

Implementation of the Learning Together Program to Strengthen Children's Literacy from an Islamic Educational Perspective in Balai Pungut Village Bengkalis

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to describe the implementation of the Learning Together Program in supporting children's literacy in Balai Pungut Village, covering the implementation process, participant responses, supporting and obstacles factors, and its relevance to the perspective of Islamic education.

Methodology: The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach. The informants consisted of 25 individuals 9, students Kukerta, 12 children, and 4 parents selected purposively. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Data analysis utilized the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity was verified through source and technique triangulation.

Main Findings: The Learning Together Program was implemented through reading activities, question-and-answer sessions, educational games, singing, and practicing vocabulary pronunciation in Indonesian, Arabic, and English. Children demonstrated positive responses through their engagement and comfort during activities, while parents reported positive changes in their children's study habits. Supporting factors included participant enthusiasm, an interactive approach, and support from students, parents, and the village government. Obstacles included disparities in children's abilities, time constraints, inconsistent attendance, and the use of electronic devices.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The novelty of this research lies in its description of a community-based literacy implementation that integrates Indonesian language support with the introduction of Arabic and English within a non-formal education setting. The program also demonstrates relevance to Islamic education through the cultivation of study habits, role modeling, educational interaction, responsibility, and the involvement of family and the community. The study did not quantitatively measure literacy improvement; thus, the findings are understood as responses and experiences observed and reported by the informants.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literacy serves as a crucial foundation for developing the thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills that learners need to navigate scientific advancements and societal life. Literacy is no longer

defined merely as the ability to read and write, it encompasses the capacity to critically understand, process, and utilize information across various life contexts. Nevertheless, international reports indicate that the literacy skills of learners in Indonesia require serious attention. Results from the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that the reading literacy achievement of Indonesian students remains below the OECD average, consequently, a literacy culture must be continuously strengthened through synergy among schools, families, and the community [1].

These findings suggest that strengthening literacy should be viewed as a process that unfolds not only in schools but also within home and community learning environments. Research indicates that home-based literacy activities are linked to the development of reading skills and children's interest in literacy, while parental involvement plays a vital role in creating a literacy friendly environment that supports child development [2]. The government has undertaken various initiatives, such as the National Literacy Movement and efforts to bolster literacy within educational institutions. However, implementing literacy programs at the community level remains challenging, particularly in rural areas with limited access to learning resources, guidance, and sustained literacy activities. As a result, some children lack adequate learning opportunities outside the school environment. Studies show that community-based literacy programs can enhance learning motivation, participant engagement, and reading proficiency when implemented through engaging and participatory activities [3].

This situation is also reflected in research on literacy in rural Indonesia, which identifies learning motivation and the availability of literacy facilities both at home and at school as critical factors in children's literacy development [4]. In a broader context, community based literacy development offers an alternative way to expand children's learning opportunities when out-of-school learning support is limited [5], [6]. In this study, literacy is understood in a limited sense as the ability to read, comprehend simple information, and use language for communication, alongside the child's engagement in learning activities. This definition aligns with the characteristics of the Learning Together Program, which provides Indonesian language tutoring while also introducing Arabic and English vocabulary. Consequently, the focus on strengthening literacy in this study is not intended to measure every dimension of literacy; rather, it aims to observe the children's learning processes and experiences through activities such as reading, comprehending simple material, communicating, asking and answering questions, and participating in learning sessions.

At its core, Islamic education is oriented not merely toward the mastery of religious knowledge but also toward shaping attitudes, habits, and behaviors that reflect virtuous values in daily life. This process can unfold across various educational settings, including non-formal education, which complements formal and informal schooling. Non-formal education offers a space for children to gain learning experiences and cultivate positive values through interactions with educators, peers, and their social environment. Research indicates that non-formal education serves as a vehicle for instilling Islamic values in children through structured learning processes that engage the surrounding community. Thus, learning activities conducted within the community serve not only an academic function but also support the development of study habits, responsibility, discipline, and social attitudes in children [7].

From an Islamic educational perspective, the educational process emphasizes the importance of habituation and role modeling in shaping a child's character. Consistent habituation within an educational setting helps children develop positive traits such as discipline, responsibility, effective communication, and independence. Research on Islamic character building demonstrates that educators acting as role models are highly effective in shaping children's behavior, as values are conveyed not only verbally but also demonstrated through actions in daily interactions [8]. In line with this, the Learning Together Program in this study was not designed not specifically as formal Islamic religious instruction, but rather as a non-formal learning support activity that provides children with the space to build study habits, interact positively, and develop language skills. Thus, the Islamic educational dimension of this program lies in its educational values and processes, rather than in the delivery of specific religious subject matter.

The need for community based learning support activities is increasingly critical in rural areas, where access to learning resources and out-of-school support programs is often limited. Preliminary observations and interviews with the Head of Balai Pungut Village revealed that while the village already possessed an institution for Quranic studies, there were no learning support activities that integrated Indonesian, introductory Arabic, and English into a single program. This situation prompted students from the STAI Hubbulwathan Duri Community Service Program (Kukerta) to develop the Learning Together Program as a non-formal educational service for children. The program was designed around interactive and enjoyable activities, giving children the opportunity to learn, interact, and practice their language skills in a highly participatory atmosphere.

Previous studies indicate that children's literacy activities can be fostered through engaging and participatory approaches. Research highlights the effectiveness of the "learning-by-doing" approach in community literacy programs and underscores the importance of learning experiences that actively involve participants [9]. Other studies show that interactions during shared reading activities are linked to children's motivation and early literacy skills [10], while the family literacy environment is associated with the development of children's language and reading abilities [11]. Research in rural Indonesia indicates that

children's literacy practices are also influenced by the interplay between home, school, and community environments [12]. These findings reinforce the view that literacy activities involving direct interaction and a supportive learning environment should be developed contextually, tailored to the specific characteristics of the participants. While existing studies highlight the importance of interactive methods, creative media, and experiential learning in strengthening literacy, there remains a need to understand how community based learning support programs are implemented within the context of village life. Specifically, there is limited explanation regarding how support activities integrating Indonesian language skills with introductions to Arabic and English are carried out through Kukerta programs, how children and parents respond to these activities, and the factors that facilitate or hinder their implementation. Furthermore, the connection between community based literacy activities and Islamic educational values within a non-formal education setting warrants further attention.

The novelty of this research lies in its portrayal of the Learning Together Program as a community based literacy initiative that integrates Indonesian language support with introductions to Arabic and English through reading, Q&A sessions, educational games, singing, and hands-on practice. The program is analyzed not merely in terms of its literacy activities but also as a form of non-formal education that fosters a habit of learning, educational interaction, role modeling, and the involvement of both families and the community. Thus, this study contributes to the field of community-based child literacy by demonstrating how village-based learning support activities can be understood through an Islamic educational perspective, without framing them strictly as formal Islamic Religious Education.

The urgency of this research stems from the need to provide children with supplementary learning experiences outside the school environment while simultaneously strengthening community engagement in education. The Learning Together Program is significant because it offers a structured, interactive learning space that is closely connected to the children's social environment. The involvement of university students as facilitators, parents as observers of their children's developing study habits, and the support of the village government demonstrates that literacy can be strengthened through collaboration among various community stakeholders. From an Islamic educational perspective, this collaboration reinforces the understanding that a child's education is a process unfolding across diverse educational settings and is not confined to formal schooling institutions. Based on the foregoing, this study aims to describe the implementation of the Learning Together Program designed to strengthen children's literacy in Balai Pungut Village, covering the program's planning and execution, the responses of children and parents, and the factors supporting and hindering the implementation of the activities. This study also situates the program's implementation within the perspective of Islamic education to examine its relevance to the cultivation of study habits, educational interaction, and the development of character values in non-formal education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Learning Together Program, participant responses to the activities, and the factors supporting or hindering the program's execution. The research does not aim to measure the program's effectiveness statistically but rather to understand the implementation process based on conditions observed in the field. The study was conducted within the context of the student Kukerta undertaken by STAI Hubbulwathan Duri students in Balai Pungut Village, Pinggir District, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province. The Learning Together Program was carried out over a one-month period, with activities held four times a week specifically from Monday to Thursday, between 20:00 and 21:00 WIB. The learning activities encompassed Indonesian language tutoring as well as introductions to Arabic and English through interactive learning exercises.

2.2 Research Subjects and Objects

The research subjects consisted of Kukerta students as program implementers, children as participants in the Learning Together Program, and parents of the participants. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement and the relevance of their role to the research focus. The research involved 25 informants consisting of 9 Kukerta students, 12 program participant children, and 4 parents. Students were chosen because they were involved in planning and implementing the program, children were chosen as activity participants, while parents were chosen because they could provide information about their children's experiences and learning habits outside of program activities. The object of the research is the implementation of the Learning Together Program as a community based non-formal education activity, which includes the process of implementing the activity, participant responses, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors for the program.

2.3 Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

Research data sources consist of primary data and supporting data. Primary data was obtained from Kukerta students, children participating in the Learning Together Program and parents through observation and interviews. Supporting data is obtained through documentation of activities related to program implementation. Data collection was carried out through three techniques, namely observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out during the activity to obtain information regarding learning activities, children's involvement, interactions between students and participants, as well as program implementation conditions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Kukerta students, participant children, and parents with questions adapted to the role of each informant. Interviews were directed at gathering information regarding program planning and implementation, experience of participating in activities, participant responses, observed study habits, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors for the program. Documentation is used as supporting data in the form of activity photos, participant attendance lists, activity schedules, learning materials, and program administration documents.

2.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this study were designed to support systematic and comprehensive data collection in accordance with the research focus. The instruments consisted of interview guides, observation guides, and a documentation sheet, each of which was developed to obtain relevant information from different data sources and through complementary data collection techniques. The distribution of the instruments, indicators or focuses, data sources, and data collection techniques is presented in Table 1.

Instrument	Indicator/Focus	Data Source	Data Collection Technique
Interview guide	Planning and implementation of the Learning Together Program	Community Service students (Kukerta)	Semi-structured interview
Interview guide	Experiences and responses regarding learning activities	Participating children	Semi-structured interview
Interview guide	Parental response and involvement regarding the program and children's learning experiences	Parents	Semi-structured interview
Observation guide	Learning activities and processes	Students and children	Observation
Observation guide	Children's engagement and responses during activities	Participating children	Observation
Observation guide	Interactions between students and participants, and program implementation conditions	Students, children, and activity environment	Observation
Documentation sheet	Activity photos, attendance lists, schedules, learning materials, and administrative documents	Program documents	Documentation

As presented in Table 1, the research instruments were developed to capture the implementation of the Learning Together Program from multiple perspectives. The interview guides were used to explore the experiences and perspectives of Community Service students, participating children, and parents. The observation guides complemented the interview data by documenting learning activities, children's engagement, interactions, and the conditions of program implementation. Meanwhile, documentation was used to provide supporting evidence of program activities and administrative implementation. The use of these complementary instruments enabled the researcher to obtain comprehensive data relevant to the research focus.

2.5 Data Validity

Data validity was established through source triangulation and technique triangulation to enhance the credibility of the research findings. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from Kukerta students, participating children, and parents. This comparison served to assess the consistency of information regarding activity implementation, participant responses, and factors supporting or hindering the program.

Technique triangulation involved comparing data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. Information from interviews was compared with observations made during activities and available documentation. Thus, information obtained via one technique could be cross-checked against other data collection techniques. Research dependability was maintained by systematically recording the research stages ranging from preparation and coordination, informant selection, and program implementation to data collection, analysis, and the process of drawing and verifying conclusions. This process ensured that the research stages could be clearly traced. Ethical aspects were also considered; informants were informed of the research objectives and their involvement in the data collection process, and their identities were kept confidential in the presentation of findings.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis employed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, comprising three stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification [13]. In the data condensation stage, data from observations, interviews, and documentation were selected, classified, and focused according to the research objectives. Data were then grouped by themes related to program implementation, participant responses, and supporting or hindering factors. In the data display stage, the condensed data were organized into narrative descriptions and tables to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and trends emerging from the research data. The final stage involved drawing and verifying conclusions. Conclusions were drawn based on patterns and findings emerging from the data, then verified by comparing information from various sources and data collection techniques. The analysis process was conducted continuously to ensure that the resulting conclusions remained consistent with the empirical data obtained during the research.

2.7 Research Procedures

The research procedures were carried out chronologically through several stages. First, the preparation stage involved coordinating with the Balai Pungut Village government to identify community needs and determine the form of relevant activities. Based on this coordination, the Learning Together Program was designed as a learning support activity for children. Second, the informant selection stage involved identifying informants based on their direct involvement and relevance to the research focus. Informants consisted of Kukerta students as program implementers, children as participants, and parents as sources of information regarding the children's experiences and study habits. Third, the program implementation stage involved carrying out the Learning Together Program over a period of one month, four times a week (Monday through Thursday), from 20:00 to 21:00 WIB. Activities included Indonesian language support as well as introductions to Arabic and English through reading, question-and-answer sessions, educational games, singing, and vocabulary pronunciation exercises. Fourth, the data collection stage involved conducting observations during activities and semi-structured interviews with informants, as well as gathering documentation related to the program's implementation. Fifth, the data analysis stage involved data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions based on data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Sixth, the verification and research findings compilation stage involved cross-checking the consistency of findings through source and technique triangulation, followed by compiling the research results based on the established focus.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Implementation of the Learning Together Program

The Learning Together Program began with an assessment of community needs, conducted in coordination with the Head of Balai Pungut Village. This coordination revealed that while the village already had an institution for Quranic studies, there were no existing academic support activities that integrated Indonesian, Arabic, and English language learning. This situation prompted students from the STAI Hubbulwathan Duri Kukerta to launch the Learning Together Program as a non-formal educational initiative for children in Balai Pungut Village. Prior to implementation, the students raised community awareness by distributing flyers containing details about the program, schedule, and learning activities. The program was subsequently conducted over a one-month period, with sessions held four times a week from Monday to Thursday between 20:00 and 21:00 WIB. The learning activities encompassed Indonesian language support, as well as introductions to Arabic and English.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Learning Together Program

Based on the results of observations, the implementation of learning uses varied activities such as reading, question and answer, educational games, singing and practicing vocabulary pronunciation. The variety of activities makes the learning atmosphere less monotonous and provides opportunities for children to be directly involved. The interaction between students and children also takes place communicatively so that it is easier for participants to participate in activities. These findings show that variety of activities is an important part in creating participant involvement during learning. The use of interactive activities and educational games provides opportunities for children to learn through direct experience, communicate, and participate in activities actively. These findings are in line with research on interactive learning and the use of game-based activities which shows that approaches that actively involve participants can support engagement in the learning process [14], [15].

The results of interviews with children showed that participants felt comfortable participating in the activities because the learning atmosphere was fun and not stressful. Some children said that they felt they read more fluently, remembered Arabic and English vocabulary more easily, and were more confident when asked to read or answer questions. These findings are participants' perceptions of the learning experience, not the results of measuring literacy skills before and after the program. These findings are in line with research that shows the importance of interaction in literacy learning through interactive reading activities. The similarity of research lies in the use of participant interaction and involvement as an important part of literacy activities. The difference is, this research does not use interactive read aloud activities specifically, but combines reading with question and answer, educational games, singing, and vocabulary practice in a community-based non-formal education context [16].

The characteristic that contributes to this research lies in the integration of Indonesian language assistance with the introduction of Arabic and English in one Kukerta-based program. Thus, the Learning Together Program not only provides reading activities, but also provides space for children to interact, practice communicating, and gain learning experiences through activities that are close to their lives. From an Islamic education perspective, the implementation of the Learning Together Program can be understood as an educational process that is not only oriented towards imparting knowledge, but also towards forming learning habits through interaction and example. The attitude of students who accompany children patiently, provide opportunities to ask and answer questions, and create a pleasant learning atmosphere shows that there is an educational process through example and habituation. This is in line with the view that non-formal education can be a space for instilling Islamic values through a regular learning process and interaction with the surrounding environment, as well as the example of educators in forming children's character. Thus, the value of Islamic education in this program is reflected in the educational process and atmosphere, not in the provision of specific religious material [17].

3.2 Children's and Parents' Responses to the Learning Together Program

3.2.1 Children's Responses

Observations indicate that the children participated in the activities with enthusiasm and engaged in various learning tasks. This engagement was evident through their participation in reading, answering questions, playing educational games, singing, and practicing vocabulary pronunciation. Some children also demonstrated the confidence to ask questions and answer those posed by the university students.



Figure 2. Interview with a children

The children's experiences while participating in the program are also reflected in the results of the interviews. One participant said, "I really like memorizing while singing, because it's fun so learning is easy to memorize while singing" (Dwinta Aprisilia, 15 August 2026). Then someone also said "Learning is both exciting and fun. Learning while playing makes it easier for me to memorize and not get bored" (Asti Zulaika, 15 August 2026). This information can be analyzed together with the results of observations to understand how the learning atmosphere and interactive activities relate to children's comfort and involvement in learning.

The positive response seen during the activity shows that an interactive learning atmosphere can create space for children to be more actively involved. This finding has similarities with research on shared reading which shows that interactions between children and companions during reading activities can be related to children's motivation to participate in literacy activities [18]. However, this research is different because the activities are not limited to reading together, but combine reading, games, singing, question and answer, and vocabulary introduction in a community-based non-formal education context.

Interview results show that children tend to like activities that use a variety of activities. A learning atmosphere that is not only centered on explanations makes participants feel more comfortable participating in learning. Some children also reported that they found it easier to remember Arabic and English vocabulary after participating in the activities. These findings show that children's positive responses are mainly seen in involvement, comfort, and courage in participating in activities, not in improving literacy skills as measured objectively. In the context of this research, these responses are indicators of learning experiences that emerge during the program.

This finding is similar to research which shows that reading activities packaged in a fun way can encourage children's motivation and interest in literacy activities [19]. Other research also emphasizes the importance of using creative activities or media in community-based learning to encourage children's involvement [20]. The difference is that previous research emphasized certain strategies or media in literacy activities, whereas this research describes the implementation of mentoring activities that use several forms of activities in an integrated manner. Games, singing, questions and answers, reading, and vocabulary practice are used alternately to adapt the activities to the participants' conditions. These findings indicate that varying activities can be a practical strategy in non-formal education to maintain children's involvement. However, because the research did not use measurements of literacy skills before and after the program, these findings cannot be used to conclude that there has been an objective increase in literacy skills.

When viewed from an Islamic education perspective, children's positive responses to activities show the importance of creating a learning environment that suits the characteristics and needs of students. Children are given the opportunity to learn through reading, playing, singing, asking, answering and interacting with companions. This pattern shows that education is not only directed at mastering material, but also at forming the courage to communicate, discipline in participating in activities, and study habits. In Islamic education, the process of forming this attitude can take place through habituation and educational interactions that are carried out consistently. Therefore, children's active involvement in the Learning Together Program can be seen as part of an educational experience that supports the development of children's knowledge and positive attitudes [21].

3.2.2 Parents' response

Interviews with four parents revealed a positive perception of the Learning Together program. Parents noted that prior to the program, some children spent most of their free time playing or using mobile phones, while opportunities for home-based learning were relatively limited due to parental busyness. One parent remarked, "Yes, my child has become diligent about reading every day. Their reading skills have become more fluent, and they are more confident" (Dewi Lestari, August 16, 2026). Another parent stated, "Yes, my child's reading ability is quite good, and their pronunciation of Arabic and English vocabulary has become clearer" (M.

Ridwan, August 16, 2026). These statements can be compared with the accounts of other parents to identify similarities and differences in family experiences throughout the program.



Figure 3. Interview with parents

After children participated in the Learning Together Program, some parents observed changes in their children's interest in reading, enthusiasm for learning activities, and confidence in using new vocabulary. These findings reflect parental observations and perceptions regarding changes in the children's learning behavior, thus they are not positioned as objective measurements of improvements in literacy skills. The role of parents in these findings demonstrates that the sustainability of children's learning habits depends on more than just the activities provided during the program itself. Previous research indicates that the home literacy environment and parental involvement are linked to the development of children's reading and language skills [22]–[24]. Studies on parental involvement in literacy learning also show that family support helps create continuity between children's learning activities at educational institutions and literacy activities at home [25]. Consequently, parental support in this study emerges as a crucial factor in maintaining learning habits after the Learning Together Program activities have concluded.

Parental involvement is a significant finding because the continuity of children's learning habits does not rely solely on activities conducted by university students. Since the program operated within a limited timeframe, fostering habits of reading and studying at home required family support. Thus, parents served not merely as those granting permission, but also as key figures in helping to sustain learning habits after the program ended. These findings reinforce the view that community-based literacy initiatives require environmental support beyond the learning activities themselves. While previous research has often focused on instructional strategies or media used in literacy activities, this study highlights that family involvement is a vital component for the sustainability of non-formal programs.

From an Islamic educational perspective, family and community involvement aligns with the principle that a child's education is shaped through habituation, role modeling, and the educational environment. Parents play a role that extends beyond simply permitting their children to participate in activities; they hold a pivotal position in sustaining learning habits within the family environment. The Learning Together Program is not specifically an Islamic religious education program; however, the habit of reading, disciplined participation in activities, positive interactions, and family support create a relevant context for viewing this program as part of an educational process aligned with Islamic educational values. Consequently, the continuity of a child's education is not solely the responsibility of the program facilitator during the program itself but also requires the family to provide a good example and ongoing guidance in daily life [26], [27].

3.3 Factors Supporting and Obstacles the Program

3.3.1 Supporting Factors

Interviews and observations revealed several factors that supported the implementation of the Learning Together Program. The first factor was the children's enthusiasm. They participated quite actively in activities such as reading, singing, educational games, question-and-answer sessions, and vocabulary pronunciation practice. This enthusiasm helped create a livelier learning atmosphere. The second factor was the interactive learning approach. The children did not merely listen to the university students' explanations; they also had opportunities to answer questions, play, sing, read, and practice vocabulary firsthand. This approach made the learning experience more relevant to the participants' own experiences. The third factor was the support provided by parents and the village government. Parents granted permission and encouraged their children to participate, while the village government provided support from the planning stage through to the program's implementation. Such support helped create conditions that allowed the program to proceed according to the planned schedule.



Figure 4. Group Photo and Flyer

The next factor is the commitment of the Kukerta participants. These students act not merely as conveyors of material but also as mentors who build communicative relationships with the participants. A friendly and patient demeanor helps children feel more at ease asking questions, providing answers, and practicing during the activities. The involvement of these various parties demonstrates that community-based literacy programs require broader support than that provided solely by the program implementers. Research on community-based literacy development in rural areas highlights the importance of parental and community participation in creating an environment that fosters children's literacy development [27]. This reinforces research findings indicating that the involvement of students, parents, and village government constitutes social capital that supports the sustainability of the Learning Together Program.

From an Islamic educational perspective, the involvement of students, parents, and village government illustrates that children's education is a shared responsibility requiring cooperation across various educational spheres. Students serve as both mentors and role models in the learning process; parents provide support from within the family environment; and the village government helps facilitate the conditions necessary for educational activities to take place. Such collaboration demonstrates that education occurs not only through the interaction between educator and learner but also through a social environment that supports the formation of children's study habits and positive attitudes. Thus, the factors supporting the Learning Together Program align with Islamic educational principles that position role modeling, habituation, and the environment as integral components of the educational process [28].

3.2.2 Obstacles Factors

In addition to supporting factors, the study identified several obstacles in the program's implementation. The first obstacle was the variation in participants' abilities. Some children were already proficient readers, while others still required guidance in recognizing letters and reading words. These disparities required university students to adjust their delivery methods so that participants with varying skill levels could effectively engage with the activities. The second obstacle was the evening scheduling; activities began at 8:00 PM (WIB), meaning some children arrived tired after their daytime activities. This fatigue affected participants' concentration during some sessions. To maintain the children's attention, the students incorporated games or songs as interludes.

The third obstacle was inconsistent participant attendance. Some children could not attend every session due to family commitments or other obligations. Consequently, certain material had to be repeated to ensure that those who had missed previous sessions could still follow the program. Another obstacle was the habit of using digital devices; interviews with parents revealed that some children spent their free time playing on mobile phones. This habit posed a challenge to establishing more consistent study routines. The Learning Together Program thus served as an alternative activity, channeling children's free time into more structured learning pursuits.

The findings regarding varying participant abilities indicate that non-formal education programs require flexible strategies. Unlike learning activities with relatively homogeneous participants, community-based activities bring together children with diverse abilities and learning experiences. Therefore, facilitators must tailor materials, activities, and the nature of their support to the participants' specific circumstances. These findings suggest that non-formal literacy programs need to be designed with flexibility, given the heterogeneous nature of the participants. Research on literacy practices in rural Indonesia indicates that children's literacy development is shaped by the interplay between the home environment, the community, the school, and local socio-cultural conditions. Furthermore, family involvement needs to be strengthened, as the home literacy environment and parent-child interactions play a crucial role in supporting children's literacy development [29], [30]. Therefore, adjustments to study groups, activity schedules, and family support could be considered in the

development of future programs. The research findings are presented in Table 2, which summarizes the main aspects identified during the implementation of the Learning Together Program. The table highlights the key findings related to program implementation, children's and parents' responses, supporting factors, and obstacles, along with their implications for the development of the program.

Table 2. Research Findings

Aspect	Key Findings	Implications
Implementation	Needs assessment, trilingual support, and interactive activities	The program is relevant as non-formal education based on local needs
Children's response	Enthusiastic, comfortable, and more confident in reading, asking questions, and answering	An interactive atmosphere fosters engagement and self-confidence
Parents' response	Parents reported increased reading interest, learning enthusiasm, and use of new vocabulary during/after the program	Family support plays a role in sustaining learning habits
Supporting Factors	Children's enthusiasm, interactive methods, village/parental support, and student commitment	Collaboration serves as a foundation for program sustainability
Obstacles Factors	Varied ability levels, evening scheduling, inconsistent attendance, and gadget usage	Adaptive strategies and adjustments to timing or study groups are needed

Table 2 shows that the Learning Together Program was generally well received by children and parents. However, variations in children's abilities, attendance, scheduling, and gadget use indicate the need for flexible strategies and family support to sustain the program. From the perspective of Islamic education, variations in ability, time constraints, and habits regarding gadget usage indicate that the educational process requires an approach adapted to the learners' specific conditions. Education cannot be delivered using a uniform model for all children, as each learner possesses unique abilities, experiences, and environmental backgrounds. Therefore, mentors need to exercise patience, provide attention tailored to the child's needs, and adjust teaching methods to ensure the educational process remains humane. This approach aligns with the Islamic educational values of leading by example and fostering habits specifically, providing gradual guidance and creating an environment that supports the learner's development.

3.4 Research Contributions, Implications and Limitations

This research contributes to the study of community-based non-formal education by demonstrating how the Learning Together Program can be implemented through a combination of Indonesian language tutoring, introductions to Arabic and English, and interactive learning activities. The research's contribution lies not in proving the program's effectiveness through literacy score measurements, but rather in describing the implementation process, participant responses, family involvement, and the conditions that both supported and hindered its execution. The novelty of this research lies in the context of integrating three languages into a student-led Kukerta based tutoring initiative and analyzing it as a space for community-based non-formal education. The program goes beyond mere reading activities, incorporating educational interactions, games, singing, and hands-on practice, alongside the involvement of university students, parents, and village government officials. This combination highlights program characteristics that differ from previous studies, which tended to focus more narrowly on reading strategies, learning media, or specific literacy activities.

From an Islamic educational perspective, this research contributes to the understanding that educational activities for children can be fostered through non-formal educational spaces involving university students, families, and the community. The Learning Together Program demonstrates that literacy activities can coexist with the cultivation of study habits, educational interaction, role modeling, responsibility, and cooperation. This perspective frames Islamic education not merely in terms of the religious subject matter taught, but also as an educational process that shapes positive habits and behaviors in daily life. Thus, the Learning Together Program can be viewed as a form of non-formal educational support aligned with Islamic educational values, even though it was not specifically designed as an Islamic Religious Education course.

The contribution of this research lies not in the quantitative measurement of improvements in literacy skills, but in the description of the implementation process of a community-based literacy program within a rural context. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Indonesian language support with the introduction of Arabic and English through interactive activities within a single non-formal education program implemented by Kukerta participants. These findings complement previous studies that largely addressed family literacy environments, shared reading activities, or community literacy programs in isolation [31]–[33]. In practical terms, the research findings have implications for higher education institutions, village governments, Kukerta students and families. Higher education institutions can incorporate learning support activities into their

sustainable community service programs. Village governments can support the provision of learning spaces and facilities. Students can employ varied learning activities tailored to the participants' abilities. Meanwhile, parents play a role in sustaining their children's reading and study habits at home.

This study has certain limitations. First, it employed a qualitative descriptive approach; thus, the findings describe the processes, experiences, and responses of the informants rather than providing quantitative measurements of literacy improvement. Second, the study did not utilize pre- and post-program literacy tests, meaning changes in reading ability or vocabulary mastery could not be quantified as measurable gains. Third, the program ran for only one month, so the study could not assess the long-term sustainability of the children's study habits. These limitations present opportunities for future research to combine qualitative approaches with literacy assessments or to conduct follow-up studies after the program concludes.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Learning Together Program in Balai Pungut Village was implemented as a community-based non-formal education activity, featuring Indonesian language support alongside introductions to Arabic and English. Activities were conducted regularly, incorporating reading, question-and-answer sessions, educational games, singing, and vocabulary pronunciation practice. The children responded positively, showing engagement, comfort, confidence in interaction, and enthusiasm for the activities, while parents reported positive changes in their children's study habits. However, these findings are based on observations and informant perceptions and cannot be interpreted as a measurable improvement in literacy skills, as the study did not employ pre- and post-program measurements. The program's implementation was supported by the children's enthusiasm, an interactive learning approach, support from parents and the village government, and the commitment of the Kukerta team. Challenges encountered included disparities in participants' abilities, the scheduling of activities in the evening, inconsistent attendance, and the use of mobile devices. These conditions highlight the need for flexible learning strategies and activity adjustments tailored to participant characteristics and family support.

From an Islamic educational perspective, the Learning Together Program is relevant as a non-formal educational space that provides not only learning experiences but also fosters habituation, role modeling, educational interaction, a sense of responsibility, and the involvement of family and the community. Although the program did not specifically focus on Islamic Religious Education, the mentoring process demonstrated that Islamic educational values could be conveyed through the ways educators interacted, provided guidance, set examples, and cultivated the children's study habits. Thus, the study's primary contribution lies in its description of a community-based literacy program that integrates trilingual support within a non-formal educational setting and its relevance to the educational process from an Islamic perspective. Future research could expand upon this study by incorporating a longer implementation period, a more diverse range of locations, and pre- and post-program literacy assessments to obtain a more measurable picture of changes in the children's abilities.

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