Village Community Participation in the Development of Socio-Cultural Literacy in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT:
The involvement of the community is very important for the development of sustainable socio-cultural literacy, especially in rural areas where traditional culture and beliefs are still a part of community life. This study is about the participations of the villagers in the implementation of socio-cultural literacy in the Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. The study used a qualitative descriptive method to shed light on the experiences, perceptions and participation of community members in literacy related activities. In-depth interviews, participant observation and documentation with village leaders, community leaders, literacy activists, teachers, youth representatives and villagers was conducted to gather data. The results indicate that community engagement takes four types planning, implementation, contribution of resources, and assessment of the literacy program. Community members are actively engaged in the development of ideas, sharing of cultural knowledge, facilities and resources, as well as program assessment of outcomes. The study also highlights a number of factors that facilitate participation; positive local cultural values, community leadership that is supportive, community engagement of stakeholders and awareness of community about the value of literacy and cultural preservation. These elements provide an enabling context to continue literacy programs and improve community bonds. The results show that the development of socio-cultural literacy is not only an educational process but it is also a collective social process that leads to the preservation of local culture, intergenerational knowledge transfer and community empowerment. The study concludes that meaningful community involvement is a key to the effectiveness and sustainability of a socio-cultural literacy program and that integration of local culture with literacy development strategies in rural communities is important.

Keywords: Community Participatio, Socio-Cultural Literacy, Rural Community Development, Cultural Preservation

Introduction. The definition of literacy has been expanded from a purely functional view of reading and writing to a more comprehensive one that includes comprehension, interpretation, communication, and involvement in social and cultural activities. Today, literacy is viewed as a highly complex competence which is needed to participate in a variety of social situations, to maintain cultural identity, and to deal with globalization challenges at personal and community levels (UNESCO, 2021). Socio-cultural literacy has a strategic place among the different dimensions of

literacy because it allows for understanding how cultural identities, social norms, traditions and community values influence collective life (Martínez et al., 2022; Dobryakova et al., 2023; Anurogo et al., 2023). Socio-cultural literacy fosters social unity and cultural sustainability within communities, in addition to individual learning.

Socio-cultural literacy is a priority especially in rural communities where traditions, indigenous knowledge and practices are still a major part of life. Rural areas are a source of cultural heritage, where values and traditions are passed on from one generation to the next through formal and informal learning (Bihari, 2023; Knapik & Król, 2023; García et al., 2025). But fast technological progress, urbanization and globalization have created a lot of social changes that can affect the traditional culture and the level of the involvement of the communities in local knowledge preservation (Appadurai, 2013). Hence, there is a need to promote socio-cultural literacy as a fundamental component of cultural continuity as well as a means of adjusting to modern socio-cultural changes in communities.

The involvement of the community is essential to the success and sustainability of literacy development programmes. Participation is defined as active participation of people and groups in decision making, implementation and evaluation processes that impact their lives (Bell & Reed, 2022; Rijal, 2023). In the field of community-based development, participation not only is a tool for mobilising resources, it also is a tool for empowering people in the community to be the drivers of change. When everyone is involved, the sense of ownership, responsibility and group commitment helps to secure long-term success of education and literacy programs. Thus, having a grasp of how communities are involved in socio-cultural literacy development is important in determining strategies that will help build local capacities and sustainable community development.

There has been a fair amount of research on the links between community involvement and literacy development. Community involvement in planning, implementing, and monitoring programs has been proven to boost their effectiveness in improving literacy (Nur'aeni et al., 2023). Community participation is important to the relevance of literacy programs as it helps to make activities relevant and meaningful to the local community, and to the community's culture and aspirations. In addition, participatory processes enable the incorporation of local knowledge systems into literacy programmes, increasing the cultural relevance and social impact of educational programmes. Due to this, literacy development is increasingly seen as a shared process between a number of actors; local communities, educational sector, civil society organisations, government sector.

In Indonesia, education quality improvement and human resource development, which includes the development of literacy, have been a national priority. Literacy competency enhancement in various social and cultural contexts has been emphasised by government initiatives (Hapsarini et al., 2023; Nadifa & Zulvani, 2024). Socio-cultural literacy is also increasingly referred to, as Indonesia is a country that has cultural diversity and requires promotion of understanding of other cultures and communities. Different community literacy initiatives have been introduced as a way to promote community participation in cultural preservation, documentation of local knowledge, and lifelong learning events. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these initiatives often depends on the extent to which local communities actively participate in their implementation and sustainability.

South Sulawesi is a culturally rich area with different ethnic tradition, high social values and rich community institutions. Bulukumba Regency is known to have a wide range of cultural heritage, traditional craftsmanship, maritime traditions and social structures based in the community within this province. The regency is also famous for its traditional Pinisi boat building, which represents local knowledge, cultural identity and intergenerational learning. These are cultural assets which offer good opportunities for socio-cultural literacy development through activities connected to the community and cultural education. However, as with any cultural tradition, current social and economic changes and the influence of the world outside are a threat to the continuity and transfer of indigenous knowledge to younger generations.

Thus, the involvement of the village communities in maintaining the socio-cultural literacy in Bulukumba Regency is needed to be actively involved. The village has a wealth of information and experiences for literacy development programs. They can be involved in cultural events, community

learning activities, sharing traditional knowledge, community discussions, and the continuation of traditional practices. Such involvement allows for socio-cultural literacy to be more of a process that brings together members of the community and links them to their cultural heritage and promotes social interaction and group learning. Furthermore, the involvement of the community can improve social capital, strengthen community resilience and promote cooperation in solving local development problems.

Although it is known that the involvement of the community in the development of socio-cultural literacy in the village is very important, there is still limited empirical evidence as to the role of community participation in the development of socio-cultural literacy at the village level, especially in Bulukumba Regency. In the past, research on literacy has tended to emphasize literacy results, educational policies, or institutional programs rather than attending to the experiences, perceptions, and roles of community members. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the role of the village community in the development of socio-cultural literacy, the forms of village community participation and the influencing factors related to the participation of the village community.

The dynamics are not only relevant to enhancing academic discourse on literacy and community development, but also to the design of policies and practices that can boost socio-cultural literacy in rural communities. In particular, this study provides insights into the importance of local participation in the preservation of cultural values, in promoting lifelong learning, and in strengthening community capacity in the face of rapid social change by examining the experiences of the communities in the village of Bulukumba, Regency of Kertajaya in Java. Overall, socio-cultural literacy development is not an educational process alone, but is also a process of the community, which requires the active participation and commitment of the members to maintain the culture and social welfare of the community.

Methods

Research Design

The method of this research was qualitative research with a descriptive case study that was used to explore the participation of the villagers in developing socio-cultural literacy in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. A qualitative approach was deemed suitable as the study aimed to gain an understanding of the experiences, perceptions and participation in socio-cultural literacy activities of the participants in their natural social setting. Instead of quantifying participation, the study examined the sense in which community members understood literacy initiatives, the ways they participated and the ways in which social and cultural factors affected their participation. The application of a case study approach allowed for a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of participation in the community as a process influenced by cultural and social conditions in the village of Bulukumba Regency.

Research Site and Context

The study was carried out in the selected villages of Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The socio-cultural traditions, community based social structures and rich local heritage, including traditional knowledge systems and cultural practices actively maintained by the local communities, are the key factors for selecting Bulukumba. The regency is well known for its cultural identity, namely its maritime culture and knowledge regarding Pinisi boat building. The socio-cultural characteristics offer a context of relevance to the study of the role of community participation in literacy development outside the context of reading and writing. The chosen villages were those in which community participation involved cultural activities, educational programs, or other development projects, as these practices were suitable to be explored.

Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, knowing that the study is concerned with socio-cultural literacy activities, there are individuals who have the right knowledge and experience that will be included in the study. The participants were village leaders, community leaders, cultural practitioners, literacy activists, teachers, youth representatives, and community members who had actively engaged in literacy related programs and cultural activities. A variety of participants allowed the study to gain multiple perspectives on community participation and literacy development. The number of participants

was increased until data saturation was achieved, i.e., no significant additional information could be gained from further interviews. This strategy ensured the richness, depth and credibility of the data collected.

Data Collection Techniques

The methods used for collecting data were in-depth interview, document analysis, and participant observation. The in-depth interviews were the main tool used to gain insight into participants' experiences, perceptions and interpretations on their participation in socio-cultural literacy development. Semi-structured interview guides were used to ensure uniformity in the interviews, and to encourage open discussion. The interviews centered around the role participants played in literacy programs, their reasons for involvement, their experiences of benefits, barriers, and suggestions for improving community involvement.

Participant observation was used to directly observe activities and interactions around literacy in the community. The researcher participated in community meetings, cultural events, educational activities and literacy programs throughout the observations to identify trends of involvement and interaction in the community. Systematic field notes were taken to capture observations of participants' behavior, the community, and the use of literacy programs.

Document analysis was also undertaken as an additional method of data collection to complement the data gathered from the interview and observation data. The relevant documents were village reports, records of literacy program, records of socio-cultural activity, local government publications, photographs, records of meetings and other archival documents pertaining to socio-cultural literacy development. Multiple data sources were used which enabled a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied and data triangulation.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through Miles, Huberman and Saldaña's (2014) interactive model of qualitative data analysis, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data analysis started along with data collection and was carried out during the research process. At the data condensation stage, interview transcripts, field notes, and documentary evidence were analysed and organized carefully, coded, and categorised thematically based on the themes that emerged in the study on community participation and the development of socio-cultural literacy.

The second phase is data display, in which the coded information was presented in thematic matrices, descriptive narratives and conceptual categories. This process helped the researcher identify pattern, relationships and themes across the various groups of participants and data sources. The last step was to make generalizations and test conclusions by reinterpreting the results as more information became available, and by comparing results with existing data. In this analytical process, the study produced a holistic picture of the types, meanings and factors of community involvement in socio-cultural literacy development.

Results

Overview of the Research Area

Bulukumba Regency is located in the southern part of South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. It is also a well-known fact that the regency has a rich cultural heritage, with strong communal traditions, and is also actively engaged in the development of its own area. Bulukumba is made up of coastal communities and inland communities, giving rise to a rich socio-cultural environment with maritime traditions, agricultural activities, and traditional cultural values. The regency is also famous for its traditional skill of making boats, known as Pinisi, which is an important part of the local culture and heritage. The socio-cultural literacy develops in these characteristics in a positive manner because the members of the community are continuously involved in passing on the knowledge, customs and values of the community from one generation to the next.

The villages selected for this study demonstrate strong social cohesion and collective community engagement. Social interactions among residents are largely characterized by mutual cooperation, collective responsibility, and active participation in community activities. Traditional values such as *gotong royong* (mutual assistance) remain highly visible in everyday village life and continue to influence community involvement in educational, cultural, and developmental programs. Community

members regularly participate in village meetings, cultural celebrations, religious gatherings, and social activities that facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences. Such practices contribute significantly to the strengthening of socio-cultural literacy by creating opportunities for learning and cultural transmission within the community.

According to one village leader, community participation remains deeply embedded in local traditions and social relationships:

"There is still a strong sense of community among the residents of this village. Residents typically participate freely in educational events, cultural gatherings, and community conversations because they feel obligated to uphold our customs and educate future generations about our cultural values." (VL1)

The results suggest that there is a socio-cultural literacy outside of formal education in the study area. Literacy practices are often informal, as in the case of cultural ceremonies, storytelling customs, religious services, and community conversations. Older individuals in the community are frequently instrumental in passing on to younger people local knowledge, historical information, and traditional knowledge and practices. These interactions help foster a sense of community amongst the residents of the village, and also provide an opportunity for them to learn more about their cultural heritage and identity.

A community leader emphasized the importance of these informal learning processes:

"The majority of cultural knowledge is not acquired solely from books. By actively participating in social events and cultural activities, young people can learn from their parents, elders, and community leaders. This is how our customs endure." (CL1)

All the villages which were selected for this study have been subjected to the modernisation, technological development and exposure to outside cultures in an increasing manner. The use of these developments has brought new possibilities for access to information and communication but also challenges in relation to the preservation of local cultural values. Some of those who spoke spoke of their concern about the younger generations being less involved in traditional community activities and more influenced by global culture. For this reason, community-based literacy programmes have gained significance as tools for cultural preservation and cultural awareness, and have been widely adopted.

One youth participant explained:

"While technology has numerous advantages, it also alters young people's interests. Instead of engaging in cultural events, many people would rather spend time on social media. As a result, literacy initiatives that integrate culture with contemporary teaching techniques are crucial." (YP1)

To meet these challenges, the following community-led projects have been developed to enhance socio-cultural literacy among the community members: This includes cultural festivals, traditional arts events, community reading programs, local history discussions and engagement activities for youth. These programmes are frequently organised in collaboration with village government, community groups, education and local cultural groups. These efforts are all collaborative, and demonstrate the commitment of community stakeholders to maintaining cultural knowledge and accommodating to the social changes of the modern day.

Based on observational data, community involvement in those activities was high in general and especially when they were tied to local traditions. The community was involved in providing time, knowledge, skills and resources to support the implementation of activities related to literacy. Children, youth, adults and elderly residents participated in different aspects of program implementation and were not limited to specific age groups. The inter-generational participation fostered important opportunities for knowledge sharing and promoted social foundations of Socio-cultural literacy development.

A literacy activist described the collaborative atmosphere as follows:

"The desire of community people to collaborate is what makes these programs successful. Each person makes a unique contribution. Some help plan events, some offer facilities, and some exchange knowledge. Both literacy and community cohesion are strengthened by this joint endeavor." (LA1)

In general, the results reveal that the research area has good socio-cultural resources which can support the literacy development. Rich cultural traditions, active community participation and strong social relationships provide a conducive environment for socio-cultural literacy. While the

process of modernization and social change poses challenges, the active participation of local people in maintaining and passing on their knowledge is still very important in maintaining socio-cultural literacy programs all over Bulukumba Regency.

Various types of Community Participation

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the socio-cultural literacy development process in the village of Bulukumba Regency was done actively by the village community in several interconnected ways. Community participation was not only in attendance to literacy programs but also in planning, implementation, resource support and evaluation activities. This level of participation was a result of the high values of community and collective responsibility among Bulukumba villagers.

Community involvement can be seen through the residents' involvement in the planning process as they indicated their literacy needs, prioritized program needs and discussed the implementation of the cultural-literacy activities. Village meetings and casual community forums grew into significant venues for people to voice their thoughts on how to save their culture and create literacy programmes. Residents highlighted the need for programs to be culturally and community-rooted.

A village leader explained:

"We typically discuss literacy activities in village meetings prior to planning them. Members of the community offer recommendations on what cultural subjects should be taught to youth and what kinds of activities are best for the village." (VL2)

This participatory planning process helped create a sense of ownership among residents. Because community members were involved from the beginning, they felt responsible for supporting and sustaining the programs. The planning stage also allowed local wisdom and cultural priorities to be integrated into literacy activities, ensuring that the programs were relevant to the community's social and cultural realities.

The implementation stage showed the most visible form of community participation. Residents actively took part in organizing and conducting literacy-related activities such as cultural discussions, traditional storytelling sessions, community reading programs, arts performances, and youth education events. Community elders shared traditional knowledge and local history, while younger residents assisted in organizing events and encouraging peer participation.

A community elder stated:

"By teaching kids about our customs, local tales, and traditions, we actively participate. This is how we make sure the next generation doesn't lose sight of their cultural heritage." (CE1)

Youth participation was also significant in the implementation process. Young people helped manage literacy events, promote activities through social media, and assist children during educational sessions. Their involvement demonstrated that socio-cultural literacy development was not only the responsibility of older generations but also a collaborative effort across age groups.

One youth participant explained:

"We assist in planning events, encourage other youth to participate, and advertise cultural events on social media. The younger generation finds the shows more appealing as a result." (YP2)

The participation of community groups in this learning activity produced a participatory learning context that was open and enabled the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next. This transgenerational contact fostered not only cultural learning, but also social cohesion in the village.

There was also a contribution from community members in providing resources to assist with socio-cultural literacy activities. Their contributions to the society were in the form of giving meeting places, lending equipment, preparing traditional food during the events, donating books and giving their time freely. Literacy programs were often put in place by the collective efforts of communities, and not just external sources of funding.

A literacy activist noted:

"The community itself provides support for the majority of our initiatives. Locals offer meeting spaces, assist with event planning, and supply any resources they can. The programs continue to function because of this collaboration." (LA2)

The spirit of mutual aid which was common in Bulukumba villages was evident in the willingness of the residents to provide resources. Despite financial constraints, community members showed commitment by donating their time, energy and

local facilities. These helped to lower expenses for the programs and boost the sense of community among the literacy programs.

The community was also involved in the assessment and sustainability of the literacy programs. Following activities, residents frequently shared information about results, barriers and opportunities for subsequent programs. The opinions of participants were seen as crucial to the relevance and effectiveness of the literacy activities.

A community leader explained:

"We typically get together after every activity to talk about what worked and what needs to be improved. We can plan better programs in the future with the help of community feedback. (CL2)"

This participatory evaluation helped to sustain socio-cultural literacy programmes. The programs were able to be more reflective and decision-making in ways that engaged community members, resulting in greater responsiveness to local needs and sustainability over time. The residents felt that they were heard and listened to, and they enjoyed the activities and expressed a desire to participate in future events.

Supporting Factors

The results showed that there was a number of factors that made the village community participation in the development of socio-cultural literacy in Bulukumba Regency. These enabling factors helped to build community involvement and helped to keep literacy-related activities sustainable. Strong local cultural values, support of the leaders, cooperation of stakeholders and awareness of the importance of literacy and cultural preservation were the most prominent factors that were identified during the study.

One of the most significant supporting factors was the existence of strong local cultural values that continue to guide social interactions within village communities. Traditional values such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), solidarity, respect for elders, and collective responsibility encouraged residents to participate actively in community activities, including socio-cultural literacy programs. These cultural values created a social environment where participation was viewed not merely as an individual choice but as a communal obligation that contributed to the well-being of the village.

The study found that many literacy activities were closely linked to cultural traditions, making community members more willing to become involved. Residents perceived socio-cultural literacy as an effort to preserve local identity and ensure that cultural knowledge could be transmitted to younger generations.

A community elder explained:

"Our culture instills in us the values of cooperation and community-beneficial endeavors. People feel obligated to participate in literacy programs that incorporate regional customs and cultural knowledge because they wish to protect our legacy." (CE2)

Similarly, another participant stated:

"Our hamlet still upholds significant cultural values. People voluntarily participate in conversations, storytelling sessions, and cultural events because they believe that these activities are essential to preserving our identity." (CL3)

These findings indicate that local cultural values served as a social foundation that encouraged active participation and strengthened community commitment to literacy development.

The presence of supportive village leaders, community leaders, and cultural figures emerged as another important factor influencing participation. Community leaders played a crucial role in mobilizing residents, coordinating activities, and encouraging involvement in literacy programs. Their influence helped build trust among community members and increased public confidence in the value of literacy initiatives.

The findings showed that village leaders often acted as facilitators by organizing meetings, providing administrative support, and encouraging collaboration among different community groups. Their active involvement motivated residents to participate and demonstrated the importance of socio-cultural literacy within local development efforts.

One village leader noted:

"Community members are typically more inclined to join if leaders actively contribute. By participating in events and motivating locals to participate in literacy and cultural initiatives, we want to lead by example." (VL3)

A literacy activist also emphasized the role of leadership:

"Community leaders are very important because people listen to them. Their support helps increase participation and makes it easier to organize activities." (LA3)

The results indicate that good leadership was a crucial factor in the successful implementation of socio-cultural literacy programmes as it enabled cooperation and kept communities engaged.

The involvement of different stakeholders was also reported as a facilitator to literacy development. The research yielded the information that village governments, schools, community groups, cultural societies and local people often collaborated to recruit volunteers for literacy programs and cultural events. This partnership helped to share resources, knowledge, and responsibilities, thus enhancing literacy efforts.

School-community partnerships played a special role in nurturing socio-cultural literacy among young people. Learning resources and learning spaces were often offered by educational institutions and community knowledge and participation were offered by community organisations.

A teacher involved in literacy activities explained:

"When schools, village officials, and community organizations collaborate, the initiatives are more successful. Every group has unique strengths that help put literacy exercises into practice." (T1)

Another participant observed:

"Collaboration allows us to reach more people and organize better programs. We share responsibilities and support one another throughout the process." (CLA)

The results show that there was an increase in community involvement as a result of building a network of supportive partners for literacy development and cultural preservation.

Also, a growing awareness of residents about the significance of supporting literacy and cultural preservation contributed to increased participation. The participants were aware that the socio-cultural literacy was critical for sustaining the local identity, building stronger social relations, and equipping younger generations to meet future challenges. The awareness spurred the involvement of members of the community in active participation, and in literacy programs and activities to help conserve local knowledge.

Participants often said that literacy involves much more than reading and writing, as it also involves having an understanding of background culture, local history, and social norms. These perceptions helped residents feel a shared responsibility for development of literacy.

One youth participant stated:

"We realize that literacy is not only about reading books. It is also about understanding our culture, traditions, and history. That is why many young people are interested in joining these activities." (YP3)

Likewise, a community member explained:

"If we do not teach our culture to younger generations, many traditions may disappear. Literacy activities help us preserve knowledge that is important for our future." (CM1)

These findings indicate that awareness of the educational, social, and cultural benefits of literacy strengthened community commitment and encouraged sustained participation in literacy initiatives.

Discussion

The results of this study shows an active role played by village communities in the development of socio-cultural literacy both in planning, implementation, contributing village resources and evaluating the development. The results indicate that the process of development of socio-cultural literacy is not only an educational process but also community-driven one where highly collective engagement and interaction are needed. Their participation from conception to implementation in a variety of different aspects of literacy projects suggests that literacy is more sustainable if community members are seen as participants and providers of literacy development.

The study revealed that involvement started at the outset of the planning process when community members offered ideas, identified community needs, and helped shape the direction of literacy programs. Thus, the result demonstrates the benefits of involving people in decision-making processes, which is more conducive to community participation rather than their being mere beneficiaries of development programs. Involving them in planning builds their sense of ownership and responsibility and leads to greater commitment

to program implementation and sustainability. Involving community members in providing input about program design and decisions fosters more culturally responsive literacy activities and community aspirations. This fits in with the work of Bell & Reed (2022) which states that meaningful participation is when people can have an impact on decisions which affect their lives and communities.

The most apparent form of participation was its implementation. Members of the community participated in cultural conversations, storytelling, educating, traditional arts, and knowledge exchanges. These activities show that the socio-cultural literacy goes beyond simple reading and writing processes and involves the transmission of values, norms, and indigenous knowledge. Focuses on the social nature of literacy that is situated in cultural and community contexts. Residents also gain knowledge by participating in cultural and educational activities, and gain a sense of collective identity and social cohesion through these activities as well.

One of the important results of this study is the role of intergenerational interaction in the development of literacy in the socio-cultural aspect. Elders shared their cultural knowledge and experiences, while younger members were involved in organizing events and using modern communication technology, to reach out to community members. This dialogue helped to retain local wisdom and to make literacy practice more relevant to current social realities. These results are consistent with those of Bhatt & Li (2026) who note that literacy practices are situated in a social environment and are influenced by the interactions between community members. Transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next helps communities remain culturally continuous and adapt to shifting societal needs.

Socio-cultural literacy, from the sociological point of view of education, suggests that social and cultural literacy represents a process used within rural communities to reproduce and transmit cultural capital. Learning is not limited to formal settings, and is also situated within the social, cultural and community relationships people have around them. The storytelling, the involvement in cultural ceremonies and participation in village-based learning activities convey norms, values and collective identities to the village residents as they gain knowledge. This process enhances social integration and the continuity of local cultural heritage from generation to generation. Similarly, engaging in community-based education practices has also been shown to positively impact cultural reproduction, community cohesion, and cultural awareness in learners through the linkage between people's cultural experiences and social realities (Abdi, A. A., & Cleghorn, 2005; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2009; Liu, 2021; Robinson, 2017).

The results also showed that community members provided a variety of resources: time, labor, facilities, knowledge, and organizational support. The examples show that there are also multiple ways in which participants can be involved in the community beyond being physically present. The open attitude of the villagers towards contributing voluntarily demonstrates good social capital in the village community. Ari et al. (2024) define social capital as being comprised of networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust that enable collective action for mutual benefit. The custom of mutual cooperation seems to increase community involvement and participation in successful literacy programs in the context of Bulukumba Regency.

Another important finding has to do with the importance of evaluation and feedback to maintaining literacy programs. Community members actively discussed outcomes of the program and gave feedback on how it could be improved. As a participatory evaluation process, this allowed for ongoing learning among stakeholders while ensuring literacy activities remained relevant to the needs of the community. The results suggest that sustainable literacy development goes beyond mere action and is an ongoing process of reflection and adaptation. A process like this is conducive to long-term impact of community-based literacy programs, and to building local ownership of development programs.

In addition, the study identified some factors that facilitate the involvement of communities in the development of socio-cultural literacy. One of the most powerful values found was with regard to local culture. The strong culture of solidarity and the sense of responsibility among the residents along with the respect for tradition encouraged the residents to participate in literacy activities. These values fostered a social atmosphere conducive to participation that was considered a social duty, not

a personal decision. Abdul et al., (2023) find the same pattern; cultural traditions play a significant role in maintaining community-based learning and knowledge sharing processes.

Supportive leadership also played a crucial role in promoting participation. Village leaders, community leaders, and cultural figures acted as facilitators who mobilized resources, encouraged involvement, and coordinated literacy activities. Their leadership contributed to building trust and legitimacy, which are essential for successful community engagement. This finding supports Ahmad & Islam (2024) argument that participatory development depends significantly on local leadership capable of facilitating inclusive community involvement and fostering collaborative action.

Collaboration among stakeholders was another important factor supporting literacy development. Partnerships involving village governments, schools, community organizations, and cultural groups enhanced the implementation of literacy programs by combining diverse resources and expertise. Such collaboration increased program effectiveness and expanded opportunities for community participation. These findings reinforce assertion that literacy development is most successful when multiple stakeholders work together to create supportive learning environments that reflect local contexts and community needs.

Community awareness regarding the importance of literacy and cultural preservation also contributed significantly to participation. Participants recognized that socio-cultural literacy plays an important role in maintaining local identity, strengthening social relationships, and preparing younger generations for future challenges. This awareness motivated residents to engage actively in literacy activities and support efforts aimed at preserving cultural knowledge. The findings suggest that literacy programs are more likely to succeed when communities understand their broader social and cultural benefits rather than viewing literacy solely as an educational objective.

Despite the generally positive findings, the study also indicates the need for continued efforts to strengthen socio-cultural literacy in the face of modernization and globalization. Increasing exposure to digital media and external cultural influences may reduce opportunities for younger generations to engage with local traditions and cultural practices. Consequently, literacy initiatives should continue to integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary learning approaches in order to remain relevant and attractive to diverse community groups. Such integration can help ensure that socio-cultural literacy remains a dynamic and sustainable component of community development.

The findings demonstrate that socio-cultural literacy development in Bulukumba Regency is strongly influenced by active community participation, supportive cultural values, effective leadership, stakeholder collaboration, and public awareness. The study highlights that literacy development is most effective when it is rooted in local cultural contexts and supported by meaningful community engagement. Through collective participation, village communities not only contribute to literacy development but also strengthen cultural preservation, social cohesion, and sustainable community development.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that village community participation plays a vital role in the development of socio-cultural literacy in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi. Community involvement was evident in the planning, implementation, resource contribution, and evaluation stages of literacy initiatives, demonstrating that socio-cultural literacy development is a collective and community-driven process. The findings further reveal that strong local cultural values, supportive community leadership, collaboration among stakeholders, and public awareness of the importance of literacy and cultural preservation serve as key factors that encourage active participation. Through these forms of engagement, community members contribute not only to the enhancement of literacy practices but also to the preservation of local cultural knowledge, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the sustainability of community development efforts. Therefore, the success of socio-cultural literacy programs depends largely on the ability to foster meaningful community participation and integrate local cultural resources into literacy development initiatives

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