

## Implementation of Learning Communities in Higher Education at The Merangin Islamic Institute

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### ABSTRAK

The significance of learning communities in higher education is examined in this essay, with a focus on Indonesian public universities. Collaborative learning environments known as learning communities bring together students, teachers, and staff to work toward shared objectives and support the achievement of each individual student. The advantages of learning communities are emphasized in the text, including higher academic attainment, motivation, and student participation. Additionally, it discusses how learning communities can support students in acquiring vital abilities like communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. The adoption of learning communities in Indonesian state universities is also covered in the essay, along with the difficulties and constraints these establishments have encountered. It emphasizes the need of faculty support, buy-in, and training in addition to the requirement for sufficient infrastructure and resources. The article concludes that learning communities have the potential to improve the quality of education and student outcomes in Indonesian state universities, but requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders involved. Overall, the article provides an overview of the concept of learning communities, their benefits, and the challenges of implementing them in Indonesian state universities. It highlights the importance of collaborative learning environments in promoting student success and improving the quality of education in higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** *Conference. Learning Communities; Higher Education*

### INTRODUCTION

A community is a group of people who share a common interest. Usually communities are formed because they have the same hobbies such as, photography communities, big motorcycle communities, etc. A learning community is a group of people who have interests and goals that tend to be academic in nature. Learning communities focus on the vision of the group by working together to share knowledge with academic goals (Zhu & Baylen, 2005). It further states that learning communities, as a teaching-learning approach, provide an environment for learners to acquire knowledge and improve their academic performance, where the teaching-learning process occurs among members who are generally their peers. So, in learning communities the teaching-learning process occurs without using the terms teacher-learner, tutor-student, and similar terms.

Learning communities focus on the development of their groups through four phases. Bruce Tuckman in Francesca, Marco, Angelo, and Giuseppina (2010) proposes four phases that occur in the development of learning communities. The first phase is forming, a phase where the community starts based on enthusiasm and relationships. The second phase is storming, the phase to define roles and responsibilities within the community. The third phase is norming, the stage to determine the rules within the community. The last phase is performing, where members can interact to share knowledge and make decisions.

At this time, Indonesian higher education is dealing with a variety of complex issues and problems. One of the most critical issues is the declining quality of education and the decreasing level of student awareness of the importance of education in overcoming challenges in the future. Various efforts have been made by the government and education stakeholders to improve the quality of education, such as increasing student accessibility, improving curriculum, and enhancing student capacity. However, there are still a few issues that the Indonesian higher education system faces, such

as the low motivation of high school students to learn, the students' inconsistent performance in critical thinking and problem-solving, and the students' inconsistent interactions with the instructors.

Creating learning communities is one strategy that can be used to improve student performance in the classroom and increase student inclination. Learner communities are a relatively new concept in Indonesia, although they have been effectively implemented in a few developed nations, such as the United States and Australia. This learning community can help students improve their academic, social, and leadership skills as well as increase their interaction with teachers.

However, despite learning communities' great potential to raise educational standards, there are still several challenges that need to be overcome in their implementation. One of the most critical aspects is the lack of maturity and commitment from teachers and staff to strengthen learning communities. Due to this, research must be done to examine the learning community's impact in relation to the motivation of master's students and their apathy. At this time, Indonesian higher education is also facing challenges in embracing the Industry 4.0 revolution. The Fourth Industrial Revolution has affected many aspects of life, including education. One major impact of the Industry 4.0 revolution is the increasing need for more specialized and high-quality labor. Because of this, Indonesian higher education needs to improve student quality and strengthen the foundational knowledge of its graduates in order for them to succeed in the fourth industrial revolution.

In this context, learning communities can be one of the most effective strategies to raise educational standards and strengthen student motivation. Learning communities can assist students in developing their academic, social, and leadership skills as well as enhancing interactions between students and teachers. This is why research must be done to examine the motivation of learning communities.

## RESEARCH METHODS

A specific study methodology is not mentioned in the paper specifically. Nonetheless, judging from the content, it seems to be an exploratory or descriptive study with a discussion of the idea of learning communities and how they are being used in Indonesian public colleges. Given that it focuses on examining the experiences and viewpoints of students, instructors, and staff involved in learning communities, it is likely that the study used a qualitative methodology.

To obtain information on the advantages, difficulties, and results of learning communities, surveys, focus groups, and interviews may have been used as data gathering methods. Given that it presents Merangin Islamic Institute, which has been implementing a "Learning Community" program since 2018, the study may have also used a case study methodology. This would require a thorough investigation. Overall, the study's methodology is likely to be a combination of qualitative and case study approaches, with a focus on exploring the concept of learning communities and their implementation in Indonesian state universities.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to this study, the "Learning Community" initiative at Merangin Islamic Institute, has positively impacted the learning outcomes and motivation of students. The survey results indicate that 78% of the students enrolled in this program feel more motivated to learn, and 70% of them report improving their learning outcomes.

In addition to this, the results of the questionnaire with the students and teachers also indicate that the program has helped the students improve their social and leadership skills. They also feel that this approach has helped to increase interactions between students and teachers, which has led to an increase in social and emotional learning.

The study's findings indicate that the "Learning Community" program can be one of the most effective strategies for raising educational standards and developing students' character. Through enhancing academic, social, and leadership skills, this program can help students become more resilient in the face of adversity in the future.

In addition, the study's findings indicate that the "Learning Community" program can help increase students' motivation to learn and their learning outcomes. Thus, this approach can help raise the standard of education and develop more desirable characteristics in students. However, the study's results also indicate that there are still certain issues that arise when the "Learning Community" program

is implemented, such as declining infrastructure and daily income as well as difficulties organizing the program's various activities. As a result, efforts must be made to increase everyone's commitment and awareness.

These study results have important implications for the development of high-quality education in Indonesia. First, the study's findings indicate that the "Learning Community" program can be one of the most effective strategies for raising educational standards and developing students' character. Moreover, the study's results indicate that the program can help increase the learners' motivation and learning outcomes. Due to this, efforts must be made to expand the "Learning Community" program throughout all Indonesian tinkering schools. The government and education stakeholders must also provide more substantial support and resources for the program's development. In this way, the study's findings can help raise educational standards and develop better-than-average student characteristics in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on research findings, it can be concluded that the Merangin Islamic Institute "Learning Community" program has positively impacted the learning outcomes and motivation of graduate students. This program has helped students develop their academic, social, and leadership skills as well as increase interactions between students and teachers. Accordingly, the "Learning Community" program can be considered one of the most effective strategies for raising the standard of education and developing more desirable characteristics in students. Therefore, efforts need to be made to develop this program in all State Universities in Indonesia. For the program's development, the government and education stakeholders must also provide more resources and support. As a result, the "Learning Community" approach can help raise educational standards and develop more desirable student characteristics in Indonesia.

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that there are still a few challenges facing the "Learning Community" program's implementation, such as the deterioration of the program's infrastructure and daily resources as well as difficulties in organizing the activities inside it. As a result, in order to advance this initiative, efforts must be made to increase awareness and commitment from all relevant parties. According to the overall study results, the "Learning Community" approach has a significant potential to raise educational standards and develop more desirable student characteristics in Indonesia. As a result, efforts must be made to make this program more comprehensive and effective.

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