



## Strengthening Character Education Through Interactive Activities at Public Elementary Schools in Samarinda

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### Abstrak

Penguatan kepemimpinan dan kerja sama di kalangan siswa sekolah dasar merupakan aspek penting dalam pendidikan karakter yang mendukung perkembangan keterampilan sosial dan interpersonal sejak usia dini. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kepemimpinan dan kerja sama siswa melalui kegiatan edukatif yang interaktif. Program ini dilaksanakan di SDN 010 Samarinda dengan melibatkan 30 siswa kelas IV dan V sebagai peserta kegiatan. Pendekatan pembelajaran partisipatif digunakan dengan menekankan keterlibatan aktif siswa melalui permainan edukatif, diskusi kelompok, dan simulasi kepemimpinan. Kegiatan tersebut dirancang untuk memperkenalkan konsep dasar kepemimpinan, mendorong kemampuan pemecahan masalah secara kolaboratif, serta menumbuhkan tanggung jawab dalam kelompok. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan bahwa program ini berhasil meningkatkan kesadaran siswa mengenai peran kepemimpinan, memperkuat kerja sama antar teman sebaya, serta meningkatkan kepercayaan diri siswa dalam menyampaikan ide dan berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan kelompok. Para siswa juga menunjukkan peningkatan kesediaan untuk mengambil peran kepemimpinan serta kemampuan komunikasi dan kerja sama selama kegiatan berlangsung. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa metode pembelajaran yang partisipatif dan berbasis aktivitas dapat secara efektif mendukung pengembangan nilai kepemimpinan dan kerja sama pada siswa sekolah dasar. Oleh karena itu, integrasi kegiatan edukatif serupa ke dalam program sekolah secara berkelanjutan sangat dianjurkan untuk mendorong pendidikan karakter yang berkelanjutan serta mendukung perkembangan sosial dan pribadi siswa sejak usia dini.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepemimpinan, kerja sama, pendidikan karakter, kegiatan interaktif.

### Abstract

*Strengthening leadership and cooperation among elementary school students is an important aspect of character education that supports the development of social and interpersonal skills from an early age. This community service program aimed to enhance students' leadership and teamwork skills through interactive educational activities. The program was conducted at SDN 010 Samarinda and involved 30 fourth- and fifth-grade students. A participatory learning approach was employed, emphasizing active student engagement through educational games, group discussions, and leadership simulations. These activities were designed to introduce basic leadership concepts, encourage collaborative problem-solving, and foster group responsibility. The results indicate that the program successfully increased students' awareness of leadership roles, strengthened cooperation among peers, and improved their confidence in expressing ideas and participating in group activities. Students demonstrated a greater willingness to take leadership roles and improved their communication and teamwork skills during the activities. The findings suggest that participatory and activity-based learning methods can effectively support the development of leadership and cooperation values in elementary school students. Therefore, integrating similar educational activities into regular school programs is recommended to promote sustainable character education and support students' social and personal development from an early stage.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Cooperation, Character Education, Interactive Activities.

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.31004/abdidas.v7i2.1339>

ISSN 2721- 9224 (Media Cetak)

ISSN 2721- 9216 (Media Online)

## INTRODUCTION

Elementary school is a critical stage for strengthening character values because children at this age are actively developing social, emotional, and interpersonal skills that influence their future learning and behavior (Sindiani et al., 2025). During this period, schools play an important role not only in developing students' cognitive abilities but also in shaping positive attitudes such as responsibility, cooperation, confidence, and leadership (Phan & Phan, 2024). Previous studies have shown that character education introduced from an early age can support children's social adjustment, participation, and moral development (Pujianti et al., 2024). Therefore, educational activities at the elementary level should be designed not only to transfer knowledge but also to provide meaningful experiences that help students practice positive social values in real situations (Xanthopoulou & Sahinidis, 2025).

Among the important values that need to be fostered in elementary school students are leadership and cooperation. Leadership at this level does not refer to formal authority but rather to simple abilities, such as taking responsibility, expressing ideas, guiding peers, making decisions, and contributing positively within a group (Kayworth & Leidner, 2002). Cooperation is an essential social skill that enables students to communicate, respect others' opinions, solve problems together, and achieve common goals (Abich et al., 2024). Several studies indicate that participatory, play-based, and group-oriented activities can effectively facilitate the development of these values in school-aged children because students learn more easily when they are directly involved in interactive learning experiences (Aldhilan et al., 2024). Thus, the integration of collaborative educational activities into school programs is highly relevant for supporting

character education in primary education settings (Ramadhani et al., 2024).

In the context of SDN 010 Samarinda, preliminary coordination and needs identification conducted before the implementation of the program indicated the need to strengthen students' leadership and cooperation values through more interactive learning experiences. Learning activities in elementary schools often emphasize academic achievement, whereas opportunities for students to practice leadership, teamwork, responsibility, and confidence in structured yet enjoyable situations remain limited (Karimi & Farivarsadri, 2024). As a result, students may understand the importance of working together in theory, but they still need concrete opportunities to experience how leadership and cooperation are practiced in group settings (Kim & Heo, 2025). This condition highlights the importance of community service programs that are directly designed to provide participatory learning experiences suited to the developmental characteristics of elementary school students.

Based on this need, this community service program was implemented through interactive educational activities involving educational games, group discussions, and leadership simulations for fourth- and fifth-grade students at SDN 010 in Samarinda. These activities were intended to provide students with direct experience in practicing responsibility, communication, teamwork, and simple decision-making within their peer groups. Therefore, this program aimed to strengthen students' understanding and practice of leadership and cooperative values through a participatory learning approach. The results of this activity are expected to contribute not only to students' character development but also to provide a practical model of school-based

community service that supports sustainable character education at the elementary school level.

## METHOD

This community service activity, conducted at SDN 010 Samarinda, aimed to strengthen leadership and teamwork values among elementary school students through interactive and participatory educational activities. This activity used a participatory learning approach that emphasized the active involvement of students in the learning process through educational games, group discussions, and leadership simulations. This approach was designed to foster students' understanding of the importance of leadership, responsibility, and cooperation, both in the school environment and in daily life.

Additionally, this activity draws on a social learning approach that emphasizes the importance of students' interactions and cooperation in the learning process. Consequently, the activity is designed collaboratively so that students not only gain conceptual understanding of leadership but also practice these values through various enjoyable and educational group activities.

### (1) Pre-implementation phase

The initial phase of the activity began with coordination and communication with school officials to obtain permission to conduct the activity and to determine the time and location. During this phase, the students' needs regarding the reinforcement of leadership and cooperation values in learning activities were also identified. The participants were 30 fourth- and fifth-grade students, totaling 30 students. In addition, the community service team prepared the activity materials, learning media, and educational activity plans for the event.

### (2) Implementation Phase

The main activity occurred over approximately 2 hours at SDN 010 Samarinda. It was conducted in the following stages: a. Presentation of leadership and cooperation concepts

At this stage, the community service team provided a brief explanation of simple leadership concepts, the importance of responsibility, and the value of cooperation in daily life. The material was presented in a language that was easy for elementary school students to understand and was accompanied by examples that were closely related to students' experiences in the school environment.



**Figure 1. Presentation of the Materials**

### b. Group Educational Games

Subsequently, the students were divided into small groups to participate in educational games designed to foster teamwork and communication skills. Through these activities, the students were encouraged to work together, help one another, and understand their respective roles within the group.



**Figure 2. Educational Games for Students**

### c. Leadership simulation

During this session, several students were given the opportunity to act as group leaders in completing assigned tasks or games. This activity aims to develop a group's courage, responsibility, and decision-making skills.

### d. Reflection and Evaluation of the Activity

The activity concluded with a group reflection session, during which students were given the opportunity to share their experiences and impressions from participating in the activity. The community service team also provided feedback and reiterated the importance of leadership and teamwork in daily life.



**Figure 3. Documentation Session**

This activity's methodology is designed to ensure that the learning process is enjoyable and interactive, thereby enhancing the students' understanding of leadership and teamwork values. Through this approach, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also gain hands-on experience in applying these values through group activities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Community service activities are one form of implementation of the Tridharma of Higher Education, which emphasizes the active role of faculty members in making tangible contributions to society. Various forms of academic knowledge and experience can be directly applied through community service activities to benefit the educational community. The community service program conducted at SDN 010 Samarinda aimed to strengthen leadership and cooperation among elementary school students through interactive educational activities. The activities proceeded smoothly, and the students and school administration provided positive feedback. The enthusiasm of the participants was evident throughout the program, as the students actively engaged in every activity designed by the community service team.

### 1. Enhancing the Understanding of Leadership Values

Leadership at the elementary school level can be understood as a student's ability to take responsibility, provide simple guidance within a group, and courageously express their opinions. Instilling an understanding of leadership values from an early age is crucial because it helps students develop a sense of responsibility, independence, and decision-making skills within their social environment. In this activity, leadership concepts were presented simply through

examples relevant to students' school lives, such as leading group discussions or helping coordinate activities with their peers. The activity results show that students are beginning to understand the role of a leader within a group. This is evident from the increased willingness of some students to take on leadership roles during the simulation activity. Additionally, students were able to identify attitudes that reflect leadership, such as being fair, listening to peers' opinions, and assisting group members in completing tasks together.

## 2. Enhancing Cooperation Among Students

Cooperation is an essential social skill in the learning process in schools. The ability to cooperate enables students to learn how to interact with others, respect differing opinions, and complete tasks collectively. The value of cooperation was instilled through interactive and enjoyable group activities. Students were divided into small groups to participate in educational games that emphasized the importance of coordination and communication among group members. Through these activities, the students learned to help one another and work together to achieve their goals. Observations showed that the students could actively participate in their groups and demonstrated a supportive attitude toward one another throughout the activity. This indicates that the provided educational activities effectively strengthened the cooperation of the students.

## 3. Boosting Self-Confidence

In addition to reinforcing the values of leadership and teamwork, this activity positively impacted students' self-confidence. Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of the psychological development of children, as it influences their willingness to express their opinions, participate in

group activities, and try new things during the learning process. Students were given the opportunity to present the results of group discussions and lead specific activities in front of their peers in this activity. Support from peers and appreciation from the service team provided positive experiences for students, making them feel more confident in interacting and participating in learning activities. Overall, this activity created a fun and participatory learning atmosphere, enabling students to gain meaningful learning experiences.

## 4. Success of the Activity

Overall, this community service activity proceeded smoothly according to the established plan. The material presented was well understood by the students, and the conducted educational activities successfully increased participant engagement in the event. The enthusiasm of the students throughout the activity demonstrates that interactive, group-based learning methods can be an effective approach for instilling leadership and teamwork values in elementary school students. Thus, this community service activity not only enhanced students' understanding of the values of leadership and cooperation but also offered a fun and meaningful learning experience for the participants. It is hoped that similar activities can be conducted on an ongoing basis to strengthen character education among elementary school students.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Community Service (PKM) program titled "Strengthening Leadership and Cooperation Values through Educational Activities for Students at SDN 010 Samarinda," the program was successfully implemented and had a positive impact on the

participants. The program implemented at SDN 010 Samarinda was able to enhance students' understanding of the importance of leadership and cooperation values both within the school environment and in daily life. Students enthusiastically participated in the program and demonstrated active engagement through an interactive educational approach.

The educational activities, which included lectures, group games, and leadership simulations, were effective in helping students understand the role of simple leadership and the importance of group work. The students not only gained theoretical knowledge about leadership values but also gained hands-on experience in practicing responsibility, communication, and coordination with their peers. This was evident in the increased student engagement in group activities and the willingness of some students to take on leadership roles in the assigned activities.

Additionally, this activity has a positive impact on boosting students' self-confidence in interacting and expressing their opinions in front of their peers. Students have the opportunity to express their ideas and actively participate in the learning process through group discussions and simple presentations. Support from peers and the service team also helps create a conducive and enjoyable learning atmosphere, making students feel more confident about engaging in the activities.

Overall, this PKM activity demonstrates that a participatory learning approach based on group activities can be an effective strategy for instilling leadership and cooperative values among elementary school students. Therefore, similar activities are expected to be implemented sustainably and developed into various forms of character education programs in schools, thereby supporting the formation of positive social

attitudes and the development of students' personalities from an early age.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the implementation of the Community Service (PKM) program, relevant parties may wish to consider several recommendations so that similar programs can provide broader and more sustainable benefits.

1. Schools are encouraged to implement ongoing character-building activities, particularly those related to leadership, teamwork, and student responsibility. Programs such as group discussions, educational games, and simple leadership activities can be integrated into classroom learning activities and extracurricular programs to provide students with the opportunity to continuously develop their social skills.
2. Teachers and educational staff should develop more interactive and participatory teaching methods during the learning process. Learning approaches based on group activities, simulations, or educational games can help students understand the values of leadership and cooperation in a more practical and enjoyable way, so that learning focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on the development of students' character.
3. Schools are expected to continue collaborating with universities or other educational institutions to perform similar community service activities. Through such collaborations, various educational programs that support the strengthening of character education, literacy, and the development of students' social skills can be continuously and sustainably developed. With the implementation of these recommendations, the school environment will increasingly support the character development of students who demonstrate leadership, are able to cooperate effectively, and possess a sense of responsibility. Additionally,

community service activities are expected to positively contribute to the character education process for elementary school students.

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