

Survival Strategies for Minority Institutions (Case Study of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel Village Watuprapat Pasuruan)

Qomariya Rahma Ayu,¹ Sulanam²

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya^{1,2}
ayurhuma2603@gmail.com,¹ sulanam@uinsa.ac.id²

Abstract: *This research examines the survival strategy of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel in Watuprapat Village, Pasuruan, in the face of competition with surrounding public elementary schools. This research uses a case study with a qualitative approach. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. This research uses source, method, and time triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is done by comparing information from various research subjects. Method triangulation was applied by combining interviews, observation, and documentation. Time triangulation was done by collecting data at different times to see the consistency of information. The results showed that MI Sunan Ampel managed to survive and develop through various innovative strategies. Among them are student pick-up programs to facilitate access, free registration that attracts parents, and affordable education costs so that they are more competitive. In addition, the teaching of English and Arabic is an added value that the community is interested in. Branding activities also play an important role in building a positive image of MI Sunan Ampel in the eyes of the community, increasing parents' trust in choosing this institution. This finding supports organizational survival theory, emphasizing the importance of adaptation and response to community needs and expectations. Through the implementation of these strategies, MI Sunan Ampel demonstrated the ability not only to survive but also thrive in a competitive educational environment. This research provides valuable insights for other educational institutions facing similar challenges.*

Keywords: *Strategi Survival, Education Competition, Education Innovation.*

Introduction

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel was established in 2014 by Akhmad Naufal with the initial name Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Asmaul Husna. The naming process went through an *istikhoroh*, where the results were considered good, and as a form of vow, Naufal committed to completing the Qur'an at Sunan Ampel, Surabaya. This practice demonstrates the spiritual values integrated into the education provided. In the context of education in Watuprapat Village, MI Sunan Ampel faces significant challenges due to competition with three public primary schools (SDN) in the vicinity. To deal with this condition, MI Sunan Ampel endeavored to survive and develop.

To cope with competition, adaptability is required.¹ Indicating that educational institutions must be able to adapt to the surrounding environment to survive in fierce competition, this adaptation includes several important aspects such as curriculum innovation that is relevant to the needs of the times as well as improving the quality of teachers who are able to guide students to think critically and creatively. In addition, the development of adequate facilities and infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, and information technology is essential to improve the quality of education. Cooperation with other institutions can also open up new opportunities for program development and resource exchange.²

Educational institutions need to be responsive to the needs of the community and involve them in decision-making as well as effective promotion to raise awareness about the excellence of madrasah, by adapting proactively to challenges and changes educational institutions especially madrasah can strengthen their position in the national education system.³ This is in line with organizational survival theory, which focuses on how organizations are able to survive and thrive in a dynamic and competitive environment. This theory emphasizes the importance of adaptation, innovation, and response to external and internal changes. Some important indicators of this theory include adaptability, which reflects how quickly and effectively an organization can respond to environmental changes, such as government policies, market trends, or customer needs.

The level of innovation applied in products, services, and processes is also a key indicator, where organizations that continuously innovate tend to be more competitive. Stakeholder engagement, including support from employees, customers, and communities, plays an important role in organizational sustainability. In addition, the availability and good management of resources, be it human, financial, or technological, is essential for survival.⁴ The quality of leadership and management strategies implemented also influence the achievement of sustainable goals. Healthy

¹ Muh Ibnu Sholeh, "Menghadapi Persaingan Sengit Lembaga Pendidikan : Strategi Diferensiasi Dalam Pemasaran Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 3 (2023): 192-222, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v1i3.259>.

² Safiq Maulido, Popi Karmijah, and Vinanda Rahmi, "Upaya Meningkatkan Pendidikan Masyarakat Di Daerah Terpencil," *Jurnal Sadewa: Publikasi Ilmu Pendidikan, Pembelajaran Dan Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 1 (2024): 198-208, <https://journal.aripi.or.id/index.php/Sadewa/article/view/488>.

³ Ayu Puspita et al., *Buku Ajaran Supervisi Pendidikan*, ed. Akhmad Ramli and Ahmad Ridani, *Bening Media Publishing*, Cetakan I (Palembang: Januari, 2024), https://repository.uinsi.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/4149/UNESCO_BUKU_AJAR_SUPERVISI_PENDIDIKAN-FILE LENGKAP.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y.

⁴ Riko Anas and Aisyah Syafitri, "Langkah Strategis Untuk Kemajuan Pendidikan," *Al-Marsus Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.30983/al-marsus.v1i1.6447>.

financial performance indicators, such as profitability, cash flow, and revenue growth, indicate the resilience of the organization.

Finally, an organizational culture that supports innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning can improve the competitiveness and survival of organizations stating that organizations that can adapt and respond to the needs of society will have a greater chance of surviving and thriving.⁵ To overcome the challenges of competition, MI Sunan Ampel adopts various strategies that reflect the principle of accessibility in education. Mr. Naufal explained, "We want to remove barriers for parents who may not be able to take their children to school." With the student pick-up program every morning, MI Sunan Ampel is committed to ensuring easier access to education for all students. The free enrollment policy and affordable tuition fees are also key strategies in attracting students from underprivileged communities.

Research by Egharevba⁶ emphasizes that educational institutions that can adapt to local needs are more likely to be successful in attracting students. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel, as a minority educational institution, needs to adopt strategies that allow it to compete effectively with other schools in the area. One strategy that can be implemented is to develop a responsive curriculum that not only follows national standards but also takes into account local values and the needs of the surrounding community.

This approach will appeal to students and parents who want education that is relevant to their cultural context. In addition, strengthening identity through emphasizing local religious and cultural values in the learning process can create a sense of identity and pride among students, thus also attracting students from different backgrounds who want to get an education that respects their cultural heritage.⁷ Madrasahs also need to build strong relationships with local communities, including community leaders and education practitioners. This collaboration is important for identifying specific educational needs and involving the community in the learning process.⁸

In addition, the application of innovative and project-based learning methods, which link the material to local issues, will make learning more interesting while ensuring that students can see the relevance of their

⁵ M Sahabuddin, "Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Perspektif Manajemen," *Educational Journal: General and Specific Research* 2, no. 1 (2022): 102-12.

⁶ Egharevba and Oseyomon (2024)

⁷ Devi Erlistiana et al., "Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Menghadapi Perkembangan Zaman Di Jawa Tengah," *Al-Fâhim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1-15, <https://doi.org/10.54396/alfahim.v4i1.235>.

⁸ S Adevia Ayu Kusumaning et al., "Perilaku Organisasi Dan Peran Hubungan Masyarakat Dalam Pemasaran Sekolah," *Edu Cendikia: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan* 4, no. 3 (2024): 1192-1205, <https://doi.org/10.47709/educendikia.v4i03>.

education in their daily lives.⁹ By implementing these strategies, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel can increase its competitiveness and ensure its survival during increasingly fierce educational competition in Watuprapat Village. These adjustments also reflect the finding that educational institutions that are responsive to local needs tend to be more successful in attracting students. Meanwhile, the excellent programs in English and Arabic offered by MI Sunan Ampel also function as a differentiation from other schools.¹⁰ This shows that foreign language programs can increase the competitiveness of educational institutions, meeting the needs of people who increasingly want foreign language-based education. Thus, the history and background of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel reflect a strong commitment to education based on spiritual values, as well as adaptation to the challenges faced.

MI Sunan Ampel not only strives to survive during competition but also shows the potential to grow through planned strategies and responsiveness to community needs. Foreign language programs can expand students' abilities, allowing them to compete not only at the local level but also at the regional and international levels. This is particularly relevant for madrasahs that want to attract students from diverse backgrounds. With the increasing public demand for foreign language-based education, institutions like Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel can fulfill this need by offering a more relevant curriculum.¹¹ To survive the fierce competition in education, madrasahs need to develop innovative programs. Including foreign languages in their curriculum is a strategic move that can attract more students and enhance the institution's reputation. By integrating a foreign language program, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel not only improves the quality of education but also strengthens its position in the face of increasing educational competition in the region.¹² This move is clearly part of an effective survival strategy for minority institutions.

⁹ Muqtakdir Nurfalaq Syarif, Ninah Wahyuni, and Sitti Wirda, "Penerapan Model Pembelajaran Menyenangkan (Joyfull Learning) Dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar IPA," *Jurnal Biotek* 10, no. 1 (2022): 102-16, <https://doi.org/10.24252/jb.v10i1.29297>.

¹⁰ Muhammad Fajrul Mushoffi, "Strategi Promosi Dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Peserta Didik Di SMA Muhammadiyah 4 Porong : Sebuah Studi Kualitatif Dengan Pendekatan Marketing Mix (7P)," *Journal of Education Research* 5, no. 3 (2024): 3983-94, <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v5i3.1415>.

¹¹ Suttrisno, Nurul Istiani, and M Romadlon Habibullo, "Analisis Manajemen Program Bahasa Inggris Kelas Unggulan Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Jurnal IBTIDA': Media Komunikasi Hasil Penelitian Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 3, no. 2 (2022): 130-41, <https://doi.org/10.37850/ibtida.v3i02.360>.

¹² Arofah Nailil Hikmah, Ibnu Chudzalifah, and Komayanti, "Analisis Kepuasan Kepala Sekolah Terhadap Alumni Program Studi Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Di Daerah Minoritas ISLAM," *PREMIRE: Journal of Islamic Elementary Education* 6, no. 1 (2024): 57-75, <https://doi.org/10.51675/jp.v6i1.807>.

This paper will explore the survival strategies of minority institutions in the face of educational competition in the region. This paper is important because it does not only discuss adaptation but also narrates the strategies used to survive in the midst of competition.

Method

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, as well as provide a broader context for the educational practices applied in this institution. Data was collected through three main methods: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with the founder and manager of MI Sunan Ampel, as well as several teachers and parents.

Direct observation was also carried out in the MI Sunan Ampel environment to see teaching and learning activities, interactions between teachers and students, and the overall atmosphere of the school. This observation provides a real picture of the application of the educational strategy described in the interview, the interview is conducted by asking several questions related to the topic of the problem which is then carefully compiled and carefully processed so that it can be related to the problem-solving.

The results of the interviews were then analyzed and conclusions were drawn from the results of the analysis. Document analysis was conducted to review written documents related to survival strategies. To ensure the validity of the data, this research uses triangulation techniques of sources, methods, and time.¹³ Source triangulation was done by comparing information from various research subjects. Method triangulation was applied by combining interviews, observation, and documentation. Time triangulation was done by collecting data at different times to see the consistency of information.

Result

MI Sunan Ampel adopts a policy of free enrollment and affordable tuition fees as a strategic step to improve the accessibility of education. This policy is very important, especially for economically disadvantaged families. By removing financial barriers, the madrasah has been able to attract more students from different backgrounds. This not only increases enrollment numbers but also creates a positive image as an inclusive educational institution that cares about the needs of the community.¹⁴

¹³ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D* (Alfabeta, 2020).

¹⁴ Ali Nurhadi, Novela Angga Pratiwi, and Badrus Soleh, "Penarikan Minat Masyarakat Sebagai Wujud Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membangun Citra Positif

In addition, the quality of teaching at MI Sunan Ampel is a top priority. All teachers in this madrasah have a minimum educational background of S1 and are involved in continuous training programs. These efforts aim to ensure that the teaching provided remains of high quality. With regular training, teachers can update their teaching methods and adapt to the latest developments in education. Good teaching quality has a direct impact on student satisfaction, who tend to be more motivated and loyal to the madrasah.¹⁵

Thus, the curriculum at MI Sunan Ampel is designed to be responsive to local needs and the times. The integration of religious and local values in learning makes students feel more connected to the material taught. This approach not only improves the relevance of education but also builds students' character and identity.¹⁶ This innovative curriculum is formulated in consultation with community leaders and parents, ensuring that the education provided is in line with community expectations.¹⁷ To support this responsive curriculum, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel utilizes various activities, such as pilgrimages and recreation, as a means of branding. This activity not only strengthens the relationship between students but also serves to introduce madrasah to the wider community. Through effective branding activities, MI Sunan Ampel succeeded in building a positive image in the community. Active involvement in social and cultural activities also increases the visibility of the madrasah, thus attracting students and parents to enroll their children.¹⁸

One of MI Sunan Ampel's main differentiation strategies is to focus on teaching English and Arabic. This program is designed to meet the demands of a society that increasingly wants foreign language-based education. By offering this excellent program, MI Sunan Ampel not only increases its competitiveness in the local education market but also provides students with

Lembaga Di Sma Wachid Hasyim Pamekasan," *Research Journal Of Islamic Educational Management* 4, no. 2 (2021): 206–18, <https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v4i2.5847>.

¹⁵ Aminah Rehalat, Zuhria Nuru, and Ainy, "Pengaruh Latar Belakang Pendidikan Guru Terhadap Proses Pembelajaran Di Kelas Pada SMP Muhammadiyah Ambon The Effect of Education Background Teacher on The Learning Process In Class At Muhammadiyah First Middle School Ambon," *Jurnal Perspektif Pendidikan Dan Keguruan* 13, no. 2 (2022): 81–87, [https://doi.org/10.25299/perspektif.2022.vol13\(2\).10592](https://doi.org/10.25299/perspektif.2022.vol13(2).10592).

¹⁶ Erlistiana et al., "Penerapan Kurikulum Dalam Menghadapi Perkembangan Zaman Di Jawa Tengah."

¹⁷ Ira Fatmawati, "Peran Guru Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran," *Revorma, Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pemikiran* 1, no. 1 (2021): 20–37, <https://doi.org/10.62825/revorma.v1i1.4>.

¹⁸ Mohammad Dendy Musthofa, Hasan Baharun, and Ainul Yakin, "Melibatkan Stakeholder: Strategi Kunci Untuk Meningkatkan Loyalitas Merek Madrasah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidik Indonesia* 3, no. 2 (2024): 20–35, <https://ejournal.papanda.org/index.php/jipi/article/view/1056>.

the necessary skills to compete in the global era. Quality language teaching helps students to prepare for local and international challenges.¹⁹

Overall, the survival strategy implemented by MI Sunan Ampel shows that educational institutions can survive and develop despite the intense competition. With inclusive policies, improved teaching quality, curriculum innovation, effective branding, and excellent programs, the madrasah has created a strong foundation for sustainability and progress. An adaptive and responsive approach to community needs has made MI Sunan Ampel a successful example for other educational institutions in the region.

Discussion

This discussion will explore the innovations applied at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel in integrating local and religious values into the education curriculum. Emphasizing a holistic approach, the madrasa focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on developing students' practical skills and character. Through various activities, such as religious literacy programs, as well as social and artistic activities, students are given the opportunity to explore and internalize cultural and spiritual values that are important for their lives.

1. Enrollment Policy and Fees

MI Sunan Ampel's policy of not charging registration fees and only charging a small fee during UAS is one of the main strategies to attract students. Naufal stated, "We prefer not to charge registration fees." This strategy is consistent with research Wahyu Zakaria²⁰, which shows that institutions offering low fees tend to attract more students, especially in economically disadvantaged communities.

The free enrollment policy implemented by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has a significant impact on the accessibility of education for children in Watuprapat Village.²¹ It notes that this policy not only increases the number of student enrollments but also helps reduce the economic burden for poor families. By removing the cost barrier, these madrasas can reach out

¹⁹ Ema Umiatul Husna, Muhammad Anshori, and Khoirun Nisa, "Strategi Pembelajaran Program Bahasa Arab Dan Bahasa Inggris Untuk Meningkatkan Daya Saing Alumni Di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 Di Pondok Pesantren Mamba'us Sholihin Suci Manyar Gresik," *Journal Educatio and Management Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.32764/joems.v4i1.355>

²⁰ Wahyu Zakaria, Ulfa Yuniati, and Euis Evi Puspitasari, "Strategi Membangun Brand Image Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan," *Indonesian Journal of Digital Public Relations (IJDPR)* 1, no. 2 (2023): 64–75, <https://doi.org/10.25124/ijdp.v1i2.5545>.

²¹ Nabilla Septiani Hermawan, Sintia Dwia Putri, and Syilvia Julianti, "Collaborative Governance Dalam Upaya Peningkatan Indeks Mutu Pendidikan Di Jawa Barat Melalui Program Sekolah Gratis," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 7, no. April (2023): 324–33, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7816433>.

to more children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who may not have access to education if they have to pay enrollment fees.²²

Compared to other institutions that charge tuition fees, MI Sunan Ampel shows advantages in terms of accessibility and attractiveness for students from low economic backgrounds. Thus, this free enrollment policy strengthens the madrasah's image as an inclusive educational institution that cares for the community.

This study shows that affordable education is one of the important factors supporting survival strategies, especially in competitive environments such as Watuprapat Village. Thus, MI Sunan Ampel not only increases enrollment numbers but also creates a fairer and more equitable educational environment for all students.

2. Improving Teaching Quality and Teacher Quality

The quality of teaching at MI Sunan Ampel is a major concern. All teachers have an undergraduate educational background and continue to receive training. Naufal emphasized, "We strive to provide continuous training." Meyer's research²³ shows that the presence of qualified teachers is key to improving the quality of education, which affects student satisfaction and loyalty. The quality of teaching at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel directly. Students who are satisfied with the quality of teaching tend to be more motivated and have high loyalty to the madrasah.²⁴

Improving the quality of teachers is done by providing continuous training programs at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel. This is one of the main pillars of the survival strategy implemented by the school. Urfa Nailatus²⁵ states that teachers who regularly attend training are better able to deal with the ever-changing challenges of education. In this madrasah, training is not only focused on improving academic competencies but also on developing the social and emotional skills needed to teach in a diverse environment. Thus, ongoing training helps teachers to remain relevant and effective in supporting students' educational achievement.

²² Tutut Wahyuni, "Sekolah Gratis Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Kualitas Pemangunan Manusia (Studi Di Kota Blitar, Jawa Timur)," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosiologi* 10, no. 5 (2021): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.21831/e-societas.v10i5.17186>.

²³ Meyer, Richter, and Kempert (2024)

²⁴ Imam Wahyudi, "Pengaruh Kualitas Pengajaran Guru Terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Smkn 2 Dumai," *Tafidu Jurnal* 2, no. 1 (2023): 31–41, <https://doi.org/10.57113/jtf.v2i1.268>.

²⁵ Urfa Nailatus Sa'diyah, Mukhlisah, and Ni'matus Sholihah, "Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 2 Lamongan," *Cakrawala: Jurnal Kajian Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Dan Studi Sosial* 8, no. 1 (2024): 71–87, <https://doi.org/10.33507/cakrawala.v8i1.1903>.

3. Curriculum Innovation

The curriculum innovation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel was developed in a way that was responsive to the needs of the community and the times. According to Urfa²⁶ curricula designed with local and global needs in mind can help educational institutions to remain relevant and competitive. Di In this madrasah, the curriculum focuses not only on academic aspects but also on developing practical skills and religious values that are appropriate to the local context. Some examples of such innovations include students being taught handicraft skills, such as making batik or wickerwork, which are part of the local culture. In this process, they not only learn craft-making techniques but also related religious values, such as patience and perseverance. According to Baiq²⁷ these activities provide opportunities for students to express their creativity while strengthening their cultural and spiritual identity.

In addition, the Madrasah holds an agriculture class that teaches students about sustainable agriculture techniques. In this class, students learn to grow vegetables, medicinal plants, and fruits in an environmentally friendly way. In addition to providing practical skills, this class also teaches students about their responsibility towards nature, respect for the environment, and understanding that nature is a gift from God that needs to be taken care of.²⁸

This madrasah holds a religious literacy program that includes reading and understanding the holy book. Students are encouraged to discuss the application of religious values in their daily lives.²⁹ Through these discussions, they can strengthen their understanding of Islamic teachings and how these values are relevant to the local context, such as the importance of respecting and helping each other in the community.

In addition to the religious literacy program, students are involved in various social activities, such as social services, fundraising, and visits to orphanages. Through these activities, they learn about the values of caring, solidarity, and social responsibility. In addition, this activity also helps

²⁶ Siti Juliaha et al., "Manajemen Inovasi Kurikulum : Karakteristik Dan Prosedur Pengembangan Beberapa Inovasi Kurikulum," *Muntazam: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 02, no. 1 (2021): 1–26, <https://doi.org/10.35706/muntazam.v2i01.5338>.

²⁷ Baiq Hapipah, Sri Rejeki, and Zedi Muttaqin, "Menggalai Tenun Sasak Dan Kearifan Lokal Untuk Pendidikan Karakter: Sebuah Kajian Etnocivic," *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasa* 9, no. 4 (2024): 232–48, <https://journal.unpas.ac.id/index.php/pendas/article/view/21037>.

²⁸ Dede Indra Setiabudi et al., "Inovasi Pengembangan Infrastruktur Madrasah Berbasis Ramah Lingkungan," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 3 (2024): 3759–68, <https://www.jurnaldidaktika.org/contents/article/view/911>.

²⁹ Udey Riyadul Huda, "Upaya Menanamkan Literasi Moral Keagamaan Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Fakultas Keguruan & Ilmu Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2022). <https://jurnal.unisa.ac.id/index.php/jfkip/article/view/208>

students develop organizational and leadership skills, which are invaluable in their lives going forward. Madrasahs organize art performances that combine religious values with traditional arts.³⁰ For example, dramas depicting inspiring stories from Islamic history. Students are involved in all aspects of the performance, from scriptwriting to rehearsals to performances.³¹ This activity not only honed their communication and teamwork skills but also strengthened their confidence when performing in public. The curriculum is developed in consultation with local community and religious leaders, ensuring that the education provided is aligned with community expectations and needs.

The integration of local and religious values in the curriculum of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel is one of the main strategies for creating a relevant and meaningful educational environment. Dela³² stated that teaching that integrates local and religious values not only strengthens students' identity but also increases their engagement in the learning process. In this madrasah, religious values are taught in a contextualized way, using examples that are relevant to students' daily lives.

In addition, the curriculum also includes character education that focuses on moral and ethical formation, which is considered important by the local community. The integration of local and religious values in the curriculum of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel can be seen through several concrete examples such as Teaching local languages by teaching students to use local languages, such as Javanese, which are integrated with religious values. Students are invited to read religious texts in local languages so that they can understand their cultural and spiritual context.

The madrasah also organizes extracurricular activities that involve local traditions, such as *wayang kulit* performances that contain moral values and Islamic teachings. In this activity, students learn not only about art but also about the messages contained in wayang stories. In addition, students are involved in social projects that relate to the values of mutual cooperation and care for the environment. For example, they participate in environmental clean-up activities held in the village, which teaches them about social responsibility and caring for others following religious teachings. Learning activities are also held in the mosque, where students learn about Islamic

³⁰ Nunu Nurfirdaus and Atang Sutisna, "Lingkungan Sekolah Dalam Membentuk Perilaku Sosial Siswa," *Naturalistic: Jurnal Kajian Penelitian Dan Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 5, no. 2 (2021): 895-902, <https://doi.org/10.35568/naturalistic.v5i2b.1219>.

³¹ Dian Pratiwi et al., "Peran Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler Dalam Pengembangan Keterampilan Sosial Siswa," *Indo-MathEdu Intellectuals Journal* 5, no. 3 (2024): 3408-16, <https://doi.org/10.54373/imeij.v5i3.1365>.

³² Dela Maulindah et al., "Lingkungan Dan Lembaga Pendidikan Dalam Pandangan Islam," *Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin* 1, no. 5 (2024): 143-53, <https://doi.org/10.62017/merdeka.v1i5.1266>.

history and worship practices while understanding the importance of the mosque as a center of social and religious activities in their community.

4. Branding through School Activities

To introduce the school, MI Sunan Ampel actively conducts various branding activities, such as pilgrimage of guardians (*ziarah wali*) and recreation. Naufal stated that this activity not only strengthens relationships between students but also introduces the school to the community. Strong branding can improve the institution's image in the eyes of the public, supporting the view of Yekti Azizah³³ that effective branding can create trust and loyalty.

The form of branding activities actively carried out by MI Sunan Ampel is through pilgrimage activities and recreation. These activities not only provide spiritual and educational experiences to students but also become an effective promotional tool to introduce the madrasah to the wider community. Mr. Naufal explained, " This activity not only strengthens the relationship between students but also introduces our school to the community." Through this activity, MI Sunan Ampel succeeded in building stronger connections with the local community, as well as expanding its reach of influence beyond the school environment.

In addition to the pilgrimage of guardians and recreational activities, branding activities are still carried out, namely picking up students every time they go to and from school. Mr. Naufal explained that they actively pick up students every morning to ensure easier access to education. This approach reflects the principle of accessibility expressed in organizational theory, which stresses the importance of adaptation to community needs.³⁴

5. Featured Program

The flagship program at MI Sunan Ampel is the teaching of English and Arabic. Naufal stated, " We focus on teaching English and Arabic, which is our main differentiation." Verren³⁵ shows that foreign language programs can improve the competitiveness of educational institutions, especially in areas that have limited access and foreign language programs can also improve the

³³ Yekti Azizah and Umi Halwati, "Strategi Branding Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Awereness Masyarakat," *DIRASAH: Jurnal Study Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (2023): 250–57, <https://ejournal.iaifa.ac.id/index.php/dirasah/article/view/899>.

³⁴ Inom Nasution et al., "Strategi Pengembangan Proyek Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Madrasah Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung," *Journal on Education* 5, no. 3 (2023): 8376–8401, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v5i3.1625>.

³⁵ Verren Auranissa Hernanda, Afwa Yasyfa Azzahra, and Fitri Alfarisy, "Pengaruh Penerapan Bahasa Asing Dalam Kinerja Pendidikan," *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains* 3, no. 1 (2022): 88–95, <https://doi.org/10.36418/jiss.v3i1.514>.

competitiveness of educational institutions, given the importance of foreign language skills in the era of globalization.

Mr. Naufal stated that all teachers have a bachelor's degree and are also trained continuously. The quality of education is one of the main factors that influence student satisfaction and loyalty. Ida Rohmah³⁶ emphasizes that the presence of qualified teachers is key to improving the quality of education.

The results of the interview with Mr. Akhmad Naufal provide deep insight into the survival strategy that MI Sunan Ampel implements various strategies that are in line with organizational survival theory. Adaptive and responsive approaches to student and parent needs demonstrate a deep understanding of the local context. The theory put forward by Rifa Nawawi³⁷ asserts that organizations that can adjust to the external environment have a greater chance of surviving.

Branding activities through pilgrimage and recreation reflect Mr. Naufal's understanding of the importance of building a positive image in the eyes of the community. On the other hand, the flagship English and Arabic programs strengthen MI Sunan Ampel's position in the local education market, in line with the findings regarding the importance of language skills in increasing competitiveness.

Overall, the results of this interview confirm that MI Sunan Ampel not only survives but also develops a planned strategy and is responsive to the surrounding environment. This shows that the institution is able to face challenges and seize opportunities in a competitive educational context.

6. Results and Discussion of Survival Strategies of Minority Educational Institutions

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel is a clear example of an educational institution that has successfully implemented a survival strategy in facing increasingly complex educational challenges. In recent years, the madrasah has adopted a comprehensive range of strategies, including strengthening links with the local community, developing excellent programs, and improving teaching quality through continuous training. According to Wallace³⁸ These strategies have resulted in a 20% increase in student enrollment in the past two years, demonstrating the effectiveness of the approach implemented.

³⁶ Ida Rohmah Susiani and Nur Diny Abadiah, "Kualitas Guru Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Program Studi IPA* 8, no. 2 (2021), <https://jurnal.stitnualhikmah.ac.id/index.php/modeling/article/view/1098>.

³⁷ Muhammad Rifa Nawawi, "Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Yang Efektif , Keunikan Produk , Dan Analisis Lingkungan Eksternal Terhadap Keunggulan Bersaing," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pemasaran Digital* 2, no. 2 (2024): 82-92, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jmpd.v2i2.155>.

³⁸ Wallace et al. (2023)

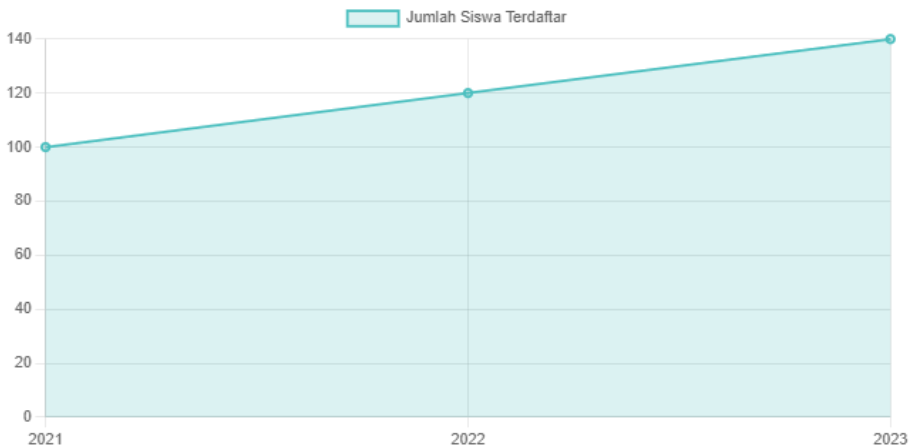


Figure 1. Number of Students Enrolled

From the available data, it can be seen that Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has experienced a significant increase in student enrollment in the last three years. In 2021, the number of enrolled students was 100, which increased to 120 in 2022, and reached 140 in 2023. This shows a positive growth trend, with a total increase of 40 students or 40% in the period. Some of the factors contributing to the increase in enrollment at this madrasah include the free enrollment policy, which removes financial barriers for underprivileged families, making education more affordable and inclusive.

In addition, improving the quality of teaching through continuous training for teachers has increased student and parent satisfaction, leading to enrollment decisions. Curriculum innovations that are responsive to local needs and the integration of religious values make education in this madrasah more relevant and attractive to the community. Engagement with the local community and social activities also helps build a positive image of the madrasah, attracting more students. An increase in the number of enrolled students not only has an impact on the financial sustainability of the madrasah but also on its reputation and competitiveness. With more students, the madrasah can allocate more resources to improve facilities and educational programs.

However, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel must also face challenges, such as the availability of sufficient resources to support the learning process and competition with other educational institutions that may offer more attractive programs. Overall, the analysis shows that Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has successfully implemented effective strategies to increase student enrollment. By continuing to focus on educational quality, curriculum innovation, and community engagement, the madrasah can continue to grow and meet the educational needs of the community. It is

important for madrasas to address the challenges that come with this growth in order to remain relevant and competitive in the future.

The survival strategy at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel reflects a series of efforts made to survive and develop in the midst of various challenges. In this context, challenges include intense competition with other educational institutions, limited resources, and policy changes that can affect madrasah operations. According to Nasution³⁹, This survival strategy includes several important aspects, including:

a. Curriculum Innovation

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel actively adjusts the curriculum to ensure that the material taught is always relevant to the times and the needs of the students. This innovation process involves several steps:

- 1) Needs Analysis: Madrasahs survey and analyze the needs of students, parents, and the community to understand what needs to be added or updated in the curriculum. This helps ensure that the education provided is in line with the demands of the modern world.⁴⁰
- 2) Integration of Local and Religious Values: The curriculum not only focuses on academic aspects but also integrates local and religious values. In this way, students not only gain knowledge but also a deeper understanding of their cultural and spiritual identity. This makes learning more meaningful and relevant to students.⁴¹
- 3) Application of Active Learning Methods: Madrasahs also implement active learning methods that encourage student participation.⁴² Group discussions, collaborative projects, and problem-based learning are some examples of techniques used to increase student engagement.

b. Human Resources Capacity Development

Human resource capacity development is one of the main priorities at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel. Through continuous training, teachers in this madrasah are strengthened in various aspects:

- 1) Professional Training: Madrasahs conduct regular training for teachers, covering the latest teaching methodologies, assessment techniques, and the use of technology in education. This training aims to improve teachers' pedagogical skills and professionalism.⁴³

³⁹ Nasution (2023)

⁴⁰ Julaecha et al., "Manajemen Inovasi Kurikulum : Karakteristik Dan Prosedur Pengembangan Beberapa Inovasi Kurikulum."

⁴¹ Masduki Asbari, "Madrasah Diniyyah Takmiliyah: Pilar Pendidikan Karakter Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Manajemen, Akuntansi Dan Bisnis* 01, no. 02 (2024): 10-14, <https://doi.org/10.70508/4dznk410>.

⁴² Fatmawati, "Peran Guru Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran."

⁴³ Rindra Risdiantoro, "Pengaruh Pelatihan Guru Terhadap Kinerja Guru Melalui Pengembangan Profesional Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Se-Kota Batu," *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 1, no. 2 (2021): 144-57, <https://doi.org/10.51339/khidmatuna.v2i1.184>.

- 2) Mentoring and Mentoring: In addition to formal training, the madrasah also implemented a mentoring program where more experienced teachers mentor their newer colleagues. This creates a mutually supportive and collaborative learning environment.⁴⁴
- 3) Performance Evaluation: The teacher performance evaluation process is conducted periodically to identify areas for improvement. The results of these evaluations are used to design more specific and customized training.⁴⁵

The high quality of teaching that results from this development is one of the determining factors in attracting and retaining students. Students who receive high-quality teaching tend to have higher motivation to learn and achieve.

c. Effective Financial Management

Good financial management is key to ensuring that all programs and initiatives at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel can run effectively. Some important aspects of financial management include:

- 1) Careful Budget Planning: Madrasahs conduct careful budget planning to ensure that all resources are used efficiently. This includes allocating funds for facilities development, teacher training, and education programs.⁴⁶
- 2) Transparency and Accountability: A transparent and accountable accounting system is in place to ensure that every expenditure can be accounted for. This not only increases the trust of the community and parents but also helps in better management of funds.⁴⁷
- 3) Diversification of Funding Sources: Madrasahs also explore various sources of funding, including donations from the community, cooperation with private institutions, and assistance programs from the government.⁴⁸ This diversification helps reduce dependence on a single source of funds and improves financial sustainability.

⁴⁴ Henny Riandari, "Mentoring Pengimbasan Pendidikan Guru Penggerak Di Sekolah Binaan Tahun 2022," *Jurnal Edukasi Indonesia* 3, no. 7 (2022): 2022.

⁴⁵ Ilham Kamaruddin et al., "Evaluasi Kinerja Guru : Model Dan Metode Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan," *Journal on Education* 6, no. 2 (2024): 11349-58, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i2.4931>.

⁴⁶ Endang Sih Pujiharti, "Manajemen Keuangan Yang Efektif Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Sekolah / Madrasah," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam An-Nahdliyah* 2, no. 1 (2023): 37-52. <https://ejournal.stainu-malang.ac.id/index.php/annahdliyah/article/view/46>

⁴⁷ Muwafiqus Shobri, "Peran Sistem Informasi Manajemen Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Transparansi Dan Akuntabilitas Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam," *AKSI Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2024): 78-88, <https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v2i2.302>.

⁴⁸ Nova Sariwati et al., "Manajemen Pembiayaan Pendidikan Dan Strategi Branding Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung," *Burangrang Jurnal Pusat Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (2024): 69-80. <https://journal.albadar.ac.id/index.php/burangrang/article/view/235>

With effective financial management, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel can maximize the educational facilities and services offered to students, creating a conducive and quality learning environment.

Through curriculum innovation, human resource capacity building, and effective financial management, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has created a strong foundation for improving the quality of education. These strategies have not only contributed to the growth in student enrollment but also ensured that the madrasah remains relevant and competitive in the ever-evolving world of education.

One of the most influential strategic steps is the free registration policy implemented by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel. This policy not only makes education more affordable for the community but also reduces barriers for families with economic limitations. By removing the enrollment fee, the madrasah is able to reach more students from low economic backgrounds, strengthen its image as an inclusive educational institution, and provide more equitable educational opportunities.⁴⁹

Adaptation and innovation are key for educational institutions, especially small or minority ones, to survive in a competitive environment. Siti⁵⁰ emphasized that institutions that do not innovate risk losing competitiveness. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel, for example, has taken innovative steps by integrating technology into the learning process. The use of digital tools helps increase interactivity in learning, making students more engaged and motivated.

The success of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel was also greatly influenced by their ability to build strong social networks in the local community. Huda⁵¹ explains that successful minority educational institutions often have active engagement with the community. This madrasah managed to attract the attention of the community by integrating local religious values into the curriculum, creating an educational environment that is more relevant and meaningful to students.

Innovation in teaching methods and active engagement with local communities can improve the competitiveness of minority educational institutions. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has developed more interactive and project-based teaching methods, allowing students to learn through hands-on experience. This engagement not only improves the quality

⁴⁹ Delfiyan Widiyanto, Annisa Istiqomah, and Yasnanto Yasnanto, "Upaya Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa Dalam Perspektif Kesejahteraan Ekonomi," *Jurnal Kalacakra: Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan* 2, no. 1 (2021): 26, <https://doi.org/10.31002/kalacakra.v2i1.3621>.

⁵⁰ Siti Aisyah, Kustiana Arisanti, and Firdaus Ainul Yaqin, "Adaptasi Dan Inovasi Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Dalam Menyambut Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," *Jurnal Educatio* 9, no. 1 (2023): 386-93, <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v9i1.4583>.

⁵¹ Huda (2021)

of education but also strengthens the relationship between the madrasah and the community.⁵²

Overall, the results of the implementation of the survival strategy at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel show that minority educational institutions can survive and develop with an adaptive and innovative approach. Through strengthening community relations, innovations in curriculum and teaching methods, and inclusive policies, the madrasah has not only managed to increase student enrollment but also ensure sustainability and relevance in an increasingly competitive education system. This success serves as an inspiring example for other educational institutions facing similar challenges.

Conclusion

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Sunan Ampel has managed to survive and thrive in the midst of intense competition with public elementary schools in Watuprapat Village, Pasuruan. The survival strategies implemented, such as the student pick-up program, free registration, affordable tuition fees, and good teaching quality, have succeeded in attracting students and parents. Excellent programs in English and Arabic language teaching as well as branding activities such as pilgrimages and recreation also contribute to the institution's positive image in the community. The implementation of strategies that are adaptive and responsive to local needs shows that MI Sunan Ampel is able to adjust to changes in the external environment, which is in line with organizational survival theory. Overall, this research shows that educational institutions that are oriented towards the needs of the community and have relevant flagship programs will more easily survive and thrive in the midst of competition. More importantly, this research shows that the implementation of strategies that are adaptive and responsive to local needs is the main key for educational institutions to survive and thrive in the midst of competition, thus offering a new perspective in understanding organizational survival theory in the context of education.

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⁵² Adi Satria and Muntaha, "Inovasi Pendidikan Abad 21 : Penerapan Design Thinking Dan Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (Projected Based Learning) Dalam Pendidikan Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* 9, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.20961/jpd.v9i2.59940>.

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