Improving Children's Literacy Culture through The Provision of a Mini Reading Garden

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Abstract. The habit of reading or literacy culture in today's society is lacking. The influence of online digital developments and the use of gadgets for children has had a huge impact on society in the habit of reading books, the culture of playing children's games in the past and the habit of reading have almost disappeared, replaced by games on devices. Therefore, it is hoped that efforts to provide infrastructure facilities for reading, especially for children, can provide new enthusiasm so that their daily activities are not only spent playing with gadgets. This reading place is provided near the TPA learning area which has become a routine activity for children every afternoon. So that in addition to learning to read the Qur’an, it can be interspersed with time to read Islamic story books which can provide insight into children's knowledge of Islam by using the media of story books of Islamic stories.

Keywords: children, culture, literacy

1 Introduction

Literacy culture in Indonesia still needs to be improved. Even though literacy has become an important issue in the educational and social world in Indonesia, there are still many Indonesian people who are not used to reading and writing well. Literacy culture in Indonesia is still relatively low, especially when compared to other developed countries. According to UNESCO data in 2016, the adult literacy rate in Indonesia is 95.4%, but the literacy rate is still low, namely only 60.02 %. This shows that even though Indonesian people are able to read and write, they are still lacking in understanding and utilizing the information obtained.

The factors that affect low literacy in Indonesia personally are definitely influenced by the lack of interest from the Indonesian people to read. They still view reading as a boring and uninteresting activity, which can be caused by a lack of access to interesting books (there are still many areas in Indonesia that are difficult to reach and have limited access to books and literacy sources, both due to geographical factors and economical). Economically, the high level of poverty and social inequality in Indonesia makes most people prefer to make a living rather than develop literacy skills. Awareness of the importance of reading is still lacking (many Indonesian people do not realize how important literacy is in improving one's abilities, awareness, and ultimately, their quality of life).

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both in terms of education, career, and social life). Also, there is an influence from the surrounding environment which is not supportive (lack of support from the government and society to increase literacy, such as book reading activities, book discussions, and so on).

Reading cannot be separated from the learning process. Putra 3 stated that a nation’s reading culture or reading habit is often a benchmark for the progress or civilization of a nation. A high reading culture in society shows the development of civilization as well as science and technology. Along with this, Somadoya 4 argues that reading is one of the language skills that students need to have besides the other three language skills. Reading activities for students are not only carried out during class time but can be carried out in the school library in free time. Reading activities can also be done at home with directions from parents.

Therefore, there are also several factors that influence the low literacy culture in Indonesia which is caused by the learning conditions at school both internally and externally. The internal problems faced by schools include:

1. Limited facilities and infrastructure for reading, such as the availability and convenience of libraries, as well as the availability of various reading books.
2. Learning situations that do not motivate students to read certain books outside of textbooks.
3. Learning in the classroom is too focused on the teacher (teacher-centered learning).
4. Rare discussion activities that can encourage students to be motivated to read.
5. Lack of role-models, namely the teacher as a role model for students in reading.

Meanwhile, the external problems are:

1. The increasing use of electronic information technology.
2. The advancement of cell phones and the internet.
3. Many families who have not instilled the habit of having to read for their children tend to allow them to do other habits, such as watching television.
4. The affordability of people's purchasing power towards books.

Therefore, to improve literacy culture in Indonesia, the efforts need to be made are:

1. Encouraging interest in reading: This can be done through reading campaign programs, providing books that are interesting and relevant to the needs of the community, and forming reading clubs.
2. Improving access to literacy: The government and society can play a role in building adequate libraries and providing easily accessible literacy resources.

3. Increasing awareness of the importance of literacy: Education about the importance of literacy can be given from an early age, both in the family and at school.

4. The government and society need to pay attention to the development of education and library infrastructure throughout Indonesia, especially in remote areas.

5. Communities need to continue to be encouraged and directed to read books, participate in book discussions, and other literacy activities.

6. The government and the private sector need to increase the publication of local books and support the development of the publishing industry in Indonesia.

7. Support and incentives for authors and book publishers, such as scholarships and writing programs.

8. Increasing affordable and quick access to the internet and information technology to facilitate access to information and literature.

By increasing literacy culture in Indonesia, it is hoped that Indonesian people will become more educated, intelligent, and able to compete in an increasingly competitive globalization era.

However, currently, much efforts have been made to improve literacy culture in Indonesia, such as providing access to libraries and literature, effective reading training, developing a literacy culture among children, and community empowerment programs to improve literacy skills. All of these efforts are expected to help improve literacy and form a good literacy culture in Indonesia.

With these steps, it is hoped that it can improve literacy culture in Indonesia and make Indonesian society an intelligent and knowledgeable society. This service program is only focused on providing reading facilities for children so that they can foster a culture of literacy for them.

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2 Methodology

The method of implementing this activity offered to overcome the above problems are in stages and can be seen in the following diagram:
Persiapan

1. Observed the condition of the children in learning activities and enthusiasm for reading
2. Prepared a program with the community
3. Collected data on the need for facilities for making a reading garden for children

Pelaksanaan

1. Prepared building materials along with the need for reading books that would be provided in the reading garden
2. Made mutual cooperation and community service to build and create a reading garden for children

3 Results and Discussion

The Community Reading Center (TBM) in Sleman area continued to grow. The initiative to create a mini library for children as a place for them to play with reading activities had been well received by the local community. They really supported this initiative so that the community provided assistance and provided a location for a playground to be built accompanied by reading activities. Children's activities, in this case TPA activities, had been going well in this hamlet so that additional places for playing activities with facilities for reading Islamic stories and reading other books could add a new atmosphere for children, thus encouraging their enthusiasm in learning, especially reading books.

![Reading Garden](image1.png)

Figure 1. The activities of reading garden for children

This reading garden facility for children was realized by the synergy of the community service program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta and the hamlet community. In addition to providing additional
funds, the community also contributed labor by carrying out mutual cooperation and collective work to build this place. Meanwhile, the location used was by utilizing an empty yard of head of the neighborhood association (RT).

4 Conclusion

A literacy culture for the community requires synergy between the government and the community at the RT level as a government apparatus that is at the lowest level. The policies that have been made into government programs should be delivered widely and be felt by people at the lowest level, so that all people are aware of them.

It is often found that good programs at the central government level are not directly felt by the community because they have not been informed, both in terms of outreach and the provision of funds. Budget funds from the center often do not flow smoothly and are not directly felt by the grassroots community so that people often use community self-help.

Therefore, the community needs to be independent in making efforts to increase its community resources, and efforts to increase literacy culture in society which is increasingly being eroded, especially among children. It is hoped that with the addition of this reading garden, it can re-energize children in learning and reading books of knowledge. So that the scientific and religious insights they gain can develop not only through school but also from free time outside school. Their free time outside school is certainly longer than the time they spend at school and it is hoped that it can be utilized with positive activities.

References


