

Evaluation of the Non-Formal Education Equivalency Program in Addressing School Dropouts at Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) Kota Bangun

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Abstract

School dropouts pose a significant challenge within the education system, requiring sustained intervention. The non-formal education equivalency program organized by the Learning Activity Center (SKB) serves as a crucial solution to provide re-access to education for dropouts. Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Non-Formal Education Equivalency Program in handling school dropouts at SKB Kota Bangun. This evaluation covers stakeholder perceptions regarding the program's success, benefits perceived by students, and its contribution to providing a second chance in education. This research employed a qualitative approach with an evaluative study method. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, namely the Head of SKB, Tutors, and Students of the equivalency program, supported by document studies related to the program. Data analysis was performed descriptively-qualitatively to interpret findings regarding the implementation, results, and impact of the equivalency program at SKB Kota Bangun. The research findings indicate that the Non-Formal Education Equivalency Program at SKB Kota Bangun is considered successful by the management and highly beneficial by the students. This program effectively serves as a vehicle for school dropouts to continue their education and obtain an equivalency diploma (Package A, B, or C), which is considered vital for job seeking and future planning. Students perceive benefits not only in the form of diploma acquisition but also in increased knowledge, skills, and the expansion of social networks. Although potential challenges in implementation are acknowledged, the program's fundamental goal of providing a second chance and addressing the school dropout issue is deemed to have been achieved. This evaluation concludes that the Equivalency Program at SKB Kota Bangun plays an important role in the local education system by providing an alternative pathway for school dropouts. The program's success in providing hope and opening future opportunities for students affirms its relevance. These findings are expected to provide constructive input for the management of SKB Kota Bangun and relevant policymakers for the quality improvement and sustainability of similar non-formal education programs.

Keywords: Program Evaluation; Equivalency Program; Non-Formal Education; School Dropouts; Learning Activity Center (SKB).

1. Introduction

In Indonesia, non-formal education plays a crucial role in providing learning opportunities for communities that cannot access formal education. Equivalency programs within non-formal education, such as Package A, B, and C, are designed to help individuals continue their interrupted education or acquire skills relevant to their lives (Puspito et al., 2021). This non-formal education not only complements the formal education system but also provides solutions for those facing various obstacles, such as economic or social constraints (Hayyi et al., 2024).

The phenomenon of school dropouts poses a serious challenge in the world of education. School dropouts are defined as school-aged individuals who do not complete their formal education. This condition has the potential to limit children's access to a proper education, hinder the development of their potential, and reduce their opportunities to contribute productively to society (Juli et al., 2023).

To address this issue, the Indonesian government has provided various non-formal education programs through alternative educational institutions (Laila & Salahudin, 2022). One of these is the Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB), which functions as a center for non-formal education services and social development. At SKB Kota Bangun, various

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educational programs have been implemented to support the empowerment of school dropouts, with the hope of providing more inclusive and sustainable educational opportunities.

In evaluating the success of non-formal education programs, one commonly used approach is the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model (Ningsih et al, 2024). This model provides a systematic framework for analyzing the relevance of the program's context, the quality of inputs, the effectiveness of the implementation process, and the outcomes achieved. Evaluating the non-formal education program at SKB Kota Bangun through the CIPP model allows for the identification of the program's strengths and weaknesses, as well as providing recommendations for future program improvements (Inniyah & Gede Mulawarman, 2021).

Based on this background, the author feels it is important to conduct research related to the evaluation of the non-formal education equivalency program in addressing school dropouts. This research focuses on the Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) Kota Bangun with the title: "Evaluation of the Non-Formal Education Equivalency Program in Addressing School Dropouts at Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) Kota Bangun."

2. Methodology

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is a type of research that focuses on description. Descriptively, this research describes and explains the events, phenomena, and social situations under study (Sugiyono, 2022). The method used in this research is the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model. This CIPP model aims to investigate in-depth and comprehensively each basic component, namely: Evaluation of the Context Component of the Non-Formal Education Program, Evaluation of the Input Component of the Non-Formal Education Program, Evaluation of the Process Component of the Non-Formal Education Program, and Evaluation of the Product Component of the Non-Formal Education Program (Hakim, 2020).

The place and time of this research were at the Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) Kota Bangun, located on Jalan Sri Bangun RT 01, Liang Village, Kota Bangun Subdistrict, Kutai Kartanegara Regency. In this research, the data collected consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with various informants related to the implementation of the non-formal education program, including the Head of the Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) Kota Bangun, educators, and students of Package A, Package B, and Package C of the non-formal education equivalency program. Secondary data were obtained from official documents related to non-formal education, such as SKB annual reports, as well as relevant studies and literature related to the research topic.

The data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman model, which was applied during data collection and afterward over a specific period. The qualitative data analysis process was carried out interactively and continuously until the data was considered saturated (Tina et al, 2023). Data validity is needed to prove that the research conducted truly meets the standards of scientific research, as well as to test the reliability of the data obtained. In qualitative research, data validity tests include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To ensure that the data in qualitative research can be accounted for as scientific research, it is important to conduct data validity tests (Yanti et al, 2024).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Background, Needs, and Relevance of the Non-Formal Education Equivalency Program in Addressing School Dropouts

The phenomenon of school dropouts is a crucial issue within the national education system, resulting in the loss of opportunities for individuals to develop their potential and contribute to development. Education is a basic right of every citizen and an important foundation for the social and economic progress of a nation (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003). Failure to complete compulsory education is often caused by economic, social, geographical factors, as well as internal factors of the students themselves, creating a vulnerable group that requires special intervention (Febriani et al, 2023).

In response to these problems, non-formal education programs such as equivalency programs (Package A, Package B, and Package C) exist as alternative pathways to provide a second chance for those who cannot attend or complete formal education. These programs are designed with greater flexibility in terms of time, place, and curriculum to accommodate the specific needs of learners, including school dropouts who may already be working or have family responsibilities

(Siregar et al., 2022). The relevance of this program lies in its ability to reach groups marginalized from the formal education system and provide them with equivalent diplomas.

In the context of Kota Bangun, the existence of the Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) as an organizer of the equivalency program is very strategic. The SKB has a mandate to serve the educational needs of the community outside the formal channels, including proactively identifying and recruiting school dropouts to return to learning. The equivalency program at SKB Kota Bangun not only aims to provide diplomas but also equips learners with relevant life skills so that they can be economically and socially independent (Kamilah et al., 2023). Thus, this program directly addresses the local need for alternative education services and contributes to efforts to complete compulsory education and reduce the number of school dropouts in the region.

The need for this program is increasingly urgent given the challenges of globalization and job competition that demand formal education qualifications as a minimum standard. Without an equivalent diploma, the opportunities for school dropouts to obtain decent work or continue their education to a higher level become very limited (Yusuf, 2024). Therefore, an evaluation of the equivalency program at SKB Kota Bangun is important to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the real needs of school dropouts and its relevance to the goals of human resource development in the area (Syaputra & Shomedran, 2023).

3.2. Teaching Staff and Facility Resources to Support Program Implementation

The success of educational programs, including equivalency programs, heavily relies on the availability and quality of supporting resources, especially teaching staff (tutors/learning facilitators) and learning facilities. Teaching staff in non-formal education play a key role not only as deliverers of material but also as motivators and facilitators who can understand the diverse backgrounds and learning needs of students (Sekolah & Surabaya, 2022). The qualifications, competence, and dedication of tutors are determining factors in the quality of the learning process at the SKB.

Based on the findings regarding the number of educators conveyed by the Head of SKB, the current qualifications are sufficient to teach subjects according to the existing class ratio. SKB Kota Bangun is supported by 18 teaching staff with Bachelor's degrees (S1), while 3 have D3 qualifications and 3 have high school diplomas. However, challenges may arise regarding the educational standards of tutors, which need to be improved more evenly, and tutors should be encouraged to participate in training, especially in skills areas. The competence of tutors in managing heterogeneous classes, applying andragogical teaching methods, and building positive relationships with students is crucial for maintaining the learning motivation of school dropouts (Juniarti, 2023).

In addition to human resources, the availability of physical facilities and learning resources also plays an important role in creating a conducive learning environment. Basic facilities such as adequate classrooms, a library with relevant book collections such as equivalency modules, and access to information technology can support program effectiveness (Aristya & Zamroni, 2024). Research findings show that SKB Kota Bangun has 8 classrooms, 1 motorcycle practice room, 2 car practice rooms, 1 sewing practice room, 1 culinary practice room, and 1 library building, often referred to in equivalency programs as a Community Reading Garden (TBM). It also has 1 office consisting of tutor rooms, a principal/leader's room, and an administrative office, 1 place of worship (Mushola), an open hall, parking, toilets, and several warehouses.

However, additional facilities are needed, such as updating and increasing the library's book collection, and the absence of good facilities like a laboratory is an aspect that needs attention. Limited resources can affect the quality of teaching and learning interactions and student comfort, which in turn can impact their participation rates and learning outcomes (Elti & Wahyuningsih, 2023). Therefore, the management and optimization of existing resources, as well as efforts to meet facility shortages, are an important part of the evaluation of the equivalency program at SKB Kota Bangun.

3.3. Constraints Faced in the Implementation of the Program

The implementation of non-formal education equivalency programs is often faced with various constraints, both internal to the organizers and external from the students' environment. Identifying these constraints is crucial for formulating effective improvement strategies. Based on program management theory, constraints can arise in the planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring stages (Darim, 2020).

One of the main constraints often reported in the implementation of equivalency programs is related to student participation and learning motivation. School dropouts often come from weak economic backgrounds, so they have to divide their time between studying and working to help their families. This leads to fluctuating attendance rates and the

risk of dropping out again (Eliza, 2022). Findings at SKB Kota Bangun, as conveyed by the head of SKB, include: Fluctuations in Student Attendance and Motivation: Many students work, have family problems, or feel bored, causing their attendance and enthusiasm for learning to fluctuate.

Other constraints can originate from the organizer's side, namely SKB Kota Bangun. Limitations in resources, facilities and infrastructure, and teaching staff can hinder the smooth operation of the program (Triarsuci et al., 2024). In addition to a lack of resources, another important issue in implementation is the lack of good learning facilities, teaching materials, and other additional activities. The inadequate condition of facilities and the limited number of teaching aids also pose challenges during teaching and learning. Furthermore, the abilities of tutors are also a challenge. There is a need for tutors who are not only knowledgeable in their subjects but also skilled in teaching adults and patient in dealing with students from diverse backgrounds.

External factors such as a lack of family or community support, stigma towards non-formal education, and the geographical conditions of the Kota Bangun area can also be obstacles. The perception that equivalency diplomas have a lower value than formal diplomas, even though they are legally equivalent, sometimes still exists in society and can affect student motivation (Nasir et al., 2024). The main problems in the implementation of this program are varied, including issues related to students (attendance, enthusiasm, external problems), lack of resources (facilities), and tutor abilities, all of which require continuous handling by the SKB. Overcoming these various constraints requires a multi-stakeholder approach and adaptive strategies from the SKB management.

3.4. Program Outcomes Achieved in Increasing the Participation of School Dropouts

The main goal of the equivalency program at the SKB is to attract school dropouts back into the education system and increase their participation. Therefore, the evaluation of program outcomes focuses on the extent to which this goal is achieved. Indicators of success can be seen from the number of enrollees, attendance rates, graduation rates, and the subsequent impact on program alumni (Nudin, 2022).

Based on data and research findings at SKB Kota Bangun for the 2024/2025 period, the equivalency program has successfully reached 546 people, consisting of Package A with 14 male and 13 female participants (total 27). In Package B, there were 124 male and 58 female participants (total 182). Meanwhile, Package C had 166 male and 117 female participants (total 283). This participation rate reflects the SKB's efforts in conducting outreach and recruitment in the areas around the Kota Bangun subdistrict.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research results and the preceding discussion, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

- a. **Background and Relevance of the Program:** The implementation of the equivalency program (Package A, B, C) at SKB Kota Bangun is based on a real need to address school dropouts due to economic, social, and motivational factors. Its main objectives are to provide access to education for obtaining equivalent diplomas, developing life skills, increasing self-confidence, and facilitating the social/economic reintegration of learners, thus making it relevant to community needs and efforts to complete compulsory education.
- b. **Supporting Resources:** The program is supported by teaching staff (tutors) whose quantity is considered sufficient, but they possess diverse qualifications and require continuous competency improvement, especially in adult learning (andragogy) methods and in skills areas. Physical facilities such as classrooms are available and functional, although the condition of other supporting resources (library, teaching materials, teaching aids) still requires improvement and additions.
- c. **Implementation Constraints:** The implementation of the program faces several significant constraints, particularly related to fluctuations in student attendance and learning motivation influenced by work obligations, personal issues, and transportation challenges. Limitations in resources (infrastructure, completeness of teaching materials) also pose obstacles. Additionally, the capacity of tutors to apply andragogical approaches and handle the diverse backgrounds of learners presents a unique challenge.
- d. **Achieved Outcomes:** The program has successfully reached a significant number of learners (546 in the 2024/2025 period) and the graduation rate reported is very high (averaging above 95%), which is an important indicator of the program's success in achieving its objectives.

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