



Transforming Early Literacy: The Impact of *Calistung* Tutoring Programs on Student Comprehension in Trimulyo Village

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Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in human resource development and serves as a foundation for national progress. However, the community in Trimulyo Village, South Lampung, still lacks awareness regarding the importance of education and the need for dedicated attention in children's learning. This program aims to enhance students' literacy and numeracy skills through a structured tutoring initiative. The study employs a community-based empowerment approach targeting five elementary school students aged 6-7 years in Trimulyo Village, Tanjung Bintang District. The program follows a three-stage method: Social Reflection, Observation, and Activity Implementation. The tutoring sessions were conducted three times a week. The primary objective was to provide additional learning support outside school hours, ensuring students become more familiar with the alphabet, numbers, and basic writing skills in a stress-free environment. The results indicate that students demonstrated significant improvements in reading comprehension, letter recognition, writing proficiency, vocabulary development, creativity enhancement through coloring activities, and overall focus during learning. Furthermore, this initiative contributed positively to the community by addressing educational challenges and supporting early childhood learning development in Trimulyo Village.

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INTRODUCTION

Pendidikan memiliki peran sentral dalam membangun sumber daya manusia yang berkualitas dan menjadi fondasi bagi kemajuan suatu bangsa. Namun, di beberapa daerah masih ditemukan hambatan dalam akses dan kualitas pendidikan dasar, yang berdampak pada rendahnya keterampilan dasar anak-anak dalam membaca, menulis, dan berhitung (*calistung*). Salah satu wilayah yang menghadapi permasalahan ini adalah Desa Trimulyo, di mana banyak siswa sekolah dasar mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami materi pembelajaran akibat kurangnya bimbingan belajar yang memadai serta minimnya keterlibatan orang tua dalam mendukung pendidikan anak-anak mereka.

Keterampilan *calistung* merupakan fondasi utama dalam proses pembelajaran di jenjang pendidikan dasar. Siswa yang tidak memiliki kemampuan membaca dan menulis dengan baik akan mengalami kesulitan dalam memahami berbagai mata pelajaran lainnya, seperti sains dan sosial.

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Demikian pula, keterampilan berhitung menjadi dasar dalam memahami konsep matematika yang lebih kompleks di jenjang pendidikan berikutnya. Studi yang dilakukan oleh UNESCO (2022) menegaskan bahwa rendahnya kemampuan literasi dan numerasi pada usia dini dapat berdampak jangka panjang terhadap prestasi akademik dan perkembangan kognitif siswa. Di Indonesia sendiri, hasil Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) menunjukkan bahwa tingkat literasi dan numerasi siswa Indonesia masih berada di bawah rata-rata internasional, yang mengindikasikan perlunya intervensi pendidikan yang lebih sistematis, terutama pada tahap awal pembelajaran.

Dalam konteks global, berbagai penelitian telah menunjukkan bahwa bimbingan belajar berperan penting dalam meningkatkan capaian akademik siswa, terutama dalam meningkatkan keterampilan dasar seperti literasi dan numerasi. Misalnya, penelitian oleh Slavin et al. (2009) menemukan bahwa program intervensi pembelajaran yang terstruktur dapat meningkatkan literasi siswa secara signifikan. Namun, kebanyakan program bimbingan belajar yang ada berorientasi pada sistem formal dengan metode pembelajaran yang kurang adaptif terhadap kondisi sosial dan budaya masyarakat di daerah terpencil atau pedesaan. Selain itu, keterbatasan sumber daya dan tenaga pendidik di daerah tersebut sering kali menjadi kendala utama dalam implementasi program bimbingan belajar yang efektif.

Berdasarkan permasalahan tersebut diperlukan pengembangan model bimbingan belajar berbasis komunitas yang tidak hanya menargetkan peningkatan keterampilan *calistung* siswa, tetapi juga membangun kesadaran orang tua terhadap pentingnya pendidikan. Berbeda dari program bimbingan belajar konvensional, pendekatan ini mengintegrasikan metode pembelajaran yang lebih kontekstual dan berbasis partisipasi masyarakat, sehingga dapat menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang lebih inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Pendekatan ini diharapkan mampu mengatasi hambatan yang selama ini dihadapi oleh siswa di daerah pedesaan dalam mengakses pendidikan berkualitas.

METHOD

This program employs a community-based learning approach, involving students and parents in the tutoring process. The target participants are five children from Trimulyo Village, Tanjung Bintang District, South Lampung Regency, who face difficulties in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The methodology used in this program consists of social reflection, initial observation, tutoring implementation, and evaluation & reflection. The social reflection stage involves discussions with mothers of the students to identify challenges in their children's education. This discussion utilizes the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method to explore parents' understanding and expectations regarding their children's learning. Next, initial observations are conducted through direct assessments of students' learning conditions at home and school (including religious study centers/TPA). Preliminary data on basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills are gathered through a simple diagnostic test, with observed indicators including letter recognition, ability to read simple words, ability to write letters, and basic arithmetic skills.

Following the observation stage, tutoring sessions are conducted three times a week, using a tailored approach to meet students' needs. The methods used include the phonics approach to enhance literacy skills, game-based learning to improve numeracy skills and motivate students, and contextual learning to make lessons more relevant to their environment. Each session is structured with an appropriate duration, covering fundamental reading, writing, and arithmetic concepts.

The final stage is evaluation and reflection, aimed at measuring the program's effectiveness. The evaluation is carried out through pre-tests and post-tests to assess improvements in students' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Additionally, interviews with students and parents help determine the program's impact on children's motivation to learn. The implementation team then conducts a reflection process to identify challenges encountered during the program and provide recommendations for future development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literacy and numeracy (*calistung*) tutoring program began in the third week of the KKN implementation, specifically on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, at the KKN 259 post located at the residence of the Head of Dusun Alam Kari 1. This activity was attended by five students aged 6–7

years from Trimulyo Village, Tanjung Bintang District, South Lampung Regency. The program was conducted three times a week, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The primary goal of this initiative was to provide additional guidance to children so they could become more familiar with and master basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills without feeling pressured in formal school learning environments.

The tutoring was conducted using a private method to ensure effectiveness and alignment with each child's comprehension level. The materials provided included letter recognition and memorization without using songs, writing practice, introduction to the names of animals, fruits, and colors, as well as drawing and coloring activities to enhance children's focus. Each session began with a joint prayer and a review of the previous lesson. Children were also given the freedom to choose the subjects they wanted to study, aiming to boost their confidence and sense of responsibility in the learning process. Activity Children during tutoring program can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic Activities During Tutoring Activities

Research by Nugroho et al. (2021) demonstrated that interactive game-based learning methods are more effective in increasing children's interest and understanding of basic literacy skills. This aligns with our findings, where a more flexible and enjoyable approach had a positive impact on children's learning motivation. Furthermore, Suyanto (2020) emphasized the importance of parental involvement in tutoring programs, which was also reflected in this program through initial discussions with parents to understand their children's needs and challenges.

Several challenges were encountered during the implementation of this activity, particularly in understanding the individual characteristics of the participating children. It took at least 2–3 sessions to adjust the teaching methods to suit each child's needs. Some children struggled with letter and number recognition, necessitating more varied approaches such as the use of visual media and educational games to enhance their interest in learning.

The impact of this program was significant for both students and their parents. The children showed improvement in recognizing and writing letters, as well as increased confidence in performing simple arithmetic exercises. Parents responded positively, noting that their children were more enthusiastic about learning at home after participating in the program.

Ensuring the sustainability of this program remains a primary concern. To maintain long-term effects, more intensive mentoring strategies and collaboration with schools and local communities are necessary. This *calistung* tutoring initiative is expected to serve as a model for similar programs in other regions, considering the importance of basic literacy in establishing a strong educational foundation for children from an early age.

With this program, it is hoped that children will no longer perceive learning as a daunting or tedious activity but rather as an enjoyable and beneficial experience. A positive learning atmosphere will help them grasp concepts more quickly and enhance their readiness for higher levels of education.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the *calistung* (reading, writing, and arithmetic) learning assistance program in Desa Trimulyo has demonstrated positive impacts on early childhood literacy development. Through a structured and engaging approach, children aged 6–7 years showed notable improvements in recognizing letters, writing, and performing basic arithmetic. The use of a private tutoring method, along with interactive activities such as coloring and object recognition, effectively enhanced children's focus and motivation.

The findings of this program align with previous studies, which emphasize the importance of interactive and enjoyable learning methods in improving literacy skills. However, challenges such as adapting to the individual learning pace of each child indicate the need for more diverse instructional strategies, including the integration of visual aids and educational games.

Parental involvement and ongoing community support are crucial for the sustainability of this program. Future efforts should focus on strengthening collaboration with local schools and educational stakeholders to ensure long-term benefits. Ultimately, this initiative serves as a model for similar literacy programs, reinforcing the idea that early education should be both accessible and engaging to foster a lifelong love for learning.

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