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## Building Brand Image Through Character Education in Kampung Sawah Elementary School

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**Abstract:** Character education not only serves as a pillar for students' moral development but also has the potential to become a competitive advantage that strengthens the image of an educational institution. This study aims to analyze the strategy of building a school's brand image through the implementation of character education at Kampung Sawah Elementary School. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in this research. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents, as well as through participant observation and documentation. The results indicated that the brand image was built by balancing brand identity and brand image, developing a brand identity system, aligning the brand with the product, humanizing the brand personality, and strengthening the brand as a symbol. Meanwhile, the character education established by SD Kampung Sawah provides character learning through routines such as praying before and after class, nurturing students through Quranic memorization, and fostering honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, and independence through outdoor learning processes. Cultivating democratic values and curiosity is achieved through various activities, such as outbounds and camping. National spirit and patriotism are implemented in a structured manner by the school to commemorate national holidays. Appreciating achievements, friendliness, communicativeness, and peace-loving behavior are implemented through collaborative work. A fondness for reading, environmental awareness, social care, and responsibility is integrated into both the classroom learning process and outdoor education involving the students. The Instagram social media account @salamkpsawah is utilized as one of the media channels to build the brand image of SD Kampung Sawah Depok.

**Keywords:** Brand Image, Character Education, Elementary School, Public Trust, Instagram.

## INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization and intense competition among educational institutions (Sholeh, 2023), schools no longer function merely as places for the transfer of knowledge; instead, they are demanded to possess uniqueness and high competitiveness (Isma, et al., 2023). choosings of modern developments and shifting public orientations in

choosing educational institutions force schools to be capable of managing their reputation. In the concept of educational marketing management, the reputation and public perception of an institution are known as brand image. A positive brand image becomes a crucial asset for schools to gain public trust (Yahya, et al., 2024), which ultimately impacts the continuity and existence of the school itself.

However, building a brand image at the elementary school level cannot be achieved solely through upgrading physical facilities or conventional promotions. Schools require a substantial foundation of values that are deeply rooted in the real needs of the community. One of the fundamental aspects that has now become a primary concern for parents in choosing a school is the instillation of moral values (Martati, 2024). The widespread crisis of moral degradation among the younger generation in recent times--such as bullying, loss of respect, and lack of discipline--makes character education a highly urgent program that is sought after by the public.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System mandates that national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. Stemming from this mandate, several elementary schools have begun integrating character education not merely to fulfill the curriculum, but as a differentiation strategy to build a distinctive institutional identity. When a school successfully becomes consistently known as a "school that molds a principled generation," its brand image will naturally form positively in the eyes of the public.

An interesting phenomenon regarding this effort can be observed at Kampung Sawah Elementary School. As an educational institution situated in a communal environment with diverse societal characteristics, this school faces both major challenges and opportunities in shaping its image. The geographical location and socioeconomic conditions around Kampung Sawah demand that the school deliver education that is not only academically excellent but also adaptive in nurturing the morality of its students. The implementation of character education at Kampung Sawah Elementary School is expected to serve as an answer to parents' anxieties while acting as the primary driving engine to boost the school's reputation in the surrounding environment.

Social media has become one of the primary instruments in this digital communication. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube have evolved into communication channels that not only convey information but also build public narratives, emotions, and perceptions. Among these various platforms, Instagram possesses dominant visual power through photos, videos, reels, and other interactive features. This characteristic makes Instagram an effective medium for building an institutional image, as visuals can convey messages more rapidly and emotionally than text alone. In the context of elementary education, Instagram often serves as the first point of contact between schools and prospective parents. This aligns with the view of Keller (2013), who states that brand image formation is heavily influenced by repeated and consistent communication exposure across various brand touchpoints.

In the decision-making process of choosing a school, parents no longer solely consider the curriculum, accreditation, or physical facilities. They also evaluate the values upheld by the school, the learning culture, the educational approach, the environmental atmosphere, and the interactions between teachers and students. All of these aspects can now be showcased through social media. Therefore, digital communication is no longer merely informative, but also persuasive and symbolic. Schools must be capable of packaging their identity through consistent visual storytelling to build a strong brand image that stands out from other institutions (Keller, 2013).

SD Alam Kampung Sawah Depok is a nature-based educational institution that embraces the concepts of experiential learning, character education, and an inclusive approach. The nature school concept emphasizes learning oriented toward direct experience

(learning by doing), interaction with the environment, and character building through real-world activities. This approach serves as the primary differentiation for the school compared to conventional elementary schools. Such differentiation is a vital element in building brand associations, as explained by Keller (2013), who notes that unique and relevant associations will strengthen a brand's position in the minds of the audience.

Nevertheless, strong differentiation will not be optimal if it is not communicated in a structured and consistent manner through an integrated marketing communication strategy. Schultz, Tannenbaum, and Lauterborn (1993) emphasize that Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) aims to unify all forms of communication so that the message received by the audience remains consistent and mutually reinforcing. Without this integration, communication can become fragmented and weaken the formation of the brand image. The Instagram account @salamkpsawah serves as the primary digital communication channel for SD Alam Kampung Sawah Depok. Through this account, the school routinely uploads documentation of learning activities, outdoor events, character programs, and various moments of interaction between students and teachers. These contents generally showcase the dynamics of nature-based learning that define the school. However, based on the research findings in this thesis, a gap was identified between the digital representation displayed on Instagram and the direct experience of parents when visiting the school.

Although the link between character education and the quality of graduates is frequently discussed, research specifically examining how character values at the elementary level are strategically utilized to shape a school's brand image—particularly within the locus of Kampung Sawah Elementary School—remains limited. Therefore, it is essential to conduct an in-depth study regarding the value internalization strategies, the obstacles encountered, and the tangible impact of this character-building program on public perception and trust levels. Furthermore, this paper will discuss Building Brand Image Through Character Education at Kampung Sawah Elementary School, via Instagram @salamkpsawah.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. The Concept of Brand Image in Educational Institutions**

#### **Definition of Brand Image**

In modern educational marketing management, schools are no longer viewed merely as social institutions, but also as educational service providers competing in an open market. According to Philip Kotler and Karen Fox (1995), a school's brand image is the overall impression, belief, idea, and perception held by the public or stakeholders toward an educational institution. This image is not formed instantly; rather, it is the result of accumulated information and experiences received by the public regarding the school.

#### **Dimensions of Brand Image Formation**

According to the theoretical domain of marketing communication, brand image is shaped by three main dimensions (Wardhana, 2024):

- 1) Attribute Image (Corporate/Institutional Image): Relates to the physical aspects, history, governance, and popularity of the school organization.
- 2) Benefit Image (Product/Service Image): Relates to the function and quality of the services provided, such as the curriculum, learning facilities, extracurricular activities, and flagship programs.
- 3) User Image: Relates to the characteristics of the service users themselves, which in the context of a school is reflected through the behavioral profile of the students, the quality of graduates (alumni), and the profile of the students' parents.

#### **The Importance of Brand Image for School Sustainability**

A positive brand image acts as a differentiator amid the intense competition among educational institutions. A good image fosters public trust, which becomes the deciding factor for parents when entrusting their children to a school. Schools with a strong brand image will

possess high sustainability, stability in the quantity of new student enrollment, and robust moral support from the surrounding community.

## **2. The Concept of Character Education in Elementary Schools**

### **The Essence of Character Education**

Lickona (1992) in his work *Educating for Character* defines character education as a deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values.

Lickona emphasizes three components of good character:

- 1) Moral Knowing: A child's awareness and understanding of what is good.
- 2) Moral Feeling: The emotional dimension of a child that loves virtue and feels remorse when doing wrong.
- 3) Moral Action: A child's competence and habit of practicing good values in daily life.

At the elementary school level, character education is a crucial phase because children are in the golden age of their moral and social development. Character education outlined by the Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas, 2014) encompasses 18 value points in character education, namely: [1] Religiousness; [2] Honesty; [3] Tolerance; [4] Discipline; [5] Hard work; [6] Creativity; [7] Independence; [8] Democracy; [9] Curiosity; [10] National spirit; [11] Patriotism; [12] Appreciating achievements; [13] Friendliness/Communicativeness; [14] Peace-loving; [15] Fondness for reading; [16] Environmental awareness; [17] Social care; [18] Responsibility.

### **Juridical Foundation of the National Education System**

Legally in Indonesia, character education is mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 3. The article states that national education functions to develop capabilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in the context of intellectualizing the nation's life. Therefore, the instillation of character at the elementary school level is not merely an optional activity, but a constitutional obligation.

### **Strategies for Internalizing Character Values in Schools**

Character education cannot succeed if it is only taught as rote learning (cognitive). Internalization requires a holistic approach, encompassing:

- 1) Cognitive Integration: Embedding moral values into classroom lesson plans.
- 2) School Culture: Creating positive habits and routines (e.g., the culture of greeting, mutual cooperation/gong royong, maintaining cleanliness).
- 3) Modeling: Teachers, principals, and administrative staff positioning themselves as primary role models for students to emulate.

### **Character Education as a Tool for School Branding**

Students and graduates serve as the "living showcase" of an elementary school. When an elementary school successfully instills strong character, the public will witness this output firsthand within the social environment. The polite, honest, and disciplined behavior demonstrated by the students of Kampung Sawah Elementary School within the communal society will become an organic testimony that builds a widespread positive perception.

## **3. Character Values as a Value Differentiation Strategy**

As a religious nation, character education is viewed as highly essential. The government has launched character education across various educational levels (Baginda, 2016). The character education established for elementary school students includes Religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, appreciating achievements, friendliness/communicativeness, peace-loving, fondness for reading, environmental awareness, and social care (Baginda, 2016). Ramadhan et al. (2025) states that the success of the predetermined

character education for elementary school students is supported by the internalization carried out by teachers.

Maharani et al. (2025) assert that character education in elementary schools plays a vital role in shaping the morality and personality of the younger generation, especially amidst technological advancements and increasingly complex global challenges.

#### **4. Brand Image Theory**

The Brand Image theory utilized in this research is the theory developed by David A. Aaker (1996), which operates under the following assumptions:

1) Brand Identity vs. Brand Image

Aaker (1996) assumes that the failure of companies or individuals building a brand occurs because they focus too heavily on Brand Image and overlook another perspective, namely Brand Identity or what the organization aims to achieve at present and in the future.

2) The Brand Identity System

Aaker assumes that a strong brand cannot rely on a single attribute alone. A brand must be viewed holistically through The Four Brand Perspectives, namely: [1] Brand as product; [2] Brand as organization; [3] Brand as person; and [4] Brand as symbol.

3) Identity Structure Assumption: Core Identity and Extended Identity

Aaker divides brand identity into two layers: [1] Core Identity, which is the innermost essence; and [2] Extended Identity, which consists of supporting elements built to reinforce Core Identity.

4) Brand-Customer Relationship Assumption

Aaker assumes that the ultimate outcome of strong branding is not merely a transaction, but rather the creation of an emotional relationship between the brand and the consumer. Character education provides emotional benefits and self-expressive benefits.

### **METHODS**

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach within a constructivism paradigm (Samatan, 2018). The qualitative approach was selected because this study aims to understand in depth the processes, meanings, and interpretations constructed by the research subjects regarding the implemented digital marketing communication strategies (Sugiyono, 2019). Field data was obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study was conducted from June to December 2025. The paradigm employed in this research is constructivist, which views reality as a product of social construction formed through individual interactions, experiences, and interpretations (Creswell, 2014). In the context of this study, the reality concerning the school's brand image and digital communication practices is understood as a construction built between the school and its audience, particularly the students' parents. The analysis applies Aaker's Brand Image theory, incorporating its four assumptions, while the analysis of character education is conducted using the character education framework outlined by the Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas, 2014).

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Getting to Know Kampung Sawah Elementary School, Depok**

Kampung Sawah Elementary School is a nature-based school founded in 2009, located in the Bukit Pertanian Housing Area, Tirtajaya, Sukmajaya District, Depok City (School Document, 2026). The Sekolah Alam Kampung Sawah (SAKS) in Depok was founded by K.H. Nur Ali Mukti (affectionately known as Kiai Ali). He established this nature school under the auspices of the Al-Kahfi Foundation (Observation, 2026). As of 2026, Kampung Sawah Elementary School in Depok has 278 students, consisting of 144 boys and 134 girls.

The implementation of activities and the teaching-learning process are organized based on the following concepts:

### 1) Open Classroom Concept (Green Class)

The Open Classroom concept is implemented by delivering lessons to students through a learning process designed in open spaces, including learning in *saung* (traditional open pavilions) and learning directly from nature. Consequently, Kampung Sawah Elementary School provides various learning facilities, ranging from gardens and fishponds to various supporting learning media. Because learning does not take place inside a traditional classroom, everything is conducted in the open air. For instance, when introducing fish and aquaculture, the teacher takes the children to the fishpond. Students learn about how fish reproduce, how they breathe, and various aspects related to fish habits. The children are brought directly to the pond to observe the fish, while the teacher explains various details about them.

### 2) Learning Curriculum

The learning curriculum is the primary pillar of the educational process at Kampung Sawah Elementary School, Depok. There are four Main Pillars integrated into the entire learning process, namely:

- a. Character Development (Akhlak) in the context of Integrated Islamic Development: The learning process begins with the habituation of worship, such as performing joint Duha prayers, reciting the Quran (*tadarrus*), and instilling daily etiquette (*adab*).
- b. Philosophy of Science: Students are engaged through experiential learning methods. Children are encouraged to ask questions, conduct simple experiments, and solve problems.
- c. Leadership: Through group activities, discussions, and outbound games, every child is trained to speak up courageously, negotiate, and lead their peers.
- d. Business and Entrepreneurship: From an early stage, students are taught the basics of financial independence and creativity through market day activities, managing gardens, and creating handicrafts from recycled materials for marketing purposes.

### 3) Pressure-Free Learning Method

Pressure-free learning is conducted through the following methods:

- a. Fun Learning: The daily learning process is assessed through group projects, presentations of students' work, and portfolios tracking the children's character development.
- b. Casual and Functional Uniforms: Due to the high frequency of outdoor activities--such as gardening, climbing, and playing in the mud--children require casual clothing and footwear that allow them to move freely on soil and grass.

### 4) A Balanced Daily Routine

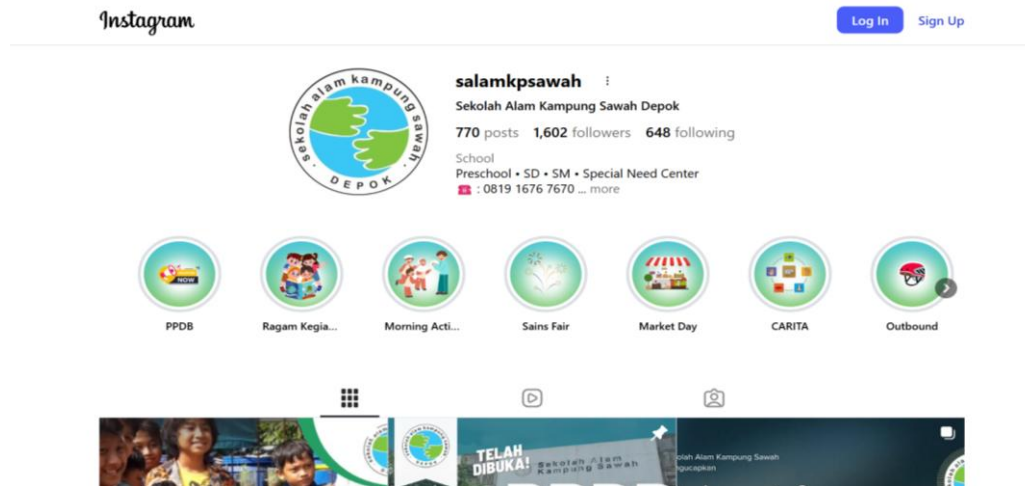
The school management divides the students' learning process into three categories:

- a. Morning: A warm and friendly welcome of students, followed by spiritual activities: prayers, morning remembrance (*dhikr*), Duha prayer, and Quran memorization (*tahfiz*).
- b. Midday: Thematic learning, including science, mathematics, and language, interspersed with physical activities or practical work outside the *saung* (open pavilions).
- c. Afternoon: Rest and communal lunch, which instills the etiquette (*adab*) of sharing, followed by congregational Zuhr prayer, and concluding with a reflection and learning evaluation session before returning home.

Through these flexible operations that integrate seamlessly with nature, the children at Kampung Sawah Elementary School grow into active individuals who possess high empathy toward the environment and demonstrate character independence.

## The Instagram Account of Kampung Sawah Elementary School @salamkpsawah

The Instagram account of Kampung Sawah Elementary School @salamkpsawah, which serves as the object of this study, was established in 2022. To date, it has garnered 1,602 followers and published 770 posts, consisting of photos, short videos, and posters related to the activities of Kampung Sawah Elementary School, Depok.



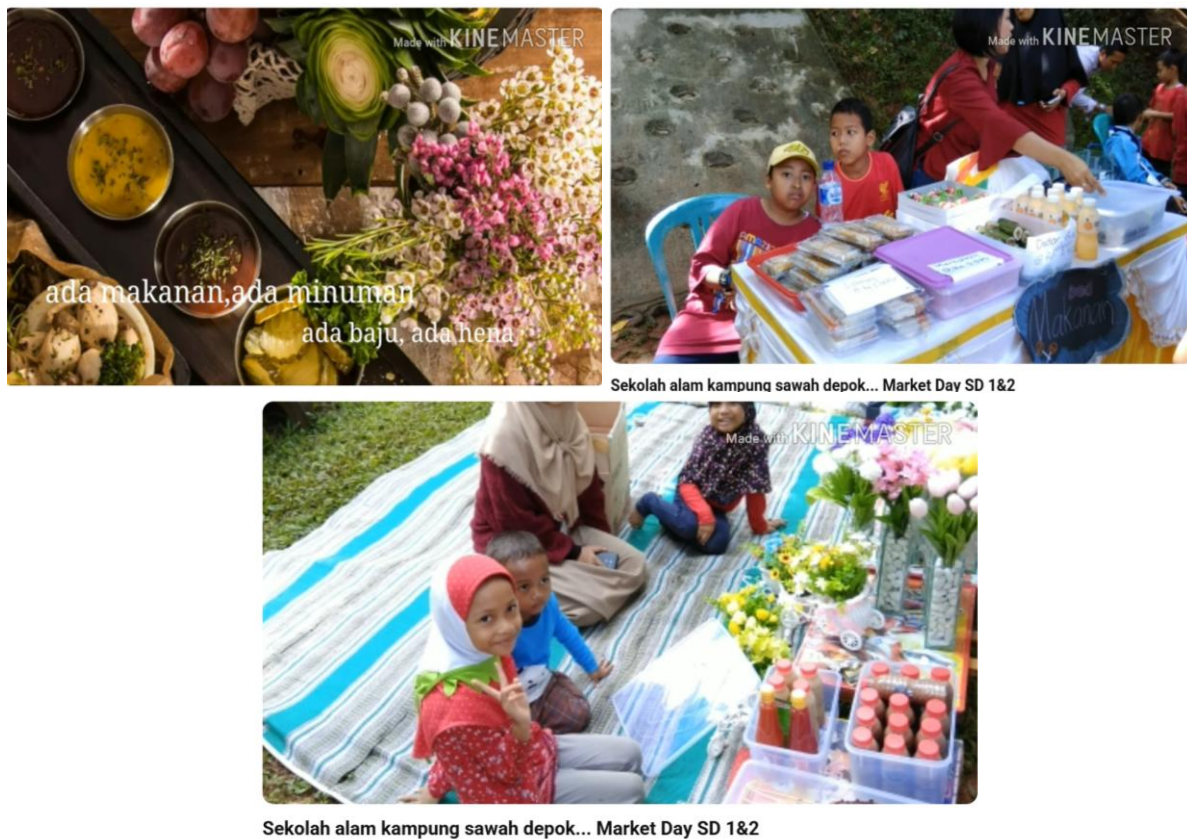
**Figure 1. The Instagram profile of SD Kampung Sawah**

Source: Sekolah Alam Kampung Sawah Depok (@salamkpsawah) • Instagram photos and videos

Research results show that Instagram has become the primary digital communication channel for SD Alam Kampung Sawah Depok in building institution visibility and image. The @salamkpsawah account actively publishes various content representing the school's daily activities. This content includes documentation of nature-based learning activities, gardening, outing class activities, religious programs, holiday celebrations, to moments of togetherness among students, teachers, and the school community. In general, these posts depict a learning atmosphere that is dynamic, interactive, and close to nature, in line with the characteristics of a nature school.

From a visual perspective, the school's Instagram content showcases the use of authentic photos and videos without extensive manipulation or complex graphic design. This reflects the school's effort to present the reality of learning activities as they are. This approach has a positive value as it strengthens the impression of being natural and transparent.

The brand image formation of Sekolah Alam Kampung Sawah, carried out through Instagram @salamkpsawah, displays teaching and learning activities that are distinct from standard formal schools. Through Instagram posts, various outdoor learning activities are visible ranging from farming and outbound activities to studying aquatic life in prepared ponds, as well as various events involving parents such as Market Day, as shown in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2. Collage of Market Day Activities at SD Kampung Sawah Depok**

Source: Sekolah alam kampung sawah depok... Market Day SD 1&2

The collage in Figure 2 shows one of the outdoor activities conducted by 1st and 2nd-grade students of SD Kampung Sawah Depok. Since the activity is Market Day, it also involves parents, who accompany their children throughout the event. This activity teaches children how to collaborate and fosters early entrepreneurship through hands-on experience in managing, organizing, and selling products created by their respective parents with the active involvement of the students. This activity is a part of the direct learning process introduced to students as soon as they join SD Kampung Sawah in their first year (Ibaddurokhman, *Interview*, 2025).

According to one of the teachers, the Market Day event serves as a platform to build closeness among fellow students while also involving their parents in the direct learning process. This ensures that parents take responsibility for their children's growth and development, as well as in building teamwork skills--both with their peers and their respective parents (Ibaddurokhman, Teacher/Facilitator, *Interview*, 2025, at SD Kampung Sawah, Depok).

### **Character Education at SD Kampung Sawah Depok**

Character education in primary schools is regulated based on the Ministry of National Education (2014), which outlines 18 character education values: [1] Religiousness; [2] Honesty; [3] Tolerance; [4] Discipline; [5] Hard work; [6] Creativity; [7] Independence; [8] Democracy; [9] Curiosity; [10] National spirit; [11] Love for the homeland; [12] Appreciating achievement; [13] Friendliness/Communicativeness; [14] Love of peace; [15] Joy of reading; [16] Environmental care; [17] Social care; and [18] Responsibility. To implement these points, each school employs different strategies in the learning process so that every institution possesses a competitive advantage and provides space for prospective stakeholders to choose a school that offers the specific qualities expected by parents.

Ibaddurokhman explained that the learning process at SD Kampung Sawah Depok differs from that of other schools. The learning process is oriented toward concrete and hands-on learning, as explained to the researcher:

*In my opinion, the main uniqueness of the learning process at this school is that it is not merely based on books or textbooks, but rather on concrete, hands-on learning. For example, when children learn about heat/caloric energy, it is not just explained through books or videos, but directly applied through activities like cooking classes, so that the children can understand the material through real-life experiences in their daily lives (Ibaddurokhman, Interview, 2025).*

According to Ibaddurokhman (Interview, 2025), the learning process—including character building at the school—is conducted through direct learning and interaction with nature. This is because the learning process at SD Kampung Sawah Depok is divided into 70% outdoor learning and 30% indoor learning. Meanwhile, character development at Sekolah Alam SD Kampung Sawah is carried out through several methods, namely:

#### **1) Habituation Based on the 4 Pillars of Nature Schools**

Daily learning activities are derived directly from the 4 Pillars of Nature Schools, which are translated into daily lesson plans. The primary character emphasized refers to their tagline: "*Santun, Beradab, Menghebat*" (Polite, Civilized, Excel). "*Menghebat*" (Excelling) in the tagline of Sekolah Alam Kampung Sawah means becoming an outstanding, empowered individual who benefits others.

#### **2) Faith-Based Approach (*Akhlakul Karimah*)**

The main vision of this school is to nurture a generation with noble character (*akhlakul karimah*).

- a. Using the Quran and Hadith as the primary guides.
- b. Implementing direct religious programs such as *Tahsin* and *Tahfidz* using the face-to-face method (*Talaqqi*), targeting the memorization of Juz 30.

#### **3) Authentic Outdoor Learning (Farming & Gardening)**

The development of environmental awareness, responsibility, and patience is honed by utilizing nature as a real learning medium. Students are directly engaged in:

- a. Caring for plants and participating in agricultural activities on land provided within the school grounds;
- b. Interacting with and caring for animals (such as goat/sheep farming and fish ponds provided on the school grounds).

#### **4) Independence Training through Basic Life Skills**

To foster an independent and agile character, students are equipped with daily life skills, such as:

- a. Housekeeping through cleaning tasks at school and home—home cleaning tasks are confirmed with their respective parents.
- b. Cooking, washing, ironing, and sewing, with all necessary equipment provided by the school.

#### **5) Social Interaction and Entrepreneurship Spirit**

Leadership, honesty, cooperation, and mental resilience are trained through social and economic programs:

- a. For 1st and 2nd-grade students, these are introduced through Market Day events involving their respective parents.
- b. Specifically for upper-grade students (grades 5–6), they engage in social interactions and learn basic finances through buying and selling activities at school, where students serve as both subjects and objects of the activities.
- c. For 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students, an internship program is provided to give them hands-on experience in the working world.

According to Ibaddurokhman (*Interview*, 2025), several internship placements are determined based on student interests. Some students intern at minimarkets or supermarkets, local public libraries, veterinary clinics, orphanages, or fire stations. Internships also leverage parent networks and can even take place at the school, provided it aligns with the student's interest.

#### 6) Culture of Inclusion and Respect for Differences

As an inclusive school that accepts children from various backgrounds and conditions (including Children with Special Needs), students are taught empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect for their peers without discrimination from an early age. This was highlighted by the Head of the Foundation of SD Kampung Sawah Depok, stating that the school accepts students with special needs and provides equal treatment (Pinasti, *Interview*, 2025).

As previously explained, the teaching and learning process at SD Kampung Sawah Depok consists of 70% outdoor activities and 30% classroom learning. The outdoor learning activities, as shown in the Collage in Figure 3, showcase various outdoor events: during camping, children are accustomed to working together to pitch tents; when learning about plants and animals, they interact directly with them; and they are also taught various sports such as archery, swimming in professional pools, and outbound training. The inclusive education aspect shows a child with special needs who also studies at SD Kampung Sawah Depok.





**Figure 3. College of Learning Activities at SD Kampung Sawah Depok**

Source: <https://sekolahalamkampungsawah.id/galeri-foto>

The college in Figure 3 illustrates that SD Kampung Sawah has provided a diverse educational experience, consciously striving to translate its vision and mission through the implementation of teaching and learning activities. Through various outdoor learning experiences, it is evident that children are not merely taught how to build teamwork and community engagement; instead, they actively collaborate in teams. For instance, during camping activities, they start by pitching tents together. In agricultural activities, children learn firsthand how to care for animals--such as the goats/sheep available on site--as well as planting and tending to vegetables by watering them. Archery practice, swimming lessons, and outbound training further develop and cultivate their leadership skills, while inclusive education provides children with special needs the opportunity to learn at this nature school.

## Discussion

### Analysis Based on Aaker's Brand Image Theory

**Brand Identity versus Brand Image Assumptions.** The research results indicate that the management of SD Kampung Sawah strives to balance Brand Identity and Brand Image by maintaining children's character building through outdoor education, while developing Brand Image partly through the Instagram account @salamkpsawah. Nevertheless, as the data shows, many outdoor activities are not entirely covered by the Instagram team due to resource constraints. As part of the school curriculum, outdoor activities take place daily through six classes simultaneously, in addition to inclusive education that also occurs every day. **Brand Identity System Assumptions.** According to Aaker, a brand cannot rely on just a single attribute; instead, it needs to be viewed holistically through four (4) perspectives: Brand as Product, Brand as Organization, Brand as Person, and Brand as Symbol.

As a product, SD Kampung Sawah has demonstrated that as a nature-based school, it has designed a nature-oriented curriculum implemented with 70% of learning conducted outdoors. Second, brand as a product means that the primary focus is how tightly the brand identity is tied to the physical characteristics, benefits, and functionality of the offering. The school delivers its brand through educational services, which can be measured by the alignment between its vision and mission and what is actually realized in the learning process.

Brand as an organization can be found in the organizational culture and values. SD Kampung Sawah Depok has established the tagline: "*Santun, Beradab, Menghebat*" (Polite, Civilized, Excel). In its implementation, the learning process must support this tagline, fostering students to become polite, civilized individuals who progress into great individuals both now and in the future. As an organization, the people within it must also shape public perception toward the brand. Furthermore, quality control is essential to ensure organizational reliability moving forward.

*Third*, brand as a person, according to Aaker, involves humanizing the brand—meaning the brand adopts human-like personality traits such as honesty, courage, elegance, and so forth. The school builds community and togetherness by involving parents in their children's learning process, such as during Market Day for 1st and 2nd graders, where parents actively participate in the event.

The *fourth* perspective is Brand as Symbol, which refers to a brand identity focused on visual strength, metaphors, and historical heritage to create strong differentiation and enhance brand recall. SD Kampung Sawah Depok has been intentionally designed as a Nature School; thus, most learning activities occur in nature. As a result, the school appears seamlessly integrated with nature, surrounded by "learning spaces" in the open air complete with areas for farming, livestock raising, fishponds, and open spaces tailored to execute the structured curriculum. Parents who enroll their children at SD Kampung Sawah must prepare themselves for their children's active outdoor schedules. The daily routine of these students differs from that of conventional elementary school children who arrive neat and leave just as neat. At this school, children need to be equipped with more than one set of clothes, which may be used after completing outdoor activities before returning to the classroom. In other words, several visible "symbols" serve to reinforce the Brand Identity System of SD Kampung Sawah.

Identity Structure Assumptions: *Core Identity and Extended Identity*. As previously explained by Aaker (1996), brand identity is divided into two layers: [1] Core Identity, which represents the deepest essence or core of the brand; and [2] Extended Identity, which includes supporting elements built to reinforce the Core Identity. The Core Identity of SD Kampung Sawah can be identified as follows:

- a) Nature-based education;
- b) Islamic character development, established through the routine of reciting prayers before and after studying, as well as performing the Duha prayer in the morning before lessons begin;
- c) Inclusive education, which provides space for children with special needs, thereby ensuring the school avoids discrimination and values every child's uniqueness.

Meanwhile, the Extended Identity as a supporting element is evident in various displays and activities, including the *Sahabat Quran* (Friends of the Quran) class, farming and gardening practices, and entrepreneurship programs. Children are also educated to be friendly not only to fellow humans but also to nature. From a learning environment perspective, open-air spaces are designed featuring open wooden gazebos (*saung*), students wearing comfortable clothing for outdoor activities, and a green, lush school environment. Thus, the Extended Identity effectively reinforces the brand established by Sekolah Alam Kampung Sawah.

*Analysis of Character Education* From the perspective of Character Education, out of all the values outlined by the Ministry of National Education (2014), several key elements are fulfilled in the character education process, including:

- a) Religiousness: SD Kampung Sawah students are accustomed to praying before and after concluding activities, alongside attending *Tahfizh Quran* classes to learn proper Quranic reading and memorization.
- b) Tolerance, Discipline, Hard Work, Creativity, and Independence: These are taught to children through various outdoor learning activities. Camping trips, for instance, serve as a medium to teach discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, and tolerance toward peers participating in shared activities.
- c) Democracy: This is taught during outdoor activities such as outbound courses, where a group or team leader must be chosen. Teachers give full freedom to team members to elect their leader, who guides them until the end of the activity.

- d) Curiosity: This is fostered when children encounter challenges while learning in nature. There are always problems to solve, and facing these obstacles naturally elevates their curiosity over time. The learning process and teacher-student interactions also stimulate children's curiosity about various aspects of the natural world.
- e) National Spirit and Love for the Homeland: These values are cultivated through flag ceremonies and commemorations on National Holidays, as well as building pride in the Indonesian nation through various activities and teacher guidance.
- f) Appreciating Achievement and Communication: Children are taught to value every achievement attained by themselves, their teams, or their peers through appreciation. This builds strong internal communication with peers, younger students, and older students through collaborative efforts developed during outdoor learning.
- g) Love of Peace and Social Care: Children are taught peace and empathy by accompanying peers with special needs during outdoor activities, as well as through scheduled visits to orphanages or nursing homes.
- h) Joy of Reading: Reading habits are cultivated through various activities beyond *Tahfizh Quran*. Facilities are provided for reading in the Literacy Gazebo (*Outdoor Reading*). Additionally, through *Nature Journaling*, after students read about pets or fish, they immediately verify the information in the field and write down their observations in their personal journals as part of the learning and evaluation process. This process is paired with contextual storytelling in the open air, which stimulates children's understanding of stories shared by their teachers.
- i) Social Care and Inclusivity: Social care is implemented at SD Kampung Sawah by fostering an *Inclusion Culture*. The school makes no distinction among children seeking to study at SD Kampung Sawah; children with special needs are admitted and granted equal treatment. For 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, Market Day events are organized, and any profits earned are collected and donated to charities--such as orphanages, disaster victims, or community members in need around the school. For 5th and 6th-grade students, community outreach programs are conducted, including community service (*kerja bakti*), cleaning public facilities, and other social activities.

## CONCLUSION

The research results on Building Brand Image through Character Education at SD Kampung Sawah Depok reveal that the built brand image achieves a balance between Brand Identity and Brand Image, establishes a Brand Identity System, aligns the brand with the product, develops the brand personality as a person, and strengthens the Brand as a Symbol. Meanwhile, regarding character education, almost all elements outlined by the Ministry of National Education (2014) have been successfully implemented by SD Kampung Sawah.

The school instills character development through habits such as reciting prayers before and after studying, guiding students through Quranic memorization (*Tahfidz*), and fostering honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, and independence through outdoor learning processes. Democratic values and curiosity are cultivated through various activities such as outbound training and camping, where students elect group leaders and exercise problem-solving curiosity when facing tasks that may require retries after initial failures.

National Spirit and Love for the Homeland are structured by the school through national holiday commemorations; Appreciating Achievement, Friendliness and Communicativeness, and Love of Peace are implemented through collaborative team activities; while Joy of Reading, Environmental Care, Social Care, and Responsibility are integrated into daily learning processes as well as hands-on outdoor education involving the students. Furthermore, the presence of the Instagram account @salamkpsawah serves to reinforce the Brand Image of SD Kampung Sawah Depok.

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