The Community-based Character Education: Study of the 'Imaji Academy' Program in Madrasa

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of the Imaji Academy program as strengthening student character education. The research method used descriptive qualitative. Research data collection was done through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis in this study followed three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and verification. The results of this study found that the Imaji Academy program at MI Darussalam 02 Jember is manifested in three feature classes, namely, literacy feature class, sociopreneur feature class, and cultural arts feature class. Meanwhile, the agricultural class has been formulated but has not been implemented. Dominant character values of the three feature classes consist of religious, gotong royong, and cultural arts values that strengthen students' character. The indicator was several works produced by students collectively. Based on the study's results, the researcher suggests strengthening the implementation of feature classes, mainly feature classes that have not been implemented. This study also suggests the importance of schools building collaboration with the community to strengthen student character education sustainably.

Keywords: Imaji Academy, Madrasa, Students' Character Education

Introduction

Imaji Academy is a collaborative program between the Dream Foundation (Yayasan Mimpi) and PT. Universal Tempu Rejo. This program emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where many students, especially those in rural areas, do learning from home. Learning from home for students in rural areas, especially elementary school students, is not as expected. Farmwork students do not learn like in schools but follow their parents to work in the fields and warehouses, resulting in a lack of study time. Their education is disrupted and can potentially increase the number of child laborers in Indonesia. If school-age children have a high intensity of parental participation in work, it can endanger their...
health and developmental safety.\(^1\) The initial formation of the *Imaji Academy* program only provides and fills children's free time to enhance their talents and interests. In 2020 this program was implemented in 2 locations of the assisted villages; Slateng village and Lembengan village, Ledokombo sub-district. The schools implementing the *Imaji Academy* program are early childhood education, Kindergarten, and elementary schools.

The *Imaji Academy* program received a good response from the community and village children, along with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 the *Imaji Academy* program will penetrate the southern part of the Jember area. There are five places where the *Imaji Academy* program is located: Kesilir village, Sabrang village, Andongsari village, Balung Lor village, and Bagon village. This program contributes to Indonesia's educational challenges. Predominantly about the fate of the education of the children of farmers and tobacco workers at the basic education level who are prone to neglect. The cause of their neglect of learning is the lack of time for parents to accompany them to study online, the availability of gadgets or laptop facilities, and inadequate internet connections.\(^2\)

The existence of *Imaji Academy* is urgent as a form of community-based participatory learning model. The administrator and manager of the reading house will be the liaison agent between the school and thematic learning that comes directly from the community. The presence of this program also leads to a more powerful synergistic role of the three pillars of education, namely family, school, and community, to build independent, innovative, creative, and consistent learning communities. Implementing the *Imaji Academy* program with this collaborative role opens up new opportunities for strengthening student character education in community-based schools. Preparation for strengthening character education that involves collaborative roles means placing all three as actors. Thus, the implementation of strengthening student character education does not only lead to the development of student behavior to become moral human beings but also so that they can anticipate the global changes that are happening.\(^3\) The development design

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can be more structured by involving all learning processes, including intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning.4

Previous studies on character education are numerous and varied. Generally, studies on character education have three bases: class, school, and community. In addition, studies on character education also focus on policies and management. The First is studies of character education in the context of classrooms and schools take the form of integrating character values with subjects, literacy movements, special programs, specific character values, and local wisdom.5 The second is the study of community-based character education. Shodiq concluded that students who take part in the Al-Islam Intensive Study program (KIAI) already have social sensitivity but have not been instilled into their character.6 Retnasari and Sumaryati made the basic education unit the research subject. Their study found that there was a collaboration between schools and the community in formulating, implementing, and evaluating programs to strengthen the character of students’ integrity.7 The third is the study of character education focuses on policy and management.8

Several previous studies have focused more on the classroom and school context. Meanwhile, studies that focus on the context of management, policy, and society are still relatively infrequent. In this study, researchers seek to complement the dearth of community-based character education studies. That is in line with the explanation in the concept book and guidelines for strengthening character education (PPK-Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter) that community-based PPK is a collaborative work between schools and the environment outside of school, referred to as partners. The forms are very diverse, ranging from communities of various types, companies, business and broadcasting institutions, to companies.9

In this study, researchers attempted to investigate the Imaji Academy program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Darussalam 02 Bagon Village, Puger District, which is one of the location points for the Imaji Academy program. The preponderance professions of parents or student guardians are farmers and tobacco workers. Meanwhile, the implementation of the Imaji Academy program has two main strategies: feature classes and reading, writing, and arithmetic (calistung) classes. Accordingly, this study will focus on implementing the Imaji Academy program to strengthen character education for MI Darussalam 02 Bagon Village, Puger District, Jember Regency students. This study is critical because it is an effort to contribute to community-based PPK studies.

Methods

This research was qualitative. The goal is to explore the central values of character education by implementing the Imaji Academy program at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Darussalam 02 Bagon Village, Puger District, Jember Regency. There were three data collection methods: the first was documentation of Imaji Academy's activities. The second was the observation, which was seeing the activities of Imaji Academy. Third, interview. This research informant consisted of the madrasa principal, the Imaji Academy program coordinator, and the students participating in the Imaji Academy. Data analysis was carried out during the research by following the interactive analysis model; data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions or data verification.10 Triangulation, the persistence of observation, and peer checking the validity of the data that has been carried out.

Discussion

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Darussalam 02 is one of the location points for implementing the *Imaji Academy* program since 2021. This *madrasa* is located in a remote area in Bagon Village, Puger District Jember Regency. The implementation of *Imaji Academy* involves community groups known as 'learning friends' (*kawan belajar*). The existence of a 'learning friend' (*kawan belajar*) is evidence of collaborative program implementation that involves not only schools but also the village community. This collaboration has implications for the *Imaji Academy* learning process in the form of strengthening collaboration between students, manifested by the process of analytic thinking training and formulating the problems being faced. *Imaji Academy* is divided into two classes, namely feature classes and reading, writing, and arithmetic classes (*calistung*).

The madrasa principal said there were six features of *Imaji Academy*; literacy, sociopreneur, agriculture, talent scouting, collaborative parenting, and traditional sports. Of the six features, the madrasa principal explained that there were differences in realization. In 2021 three features have been successfully implemented: literacy, sociopreneur, and cultural arts. Meanwhile, in 2022 there will be additional features, agriculture. The six features are activities with an assignment supporting students' character. This explication upholds the principle of 21st Century learning that learning must be collaborative and integrated with the community.

Before joining the feature class, students take a test first to determine if their talents and interests correspond to the feature class. Each feature consists of 15 to 20 students. That is in line with the explanation of the *Imaji Academy* coordinator, who explained that *Imaji Academy*’s activities took place according to the existing categories. As one of the locations for implementing the *Imaji Academy* program, MI Darussalam 02 has four features, but only three have been implemented. In addition to the feature class, *Imaji Academy* also provides supporting facilities for activities such as an educational park, a mini garden, and a mini zoo. One of the *Imaji Academy* participants from grade 4 also said that he followed the features of sociopreneur and cultural arts. The student received

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12 Pamungkas.
knowledge, patience, honesty, discipline, and compactness lessons during the feature class. Details of the feature classes at MI Darussalam 02 can be seen in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Feature Class</th>
<th>Activity Output</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sociopreneur</td>
<td>Making banana and cassava chips whose results are sold</td>
<td>1. Patience in making products Ketelitian 2. Accuracy 3. Petrify each other 4. There needs to be cohesiveness 5. Cooperate 6. Fair in the division of tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources: Documentation of MI Darussalam 2 Bagon*

Table 1 describes Imaji Academy's activities at MI Darussalam 02, where each feature has an activity output and the value obtained by students. The first feature class is literacy. The output of this feature is the student's work in the form of a book. The values obtained by students are three: independence, honesty, and expediency. The second is the sociopreneur features class. The output of this feature is the skill of making banana and cassava chips for sale. At the same time, the values obtained by students are patience, thoroughness, mutual help, cohesiveness, cooperation, and fairness. Third, the features of cultural arts. The output of this feature is the Labako dance. From the dance, the values obtained by students are discipline, cohesiveness, and obedience. Fourth, agricultural features classes have not been implemented, so they have not shown the outcomes and values obtained by students.

The enactment of these features has the content of strengthening character education for students. The outputs and values that emerge from each feature align with several principles of character strengthening, namely orientation on the development of student potential as a whole, exemplary, and habituation in the school environment. Strengthening character education (PPK) is a process of transmitting and developing student competencies as a whole which is in harmony with the national mental revolution.

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14 Huda, “Membangun Karakter Islami.”
movement. The movement to build five main characters consists of a religious character, a nationalist character, an integrity character, an independent character, and a cooperation character.\(^{15}\)

**Strengthening Students' Religious Values in the Imaji Academy Program**

Religious character is a reflection of faith in God manifested in human behavior. It contains three relational dimensions: the relationship between humans, God, and the universe.\(^ {16}\) The religious character is also in line with the *Pancasila* values, especially with the first principle, *the Belief in the one and only God*. Thus, the religious character has a substantial foundation and has direct effects on shaping the religious character of students to achieve the *Pancasila* vision.

Researchers found several religious values in implementing the *Imaji Academy* program at MI Darussalam 02 in this study. These values have contributed to the strengthening of students' character. The indicator can be seen from several feature class activities. First is the literacy feature class. The priority value of this feature class is to teach students to be honest in their activities. Honesty is one of the Islamic values that is a source of goodness in this world and the hereafter.\(^ {17}\) Another value is independence which teaches students not to depend on others. Second, disciplined and punctual, following the provisions of the activities schedule that emerge in the cultural arts feature class. The third is literacy and sociopreneur classes. This features class creates the value of providing benefits to nature and the surrounding environment. The indicators are flower planting activities and the manufacture of supporting facilities in the form of educational gardens, namely mini gardens, and mini zoos.

Some of the indicators contain religious values. According to Sahlan, the characteristics of religious values that impact a person are honesty, fairness, benefiting others, humility, and high discipline.\(^ {18}\) The researcher found three religious values that contributed to several character sub-values from these indicators. First, honesty as a sub-

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value of the integrity character; second, discipline as a nationalist sub-value; and provide benefits categorized as religious and nationalist sub-values.\textsuperscript{19}

The three religious values that emerged from the implementation of the \textit{Imaji Academy} program showed that the student's character-building strategy refers to religious values and is in line with several character values in the concepts and guidelines of character education. Placing religion as a reference for forming student character values is an effort to create Islamic character in students. This foundation is the reference to always being consistent with the Islamic teachings. This fact also confirms the habituation of religious behavior for students as an effort to cultivate religious character,\textsuperscript{20} as well as a form of balancing religious values with the process of building their character.\textsuperscript{21} If these values are embedded in students, they will become a generation with commendable morals.

Some indicators of religious values are also an effort to build a religious atmosphere in madrasas. Azzet informed four models of religious atmosphere development in Islamic education. First is the structural model that gets permission from the institutional leadership through school regulations and policies. Second, a formal model was created based on religious understanding to teach the afterlife and spiritual life problems. The third is the mechanical model, whose formation refers to the religious understanding that all aspects of life contain religious values. Fourth, the organic model refers to the view that Islamic education is a system of cultivating and developing a religious life.\textsuperscript{22} Besides these models, another necessary aspect is the role of the school ecosystem in driving the creation of a religious atmosphere in schools.\textsuperscript{23}

The \textit{Imaji Academy} program is categorized as a mechanical model of the four models. The first indicator is that the implementation of its activities is based on religious values that contain three relational dimensions between humans, God, and the environment. The second is the development of students' religious values also refers to their talents and interests. The last indicator is that the selection process requires the suitability of students' talents and interests in the image feature class. Therefore, the

\textsuperscript{19} Penyusun, \textit{Konsep dan Pedoman Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter}, 8–9.


\textsuperscript{21} Suryanti and Widayanti, “Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Religius.”

\textsuperscript{22} Akmd Muhaimin Azzet, \textit{Urgensi Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia} (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011), 88.

presence of the Imaji Academy program at MI Darussalam 02 not only contributes to maintaining the religious character of students but not their talents and interests.

**Strengthening Students’ Mutual Aid (Gotong Royong) Character in the Imaji Academy Program**

The value of the gotong royong character reflects actions that respect the spirit of cooperation to solve a common problem. Mulyani informed several simple forms of strengthening the gotong royong character value in schools; class pickets, clean Fridays, and group assignments. Developing the gotong royong value in school is an effort to strengthen students' social capital. Its implementation can also form ethical values, the value of honesty, the value of togetherness, mutual trust, and open cultural revitalization. Maintaining the gotong royong attitude in schools can assist students in not becoming apathetic and not being trapped in a moral crisis in the global era.

The Imaji Academy program implementation at MI Darussalam 02 has strengthened the student's gotong royong character. The indicator refers to several feature classes that have taken place. First is the literacy feature class. The output is the work of students in the form of books. This student work proves the existence of gotong royong. The embodiment of the work also represents several sub-values of gotong royong, such as commitment, solidarity, cooperation, volunteerism, and mutual assistance. Without these sub-values, students' work will be complicated to realize. The second is the sociopreneur feature class. The output of this feature class is the skill of producing chips for sale. This output form shows an effort to collectively develop student creativity, which refers to the value of the gotong royong character. The products that students produce also possess several gotong royong sub-values, precisely the values of teamwork, responsibility, solidarity, and mutual respect regarding the division of

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25 Mulyani et al., “Peningkatan Karakter Gotong Royong Di Sekolah Dasar.”
In addition to the value of the *gotong royong* character, the product manufacturing process also encourages the strengthening of students' positive attitudes that contribute to maintaining character education in general, including the values of patience, thoroughness, and justice. Lastly is the cultural arts feature class. Student cohesiveness or solidarity is the dominant sub-value of the *gotong royong* character in this feature class.

Some of the products from the feature class are a form of student *gotong royong* character innovation. This innovation form also shifts the pattern of student character building, which has led to a conceptual understanding of *gotong royong*, or the value of the main character and other sub-values. As an innovation form that is still relatively simple, this study complements several studies that focus on sustaining the character of students' *gotong royong* in the classroom context, starting from the enactment of class cleaning pickets, clean Fridays, and group assignments.

Therefore, this study's findings attempt to move students' *gotong royong* in the classroom context toward more productive *gotong royong*. The students' *gotong royong* productivity in this study is the existence of the work and products they produce through feature classes. That is evidence of the significance of collaboration in the character-strengthening process. The collaboration form can be categorized as strengthening community-based character education, where schools collaborate with business institutions or companies that have relevance and commitment to the world of education by creating inspirational classes in the form of feature classes.

**Strengthening Students' Integrity Character in the Imaji Academy Program**

The integrity character value is the fifth of the five central character values that are interrelated and have sub-values. Integrity sub-values are honesty, moral commitment, responsibility, anti-corruption, justice, exemplary, respect for individual dignity, loyalty, and love of truth. In the Islamic education context, Azra explained that integrity is compliance with the basic principles of ethics and morals. The traits of integrity character

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30 Penyusun, 9.
31 Mahardika, “Penanaman Karakter Bangsa Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Sekolah.”
consist of sincerity, consistency, and determination,\textsuperscript{36} which have two main functions, preserving morals and conscience.\textsuperscript{37}

The identification of strengthening students' integrity character in this study refers to the integrity sub-value and several feature classes enforced at MI Darussalam 02. First is the literacy feature class. The literacy feature class produces student work as a book and emerges three character values; independence, honesty, and usefulness. The character value which includes the sub-value of integrity is honesty. Honesty is the core of the character of integrity, both honest with oneself and with others.\textsuperscript{38} The student's work results are an achievement form of their integrity.\textsuperscript{39} In addition, students' work also leads to the contribution of knowledge which, if continuously developed, has the potential to construct Muslim intellectual candidates who are productive in their employment.\textsuperscript{40}

However, the existence of student work also indicates the presence of other sub-values of integrity, such as justice, responsibility, and moral commitment.\textsuperscript{41} The value of justice and responsibility is a consequence of the process of making students work. With the value of fairness, all students do not mind writing works that become anthologies. Then the value of their responsibility can be seen in completing their work to contribute to a shared moral commitment, namely the work of student anthologies. Some of these sub-values teach them to harmonize their words, actions, and deeds.

The second is the sociopreneur feature class. The output of this feature is the skill of producing chips for sale. The values that occur from this feature class are patience, thoroughness, mutual assistance, solidarity, cooperation, and fairness. When viewed from the output, the sociopreneur feature class is parallel to the literacy feature class, both producing a product. However, the supporting values are slightly distinct. Hence, this feature class still contributes to strengthening the integrity character of students because its product orientation is more directed at developing skills and the creative economy. The dominant sub-values in this feature class that contribute to strengthening the integrity character of students are responsibility, justice, and moral commitment.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{38} Ulya and Anisah, “Pembentukan Nilai Karakter Integritas.”
\bibitem{40} Ulya and Anisah, “Pembentukan Nilai Karakter Integritas.”
\bibitem{41} Penyusun, Konsep dan Pedoman Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter, 9.
\end{thebibliography}
value of cooperation and mutual help is more directed at strengthening the *gotong royong* character. Thus, this feature class also strengthens the conceptual explanation of the principal values of character education that interact with each other, not stand alone.42

The third is the cultural arts features class. The output of this feature is the *Labako* dance. From the dance, the values obtained by students are discipline, cohesiveness, and obedience. In this regard, the madrasa principal said, "at first, the students could not dance. Nevertheless, their persistence to practice dancing every Friday paid off, and they were able to dance the *Labako* dance." From this explanation, consistency and commitment are other values that emerge in students. Thus, this feature class also contributes to strengthening the integrity character of students. The sub-values of integrity are moral commitment and responsibility. Thus, this finding strengthens Setiawan's research results that character values in dance education consist of responsibility, student confidence, never giving up, courage, and social attitudes.43

**Conclusion**

This study found three main characters of implementing the *Imaji Academy* program at MI Darussalam 02; religious character, *gotong royong*, and integrity. The three emerged from several feature classes. There are literacy, sociopreneur, and cultural arts feature classes. The strengthening of grades in each feature class is manifested in various student works, including student anthology books, chips for sale, and the *Labako* dance. The results of this study suggest two important things. First, schools need to maintain a collaborative character education strengthening program with the community because the basis for strengthening character education is not class and school but also community-based. Second, schools and their ecosystems need to maintain commitment and consistency to strengthen character education by contextualizing students' conceptual understanding of good character with actual behavior.

**References**


42 Penyusun, 9.
43 Aris Setiawan, “Mengembangkan Nilai Karakter dan Kemampuan 4C Anak Melalui Pendidikan Seni Tari di Masa Revolusi Industri 4.0,” *Didaktis: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 19, no. 2 (July 5, 2019), http://dx.doi.org/10.30651/didaktis.v19i2.2958.


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