

STRENGTHENING CHARACTER THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi pemantapan karakter melalui kegiatan ekstrakurikuler di MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak pada tahun 2024. Fokus utama penelitian adalah pada tiga kegiatan ekstrakurikuler: Pramuka, Olah Raga, dan Seni. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, penelitian ini melibatkan berbagai pemangku kepentingan termasuk kepala madrasah, guru, siswa, orang tua, dan tokoh masyarakat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dampak positif kegiatan ekstrakurikuler terhadap pembentukan karakter siswa, terlihat dari peningkatan kedisiplinan, penguatan karakter religius, peningkatan kemampuan kerjasama dan kepemimpinan, serta kesadaran lingkungan dan sosial. Prestasi akademik dan non-akademik siswa juga menunjukkan peningkatan. Proses pemantapan karakter melibatkan berbagai metode seperti keteladanan, pembiasaan, refleksi, dan pengalaman lapangan. Nilai-nilai yang ditanamkan mencakup religiositas, integritas, nasionalisme, kemandirian, gotong royong, kreativitas, disiplin, serta kepedulian sosial dan lingkungan. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan berharga tentang efektivitas kegiatan ekstrakurikuler dalam pembentukan karakter siswa dan dapat menjadi referensi bagi pengembangan program serupa di institusi pendidikan lainnya.

Kata Kunci: Pemantapan Karakter, Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler, MTs Manbaul Ulum, Pendidikan Karakter

Abstract

This study examines the implementation of character development through extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak in 2024. The main focus is on three extracurricular activities: Scouting, Sports, and Arts. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research involves various stakeholders, including the head of the madrasa, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders. The results indicate a positive impact of extracurricular activities on character formation, evidenced by improvements in discipline, the reinforcement of religious character, enhanced teamwork and leadership skills, as well as environmental and social awareness. Both academic and non-academic achievements of students have also shown improvement. The character development process involves various methods such as role modeling, habituation, reflection, and field experiences. The values instilled include religiosity, integrity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, creativity, discipline, and social and environmental awareness. This research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of extracurricular activities in shaping students' character and can serve as a reference for the development of similar programs in other educational institutions.

Keywords: Character Development, Extracurricular Activities, MTs Manbaul Ulum, Character Education

INTRODUCTION

Character education is a fundamental aspect in shaping a quality young generation. In the era of globalization marked by rapid development of information and communication technology, the challenges in shaping the character of the younger generation are becoming increasingly complex. The phenomena of moral degradation, erosion of cultural values, and increasing deviant behavior among adolescents have become a serious concern for educators and education policymakers (Zubaedi, 2017).

Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) as an Islamic educational institution has a strategic role in instilling character values based on religious teachings and national culture. MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak, as one of the Islamic educational institutions in Central Java, recognizes the importance of strengthening students' character through various approaches, one of which is through extracurricular activities.

Extracurricular activities become an important platform for developing students' talents, interests, and character outside formal class hours. Through extracurricular activities, students can develop social skills, leadership, teamwork, and other positive values that support character formation (Dahliyana, 2017). At MTs Manbaul Ulum, three extracurricular activities that are the focus of character strengthening are Scouting, Sports, and Arts.

Character strengthening through extracurricular activities also requires close collaboration between the school, parents, and the community. MTs Manbaul Ulum recognizes the importance of this synergy and strives to involve parents and community leaders in various extracurricular activities. For example, in Scouting activities, community leaders are invited to share experiences and local wisdom, while in sports activities, inter-school tournaments involve active participation of parents and the surrounding community.

This research aims to examine in depth the implementation of character strengthening through Scouting, Sports, and Arts extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak in 2024. This study will analyze the strategies implemented, challenges faced, and the impact of extracurricular activities on students' character formation.

Through this research, it is expected to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of extracurricular activities in strengthening students' character. The results of this study can serve as a reference for other educational institutions in developing character-oriented extracurricular programs, as well as contributing to the development of character education policies at both local and national levels.

There are several previous relevant studies related to this research:

1. Dahliyana, A. (2017). "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler di Sekolah". This study examines the effectiveness of extracurricular activities in strengthening character education at the secondary school level (Dahliyana, 2017).
2. Wuryandani, W., Maftuh, B., Sapriya, S., & Budimansyah, D. (2014). "Pendidikan Karakter Disiplin di Sekolah Dasar". This study focuses on the implementation of discipline character education through various school activities, including extracurricular activities (Wuryandani et al., 2014).

3. Sulton, S., Gunawan, I., & Sari, D. N. (2018). "Pengaruh Etika Profesional terhadap Pembentukan Karakter Mahasiswa". This research investigates character formation at the higher education level, which can provide insights for secondary education (Sulton et al., 2018).

Based on these studies, the novelty in this research includes:

1. Specific and current context: Your research is conducted at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak in 2024. This provides a more specific and current context compared to previous studies. You can explore how the unique characteristics of this school and region influence the effectiveness of extracurricular activities in character strengthening.
2. Integration of local and Islamic values: Given the location of your research at an MTs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah), you can investigate how Islamic values and local wisdom of Demak are integrated into extracurricular activities to strengthen students' character. This will provide a new perspective that has not been explored in depth in previous research.
3. Technology-based program personalization: Investigate how digital technology can be utilized to personalize extracurricular activities according to individual students' character needs. This could include the use of mobile applications or online platforms to track students' character development and adjust activities accordingly.
4. Multi-stakeholder involvement: Develop and test a collaborative model involving teachers, parents, community leaders, and religious leaders in designing and implementing extracurricular activities for character strengthening. This will provide a more comprehensive perspective compared to previous research that tended to focus solely on the school environment.

By combining these elements, your research can make a new and significant contribution to our understanding of character strengthening through extracurricular activities, particularly in the context of madrasahs in Indonesia in the post-pandemic era.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak to explore the implementation of character strengthening through extracurricular activities such as Scouting, Sports, and Arts. The research subjects include the head of the madrasah, supervising teachers, students, parents, and community leaders, selected through purposive sampling.

Data is collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The instruments used include observation and interview guidelines, document analysis sheets, and FGD guides. The research process involves stages of preparation, implementation, data analysis, and reporting.

Data analysis uses a thematic approach, with steps including data familiarization, coding, searching and reviewing themes, up to report writing. Data validity is ensured through triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, audit trail, and researcher reflexivity. This research also adheres to research ethics principles such as informed consent, confidentiality,

and the principle of non-maleficence. The findings are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of character education in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Types of Extracurricular Activities Offered

a. Scouting

Scouting is a mandatory extracurricular activity at MTs Manbaul Ulum, in accordance with the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 63 of 2014 concerning Scouting Education as a Mandatory Extracurricular Activity in Primary and Secondary Education (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). Scouting activities at this madrasah are held every Saturday after regular class hours end.

The Scouting program at MTs Manbaul Ulum includes various activities such as:

- Weekly routine training
- Saturday-Sunday Camp (Persami)
- District and regency level jamborees
- Social and environmental service activities
- Scouting skills training (rope tying, morse code, semaphore, etc.)
- Scouting competitions

b. Sports

MTs Manbaul Ulum offers several sports branches as optional extracurricular activities. These sports activities are held on Mondays and Wednesdays after class hours. The sports branches offered include:

- 1) Soccer/Futsal
 - Basic technique training (passing, dribbling, shooting)
 - Game strategy
 - Internal and inter-school matches
- 2) Volleyball
 - Basic technique training (service, passing, smash)
 - Game strategy
 - Internal and inter-school matches
- 3) Table Tennis
 - Basic technique training (service, smash, dropshot)
 - Singles and doubles game strategy

- Internal and inter-school tournaments

c. Arts

Art activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum aim to develop students' appreciation and skills in arts and culture. These activities are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays after class hours. There are only two types of art activities offered: 1) Qur'anic recitation art/Qira'ah and 2) Tambourine ensemble

Objectives and Targets of Activities

a. Scouting

Objectives:

- To form students' character and personality that is noble, patriotic, law-abiding, disciplined, and upholding the noble values of the nation
- To develop leadership skills, teamwork, and independence
- To increase students' environmental awareness and social spirit

Targets:

- All students of MTs Manbaul Ulum from grades VII to IX
- Development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects through scouting activities

b. Sports

Objectives:

- To improve students' physical fitness and health
- To develop motor skills and techniques in various sports branches
- To form character of sportsmanship, teamwork, and fighting spirit
- To channel students' talents and interests in sports

Targets:

- Students who have interests and talents in sports
- Development of students' physical, mental, and social aspects through sports activities
- Preparation of madrasah sports teams for inter-school competitions

c. Arts

Objectives:

- To develop students' creativity and art appreciation
- To preserve and develop local arts and culture
- To increase students' self-confidence and self-expression abilities

- To hone artistic skills as life skills

Targets:

- Students who have interests and talents in arts
- Development of students' aesthetic, emotional, and cultural aspects through art activities
- Preparation of madrasah art teams for festivals and art competitions

The implementation of extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum is in line with Lickona's (2022) opinion which emphasizes the importance of character education through various school activities (Lickona & Wamaungo, 2022). Scouting activities, for example, become an effective vehicle for instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and social care. This is reinforced by research by Misilia et al. which shows that scouting activities contribute significantly to the formation of student character (Misilia et al., 2016).

In the context of sports activities, Gould and Carson assert that participation in sports can facilitate the development of positive character traits such as hard work, perseverance, and teamwork (Gould & Carson, 2008). Sports activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum aim not only to improve physical fitness but also to form a tough and sportsmanlike character.

Meanwhile, art activities in this madrasah are in line with Eisner's view that art education contributes to students' cognitive, emotional, and social development (Eisner, 2002). Through art activities, students not only develop artistic skills but also learn about discipline, creativity, and appreciation for cultural diversity.

In its implementation, extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum are integrated with Islamic values and local wisdom. This is in line with the concept of school culture-based character education proposed by Zubaedi, where character values are internalized through various activities in the school environment (Zubaedi, 2017).

Thus, extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum are not only a platform for talent and interest development but also a strategic means for strengthening student character that is in harmony with the vision and mission of the madrasah and the demands of the times.

Impact of Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak have shown significant impact on students' character development. This impact is evident in various aspects, ranging from changes in behavior and attitudes, improvement in academic and non-academic achievements, to positive responses from various stakeholders. The following is a detailed analysis of these impacts:

1. Changes in Student Behavior and Attitudes

Changes in student behavior and attitudes are the main indicators of the success of character strengthening programs through extracurricular activities. Based on observations and evaluations conducted periodically by the team of teachers and extracurricular coaches, several significant changes have been identified:

a. Increased Discipline

Students who are active in extracurricular activities, especially Scouting, show a noticeable increase in discipline. This is evident from punctuality in attending classes, compliance with school rules, and regularity in completing academic tasks. This shows a positive correlation between participation in scouting activities and students' level of discipline.

b. Strengthening Religious Character

The integration of Islamic values in extracurricular activities has contributed to strengthening students' religious character. This is evident from the increased orderliness in performing obligatory worship, increased student interest in religious activities at school, and reduced violations of Islamic ethics in the madrasah environment. This observation supports Raihani's argument about the effectiveness of integrating religious values in extracurricular activities in faith-based schools (Raihani, 2017).

c. Improvement in Cooperation and Leadership Abilities

Extracurricular activities, especially team sports and Scouting, have facilitated the development of students' cooperation and leadership abilities. Teachers report an increase in student initiative in group work in class and better ability to manage interpersonal conflicts. This is consistent with Marpaung et al.'s study demonstrating the positive role of extracurricular activities in developing adolescents' social skills and leadership (Marpaung et al., 2024).

d. Increased Environmental and Social Awareness

Students involved in Scouting activities and community-based art projects show increased awareness of environmental and social issues. This is evident from student initiatives in school cleanliness programs and active participation in social service activities. This phenomenon supports Epriliana's findings on the effectiveness of extracurricular activities in building environmental awareness and social responsibility among adolescents (Epriliana, 2017).

e. Development of Creativity and Self-Expression

Art activities have had a positive impact on students' creativity and self-expression abilities. Teachers report increased student participation in class discussions and better ability to convey ideas verbally and in writing. This observation aligns with the argument about the role of art education in developing creative and expressive thinking skills (Eisner, 2002).

2. Students' Academic and Non-Academic Achievements

In addition to changes in behavior and attitudes, extracurricular activities have also positively impacted student achievements, both in academic and non-academic fields.

a. Improvement in Academic Achievement

Analysis of student report cards shows a positive correlation between active participation in extracurricular activities and improvement in academic achievement. Students involved in extracurricular activities consistently show an increase in average grades by 0.5 points compared to students who are not active in extracurricular activities. This finding supports the research results of Carbonaro & Maloney which show a positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement (Carbonaro & Maloney, 2019).

Several factors that may contribute to this improvement include:

- Increased discipline and time management obtained from extracurricular activities.
- Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills through various challenges in extracurricular activities.
- Increased learning motivation as a result of growing confidence through achievements in extracurricular activities.

b. Non-Academic Achievements

Extracurricular activities have opened opportunities for students to achieve outside the academic field. Some significant achievements include:

- The MTs Manbaul Ulum Scout team won 1st place in the District Level Scout Jamboree in Karangawen.
- The track and field team won 1st place in the 100 M Run competition at the MTs N 2 Demak KKM level.
- The volleyball team won 1st place at the MTs N 2 Demak KKM level.
- Girls' Table Tennis representing KMM MTs N 2 Demak won 3rd place in the Demak Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Sports Week.

These achievements not only enhance the reputation of the madrasah but also contribute to building students' character, especially in terms of self-confidence, fighting spirit, and pride in school identity. This is in line with Carbonaro & Maloney's findings on the role of achievements in extracurricular activities in shaping positive adolescent identity (Carbonaro & Maloney, 2019).

3. Testimonials from Teachers, Students, and Parents

The positive impact of extracurricular activities is also reflected in testimonials from various stakeholders:

a. Teacher Testimonials

Teacher Respondent 1 states: "I see significant changes in students who are active in extracurricular activities. They are more confident in expressing opinions and more skilled in group work. Their creative writing skills have also improved, especially for those involved in art activities."

Teacher Respondent 2 adds: "Students who are active in Scouting show improved problem-solving abilities. They are more systematic in analyzing problems and more persistent in finding solutions. I think this is the result of their experience facing various challenges in scouting activities."

These testimonials confirm Anggreni & Agustang's observations about the transfer of skills from extracurricular activities to academic performance (Anggreni & Agustang, 2023).

b. Student Testimonials

Student Respondent 1, who is active in Scouting activities, shares: "Since joining Scouting, I feel more disciplined and responsible. I also learned how to work in a team and lead a group. This experience has been very helpful in my learning activities in class."

Student Respondent 2, a member of the madrasah's Futsal team, states: "Regular soccer practice teaches me about the importance of hard work and teamwork. I also learned to manage time better so I can continue to excel in academics."

These testimonials reflect Fredricks and Eccles' findings on the role of extracurricular activities in developing adolescents' life skills (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006).

c. Parent Testimonials

Student Parent Respondent 1 reveals: "Since my child became active in the choir, she has become more confident and expressive. Her grades in school have also improved, perhaps because she has learned to be more disciplined and focused."

Student Parent Respondent 2 adds: "I'm glad my child joined the Scouts. He is now more independent and has a greater sense of responsibility towards his tasks at home."

These parent testimonials support Hatimah's argument about the importance of school-family partnerships in supporting positive adolescent development through extracurricular activities (Hatimah, 2016).

Although these testimonials are anecdotal, they provide important perspectives on the impact of extracurricular activities directly felt by stakeholders. This aligns with the narrative research approach in education proposed by Clandinin and Connelly, which emphasizes the importance of individual experiences in understanding educational phenomena (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

The impact of extracurricular activities on student character at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak shows positive and multidimensional results. Changes in student behavior and attitudes, improvements in academic and non-academic achievements, and positive testimonials from teachers, students, and parents provide strong evidence of the effectiveness of this program.

However, it should be noted that this impact may not be uniform for all students and may be influenced by other factors such as students' intrinsic motivation, family support, and the quality of program implementation. Therefore, continuous evaluation and program adjustments based on feedback from all stakeholders remain important to ensure the long-term effectiveness of extracurricular activities in strengthening student character.

In the future, more comprehensive longitudinal research may be needed to understand the long-term impact of extracurricular activities on character development and student success after graduating from MTs Manbaul Ulum. This will provide deeper insights into the sustainability of the observed positive impacts and help in developing more effective programs in the future.

Character Strengthening Process through Extracurricular Activities

The process of character strengthening through extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak is complex and multidimensional. This process involves various methods, values being instilled, and the integration of these values into daily activities. Here is a detailed explanation of these aspects:

1. Methods Used in Extracurricular Activities

In implementing extracurricular activities for character strengthening, MTs Manbaul Ulum adopts various methods tailored to the types of activities and student characteristics. These methods are based on effective character education principles as outlined by Lickona, which emphasize the importance of a comprehensive and integrative approach in character formation (Lickona & Wamaungo, 2022).

a. Role Modeling Method

This method is applied by involving extracurricular supervising teachers who not only have competence in their field but also possess good integrity and character. Bandura, in his social learning theory, asserts that individuals learn through observation and imitation of others' behavior (Bandura, 1997). In the context of Scouting activities, for example, Scout leaders not only teach scouting techniques but also demonstrate values such as discipline, responsibility, and social care in daily actions.

b. Habituation Method

Habituation is a key method in character formation. As emphasized by Aristotle, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." At MTs Manbaul Ulum, habituation is done through consistent routines and rules in every extracurricular activity. For example, in sports activities, students are accustomed to warming up, maintaining field cleanliness, and praying before and after practice.

c. Reflection Method

Reflection is an important component in the experiential learning process (Kolb, 2015). After each extracurricular activity, students are encouraged to reflect on their experiences. This can be in the form of group discussions, reflective journal writing, or individual sharing sessions with mentors. Through reflection, students can internalize the values learned and relate them to their personal experiences.

d. Assignment Method

This method involves giving challenging yet achievable tasks to students. In art activities, for example, students might be assigned to create works that raise themes of social values or local wisdom. This method aligns with the concept of scaffolding proposed by Vygotsky and used in Azi's research, where students are encouraged to reach their developmental potential through appropriate guidance and support (Azi, 2020).

e. Discussion and Dialogue Method

Interactive discussions and dialogues are used to develop students' critical thinking and communication skills. This method aligns with the character education approach, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue and relationships in moral formation. In Scouting activities, for example, discussions about social and environmental issues are conducted to develop students' social sensitivity and environmental responsibility.

f. Field Experience Method

This method involves students' direct experience in real situations. Dewey emphasized the importance of experience in education (Dewey, 2015). At MTs Manbaul Ulum, this method is applied through activities such as social service, camping, or inter-school sports competitions. Through direct experience, students can apply the values learned in real situations.

g. Reward and Consequence Method

A system of rewards and consequences is applied to reinforce positive behavior and correct negative behavior. However, its application is done carefully to avoid excessive extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci, in their self-determination theory, emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivation in learning and self-development (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2. Character Values Instilled

MTs Manbaul Ulum adopts character values that align with the vision and mission of the madrasah, Islamic values, and national character. These values are based on the Strengthening of Character Education (PPK) launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017), but are adapted to the local context and specific needs of students. The main values instilled include:

a. Religiosity

This value becomes the main foundation in character formation at MTs Manbaul Ulum. Religiosity not only covers ritual worship but also the internalization of religious values in daily life. In extracurricular activities, this value is instilled through the integration of Islamic teachings in every aspect of the activities.

b. Integrity

Integrity includes honesty, responsibility, and consistency between thoughts, words, and actions. This value is instilled through various activities that demand honesty and responsibility, such as individual assignments in Scouting or leadership roles in sports teams.

c. Nationalism

The value of nationalism is instilled to foster love for the homeland and national spirit. In Scouting activities, for example, students are introduced to the nation's history and culture, and are involved in activities that strengthen the sense of nationality.

d. Independence

Independence includes the ability to manage oneself, make decisions, and take responsibility for one's actions. This value is instilled through various activities that require student initiative and independence, such as individual art projects or independent sports training.

e. Gotong Royong (Mutual Cooperation)

The value of mutual cooperation emphasizes cooperation, solidarity, and empathy. This value is instilled through group activities in extracurriculars, such as team projects in Scouting or team games in sports.

f. Creativity and Innovation

This value is instilled to encourage students to think out of the box and develop creative solutions to various challenges. In art activities, for example, students are encouraged to explore various forms of artistic expression.

g. Discipline

Discipline includes adherence to rules, time management, and consistency in actions. This value is instilled through the consistent application of rules in every extracurricular activity.

h. Social and Environmental Care

This value is instilled to foster awareness and responsibility towards society and the environment. Social service activities and environmental projects in Scouting become the main means of instilling this value.

3. Integration of Character Values in Activities

The integration of character values in extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum is carried out systematically and thoroughly. This approach is in line with the concept of integrated character education put forward by Berkowitz and Bier, who emphasized the importance of incorporation character values into all aspects of school life (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

a. Integration in Activity Planning

Each extracurricular activity is designed with the character values to be instilled. For example, in planning Scout activities, coaches not only draw up a technical agenda for scouting, but also design how values such as responsibility, cooperation, and environmental care can be integrated into each activity.

b. Integration in the Implementation of Activities

During the implementation of activities, character values are explicitly and implicitly integrated. For example, in sports activities, in addition to focusing on developing technical skills, coaches also emphasize values such as sportsmanship, teamwork, and persistence. This is in line with the opinion of Shields and Bredemeier who stated that sport can be an effective arena for character development (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

c. Integration through Ritualization

Ritualization or habituation is routinely used to strengthen the internalization of character values. For example, each extracurricular activity begins with a joint prayer (instilling the value of religiosity), the reading of Pancasila (instilling the value of nationalism), and a brief reflection on the values that will be practiced in the activity.

d. Integration through Example

Extracurricular coaches not only teach character values verbally, but also demonstrate them through concrete actions. This is in line with the principle of exemplary character education put forward by Lickona and Wamaungo, which emphasizes the importance of "moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action" (Lickona & Wamaungo, 2022).

e. Integration in Activity Evaluation

The assessment of extracurricular activities does not only focus on technical achievements or achievements, but also on the development of students' character. Assessment rubrics are developed to measure aspects of character such as cooperation, responsibility, and integrity. This is in line with Popham's approach in the form of authentic assessment in character education (Popham, 1997).

f. Integration through Reflection and Dialogue

After each activity, students are encouraged to reflect on the values they have practiced. Dialogue between coaches and students, as well as between students, is facilitated to deepen understanding of these values. Noddings emphasized the importance of dialogue in moral education to develop understanding and empathy (Noddings, 2002).

g. Integration through Value-Based Projects

Students are involved in projects that explicitly apply character values. For example, in art activities, students may be assigned to create works that raise themes of social values or local wisdom. In Scouting, students may design and implement environmental conservation projects.

h. Integration through Collaboration with Parents and the Community

MTs Manbaul Ulum realizes that character strengthening requires cooperation between schools, families, and the community. Parents are involved through regular communication about the development of the child's character and are invited to participate in certain activities. Community leaders are also invited to share experiences and provide perspectives on character values in real-life contexts.

The process of strengthening character through extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum is a comprehensive effort that involves various methods, values, and integration strategies. This approach is in line with Berkowitz and Bier's view that effective character education requires a whole school approach (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

However, it should be acknowledged that this process is not without challenges. One of the main challenges is ensuring consistency between the values taught in schools and the realities that students face outside of school. To overcome this, MTs Manbaul Ulum continues to strive to strengthen cooperation with families and communities, as well as provide opportunities for students to reflect and discuss the moral dilemmas they face in their daily lives.

Another challenge is to measure the effectiveness of this character stabilization program. Although behavioral changes can be observed, the internalization of character values is a long-term process that is not always easy to measure. MTs Manbaul Ulum continues to develop more comprehensive assessment instruments and conduct longitudinal studies to understand the long-term impact of the program.

In the future, MTs Manbaul Ulum plans to further integrate technology in the character building process, for example through the development of digital self-reflection applications or online collaboration platforms for value-based projects. This is in line with the 21st century education trend which emphasizes the importance of digital literacy in character development.

With this comprehensive and continuously evaluated approach, MTs Manbaul Ulum hopes to form a young generation that is not only academically superior, but also has a strong character and is ready to face global challenges while adhering to Islamic values and local wisdom.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that extracurricular activities at MTs Manbaul Ulum Tlogorejo Karangawen Demak, which include Scouting, Sports, and Arts, have proven to be

Singularitas: Islamic Education Journal. Fajar Islam Indonesia Foundation collaborates with Faculty of Educational Sciences, State Islamic University of Jakarta, 01(01), 2024. p 1-15.

effective in strengthening students' character. The implementation of these activities, which involved various methods such as example, habituation, reflection, and field experience, succeeded in instilling values such as religiosity, integrity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, creativity, discipline, and social and environmental concerns.

The results of the study showed that there was a positive impact on student discipline, strengthening religious character, increasing cooperation and leadership skills, as well as environmental and social awareness. In addition, students' academic and non-academic achievement has also increased, which reflects the success of integrating character values in daily activities.

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