

**ADVANCING COMMUNITY'S LITERACY CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF
READ ALOUD COMMUNITY BANDUNG**

**MEMAJUKAN BUDAYA LITERASI KOMUNITAS: ANALISIS PERAN KOMUNITAS
MEMBACA NYARING BANDUNG**

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Abstrak

Studi ini menganalisis peran Komunitas Read Aloud Bandung dalam mendorong budaya literasi berbasis komunitas melalui praktik membaca nyaring yang dipimpin oleh orang tua. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan sembilan peserta yang merupakan orangtua anggota komunitas serta satu pendiri komunitas ditambah dengan observasi langsung dan studi dokumen. Analisis tematik menghasilkan tujuh domain utama. Pertama, literasi dipandang sebagai bentuk modal budaya, namun dibatasi oleh hambatan struktural seperti biaya, waktu, dan persepsi sosial. Kedua, pengalaman awal peserta dalam membacakan nyaring ditandai oleh keterlibatan emosional dan stimulasi kognitif yang meningkat. Ketiga, praktik membaca nyaring ditemukan mampu meningkatkan kosakata, pemahaman, dan kesiapan anak untuk sekolah. Keempat, tantangan signifikan yang diidentifikasi meliputi distraksi digital, isolasi peran orang tua, dan mitos tentang kepemilikan buku. Kelima, inisiatif ini membangun kepercayaan diri, pembelajaran antar-sesama, dan rasa tujuan baru di antara para peserta. Keenam, meskipun organisasi ini bertumpu pada kerja sukarela, terdapat keterbatasan dalam hal skalabilitas dan keberlanjutan. Terakhir, komunitas mengusulkan strategi praktis untuk pengembangan, seperti koordinator wilayah dan pendekatan yang lebih inklusif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa Komunitas Read Aloud Bandung berhasil mereposisi literasi sebagai praktik yang relasional, terjangkau, dan berbasis komunitas, serta memberikan kontribusi penting bagi wacana pengembangan literasi akar rumput di konteks perkotaan dengan sumber daya terbatas.

Kata Kunci: Budaya Literasi Komunitas; Komunitas Membaca Nyaring Minat Membaca Promosi Literasi

Abstract

This study analyzes the role of the Read Aloud Community Bandung in advancing community-based literacy culture through parent-led reading practices. Using a qualitative, phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with nine parents participants and one community founder along with direct observation and documents study. Thematic analysis revealed seven key domains. First, literacy is viewed as a form of cultural capital, yet constrained by structural barriers including cost, time, and societal perceptions.

Second, participants' initial reading aloud experiences were marked by emotional engagement and improved cognitive stimulation. Third, the practice of reading aloud was found to enhance vocabulary, comprehension, and school readiness. Fourth, significant challenges were identified, including digital distractions, parental isolation, and myths about book ownership. Fifth, the initiative fostered confidence, peer learning, and a renewed sense of purpose among participants. Sixth, while the organization thrives on volunteerism, it faces limitations in scalability and continuity. Lastly, the community proposed practical strategies for expansion, such as local coordinators and inclusive outreach. These findings suggest that the Read Aloud Community Bandung effectively repositions literacy as a relational, accessible, and community-driven practice, contributing valuable insights to the discourse on grassroots literacy development in under-resourced urban contexts.

Keywords: *Community Literacy Culture; Literacy Promotion; Reading Aloud Community; Reading Interest*

INTRODUCTION

Literacy has long been regarded as a cornerstone of human capital development and social progress. It enables access to education, facilitates participation in the labor market, and underpins democratic engagement and civic inclusion. In recent decades, conceptualizations of literacy have evolved significantly. No longer viewed solely as the mechanical ability to decode and encode written text, literacy is now widely understood as a multidimensional set of practices involving comprehension, interpretation, critical thinking, and context-sensitive application (Nur'aeni et al., 2023; Nurhayati & Musa, 2020; Setiadi et al., 2023). Early childhood represents a particularly pivotal phase for cultivating foundational literacy, given its implications for cognitive maturation, school preparedness, and long-term educational trajectories (Astuti & Nurhayati, 2022; Octaviani et al., 2023; Tini et al., 2025). Among the myriad literacy practices endorsed in early education literature, reading aloud—especially when mediated by parents or primary caregivers—has garnered extensive empirical support for its efficacy in enhancing children's language development, narrative understanding, and emotional well-being (Batini et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, a country grappling with wide disparities in educational access and quality, the imperative to strengthen early literacy is particularly acute. Structural challenges such as unequal access to quality books, limited library infrastructure, and insufficient parental literacy modeling persist as formidable barriers (Ahmad et al., 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2022, 2025). Although national programs have emphasized reading campaigns and school-based literacy instruction, these initiatives often overlook the significance of the home literacy environment and the everyday roles that caregivers play in cultivating early language exposure (Fauzi & Nurhayati, 2025; Kobasah & Nurhayati, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2021). Additionally, prevailing cultural attitudes that frame literacy as a formal academic endeavor rather than a socially embedded, day-to-day practice have inhibited its integration into family routines (Nurhayati et al., 2020). These issues highlight the necessity of contextually appropriate, community-embedded interventions that empower parents and caregivers as literacy facilitators.

One of the principal constraints in promoting household-level literacy in Indonesia stems from the perception that reading is an elite activity—costly, time-consuming, and inaccessible to lower-income families (Nurhayati & Anggidesialamia, 2020). This misperception, combined with the structural limitations of urban poverty, has dampened literacy engagement among many parents. Compounding this issue is the increasing encroachment of digital media on family interaction time (Milyane et al., 2023). The ubiquity of smartphones and entertainment technology has often displaced traditional dialogic practices, reducing opportunities for narrative engagement and linguistic enrichment (Mulyani et al., 2025). These intersecting challenges underscore the importance of reframing literacy as an inclusive, low-cost, and socially meaningful activity that can be enacted within diverse household contexts, irrespective of socio-economic status.

Community-based literacy movements have emerged as a viable and promising strategy to counteract these barriers. These grassroots initiatives rely on localized networks, peer support, and culturally embedded practices to promote sustained literacy engagement (Fauzi & Nurhayati, 2025; Nur'aeni et al., 2023). Unlike institutional programs that may be constrained by bureaucratic limitations or generic curricular mandates, community-led efforts are often participatory, adaptive, and responsive to lived realities. In Indonesia, several such initiatives have surfaced, frequently led by educators, parents, and literacy activists. Despite their increasing prevalence, scholarly investigations into the structure, dynamics, and outcomes of these initiatives remain scarce. This empirical void hinders the development of nuanced theoretical frameworks and evidence-based policy interventions attuned to the specificities of grassroots literacy mobilization.

The Read Aloud Bandung initiative represents a salient example of a grassroots movement that seeks to promote literacy through dialogic, parent-mediated reading practices. Founded during the COVID-19 pandemic as a response to the lack of child-centered literacy engagement in households, the initiative mobilized volunteers—primarily mothers—to incorporate daily read-aloud routines into their parenting practices. The program utilized a hybrid model of digital engagement, offline workshops, and partnerships with local schools to cultivate a supportive literacy community. Preliminary observations suggest that participation in the initiative enhanced parental confidence, fostered deeper emotional bonds between caregivers and children, and expanded children's exposure to varied reading materials. However, empirical investigations into the operational mechanisms, challenges, and long-term effects of such volunteer-driven programs remain underdeveloped.

Substantial scholarly literature has affirmed the pedagogical value of reading aloud in early literacy development. Dialogic reading, in particular, has been shown to enhance children's expressive vocabulary, narrative comprehension, and metalinguistic awareness (Batini et al., 2020). Intervention studies that combine read-aloud practices with structured parental support demonstrate significant gains in language outcomes, especially for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (Barone et al., 2020). Furthermore, research emphasizes that the cultural relevance of literacy materials and activities is critical to fostering sustained engagement and optimizing developmental benefits (Ghofur & Nurhayati, 2023; Tini et al., 2025; Yosfiani & Nurhayati, 2023).

Yet, the predominant focus of these interventions has been on school-based or clinician-led models, which may not reflect the contextual realities or motivational dynamics of community volunteers. The socio-emotional, logistical, and pedagogical underpinnings of grassroots literacy

activism remain insufficiently theorized. Key questions remain unanswered: How do community volunteers conceptualize literacy and their roles within it? What are the enabling and constraining conditions that affect their engagement? How do such initiatives maintain continuity and efficacy in the absence of institutional support or external funding? Addressing these gaps is vital for broadening our understanding of literacy as a community practice and for informing scalable, sustainable intervention models.

The present study responds to this gap by conducting an empirically grounded, qualitative investigation of the Read Aloud Bandung initiative. It examines the lived experiences of caregivers participating in the program, with particular attention to how they navigate the cognitive, emotional, and logistical dimensions of reading aloud within a community-based framework. Using a phenomenological approach, the study explores how participants make sense of their engagement, negotiate structural constraints, and envision their roles as literacy facilitators. The analysis also considers the material and symbolic resources that underpin the initiative's functioning, including volunteer networks, parental identities, and the sociocultural meanings of literacy.

The distinct contribution of this study lies in its focus on a bottom-up, caregiver-centered model of literacy promotion. By foregrounding the voices and experiences of community actors rather than institutional authorities, the study repositions literacy as a relational, culturally situated, and contextually embedded practice. The findings are anticipated to yield both practical and theoretical implications: practically, by informing the design of more responsive and inclusive literacy interventions; theoretically, by contributing to the literature on community literacies and grassroots pedagogical innovation. In doing so, the study seeks to advance a vision of literacy development that is not only effective but also equitable, participatory, and grounded in the lived experiences of those most directly engaged in the process.

METHOD

This inquiry adopted a qualitative, interpretive phenomenological approach to investigate the lived experiences and perspectives of participants engaged in the Read Aloud Bandung initiative. The methodological design was purposefully constructed to elicit richly layered, emic narratives that capture the socio-cultural, cognitive, and affective dimensions of grassroots literacy advocacy within the context of urban Indonesia (Iswahyudi et al., 2023; Nurhayati, Kurnianta, et al., 2024). The study prioritized participants' subjectively constructed realities and their interpretive processes in engaging with reading aloud as a literacy intervention (Qolamani, 2023). This approach facilitated a nuanced exploration of meaning-making processes rather than the mere documentation of observable behaviors or literacy outcomes. The study's central aim was to apprehend the transformative potential of reading aloud from the standpoint of those enacting and experiencing it within everyday educational and domestic environments.

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure the recruitment of information-rich participants whose profiles were congruent with the study's objectives. The sample comprised nine adult female participants aged 31 to 45 who had engaged in Read Aloud Bandung's programs, supplemented by a key informant interview with the initiative's founder. Participants were identified based on their prior involvement in workshops, literacy events, and community engagements facilitated by the Read Aloud Bandung collective. Eligibility criteria included: (1)

active involvement in Read Aloud Bandung activities; (2) participation in at least one formal program component; and (3) willingness to articulate reflective insights regarding their experiences with reading aloud. Snowball sampling was further utilized to reach additional eligible participants. Although the demographic homogeneity—specifically, female caregivers—was not intentional, it mirrored the community's primary demographic during the study period, offering insight into the dominant actor group within the movement.

Primary data were generated through open-ended, semi-structured interviews, complemented by document analysis of organizational archives and participant-generated content. The nine participant interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and subsequently translated into English. Interviews, each ranging from 30 to 60 minutes, were conducted in person or via digital conferencing tools, accommodating participants' preferences and pandemic-era constraints. An extended narrative interview was conducted with the founder, providing longitudinal and organizational insights into the initiative's conceptualization, evolution, and strategic intent. This session lasted approximately 90 minutes and adopted a biographical-narrative structure to facilitate expansive reflection. Supplementary data, including summary notes (notulen) from community meetings and feedback from prior workshops, were analyzed to triangulate and contextualize the interview data. These textual materials were instrumental in verifying thematic consistency and enhancing interpretive validity.

The study adhered to established ethical guidelines in qualitative research, with formal approval obtained via an internal ethics review process. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, their rights (including voluntary participation and withdrawal), and the protocols for data confidentiality and anonymization. Informed consent was secured both verbally and in writing. To mitigate any emotional discomfort—especially when discussing sensitive topics such as educational disadvantage or familial tensions—interviews were conducted with cultural sensitivity and flexibility. Pseudonyms were employed across all documentation, and digital recordings were securely stored before being destroyed upon transcription verification. Translations were validated by bilingual researchers to ensure the preservation of linguistic nuance and cultural context.

Thematic analysis, informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase model, was the principal analytical strategy. Transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve immersion, followed by inductive coding that surfaced salient linguistic and conceptual units. These codes were organized into candidate themes, which were then reviewed for coherence and representational adequacy. The analytical process was iterative and reflexively engaged. Peer debriefing with scholars in literacy studies and qualitative methodology was employed to refine thematic structures and to challenge interpretive assumptions. Disagreements were reconciled through dialogical consensus-building and corroborated using auxiliary textual data. Seven major themes emerged: (1) Literacy as cultural capital and emotional labor; (2) Reading aloud as therapeutic engagement; (3) Narrative exposure and early literacy acquisition; (4) Structural and perceptual barriers to sustained practice; (5) Agency and empowerment through community affiliation; (6) Volatility within volunteer-driven initiatives; and (7) Strategic envisioning for programmatic scalability. These themes were integrated with illustrative quotations and situated within contemporary theoretical and empirical discourse. The study was guided by the qualitative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

DISCUSSIONS

This study critically examines participants' experiences and perspectives regarding literacy development through reading aloud initiatives. The findings elucidate both individual and systemic dimensions that influence literacy practices within the target community.

1. Literacy Culture: Aspirations Amid Structural Constraints

Participants consistently recognized the inadequacy of literacy culture in their respective communities. Literacy was conceptualized not merely as a mechanical skill involving reading and writing, but as a multidimensional competency encompassing comprehension, critical evaluation, and practical application. Structural impediments such as economic hardship, temporal limitations, and infrastructural deficiencies were recurrently highlighted. One participant asserted, "In my environment, literacy culture still requires vigorous advocacy; many parents do not perceive reading as an essential necessity." Financial constraints were often cited, with another noting, "Books are prohibitively expensive and often relegated to the lowest priority." Moreover, limited access to libraries and unfamiliarity with digital resources compounded these challenges. The founder of Read Aloud Bandung observed, "In our society, books and reading remain luxuries rather than recognized necessities," thereby revealing the depth of socio-cultural barriers to literacy proliferation.

The findings underscore the nuanced conceptualization of literacy among participants as extending beyond functional reading and writing to encompass evaluative and applied competencies. However, these aspirations are systematically undermined by entrenched socio-economic and cultural conditions. The notion of books and literacy as luxuries, rather than as public goods or essential developmental tools, reflects deep-rooted inequalities in access and perception (Fauzi & Nurhayati, 2025; Nur'aeni et al., 2023). This is consistent with prior scholarship emphasizing the intersection between literacy practices and socio-economic stratification. Moreover, participants' recognition of these constraints signifies a level of critical consciousness that could form the foundation for future community-driven advocacy. From a policy perspective, this highlights the urgency of integrating literacy development into broader social welfare agendas—ensuring not only material access to books and reading spaces but also cultural re-framing of literacy as a normative and inclusive practice. The results point to the need for multimodal interventions that blend economic, pedagogical, and communicative strategies to normalize literacy engagement in everyday domestic and communal life (Aras, 2018; Nurhayati et al., 2021).

2. Initial Encounters with Reading Aloud: Emotional and Cognitive Resonance

Participants' initial engagement with reading aloud was overwhelmingly positive, facilitating deeper emotional bonds and enhancing communicative interactions with their children. As one participant reflected, "Reading aloud for the first time was exhilarating. My child became more engaged and inquisitive." Reading aloud was also cited as an effective intervention for children with speech delays. One mother shared, "My child was diagnosed with speech delay, and our communication significantly improved through the practice of reading aloud." Notably, some participants first engaged with children's literature for their own enjoyment before involving their children, suggesting a transformative personal-literacy journey: "Initially, I read children's books for my own pleasure, and later invited my child to participate."

Participants' accounts of their initial engagement with reading aloud reaffirm literature emphasizing the affective and relational dimensions of literacy practices. The emotional resonance expressed—particularly in cases involving children with speech delays—reveals how reading aloud functions as both a cognitive-linguistic tool and a medium for strengthening familial intimacy (Barone et al., 2020; Batini et al., 2020). The therapeutic and motivational aspects identified by participants align with Vygotskian perspectives on the sociocultural context of learning, where meaningful interactions mediate cognitive development. This suggests that literacy initiatives should foreground the relational benefits of practices like read-aloud, not merely as instructional techniques, but as pathways for building empathy, communication, and familial cohesion. Importantly, the fact that some parents discovered children's literature through personal enjoyment complicates traditional top-down paradigms of literacy transfer, indicating a potentially reciprocal model wherein adults' enthusiasm catalyzes child participation (Gondiwati & Nurhayati, 2024; Kusmiatiningsih et al., 2024). These findings advocate for designing literacy programs that also nurture parental literary engagement, recognizing them as co-learners and co-narrators in the literacy journey (Farlina et al., 2025; Murniati & Nurhayati, 2024).

3. Literacy Development Facilitated by Reading Aloud

All participants unanimously agreed that reading aloud significantly enhances children's literacy development. They reported notable improvements in vocabulary acquisition, comprehension skills, and early reading readiness. One respondent remarked, "Reading aloud enriches the child's vocabulary, fosters critical thinking, and cultivates attentive listening habits." Another noted, "Children consistently exposed to books through read-aloud sessions demonstrate a readiness to grasp letters and textual structures without the need for coercive instruction." The emergence of dialogic reading practices was particularly significant, as evidenced by the comment, "My child's questions evolved into substantive conversations, deepening their cognitive engagement."

The data provide compelling empirical evidence that reading aloud plays a critical role in foundational literacy acquisition. Participants' observations of improved vocabulary, comprehension, and school readiness reinforce existing research on dialogic reading and oral language development (Ghofur & Nurhayati, 2023). The emphasis on dialogic interaction—where children's questions evolve into sustained discourse—resonates with Bruner's theory of scaffolding and the importance of language-rich environments. These qualitative insights further support the integration of read-aloud strategies into early childhood curricula and parenting programs, not merely as enrichment, but as core developmental mechanisms (Batini et al., 2020). Moreover, the perceived reduction in the need for formal reading instruction due to early exposure to texts suggests a preventive literacy model that may mitigate educational disparities later in schooling. Future interventions should consider how to operationalize these findings through culturally adaptive training modules that embed reading aloud into routine caregiving and classroom practices, particularly in underserved communities.

4. Obstacles in Promoting Reading Aloud Practices

Despite its benefits, several obstacles were identified in promoting sustained reading aloud practices. The pervasive allure of digital gadgets was a prominent deterrent. One participant stated, "Children today are more inclined toward gadgets than books." Parental isolation in promoting literacy within families further compounded the difficulty, with one mother lamenting,

"Advocating for literacy alone is an exhausting endeavor." Misconceptions about the necessity of owning vast quantities of books also discouraged many: "Some believe they must own a thousand books, which disheartens them before they even begin." Economic barriers and restricted access to children's literature remained persistent challenges. The founder highlighted, "Numerous affordable and free reading resources exist; however, the critical deficiency lies in awareness and prioritization."

Despite broad recognition of its benefits, promoting reading aloud remains fraught with systemic challenges. The findings here illustrate how digital distractions, parental isolation, economic hardship, and misinformation coalesce to form a formidable barrier to sustainable literacy practices (Davidson et al., 2021). These issues mirror global trends wherein technological saturation and socio-economic precarity threaten traditional literacy forms. Of particular concern is the normalization of digital consumption over dialogic engagement, which may displace opportunities for narrative co-construction crucial to early literacy (Rosita et al., 2020). The misconception that effective literacy practice requires material abundance—such as owning a thousand books—reveals the urgent need for demystification and re-education. Strategic interventions must thus include public campaigns that reframe reading aloud as an accessible, low-cost, and culturally relevant activity (Weisleder et al., 2018). Additionally, community-based mentorship and peer support models may alleviate the emotional and logistical burdens parents face, cultivating collective literacy responsibility rather than isolating it within individual households (Majid & Nurhayati, 2020; Nurhayati, Dina, et al., 2024; Suharto et al., 2021).

5. Transformative Influence of Read Aloud Bandung Initiatives

Engagement with Read Aloud Bandung's initiatives proved transformative for numerous participants. Workshops, particularly "Think Aloud" and "Training of Trainers," were lauded for their practical, participatory methodologies. One respondent emphasized, "The workshops were not merely theoretical; they emphasized direct practice and constructive feedback, which proved invaluable." Additionally, the network-building opportunities fostered a collective sense of purpose among literacy advocates. As one participant reflected, "Meeting inspiring women passionate about literacy invigorated my own commitment to contributing further." Programs such as "Kurupuk" (book review sessions) effectively promoted family-based literacy activities, although maintaining volunteer momentum over time presented notable challenges. Despite resource constraints, Read Aloud Bandung offered an essential platform for the cultivation of literacy-related competencies and communal solidarity.

The Read Aloud Bandung initiative exemplifies how grassroots literacy interventions can catalyze personal transformation and community empowerment. Participants' testimonies reveal a heightened sense of agency, confidence, and solidarity through structured workshops and peer interaction. This aligns with participatory education frameworks, where dialogic spaces and critical reflection become drivers of change (Nurhayati, 2021b; Rahmat et al., 2024; Subakti et al., 2022). By integrating both cognitive skill-building and emotional reinforcement, the program fosters a holistic learning ecology (Abdullah et al., 2024). Moreover, the combination of formal training (e.g., ToT, Think Aloud) and informal community events (e.g., book reviews, reading parades) contributes to a multi-tiered literacy culture that transcends traditional schooling. However, challenges remain in maintaining volunteer engagement and scalability. The findings suggest that such initiatives require institutional partnerships and hybrid funding models to ensure

longevity. Future programming should also explore the scalability of their approach—particularly the potential for digital platforms to sustain engagement without compromising interpersonal depth and relational trust.

6. Organizational Capacities and Constraints

Operating primarily on a volunteer basis, Read Aloud Bandung faces inherent challenges in maintaining programmatic consistency and expanding outreach. Recruitment strategies largely depend on organic participant interest generated through events. As the founder noted, "Most new members are parents and teachers already predisposed to valuing literacy." Although the community successfully mobilized a committed core group, expanding participation and sustaining engagement across broader demographic sectors remains constrained by financial and logistical limitations.

The reliance on volunteerism as a structural backbone of Read Aloud Bandung reveals both its democratic potential and its operational fragility. While organic recruitment fosters authenticity and community ownership, it also limits scalability, continuity, and institutional memory. This tension is well-documented in civil society literature, which notes the paradox of grassroots vitality often being undermined by resource precarity. Participants' experiences reflect this duality: the program's appeal lies in its grassroots ethos, yet its expansion is hindered by the absence of systematic support. The community's success in cultivating a core of committed members underscores the importance of leadership development and distributed governance models (Mustari & Nurhayati, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2023). There is a clear imperative for Read Aloud Bandung to formalize its organizational infrastructure without compromising its participatory spirit. This may involve professionalizing certain roles, instituting mentorship pipelines, and creating feedback loops to support volunteer retention. Institutional resilience, in this context, is not antithetical to grassroots engagement but a necessary condition for its flourishing.

7. Prospective Strategies for Expansion and Sustainability

Participants proposed a range of strategic interventions to enhance outreach and ensure sustainability. Suggestions included localized community events, systematic follow-up with workshop alumni, and the establishment of stronger institutional partnerships. One participant advocated, "We must initiate small-scale community events that involve parents directly in reading practices." Another highlighted, "Our approach must be consistently persuasive, accessible, and resilient." The founder articulated plans for the establishment of regional coordinators (Korwil) to decentralize leadership and amplify the community's reach: "Korwil are envisioned as extensions to proliferate the read-aloud movement across Greater Bandung." Nonetheless, participants acknowledged that substantial shifts in public perceptions of literacy are imperative. As poignantly expressed by one respondent, "How can parents consumed with securing their next meal contemplate purchasing storybooks for their children?"

Participants articulated a coherent vision for broadening the reach and deepening the impact of Read Aloud Bandung. Strategies such as localized events, post-training follow-ups, and school partnerships reflect a pragmatic understanding of community engagement dynamics. Establishing regional coordinators (Korwil) is particularly noteworthy, as it suggests a shift toward a decentralized, networked model of literacy promotion. This mirrors distributed leadership theories in educational change, which emphasize the efficacy of context-sensitive, bottom-up innovation (Mustari & Nurhayati, 2024). However, such decentralization must be accompanied by

robust support systems—training modules, monitoring frameworks, and resource-sharing mechanisms—to ensure consistency and quality control. The participants' acknowledgment of attitudinal barriers, especially among economically vulnerable families, points to the need for culturally attuned messaging that resonates with lived realities. Overall, the data advocate for a dual approach: macro-level advocacy to normalize literacy as a societal value, and micro-level interventions tailored to specific community textures. Sustainability, in this sense, hinges on adaptability, relational trust, and multi-stakeholder collaboration (Heryanti & Nurhayati, 2023; Latif et al., 2023; Nurhayati, 2021a).

The findings affirm that reading aloud confers profound cognitive, linguistic, and emotional benefits, while also fortifying parent-child relational dynamics. Read Aloud Bandung has achieved commendable progress in advancing literacy practices among parents and educators. Nevertheless, sustainable impact necessitates addressing systemic barriers related to access, awareness, and socio-cultural prioritization. The experiences of this community underscore the pivotal role of grassroots initiatives in literacy advocacy and highlight the urgent need for strategic planning, inclusive outreach, and continuous support mechanisms to foster a more equitable and robust reading culture within Bandung.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed the persistent problem of weak literacy culture within urban Indonesian communities, particularly the underutilization of reading aloud as a strategic approach to foster early literacy and strengthen family-based learning. Through in-depth interviews with participants of the Read Aloud Bandung initiative and its founder, the research explored how individuals experience, interpret, and implement reading aloud within constrained socio-economic and cultural environments. The findings revealed that reading aloud is not merely an educational technique but a relational practice that enhances children's cognitive development, language acquisition, and emotional well-being. Participants reported notable gains in their children's vocabulary, comprehension, and school readiness, along with stronger parent-child communication. Importantly, the study also illuminated systemic barriers—economic precarity, limited access to literature, digital distractions, and cultural misconceptions—that inhibit widespread adoption of reading practices. Despite these obstacles, the Read Aloud Bandung community exemplifies adaptive grassroots mobilization, offering structured training, peer support, and localized engagement that empower parents and educators alike. The initiative's evolving model demonstrates how community-based literacy movements can bridge institutional gaps and cultivate sustainable change from below. Given these insights, the study underscores that promoting early literacy through reading aloud must go beyond instructional guidance. It requires reimagining literacy as a communal responsibility, embedded within everyday practices, and supported by inclusive infrastructures. Future literacy efforts should integrate multi-level strategies: expanding access to affordable or free reading materials, reconfiguring parental literacy as both achievable and essential, and institutionalizing community-led models of support. Ultimately, this research affirms that the path to transformative literacy begins not only with pedagogical innovation but with the cultural and structural affirmation of reading as a right, not a privilege. Stakeholders—educators, policymakers, and community leaders—must now act to ensure this right is accessible, celebrated, and sustained across all sectors of society.

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