

Enhancing Islamic Religious Learning and Quranic Reading Through KKN-Thematic Program: A Case Study in Ridan Permai Village

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Abstract

This study evaluates the contribution of Thematic Community Service Program (KKN-T) students from the Islamic College (STAI) As-Sunnah in enhancing children's enthusiasm for Islamic religious learning and Quranic reading in Ridan Permai Village. Using a qualitative descriptive method with an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, data were collected before and after intervention through observation, interviews, and activity documentation. Results show significant improvements in children's enthusiasm for Islamic studies and Quranic reading abilities following KKN-T student interventions through various learning activities such as Quran memorization and tahsin circles, Arabic language learning, prophetic biography studies, ablution and adhan practice training, and Islamic competitions. Community participation in village religious activities also increased. These findings demonstrate that the KKN-T program can serve as an effective model for enhancing learning enthusiasm and community engagement in religious education at the local level.

Keywords: Thematic Community Service Program; Islamic religious education; learning enthusiasm; Asset Based Community Development

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Introduction

Islamic religious education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and identity of Muslims. However, a major challenge in implementing Islamic education is creating an environment conducive to enhancing learning motivation and understanding of religious teachings. In many areas, especially in rural regions, access to Islamic education is often limited, with a lack of adequate facilities and appropriate curricula being major obstacles.

In this context, the Kuliah Kerja Nyata-Tematik (KKN-T) program has an important role as a platform for university students to contribute to community development,¹ particularly in the field of religious education.² One of the higher education institutions participating in the KKN-T program is the Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) As-Sunnah.³ Through this program, STAI As-Sunnah students have the opportunity to engage in community empowerment activities, including efforts to increase enthusiasm for learning Islamic religion and reading the Quran in the community.

Previous research has highlighted the significance of Islamic religious education in character building and moral development. Rodiyah emphasized the importance of Islamic education and moral education in fostering the character of elementary school children.⁴ This study underscores the role of religious education in helping children understand the ethical and moral values contained in religious teachings.

Fatoni discussed the objectives of Islamic education, stating that they are a critical component that must be formulated before other educational components.⁵ Clear objectives provide a standard for effort, direction, and guidance in the educational process. This perspective highlights the need for well-defined goals in Islamic education programs.

Aziz focused on Arabic language learning for early childhood to understand the Quran.⁶ They emphasized that as Muslims who follow the Quran and Sunnah, both of which use Arabic, it becomes a necessity to study and understand their contents. This study underlines the importance of Arabic language competency in comprehending Islamic teachings.

Prima et al. conducted a training on the call to prayer (adhan) and iqamah for children at MTs Al Banna Pulau Banyak Tanjung Pura.⁷ They highlighted that the adhan contains the meaning of aqidah, starting with takbir, affirming the existence and perfection of Allah SWT, followed by tauhid, and establishing the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ. This research demonstrates the significance of practical religious training for children.

¹ Slamet Riyadi et al., "Action Based Community Development by STAI As-Sunnah," *Al-ArkhabiiL: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 3, no. 2 (2023): 15–27, https://doi.org/10.51590/jpm_assunnah.v3i2.503.

² Slamet Riyadi et al., "Andragogy and Edutainment Approach: A Cross-Generational Solution for Improved Worship Practices," *Al-ArkhabiiL: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat* 4, no. 3 (2024): 11–20.

³ Slamet Riyadi, Arifdo Putra, and Salsa Ikhlasiah, "Program Evaluation on Qafilah Dakwah Zulhijah: A Review of Evaluation Studies Using CIPP Model Approach," *WARAQAT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 7, no. 2 (2022): 193–207.

⁴ Muslimatur Rodiyah, "The Importance of Islamic Religious Education and Moral Education in Building the Character of Primary School Children," in *Proceeding of International Conference on Education, Society and Humanity*, vol. 01, 2023, 2023.

⁵ Mahfud Heru Fatoni and Joko Subando, "The Important Role of Learning Evaluation for Improving the Quality of Islamic Education: A Literature Study," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 2 (2024): 223–40.

⁶ Abdul Aziz, Siti Khoirun Niswah, and Faisal Mahmuoud Adam Ibrahim, "ACQUISITION OF ARABIC AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN EARLY CHILDREN IN ISLAMIC KINDERGARTEN.," *Arabiyat: Journal of Arabic Education & Arabic Studies/Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Arab Dan Kebahasaaraban* 8, no. 2 (2021).

⁷ Angga Prima et al., "Pelatihan Kumandang Adzan Dan Iqamah Pada Santri Taman Pendidikan Al- Qur ' an Masjid Al- Mu ' Min," *El-Madaniyah : Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat P3M STAI Sangatta* 01, no. 01 (2024): 56–67.

Ismani and Purnama provided assistance in wudu practice to improve wudu abilities at TPQ Al Husnan, Sidoharjo Village, Pulung District.⁸ Their study shows the effectiveness of hands-on guidance in enhancing children's understanding and skills in performing religious rituals.

While these studies provide valuable insights, there is still a need for further research on the specific role of university students in community-based Islamic education programs. This study aims to fill that gap by evaluating the contribution of STAI As-Sunnah students in the KKN-T program towards increasing enthusiasm for learning Islam and reading the Quran among children in Ridan Permai Village. The findings are expected to offer practical strategies for improving the quality of Islamic education in rural communities.

This research aims to evaluate the contribution of STAI As-Sunnah KKN-T students in increasing enthusiasm for learning Islamic religion and reading the Quran among children in Ridan Permai Village. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach⁹ with the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model.¹⁰ This approach is highly relevant in the context of studying the increase in children's enthusiasm for learning Islam and the Quran. The ABCD model emphasizes identifying and utilizing existing resources within the community to achieve sustainable development.¹¹ In this context, the research will identify assets within the community, such as the presence of religious leaders, educational institutions, or strong religious traditions, which can be leveraged to enhance children's enthusiasm for learning Islam and the Quran.

Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this research will gain an in-depth understanding of the social, cultural, and environmental contexts in which children grow and learn. Interviews, observations, and document analysis will be used to gather data on perceptions, attitudes, and practices related to learning Islam and the Quran in the community. The results are expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the factors influencing children's enthusiasm for learning Islam and the Quran, as well as offer recommendations and strategies tailored to the needs and potentials within the community.

The research was conducted from March 17-31, 2024, in Ridan Permai Village, Bangkinang. The research report contains quotes from activities, field notes, and photographs. Data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation.

To ensure robust data analysis, the researcher will employ coding and thematic analysis techniques. The data from interviews, observations, and documents will be carefully reviewed and coded based on emerging themes and patterns. The coded data will then be categorized and analyzed to identify key findings and insights. The researcher will also use triangulation, comparing data from different sources to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings.

To guide the research process, the following research question is formulated: "How do STAI As-Sunnah KKN-T students contribute to increasing enthusiasm for learning Islamic religion and reading the Quran among children in Ridan Permai Village?"

The selection of Ridan Permai Village as the research location was based on purposive sampling, considering the village's characteristics and the presence of the KKN-T program. The researcher has also consulted with key stakeholders, including the village head, to ensure the feasibility and relevance of the planned activities.

⁸ Wilda Musta'idatul Walida Ismani and Medina Nur Asyifa Purnama, "Pendampingan Praktek Wudhu Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Berwudhu Di TPQ Al Husnan Desa Sidoharjo Kecamatan Pulung," *Social Science Academic*, 2023, 115–22, <https://ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/ssa/article/view/3635/1824>.

⁹ Vickie a. Lambert and Clinton E. Lambert, "Qualitative Descriptive Research: An Acceptable Design," *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research* 16, no. 4 (2013): 255–256, <http://antispam.kmutt.ac.th/index.php/PRIJNR/article/download/5805/5064>.

¹⁰ Anna Haines, "Asset-Based Community Development," in *An Introduction to Community Development* (Routledge, 2014), 67–78.

¹¹ Rebecca Harrison et al., "Asset-Based Community Development: Narratives, Practice, and Conditions of Possibility—A Qualitative Study With Community Practitioners," *SAGE Open* 9, no. 1 (2019): 2158244018823081, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018823081>.

Throughout the research, ethical considerations will be prioritized. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality will be protected. The researcher will strive to maintain objectivity and avoid bias in data collection and analysis.

The methods employed in this study are designed to provide a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation of the KKN-T program's impact on children's enthusiasm for Islamic learning in Ridan Permai Village. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of effective community-based Islamic education strategies.

Results and Discussion

The KKN-T program implemented by STAI As-Sunnah students in Ridan Permai Village yielded significant results in increasing children's enthusiasm for learning Islamic religion and reading the Quran. Through a series of carefully designed activities, the students were able to engage the children and foster a deeper interest in religious education.

One of the cornerstones of the program was the Quran memorization circle (*halaqah tahfidz*). In these sessions, children were given the opportunity to memorize portions of the Quran based on their individual capabilities. The students created a supportive environment where the children felt encouraged to push themselves and take on new challenges. As one participant noted:

"Before joining the *halaqah*, I struggled to memorize even short surahs. But the facilitators were so patient and made it feel achievable. Now, I look forward to learning more of the Quran every day." (Participant A, personal communication, March 25, 2024)



Figure 1: Halaqah Tahsin I



Figur 2: Halaqah Tahsin II

The impact of the *halaqah tahfidz* extended beyond just memorization skills. Observations during the sessions revealed that the children were developing a stronger connection with the Quran. They were eager to understand the meanings behind the verses they were memorizing and would often ask the facilitators for explanations (Field note, March 23, 2024). This engagement with the deeper meanings of the Quran is a crucial step in fostering a lifelong love for religious learning.

Alongside memorization, the program placed a strong emphasis on improving the children's Quranic recitation skills through *halaqah tahsin*. The students provided instruction on tajwid rules and offered immediate feedback to help the children refine their pronunciation and cadence. Many of the children had never received formal training in Quranic recitation before, and the impact of the *halaqah tahsin* was transformative. As one participant shared:

"I used to be so shy about reciting the Quran in front of others because I knew I was making mistakes. But in the tahsin halaqah, I learned that it's okay to make mistakes as long as I keep trying to improve. Now, I feel proud to recite for my family and friends." (Participant B, personal communication, March 28, 2024)

The halaqah tahsin not only improved the children's technical recitation skills but also boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Many of the children began to take on leadership roles, volunteering to lead group recitations and even teaching their peers (Field note, March 27, 2024). This ripple effect of knowledge-sharing and peer support was an unexpected but welcome outcome of the program.

To complement the Quranic learning, the students also incorporated Arabic language lessons into the program. Using the "Arabiyah baina Yadaik" book as a guide, they taught the children basic conversational skills that would enable them to engage with Islamic texts and teachings more effectively.¹² The interactive nature of the lessons, which included role-playing exercises and games, kept the children engaged and motivated to learn. As one student facilitator observed:

"It's incredible to see how quickly the children are picking up Arabic vocabulary and grammar. They're always eager to practice what they've learned and apply it in real conversations." (Facilitator A, personal communication, March 29, 2024)

The Arabic language component of the program opened up new avenues for the children to explore their faith. Many expressed a desire to read Islamic books in their original Arabic and to understand the prayers they recite daily (Field note, March 26, 2024). By equipping the children with foundational Arabic skills, the program laid the groundwork for a deeper engagement with Islamic scholarship and spirituality.

Beyond the classroom, the students also organized practical workshops to teach the children essential Islamic practices. The wudu (ablution) workshop, held at SDN 020 Ridan Permai school, was a prime example of this hands-on approach to learning. The students demonstrated the proper technique for performing wudu according to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and then guided the children through the process step-by-step. For many of the children, this was the first time they had received detailed instruction on wudu. As one participant remarked:

"I always knew that wudu was important, but I never realized how many small details there were to getting it right. Learning the proper way to do it made me feel more connected to my prayers." (Participant C, personal communication, March 30, 2024)

The wudu workshop not only taught the children a crucial practical skill but also instilled in them a greater appreciation for the significance of ritual purity in Islam. Many of the children began to pay closer attention to their wudu in their daily lives and would remind each other of the importance of doing it correctly (Field note, March 30, 2024).

¹² Slamet Riyadi and Rozaanah Rozaanah, "Simplification of Arabic Preparatory Classes through Daurah Mukatsafah in Higher Education," *Arabiyatuna: Jurnal Bahasa Arab* 7, no. 1 May (2023): 203, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jba.v7i1.6366>.



Figure 3: Praktek Wudhu'

To further deepen the children's knowledge of Islamic history and values, the program included lessons on the life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Sirah Nabawiyah). The students assigned the children to memorize the lineage of the Prophet and key events from his biography. This exercise aimed to help the children form a personal connection with the Prophet and to understand the context in which Islam emerged. As one participant shared:

"Learning about the life of the Prophet ﷺ made me realize how much he struggled and sacrificed for the sake of Islam. It made me want to be a better Muslim and to follow his example more closely." (Participant D, personal communication, March 31, 2024)

The Sirah Nabawiyah lessons had a profound impact on the children's understanding of their faith. Many began to see Islam not just as a set of rules and rituals, but as a way of life embodied by the Prophet ﷺ. They were inspired to emulate his character and to apply Islamic values in their daily interactions with others (Field note, March 29, 2024).

The culmination of the program was the Islamic competition, which brought together children from kindergarten, elementary, and junior high school levels. The competition featured a range of categories, including Quranic memorization, adhan (call to prayer), and Islamic speech. The turnout was impressive, with over 90 children participating (Documentation, March 29-31, 2024).



Figure 4: Pembelajaran Azan

The energy and enthusiasm of the children during the competition was palpable. They cheered each other on and celebrated each other's successes. For many, it was the first time they had the opportunity to showcase their Islamic knowledge and skills in front of a large audience. As one participant remarked:

"I was so nervous before my speech, but when I saw how supportive everyone was, I felt like I could do anything. It was an amazing feeling to share what I had learned with so many people." (Participant E, personal communication, March 31, 2024).



Figure 5: Perlombaan

The Islamic competition not only provided a platform for the children to demonstrate their learning but also fostered a sense of community and belonging. The children formed new friendships and bonds over their shared experiences in the program (Field note, March 31, 2024).

Overall, the results of the KKN-T program underscore the significant impact that dedicated and innovative teaching can have on children's enthusiasm for Islamic learning. By creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, the STAI As-Sunnah students were able to unlock the children's potential and nurture a deep love for their faith. The program's success offers valuable lessons for educators and community leaders seeking to enhance Islamic education in their own contexts.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of community-based approaches in enhancing Islamic education and increasing enthusiasm for learning Islam and reading the Quran among children in rural areas. The KKN-T program implemented by STAI As-Sunnah students in Ridan Permai Village demonstrates the potential of university-community partnerships in addressing educational challenges and promoting religious literacy.

The success of the program can be attributed to several key factors that are grounded in educational and psychological theories. Firstly, the students adopted a participatory approach that actively engaged the children in the learning process. This approach aligns with the principles of the ABCD model, which emphasizes the importance of community participation and asset mobilization.¹³ By involving the children in activities such as Quranic memorization, recitation, and practical workshops, the students fostered a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation among the participants. This is consistent with the self-determination theory,¹⁴ which posits that individuals are more likely to engage in activities that satisfy their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Moreover, the program's activities were carefully designed to be engaging and developmentally appropriate for the children. The use of interactive teaching methods, such as group recitation, role-playing exercises, and hands-on workshops, made the learning process more enjoyable and effective. This approach is supported by the theory of multiple intelligences,¹⁵ which suggests that individuals possess different types of intelligences and learn best when information is presented in a way that aligns with their strengths.¹⁶ By catering to the children's diverse learning styles and interests, the program was able to maintain a high level of engagement and participation throughout.

The emphasis on practical skills development, such as proper wudu techniques and adhan recitation, was another key factor in the program's success. By providing opportunities for the children to apply their knowledge in real-life contexts, the program helped to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This is in line with the experiential learning theory,¹⁷ which highlights the importance of concrete-experiences¹⁸ and active experimentation in the learning process.¹⁹ Through hands-on learning, the children were able to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islamic practices, which in turn strengthened their connection to their faith.

The inclusion of Islamic competitions further enhanced the children's motivation and sense of achievement. The competitions provided a platform for the children to showcase their skills and knowledge, fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment. This is consistent with the goal-setting theory,²⁰ which suggests that setting specific, challenging, and achievable goals can enhance performance and motivation. By providing clear targets and recognition for their efforts, the competitions helped to sustain the children's engagement and drive for continuous improvement.

¹³ J. L. Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research. (Chicago. ACTA Publications, 1993).

¹⁴ Edward L Deci and Richard M Ryan, "Self-Determination Theory," *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* 1, no. 20 (2012): 416–36.

¹⁵ Howard Gardner, "The Theory of Multiple Intelligences," in *Early Professional Development for Teachers* (David Fulton Publishers, 2012), 133–41.

¹⁶ Robert J. Sternberg, "The Theory of Successful Intelligence," *Gifted Education International* 15, no. 1 (2000): 4–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026142940001500103>.

¹⁷ David A. Kolb, Richard E. Boyatzis, and Charalampos Mainemelis, "Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions," in *Perspectives on Thinking, Learning, and Cognitive Styles* (Routledge, 2014), 227–47, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410605986-9>.

¹⁸ Maaike D. Endedijk and Jan D. Vermunt, "Relations between Student Teachers' Learning Patterns and Their Concrete Learning Activities," *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 39, no. 1 (2013): 56–65, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2012.10.001>.

¹⁹ PATRICIA H. MURRELL and CHARLES S. CLAXTON, "Experiential Learning Theory as a Guide for Effective Teaching," *Counselor Education and Supervision* 27, no. 1 (1987): 4–14, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.1987.tb00735.x>.

The positive outcomes of the KKN-T program have significant implications for the field of Islamic education, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The study demonstrates the potential of university-community partnerships in leveraging local assets and expertise to enhance the quality and accessibility of Islamic education. By mobilizing university students as facilitators and mentors, the program was able to provide a level of educational support that would have been difficult to achieve through traditional means. This model of collaboration can serve as a template for other communities looking to address educational disparities and promote religious literacy.

However, the study also highlights some of the challenges and limitations of community-based educational interventions. One of the main challenges is ensuring the sustainability and scalability of such programs beyond the initial implementation period. While the KKN-T program was highly successful in the short term, its long-term impact will depend on the ability of the community to maintain and build upon the momentum generated by the students. This requires ongoing support and resources from local stakeholders, as well as a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation.

Another challenge is the need for cultural sensitivity and contextual relevance in the design and delivery of Islamic educational programs. While the KKN-T program was well-received by the children and the community in Ridan Permai Village, its effectiveness in other contexts may vary depending on local norms, values, and expectations. This highlights the importance of engaging local stakeholders in the planning and implementation of educational interventions to ensure that they are aligned with the community's needs and priorities.

Despite these challenges, the findings of this study offer valuable insights and recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community leaders seeking to enhance Islamic education in diverse settings. The study underscores the importance of adopting participatory and learner-centered approaches that actively engage children in the learning process. It also highlights the need for comprehensive educational programs that integrate Quranic memorization, recitation, Arabic language instruction, practical skill development, and character education based on Islamic values.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the potential of university-community partnerships in mobilizing resources and expertise to support educational initiatives in underserved communities. By leveraging the skills and knowledge of university students, communities can access a wealth of human capital that can help to bridge educational gaps and promote social development. This model of collaboration can be further strengthened through the establishment of long-term partnerships and the development of sustainable funding mechanisms.

²⁰ Edwin Locke and Gary P. Latham, "Reply to Commentaries on 'The Development of Goal Setting Theory: A Half Century Retrospective'." *Motivation Science* 5, no. 2 (2019): 114–15, <https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000145>.

In conclusion, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature on Islamic education and community development by demonstrating the effectiveness of a participatory, community-based approach in enhancing children's enthusiasm for learning Islam and reading the Quran. The findings provide empirical support for the ABCD model and highlight the potential of university-community partnerships in addressing educational challenges in rural and underserved communities. While there are certainly challenges and limitations to this approach, the lessons learned from the KKN-T program in Ridan Permai Village offer valuable insights and recommendations for educators, policymakers, and community leaders seeking to promote religious literacy and social development in diverse settings.

Conclusion

This study evaluates the contribution of STAI As-Sunnah students in the KKN-T program towards increasing enthusiasm for learning Islamic religion and reading the Quran among children in Ridan Permai Village. Through a descriptive qualitative approach with the ABCD model, the research examines the impact of various activities implemented by the students, including Quranic memorization circles, recitation workshops, Arabic language learning, practical skill training, and Islamic competitions. The findings reveal a significant increase in children's enthusiasm for learning Islam and reading the Quran after participating in the KKN-T program. The students' engaging and participatory approach, combined with the use of interactive teaching methods and practical skill-building activities, created a conducive learning environment that motivated the children to deepen their religious knowledge and improve their Quranic recitation skills.

The study highlights the effectiveness of community-based approaches in enhancing Islamic education and promoting religious literacy in rural areas. It demonstrates the potential of university-community partnerships in addressing educational challenges and leveraging local assets to support children's religious development. The implications of this research extend beyond the specific context of Ridan Permai Village. The findings offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and community leaders seeking to improve the quality and accessibility of Islamic education in diverse settings. The study underscores the importance of engaging university students in community development programs and the need for collaborative efforts between educational institutions and local communities. However, the research also identifies challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and scalability of such programs. These include the need for ongoing training and support for university students, the development of culturally relevant curricula, and the establishment of long-term partnerships between universities and communities.

Future research could explore the long-term impact of community-based Islamic education programs on children's religious attitudes and practices, as well as investigate the perspectives of parents, community leaders, and religious institutions on the role of university students in promoting Islamic education. In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on community-based approaches to Islamic education and highlights the significance of university-community partnerships in enhancing religious literacy and enthusiasm for learning Islam and reading the Quran among children in rural areas. The findings provide a foundation for further research and practice in the field of Islamic education and community development.

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