❒   272

Developing self-efficacy, mattering, and general well-being through community-based education in the rural area

Abdul Aziz[1], Mohammad Padil[2], Mujtahid Mujtahid[2], Kususanto Ditto Prihadi[3]
[1]English Department, Faculty of Humanity, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Malang, Indonesia
[2]Islamic Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Islamic Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim
Malang, Malang, Indonesia
[3]Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science and Liberal Arts, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This qualitative study aimed to explore the implementation of community-based education (CBE) in the village of Desa Karang Pandan, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The CBE was conducted in order to educate the community members in information technology, Arabic language, Quran reading, Boyscout activities, and indigenous martial arts. Apart from that, the CBE was implemented to address specific communal issues, such as lack of self-efficacy, sense of mattering, and general well-being of the community members. Data was collected through observations and interviews along the CBE program, and analyzed by utilizing thematic analysis methods. Positive responses were shown in the interview results. They were represented by the frequent occurrences of themes such as improvement of mattering and self-efficacy, higher motivation to learn and the development of general well-being. Nevertheless, it is possible that the positive responses from the community members were caused by the novelty effect of the program. Further concerns and limitations are discussed in the end of this paper.

Corresponding Author:

Kususanto Ditto Prihadi
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Science and Liberal Arts, UCSI University
Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Email: prihadi@ucsiuniversity.edu.my

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is written based on our implementation of community-based education (CBE) in Karang Pandan village, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. As a qualitative work, this study aimed to explore the impact of the implementation of CBE in solving the communal issue in the village, as well as improving the sense of mattering among their community members. CBE can be traced back to strong pedagogical tradition rooted in Boyer [1] and Freire [2] who argued that educational institutions, such as universities, should be responsive to community needs and to society as a whole, and that faculty members should be "reflective practitioners" in the education process. CBE was recorded to be successful in interrupting patterns of educational inequity; thereby it is considered as one of the main significant elements of the everlasting process that eventually came to the current educational policy climate [3].

We chose CBE to be conducted as a community service activity of our university because based on our initial observation and interview, we concluded that several concerns were raised by the villagers, both the adults or the school students. Most of the adults in the village of Karang Pandan raised their problem related to their financial well-being and their concerns regarding their children education, while most of the younger members of community expressed lower levels of motivation to study. Overall, it was detected that most of the community members at any age had developed low sense of societal mattering, the feeling that

they matter to the larger world outside their community [4], self-efficacy, the belief that they are good enough in doing their tasks [5], and basic motivation to grow in life. In the light of the problems and concerns of the community members, we opted for conducting CBE because it is more practical than any form of formal education [6], instructions and activities can be tailored to cater the needs of the targeted community; In other words, CBE can be used as a first aid to empower the community members to improve their well-being based on their needs and their specific resources [7].

In the context of our study, the initial interview with the local villagers also indicated high level of perceived marginality (Table 1), and marginality is negatively correlated with the sense of mattering [8]. Mattering is defined as the sense that we matter to other people [9]. The sense of mattering is considered an important psychological feature among adults, because it is a significant robust predictor of psychological well-being [10], self-efficacy among working adults [11], and entrepreneurship among adults who run their own business [12]. Among younger individuals, such as young adults and students, mattering was reported to be the significant protective factor for loneliness [13], depression and destructive behavior, such as suicide ideation [14], significant factors of self-acceptance [15], and general happiness among students [10].

Furthermore, mattering was distinguished into two types, namely interpersonal mattering and societal mattering [4]. Interpersonal mattering was defined as one's perception of being valued by specific significant others (spouses, parents, and friends), while societal mattering was defined as one's perception of being valued by society as a whole, a belief that the person can make a difference and have an impact in society, or in the world [16].

On the other hand, self-efficacy is another important variable to be improved in the context of Karang Pandan village, because as represented by Table 1, we detected that self-efficacy belief was averagely low among the community members. Self-efficacy is the belief that one can perform well when doing their task [5] and in the context of our community, interview results with the adults members indicated that they have low efficacy in sustaining and improving their financial situation. Similarly, younger members of the community indicated lower academic efficacy at school.

The importance of self-efficacy has been highlighted by the previous recent studies, for instance, knowledge sharing and community learning would not take place without mutually adequate self-efficacy among the community members [17]. Similar statement was reported by Fong *et al*. [18], who suggested that CBE was conducted successfully in Kuching, Malaysia, and it improved the community members' self-efficacy, together with their sustainability of the tourism industry in their area. The significance of self-efficacy in the context of CBE was also reported to positively affect leadership skills [19], motivation to learn [20], and academic success among students [21]. It is also important to note that self-efficacy is significantly connected to hope, spirituality, and the sense of mattering [22].

Table 1. Samples of translated excerpts of the intitial interview responses

Participants	Translated responses	Themes
Adult 01	We are not well-connected with important cities; therefore, it is difficult for us to sell our goods with good price. That also the source of our concern on our children's future.	Perceived marginalization, low self-efficacy, low societal mattering
Student 01	Many of our school subjects were difficult, and we were not sure what we will do with such subjects when we grow up.	Low self-efficacy, low societal mattering

As represented by the excerpts' samples in Table 1 and the aforementioned reviewed literature, it is suggested that the lack of mattering among the society members of Karang Pandan village worth concerning. Their younger generation might not be able to enjoy a smooth development due to the potential problems they might face if no intervention is conducted. Furthermore, the lack of mattering among the adults might even lead to undesirable social events within the community due to lack of satisfaction of life, self-efficacy, and inadequate entrepreneurship among their financial stakeholders. Thus, we decided to attempt to address the aforementioned concern; nevertheless, our time for community service activity was limited, therefore we decided to resort to CBE.

A meta-analysis by Alsbury *et al*. [23] suggested that CBE tends to reap benefits when they are focused on substantive outcomes, including improvements in cultural capital, social advocacy, and inequitable privilege as well as in students' understanding, empathy, and activism for diverse communities. Additionally, the same study also suggested that academic outcome among students in the society would be improved significantly when the CBE was focused on the development of the social relationship between the school and community members. Furthermore, mutual understanding among community members is considered important for the progress of any learning community, especially in order to produce the habit of learning and adjusting to the changes that occur during the CBE period [24].

Supporting that, another meta-analysis by Santabárbara *et al*. [25] suggested that CBE was effective method in curbing anxiety disorders related to the coronavirus disease (COVID) pandemic. They collected cross-sectional CBE-related studies published between December 1, 2019 and August 23, 2020, using PubMed, WoS, Embase, and other sources and included 43 studies out of 3,049 records. These studies yielded an estimated overall prevalence of anxiety of 25%, which varied significantly across the different tools used to measure anxiety; however, it was also recorded that 7.3% of the total populations had developed less levels of anxiety due to the CBE practice. This recent study suggested that the application of CBE can improve communal awareness and knowledge that eventually reduce the negative effect of social ignorance related to the pandemic in a larger scale of population.

The aforementioned meta-analyses also indicated another advantage of CBE, which lies on its versatility. In the case of pandemic, formal-institutional education would not have enough coverage to deliver massive-scale education as CBE would. Moreover, effective education development must meet the need and interest of community members to improve their well-being before it is brought to higher levels of population [26]. In the light of that, another meta-analysis by Nahmias *et al*. [27] reported that the prevalence (R-square) of early intervention program for children with autism through CBE was significantly more superior to those associated with universities and hospitals by 0.21 for adaptive behavior and 0.32 for communication outcomes. It can be observed from the aforementioned study that while educational institution and hospital might develop deeper knowledge of the learners, they might not be able to show practically meaningful social impact as rapid as CBE.

One of the characteristics and advantages of CBE is that the teachers and the learners should actively identify and define learning topics and goals together [6], [7]. Thus, teachers should not be the sole source of knowledge, because the community members might have better information and knowledge regarding their local potential and resources [3], [28]. The supporting case in the context of South East Asia was the work of Bich and Cuong [29] in Vietnam. They have conducted a quasi-experimental, pre-test–post-test, nonequivalent control group study on 251 and 241 pregnant women and their husbands were enrolled into the intervention and control groups, respectively. The CBE was conducted in the form of 1-year intervention targeting fathers included mass media, game show-style community events, group and individual counseling at health facilities and home visits, and the results indicated that fathers in the intervention group were also more likely to report active involvement in supporting mothers to practice exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) during antenatal and postpartum periods. In other words, their study suggested that positive significant changes of communal knowledge and attitude towards EBF were achieved in relatively short time by utilizing CBE method.

Other studies in different contexts reported the effectiveness of CBE on learners, for instance, exercising medical treatment as CBE had effectively improved the understanding and skills among medical students [30] and that practicing foreign language in the form of CBE by learner's collaboration with society had effectively improve the language skills among school students in rural areas [7]. In other words, CBE facilitates the learner to build social interaction and collaboration to understand the learning materials within and after school hours [28]. Supporting that, previous study [31] reported that integrating CBE and classroom instruction promotes critical thinking skill, communication skill, interpersonal skill, local and global citizenship, and intrapersonal development.

In the context of our study, the CBE was conducted in Karang Pandan village, Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The aim of the CBE was to improve their potential and natural talents, as well as to promote comprehensive understanding of school curriculum for school students in the community. The CBE was conducted by students and lecturers of our university as our community service and contribution to the national development, especially in the line of human resources development. The empowerment of the human resource in this area is considered important based on our initial survey on the village potential, demography, social life, education, and economic well-being. It was suggested that there were two main areas that need to be improved, namely diversification of the potential talents, and the improvement of the comprehensive understanding of school curriculum among students in the community.

Until the time this paper is being written, the majority of the villagers in Karang Pandan rely on rice farming as their main income, while some of them rely on traditional home industry products with minimum support of digital technology, few of them work as civil servants. The village has two public elementary schools, one junior high school affiliated with Hidu foundation, one Islamic junior high school or it is called *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, one private senior high school, and one senior vocational school. The data show that the village people are highly concerned with the importance of education for the future of young generation and the villagers. Based on the demographical, educational, and interview with the villagers, researchers decided to included CBE program in the various fields, namely Arabic language class, Quran class, information technology, and extracurricular activities. Each of the field is discussed in the following sub sections.

Based on our initial interview, we concluded that several problems were raised by the villagers, both the adults or the school students. Most of the adults who were involved in home industry sectors tend to raise problems in marketing their products, while those who farm reported the instability of the value of their products in the local market. Most adults who have children tend to show some concerns related to the future of their children due to their belief that the local community schools were not as good as the schools in the cities. Most school students in the community showed the tendency that they were not highly motivated to study in schools due to the fact that they believe that their teachers could not see the bigger picture of what the future holds for them, and it led to the drop of academic self-efficacy and self-esteem [32].

Further, the situation led them to learn that they are academically helpless, and learned helplessness leads to further academic consequences, such as perceived depression [33]. While they were quite savvy with social media, they did not seem to be very exposed to any career path other than what most adults in the village do for living. It was also detected that most of the community members at any age developed low sense of societal mattering, the feeling that they matter to the larger world outside their community, while having adequate level of interpersonal sense of mattering.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

We have conducted the CBE by involving ourselves as CBE facilitators into the life of the villagers to help them to improve the certain fields that we have previously discussed. Interviews and observations were conducted along the process. The data was compiled and transcribed in order to be analyzed further.

2.1. Arabic language extra classes

Arabic language is a compulsory subject for the pupils of Islamic Junior High School or *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) in the village, and it is started in their first year of MTs until they graduated. Most of the pupils reported difficulties in understanding the learning materials. They also reported that they were only learned the subject within class hour (of four hours per week), and never had any chances to practice it outside the class hour. We also identified that the classes they attend prioritized more on the written aspects and passive language skills through grammatical translation method.

The students of our university who conducted the CBE decided to develop strategies to create happier and easier Arabic learning atmosphere. They motivated MTs pupils to practice expressing Arabic for simple activity. They asked the pupils to tell what they do in the morning before school hours, what they do during school hours, and what they do at home with family after school hours. Telling daily activity in simple Arabic expression improves their enjoyment and happiness in learning the language. Digital technology usage was also introduced in order to support the learning. The learners were asked to tell and write the materials in simple conversation and composition.

The CBE facilitators played the role as a facilitator and partner for their learners to practice and improve Arabic language skills outside the class. The facilitator had paid big efforts to integrate learning activity in the class and informal learning activity with facilitator after school hour. It has been reported in a previous study that utilizing game elements in learning would improve the students' self-esteem, apart from their academic ability [34]. This activity successfully improved the learners' achievements and motivation to learn. Interviews were conducted to the students and the thematic analyses indicated positive response in the subject of Arabic, motivation to learn and interpersonal mattering. Table 2 presents the samples of translated excerpts of the interview responses on Arabic extra classes.

Table 2. Samples of translated excerpts of the interview responses on Arabic extra classes

Participants	Translated responses	Themes
Student 04	I love learning (the Arabic subject) using digital apps. It is fun and keeps us study for longer time because it is so enjoyable. We even learn new vocabularies faster.	Improved motivation. Improved self-efficacy
Student 07	I enjoy learning this way, now I can even teach my parents some simple words in Arabic	Improved motivation. Improved interpersonal mattering to parents.

2.2. Quran extra classes

The community is considered highly religious, yet they are not highly literate in terms of Quran. They need to get to be more spiritual, rather than high in religiosity without spiritual understanding, in order to apply the religious wisdom in their interpersonal relationship [35]. In order to achieve that, our CBE facilitators who studied at Islamic universities, taught Quran to the villagers of any age. They motivated the people that no late to learn the Holy Quran. They paid less attention to the mistake, but they built motivation in learning Quran. They created joyful and comfortable atmosphere during the learning process. They

realized that each person has his own pace to understand the learning material so they treated the people according to each individual potential. The activity was done regularly after sunset prayers in every mosque of the village. Again, positive responses were reported in terms of motivation to learn, self-efficacy and sense of interpersonal mattering among peers and family members (Table 3). It is important to note that the community consists of individuals with various religions and belief systems, yet they live together peacefully and respect each other; this is shown by their activity in any religious holiday celebration.

Table 3. Samples of translated excerpts of the interview responses on Quran extra classes

Participants	Translated responses	Themes
Adult 05	I realized that despite being a Muslim, I was illiterate in Quran, and never had any chance to learn about it. With this program I feel that I can learn again, as well as gather with my neighbors, friends and family members during the classes after the sunset prayers. The atmosphere felt really warm and friendly, we can even learn from each other.	Improved self-efficacy. Improved interpersonal mattering to peers and family members.
Adult 06	The teachers (CBE facilitators) are very friendly and patient in teaching us. They don't blame us for making mistakes; instead, they ask me to listen to my own recorded reading and compare it with theirs so I can see my mistakes without them pointing it out.	Improved self-efficacy. Improved motivation to learn.

2.3. Information technology (IT)

This activity was focused on two target populations, namely the village officers and the home industry owners. Our CBE facilitators conducted IT training and scaffolding to the village officers intensively in order to make their work much easier and the service they offer to the society run much smoother. At the end of the program, the village budgeting and finance system was computerized well, and the officers had mastered what it takes to give better service using the IT facilities they have. The officers' responses regarding this progress can be observed in Table 4. Similarly, the home industry owners were trained to offer their products online. One of the village main industries is the production of *Topeng Malangan* (wooden mask) which serve as traditional dancing props, souvenirs, and traditional ritual props. Before going online, their market was limited to few art schools in different cities, and their products were less known by public. Their market was getting wider and they started to receive more orders when they started going online, supported by our CBE facilitators (Table 4).

Table 4. Samples of translated excerpts of the interview responses on IT support

Participants	Translated responses	Themes
Officer 01	It was shocking to see how fast the service can be done online. The facilities have been installed since quite a while, but we didn't utilize it effectively enough until this program is started. I'm glad that we can provide more service with less time taken.	Improved self-efficacy. Improved societal mattering (to the community)
Entrepreneur 01	We start to receive more orders of wooden masks to be sent to various parts of the countr. It is a very good progress for our business and the village in general.	Improved self-efficacy, Improved societal mattering (to the community)

2.4. Extracurricular activities (ECA)

Most of our CBE facilitators are members of the campus boy scouts and *Pencak Silat* (PS), Indonesian martial arts. They conducted both extracurricular activities among the students of the schools in the village, and the response was very positive and enthusiastic. Table 5 shows the example of their responses of the ECA.

Table 5. Samples of translated excerpts of the interview responses on ECA

Participants	Translated responses	Themes
Boy scout 02	This activity taught me lots of living skills that I didn't learn at school or at home. I love doing it in a group of friends and solve problems together.	Improved self-efficacy. Improved interpersonal and societal mattering
PS 05	I enjoy PS so much, and I am training hard now so I can win regional competitions soon, because by winning regional competition, I can get scholarship to higher education in the city.	Improved self-efficacy. Improved societal mattering.

2.5. Overall analysis

It is identifiable that CBE during our community service had brought significant impact to this society. Especially in terms of their self-efficacy and general mattering. While our intent was to improve their general well-being, the response from the community was overwhelmingly positive. Apart from intangible positive results, such as the improvement of their motivation to learn, self-efficacy, and mattering, some tangible results were observed. For instance, the significant increase of the sale from home industries and farms that opens extra employments as well as the efficiency of the village officer services.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While the results sound positive, we realize that our study and program are not without limitation. As program facilitators, it is our concern whether we can sustain their motivation and progress when our community service period is over. While we managed to impart some of the knowledge, we realized that our facilitators did not have enough time to train any successor for certain activities like the PS, boy scout, Quran classes, or Arabic classes. Similarly, we are not sure whether the IT knowledge of the village officers and the business owners will be updated when the new version of technology arrived. Therefore, our university has decided to have this community service as a continuous program. It is expected that the progress in the village of Karang Pandan can be sustained.

In the context of research, the limitation of this study is that the impact we recorded in our findings might have been the product of novelty. The community members were excited to join most of the activities because it was new for them, and there is no warranty that there will be turnover intention when the activities become no longer novel. Another limitation is that we did not quantitatively measure the improvement of certain psychological features, such as motivation, mattering, and self-efficacy. It is highly suggested for the future research to conduct the quantitative version of a similar study.

Further recommendation for future research is related to the development and effect of mattering among the community members. While the CBE program managed to improve their sense of mattering, will we be able to see improvement in other psychological features as in the previous studies, such as entrepreneurship [12] and self-efficacy among working adults [11]? It is suggested to conduct future studies related to the improvement of the aforementioned variables through CBE. Furthermore, while we managed to improve the mattering among the younger member of the community, we neither measured the decrease of levels of variables that mattering might protect them from, such as loneliness [13], destructive behavior [36], nor did we gauge other variables that mattering might have improved, such as self-acceptance [15] and general happiness among students [10].

4. CONCLUSION

The CBE in Karang Pandan village was considered successful in achieving its short-term goals, which are to improve the community members' sense of mattering and solve some communal issues, such as school engagement, civil service, and financial well-being in general. Nevertheless, it is important to explore how such a program can play its role as a scaffolding tool to improve the village, which means that after some training and hand-holding, there should be the time where the village can sustain its own improvements without any CBE program conducted there.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Abdul Aziz ⓘ 🔍 SC P is a senior educator in UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim's English Department. After finishing his Ph.D in Universiti Sains Malaysia, he developed his research portfolio further into education leadership and application. He can be reached through aziz@bsi.uin-malang.ac.id.

Mohammad Padil ⓘ 🔍 SC P as a teacher trainer, his main research interest lies on how to deliver education more effectively, especially among the non-WEIRD (Westernized, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) community. He can be reached through email: fosslaresearch@gmail.com.

Mujtahid ⓘ 🔍 SC P is lecturer at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia. He got his bachelor and master degree from the Faculty of Islamic Religion, Department of Islamic Education, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. He can be contacted at: mujtahid75@gmail.com.

Kususanto Ditto Prihadi ⓘ 🔍 SC P is the Head of Research and Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Social Science and Liberal Arts, UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. His research area is in mattering and interpersonal relationship in any setting. He can be contacted at: prihadi@ucsiuniversity.edu.my.