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COMMUNITY SERVICE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC WORK (PKM KI): IMPROVING STUDENT CHARACTER THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING AT MI DARUL FALAH

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Abstract

This Community Service Based on Scientific Work (PKM-KI) was motivated by the lack of communication skills and self-confidence among primary school students in public speaking. The program aims to strengthen students character through Islamic public speaking training at MI Darul Falah. The study applied a descriptive qualitative method with a participatory educational approach, involving 30 students from grades IV to VI. The training consisted of theoretical sessions, practical speaking exercises, and mentoring conducted by lecturers and teachers. The results indicated a significant improvement in students confidence, responsibility, and politeness in communication. Students become more capable of expressing ideas logically and respectfully. It can be concluded that Islamic-based public speaking effectively reinforces core character values such as empathy, integrity, and responsibility. It is recommended that this program be sustained as a flagship initiative for character education in Islamic and primary schools.

Keywords: *Islamic values, PKM-KI, primary education, public speaking, student character*

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1. Introduction

Education is essentially not only oriented towards mastering knowledge, but also aims to shape the character and morality of students. True education must combine cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects so that students develop holistically. In the context of 21st-century education, character building has become a major urgency as global challenges and the rapid flow of digital information can influence the behavior of the younger generation. The digital world brings major changes in the way of thinking, communicating, and behaving, so that education is required to produce not only intellectually intelligent students, but also morally and spiritually mature.

The phenomenon of low communication ethics and courage in speaking in public is one of the problems often encountered in elementary school environments (Ambarsari & Shalaty, 2024). Many students possess great ideas and potential, but lack the confidence to express them publicly. This situation indicates that students still need targeted communication skills development based on moral values. The lack of opportunities to practice public speaking also makes them unaccustomed to managing their emotions and expressing opinions politely and responsibly. This has the potential to create a gap between



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students' academic abilities and their social and emotional abilities (Wardani & Hidayat, 2021).

Public speaking is a crucial skill that plays a role in developing self-confidence, responsibility, and critical thinking. This skill not only supports academic success but also provides essential provisions for facing future social and professional life. Research by Albertus et al. (2024) confirms that systematic public speaking training can improve interpersonal communication skills and develop students self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Furthermore, this training also fosters logical and reflective thinking skills because students are required to organize ideas coherently and argumentatively. In the context of basic education, these skills need to be instilled from an early age so that students are accustomed to expressing ideas politely, structured, and courteously in accordance with social ethics and religious values (Albertus et al., 2024).

From an Islamic perspective, good speech is part of a commendable morality that was highly emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He said, "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent" (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). This principle shows that speaking skills are not merely technical abilities, but rather a reflection of the quality of one's faith and morals. In Islam, communication has ethical and spiritual dimensions, where every word spoken must have good value and avoid evil. Therefore, speaking skills are not only a technical aspect, but also an integral part of moral formation (Setyowati et al., 2023).

Unfortunately, the reality on the ground shows that some students tend to imitate social media communication styles that are not in accordance with Islamic manners, such as speaking rudely, insinuating, or conveying information without verification. This phenomenon reflects a crisis of communication ethics among teenagers and children due to unfiltered exposure to digital media. Therefore, systematic educational intervention is needed to instill moral values in communication skills. Islamic religious education can be the main bulwark in instilling ethical awareness and moral responsibility in students communication activities (Puspitasari et al., 2024)

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), as an Islamic elementary educational institution, plays a strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation (Thonthowi, 2024). Through integrative learning between science and Islamic values, madrasahs have great potential to become models of spirituality-based character education. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum provides space for the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, which encompasses the dimensions of faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character. These values align with the vision of Islamic education, which emphasizes a balance between intellectual intelligence and noble morals (Zainuddin, 2023). One effective medium for achieving this is through Islamic public speaking activities, which not only teach speaking skills but also instill the values of responsibility, empathy, and integrity (Puspitasari et al., 2024).

This Scientific Work-Based Community Service (PKM-KI) activity is implemented as a form of applying academic research findings to real-world practice. This program aims to strengthen students' character through Islamic-based public speaking training at MI Darul Falah. The participatory approach used enables students to become not only objects of learning but also active subjects in the character education process. Through simulations, exercises, and hands-on practice, students are encouraged to understand that speaking is not just about conveying words, but also about conveying meaning, messages, and positive values. Therefore, this activity is expected to make a tangible contribution to the development of an applicable and sustainable Islamic character development model in elementary education institutions (Hidayat et al., 2021).

Various previous studies have discussed the importance of public speaking training in increasing student self-confidence (Ambarsari & Shalaty, 2024; Ananda et al., 2024). However, most of these studies focused on general communication skills without integrating Islamic values as a foundation for character. Furthermore, training activities conducted in many schools are still temporary and not structured into a sustainable character development

program (Rohman, 2022). This PKM-KI activity offers a novelty in the form of a public speaking approach based on Islamic values that is systematically integrated with character development in madrasas. Through a participatory and contextual approach, this activity not only improves speaking skills but also instills moral, spiritual, and social values that shape students into communicative and noble individuals. Thus, this PKM-KI fills the gap in previous research by positioning public speaking as an integrative means of communication skills and Islamic character education at the elementary level (Hafidz & Lestari, 2023).

This PKM-KI activity is expected to make a positive contribution to the development of students' character through fun and educational media. Public speaking is not just the ability to speak, but the art of building self-confidence, responsibility, empathy, and courage, all of which are the foundation of a strong national character. This activity also demonstrates that character development does not have to be carried out through a rigid formal approach, but can be realized through inspirational and creative activities (Widiyanto, 2020). With good collaboration between the academic world and educational units, this small change can be part of a major change in producing a generation of Indonesians with character, ethics, and quality in the modern era.

2. Method

The research method used in this community service activity is a descriptive qualitative approach with an educational participatory method. This approach allows for direct involvement between the implementation team and the MI Darul Falah students as the activity subjects, totaling 30 students in grades IV to VI who were selected based on teacher recommendations. The activity took place at MI Darul Falah with four main stages: planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up. Data collection was carried out through observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of activities in the form of photos, videos, and field notes. The training materials included the basics of Islamic public speaking, public speaking practice, and character building based on Islamic values. Data analysis was carried out qualitatively with an approach of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions as proposed by Miles and Huberman. Data validity was strengthened by triangulation of sources and methods, as well as reflection on the results of the activity with teachers. The theory of character education from Thomas Lickona (1991), as well as the contextual learning approach from Piaget and Vygotsky served as the theoretical basis in designing this training to ensure that the learning process is in accordance with the cognitive and affective developmental stages of elementary school students.

3. Results and Discussion

The Scientific Work-Based Community Service (PKM-KI) program at MI Darul Falah has shown significant results in improving the character and communication skills of madrasah students. This program arose from concerns about the low level of public speaking skills, which impacts students' self-confidence and social skills. Based on initial observations, only about 30% of students were able to express their opinions fluently in class, while the majority tended to be passive and reluctant to speak. This situation shows that basic education does not fully provide space for the development of communication soft skills. Yet, speaking skills are a crucial component of character and social-emotional education (Dwi Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024; Siregar et al., 2024). Therefore, this PKM-KI activity is designed as a concrete effort to answer these challenges with an Islamic public speaking approach that not only emphasizes the technical aspects of speaking, but also the instilling of moral, spiritual, and social values. True character education integrates moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, so that students not only understand goodness cognitively, but also become accustomed to doing it in the practice of life, (Siswoyo et al., 2020).

Islamic public speaking training at MI Darul Falah was developed using a participatory approach oriented to the needs of madrasah students. This activity was attended by 30 students in grades IV–VI and was implemented through four stages:

planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation. During the planning stage, the PKM team conducted an initial assessment of students' communication skills and character through interviews with teachers and classroom observations. The results indicated that the main obstacles lay in shyness, lack of speaking practice, and a poor understanding of Islamic speaking etiquette. Based on these findings, the team designed a practice-based training module that included guidelines for composing Islamic speech texts, intonation exercises, stage mastery, and the instilling of speaking etiquette. This hands-on approach is supported by Piaget's (1952) constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that children construct knowledge through concrete experiences. In this context, students learn to speak by understanding that communication is not simply conveying words, but also expressing Islamic values through polite and responsible behavior (Ambarsari & Shalaty, 2024;Oktarina Harahap et al., 2024).

The activities were conducted in an interactive atmosphere that actively involved students. Each session consisted of vocal warm-ups, speaking simulations, script-writing exercises, and value reflections. Students were trained to compose simple speeches on the themes of honesty, trustworthiness, and respect for teachers. Teachers and students acted as facilitators, providing direction and feedback. According to Vygotsky (1978), effective learning occurs in the context of social interaction through the zone of proximal development, where students learn with the guidance of more experienced individuals. This approach proved effective because students demonstrated high enthusiasm and active participation throughout the activities. This aligns with La-Tahzan's (2025) findings that a participatory approach increases students' emotional engagement and fosters confidence in speaking (Aprilia et al., 2025).

Observational data shows that this activity has a significant impact on increasing student self-confidence. At the beginning of the activity, only 25% of students dared to speak without being asked, but after three weeks of training, that number increased to 85%. Teachers also noted behavioral changes such as increased voice volume, clarity of articulation, and eye contact while speaking. These changes align with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, which explains that an individual's self-confidence grows through repeated successful experiences. In the context of PKM-KI, each successful student speaking in front of their peers strengthens their positive perception of their abilities (perceived competence), thus encouraging further participation. Research by Lefrant et al. (2024) also showed that real-life simulation-based public speaking training can reduce speech anxiety by up to 60%, while significantly improving students' interpersonal competence (Albertus et al., 2024).

Furthermore, this PKM-KI activity is not only oriented towards improving communication skills, but also fostering religious character through Islamic speaking practices. In each session, students are trained to connect the content of their speeches with the moral messages of the Quran and Hadith. For example, when discussing the theme of honesty, students are asked to interpret the meaning of the hadith "honesty leads to goodness," and then relate it to everyday experiences at school. This contextual approach aligns with Fazlur Rahman's (1982) view through the theory of double movement, namely the importance of moving the values of the text into a modern social context. Thus, students not only memorize verses or hadith, but also understand their relevance and implement them in real life (Rahman, 1982) Nurdin (2023) added that this kind of contextual Islamic education forms a religious generation that is able to think critically and adaptively to the challenges of the times (Mahrus, 2024).

From a moral and social perspective, Islamic public speaking-based learning also encourages stronger interactions between students. Through peer feedback activities, students learn to provide positive comments and constructive suggestions to their peers. This creates an appreciative and collaborative culture in the classroom (Ariandini & Hidayati, 2023) states that children's language and cognitive development is highly dependent on meaningful social dialogue. By providing mutual input, students learn to respect others' opinions, develop empathy, and strengthen interpersonal communication skills. Furthermore,

this positive interaction also fosters intimacy and mutual respect among participants, a tangible manifestation of the Islamic value of brotherhood (Febrianty et al., 2024).

The muhadhoroh activity is a core component of the PKM-KI program. Each week, students are asked to prepare a speech on an Islamic value relevant to their lives, such as discipline, trustworthiness, or social concern. Through this activity, students are encouraged to interpret Islamic values in their speaking practice and social action. Research by Puspitasari et al. (2024) shows that muhadhoroh not only increases students' speaking skills but also fosters spiritual awareness and self-reflection (Puspitasari et al., 2024) At MI Darul Falah, this activity has become a routine activity integrated into the school's extracurricular program. Teachers stated that "the children are now more confident when speaking in front of their peers, and are becoming accustomed to using polite and Islamic language." This demonstrates that muhadhoroh functions not only as a means of communication but also as a means of character building through ongoing practice (Ramadani et al., 2025).

Interviews with teachers and students indicate that this program also contributes to improving students' ethical literacy. They become more sensitive to the values of politeness, honesty, and responsibility in speaking. Sari et al. (2024) stated that communication learning combined with religious values can increase ethical awareness and moral decision-making skills. In the context of PKM-KI, students not only speak fluently but also consider the ethics and etiquette of communication according to Islamic teachings. Thus, the speaking skills developed are holistic combining intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects simultaneously (Fitria, 2023).

From a pedagogical perspective, the effectiveness of this activity is also supported by the application of a contextual teaching and learning approach and student-centered learning. Students are not positioned as passive recipients of knowledge, but rather as key actors in the learning process. Teachers and students act as facilitators, guiding reflection and exploration of ideas. According to Johnson (2002), contextual learning helps students connect learning experiences to real life, making knowledge more meaningful. This model has been shown to enhance students' critical thinking skills, creativity, and social responsibility.

PKM-KI activities also have a positive impact on teachers and the madrasah environment. Teachers who previously used conventional lecture methods are now starting to implement communicative strategies such as storytelling, role-playing, and debate simulations. This change creates a more dynamic and enjoyable learning environment. Thonthowi (2024) emphasized that the success of character education depends on teachers' ability to create reflective learning that fosters student participation and empathy. Through active involvement in the PKM-KI program, teachers at MI Darul Falah gained firsthand experience in integrating character education with 21st-century skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking (Thonthowi, 2024)

In addition to the academic and moral impacts, this activity also fosters a widespread social impact (multiplier effect). Students who have developed speaking skills become role models for their peers. They begin to be involved in various school activities, such as serving as event hosts, prayer leaders, or speakers at religious events. This domino effect strengthens a culture of self-confidence and positive communication within the school environment. Research by Putri (2025) shows that a positive interpersonal community can increase students' sense of responsibility, discipline, and integrity, while creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment (Ramadhani et al., 2025).

From a cognitive perspective, the improvement in students' logical and systematic thinking skills was also clearly visible. Before the training, students often composed sentences randomly and without a logical structure. After six practice sessions, 90% of students were able to create speeches with a coherent opening, body, and closing structure. These results demonstrate the effectiveness of experiential learning in fostering logical thinking skills (Piaget, 1952). Furthermore, public speaking activities help students develop metacognitive skills, namely awareness of their own thought processes. Through post-performance reflection, they learn to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.

Research by Saputra (2024) confirms that reflective activities such as these are important for shaping the character of lifelong learners (Dwi Saputra & Tunnafia, 2024).

The PKM-KI program also serves as a productive collaborative platform between students, lecturers, and the madrasah. In its implementation, students serve as facilitators, while lecturers act as academic mentors, integrating Islamic communication theory with practical work. This collaboration represents a concrete implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. According to Thonthowi (2024), this type of collaboration strengthens the relevance of higher education to societal needs. At MI Darul Falah, PKM-KI activities serve as a social laboratory where students learn to apply theory in real-world contexts, while students and teachers gain practical benefits from research-based academic interventions (Thonthowi, 2024).

The success of this activity is also inseparable from institutional support. The principal of the madrasah committed to making Islamic public speaking training a regular extracurricular activity. This kind of institutional support is crucial for maintaining the program's sustainability. Mariun et al. (2024) emphasized that **the success of character education is highly dependent on** consistent policies and structural support. With institutional commitment, the values instilled can be maintained and become part of the school culture. This demonstrates that PKM-KI not only produces temporary changes but also creates a sustainable character learning system at MI Darul Falah (Mariun et al., 2024)

Furthermore, the success of the PKM-KI program at MI Darul Falah can also be seen in the students' increased reflective awareness of Islamic communication values. Through post-training reflection activities, students are encouraged to evaluate not only their speaking style but also the intentions and goals behind their communication. This approach fosters spiritual awareness that speaking in Islam is a trust that must be upheld. According to Fadhilah (2025), effective Islamic communication skills are determined not only by rhetorical ability, but also by sincerity of intention, honesty of message, and politeness in delivery. Therefore, Islamic values-based public speaking training at MI Darul Falah not only hones speaking skills but also strengthens students' moral integrity in their daily lives (Fadhilah et al., 2025).

In the context of character education in Islamic elementary schools, the integration of religious values and soft skills such as communication is crucial. As Fauzieyah (2024) emphasized, character cannot be developed solely through the teaching of moral theory but must be built through real-life experiences and consistent practice (Fauzieyah & Suyatno, 2024). The PKM-KI program is a concrete example of experiential learning, enabling students to learn directly from practice. Through activities such as muhadhoroh (religious dialogue), speech practice, and peer feedback, students not only acquire skills but also experience a deep internalization of values. This type of habituation has proven effective in shaping the religious and social character of elementary school-aged children (Amelia & Misriandi, 2022; Tin Rustini, AliyaPutriGunawan, 2025)

In addition, PKM-KI activities also strengthen students' digital and media literacy through the use of instructional videos and recorded performances. In some sessions, students are asked to review their practice videos to assess their strengths and weaknesses. This process teaches self-assessment while enhancing reflective thinking skills. According to Mulyadi (2024), the use of digital media in character education can increase student engagement and strengthen metacognitive awareness (Mulyadi, 2024) At MI Darul Falah, this practice helps students understand that technology can be used as a tool for learning and self-reflection, not just for entertainment. This aligns with the spirit of Islamic digital literacy, which emphasizes the wise, productive, and ethical use of technology (Abdul Wahab, Ade Risna Sari, 2022).

The long-term effects of these PKM-KI activities are also evident in the formation of a collaborative learning ecosystem at the madrasah. Teachers, students, and university students continue to interact in follow-up activities such as Islamic speech competitions and inter-class communication forums. These activities strengthen emotional bonds between all parties while expanding students' space for expression. According to Julinda Siregar (2025),

the success of character development through communication depends on the support of a conducive social ecosystem, where each individual feels valued and given the opportunity to develop. Thus, PKM-KI not only improves individual speaking skills but also builds a positive communication culture that becomes part of the madrasah's identity (Julinda Siregar, Muhibatur Rohmatul Akhiroh, Umi Habibatul A'liyah, Desti Nurdiana Eka Putri, 2025).

This program also contributes to improving teachers' professional competence. Through mentoring activities and field observations, teachers gain new insights into practice-based learning strategies and values reflection. Teachers begin to understand the importance of balancing cognitive and affective aspects in developing students' communication skills. As Eneng Mardiana et al. (2024) noted, 21st-century teachers must act as value facilitators and character mentors, not simply conveyors of material.(Eneng Mardiana, Zakia Nur Aras Wiguna Kusuma, 2024). Experience through PKM-KI provides inspiration for teachers to enrich Islamic Religious Education learning methods with creative activities such as Islamic storytelling and children's da'wah simulations, which have been proven to increase students' emotional involvement (Nurizka et al., 2023).

From a socio-religious perspective, this activity also strengthens MI Darul Falah's image as an adaptive and innovative educational institution integrating science, technology, and Islamic values. Madrasas are no longer viewed solely as places of religious instruction, but rather as centers for developing superior character based on Islamic communication. According to Nasution (2025), strengthening the role of madrasas as centers of moderation and national character development is crucial amidst the challenges of the digital era. Through PKM-KI, MI Darul Falah demonstrates that educational innovation rooted in Islamic values can generate broad and sustainable social impact (Nasution & Nisaul Mufidah, 2025).

Overall, the success of the PKM-KI program at MI Darul Falah underscores the importance of synergy between academic theory, educational practice, and religious values in developing a generation that is articulate, virtuous, and has leadership qualities. This program serves as concrete evidence that scholarly-based community service activities can make a substantial contribution to the character development of madrasah students while enriching Islamic education practices at the elementary level (Ainatul, 2024;Azhari, 2024).

4. Conclusions

The Community Service Based on Scientific Work (PKM-KI) activity conducted at MI Darul Falah has demonstrated that Islamic public speaking training students can serve as an effective medium for strengthening the character of elementary school. Through a participatory and educational approach, students not only improved their public speaking skills but also enhanced their self-confidence, sense of responsibility, and ability to express ideas logically and politely. This activity also reinforced Islamic character values that are essential foundations in primary education, such as empathy, noble morals, and constructive courage.

The positive impact of this activity was not only felt by students but also by teachers and the school environment, which began to adopt a learning approach based on active communication and character building. Therefore, Islamic public speaking training is highly recommended to be developed as a flagship program in primary schools. For the sustainability of this program, continuous collaboration among academics, teachers, and educational institutions is required. The authors express their gratitude to all parties who supported the implementation of this activity, especially the academic community of IAIN Pontianak and the entire family of MI Darul Falah.

Based on the results of the Community Service Based on Scientific Work (PKM-KI) activity at MI Darul Falah, it is recommended that the Islamic public speaking training be conducted continuously with full support from the school and higher education institutions. The school can adopt this training as a regular activity, either through extracurricular programs or by integrating it into Islamic Education and Indonesian subjects, so that the character values instilled in students can continue to grow consistently.

Furthermore, broader collaboration between academics, teachers, and the community is needed to develop more contextual public speaking training models that are suitable for the characteristics of primary school students. Future research is also recommended to evaluate the long-term impact of this training on students' character development and self-confidence.

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