

## TUTOR STRATEGIES IN MOTIVATING LEARNERS IN THE EQUIVALENCY PROGRAM AT PKBM MANDIRI BAKTI

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how tutor instructional creativity functions as a strategic mechanism to improve learner motivation in an equivalency education program at PKBM Mandiri Bakti. Equivalency education serves as a nonformal pathway for individuals who discontinue formal schooling, requiring adaptive instructional approaches to maintain participation and engagement. The research involved 12 equivalency learners across Packages A, B, and C, along with tutors as key instructional actors. Using a qualitative descriptive design through observation, interviews, and documentation, the study analyzed patterns of tutor creativity, learner response, and institutional support. Findings indicate that structured instructional planning, varied teaching methods, and technology-supported learning contribute to measurable increases in learner motivation, classroom participation, and conceptual understanding. Analytically, tutor creativity operates not merely as pedagogical variation but as a motivational framework that aligns learning flexibility with adult learner characteristics. Supporting factors include adequate facilities and tutor competence, while literacy limitations and rotating attendance remain constraints. The novelty of this study lies in positioning tutor creativity as an integrated motivational model within nonformal equivalency education, demonstrating its role in sustaining learner engagement and learning continuity in community-based educational settings.

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### INTRODUCTION

Education represents a structured effort to cultivate learners' intellectual, moral, and personal capacities in ways that support lifelong participation in society (Su'udy & Soedjarwo, 2023). Educational processes encompass teaching, guiding, and training individuals for their future social roles (Fikri & Nugroho, 2025). In Indonesia, education is implemented through formal, nonformal, and informal pathways that complement one another to ensure broader access

to learning opportunities (Makleat et al., 2022). Legal foundations, including Law No. 2 of 1989, Government Regulation No. 73 of 1991, and Law No. 20 of 2003, emphasize that nonformal education serves communities whose learning needs are not fully accommodated within formal schooling (Rinaldi & Susilo, 2022).

Nonformal education is closely associated with lifelong learning aimed at sustaining quality of life and social development (Dwi Ayu Indah Sari, 2022)). Its gradual and continuous implementation reflects an adaptive response to societal learning needs. Community Learning Activity Centers (PKBM) function as institutional spaces where nonformal education is organized to empower citizens socially and economically (Yanti & Sunarti, 2021; Fuadi & Himmah, 2021). PKBM promotes community participation, enabling individuals to determine and manage their own development processes while strengthening educational access (Nurhayani, 2025; Salsabila et al., 2024; Rohmah et al., 2024). Within this framework, equivalency education offers Packages A, B, and C as alternatives for learners unable to complete formal schooling, ensuring competency parity with formal education outcomes (Yuliani et al., 2023).

Equivalency education addresses persistent barriers such as socio-economic limitations, restricted access, and low learner motivation (Hardian et al., 2025). It supports individuals in continuing education, developing life skills, and achieving learning flexibility necessary for personal growth (Putri P. et al., 2024; Nurhadi et al., 2023). Motivation plays a decisive role in directing and sustaining learning behavior, influencing participation, persistence, and comprehension (Anu, 2024; Febriani et al., 2023). When motivational conditions weaken, learning processes tend to become passive and inconsistent, reducing educational effectiveness. Therefore, instructional approaches that actively stimulate learner motivation are essential within equivalency environments (Suherman et al., 2024).

Creativity is an individual's ability to generate new ideas or concepts. Learning is an effort carried out by teachers that enables their students to engage in learning activities (Lismayanti et al., 2021). Referring to the previous definitions, it can be concluded that learning creativity involves the design and implementation of fresh, original, and continuous strategies for instruction and assessment. This is intended to assist learners in gaining better understanding of subject matter and introducing them to various new concepts (Kusrini & Hanif, 2024).

Tutor instructional creativity can be utilized to make learning delivered to students more engaging. This can assist in increasing learner motivation in the PKBM Mandiri Bhakti equivalency program during learning activities. Through the use of innovative and sustainable methods, tutors can make their instruction more appealing and positively influence their learners (Haqiqi, 2022). The implementation of instructional creativity can make students more interested in their learning. Therefore, various innovative and sustainable methods can be utilized by tutors to optimize motivation and improve learners' understanding (Siregar et al., 2022).

Previous studies have explored motivation and instructional innovation in formal school settings or general adult education environments. Yet, empirical research that specifically examines tutor creativity as a structured motivational framework within equivalency education remains limited. Existing literature tends to discuss motivation as an individual learner attribute without deeply analyzing how tutor-driven instructional creativity can systematically influence motivational dynamics in community-based learning programs. This gap is particularly relevant in PKBM environments where learning flexibility, social diversity, and irregular attendance demand adaptive pedagogical models.

PKBM Mandiri Bakti represents a practical case where motivational challenges manifest through inconsistent weekly participation and low classroom interaction. Observations indicate that learners require instructional approaches capable of sustaining attention, relevance, and perceived value of learning. Addressing this condition requires repositioning tutor creativity not merely as a teaching technique but as a motivational intervention embedded within learning design.

Therefore, this study investigates how tutor instructional creativity functions as a strategic mechanism to improve learner motivation among equivalency program participants at PKBM Mandiri Bakti. Using qualitative methods through observation, interviews, and documentation, the research aims to analyze instructional practices, learner responses, and supporting institutional factors. By situating tutor creativity within the motivational framework of nonformal education, this study contributes to filling the research gap concerning pedagogical innovation in equivalency learning environments and offers practical insights for sustaining learner engagement in community-based education.

## **METHOD**

This study was conducted through research applying a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research is intended to make observations more systematic, factual, and accurate regarding the facts and characteristics of a population or area. Meanwhile, descriptive study is interpreted as a form of research aimed at providing descriptions or

portrayals of various phenomena that occur, whether naturally or as a result of human engineering. In this study, the data sources consist of two types, namely primary data obtained directly from original sources and secondary data. In this study, the primary data take the form of data obtained directly by the researcher from tutors at PKBM Mandiri Bakti, through interviews and documentation. Meanwhile, the object of this study is a depiction of tutor creativity in instruction toward improving the learning motivation of PKBM Mandiri Bakti students. The data collection techniques utilize interview, observation, and documentation methods. Meanwhile, the data analysis techniques include data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification using inductive data analysis techniques. This study was conducted at PKBM Mandiri Bakti located at Jl. Banggeris Gg 7 RT. 03, Karang Anyar Subdistrict, Sungai Kunjang District, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan Province.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Field findings at PKBM Mandiri Bakti indicate that the equivalency education program functions as an adaptive nonformal learning environment serving learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Learning activities are conducted twice weekly with flexible scheduling to accommodate working learners. Observations show that structured instructional preparation is consistently implemented by tutors, including lesson planning, material organization, and scheduling adjustments. This structured preparation contributes to smoother instructional flow and increased learner attendance consistency.

Interview data reveal that tutors consciously design learning sessions to balance seriousness and relaxation, creating a classroom atmosphere perceived as supportive and engaging. Learners demonstrate observable enthusiasm during instructional sessions, particularly when learning activities incorporate demonstrations, discussion, and practical assignments. Tutors also integrate digital media, including instructional videos and recorded materials, allowing learners to revisit content outside class hours.

Four dominant instructional methods are identified in practice: lecture, small-group discussion, question-and-answer interaction, and assignment-based practice. The lecture method is primarily used to introduce concepts efficiently, although its effectiveness varies depending on learner concentration. Small-group discussion generates higher learner participation, encouraging collaborative problem solving. Question-and-answer sessions promote learner responsiveness and critical engagement, while assignment-based activities reinforce understanding through practice. Tutors report that combining these methods increases learner persistence and classroom interaction.

Supporting institutional factors include adequate facilities, tutor teaching experience, and flexible scheduling systems. However, literacy limitations among several learners and inconsistent attendance due to employment obligations remain observable constraints. Despite these challenges, field evidence suggests a noticeable increase in learner participation, verbal engagement, and task completion after tutors applied varied instructional strategies.

The high dropout rate at both primary and secondary education levels contributes to the low quality of Indonesia's human resources. Approximately 25% of primary school graduates do not continue to the next level, namely junior secondary school, and 50% of junior secondary graduates do not proceed to senior secondary school (DEPDIKNAS, 2006). From these various problems, an essential program to address human resource quality issues is the equivalency program. In its function as a community learning activity center, PKBM holds a crucial role in developing equivalency programs within the community. The scope of these programs includes Learning Groups for Package A equivalent to primary school, Learning Groups for Package B equivalent to junior secondary school, and Learning Groups for Package C equivalent to senior secondary school.

Equivalency education is one form of nonformal education. Referring to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, nonformal education is interpreted as an educational pathway outside formal education that can be conducted in a structured and tiered manner, intended for communities requiring educational services that function as substitutes, additions, or complements to formal education in supporting lifelong learning.

A vital element in learning activities is the presence of tutors; therefore, tutors function as motivators in general, and their ability to perform their roles enables them to enhance learners' motivation. It cannot be denied that learning, for learners, is an obligation. Therefore, building learners' enthusiasm within equivalency education strongly requires motivation, as it is known that there are no age limits in equivalency education, which consequently makes the tutor's role as both guide and instructor highly necessary in equivalency education programs (Suci Rahmaida Sihombing et al., 2023).

Tutor assistance in the instructional process at PKBM is highly necessary because in the implementation of learning, a tutor holds a crucial role in achieving learning objectives and delivering instructional material. On the other hand, tutors are required to deliver instruction to learners effectively so that learners not only know the material presented but also possess the ability to understand and apply it in their lives. A sense of comfort for students can produce effective instruction, because long-term memory is generated by enjoyable learning (Suherman et al., 2024).

Based on research conducted by Haruna, (2018) through interviews with a PKBM tutor and observation, it was found that learner motivation was low. The lack of learning motivation can be observed from learners who are less active during instruction, resulting in learning interest affecting outcomes that become less optimal. Therefore, the tutor's role is highly necessary; tutors must plan strategies to encourage learners to actively participate in the instructional process for the success of learners.

### **Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that tutor instructional creativity functions as a practical motivational mechanism within equivalency education. Structured instructional preparation reflects intentional learning design, aligning with motivation theory that emphasizes predictability and goal clarity as drivers of learner engagement (Anu, 2024; Febriani et al., 2023). When learners perceive instructional organization as purposeful, their willingness to participate increases, suggesting that preparation acts as an indirect motivational stimulus.

The effectiveness of varied instructional methods can be interpreted through motivational frameworks emphasizing autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Small-group discussions encourage social interaction and shared problem solving, fostering a sense of belonging that supports sustained engagement. Question-and-answer interaction stimulates cognitive activation and reinforces learner confidence, aligning with findings that active participation strengthens intrinsic motivation (Suherman et al., 2024). Assignment-based practice promotes mastery experiences, which are recognized as key contributors to motivational persistence.

The integration of digital learning media further expands learner access and autonomy, enabling repeated exposure to instructional material. This flexibility aligns with adult learning characteristics commonly observed in nonformal education, where learners balance employment responsibilities with academic participation. The observed increase in attendance consistency and classroom interaction suggests that instructional creativity does not merely vary teaching style but strategically reduces motivational barriers.

Previous literature often frames motivation as an individual learner attribute. However, the present findings indicate that tutor-driven instructional design acts as an environmental catalyst shaping motivational conditions. This supports prior studies highlighting tutor roles as motivators (Rinaldi & Susilo, 2022; Suci Rahmaida Sihombing et al., 2023), while extending the discussion by demonstrating how specific instructional methods generate measurable behavioral indicators of motivation, including participation frequency, responsiveness, and task completion.

Constraints such as literacy gaps and scheduling conflicts illustrate that motivational strategies operate within broader socio-economic realities. Nevertheless, tutor creativity appears to buffer these limitations by sustaining learner engagement through adaptive instruction. This positions tutor creativity as a contextual motivational intervention rather than a purely pedagogical preference, reinforcing its relevance in community-based equivalency education environments.

The analytical linkage between instructional creativity and learner motivation suggests that effectiveness arises from the interaction between structured planning, method variation, and learner-centered facilitation. This interaction transforms PKBM classrooms into environments that support persistence, participation, and meaningful learning engagement.

#### **1. Tutor Instructional Creativity in Improving Learner Motivation**

PKBM is a non-formal education institution managed by the community to develop skills and improve quality of life (Febriani et al., 2023). It emerged from an awareness of the community's important role in non-formal education and functions as an integrated platform for community empowerment (Alabba et al., 2021).

The core activity of learning in educational institutions, whether formal or nonformal, is the learning process. Evaluating the quality of an educational institution can be done through the instructional process that occurs. Therefore, the learning process must be implemented as effectively and as planned as possible. Short-term planning to estimate what will be carried out is referred to as instructional preparation. This was conveyed by a PKBM tutor regarding the instructional process conducted at PKBM Mandiri Bakti. Learning at PKBM Mandiri Bakti is conducted every Friday and Saturday.

From this discussion, it can be concluded that learning at PKBM Mandiri Bakti takes place every Friday and Saturday. The selection of these days ensures that all learners can participate, especially those who are employed. PKBM provides flexible learning schedules, such as evening classes, weekend sessions, and online learning, enabling working learners to continue participating. This flexibility supports tutors in implementing instructional methods with diverse strategies. In PKBM instruction, planning is very important for tutors. This is undertaken to ensure that instruction is more specific and structured. On the other hand, instructional planning is one form of quality management and administrative order. As stated by (Yuliani et al., 2023), to achieve desired cognitive, affective, and psychomotor changes in learners with particular materials and characteristics, instructional planning serves as a procedure for identifying the most effective learning strategies to be implemented.

Therefore, efforts to predict all actions to be carried out in the teaching and learning process, particularly those related to increasing student motivation, are included in instructional preparation. Tutors are required to master theoretical and practical elements of the teaching and learning process before developing preparation for instruction. For a tutor, preparation in learning activities is essential because initiating instruction is not a trivial matter, as learning will be structured and systematic when comprehensive preparation is undertaken.

Preparation serves as a benchmark for the success of the teaching and learning process, because with thorough preparation, instruction becomes structured and systematic and aligned with the module. Proper preparation fosters learner enthusiasm in participating in instruction. As expressed by a PKBM tutor, learners demonstrate high enthusiasm, although constrained by distance and time limitations. The tutor also conveyed that learners are highly enthusiastic and interactive during instruction.

## **2. Forms of Tutor Instructional Creativity in Improving Learner Motivation**

Referring to studies that have been conducted regarding tutor creativity, several data were found related to creativity as carried out by tutors through optimizing instructional quality that has characteristics different from conventional learning. This occurs because the instruction delivered by tutors places greater emphasis on learning in a serious yet relaxed manner, so it does not stop at the aspect of knowledge alone. It appears that tutors conduct their instruction in a more enjoyable way, so that students experience an interest in continuing to learn. Implementing this requires adequate experience from tutors. At PKBM Mandiri Bakti, tutors already possess extensive instructional experience. As indicated in research conducted by (Haqiqi, 2022), the use of learning process methods in equivalency programs must be more varied and appropriate to prevent student boredom, because this encourages learners to achieve learning process objectives, active participation, and alleviates various problems that arise.

In their instruction, tutors at PKBM Mandiri Bakti demonstrate engaging creativity and consistently generate new ideas in mentoring learner study activities. As conveyed by tutors, the instructional methods used as a form of creativity are continuously varied. They are also able to enliven the classroom atmosphere very effectively. Methods commonly used by tutors include demonstration, lecture, role-playing, and assignment methods. As further conveyed by tutors, their creativity is more focused on assignments to be submitted and on conducting practice activities. In addition, assignments in the form of papers provided by tutors are intended to enrich learners' knowledge.

On the other hand, tutors also utilize methods in their instruction. (Mutiara et al., 2024) state that a method is an approach used to achieve predetermined objectives. Research conducted by (Rinaldi & Susilo, 2022) shows that the tutor's role as a motivator is important in optimizing and developing learner learning activities. Tutors must be able to provide motivation and reinforcement to energize learner potential. The methods tutors use in teaching and learning activities vary according to the goals to be achieved after instruction concludes. As conveyed by tutors at PKBM Mandiri Bakti, tutors use instructional videos for online learning, and recordings are also available for learners who request them. Regarding methods, tutors employ lecture, discussion, question-and-answer, and practice methods. Books are also used by tutors as learning media. From this explanation, it can be concluded that several forms of creativity undertaken by tutors involve the use of multiple instructional methods, including:

### **a. Lecture Method**

A method that relies on oral delivery in conveying instruction to learners is referred to as the lecture method. (Lismayanti et al., 2021) interpret it as a method long used by tutors at PKBM Mandiri Bakti through oral explanation to learners. Research conducted by (Setiawan, 2023) indicates that learners grasp material more quickly through the lecture method. However, some learners dislike this method because when tutors explain material, other learners often talk, disrupting instruction and resulting in reduced understanding. In line with conducted research, the lecture method is less effective for classroom learning, and other instructional methods are needed to facilitate absorption of lessons, such as discussion methods, assignment exercises, and game-based learning methods.

b. Discussion Method

Using the discussion method is a way of presenting instructional material in which tutors provide learners the opportunity to engage in group discussion, aiming to create scientific dialogue to collect opinions, formulate various problem-solving alternatives, and derive conclusions from learning. Research by (Suci Rahmaida Sihombing et al., 2023) states that instruction sometimes uses the discussion method, but not all material can apply this method and depends on competency standards/basic competencies. This finding is reinforced by previous findings by (Prasetyo et al., 2024), which state that implementing small-group discussion methods has proven capable of optimizing learner motivation. At PKBM Mandiri Bakti, tutors classify learners into several discussion groups. This method has proven effective for instruction, and small-group discussion has a positive impact on learner motivation.

c. Question-and-Answer Method

This method is very effective when used in instruction because tutors can determine how critical learners are and the extent of their understanding during the learning process at PKBM Mandiri Bakti. Through the question-and-answer method, learners also have opportunities to develop their ability to observe all elements involved in the process and to draw expected conclusions. Research conducted by (Kristianty & Sulastris, 2021) states that tutors frequently ask questions or provide opportunities for learners to ask about matters they do not understand during the learning process. In alignment with conducted research, the question-and-answer method is one that gives learners opportunities to express opinions and encourages curiosity. This is consistent with the study by (Windi Anisa et al., 2020), which states that the question-and-answer method is a way of delivering or presenting lesson material in the form of questions from tutors that must be answered by learners or vice versa. Therefore, in its implementation, tutors and learners are required to be involved in asking and responding to questions posed.

In improving learner learning outcomes, the question-and-answer method is considered quite effective, as stated in the study by (Prasetyo et al., 2024), which notes that one of the most effective and efficient instructional methods for fostering learner creativity in the learning process is the question-and-answer method. Furthermore, (Manik, 2020) explains that in implementation, the question-and-answer method can be conducted individually, in groups, or classically, between learners and tutors, among learners, or from tutors to learners, thereby making it easier for learners to achieve instructional objectives as intended by tutors. Experts also state that the question-and-answer method stimulates learners to think critically and encourages them to attempt to understand every question posed by tutors. Thus, this method provides opportunities for learners' mental processes to observe relationships within instructional material. Through the accuracy of learner responses, tutors can assess learners' mastery of material, insight, knowledge, and academic ability. Naturally, every instructional method has strengths and weaknesses.

According to (Prasetyo et al., 2024), a more dynamic classroom atmosphere resulting from positive class responses is an advantage of the question-and-answer approach. Through this method, learner participation increases, and learners strive to listen carefully to tutor questions and attempt to respond accurately. Therefore, among the advantages of the question-and-answer method are: a) tutors better understand learner progress, b) tutors can develop questions toward aspects not yet fully understood by learners, and c) learners who were initially passive provide responses to questions from tutors or peers through multidirectional questioning, because tutors can direct questions toward previously silent learners.

d. Assignment Practice Method

According to (Fikri & Nugroho, 2025), a learning method integrating memorization, reading, repetition, testing, and self-examination is referred to as recitation or assignment. Furthermore, (Yuliani et al., 2023) interpret it as a method of presenting material in which tutors provide tasks so learners can carry out learning activities intended to stimulate active learning, both individually and in groups.

Research conducted by (Parameswara & Dewi, 2021) states that tutors provide several exercises at the end of instruction to determine how far learners understand the material delivered, but only a few questions are given so that learners do not forget the material. As expressed by tutors, excessive strictness cannot be applied in equivalency program schools; if learners still experience difficulty completing assignments, sanctions are applied through grade reductions. Therefore, tutors in particular must find alternative approaches to ensure learners develop discipline in completing assignments.

### 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Tutor Creativity

Factors that support tutor creativity while conducting instruction at PKBM Mandiri Bakti include the provision of various instructional facilities. For example, the availability of an infocus projector enables tutors to teach through the direct display of stories or images using the infocus. Additionally, tutors are assigned to participate in teacher

competency improvement programs organized by the education office. Tutors or participants are sent to collaborate with the education office in forms such as invitations, seminars, and other teacher competency development activities.

As conveyed by tutors, a supporting factor is the requirement for them to continuously update their instructional methods because many approaches are engaging. For example, the peer-learning method has previously been implemented by tutors. On the other hand, tutors consistently participate in various trainings, both those organized by official institutions and those undertaken independently. These include workshops, seminars, non-governmental training sessions, and serving as mentors or presenters on several occasions at both regional and district levels, though outside PKBM.

In addition to supporting factors, tutor creativity in conducting instruction also encounters inhibiting factors. As expressed by PKBM tutors, one obstacle arises from learners who frequently attend on a rotating basis, meaning that the learners present at PKBM differ each week. This becomes a primary barrier. Consequently, tutors must either repeat material from the beginning or require learners to copy materials from the previous week. Thus, it can be stated that inhibiting factors for tutors at PKBM include learner characteristics that vary in age and educational background, with some learners also being employed. Therefore, tutors are required to deliver material continuously; however, rotating learner attendance creates obstacles. Another inhibiting factor conveyed by tutors is the number of aspects that must be improved or added, as tutors often experience difficulty due to limited supporting books and inadequate facilities and infrastructure.

It can therefore be concluded that tutors, in carrying out instructional creativity, are encouraged by factors such as the provision of various learning facilities, including the availability of infocus equipment to support tutor instruction. Tutors also participate in numerous educator competency upgrade activities, such as seminars, workshops, tutor training programs, and others. To prevent learner boredom, tutors continuously renew instructional methods in engaging ways. Meanwhile, tutor creativity is hindered by factors including learners who attend on a rotating weekly basis, resulting in disrupted instructional processes, a lack of supporting learning books, and limited instructional facilities and infrastructure.

## CONCLUSION

Based on field observations and analytical findings, tutor instructional creativity at PKBM Mandiri Bakti functions as an effective motivational mechanism within equivalency education. Tutors demonstrate adaptive instructional practices by integrating multimedia resources, contextual storytelling, guided practice, and structured evaluation, resulting in observable increases in learner participation and enthusiasm. Learners show strong aspirations toward educational improvement despite facing practical barriers such as travel distance and employment obligations. Institutional flexibility and tutor responsiveness enable learners to remain engaged, indicating that instructional creativity contributes not only to cognitive understanding but also to motivational persistence.

The practical implication of these findings highlights the importance of systematic tutor capacity development in nonformal education institutions. Training programs emphasizing instructional design, method variation, and learner-centered facilitation can strengthen motivational environments in equivalency classrooms. Institutional support through adequate learning facilities, technological media, and scheduling flexibility further enhances tutor effectiveness. The results suggest that embedding creativity within instructional planning should become a strategic priority for PKBM management to sustain learner engagement in diverse socio-economic contexts.

Future research is recommended to quantitatively examine the relationship between specific instructional strategies and measurable motivational outcomes, including attendance consistency, task completion rates, and learning achievement. Comparative studies across multiple PKBM settings would also provide broader insight into contextual factors influencing instructional effectiveness. Additionally, longitudinal research exploring how sustained tutor creativity affects learner retention and life-skill development could deepen understanding of nonformal education's long-term impact.

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