individuals and their environments (Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Geldhof *et al.*, 2014; Lerner *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, studies on intentional self-regulation indicate that developmental growth frequently unfolds incrementally through cycles of challenge,

adaptation, and reflection rather than through discrete achievements (Bowers *et al.*, 2011; Mertens *et al.*, 2022).

Because character growth is cumulative and context-dependent, its most meaningful manifestations may remain invisible within conventional assessment systems. A scout who gradually develops stronger ethical judgment, increased responsibility, greater resilience, or deeper commitment to service may experience profound developmental change despite receiving little formal recognition. Conversely, highly visible achievements may not necessarily correspond to comparable levels of character development.

The challenge is further complicated by the fact that character strengths often manifest differently across situations. Honesty, gratitude, humility, perseverance, and kindness are expressed through diverse behavioral patterns rather than through singular accomplishments (Kretschmar *et al.*, 2023). Consequently, meaningful assessment requires attention to longitudinal patterns of behavior rather than isolated moments of success.

These observations suggest that many existing assessment systems may be poorly aligned with the developmental realities of character formation. When educational success is evaluated primarily through visible achievements, substantial forms of personal growth risk remaining undocumented, undervalued, and ultimately overlooked.

3.5 Misalignment Between Scouting Philosophy and Assessment Practice

The preceding limitations point toward a broader issue concerning the relationship between educational philosophy and assessment practice. Effective assessment systems should reflect the educational purposes they are intended to support. When assessment indicators diverge from educational goals, institutions may experience what can be described as a purpose-assessment misalignment.

Scouting philosophy emphasizes self-development, service, leadership, citizenship, teamwork, responsibility, and moral commitment. These objectives are developmental in nature and involve long-term processes of personal growth. Yet many assessment practices continue to rely heavily on indicators associated with competition, public recognition, and externally visible accomplishment.

This discrepancy is important because assessment systems communicate institutional priorities. Participants naturally allocate effort toward activities that receive recognition and reward. Therefore, when awards, rankings, and trophies become dominant indicators of success, they may unintentionally influence participants to prioritize performance outcomes over developmental goals.

Self-Determination Theory provides additional insight into this issue. While external rewards can support competence development under certain conditions, excessive reliance on external validation may undermine intrinsic motivation and shift attention away from personally meaningful goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2020). For youth organizations whose mission involves lifelong character formation, this motivational shift may be particularly problematic.

From a Positive Youth Development perspective, successful youth programs are expected to promote thriving, contribution, and civic engagement rather than simply producing high performers (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Catalano *et al.*, 2004; Lerner *et al.*, 2021). Assessment frameworks that emphasize competitive accomplishment alone are therefore unlikely to fully capture the educational purposes that scouting seeks to achieve.

3.6 The Conceptual Gap: Toward a Character-Based Assessment Paradigm

The foregoing discussion reveals a significant conceptual gap within existing approaches to scouting assessment. Current systems provide useful mechanisms for documenting participation, skill acquisition, and competitive accomplishment. However, they offer limited guidance regarding how broader developmental outcomes should be conceptualized, assessed, and recognized.

Three interrelated limitations are particularly evident. First, existing approaches tend to privilege visible achievements over developmental processes. Second, they frequently underestimate forms of character growth that emerge gradually through sustained participation. Third, they may create misalignment between the educational philosophy of scouting and the indicators used to evaluate success.

To clarify the conceptual distinction underlying the proposed framework, it is useful to compare the dominant assessment orientation commonly found in scouting with a developmental perspective that emphasizes long-term character growth, personal improvement, and contribution.

Table 2. Comparative Assessment Paradigms in Scouting Education

Dimension	Traditional Achievement Paradigm	Character Achievement Paradigm
Primary Success Indicator	Medals, badges, rankings, trophies	Developmental growth and character formation
Assessment Focus	Performance outcomes	Developmental processes and progression
Evaluation Reference	Comparison with others	Comparison with previous self
Dominant Motivation	External recognition and rewards	Personal growth and self-improvement
Time Orientation	Short-term accomplishments	Long-term development
Educational Emphasis	Competitive excellence	Character development and flourishing
Recognition Basis	Visible achievements	Sustained behavioral patterns
Core Educational Question	Who performed best?	Who has grown and developed?

Source: Developed by the author based on Character Education, Positive Youth Development, Experiential Learning, Achievement Goal Theory, and Self-Determination Theory.

The comparison highlights a fundamental shift in how achievement is conceptualized. Rather than treating success as competitive superiority or external recognition, the developmental perspective emphasizes continuous character growth, self-improvement, and meaningful contribution, thereby aligning assessment more closely with the educational mission of scouting.

Although character education, Positive Youth Development, experiential learning, and motivational psychology all emphasize personal growth, flourishing, contribution, and virtue development, these perspectives have not yet been sufficiently integrated into a coherent assessment framework specifically designed for scouting education. As a result, there remains no widely articulated model capable of evaluating educational success beyond medals, rankings, badges, and trophies.

The preceding critique suggests that current assessment systems emphasize observable accomplishments while overlooking developmental outcomes. This imbalance creates a conceptual gap between the educational purposes of scouting and the indicators commonly used to define success.

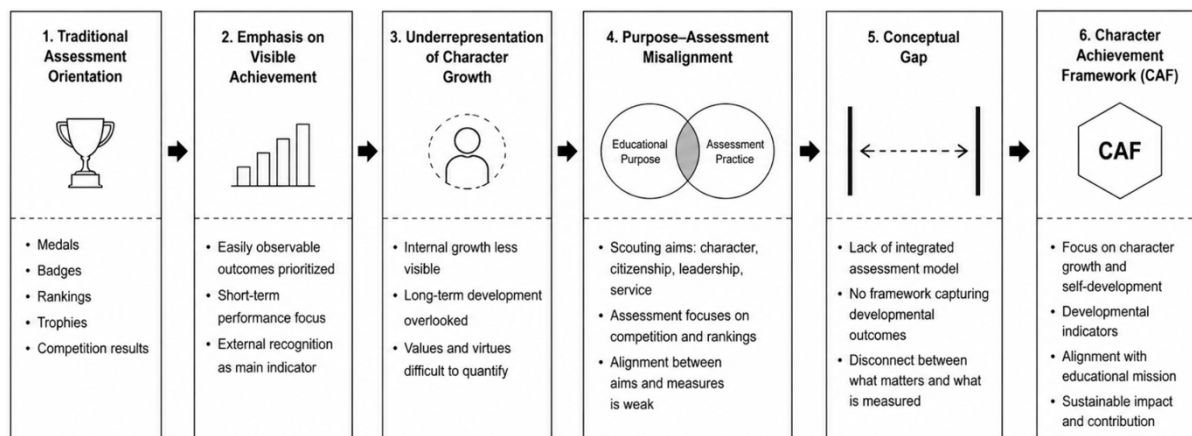


Figure 1. From Medal-Centered Achievement to Character Achievement

Source: Developed by the author based on the conceptual synthesis presented in this study.

The figure illustrates the causal logic underlying the development of CAF. As assessment increasingly prioritizes visible achievements, important developmental outcomes become marginalized, creating a misalignment between educational objectives and evaluation practices. This conceptual gap necessitates a character-centered framework capable of capturing broader developmental success.

Addressing this limitation requires a fundamental reconceptualization of achievement itself. Rather than defining achievement primarily as competitive superiority or externally recognized accomplishment, achievement should be understood as sustained developmental progress reflected through integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, positive relationships, and continuous self-development.

Such a perspective aligns more closely with contemporary theories of character formation, Positive Youth Development, and experiential learning while remaining faithful to the foundational educational purposes of scouting. Building upon this conceptual need, the following section introduces the Character Achievement Framework (CAF), a multidimensional model designed to reposition character growth as the central indicator of educational success in scouting education.

4. Conceptualizing Character Achievement in Scouting Education

4.1 Reconceptualizing Achievement in Scouting Education

The preceding discussion suggests that prevailing understandings of achievement in scouting education remain heavily influenced by performance-oriented assumptions. Success is frequently represented through visible accomplishments such as awards, competition victories, advancement records, and public recognition. While these indicators may provide evidence of participation and competence, they do not fully capture the broader developmental purposes that scouting seeks to achieve.

Contemporary scholarship in character education, Positive Youth Development (PYD), and experiential learning increasingly argues that educational success should be understood as a process of human development rather than merely the attainment of externally recognized outcomes. Educational experiences are valuable not simply because they produce performance gains but because they contribute to the formation of character, identity, responsibility, and social contribution (Berkowitz, 2022; Lerner *et al.*, 2021). From this perspective, achievement should be evaluated according to developmental growth rather than comparative superiority.

This distinction is particularly important in scouting education. The fundamental purpose of scouting is not to produce winners and losers but to cultivate young people who are capable

of leading, serving, cooperating, and acting responsibly within society. Consequently, achievement within scouting should be understood as the extent to which participation contributes to sustained growth in character-related capacities that support lifelong citizenship and contribution.

Building upon this premise, this paper proposes the Character Achievement Framework (CAF). The framework conceptualizes achievement as a multidimensional developmental construct reflecting progressive growth in virtues, relationships, and self-regulatory capacities that emerge through participation in scouting experiences. Rather than positioning achievement as a final outcome, CAF treats achievement as an ongoing developmental process through which individuals become increasingly capable of acting ethically, contributing socially, and directing their own growth.

4.2 The Architecture of Character Achievement

The Character Achievement Framework is organized around six dimensions: integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development. These dimensions are not presented as independent traits but as interconnected developmental capacities that collectively represent educational success in scouting.

The framework is grounded in the proposition that character achievement develops through a progression from internal regulation to social contribution and ultimately toward broader personal development. This proposition is consistent with research suggesting that positive developmental outcomes emerge through the interaction of personal strengths, relational assets, and self-regulatory processes (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Linver *et al.*, 2022).

Accordingly, CAF organizes its dimensions into three conceptual layers. The first layer consists of internal character assets represented by integrity and responsibility. These dimensions provide the moral and self-regulatory foundations that guide behavior. The second layer consists of relational character assets represented by service, leadership, and brotherhood. These dimensions reflect the outward expression of character within social contexts. The third layer consists of self-development, which functions as an integrative developmental outcome reflecting continuous growth across the preceding dimensions.

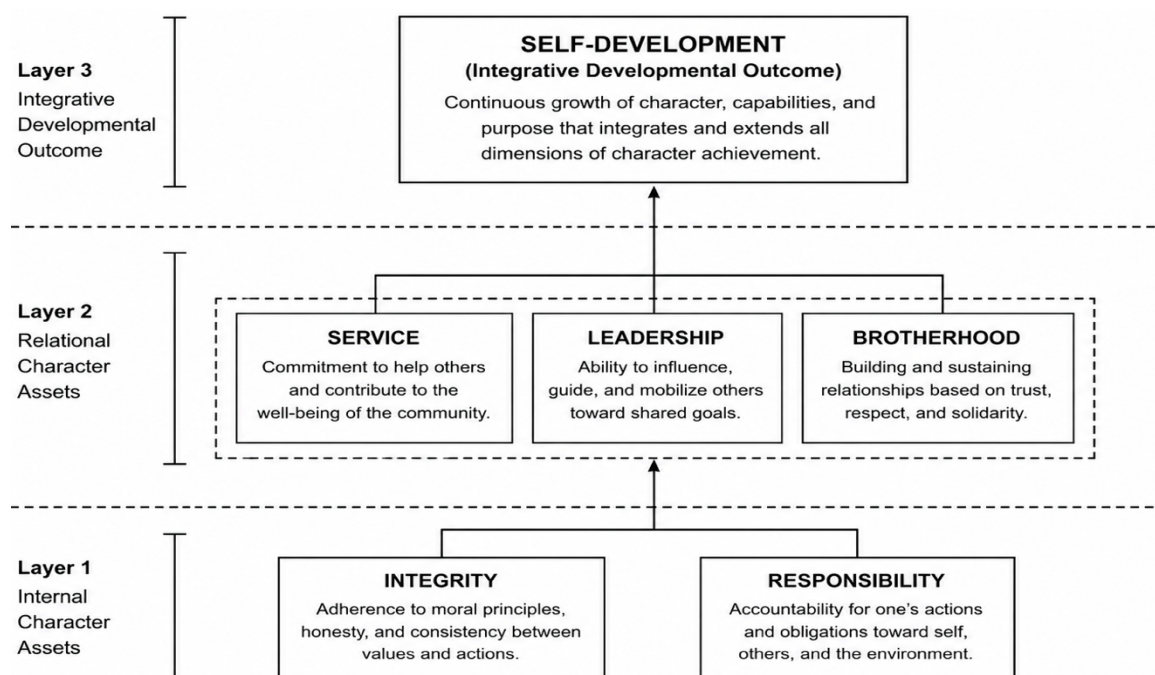


Figure 2. The Architecture of the Character Achievement Framework (CAF)

Source: Developed by the author.

The figure illustrates CAF as a layered developmental architecture. Internal character assets provide the ethical and self-regulatory foundation for behavior, relational character assets translate character into social engagement, and self-development emerges as an integrative outcome reflecting cumulative growth across all dimensions of character achievement.

This architecture reflects the educational logic of scouting. Character development begins with the formation of personal values and self-regulation, expands through interaction and contribution to others, and culminates in a broader process of lifelong personal growth. Achievement is therefore understood not as a static accomplishment but as a developmental trajectory.

4.3 Internal Character Assets: Integrity and Responsibility

The first component of character achievement consists of internal character assets, which provide the foundation for ethical conduct and self-governance. Among these assets, integrity and responsibility occupy a particularly important position because they influence how individuals interpret situations, make decisions, and regulate behavior.

Integrity refers to the consistency between values, commitments, judgments, and actions. It reflects the degree to which individuals act in accordance with internalized moral principles even when external supervision or rewards are absent. Character education scholars consistently identify integrity as a foundational virtue because it supports the coherence and authenticity of moral action (Walker, 2022). Without integrity, other positive characteristics may become unstable or dependent upon external incentives.

Responsibility complements integrity by reflecting an individual's willingness and capacity to accept obligations, fulfill commitments, and remain accountable for personal actions. Developmental research indicates that responsibility emerges through repeated opportunities to exercise judgment, manage commitments, and engage in intentional self-regulation (Mertens *et al.*, 2022). As young people become increasingly capable of directing their own behavior, responsibility evolves from simple rule compliance into self-governed commitment to personal and collective goals.

Within scouting environments, integrity and responsibility are cultivated through participation in activities that require honesty, accountability, reliability, and adherence to shared values. These qualities often develop through everyday experiences rather than exceptional performances. Consequently, they may be poorly represented by conventional recognition systems despite being central indicators of educational growth.

Together, integrity and responsibility form the internal moral infrastructure of character achievement. They provide the psychological and ethical foundations that enable young people to engage constructively with others and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

4.4 Relational Character Assets: Service, Leadership, and Brotherhood

While internal character assets guide personal conduct, scouting education ultimately seeks to prepare young people for participation within broader social environments. For this reason, character achievement must also include relational dimensions that reflect how individuals interact with, influence, and contribute to others.

Service represents the commitment to contributing positively to the welfare of individuals, communities, and society. Research on service-learning consistently demonstrates that meaningful service experiences strengthen empathy, civic responsibility, social awareness, and community engagement (Compare & Albanesi, 2024; Lin, 2021). Service is therefore more than an activity; it reflects an orientation toward contribution that connects personal development with collective well-being.

Leadership represents the capacity to influence others in ways that support shared goals, ethical decision-making, and constructive group functioning. Contemporary leadership scholarship increasingly emphasizes that effective leadership is grounded not merely in authority but in responsibility, service, and moral influence (Dabdoub *et al.*, 2024). Within scouting, leadership develops through practical experiences that require initiative, collaboration, conflict management, and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty.

Brotherhood represents the relational dimension of belonging, trust, cooperation, and mutual support. Although often overlooked in conventional assessment systems, positive interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in youth development. PYD research consistently identifies connection and caring as developmental assets associated with thriving, contribution, and well-being (Bowers *et al.*, 2010; Geldhof *et al.*, 2019). In scouting contexts, brotherhood functions not only as an outcome but also as a mechanism through which learning, character formation, and social responsibility are reinforced.

These three dimensions collectively represent the outward expression of character. Whereas integrity and responsibility regulate behavior internally, service, leadership, and brotherhood translate character into social action. They reflect the capacity to contribute positively to groups, communities, and society while maintaining constructive relationships with others.

4.5 Self-Development as an Integrative Outcome

The final dimension of CAF differs conceptually from the preceding dimensions. Rather than functioning as an independent character asset, self-development serves as an integrative developmental outcome emerging from the interaction of internal and relational character capacities.

Self-development refers to the ongoing process through which individuals become increasingly self-aware, self-regulated, competent, and capable of directing their own growth. This perspective aligns with contemporary Positive Youth Development scholarship, which emphasizes agency, intentional self-regulation, and adaptive functioning as central mechanisms of thriving (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Geldhof *et al.*, 2014).

The concept is also consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that human development is supported when individuals experience autonomy, competence, and meaningful social relationships (Ryan & Deci, 2020). As integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, and brotherhood become increasingly integrated into daily behavior, individuals acquire greater capacity for self-directed growth and purposeful engagement with life.

Importantly, self-development is fundamentally self-referenced rather than comparative. Progress is evaluated relative to previous levels of functioning rather than against the performance of others. This distinction reflects one of the central propositions of CAF: educational success should be measured by developmental growth rather than competitive superiority.

Accordingly, self-development functions as the primary developmental outcome through which character achievement is realized. It represents the cumulative expression of growth across all preceding dimensions.

4.6 The Character Achievement Process

The Character Achievement Framework conceptualizes character achievement as a developmental process generated through participation in scouting experiences. Activities such as patrol systems, outdoor programs, community service projects, leadership assignments, and collaborative problem-solving create opportunities for experiential learning that support growth across multiple dimensions simultaneously.

Drawing upon experiential learning theory and Positive Youth Development, the framework proposes that developmental experiences contribute first to the formation of internal character assets. These assets subsequently influence the quality of social participation and contribution, which are expressed through relational character assets. Over time, repeated engagement in these processes supports broader self-development and increasingly mature forms of citizenship.

Beyond its structural architecture, CAF also proposes a developmental mechanism through which character achievement emerges. The framework explains how scouting experiences progressively generate character growth, leading to broader self-development and long-term contribution to society.

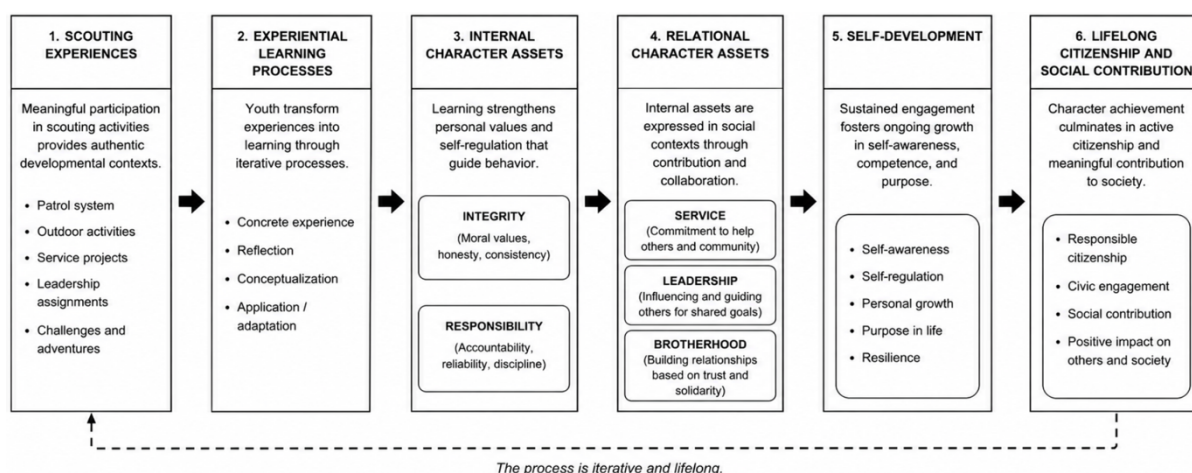


Figure 3. Developmental Process of Character Achievement in Scouting

Source: Developed by the author.

The figure illustrates character achievement as a cumulative developmental process. Meaningful scouting experiences initiate experiential learning, which strengthens internal character assets and subsequently supports relational character capacities. Through repeated engagement, these processes foster self-development and ultimately contribute to lifelong citizenship and positive social contribution.

This sequence emphasizes that achievement is not an isolated outcome but the cumulative result of ongoing developmental processes occurring through participation in meaningful educational experiences.

4.7 Conceptual Propositions

Based on the foregoing framework, seven conceptual propositions are advanced.

P1: *Participation in meaningful scouting experiences positively contributes to the development of integrity.*

P2: *Participation in meaningful scouting experiences positively contributes to the development of responsibility.*

P3: *Participation in meaningful scouting experiences positively contributes to service orientation.*

P4: *Participation in meaningful scouting experiences positively contributes to leadership development.*

P5: *Participation in meaningful scouting experiences positively contributes to brotherhood and positive social relationships.*

P6: *The combined development of integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, and brotherhood positively contributes to self-development.*

P7: Self-development positively contributes to lifelong citizenship and social contribution.

Collectively, these propositions position character achievement as a developmental construct that extends beyond conventional indicators of success. Rather than defining achievement through medals, rankings, or competitive victories, the Character Achievement Framework conceptualizes achievement as sustained growth in the capacities that enable young people to flourish, contribute, and lead meaningful lives.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The Character Achievement Framework (CAF) contributes to the literature by reconceptualizing achievement as a developmental construct rather than a performance-based outcome. Existing approaches within youth development and scouting education frequently evaluate success through visible indicators such as awards, rankings, advancement records, and competitive accomplishments. Although these indicators provide evidence of participation and competence, they do not fully capture the broader developmental purposes that educational programs seek to achieve.

The framework extends character education scholarship by positioning achievement as the cumulative expression of virtue development rather than the attainment of externally recognized accomplishments. In doing so, CAF aligns with contemporary arguments that educational success should be evaluated according to patterns of character formation, flourishing, and responsible action rather than isolated performances (Berkowitz, 2022; VanderWeele, 2022). This perspective shifts attention from what individuals achieve to who they become through participation in educational experiences.

CAF also contributes to Positive Youth Development (PYD) scholarship by integrating character, contribution, self-regulation, and social relationships within a single developmental architecture. While PYD literature has extensively examined thriving, intentional self-regulation, and contribution as developmental outcomes, fewer frameworks have explicitly conceptualized how these outcomes can be translated into assessment systems within nonformal educational settings (Buenconsejo & Datu, 2022; Lerner *et al.*, 2021). The framework therefore provides a conceptual bridge between developmental theory and educational evaluation.

A further contribution lies in the integration of character education, experiential learning, motivational psychology, and Positive Youth Development into a coherent explanation of achievement. Rather than treating these traditions as separate theoretical domains, CAF demonstrates how they collectively support a developmental understanding of educational success. This synthesis expands current discussions regarding how youth development programs can evaluate outcomes that are meaningful, enduring, and educationally relevant.

5.2 Reframing Assessment in Scouting Education

One of the central implications of CAF concerns the purpose of assessment itself. Traditional assessment approaches often function as mechanisms for documenting performance, comparing participants, and recognizing accomplishment. While these functions remain valuable, they may be insufficient for capturing developmental outcomes that emerge gradually through participation in scouting experiences.

The framework proposes a shift from outcome-centered assessment toward developmental assessment. Under this perspective, assessment is not primarily concerned with identifying who performs better than others but with understanding how individuals grow over time. Progress becomes defined by developmental trajectories rather than comparative rankings.

This reconceptualization is consistent with contemporary scholarship emphasizing that character, flourishing, and personal growth require multidimensional approaches to assessment (Kretzschmar *et al.*, 2023; VanderWeele, 2022). Because developmental outcomes are often expressed through patterns of behavior rather than isolated events, meaningful evaluation must draw upon multiple forms of evidence collected across contexts and over time.

Consequently, scouting assessment systems may benefit from incorporating indicators that capture integrity, responsibility, service orientation, leadership behaviors, relational development, and self-reflection. Such indicators complement rather than replace existing achievement systems by providing a more comprehensive understanding of educational effectiveness. Competitions, badges, and advancement structures may continue to play important roles, but they should be interpreted as developmental instruments rather than ultimate indicators of success.

The broader implication is that assessment should serve learning and development rather than merely documenting accomplishment. When assessment is aligned with educational purposes, it becomes a mechanism for growth rather than a tool of comparison.

5.3 Implications for Scout Leaders and Educational Practice

The framework carries important implications for scout leaders, adult volunteers, and educators responsible for facilitating youth development. First, CAF highlights the importance of creating learning environments that intentionally support character formation alongside skill development. Educational activities should not be evaluated solely according to whether participants complete tasks successfully but also according to how those experiences contribute to responsibility, cooperation, ethical decision-making, and service.

Second, the framework reinforces the importance of adult role modeling. Character education research consistently demonstrates that young people learn values not only through instruction but also through observing how respected adults behave in everyday situations (Sanderse, 2013). Consequently, scout leaders play a crucial role in shaping developmental environments through their interactions, decisions, and responses to challenges.

Third, CAF suggests that feedback practices should emphasize growth rather than comparison. Feedback that recognizes effort, improvement, initiative, responsibility, and contribution is more likely to support mastery-oriented motivation and self-development than feedback focused exclusively on outcomes and rankings. Such practices are consistent with both Achievement Goal Theory and Self-Determination Theory, which emphasize the developmental benefits of autonomy-supportive learning environments (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Finally, scouting activities should be intentionally designed to create opportunities for character enactment. Community service projects, patrol leadership responsibilities, collaborative problem-solving tasks, and outdoor challenges provide contexts in which participants can demonstrate and strengthen the dimensions represented within the framework. Character achievement therefore emerges not through instruction alone but through participation in meaningful experiences that require ethical action and social responsibility.

5.4 Implications for Scouting Organizations and Policy

The implications of CAF extend beyond individual educational practice to the organizational level. Assessment systems communicate institutional priorities, and therefore the indicators selected by scouting organizations influence how success is understood by participants, leaders, parents, and communities.

In many contexts, external stakeholders often associate scouting success with competition results, awards, and visible accomplishments. While these indicators remain valuable, excessive reliance on them may unintentionally narrow understandings of educational achievement. The framework encourages organizations to adopt broader evaluation systems that recognize developmental outcomes alongside performance outcomes.

One practical implication involves the diversification of recognition systems. In addition to rewarding technical competence and competitive success, organizations may consider recognizing sustained service, ethical leadership, community contribution, cooperation, and personal growth. Such recognition systems communicate that character development is valued as highly as performance achievement.

CAF also has implications for policy development. Educational guidelines, advancement systems, and evaluation frameworks may benefit from incorporating developmental indicators that reflect the broader purposes of scouting. Such integration would strengthen alignment between organizational objectives and assessment practices while reinforcing the educational mission of the movement.

More broadly, the framework contributes to ongoing discussions regarding the role of nonformal education in promoting citizenship, social responsibility, and human flourishing. By emphasizing developmental growth rather than competitive superiority, scouting organizations may be better positioned to address contemporary educational challenges and societal needs.

5.5 Future Research Directions

As a conceptual framework, CAF requires empirical examination and further theoretical refinement. Several avenues for future research are particularly important.

First, future studies should focus on developing and validating instruments capable of measuring the six dimensions of character achievement. Existing research on character strengths, Positive Youth Development, flourishing, and self-regulation provides a strong foundation for constructing multidimensional assessment tools that reflect the conceptual architecture proposed in this study (Wen *et al.*, 2022; Yıldırım & Arslan, 2023).

Second, longitudinal research is needed to examine how character achievement develops through sustained participation in scouting programs. Because CAF conceptualizes achievement as a developmental process, longitudinal designs are particularly well suited for investigating changes in integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development over time.

Third, future research should explore multi-informant approaches to character assessment. Developmental outcomes are often perceived differently by participants, peers, leaders, parents, and community members. Integrating multiple perspectives may enhance validity while providing a richer understanding of character growth.

Fourth, comparative studies across countries and cultural contexts would contribute to evaluating the generalizability of the framework. Scouting operates globally across diverse cultural environments, and future research should examine whether the dimensions proposed in CAF function similarly across different social and educational settings.

Finally, future studies should investigate the relationship between competitive achievement and character achievement. Although the framework distinguishes these constructs conceptually, they are not necessarily incompatible. Under appropriate educational conditions, competitive experiences may contribute positively to leadership, perseverance, teamwork, and responsibility. Understanding the circumstances under which competition supports rather than undermines character development represents an important research agenda for both scouting and youth development scholarship.

The Character Achievement Framework does not reject competition, achievement badges, or recognition systems as educational tools. Rather, it repositions them within a broader developmental perspective in which character growth remains the primary purpose of scouting education. Awards and accomplishments may continue to provide motivation and opportunities for learning, but they should not become the sole indicators of educational success.

By redefining achievement as sustained growth in integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development, CAF offers a more comprehensive understanding of what it means to succeed in scouting. Such a perspective aligns more closely with contemporary scholarship on character education, Positive Youth Development, and experiential learning while remaining faithful to the original educational mission of scouting: preparing young people to become responsible citizens, ethical leaders, and active contributors to society.

6. Conclusion

This study addressed a persistent yet underexamined problem in scouting education: the tendency to evaluate success primarily through visible achievements such as medals, rankings, badges, and competitive accomplishments despite the movement's longstanding educational commitment to character formation, citizenship, leadership, and social responsibility. Although contemporary scholarship in character education, Positive Youth Development (PYD), experiential learning, and motivational psychology increasingly emphasizes developmental growth as the primary purpose of youth education, existing scouting assessment approaches have remained largely oriented toward externally observable outcomes. Consequently, a significant conceptual gap has emerged between the developmental objectives of scouting and the indicators commonly used to evaluate educational success.

In response to this gap, the study developed the Character Achievement Framework (CAF), a conceptual model that reconceptualizes achievement as a multidimensional developmental construct rather than a performance-based outcome. The framework advances current scholarship by integrating previously fragmented theoretical perspectives from character education, Positive Youth Development, experiential learning, Achievement Goal Theory, and Self-Determination Theory into a coherent explanation of how achievement can be understood within nonformal educational settings. Rather than defining success through competitive superiority or external recognition, CAF positions achievement as sustained growth across six interrelated dimensions: integrity, responsibility, service, leadership, brotherhood, and self-development. The framework further contributes to theory by organizing these dimensions into a developmental architecture consisting of internal character assets, relational character assets, and an integrative developmental outcome, thereby offering a more systematic explanation of how character achievement emerges through scouting experiences.

The study makes several important theoretical contributions. First, it extends character education scholarship by shifting the focus of achievement from observable accomplishments to enduring patterns of virtue enactment and developmental growth. Second, it contributes to Positive Youth Development literature by providing a conceptual bridge between developmental outcomes and assessment practices, an area that has received comparatively limited attention in nonformal education research. Third, it advances assessment theory by proposing a developmental perspective that complements traditional performance-oriented evaluation systems. Collectively, these contributions reposition achievement as a process of becoming rather than merely a record of accomplishment.

The framework also carries significant practical and policy implications. For scout leaders and educators, CAF provides a conceptual foundation for designing learning environments, feedback systems, and recognition practices that emphasize character growth alongside skill acquisition. For scouting organizations, the framework offers an alternative lens through which educational effectiveness can be evaluated beyond competition results and advancement records. More broadly, the framework contributes to ongoing discussions concerning how youth organizations can cultivate citizenship, ethical leadership, social responsibility, and human flourishing in increasingly performance-driven educational environments.

Several limitations should nevertheless be acknowledged. As a conceptual study, the framework has not yet been subjected to empirical validation and therefore requires systematic examination across different scouting contexts and cultural settings. Furthermore, although the six dimensions were derived through theoretical synthesis, their relative relationships, developmental sequencing, and measurement properties remain subject to future investigation. The framework should therefore be viewed as a theory-building foundation rather than a finalized assessment model.

Future research should focus on developing and validating multidimensional instruments capable of measuring character achievement across the six proposed dimensions. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine developmental trajectories over time, while multi-informant approaches involving youth participants, peers, leaders, parents, and community members may provide richer insights into character growth processes. Comparative cross-cultural research would further strengthen understanding of the framework's applicability across diverse scouting environments. In addition, future studies should explore the dynamic relationship between competitive achievement and character achievement in order to identify conditions under which competition may support rather than constrain developmental outcomes.

Ultimately, the significance of scouting cannot be fully understood through medals, trophies, or rankings alone. Its enduring educational value lies in its capacity to shape individuals who act with integrity, accept responsibility, serve others, lead ethically, build meaningful relationships, and pursue continuous self-development. By redefining achievement as developmental growth rather than competitive success, the Character Achievement Framework offers a new perspective for understanding educational excellence in scouting and provides a foundation for more human-centered approaches to assessment, leadership development, and youth education in the twenty-first century.

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