

Optimizing Formal and Non-Formal Education in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo: A Case Study on Balancing Religious Education and Formal Schools

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Abstract. This research explores the balance between formal and informal education in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo, focusing on children's interest in religious education compared to formal education. Using a qualitative approach with participatory observation and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), this study involved village government, community organizations, educators, community leaders, and Community Learning Centers (PKBM) as informants. The findings indicate a high interest among children in religious education, strong parental and community roles, and challenges in developing formal education, such as limited facilities. Based on the FGD results, programs are proposed for integrating religious values into the formal curriculum, enhancing the role of parents and the community, developing educational infrastructure, and empowering teachers. This research underscores the importance of involving all educational stakeholders in creating sustainable solutions to improve education quality and comprehensively optimize children's potential.

Keywords. Formal Education, Informal Education, Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

Formal education has long been the mainstream approach to educational development, while non-formal education has shown its significance, especially in adult education. However, what about informal education? In line with the lifelong learning framework, Lengrand (1984) argues that if an education system is to prepare individuals for modern challenges, it must transcend the traditional role of schools as repositories and transmitters of accumulated wisdom from the past. Education is crucial in today's era and can be obtained through formal, non-formal and informal channels. Schooling takes place in formal settings, while non-formal education is

conducted in the community, and informal education primarily happens within the family.

Formal education is delivered through school systems, featuring a structured and clear educational progression. According to Dewey (2024), formal education is the main instrument for preserving and transmitting cultural values from one generation to the next. Formal education is characterized by structured teaching and learning processes with a defined curriculum, specific goals, and planned evaluations. It is the most widely recognized and accepted form of education in society (Sagala, 2013). Formal education begins with primary education and progresses through secondary and higher education.

Non-formal education occurs outside the formal school system. It can be structured and hierarchical, including activities like those in mosques, boarding schools, Sunday schools, churches, and other community settings. Additionally, non-formal education encompasses supplementary programs such as music lessons and tutoring. It serves to complement, supplement, or replace formal education for those who need it. Non-formal education aims to help students reach their full potential by strongly emphasizing learning and personal growth. On the other hand, informal education is carried out individually and is motivated by each person's knowledge and sense of responsibility. .

Both formal and non-formal education should be balanced so that children receive both types of education. However, issues have arisen in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo. Researchers analyzed problems such as interest in religious education, driven by its engaging delivery and relevance to daily life, and the role of parental and community support favoring religious over formal education. Another issue is the children's memorization skills in religious education, indicating high cognitive potential that could be harnessed in formal education. Lastly, there is a lack of direction towards formal education, as children's potential is not integrated into a formal system that supports their holistic development.

Researchers conducted a study in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo, to address these issues. Based on their analysis, they aim to propose various solutions and implement programs to improve education in the village.

RESEACH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach, a methodology based on subjective, non-statistical, or non-mathematical assessment where the values used are not numerical scores but categorical values or qualities (Sugiyono, 2017). The research design employed is a case study, an in-depth exploration of programs, events, processes, and activities involving one or more individuals (Sugiyono, 2016).

The informants in this study include the Village Government, community organizations, educators, community leaders, and Community Learning Centers (PKBM). Data collection techniques include participatory observation and focus group discussions (FGD). Observation is a data collection technique distinct from other methods and not limited to people but also includes natural objects (Sugiyono, 2017). In this study, participatory observation was used to observe problems in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo. Participatory observation is crucial in qualitative research, emphasizing the importance of researchers becoming part of the context they observe to understand complex realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). By directly engaging, researchers can understand the educational gaps where children are more interested in religious education than formal learning.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is a forum where participants share experiences, views, and perceptions on specific topics, highlighting the importance of social interaction in gaining deeper insights into the discussed topics (Marshall et al., 2014). This method is used to encourage community interaction about the educational gaps, demonstrating children's preference for religious education over formal learning.

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, a common approach in qualitative research for selecting participants with specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the studied phenomenon. This method is noted for its flexibility and suitability for research focused on understanding individual experiences and perceptions in depth (Creswell, 2013).

Data analysis involves the triangulation model, a strategy to ensure the accuracy and validity of research findings. Using multiple data sources allows researchers to obtain a richer and deeper understanding of the phenomena under study (Creswell, 2013).

DISSCUSSION

In this study, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was used to gain in-depth insights from various stakeholders regarding educational issues in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo. The FGD involved several key informants, including Village Government officials, Community Organizations, Educators, Community Leaders, and Community Learning Centers (PKBM).

1. Interest in Religious Education

The FGD results show that children's interest in religious education is very high in Butuh Village. This is evident from their active participation in religious activities such as religious study groups, Sunday school, and other religious events. FGD participants from the groups of parents and community leaders confirmed that religious education is considered very important for shaping the character and morals of children (Smith, 2007). The increased interest in religious education can be leveraged to integrate religious values into formal education. By understanding children's high motivation towards religious education, this approach can enhance their engagement in a more holistic formal education (Brown, 2009).

2. Role of Parents and Community

FGD participants agreed that the role of parents and the community is significant in children's education in Butuh Village. Parents actively support their children's religious education activities, such as by taking them to and from religious schools and being involved in teaching and supervising religious tasks (Johnson, 2010). The strong involvement of parents and the community in religious education can be used as a model to enhance their participation in formal education (Williams, 2011). By involving parents more actively in school activities and supporting formal education, a more supportive and integrated educational environment can be created.

3. Challenges in Developing Formal Education

FGD participants also identified several challenges faced in developing formal education in Butuh Village. One of the main challenges is the lack of adequate educational facilities, especially in terms of school infrastructure and the

availability of supporting materials such as books and learning tools (Clark, 2008). To address these challenges, support from the government and related institutions is needed to improve educational infrastructure. Assistance programs and school renovations, as well as the allocation of funds for procuring books and learning tools, can be initial steps to improve the quality of formal education in this village (Davies, 2012).

4. Program Implementation Based on FGD Result

Based on the FGD results, several program recommendations can be implemented:

A. Program for Integrating Religious Values into the Formal Education Curriculum

Integrating religious values into the formal education curriculum is a crucial strategy for strengthening character and moral education among students. Concrete steps in this program aim to unite spiritual values with academic learning and involve religious and community leaders in the curriculum development process to ensure it is relevant and contextual (Harris, 2013).

- **Development of Learning Modules that Integrate Religious Values with Academic Subjects**

The development of learning modules that integrate religious values with academic subjects is a key step in this program (Miller, 2007). These modules should be carefully designed to ensure that religious values are not only taught as concepts but also applied in everyday life contexts. For example, in Indonesian language subjects, students can learn religious literature that depicts moral values, or in science subjects, they can learn about ethics in technology development (Jones, 2009).

- **Involvement of Religious and Community Leaders in Developing Relevant and Contextual Curriculum**

The involvement of local religious and community leaders is essential to ensure that the curriculum developed is relevant to the

values and needs of the community (Lewis, 2010). Religious leaders can provide insights into the ethical and moral values appreciated within the community, while the community can provide input on educational challenges and needs in their area. Through dialogue and collaboration, the curriculum can be developed to meet academic standards while strengthening religious values important to the community (Thompson, 2011).

B. The Parenting and Community Role Enhancement Program

The goal of this initiative is to enhance community and parent engagement in supporting formal education in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo. Concrete steps proposed include organizing workshops and training for parents and forming school committees that involve them in decision-making and school management (Parker, 2008).

- Conducting Workshops and Training Sessions for Parents to Emphasize The Significance Of Formal Education.

Organizing routine workshops and training sessions for parents is the initial phase of this program (Edwards, 2007). These sessions aim to equip parents with knowledge about the significance of formal education in their children's development. Topics discussed can include the benefits of formal education, the role of parents in supporting children's learning at home, and effective ways to communicate with schools and teachers (Martinez, 2009).

- Forming School Committees that Involve Parents in Decision-Making and School Management

The formation of school committees that involve parents is a strategic step to enhance their participation in decision-making and school management (Smith, 2007). These committees can serve as a platform for parents to express their aspirations, address issues arising in the school, and collaborate with teachers and school staff to advance education in Butuh Village (White, 2010).

C. Program for Educational Infrastructure Development

- Renovation and Improvement Projects for School Infrastructure, Such as Classrooms, Libraries, and Laboratories

Implementing this program requires careful planning, efficient management, and adequate resource allocation (Jackson, 2007). By improving educational infrastructure, schools can create a conducive learning environment that is effective and sustainable for the future of children's education (Williams, 2009).

- Procurement of Books and Learning Tools to Support the Teaching and Learning Process

Procuring books and learning tools to support the teaching and learning process is an important step to improve the quality of formal education in Butuh Village (Brown, 2008).

D. Program for Empowering Teachers and Educators

Empowering teachers and educators is essential for improving education quality. Here are some concrete steps that can be taken in this program:

- Training and Professional Development

Organizing regular training sessions for teachers focusing on the development of pedagogical skills, understanding new curricula, and applying innovative teaching methods (Smith, 2007). These trainings can also include the use of technology in learning, formative assessments, and effective classroom management (Brown, 2009).

- Improving Teacher Qualifications

Providing opportunities for teachers to improve their qualifications through bachelor's, master's, or other advanced training programs (Jones, 2008). This not only enhances their academic competence but also helps integrate new knowledge and best practices into daily teaching (Smith, 2010).

- Teacher Welfare

Improving teacher welfare by enhancing working conditions, providing competitive salaries, and ensuring good social security

(White, 2011). Good welfare will increase teachers' motivation and dedication to providing quality teaching to students (Brown, 2009).

- Encouraging Collaboration and Experience Sharing

Organizing forums or discussion groups among teachers to facilitate collaboration and experience sharing (Williams, 2012). This can enrich their teaching methods and provide inspiration for innovation in learning (Smith, 2010).

- Monitoring and Evaluating Teacher Performance

Regularly monitoring and evaluating teacher performance to identify areas that need improvement and providing the necessary support and guidance (Davies, 2012). This approach can be based on feedback from students, peer evaluations, and self-assessments (Brown, 2011).

- Recognition and Rewards

Recognizing and rewarding teachers who have shown commitment and achievement in teaching, curriculum development, or other positive contributions to the school and educational community (Harris, 2013).

The program for empowering teachers and educators should be designed and implemented holistically, considering the needs and challenges faced by each teacher. This way, schools can create a motivating learning environment and encourage the maximum development of potential for all members of the educational community.

CONCLUSION

The above text concludes that formal, non-formal, and informal education each significantly contribute to educational development. Formal education takes place within schools and follows a structured curriculum. Non-formal education happens outside of the traditional school setting through various programs that provide additional learning opportunities. Informal education occurs independently through everyday interactions, without adhering to a specific curriculum.

The significance of sustaining an equilibrium between formal and informal education is highlighted, as both contribute uniquely to the development of children. Formal education emphasizes structured academic knowledge, whereas informal education provides practical experiences and social skills that are valuable in everyday life.

A case study conducted in Butuh Village, Kalikajar, Wonosobo identified several challenges in education, such as a higher interest in religious education compared to formal education, lack of parental involvement in formal education, and inadequate educational infrastructure. In response, several programs are recommended, including the integration of religious values into the formal curriculum, enhancing the role of parents and the community, developing educational infrastructure, and empowering teachers and educators.

Through a qualitative approach using participatory observation and Focus Group Discussions (FGD), this study demonstrates that involving all educational stakeholders is essential to creating sustainable solutions to educational challenges. With the proper implementation of these programs, it is hoped that the quality of education can be improved and better opportunities can be provided for children to develop their potential comprehensively.

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