

Internalization of Positive Language through Religious Coping as a Community Service Program to Enhance Madrasah Students' Academic Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

This community service program was conducted to address the problem of low academic self-efficacy among final-year students at MA Darussa'adah, particularly related to their confidence in pursuing higher education. Based on preliminary observations, many students internalized negative self-talk influenced by socio-economic constraints and limited educational aspirations. The program aimed to strengthen students' academic self-efficacy through the internalization of positive language integrated with religious coping practices, specifically muhasabah. Using a community-based participatory approach, the service activities included psychoeducational sessions, guided muhasabah-based positive self-talk exercises, and reflective group discussions. The results indicate positive changes in students' internal language patterns, emotional regulation, and academic motivation. Students demonstrated increased confidence, more constructive self-statements, and clearer aspirations for higher education. This program highlights the effectiveness of integrating positive language and religious coping in community-based educational empowerment and shows strong potential for replication in similar Madrasah contexts.

Keywords: positive language, religious coping, self-talk, academic self-efficacy, Madrasah students, community service

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1. Introduction

MA Darussa'adah as the community partner faces psychological challenges among its final-year students, particularly related to academic confidence and future educational aspirations. Many students experience low academic self-efficacy, which affects their motivation and decision-making regarding higher education. This condition highlights the need for a structured community service intervention that addresses students' internal psychological resources in a culturally and religiously appropriate manner.

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant cognitive, emotional, and social transitions. During this period, students are required to make important academic decisions that may shape their future educational and career trajectories. One psychological factor that plays a crucial role in adolescents' academic adjustment and persistence is academic self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve academic goals[1]. High levels of self-efficacy are consistently associated with greater motivation, resilience, and academic achievement,

whereas low self-efficacy often leads to avoidance behaviors, anxiety, and diminished aspirations for further education.

In many educational contexts, particularly in faith-based institutions such as Madrasahs, students face complex challenges that extend beyond academic demands. Socio-economic limitations, perceptions of unequal opportunities, and internalized feelings of inadequacy frequently undermine students' confidence in pursuing higher education[2]. These conditions are especially evident among students from lower-middle socioeconomic backgrounds, where structural barriers often intersect with psychological vulnerabilities. Consequently, there is an urgent need for intervention strategies that not only address academic skills but also strengthen students' internal psychological resources.

Previous studies have highlighted the role of self-talk as an internal cognitive process through which individuals interpret experiences, regulate emotions, and guide behavior. Positive self-talk, characterized by constructive, affirming, and supportive internal language, has been shown to enhance motivation, emotional regulation, and performance across educational settings. Conversely, negative self-talk

reinforces self-doubt and maladaptive beliefs, contributing to reduced academic engagement. Within the field of educational psychology, self-talk is increasingly understood as a form of inner speech that mediates between cognition, emotion, and action.

In parallel, research on religious coping suggests that religious beliefs and practices can function as powerful psychological resources, particularly in communities where religion is deeply embedded in daily life[3]. Religious coping enables individuals to reinterpret stressors through faith-based meanings, fostering acceptance, hope, and psychological resilience. In Islamic educational contexts, one prominent form of religious coping is muhasabah, a reflective practice involving self-evaluation, moral awareness, and intentional self-improvement. Muhasabah encourages individuals to engage in internal dialogue grounded in spiritual values, making it closely aligned with the concept of positive self-talk.

Several empirical studies have demonstrated that religious coping strategies, including spiritually oriented self-reflection and affirmation, can positively influence self-efficacy and emotional well-being among adolescents. However, much of the existing literature remains either theoretical or focused on clinical or individual counseling settings. There is a notable lack of community-based interventions that integrate positive language, self-talk, and religious coping within educational environments, particularly in Madrasahs. Moreover, few studies explicitly conceptualize language itself as a central mechanism through which religious coping operates to shape students' academic self-beliefs.

This gap is significant because language plays a fundamental role in how students construct meaning about themselves and their abilities. Internalized language—especially when repeated through reflective and affirmational practices—can shape enduring cognitive schemas related to competence and self-worth. In Madrasah settings, where religious discourse is already familiar and meaningful, integrating positive language into religious coping practices offers a culturally resonant and sustainable approach to psychological empowerment.

Based on these considerations, this study addresses the following problem: How can the internalization of positive language through religious coping practices enhance the academic self-efficacy of Madrasah students? The research is grounded in a community-based participatory framework and builds upon prior empirical findings indicating that religious coping through self-talk contributes to improved self-efficacy among adolescents. Preliminary observations at MA Darussa'adah further revealed that many final-year students experience low confidence in their academic abilities and limited belief in their prospects for higher education.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a community-based intervention that internalizes positive language through muhasabah as a form of religious coping to enhance students' academic self-efficacy. Specifically, the study aims to (1) facilitate students' awareness of their internal language patterns, (2) promote the use of positive, faith-based self-talk, and (3) strengthen students' confidence in their academic potential and future educational pathways.

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. First, it positions language as a central analytical and practical component in religious coping, bridging perspectives from educational psychology, linguistics, and religious studies. Second, it extends prior research by implementing religious coping strategies within a community service and educational intervention, rather than a purely clinical context. Third, it offers a contextually grounded model for enhancing academic self-efficacy among Madrasah students, which may inform future community-based programs in similar educational and cultural settings.

Therefore, this community service program aims to assist Madrasah students in developing positive internal language patterns through religious coping practices in order to strengthen their academic self-efficacy and educational motivation.

2. Method of Community Service Implementation

This community service program was implemented using a community-based participatory approach that emphasized the active involvement of the partner institution and students throughout the activities[4]. The approach was designed to provide practical assistance and empowerment rather than to test research hypotheses. The program focused on strengthening students' internal psychological resources through culturally and religiously appropriate interventions, particularly by integrating positive language practices within religious coping activities in the Madrasah context.

The preparation stage began with coordination between the community service team and MA Darussa'adah as the community partner to identify priority problems faced by final-year students. Preliminary observations and informal discussions with teachers and students were conducted to explore students' levels of academic confidence, educational aspirations, and dominant patterns of internal language. These activities indicated that many students experienced low academic self-efficacy, persistent negative self-talk, and anxiety regarding higher education, which informed the design of the intervention materials. Based on this needs assessment, the team prepared psychoeducational materials, muhasabah guidelines, and positive language affirmation prompts tailored to the students' religious and cultural background.

The implementation stage constituted the core activities of the community service program. Students participated in psychoeducational sessions that introduced the concepts of academic self-efficacy, internal language or self-talk, and religious coping, emphasizing the influence of internal dialogue on emotions, motivation, and academic behavior within an Islamic value framework. This was followed by guided muhasabah-based activities in which students engaged in structured reflection using affirmation cards and reflective prompts designed to encourage positive, faith-based internal language. Group reflection sessions were also facilitated to allow students to share experiences, articulate changes in self-perception, and reinforce positive language patterns through peer support and social validation.

Evaluation of the community service activities was conducted using qualitative and descriptive techniques to capture observable changes experienced by the participants. Data were collected through observational notes documenting students' engagement and verbal expressions during activities, as well as reflective responses describing perceived changes in self-talk, academic confidence, and educational motivation before and after the intervention. The evaluation prioritized process-oriented and outcome-oriented insights, focusing on changes in language use, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy rather than statistical measurement, in accordance with the objectives of community service programs.

To support the sustainability of the program, discussions were held with the Madrasah to explore the integration of positive language and muhasabah-based reflection into routine educational and counseling activities. Teachers were encouraged to continue reinforcing constructive internal language practices as part of character education and religious guidance, enabling the benefits of the intervention to extend beyond the duration of the community service program. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the implementation of the community service activities. Participants were informed about the objectives and procedures of the program, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of students' personal reflections was maintained. All activities were conducted in a manner respectful of students' religious, cultural, and psychological well-being.

3. Results and Discussions Result

1. Overview of Program Implementation

The outcomes of the community service activities show that the program was well received by the partner institution and actively participated in by the students. Throughout the implementation, students demonstrated high levels of engagement during psychoeducational sessions, muhasabah-based activities, and group reflections. The integration of positive language practices with religious coping created a supportive environment that encouraged students to reflect openly on their academic experiences and internal dialogue[5].

Overall, the program achieved its primary objective of strengthening students' academic self-efficacy through the internalization of positive language.



Figure 1. Presentation of Material by Mrs. Erina

2. Initial Condition: Patterns of Negative Internal Language

The outcomes of the community service activities show observable changes in students' behavior and language use. Prior to the program, many students expressed hesitation, passivity, and self-doubt when discussing academic matters. After participating in the activities, students became more confident in expressing opinions, more active in group discussions, and more willing to articulate academic goals. Changes were also evident in students' internal language patterns. Negative self-statements that previously reflected fear of failure and perceived limitations were gradually replaced by more constructive and hopeful expressions. These behavioral and linguistic shifts indicate an improvement in students' academic self-efficacy and emotional regulation as a direct result of the community service intervention.

Table 1. Negative and Reformulated Positive Self-Talk Identified at the Initial Stage

Category of Inner Speech	Negative Self-Talk (Before)	Reformulated Positive Self-Talk (After)	Linguistic Analysis (Stance, Modality, Appraisal)
Self-doubt about ability	"I am not smart enough to study at university."	"I am capable of learning and improving with consistent effort and trust in Allah."	Shift from negative self-appraisal to positive capacity appraisal
Fear of failure	"I will probably fail if I try."	"I may face challenges, but I will keep trying and learning."	Modality shifts from certainty of failure to possibility and resilience

Category of Inner Speech	Negative Self-Talk (Before)	Reformulated Positive Self-Talk (After)	Linguistic Analysis (Stance, Modality, Appraisal)
Social comparison	“Students from public schools are better than us.”	“Every student has different strengths and opportunities.”	Stance shifts from comparative inferiority to neutral-evaluative stance
Socio-economic limitation	“My family background limits my future.”	“My background does not determine my future; my effort and prayer matter.”	Appraisal shifts from deterministic judgment to agentive stance
Academic pessimism	“University is not for someone like me.”	“Higher education is possible if I prepare myself and seek guidance.”	Identity stance shifts from exclusion to inclusion and possibility

3. Engagement with Positive Language and Religious Reflection

The outcomes of the community service activities show several indicators of program success. First, students demonstrated increased participation and initiative during discussions related to higher education and future planning. Second, reflective responses revealed a shift from deterministic and pessimistic language toward growth-oriented and agentive expressions. Third, students showed improved emotional openness and reduced anxiety when reflecting on academic challenges. These indicators suggest that the internalization of positive language through religious coping effectively supported students in reconstructing their academic self-beliefs and motivation.

Table 2. Example of Religious and Linguistic Internalization of Positive Self-Talk

Program Stage	Example of Inner Speech	Reformulated Positive Self-Talk	Linguistic Function
Initial identification	“I am not capable of continuing to university.”	—	Negative self-appraisal indicating low academic self-efficacy

Program Stage	Example of Inner Speech	Reformulated Positive Self-Talk	Linguistic Function
Muhasabah-based reformulation	—	“I will make my best effort, and Allah will guide my path.”	Positive stance and faith-based appraisal
Reflective articulation	“Through muhasabah, I learned to speak to myself with hope and trust in Allah.”	—	Internalization of positive inner speech
Post-intervention reflection	“I now believe that my efforts have value and meaning.”	—	Agentive stance and enhanced self-efficacy appraisal

4. Changes in Language Use and Self-Expression

The outcomes of the community service activities show meaningful changes in students’ self-perception as reflected in their written and verbal reflections. Several students reported feeling more confident and hopeful about their academic future after engaging in muhasabah-based activities. One student expressed that speaking to oneself with positive and faith-based language helped reduce fear and increase motivation to continue to higher education.

Other students reflected that the activities enabled them to recognize personal strengths and view academic challenges as part of a learning process rather than as personal failure. These reflections illustrate the personal and psychological impact of the community service program on the students as the primary beneficiaries.

Table 3. Examples of Linguistic Shifts in Students’ Academic Discourse

Aspect of Language Use	Examples Before Intervention	Examples After Intervention	Linguistic Interpretation
Self-evaluation	“I am not capable of competing academically.”	“I am learning and improving step by step.”	Shift from negative appraisal to growth-oriented appraisal

Aspect of Language Use	Examples Before Intervention	Examples After Intervention	Linguistic Interpretation
Focus of discourse	“My background limits my opportunities.”	“My effort can open new opportunities.”	Change from deterministic stance to agentive stance
Academic goals	“I have no clear plans after graduation.”	“I want to prepare myself to continue to higher education.”	Increased intentionality and future orientation
Emotional tone	Expressions of fear and resignation	Expressions of hope and confidence	Positive and affective stance
Participation style	Passive and hesitant responses	Active and confident articulation	Internalization of positive inner speech

The linguistic tables presented in this section are not intended as a purely discourse-analytical exercise but serve as evidence of the impact of the community service activities. The comparison between negative self-talk before the program and reformulated positive language after the intervention illustrates how students’ internal dialogue changed as a result of the activities. These tables demonstrate the internalization of positive language patterns aligned with religious coping practices and provide concrete documentation of the behavioral and psychological changes experienced by the partner community. As such, the tables support the evaluation of program outcomes rather than functioning as theoretical linguistic analysis.



Figure 2. Presentation of Material by Mrs. Aziiza

Discussion

1. Interpreting the Findings within Self-Efficacy Theory

The outcomes of the community service activities show that improvements in students’ academic self-efficacy can be understood in relation to Bandura’s self-efficacy framework, particularly regarding how students’ beliefs about their capabilities shaped their engagement throughout the program[6]. During the community service activities, students who initially demonstrated hesitation and low confidence gradually became more

willing to participate in reflective discussions, express their thoughts, and articulate academic aspirations. This change indicates that strengthened self-beliefs played an important role in encouraging students to engage more actively with the intervention process.

Among the participating Madrasah students, the internalization of positive language helped reconstruct self-beliefs in a more adaptive and empowering manner[7]. Through repeated exposure to positive, faith-based self-talk during muhasabah activities, students learned to reinterpret academic challenges as manageable and meaningful rather than as indicators of personal inadequacy. This cognitive shift supported greater persistence when discussing future educational plans and reduced avoidance behaviors that were previously associated with fear of failure.

Furthermore, the development of academic self-efficacy was closely linked to students’ emotional responses during the activities. As students adopted more constructive internal language, they appeared calmer, more focused, and more open to dialogue, suggesting improved emotional regulation. These changes illustrate that the enhancement of self-efficacy observed in this community service program was not solely an abstract psychological outcome, but a practical and observable process reflected in students’ participation, communication, and motivation. Overall, this reflection underscores the relevance of self-efficacy theory in explaining the positive outcomes of language-based community service interventions within Madrasah contexts.

2. Language Internalization through Religious Coping in Community Service Activities

The outcomes of the community service activities show that the internalization of positive language functioned as an effective psychological mechanism when integrated with religious coping practices during the program. Through muhasabah-based reflective activities, students became more aware of their internal dialogue and its influence on emotions, motivation, and academic behavior[8]. The use of positive, faith-based self-talk enabled students to regulate emotions more effectively and engage more actively in discussions related to their academic experiences and future aspirations. The integration of religious coping provided a culturally meaningful context that strengthened the impact of positive language internalization. Rather than perceiving affirmational language as artificial or externally imposed, students experienced reflective practices as aligned with their religious values and daily spiritual routines. This alignment enhanced acceptance and internalization of positive internal language, allowing students to reinterpret academic challenges with greater confidence and hope. Within the context of the community service

activities, religious reflection acted as a contextual amplifier that supported the sustainability of psychological and behavioral changes observed among the participating Madrasah students.

3. Educational Implications for Madrasah Contexts

The results have important implications for educational practice in Madrasah settings. Many Madrasah students face structural and socio-economic challenges that negatively affect their academic confidence. While systemic inequalities cannot be addressed solely through school-based interventions, strengthening students' internal psychological resources can significantly improve their capacity to navigate such challenges.[9]. The outcomes of the community service activities show that the participatory approach used in the program contributed significantly to its success. By actively involving students in reflective activities and open dialogue, the intervention fostered a sense of ownership and psychological empowerment among participants. Students became more engaged in the process and more confident in expressing their thoughts, experiences, and aspirations.

The collective reflection sessions further strengthened this sense of empowerment by encouraging solidarity and mutual support among students[10]. Rather than being positioned as passive recipients of information, students were actively involved as participants in their own psychological development. This participatory community service approach supports sustainability, as students are more likely to continue practicing positive internal language and reflective strategies beyond the duration of the program. The outcomes of the community service activities show that addressing psychological barriers is an important complement to existing socio-economic challenges faced by Madrasah students. Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds initially internalized narratives of limitation that negatively affected their academic aspirations. Through the internalization of positive language integrated with religious coping practices, students gained practical cognitive tools to challenge these limiting narratives and develop more hopeful perspectives about their future[11]. While the program does not eliminate structural or socio-economic barriers, it demonstrates that psychological empowerment plays a crucial role in enabling students to engage more proactively with available educational opportunities. This finding reinforces the value of community service interventions that focus on strengthening internal resources as part of broader efforts to support students from marginalized contexts.

4. Conclusions

This community service program provides direct and meaningful benefits for Madrasah students by strengthening their academic self-efficacy through the

internalization of positive language rooted in religious coping practices. The intervention was specifically designed to respond to the psychological challenges faced by final-year students at MA Darussa'adah, particularly low academic confidence, negative self-talk, and uncertainty regarding future educational pathways. By positioning language as an internal cognitive and affective tool and integrating it with religious reflection, the program successfully addressed students' internal psychological resources in a culturally relevant manner. One of the most significant contributions of this community service activity lies in its impact on students' psychological empowerment. Through guided muhasabah-based activities and positive language exercises, students became more aware of their internal dialogue and learned to reconstruct negative self-statements into more constructive and hopeful expressions. This shift in internal language helped students reinterpret academic challenges not as personal limitations but as opportunities for growth and effort. As a result, students demonstrated greater confidence in their academic abilities and showed increased willingness to engage in discussions related to higher education and future planning.

In addition to enhancing academic self-efficacy, the program contributed positively to students' emotional regulation. Observations and reflective responses indicated that students experienced reduced anxiety and greater emotional calm when reflecting on academic demands and future aspirations. The integration of religious coping practices, particularly muhasabah, provided emotional comfort and spiritual reassurance, enabling students to manage stress more effectively. This emotional stabilization is an important outcome, as emotional well-being plays a crucial role in sustaining motivation and persistence in academic contexts. The community service program also had a notable impact on students' educational motivation. As students' self-efficacy improved, they began to articulate clearer academic goals and aspirations, including a stronger interest in pursuing higher education. This motivational shift suggests that strengthening internal psychological resources can activate broader developmental processes related to goal-setting and future orientation. While the program did not eliminate structural or socio-economic barriers, it equipped students with the psychological resilience and agency needed to engage more proactively with available educational opportunities.

From an institutional perspective, this program offers a practical and replicable model for Islamic educational institutions seeking to integrate language awareness and religious reflection into student development initiatives. The intervention does not require complex resources or specialized clinical settings, making it feasible to implement within routine Madrasah activities such as counseling sessions, religious guidance, and character

education programs. The use of culturally familiar religious practices enhances acceptance and sustainability, allowing educators to continue reinforcing positive internal language beyond the duration of the community service activity.

Despite its positive outcomes, this program has certain limitations. The activities were conducted within a single Madrasah context and relied primarily on qualitative and descriptive evaluation methods. Future community service initiatives may consider incorporating longer-term follow-up and complementary quantitative indicators to assess the sustainability of the observed changes. Nevertheless, the present program demonstrates that community-based interventions focusing on positive language and religious coping can serve as an effective strategy for empowering Madrasah students academically and psychologically. In conclusion, this community service program highlights the importance of addressing students' internal psychological resources alongside academic and structural considerations. By integrating positive language practices with religious coping in a community-based framework, the program contributes to holistic student development and offers valuable insights for educators, practitioners, and institutions committed to supporting adolescents' academic confidence and future aspirations.

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