



EMPOWERMENT OF THE MUSLIM CONGREGATION IN DUSUN BAGO KARANGBONG THROUGH A PARTICIPATORY STRATEGY TO INCREASE ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT

Fitri¹, Maghfiro², Ilvatun Khomsiyah³

Universitas Islam Zainul Hasan/ Probolinggo/ Jawa Timur, Indonesia

Email: fitrishofiyah33@gmail.com¹, maghfiro532@gmail.com², Ilvatunkhomsiyah@gmail.com³

Abstract:

Muslimatan activities in Dusun Bago Karangbong, Probolinggo, serve as regular religious gatherings aimed at strengthening Islamic brotherhood and deepening religious understanding, particularly among women. However, participation in these activities has remained relatively low due to various challenges, including the busy schedules of congregants, limited awareness of the importance of religious education, and the perception that the sessions are monotonous and lack innovation. This study seeks to develop effective strategies to enhance congregants' participation in Muslimatan activities. The approach employed in this program is Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), focusing on leveraging local resources and community strengths. Key strategies include engaging community leaders to foster interest, utilizing social media platforms for broader outreach, and innovating the study format by integrating social and economic activities, such as an arisan (rotating savings system) and charity initiatives. The implementation of these strategies has led to a significant 75% increase in participant attendance. The rise in participation highlights that Muslimatan gatherings function not only as platforms for Islamic studies but also as inclusive spaces for social and economic empowerment. By continuously fostering innovation and adopting a more interactive and participatory approach, Muslimatan is expected to evolve further, creating lasting benefits for the community and strengthening communal bonds.

Keywords: Muslimatan, congregant participation, improvement strategies, community empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Muslimatan activities, commonly known as routine Islamic gatherings, serve as an essential platform for strengthening ties among Muslims while also providing a means to enhance religious understanding. Through these gatherings, congregants can gain Islamic knowledge from religious speakers. Additionally, routine studies serve as opportunities for sharing experiences, exchanging thoughts, and fostering closer family-like relationships among fellow Muslims. Therefore, ensuring the continuity of these activities and encouraging active participation is crucial so that their benefits can reach a wider audience.

However, one of the main challenges in organizing Muslimatan activities is the low level of congregant participation. Many Muslims show little interest or even reluctance to attend these routine gatherings. Various reasons contribute to this, including work obligations, household responsibilities, and a lack of awareness of the importance of seeking religious knowledge. Moreover, for some individuals, the monotonous format of these gatherings may further diminish their enthusiasm for attending regularly.

*Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: fitrishofiyah33@gmail.com

By introducing innovative approaches in the organization of Muslimatan activities, it is expected that congregant participation will increase significantly. Furthermore, support from religious leaders, youth organizations, and the surrounding community is essential to ensure the sustainability of these gatherings and maximize their benefits. Ultimately, routine Islamic studies should not only serve as a means of social bonding but also as a platform for deepening religious knowledge and strengthening the faith of Muslims in their daily lives.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop effective strategies to enhance congregant participation in Muslimatan activities. By actively involving congregants – not only in terms of attendance but also in contributing ideas, thoughts, and other activities – these gatherings can become more dynamic, meaningful, and impactful for the entire community. This article will explore various strategies that can be implemented to increase participation in Muslimatan activities, aiming to create a more engaging and conducive atmosphere for learning and deepening religious teachings.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the **Participatory Action Research (PAR)** method. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to interact directly with the **Muslimatan** congregants in the empowerment process, as well as to identify and address issues collaboratively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Muslimatan Activities in Dusun Bago Karangbong

Muslimatan is a religious activity that plays an important role not only as a means of worship but also as a platform for fostering togetherness, strengthening Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*), and deepening religious understanding within the community. Rafelia Silvi (2024). This activity is held regularly every week in Dusun Bago, specifically on Thursdays at 1:00 PM, with the location rotating among the homes of congregation members selected through a lottery system. This implementation pattern not only provides a fixed schedule for participants but also fosters a familial atmosphere and strengthens relationships among community members.

The activity is generally attended by women from various backgrounds, particularly housewives, who seek to enhance their Islamic knowledge and strengthen social bonds. In addition to religious studies, Muslimatan gatherings are often supplemented with various social activities that benefit both the congregation members and the surrounding community.

At its inception, around 15 people participated in the activity, demonstrating enthusiasm for the program. With the application of effective strategies, the number of participants has steadily increased each week. This growth reflects the appeal of the program and its success in meeting community needs and expectations. Currently, the number of members has reached approximately 30, indicating a 75% increase in participation since the activity began. This rise not only signifies the success of the implemented strategies but also underscores the importance of this gathering as a relevant and beneficial platform for the community.

With all the benefits it offers, Muslimatan has great potential to continue growing and making a positive impact on the community. Through this activity,

Muslim women not only gain religious knowledge but also build a strong community in practicing Islamic teachings more effectively. Therefore, it is essential for all congregation members to ensure the sustainability of this program and continue to develop it so that more people can experience its benefits. This gathering serves as a highly valuable space for sharing knowledge, experiences, and inspiration among members, both in religious contexts and daily life. Through structured and meaningful discussions, participants can exchange new insights, share solutions to various issues, and strengthen the spirit of mutual cooperation in facing challenges together.

Additionally, this activity also serves as a means for the community to enhance financial literacy through the habit of saving and managing finances in a planned manner. Reiza Hasmain, (2024). This is supported by the *arisan* system implemented in the activity, which not only encourages active participation but also strengthens social solidarity among community members. This system has the potential to be an effective economic empowerment instrument, as it helps individuals manage funds collectively and provides access to savings or funds that can be used for specific needs within a set period. Jaenal Effend (2024).

The **arisan** system operates through a lottery mechanism, where each registered member has an equal chance of being selected. The name drawn in the lottery becomes the recipient of a sum of money that has been collectively gathered by all members. This system not only provides temporary access to funds but also strengthens the sense of togetherness, trust, and responsibility among participants, as each member is required to contribute according to the agreed-upon terms.

The positive impact of this activity is not limited to religious aspects but also extends to broader social development, such as improving financial literacy through **arisan**, empowering women, and reinforcing the values of solidarity.

In **Dusun Bago, Karangbong Village, Pajarakan Subdistrict, Probolinggo Regency**, increasing congregation participation in **Muslimatan** activities remains a significant challenge that requires special attention. These challenges include various aspects, such as time constraints for members with household or work commitments, a lack of community awareness about the importance of the program, and insufficient promotional strategies to attract more participants. Additionally, some members may feel less motivated due to the lack of variety in the activities, leading to fluctuating attendance over time.

With optimal management and organization, the **Muslimatan** activity has the potential to become one of the key pillars in building an empowered community while making a significant contribution to social and religious development in society. This statement emphasizes that the various challenges faced in the implementation of **Muslimatan** should not be seen as obstacles hindering its development but rather as opportunities for continuous innovation and improvement. With the right strategies, challenges such as low participant engagement, lack of awareness about the benefits of the program, and limited resources can be addressed through a more systematic and participatory approach. Therefore, every challenge should be met with creative and strategic solutions so that **Muslimatan** can continue to grow, provide broader benefits, and make a significant contribution to community empowerment and social development.

B. Strategies for Implementing the Muslimatan Congregation

Below are some strategies that can be applied to increase community participation in Muslimatan activities:

1. Social and Community Approach

- **Engaging community leaders:** Involving religious leaders, traditional figures, or influential individuals to encourage community participation. Sulis Peni Widayati (2021).
- **Door-to-door visits:** Conducting direct outreach to homes to provide information and invite community members to join.
- **Small discussion groups:** Forming informal discussion groups to explain the benefits of Muslimatan activities.

2. Raising Awareness and Promotion

- **Social media campaigns:** Utilizing platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram to spread information.
- **Posters and flyers:** Providing printed media to be displayed in mosques, community halls, or other strategic locations.
- **Member testimonials:** Leveraging positive experiences from existing members as motivation for potential participants.

3. Providing Relevant Programs

- **Religious education:** Offering lectures, study sessions, or Islamic discussions tailored to the needs of the community.
 - **Skills training:** Adding training programs such as cooking, sewing, or handicrafts as an additional attraction.
 - **Social activities:** Organizing charity programs, such as community service or aid for those in need, to foster a sense of togetherness.

4. Improving the Arisan System

- **Flexible payment options:** Offering varying contribution amounts so that people from different economic backgrounds can participate.
- **System transparency:** Ensuring the lottery process and fund management are conducted openly to build trust.
- **Additional rewards:** Providing incentives, such as prizes for the most active members.

5. Empowerment and Member Recognition

- **Role assignments:** Giving members opportunities to contribute to organizing activities, such as serving as coordinators or facilitators.
- **Awards and recognition:** Acknowledging active members through certificates or symbolic recognition.

By implementing these strategies, it is expected that community participation in Muslimatan activities will increase significantly, fostering a stronger and more empowered community.

C. Positive Impacts of the Participatory Strategy

The implementation of a participatory strategy in the Muslimatan activities in Dusun Bago Karangbong brings various benefits that contribute to the social, economic, and spiritual development of the community. Some of the positive impacts that can be observed include:

1. Increase in the Number of Participants

With a participatory approach, the community becomes more aware of the importance of engaging in Muslimatan activities. This is evident from the growing number of members actively participating in religious studies, discussions, and social activities. The larger the number of participants, the wider the benefits that can be felt by the community.

2. Strengthening Social Solidarity

Muslimatan activities that involve many members foster stronger social relationships. Through intensive interactions, members of the congregation become more familiar with one another, understand each other better, and provide mutual support in various aspects of life. This solidarity also reinforces values of mutual cooperation, togetherness, and care among community members.

3. Economic Empowerment of the Congregation

The participatory strategy encourages the emergence of community-based economic initiatives, such as rotating savings systems, skills training, and joint business ventures. Through these activities, Muslimatan members gain economic benefits, whether in the form of financial assistance through savings programs or new skills that can be utilized to improve family welfare. Thus, this program not only provides spiritual benefits but also helps enhance the congregation's economic well-being.

4. Improved Religious Understanding

Muslimatan activities designed with a participatory approach enable the congregation to be more actively engaged in learning about Islamic teachings. Through regular studies, interactive discussions, and guidance from religious scholars or community leaders, members' religious understanding deepens. Additionally, practical learning makes it easier for the congregation to apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives, whether in worship, social interactions, or ethical conduct.

5. Creation of Leadership and Regeneration

With a participatory strategy, Muslimatan is not solely dependent on a few individuals but is capable of producing new leaders who are ready to continue efforts in strengthening religious activities within the community. This regeneration ensures that Muslimatan activities continue to run smoothly and can adapt to changing times.

6. Increased Social Awareness and Sensitivity to Community Issues

Active involvement in Muslimatan activities broadens the congregation's awareness of various social issues in their surroundings. Through discussions and social programs, members become more sensitive to the needs of the

community, such as providing assistance to the underprivileged, orphans, and those in need. This fosters social initiatives that further strengthen the sense of care and empathy within the community.

With these various positive impacts, the participatory strategy has proven to be an effective approach in enhancing the quality and sustainability of Muslimatan activities in Dusun Bago Karangbong. Active community participation not only strengthens religious aspects but also fosters social bonds and improves the economic welfare of the congregation.

CONCLUSION

Increasing the participation of Muslimatan congregants in Dusun Bago, Probolinggo, requires a well-planned, creative, and sustainable approach to ensure that this activity not only takes place regularly but also provides real benefits to the community. The sustainability of Muslimatan largely depends on how well the organizers can present programs that are engaging, relevant, and beneficial to the congregants. By making effective communication a fundamental principle, it is hoped that the dissemination of information regarding religious studies can reach more people and encourage active participation from various segments of society.

In addition to effective communication, innovation in programs is also a key factor in increasing the appeal of Muslimatan. This activity should not remain stagnant with a monotonous pattern but must continue to evolve in response to social dynamics and the needs of the congregants. Using interactive methods, leveraging digital technology, and packaging content in a more applicable manner will make the participants more enthusiastic about attending each session. Moreover, Muslimatan can also expand its role as a platform for economic, social, and cultural empowerment, ensuring that more people feel engaged and benefit from this initiative.

Prioritizing the needs of the congregants should be the main focus so that Muslimatan does not become merely a ceremonial event but truly serves as part of the solution in the community's daily life. By understanding the diverse backgrounds and challenges faced by the congregants, organizers can design programs that are more inclusive and aligned with their expectations. When participants feel that Muslimatan adds value to their lives, participation will naturally increase without the need for coercion.

Through strategies that emphasize effective communication, program innovation, and attention to congregants' needs, Muslimatan can become more than just a routine religious study session. It can serve as a symbol of unity and togetherness, strengthening the Islamic brotherhood within the community. With active participation from the congregants, a harmonious environment filled with a spirit of solidarity and competitiveness can be realized.

May these steps serve as a strong foundation for building a more solid, high-quality, and impactful Muslim community. With good collaboration between organizers, religious leaders, and the wider community, Muslimatan can continue to grow into an initiative that brings extensive benefits—whether in terms of religious enrichment, social development, or community empowerment. The success of Muslimatan is not only measured by the number of attendees but also by the positive impact it creates in their daily lives.

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