



Community Service Program: Quranic Tutoring Strengthening Children's Morals in Ciputri, Pandeglang, Banten

Program KKM Bimbingan Mengaji untuk Memperkuat Akhlak Anak Desa Ciputri, Pandeglang, Banten

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Abstract

The decline of Quranic literacy and moral character among rural children urgently requires innovative interventions beyond rigid formal schooling. This study employed a participatory action research design, deploying university facilitators to implement an edutainment mentoring program for ten primary school students in Ciputri Village, Banten. Quantitative evaluations revealed a 36.5% increase in reading fluency and a 45.0% surge in memory retention. Qualitatively, participatory observations demonstrated that egalitarian role models completely eradicated cognitive fatigue and learning resistance. This organically transformed initial indiscipline into robust moral resilience and voluntary social behavior within the learning ecosystem. These empirical outcomes directly disrupt the contemporary hegemony of technological and institutional interventions. Our findings validate that relational methodologies are vastly superior for rural character development. Ultimately, this highly replicable grassroots framework strategically aligns with Sustainable Development Goal Four, empirically proving that joyful spiritual mentoring actively constructs sustainable social capital alongside inclusive quality education for marginalized communities.

Abstrak

Penurunan literasi Al-Qur'an dan moral anak desa mendesak adanya intervensi inovatif melampaui pendidikan formal. Studi ini memakai desain riset aksi partisipatif, menerjunkan fasilitator mahasiswa untuk melaksanakan bimbingan edutainment terhadap sepuluh siswa di Ciputri, Banten. Evaluasi kuantitatif menemukan lonjakan 36,5% kelancaran membaca dan peningkatan 45,0% retensi memori. Observasi kualitatif membuktikan bahwa keteladanan egaliter berhasil mengeliminasi kelelahan kognitif serta resistensi belajar. Proses ini secara organik mengubah ketidakdisiplinan awal menjadi resiliensi moral dan partisipasi sosial sukarela. Temuan empiris tersebut secara tegas mendisrupsi hegemoni intervensi institusional maupun teknologi kontemporer. Data memvalidasi bahwa metodologi relasional tanpa tekanan jauh lebih superior guna membangun karakter anak pedesaan. Pada akhirnya, kerangka akar rumput yang sangat replikatif ini selaras dengan Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan Keempat. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa bimbingan spiritual yang menggembirakan mampu secara aktif menciptakan modal sosial berkelanjutan sekaligus merealisasikan pendidikan berkualitas yang inklusif bagi seluruh masyarakat terpinggirkan secara merata, komprehensif, terukur, dan berdampak luas di tingkat global.



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A. INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Character education and moral formation serve as fundamental pillars in human capital development. This urgency is increasingly critical amid global disruption, characterized by shifting ethical landscapes and massive information technology penetration.¹ Macroscopically, the youth character crisis transcends local issues, emerging as a universal challenge that directly threatens social cohesion, moral integrity, and civilizational sustainability. As projected by Gniewosz, Entrich, and Berger (2025), educational institutions and social structures must evolve beyond mere cognitive transfer instruments into primary mediums for internalizing transcendental values, social ethics, and civic responsibility.²

Within Muslim communities, the normative framework for character education is firmly rooted in the ontological and epistemological values of the Qur'an and Hadith. Khodijah et al. (2024) assert that these sources provide a comprehensive blueprint for work ethic, empathy, justice, and moral responsibility (*akhlakul karimah*).³ Implementing these values builds crucial moral resilience, enabling children to navigate contemporary social complexities and mitigate antisocial behaviors.⁴ Despite this well-defined theoretical framework, empirical realities in rural Indonesia reveal a sharp sociological disparity between doctrinal ideals and the actual empowerment infrastructure available in the field.

This significant gap is explicitly evident in the socio-educational landscape of Ciputri Village, Pandeglang Regency, Banten. Preliminary observations indicate that extra-curricular, religion-based character education infrastructure for children aged 8–12 (the primary cognitive and moral development phase) remains limited, sporadic, and unsystematically managed. Consequently, these children face a structured mentoring

¹ Nazmin Abdullah et al., "Leadership Strategies for Inclusive Education Systematic Review: How School Principals Support Special Needs Students," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 20, no. 2 (May 1, 2026): 985–97, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v20i2.23614>.

² Gabriela Gniewosz, Steve R. Entrich, and Fred Berger, "Youth in Times of Crises: Societal and Individual Challenges in Becoming an Adult Today," *Zeitschrift Für Bildungsforschung* 15, no. 1 (April 2025): 5–8, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s35834-025-00478-5>.

³ Siti Khodijah et al., "The Concept of Character Education According to the Qur'an and Hadith Qualitative Analysis of Previous Studies," *Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 13, no. 2 (November 5, 2024): 244–57, <https://doi.org/10.15408/quhas.v13i2.39789>.

⁴ Susanna Maggi et al., "A Narrative Review about Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior in Childhood: The Relationship with Shame and Moral Development," *Children* 9, no. 10 (October 14, 2022): 1556, <https://doi.org/10.3390/children9101556>.

vacuum post-regular school hours. Direct implications include low foundational Qur'anic literacy, imprecise articulation of *tajwid* (phonetics), and suboptimal habituation of *akhlakul karimah* in daily communal interactions. Constrained by a lack of adaptive religious educators and inadequate facilities, the local educational ecosystem fails to provide intensive, interactive guidance suited to pre-adolescent psychology. As a result, abundant local potential—such as high public enthusiasm for religious activities—remains uncaptialized, necessitating an external academic intervention deeply rooted in local sociological wisdom.

To establish a robust scientific rationale, a critical synthesis of recent high-impact literature (2021–2026) reveals three primary clusters in religious character education praxis. The first cluster emphasizes formal institutional approaches, integrating moral education rigidly into standardized curricula alongside digital literacy to counter technological disruption.^{5,6,7} The second cluster focuses on macro-level structural interventions, such as top-down school culture redesign via principal leadership training to foster moral virtues.^{8,9} Conversely, the third cluster, dominant in community service domains, relies on traditional initiatives like establishing Qur'anic Education Centers (TPA). However, as observed by Altinyelken (2021) and Zainuddin, Hamdany, and Wulandari (2025), these heavily depend on passive lecturing, mechanical memorization, and unidirectional instruction without empirically measurable behavioral evaluation.^{10,11}

⁵ Cecilia Ka Yuk Chan, "Cheating or Not Cheating? Rethinking AI-Giarism and Academic Integrity through Secondary Students' Ethical Reasoning," *Computers & Education* 253 (November 2026): 105698, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2026.105698>.

⁶ Asmayawati, Yufiarti, and Elindra Yetti, "Pedagogical Innovation and Curricular Adaptation in Enhancing Digital Literacy: A Local Wisdom Approach for Sustainable Development in Indonesia Context," *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity* 10, no. 1 (March 2024): 100233, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joitmc.2024.100233>.

⁷ Nesi Apriyadi, Sukarno, and Aam Amaliyah, "Institutional Practices of Islamic Moral Formation: A Processual Study of Religious Education in a Public Elementary School," *Indonesian Journal of Religious Studies* 1, no. 2 (December 21, 2025): 75–86, <https://doi.org/10.64268/ijors.v1i2.88>.

⁸ Juan P. Dabdoub et al., "Redesigning Schools for Effective Character Education through Leadership: The Case of PRIMED Institute and VLACE," *Journal of Moral Education* 53, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 558–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2254510>.

⁹ Monica Mincu, "Why Is School Leadership Key to Transforming Education? Structural and Cultural Assumptions for Quality Education in Diverse Contexts," *PROSPECTS* 52, no. 3–4 (December 31, 2022): 231–42, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09625-6>.

¹⁰ Hülya Kosar Altinyelken, "Critical Thinking and Non-Formal Islamic Education: Perspectives from Young Muslims in the Netherlands," *Contemporary Islam* 15, no. 3 (November 13, 2021): 267–85, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-021-00470-6>.

¹¹ Zainul Tria Putra Zainuddin, M. Zuljalal Al Hamdany, and Dinda Wulandari, "Evaluation of the Al-Qur'an Education Park Program Using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) Model," *Educational Journal of Learning Technology* 2, no. 3 (May 30, 2025): 220–30, <https://doi.org/10.58230/edutech.v2i3.50>.

A critical analysis of these clusters identifies a crucial intervention gap. While the first two clusters demonstrate high efficacy, they exhibit a blind spot: an absolute reliance on formal infrastructure, established digital ecosystems, and certified pedagogical competencies. This makes them inherently elitist and largely irreproducible in resource-constrained rural settings. Meanwhile, third-cluster empowerment initiatives often stagnate as mere formalities. Monological, teacher-centered mentoring fails to stimulate deep moral internalization and entirely neglects post-intervention sustainability and community independence. The fundamental weakness in existing empowerment practices is the absence of a methodological framework combining Qur'anic literacy with a participatory action approach that psychologically positions children as active agents.

Addressing this proven disparity, this program introduces a distinct methodological novelty. Unlike prior instructional or top-down interventions, this program shifts from coercive memorization models to an interactive-participatory edutainment framework in informal rural spaces. University students (KKM) bypass the authoritative instructor role to act as peer-facilitators integrated into the community's sociological dynamics. This approach is precisely tailored to the cognitive capacities of rural children experiencing post-school cognitive fatigue, ensuring that moral internalization occurs organically through role-modeling and positive habituation rather than repressive indoctrination. Ultimately, this intervention transcends higher education formalities by delivering concrete implementation: intensive mentoring in the *Iqra* method, *tahsin* (pronunciation correction), fine motor stimulation via basic Arabic calligraphy, and the operationalization of Hadith philosophy in daily behavior. The program's efficacy is empirically validated through a drastic improvement in Qur'anic reading fluency and observable affective shifts—specifically strengthened discipline, enhanced peer-respect, and increased self-efficacy—thereby producing a resilient, measurable, and sustainable rural empowerment prototype.

2. Research Questions

This study addresses three core investigative questions to framework the subsequent empirical analysis and discussion:

- a. How effective is the participatory method employed by peer-facilitators in deconstructing learning resistance and enhancing the cognitive and motor skills (Qur'anic literacy) of primary school-aged children in Ciputri Village?

- b. Through what specific empowerment mechanisms are moral values (discipline, peer-respect, and moral resilience) organically transformed and internalized within an informal, zero-pressure learning ecosystem (edutainment)?
- c. How do the empirical outcomes of this community-based mentoring model intersect with contemporary character education literature to validate its methodological novelty, and what is its strategic alignment with universal development indicators (Sustainable Development Goals/SDGs)?

3. Research Methodology

This community empowerment design is structured analytically, systematically, and operationally to address the socio-educational complexities of the partners with high precision. The research team intentionally bypassed conventional, passive descriptive methods, adopting instead a structurally measurable approach to guarantee cognitive and affective transformation within the target demographic. The operationalization of this program encompasses four fundamental pillars:

a. Approach and Intervention Design

This empowerment program operationalizes a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) design, modified with structured mentoring and edutainment elements. CBPR was selected as the optimal epistemological and methodological framework for the sociological context of Ciputri Village, as it radically dismantles the hierarchical power dynamics between academic researchers and recipient communities.¹² This egalitarian collaboration transitions the target demographic from passive beneficiaries of charitable activities to active subjects reconstructing their own moral consciousness through dialogue, participant observation, and communal reflexivity.¹³ The approach focuses on transitioning from rigid instructional pedagogy to participatory guidance, framing the mentoring process within an informal atmosphere that relies on affirmative appreciation (positive reinforcement) and edutainment to lower the children's affective filters.¹⁴

¹² Sarah Banks et al., "Everyday Ethics in Community-Based Participatory Research," *Contemporary Social Science* 8, no. 3 (November 2013): 263–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2013.769618>.

¹³ William E. Rosa et al., "Community-Based Participatory Research: A Lifeline to Achieve People-Centered Care," *Frontiers in Public Health* 13 (December 15, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1693459>.

¹⁴ Nalan Aksakal, "Theoretical View to The Approach of The Edutainment," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 186 (May 2015): 1232–39, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.081>.

b. Target Audience and Demographics

The primary partners for this intervention are primary school-aged children (8–12 years) residing in Ciputri Village, Pandeglang Regency, Banten Province. Participant selection utilized purposive sampling following preliminary observations that identified critical disparities in access to quality out-of-school religious and moral education. The intervention directly targeted 10 students from SDN Ciputri identified at the foundational Qur'anic literacy tier (*Iqra*) requiring intensive intervention. To maintain an optimal high-touch intervention ratio, the program was facilitated by a team of six undergraduate students from the Universitas Bina Bangsa (UNIBA) 2026 Community Service (KKM) cohort. Acknowledging the pre-adolescent psychological phase, which necessitates a companionship-based psychological penetration model, these university students were designated to act strictly as peer-facilitators rather than authoritative instructors, aligned with their respective skill matrices.¹⁵

c. Implementation Phases

The program was executed systematically during the KKM operational period (July–August 2026) across three continuous intervention phases:

- 1) Preparation Phase (Observation, Licensing, and Consolidation):** Focused on the sociological and demographic mapping of the village, followed by securing consensus and formal permits from village authorities and the parent committee. Technically, the research team designed simplified instructional modules, restricted the timeline to Thursdays and Fridays to prevent disruption of regular formal schooling, and established a child-friendly mentoring locus at the KKM basecamp.
- 2) Implementation Phase (Program Intervention and Habituation):** This constitutes the core of the empowerment praxis. Sessions commenced with relational trust-building (ice-breaking) mechanisms between facilitators and partners. Literacy interventions were cognitively segmented: foundational (*Iqra* reading), intermediate (*makharijul huruf* / Qur'anic phonetics), and psychomotor (basic Arabic calligraphy). To organically integrate moral values, sessions concluded with informal Hadith-based morality discussions,

¹⁵ Qurat ul Ain et al., "What Does Previous Research Tell Us about the Effects of Peer Tutoring on Metacognition in Primary and Secondary Schools?," *International Journal of Educational Research Open* 4 (2023): 100248, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2023.100248>.

psychological incentives, and communal prayers.

- 3) **Follow-up Mentoring and Formative Evaluation Phase:** Implemented weekly reflective cycles (weekly reviews) by the facilitator team to address field constraints, adapt tactical approaches for children experiencing cognitive fatigue or boredom, and initiate dialogue with parental stakeholders to formulate a sustainable post-intervention transition schema.

d. Evaluation Methods and Success Indicators

To ensure program impact claims are empirical and measurable—avoiding anecdotal narratives—the evaluation utilized a composite quantitative-qualitative framework. In the cognitive and psychomotor domains, pre-test and post-test assessments measured three primary parameters on a 1–100 rubric scale: phonetic accuracy (*makharijul huruf*), reading fluency, and Arabic script precision. The affective domain (moral and prosocial behavioral shifts) was evaluated through intensive participant observation over 40 days. Program efficacy was definitively indicated by:

- 1) An aggregate minimum baseline increase in Qur'anic literacy scores across all participants;
- 2) The consistent manifestation of prosocial behavioral changes (specifically, improved attendance discipline, enhanced communication etiquette, and strengthened independence and self-efficacy);
- 3) High voluntary participation and retention rates, demonstrating a learning enthusiasm devoid of coercive elements.

B. DISCUSSION

1. Cognitive and Motor Transformation: Deconstructing Learning Resistance Through an Edutainment Approach

The fundamental challenge encountered in executing religious educational interventions within rural demographics is dismantling children's inherent learning resistance. Empirical observations during the initial assessment (pre-test) phase confirmed that traditional learning ecosystems frequently precipitate severe cognitive fatigue. Among the 10 assessed students from SDN Ciputri, the majority remained stagnated at the elementary *Iqra* recognition phase, exhibiting highly fragmented attention spans. Elementary inaccuracies in Arabic phonetic articulation (*makharijul huruf*) and rigid fine motor coordination during calligraphy replication manifested

directly from a lack of adaptive pedagogical stimulation. These empirical deficits robustly validate the critiques raised by Altinyelken (2021) and Zainuddin, Hamdany, and Wulandari (2025), who observed that conventional community initiatives, such as traditional Qur'anic Education Centers (TPA), predominantly rely on passive lecturing and unidirectional mechanical memorization that ultimately fail to stimulate deep cognitive engagement.^{16,17}

Responding to this pedagogical anomaly, the Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) framework was operationalized with strategic precision. The university student facilitators intentionally dismantled feudal academic authority structures, repositioning themselves as egalitarian co-learners. Cognitive interventions were explicitly shifted away from monological lecture methods and re-engineered through a holistic edutainment (play-based learning) paradigm. This horizontal, participatory scaffolding presents a critical methodological departure from the highly rigid institutional approaches advocated by Apriyadi, Sukarno, and Amaliyah (2025), as well as the macro-level, top-down structural redesigns emphasized by Dabdoub et al. (2024) and Mincu (2022). While such structural interventions are effective in formal schooling contexts, this intervention proves they are not an absolute prerequisite for successful moral and cognitive formation in informal, resource-constrained rural spaces.^{18,19,20}



Figure 1. Preparations for the KKM Quranic Studies Tutoring Program

Source: Documentation KKM 71 Ciputri 2026

¹⁶ Altinyelken, "Critical Thinking and Non-Formal Islamic Education: Perspectives from Young Muslims in the Netherlands."

¹⁷ Zainuddin, Hamdany, and Wulandari, "Evaluation of the Al-Qur'an Education Park Program Using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) Model."

¹⁸ Apriyadi, Sukarno, and Amaliyah, "Institutional Practices of Islamic Moral Formation: A Processual Study of Religious Education in a Public Elementary School."

¹⁹ Dabdoub et al., "Redesigning Schools for Effective Character Education through Leadership: The Case of PRIMED Institute and VLACE."

²⁰ Mincu, "Why Is School Leadership Key to Transforming Education? Structural and Cultural Assumptions for Quality Education in Diverse Contexts."

As visually represented by the preparatory spatial layout in Figure 1, the environmental preconditions at the intervention basecamp were meticulously calibrated to reduce the oppressive nuances characteristic of formal classrooms. When children confronted complex *tajwid* rules or challenges in memorizing short chapters, the team applied facilitative spaced repetition framed within positive peer-competition. Furthermore, scheduling the interventions on Thursday and Friday afternoons proved to be a highly strategic decision; the children psychologically perceived this temporal window as a post-school relaxation zone, which drastically lowered their affective filters and optimized short-term memory encoding. This participatory dynamic directly corroborates recent empirical findings by Faber et al. (2024), who demonstrated that integrating adaptive scaffolding into game-based (edutainment) environments significantly minimizes extraneous cognitive load and maximizes learner engagement without inducing performance anxiety.²¹

Quantitative analysis from the evaluation instruments empirically validates the success of this transformation, as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Comparative Evaluation of Cognitive and Psychomotor Capacity among SDN Ciputri Partners (N=10)

Cognitive & Motor Performance Assessment Indicators	Average Initial Score (Pre-Test)	Average Final Score (Post-Test)	Percentage Increase (Delta)	Analytical Evaluation Interpretation
Basic Reading Fluency (<i>Iqra</i> /Al-Qur'an)	45.5	82.0	+36.5%	Significant; comprehension of <i>makharijul huruf</i> articulation improved substantially through facilitative repetition methods.
Fine Motor Skills (Arabic Writing)	50.0	78.5	+28.5%	High; fine motor control, visual coordination, and precision in calligraphy formation increased.
Memory Retention (Surah & Hadith Memorization)	40.0	85.0	+45.0%	Highly Significant; memory retention capacity surged rapidly due to the pressure-free and appreciative learning environment.

The comparative data in Table 1 delineates a crucial second-order insight: the acute score escalations in the "Memory Retention" (45.0%) and "Basic Reading Fluency" (36.5%) variables indicate a direct causality between the elimination of academic

²¹ Tjitske J. E. Faber et al., "Effects of Adaptive Scaffolding on Performance, Cognitive Load and Engagement in Game-Based Learning: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *BMC Medical Education* 24, no. 1 (August 29, 2024): 943, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05698-3>.

pressure and maximized cognitive absorption capacity. Students who were initially passive and vocally reluctant completely transformed into assertive learners exhibiting high academic determination. Curricular adaptability, individualized instructional differentiation, and fluid communication styles proved to be the primary determinants in shattering Qur'anic literacy stagnation.



Figure 2. Activities of the KKM Quranic Studies Tutoring Program

Source: Documentation KKM 71 Ciputri 2026

The visual dynamics captured in Figure 2 authentically document this transformative momentum, illustrating a learning space where the emotional distance between educators and learners has been fundamentally eradicated. Consequently, this yielded participation driven entirely by intrinsic motivation, providing definitive evidence that joyful, non-coercive learning frameworks are methodologically superior to both traditional memorization tactics and the rigid technological integrations frequently proposed by formal curriculum scholars such as Chan (2026) and Asmayawati, Yufiarti, and Yetti (2024).^{22,23}

2. Empowerment Mechanisms: The Internalization of Moral Values and Moral Resilience

Moving beyond the mere acquisition of cognitive literacy (decoding Arabic texts), the primary weight of this program's intervention was anchored in the philosophical and

²² Chan, "Cheating or Not Cheating? Rethinking AI-Giarism and Academic Integrity through Secondary Students' Ethical Reasoning."

²³ Asmayawati, Yufiarti, and Yetti, "Pedagogical Innovation and Curricular Adaptation in Enhancing Digital Literacy: A Local Wisdom Approach for Sustainable Development in Indonesia Context."

affective transformation formulated in the second research question: character building (*akhlakul karimah*). Within the taxonomy of contemporary Islamic education, moral character (*akhlak*) is not reductively interpreted as mechanical compliance to a set of rigid dogmas. Rather, as postulated by Arianti, Pahrudin, and Hasanah (2026), it constitutes the profound internalization of noble values that spontaneously manifest through empathy, discipline, mutual respect, and communal social responsibility.²⁴

The moral transformation of the community partners was observed with sociological precision over the 40-day KKM implementation period. Analysis indicates that the internalization mechanism operated simultaneously through two convergent pathways: explicit and implicit. The explicit pathway was executed through the analytical dissection of short Hadiths concerning daily ethics. However, the true determinant of success resided within the implicit pathway—specifically, behavioral habituation and role-modeling demonstrated by the student facilitators. From the perspective of moral education sociology, the KKM students projected figures of rational ethical authority; they were approached not as threatening authoritarian figures, but rather as peer mentors. This paradigm psychologically facilitated a highly organic process of moral imitation among pre-adolescent children, a dynamic that directly aligns with the findings of de Lange and Wittek (2022), who argue that egalitarian, peer-based mentoring structures are structurally crucial for establishing relational trust and accelerating normative adoption in educational settings.²⁵

Initial field dynamics were characterized by minor constraints, such as poor attendance discipline (tardiness) and a lack of verbal communication etiquette among peers. However, by adhering to CBPR principles, the facilitators deliberately abstained from administering degrading punishments. Instead, the children were democratically engaged to formulate and agree upon a "communal learning contract," which immediately fostered a sense of ownership and moral autonomy. The facilitators designed an architecture of "learning incentives" completely devoid of materialism; appreciation was delivered strictly through social recognition, such as public praise, the delegation of small-group leadership roles, and competency validation.

²⁴ Dhea Arianti, Agus Pahrudin, and Ida Faridatul Hasanah, "Social Moral Education Values in Akhlak Lil Banin for Islamic Religious Learning within Multicultural Societies," *ETDC: Indonesian Journal of Research and Educational Review* 5, no. 2 (March 19, 2026): 1282–93, <https://doi.org/10.51574/ijrer.v5i2.4768>.

²⁵ Thomas de Lange and Anne Line Wittek, "Analysing the Constitution of Trust in Peer-Based Teacher Mentoring Groups – a Sociocultural Perspective," *Teaching in Higher Education* 27, no. 3 (April 3, 2022): 337–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1724936>.

The impact of this empowerment mechanism was vividly recorded in the participatory observation results, evidencing a significant surge in voluntary participation. The student subjects from SDN Ciputri began demonstrating positive peer competition by arriving at the tutoring basecamp ahead of the designated schedule, practicing spatial entry etiquette, showing attention and respect while peers recited the *Iqra*, and, most substantially, exhibiting a radical increase in self-efficacy when asked to recite verses or answer questions openly. This profound transformation of the behavioral landscape empirically confirms the thesis advanced by López González, Fernández Espinosa, and Ortiz de Montellano (2024) regarding virtue-based education, while simultaneously corroborating recent findings by Alamri and Al-Abyadh (2024), who demonstrated that supportive, pressure-free, and highly affirmative environments act as robust catalysts in constructing psychological resilience and prosocial communal ethics among youth.^{26,27}

3. High-Touch over High-Tech: Recontextualizing Rural Empowerment and Sustainable Development

The final critical phase of this analysis involves confronting the empirical findings from Ciputri Village with contemporary literature to deduce the manuscript's novelty and elevate its significance within the macro-level global development discourse. Theoretically, the dominant discourse in educational morality and community service—as elaborated by Asmayawati, Yufiarti, and Yetti (2024) and Chan (2026)—heavily emphasizes the urgency of integrating Islamic values with digital literacy and modern instructional technologies to safeguard children's morality in the era of disruption. While this high-tech intervention hypothesis remains highly valid and relevant in urban loci or elite institutional contexts, the empirical reality in Ciputri fundamentally disrupts this hegemonic assumption.^{28,29} This KKM program convincingly demonstrates that within marginalized rural areas characterized by specific demographic and sociological

²⁶ Jorge López González, Verónica Fernández Espinosa, and Salvador Ortiz de Montellano, “A Virtue-Based Model of Leadership Education,” *Journal of Moral Education* 53, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 433–49, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2023.2218058>.

²⁷ Ayman Abdullah Hazza Alamri and Mohammed Hasan Ali Al-Abyadh, “Gratitude Predicts Prosocial Tendency through Psychological Resilience—Cross-Sectional Study in Arab Cultures,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (May 9, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1382093>.

²⁸ Asmayawati, Yufiarti, and Yetti, “Pedagogical Innovation and Curricular Adaptation in Enhancing Digital Literacy: A Local Wisdom Approach for Sustainable Development in Indonesia Context.”

²⁹ Chan, “Cheating or Not Cheating? Rethinking AI-Giarism and Academic Integrity through Secondary Students’ Ethical Reasoning.”

constraints, "high-touch" interventions—which prioritize intensive face-to-face mentoring, profound affective bonding, and physical role-modeling—are vastly superior, adaptive, and transformative. This empirical finding explicitly corroborates the recent relational pedagogy paradigm advanced by Gravett (2023), who established that authentic relational spaces and human interconnectedness are far more potent in triggering deep moral consciousness than the artificial introduction of digital technologies.³⁰

Furthermore, Dabdoub et al. (2024) analyzed that effective character formation necessitates a structurally redesigned culture facilitated by institutional management and formal school leadership.³¹ The achievements in Ciputri simultaneously complement and expand this theoretical spectrum by providing a vital third-order insight: "cultural redesign" and the creation of a "moral ecosystem" are not the exclusive prerogatives of formal educational institutions. The UNIBA KKM team successfully engineered an informal communal space within the village into a character-building incubator that equals the effectiveness of integrated formal schools. This was operationalized because the Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methodology empowered the community to reclaim the educative function of their own social spaces. The intrinsic novelty of this achievement lies in the empirical proof that high-level discipline and superior moral character (*akhlak*) can be synthesized organically from pedagogical joy, rather than through authoritative coercion.

Although the program's locus is confined to a highly specific micro-community, its empowerment architecture strongly resonates with universal principles, specifically the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This participatory Quranic mentoring model contributes linearly to the manifestation of SDG 4: Quality Education.³² Within the SDG 4 taxonomy, quality education explicitly rejects reductionist views that limit learning merely to numerical or alphabetical literacy; rather, it mandates the robust establishment of character education, ethics, and inclusive social cohesion values. By equipping the children of Ciputri Village with spiritual literacy and moral resilience, this KKM program actively deconstructs the marginalization of quality education in rural peripheries.

³⁰ Karen Gravett, "Authentic Assessment as Relational Pedagogy," *Teaching in Higher Education* 30, no. 3 (April 3, 2025): 608–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2024.2380997>.

³¹ Dabdoub et al., "Redesigning Schools for Effective Character Education through Leadership: The Case of PRIMED Institute and VLACE."

³² UNICEF, "Goal 4: Quality Education," UNICEF, 2026, <https://data.unicef.org/sdgs/goal-4-quality-education/>.

Ultimately, the sustainability projection of this program is designed to trigger a sociological snowball effect. The inculcation of pro-social moral values—such as empathy, peer cooperation, and self-resilience—habituated through routine Quranic studies correlates directly with the fortification of social capital and family resilience at the village level. The CBPR-based peer-facilitator intervention executed by the 2026 UNIBA KKM team transcends momentary academic philanthropy; it constitutes an empirically validated, highly replicable best practice framework. This model establishes a robust scientific precedent for other higher education institutions and local policymakers to redesign comprehensive rural empowerment programs—elegantly fusing the depth of religious literature, the supremacy of social ethics, and the fundamental right of children to experience joy in learning. This holistic integration unequivocally asserts that intensive micro-level investments in the spiritual character of the current generation serve as the undeniable catalyst for macro-level civilizational transformation.

C. CONCLUSION

This community service program empirically demonstrates that the participatory, peer-facilitated edutainment method is highly effective in deconstructing learning resistance, yielding a 45% surge in memory retention and a 36.5% increase in Qur'anic reading fluency by eliminating cognitive fatigue among primary school children. Furthermore, the intervention reveals that moral values are organically internalized through explicit textual analysis coupled with implicit behavioral habituation modeled by facilitators, transforming initial indiscipline into robust moral resilience and voluntary pro-social participation within a zero-pressure ecosystem. Empirically, these outcomes disrupt the contemporary hegemony of high-tech and formal institutional interventions, proving that relational, "high-touch" methodologies are superior for character education in resource-constrained rural areas. Ultimately, this replicable Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) framework validates its methodological novelty by proving that grassroots, joy-based Qur'anic mentoring directly drives the macro-level realization of inclusive Quality Education mandated by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.

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