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EDUTAINMENT IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPING READING AND WRITING LITERACY: A MULTI-CASE STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND MADRASAHS

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Tatag Satria Praja

Universitas Muhammadiyah Lamongan, Indonesia (praja684@gmail.com)

Husniyatus Salamah Zainiyati

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia (husniyatussalamah@uinsby.ac.id)

Hanun Asrohah

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia (hanunasrohah@uinsby.ac.id)

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ABSTRACTS

Background: Edutainment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools and madrasas has the potential to develop comprehensive, critical, and reflective reading and writing literacy in line with the demands of 21st-century education. Indonesia's low literacy level, as indicated by PISA assessments, highlights the need for innovative and inclusive educational approaches. **Purpose:** This study explores how edutainment develops reading and writing literacy in PAI learning, identifying implemented activities and analyzing their impact at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya and MI Narrative Quran Lamongan. Method: This research uses a qualitative approach with a multicase study design; data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, surveys, and documentation. Informants included 20 interview participants and 40 students for the survey. Data analysis included reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, with triangulation ensuring data validity. Results: The results show that edutainment in developing reading and writing literacy in PAI encompasses six elements: learning environment, interactive media, educational games, literacy activities, project-based evaluation, and creative expression, known as the EDULITA concept. Reading and writing literacy within EDULITA goes beyond understanding, analyzing, and communicating information by integrating creativity, interaction, and reflection. Activities such as interactive quizzes, musicalization, group discussions, video watching, storytelling, and project-based literacy positively impact students' comprehension, analysis, communication, and creativity. Conclusion: Edutainment facilitates the development of students who are more creative, critical, and reflective and who can internalize Islamic values in PAI learning.

A. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, reading and writing literacy has become a crucial skill for students as technological advancements increasingly impact various aspects of life, including access to information and communication patterns (World Economic Forum, 2020). Information is now accessible anytime and anywhere, emphasizing the importance of reading and writing literacy skills, particularly the ability to read and write effectively. Reading and writing literacy goes beyond reading comprehension; it includes analytical, critical, and reflective abilities that help students connect information with real-life experiences and societal contexts (Kurniawan & Putri, 2021). These skills enable students to understand, communicate, and apply information effectively, making literacy fundamental for personal development and academic success (Sari, 2020). Foundational reading and writing literacy skills, especially reading and writing, are particularly significant for primary school students as they support cognitive growth, social development, and expressive capabilities (Permatasari, 2021).

National efforts to promote reading and writing literacy among students in Indonesia have included government programs such as the School Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Sekolah or GLS) and the Madrasah Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Madrasah or GELEM). GLS and GELEM encourage schools and madrasahs to integrate reading and writing practices into daily routines, requiring students to read for 10–15 minutes before the start of the school day. This initiative aims to foster lifelong reading habits and create a literate environment within educational institutions (Mardiani et al., 2021). In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has promoted integrating reading and writing literacy within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to cultivate students' critical and creative thinking skills (Kemenag, 2020).

Despite these initiatives, Indonesia still faces significant challenges in improving literacy levels. The most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report (2022) indicates that Indonesian students' reading literacy remains below the global average, with an average score of 359, significantly lower than the OECD average of 497. This low literacy level places Indonesia at 70th out of 80 assessed countries. Factors contributing to low literacy levels include a tendency among students to use digital devices primarily for entertainment rather than educational purposes (Suyadi, 2020). Data suggests that approximately 75 million Indonesian children spend more time on gadgets than on reading activities, with daily screen time often exceeding 300 minutes (Ramadhani & Sulistiyo, 2021). This reliance on digital entertainment over reading indicates a need for strategies that integrate engaging, literacy-rich experiences into educational practices.

In Islamic teaching, the significance of reading and writing is emphasized in the Quran, particularly in Surah Al-'Alaq verses 1–5, where Allah commands the Prophet Muhammad to "Read" highlight. It highlights the pen as a tool of knowledge. This foundational teaching underscores reading and writing as pathways to knowledge and civilization, a view prominent Islamic scholars share (Shihab, 2019). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) provides an ideal context for reinforcing reading and writing literacy, as it also conveys religious values and encourages students to engage with the text in ways that foster critical thinking and self-reflection. Through PAI, students develop essential reading and writing literacy skills needed for understanding religious teachings, articulating thoughts, and applying Islamic values in daily life (Sukardi, 2021).

In this context, integrating "edutainment" into PAI offers an innovative solution for enhancing reading and writing literacy skills. Edutainment combines educational content with entertainment elements to create a dynamic, interactive learning environment that fosters student engagement. This approach has shown potential for literacy development by using storytelling, interactive media, and educational games to encourage active participation and more profound understanding (Nurhayati & Rahmawati, 2020). Through edutainment, students are not passive recipients of information but encouraged to engage critically and creatively with the material, enhancing their analytical and reflective skills (Handayani, 2021). Additionally, edutainment addresses the limitations of conventional teaching methods by providing an inclusive, student-centered environment that inspires intrinsic motivation and literacy development (Arsyad & Wahyuni, 2019).

Edutainment can be particularly impactful in the primary school context, where foundational reading and writing literacy skills are crucial for academic success. Research suggests that edutainment activities like story-based digital games, creative writing prompts, and thematic play can improve student engagement and foster a stronger connection to learning content (Yulianti & Mulyadi, 2022). For instance, primary students engaged in writing exercises through story creation or participating in theme-based creative writing experiences improved literacy skills and increased motivation. Such activities also serve as tools for literacy and platforms for creativity, collaboration, and personal expression (Pratama et al., 2021).

Furthermore, edutainment strategies enhance students' intrinsic motivation, a key factor in reading and writing literacy learning (Pratama et al., 2021). Intrinsic motivation in literacy enables students to exercise autonomy and take ownership of their learning process, making it a powerful tool in a student-centered educational approach. For PAI, edutainment can provide a practical framework that links reading and writing literacy with religious understanding. Digital games or interactive storytelling activities focused on Quranic verses or Islamic moral values, for example, reinforce literacy skills and deepen students' comprehension of Islamic teachings (Siregar & Haryono, 2021).

Given this background, this study aims to explore the role of edutainment in enhancing reading and writing literacy skills within the PAI framework in primary schools. The study focuses on two educational institutions implementing edutainment approaches: SD Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya and MI Narrative Quran Lamongan. The primary objectives are to identify practical edutainment activities that promote reading and writing literacy in PAI and to evaluate the impact of these activities on students' reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

B. METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative field research approach to examine the implementation of edutainment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and its impact on reading and writing literacy skills at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya and MI Narrative Quran Lamongan. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with 20 key informants (such as school principals, curriculum coordinators, innovation teams, PAI teachers, and students), classroom observations focusing on edutainment activities and student engagement, questionnaires distributed to 40 students to assess their perceptions of edutainment's effectiveness in enhancing literacy skills, and analysis of

relevant documents such as curricula, teaching materials, and records of literacy activities. Data analysis followed Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, which encompasses data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of edutainment's role in developing reading and writing literacy within PAI (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). To enhance validity, triangulation across data sources and methods was applied, supported by prolonged field engagement and member-checking with participants to ensure the reliability and credibility of findings, in line with Creswell and Poth's qualitative research standards (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Education Learning in Schools and Madrasas

The research findings indicate that the edutainment approach to developing reading and writing literacy in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at schools and madrasahs encompasses six elements: learning environment, interactive media, educational games, literacy activities, project-based evaluation, and creative expression. This approach integrates creativity, interaction, and reflection across three literacy stages, pre-reading, reading, and post-reading, to enhance students' listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. As a result, researchers have identified a new concept that combines edutainment and literacy to develop reading and writing literacy in PAI learning at schools and madrasahs, called the EDULITA concept (Edutainment and Literacy). The EDULITA (Edutainment and Literacy) concept integrates edutainment elements to enhance literacy in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). EDULITA adds interaction, reflection, and creativity to the three core components of reading and writing literacy described by Fountas and Pinnell: comprehension, analysis, and communication (Fountas & Pinnell, 2020). It aims to develop reading and writing literacy in PAI instruction at schools and madrasahs.

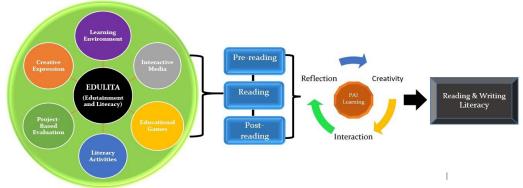


Figure 1: Edutainment in Developing Reading and Writing Literacy in Islamic Education (PAI) Learning in Schools and Madrasas

Figure 1 illustrates the EDULITA concept in developing reading and writing literacy in Islamic Education (PAI) learning in schools and madrasas. The EDULITA concept includes six main elements: learning environment, interactive media, educational games, literacy activities, project-based evaluation, and creative expression, which interact to create a fun and meaningful learning experience. The literacy stages consist of pre-reading, reading, and post-reading, applied within the context of PAI learning. Each literacy stage is supported by interaction, reflection, and creativity within

the learning process, enabling the development of students' reading and writing literacy (comprehension, analysis, communication) in PAI material more effectively.

a. Learning Environment

The learning environment is fundamental to effective education. EDULITA's learning environment fosters a religious atmosphere, going beyond physical space to cultivate spiritual values. This environment includes facilities like libraries, prayer rooms, or discussion areas in mosques, providing students with spaces that not only support religious reading and writing but also immerse them in the spiritual depth of the texts. According to Marie Clay's literacy theory, a rich environment supporting emotional and cognitive growth is crucial for literacy development (Clay, 2020). Research by Zhang and Wang (2019) found that social interaction within learning environments enhances students' motivation and interest in literacy. EDULITA's learning environment expands beyond classrooms, incorporating reflective spaces that help students connect with PAI texts. The design caters to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles, enhancing students' engagement and comprehension.

b. Interactive Media

Interactive media is another core element in EDULITA, designed to accommodate diverse learning styles through visual and auditory tools. Mayer's Multimedia Theory suggests that interactive tools such as videos and digital apps engage multiple sensory channels, promoting deeper learning (Mayer, 2020). Prasetyo and Andayani (2021) demonstrated that using interactive media in PAI instruction improves literacy skills while providing a dynamic, enjoyable learning experience. For example, interactive videos on the stories of prophets or digital Quran apps offer engaging visuals and sound, aiding comprehension. At the post-reading stage, interactive media supports reflection, with tools like quizzes and video reviews enabling students to test understanding and strengthen literacy skills. Hernandez and Gallo (2022) found that such reflective tools support critical literacy, prompting students to relate textual values to real life.

c. Educational Games

Educational games in EDULITA enhance students' motivation and understanding of reading and writing literacy. Self-directed learning through games demonstrates that educational games can independently build literacy skills (Mitra, 2021). Games foster autonomy, competence, and connection, increasing intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2020). In EDULITA, games are used at every stage of reading and writing literacy to engage students' interest. For example, during the pre-reading stage, games spark curiosity about the text, while in the reading stage, games introduce challenges that encourage active literacy engagement. Educational games also help students develop critical thinking skills. Bloom's taxonomy emphasizes skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating—essential for literacy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2019). Text-based games that include religious narratives strengthen logical thinking and reinforce moral values. Studies by Yee (2021) show that such games, which require problem-solving and decision-making, enhance critical and analytical skills.

d. Literacy Activities

Literacy activities in EDULITA develop students' critical thinking and reflection on religious texts. Fountas and Pinnell's theory emphasizes that compelling reading and writing literacy activities should include comprehension, analysis, and communication (Fountas & Pinnell, 2020). Literacy activities in EDULITA encourage reflection,

collaboration, and creative expression, engaging students with content on a deeper level. In pre-reading, students engage in context-building activities to establish background knowledge. Bruner's scaffolding theory highlights support structures to help students understand complex texts, primarily abstract religious concepts. Hernandez and Gallo (2022) reported that context-based reading and writing literacy activities enhance student understanding and engagement. In the post-reading stage, journaling and creative projects encourage students to explore religious values in real-life contexts.

e. Project-Based Evaluation

Project-based evaluation in EDULITA offers comprehensive assessment by engaging students in relevant, practical projects. Fullan's Project-Based Learning Theory asserts that projects enable critical thinking, collaboration, and practical application (Fullan, 2019). In EDULITA, collaborative projects like creating videos or articles on religious values allow students to apply literacy skills in real-world settings, enriching their learning experience. Project-based collaboration aligns with Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, as students can express understanding through visual, auditory, or kinesthetic modes (Gardner, 2020). Projects involving religious text interpretation encourage group discussions, fostering literacy that is reflective, collaborative, and critical (Alon et al., 2021).

f. Creative Expression

Creative expression in EDULITA enables students to convey their understanding of texts uniquely and personally. According to Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, creative expression allows students to engage in various forms based on their preferences, including visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (Gardner, 2020). EDULITA expands reading and writing literacy beyond comprehension by adding creative outlets, allowing students to blend understanding, reflection, and creativity. Sugata Mitra's edutainment theory suggests that learning involving creativity and emotional engagement boosts motivation (Mitra, 2021). Creative expression helps students view learning as meaningful and enjoyable, strengthening their connection to the material. Additionally, creative projects help build essential visual and digital literacy skills, which are crucial in the modern era (Childs & Stevens, 2021).

Consequently, the EDULITA concept, integrating literacy theory from Fountas and Pinnell, Sugata Mitra's edutainment principles, and David Ausubel's meaningful learning approach, provides a holistic literacy framework that extends beyond essential reading and writing skills. By incorporating six main elements: understanding, analysis, communication, reflection, interaction, and creative expression, EDULITA fosters a comprehensive learning experience that enhances technical literacy skills while promoting creativity, engagement, and meaningful reflection (Siregar & Haryono, 2021).

Edutainment Activities in Islamic Education Learning to Develop Reading and Writing Literacy in Schools and Madrasas

Edutainment activities in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning in schools and madrasahs aim to develop students' reading and writing literacy through an interactive and enjoyable approach based on edutainment activities (game activities, creativity, collaboration, media, expression, and literacy). As a result, edutainment activities include interactive quizzes, musicalization, group discussions, video watching, storytelling, and project-based literacy, providing a varied and in-depth

learning experience. Interactive quizzes enhance listening skills and analysis, while musicalization and storytelling strengthen creative understanding and communication. Group discussions, video-watching support analysis, social interaction, and project-based literacy reinforce reading, writing, and critical analysis skills. The EDULITA concept integrates these elements to foster creativity, reflection, and active student engagement in the learning process, providing a comprehensive experience beyond text comprehension (Siregar & Haryono, 2021). Below is an explanation of these activities:

a. Interactive Quizzes

Interactive quizzes provide challenges and reinforce students' listening skills and comprehension of the material. According to research by Ali and Farooq (2021), well-designed quizzes can increase student motivation by involving them in a competitive learning process. Interactive quizzes promote critical thinking as students analyze questions and search for answers, which is essential for reading and writing literacy development. Fountas and Pinnell's literacy theory emphasizes that reading requires deep understanding and analytical abilities (Fountas & Pinnell, 2019). In PAI learning, interactive quizzes help students practice these skills in a fun and engaging manner. Nugroho's research (2020) shows that students who use interactive quizzes in Quranic learning significantly improve their ability to understand verses and rephrase them in their own words. These quizzes allow students to learn independently with instant feedback from the game, reinforcing their understanding of the concepts being learned. Learning through games is highly effective in facilitating the understanding of abstract concepts (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2020).

b. Musicalization

Musicalization is a creative activity that helps students understand religious texts in a novel way. Music influences emotions and enhances memory retention. In the EDULITA approach, musicalization involves students singing lyrics related to religious values, making it easier for them to remember and understand the material being taught. Musicalization acts as a bridge that connects religious understanding with positive emotional experiences. Students who engage in musicalization activities enhance their reading and writing literacy skills and deepen their mastery of religious values. Through musical experiences, students engage with religious teachings more deeply, helping them grasp the meaning of the lyrics they sing (Hargreaves & North, 2020). Research by Nunn (2021) shows that students involved in musicalization activities improve reading and writing literacy skills and strengthen their mastery of religious values. In practice, musicalization can be applied in various forms, such as creating songs based on the stories of the Prophets or moral values in Islam (Spink & McCoy, 2021). Musicalization helps students internalize the values better by connecting religious teachings to emotional lyrics.

c. Group Discussions

Group discussions are essential for developing critical thinking skills. Students engage in discussions, share viewpoints, and analyze texts in a collaborative setting. Group discussions not only enhance concept comprehension but also foster social skills. In EDULITA, group discussions support social interaction and deepen students' understanding of religious values in texts. According to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, learning occurs in social contexts where peer interactions enrich the learning experience (Gokhale, 2020). Research by Johnson and Johnson (2021) emphasizes that group discussions improve students' ability to listen, argue, and express their ideas

clearly. In PAI education, these discussions offer students the opportunity to question and reflect on the values within religious texts, helping develop communication and reading and writing literacy skills.

d. Watching Videos

Watching videos is an effective method for presenting information engagingly and educationally. Visual media helps simplify complex concepts. According to Rakes (2020), watching videos in education can improve students' understanding and provide more concrete context for the material. In EDULITA, videos related to religious stories or Islamic values present information visually and encourage students to reflect on the meaning and implications of what they watch. Engaging media allows students to become more deeply involved, enhancing their motivation and interest in the subject matter (Alharbi, 2021). Research by Kamarudin et al. (2020) shows that students who watch educational videos about religious education better understand and can explain the concepts taught more clearly than traditional teaching methods. Watching videos also helps students improve their reading and writing literacy skills as they are asked to organize and express thoughts based on what they watch (Hamdan, 2020).

e. Storytelling

Storytelling is highly compelling for conveying religious values, engaging and easily comprehensibly. This activity allows students to connect with the material emotionally. Storytelling enhances students' speaking and listening skills. In EDULITA, students are encouraged to listen to stories and retell or create their own stories related to religious values. Through storytelling, students are encouraged to think critically and reflect on the meaning of the stories. According to Morrow (2020), storytelling improves reading and writing literacy and helps develop empathy and a deeper understanding of religious teachings. Research by Daryanto (2021) shows that storytelling strengthens reading and writing literacy skills and helps students internalize moral values effectively. Jerome Bruner (2020) emphasizes that storytelling helps students understand the structure of language, characters, and narrative flow, which are crucial for reading and writing literacy development.

f. Project and Literacy

Project-based literacy integrates all the reading and writing literacy skills learned through applicable and relevant projects. These activities allow students to apply their reading and writing skills in real-life situations. According to research by O'Donnell and Patel (2021), project-based literacy increases student engagement and allows them to collaborate in groups, enhancing their analytical and collaborative skills. In the context of PAI, these projects can include writing reports on religious values, creating presentations, or community projects that apply these values in daily life. This approach strengthens reading and writing literacy and promotes critical thinking skills necessary in today's evolving world. Research by Kurniawan and Haris (2021) shows that students involved in project-based literacy activities have improved communication and analytical skills.

The Impact of Edutainment on Developing Reading and Writing Literacy in Islamic Education Learning in Schools and Madrasas

Edutainment positively impacts the development of students' reading and writing literacy, particularly in comprehension, analysis, and communication. Regarding comprehension, edutainment helps students learn in a more profound, more

enjoyable way while internalizing Islamic values. In analysis, edutainment encourages critical thinking and connects Islamic values to everyday life. In communication, edutainment boosts confidence, creativity, and practical speaking and writing skills. Additionally, edutainment promotes fluent literacy, making students more creative, critical, and reflective in understanding and communicating Islamic values. Based on the edutainment theory by Sugata Mitra, the literacy development theory by Fountas and Pinnell, and Ausubel's meaningful learning approach.

a. Comprehension Dimension

Edutainment in PAI fosters a deep, enjoyable, and contextual understanding of Islamic content. Combining educational elements with entertainment maintains students' attention and interest throughout the learning process. Studies indicate that students engaged in edutainment-based learning achieve better comprehension than those taught through traditional methods, as edutainment encourages active participation and involvement in learning (Hamdan et al., 2021). Furthermore, this method facilitates the internalization of Islamic values by making learning experiences relevant to students' daily lives, helping them connect religious teachings to real-world contexts (Fountas & Pinnell, 2020; Plass et al., 2021). Edutainment activities like quizzes and storytelling encourage reflective thinking, allowing students to link Islamic values with personal experiences (Rakes, 2020).

b. Analysis Dimension

Students' analytical skills are also enhanced through edutainment in PAI, fostering critical and reflective thinking. Group discussions and collaborative projects encourage students to view information from various perspectives. Research shows that students involved in group discussions develop better analytical skills by learning to consider diverse arguments and viewpoints (Gokhale, 2019). This is particularly valuable in PAI, where students must critically understand and apply Islamic values. Edutainment also promotes applying these values in everyday life, as students involved in literacy-based projects can better relate PAI content to their experiences (Kurniawan & Haris, 2021; Alharbi, 2020). Mitra's theory of learning emphasizes exploration and collaboration, which are the core of edutainment (Mitra, 2020). Edutainment nurtures curiosity and deepens their understanding of religious content by creating an environment where students learn from each other and explore content interactively.

c. Communication Dimension

Edutainment fosters students' confidence and creativity in verbal and written communication. Through presentations and discussions, students have opportunities to share their ideas confidently. Research shows that active participation in communication activities builds student confidence, an essential skill in PAI when discussing moral and ethical values (Bargh, 2021). Activities like storytelling and group discussions also develop practical communication skills, as storytelling improves speaking and listening skills (Morrow, 2020). Ausubel's meaningful learning theory reinforces the importance of linking new knowledge to prior experiences, helping students internalize religious values and apply them in real-life communication (Ausubel, 2019; Nystrand & Gamoran, 2020).

d. Reading and Writing Literacy Level

Edutainment in PAI learning is at the level of reading and writing literacy, known as literacy fluency, which refers to students' ability to comprehend texts and analyze and communicate them effectively. This level of literacy fluency is achieved when

students can process information more deeply through engaging and interactive activities, encouraging them to explore material critically and reflectively. In the context of edutainment, students are not only learning to master the material but also developing critical thinking and creative expression skills that align with Islamic values (O'Donnell & Patel, 2021). This approach helps students understand and articulate Islamic teachings more profoundly and meaningfully, making these values an integral part of their comprehension and daily lives (Anderson & Kim, 2020).

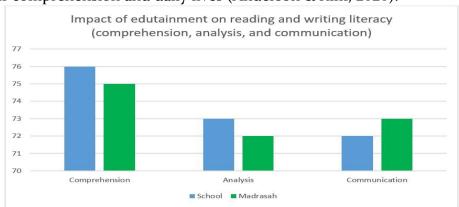


Figure 2. The Impact of Edutainment in Developing Reading and Writing Literacy in PAI Learning in Schools and Madrasahs

The bar chart in Figure 1 illustrates that the impact of edutainment has proven effective in developing reading and writing literacy levels in schools and madrasahs, as depicted by the data in the diagram. In schools, edutainment activities increased comprehension by 76%, analysis by 73%, and communication by 72%. In madrasahs, comprehension reached 75%, analysis 72%, and communication 73%. These findings emphasize the significant impact of edutainment on reading and writing literacy skills in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, as edutainment promotes more profound understanding, critical thinking, and effective communication. Additionally, with edutainment, students' literacy levels in both schools and madrasahs achieve literacy fluency by encouraging them to become more creative, critical, and reflective in their understanding and expression of Islamic values.

D.CONCLUSION

Education (PAI) learning in schools and madrasahs encompasses six elements: learning environment, interactive media, educational games, literacy activities, project-based evaluation, and creative expression. These six elements are integrated across three literacy stages (pre-reading, reading, and post-reading). This research resulted in the EDULITA (Edutainment and Literacy) concept, which broadens reading and writing literacy by incorporating creativity, interaction, and reflection as part of the learning process. Activities such as interactive quizzes, musicalization, group discussions, watching videos, storytelling, and project-based literacy have proven effective in supporting comprehensive literacy development. The positive impact of edutainment on comprehension helps students learn more deeply and enjoyably while internalizing Islamic values. In analysis, it encourages critical thinking and connects Islamic values to everyday life. Communication enhances confidence, creativity, and practical speaking and writing skills.

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