

Actualization of Literacy Seminar Program as A Strengthening of Children's Reading Interest in Elementary Schools in Cibodas Village, Lembang District

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ABSTRACT

In the era of Society 5.0, literacy is the ability to read, critically interpret and utilize information effectively. This study evaluates a literacy seminar to foster reading interest among fifth-grade students in Desa Cibodas, Kecamatan Lembang. The seminar aimed to counteract the declining number of active libraries and provide an engaging platform for young learners to develop literacy skills. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data collection methods included field observations, interviews, and documentation. The study involved 196 students from five elementary schools, reflecting a broad participation level. Findings indicate that the seminar significantly enhanced students' awareness of literacy's importance. The interactive sessions, incorporating storytelling, group reading, and discussions, created an engaging atmosphere that encouraged students to perceive reading as enjoyable rather than an obligation. One of the critical challenges observed was the lack of accessible reading materials due to the closure of village libraries. Despite this, the seminar served as a temporary yet effective intervention, rekindling students' enthusiasm for reading. The discussions emphasized how literacy is fundamental in preparing young learners for an increasingly digital society, where information processing and critical thinking are essential. The seminar's impact extends beyond immediate participation; it lays a foundation for sustainable literacy development, fostering a generation capable of adapting to Society 5.0. This initiative underscores the need for continued community efforts to sustain and expand literacy programs, ensuring long-term educational benefits for Desa Cibodas' students.



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1. Introduction

In the era of society 5.0, literacy skills are one of the most crucial things, especially for students at the elementary school level. It is important because education at the elementary school level is the main foundation for forming children's skills and knowledge. At this stage, children learn not only to recognize letters and numbers but also to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and the use of technology [1]. Strong literacy at this level will help them adapt to rapid technological changes and face future challenges, including utilizing technology for social good and everyday life (Jamison, 2005).

Literacy is a crucial basic skill for children to face future educational challenges. In the world of education, the term literacy is no longer foreign. In terms of language, literacy comes from Latin, namely literatus, which means a person who learns. Literacy is a person's ability to use potential and skills in

processing and understanding information when carrying out reading and writing activities. Initially, literacy was only known as reading and writing. However, the era is increasingly developing, so the term literacy has a broad meaning, namely not only reading and writing but also understanding information and critical thinking skills that will affect their intellectual development. UNESCO emphasizes the importance of literacy, stating that literacy is the right of every human being, and that literacy is the basis for lifelong learning. In an era of increasingly advanced globalization, children must have a high literacy level to compete globally [2]. However, the existing reality shows that reading interest among children, especially in elementary schools, is still relatively low. It is a challenge for the world of education, especially in areas where access to literacy sources is still limited, such as in Cibodas, West Bandung Regency.

According to the latest UNESCO data in January 2020, Indonesia is in the second lowest position in the world literacy ranking, indicating low reading interest among the community. UNESCO reported that only around 0.001% of the population has a reading habit, meaning that out of 1,000 people, only one is an avid reader [3]. In addition, a study was conducted on students' reading, mathematics, and science skills by INAP (Indonesia National Assessment Program), which stated that students' reading skills in Indonesia are still low, at only 46.83%. A study released by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, entitled *World's Most Literate Nations Ranked*, also strengthened this finding by placing Indonesia in 60th place out of 61 countries regarding reading interest. Indonesia is just below Thailand (ranked 59) and slightly above Botswana (ranked 61). Ironically, although in the category of literacy-supporting infrastructure, Indonesia is ranked higher than several European countries, this has not been able to significantly encourage people's reading interest.

Innovative steps are needed to stimulate reading interest and improve children's literacy skills. One strategic effort that can be made is through holding literacy seminars. This socialization aims to provide teachers, parents, and children with an understanding of the importance of literacy while also providing creative methods and approaches for children to optimize their reading skills. In the Cibodas area, West Bandung Regency, literacy seminars are one intervention expected to raise the spirit of learning and reading among elementary school students. By involving various stakeholders, this seminar can create positive changes in children's mindsets and reading habits, ultimately improving the quality of education in the area.

2. Method

The researcher used field research with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation Azhari [4]. Implementing community service activities uses a participatory approach, prioritizing assisted elementary schools' active role or involvement in Cibodas Village. Elementary schools in Cibodas Village that are assisted include SDN Buah Batu, SDN 1 Cibodas, SDN 2 Cibodas, SDN 4 Cibodas, and SDN Cibeunying. This activity will be carried out from 16-22 August 2024. The stages of implementation of this activity are planned as follows:

2.1. Socialisation and Coordination

This activity was carried out before starting the Literacy Seminar activity. The goal of holding socialization and coordination is to achieve good coordination with the parties involved and the parties who are the targets. This activity began with a meeting with the management of the Cibodas Village Library, which discussed the problems related to low literacy in elementary schools in Cibodas. Then, a plan was proposed to hold a Literacy Seminar, which is expected to raise the spirit of literacy among students at Cibodas Elementary School. Next, the researcher coordinates with the school that is the target of the activity. In this case, the researcher conveys the initial to final plan, including the outcome and follow-up plan for the Literacy Seminar activity.

2.2 Community Assistance

This stage is carried out after the socialization and coordination stages are completed. This stage is important for the success of the work program, namely the literacy seminar. Mentoring is done directly at the elementary school where the Literacy Seminar is held. The mentoring is carried out simultaneously with the Literacy Seminar in the form of mentoring reading story books together in the elementary school library in Cibodas Village. This mentoring is carried out so that students can understand that the ability to read and understand the contents of the reading is important in the 21st century so that they

are not easily fooled by hoax information. In addition, mentoring in the library also aims to bring children closer to reading books, both textbooks, novels, and story books, so the library's role runs optimally.

3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results in the field, the literacy rate of elementary school children in Cibodas Village is still relatively low. It is due to the school's lack of habituation that children's interest in reading is impacted. Efforts to improve must be made. Therefore, researchers provide alternative solutions by holding literacy socialisations that aim to increase awareness of the importance of literacy, especially for elementary school students. This Literacy Socialisation was attended by 196 fifth-grade students from five elementary schools in Cibodas Village. In this activity, the speakers were Mrs. Nia Kurniasih and Mr. Handri Sugandi, the Cibodas Village library managers. This Literacy Socialisation discussed storytelling techniques. This material was chosen because the researcher considered an easy way to introduce children to books is through stories. It is because a story has a plot that makes readers interested in continuing their reading. That way, students will find it easier to like reading books.

3.1 Literacy Socialisation Program in Cibodas Village, Lembang District

Literacy activities are generally associated with reading and writing. However, the Prague Declaration of 2003 emphasized that literacy also includes how a person communicates in society. Literacy means social practices and relationships related to knowledge, language and culture [5]. The UNESCO Declaration also highlights that information literacy involves identifying, determining, finding, evaluating, creating, organizing, using, and communicating information to deal with various problems. These abilities are important for every individual to participate in the information society and are part of the basic human rights related to lifelong learning [6].

Currently, the habit of reading is starting to disappear from school students. They only read books when there is a school assignment. Therefore, it is very important to instill awareness of the importance of reading early on in schools. Literacy activities are closely related to the learning process in schools, so there needs to be an understanding of this from the early education stage [7]. In Cibodas Village, from the results of coordination with the head of the Cibodas Village library, researchers found initial data showing that 17 libraries were established to support community reading activities. However, only 3 of these libraries are currently active and operating well. The decrease in active libraries is due to the low interest in reading among children, especially at the elementary school level.

To overcome this problem and increase reading interest among elementary school children, we launched a breakthrough in literacy Socialisation. This socialization is specifically designed for elementary school children in Cibodas Village to introduce them to the fun and educational world of reading. Socialization activities include various interactive activities such as reading together, literacy-based games, and story and discussion sessions involving children. With this literacy Socialisation, we hope to spark children's interest in books and reading. This program also aims to revive the spirit of using libraries in the village so that children will be more motivated to visit and utilize the existing library. In addition, this socialization is expected to strengthen the role of inactive libraries by stimulating reading interest and community participation.

The Literacy Socialization activity in Cibodas Village involved 196 fifth-grade students from five Public Elementary Schools. In addition to the presence of students, several teachers from each school also participated as companions. This assistance aims to provide direct guidance and emphasize the importance of literacy to students. Teachers play an important role in supporting this program by helping students understand the benefits of reading and encouraging them to be more actively involved in reading activities at school and home.

The socialization activities were carried out in three stages and systematically designed to optimize the program's impact. Each stage was arranged with a different focus, from introducing reading interests, developing critical reading skills, and strengthening independent reading habits. By involving five public schools at once, this program created a collaborative environment that allowed students from various backgrounds to interact and learn together, strengthening the spirit of reading among them. The first stage of this program involves in-depth coordination and socialization regarding Literacy socialization with state schools in Cibodas Village and the Head of the local Village Library. This step aims to build

solid cooperation to increase awareness and interest in reading among elementary school students. By involving various related parties, it is hoped that this socialization can run effectively and positively impact children's reading habits in schools while strengthening the role of the village library as a center for information and literacy resources. Researchers conducted socialization and coordination at elementary schools in Cibodas Village, including SDN Buah Batu, SDN 1 Cibodas, SDN 2 Cibodas, SDN 4 Cibodas, and SDN Cibeunying.



Fig.1 Completion of Literacy Materials by the Cibodas Village Library Manager



Fig.2 Reading assistance

The second stage is the implementation of a literacy Socialisation conducted by the authors and also village library officers regarding the importance of literacy which is carried out in every public elementary school in Cibodas Village, including at SD Negeri Buah Batu which was held on August 16, 2024, continued at SD Negeri 2 Cibodas which was held on August 19, 2024, then at SD Negeri 1 Cibodas and SD Negeri 4 Cibodas which were held on August 21, 2024, and finally at SD Negeri Cibeunying which was held on August 22, 2024, in this second stage the details of the activities include filling in material regarding the importance of literacy by the Village Library Manager and then reading assistance by the team for 15 minutes.



Fig.3 Implementation of the Storytelling Competition

The Third Stage is the implementation of the Storytelling Competition. This storytelling competition was a follow-up to the literacy Socialisation that had been held. Researchers collaborated with library managers, the community, and the Cibodas Village government in the storytelling competition. This storytelling competition was attended by 4 participants as representatives from their respective schools and two accompanying teachers.

From the three stages, literacy socialization impacts reading interest among elementary school students. From the results of an interview with the head of the village library, Mrs Nia Kurniasih, she explained that when the Cibodas village storytelling competition was held, it did not provide representatives due to the lack of reading interest from elementary schools. In the storytelling competition, 20 fifth-grade students participated in literacy socialization, which indicated increased reading interest among elementary school students in Cibodas village. Of the 20 participants, all had increased abilities in understanding the contents of the reading. Therefore, other programs are still needed to increase reading interest among elementary school children, such as revitalizing libraries in Cibodas Village so that more students visit the library or a literacy movement before studying because increasing interest in reading among elementary school children is expected to have a long-term positive impact on their academic development and form good reading habits from an early age. To encourage intellectual growth and creativity of children in the village.

3.2 Impact of Literacy Socialization Program on Elementary School Children's Reading Interest in Cibodas Village

The Literacy Socialization Program implemented at Cibodas Village Elementary School, Lembang District, significantly impacted children's reading interests. Through an interactive and creative approach, this program succeeded in attracting students' attention, increasing their interest in reading activities, and opening up new opportunities for them to develop literacy skills.

1. Increased Interest in Books

One of the main impacts of this program is the increasing interest of students in books. Before socialization, many children considered reading to be a boring activity and were limited to study materials. However, after attending the socialization, many students became more interested in fiction and non-fiction story books. The delivery of material through interactive story reading and interesting visual presentations made children more interested in exploring the world of reading outside of textbooks.

2. Increased Reading Frequency

The program also encouraged increased reading frequency among students. Data obtained through teacher observation showed that after the socialization, students borrowed books from the school library more often and were more actively involved in reading activities in class. Some students even started reading outside of class hours, such as during breaks or at home and showed pride in completing their books. It shows that the Socialization program has successfully changed students' reading habits to be more positive.

3. Increased Confidence in Reading

In addition to increasing reading frequency, the literacy Socialisation program also impacts students' confidence in reading. Through joint reading activities and interactive discussions during the socialization, students who previously felt less confident reading in front of their friends began feeling more comfortable. They were courageous in reading aloud in class and more active in literacy-related activities. This improvement is important because confidence is one of the keys to developing good literacy skills.

4. Parent and Community Involvement

Another positive impact is the increased involvement of parents and communities in supporting children's reading interests. This socialization not only involved students but also invited the participation of parents and community leaders to understand the importance of literacy at home and in the surrounding environment. Some parents began to pay more attention to their children's reading

habits at home. At the same time, the school community became more active in organizing activities that support literacy, such as reading together and book donations.

5. Improving Literacy Quality

In general, the literacy socialization program impacts increasing reading interest and the quality of students' literacy. Children who previously had difficulty reading or did not understand the text increased their reading ability after socialization. It can be seen from their ability to understand the story's contents, identify characters, and draw conclusions from the texts they read. It shows that this program has succeeded in making a positive contribution to the quality of literacy education in schools...

6. Changing Attitudes Towards Literacy

The Socialisation program also significantly changed attitudes towards the importance of literacy among students and teachers. Before the program, literacy was often only seen as part of the compulsory curriculum that had to be fulfilled. However, after the socialization, students and teachers began to see literacy as fun and important for their self-development. It created a more supportive environment for literacy growth in schools.

7. Challenges and Sustainability of the Program

Although these positive impacts are visible, several challenges need to be considered for the program's sustainability. One of them is maintaining children's interest in reading so that it remains high after socialization. It requires ongoing support from schools, teachers, parents, and the community. Therefore, follow-up programs such as reading clubs, story competitions, and literacy workshops must be held regularly to maintain and increase interest in reading. In addition, from the literacy Socialisation and storytelling competition, the winners will also be included in the district-level competition, in which initially the teachers did not think of sending their best students to participate. The literacy Socialisation and storytelling competition will also be carried out continuously by the management of the Cibodas Village library as a result of empowerment activities carried out by the service team. With these positive impacts, the Literacy Socialization Program in Cibodas Village has proven to be an effective initiative in increasing reading interest in elementary school children. It inspires the develop similar programs in other areas to strengthen literacy culture among the younger generation.

4. Conclusion

The literacy Socialisation activity held in several elementary schools in Cibodas Village is a strategic effort that has increased awareness and interest in reading among elementary school students. Through an interactive and participatory approach, this socialization provides an understanding of the importance of literacy and creates a pleasant learning atmosphere. Based on the results of the activity involving 196 fifth-grade students from five elementary schools in Cibodas Village, this socialization raised awareness of the importance of literacy. Although the number of active libraries in the village has decreased drastically, this socialization provides a positive alternative by bringing children closer to interactive and fun reading activities. Through three stages of implementation, namely socialization, socialization in each school, and storytelling competitions, there was an increase in students' ability to understand the contents of the reading. However, participation in the storytelling competition was still relatively low. It shows that there needs to be follow-up in the form of other programs, such as the revitalization of village libraries and literacy movements, before learning so that children's interest in reading can continue to be increased sustainably. Programs such as library revitalization and the implementation of literacy movements in schools can be concrete steps to maintain the momentum that has been created. Thus, this socialization will not only be a momentary trigger but will become a foundation for forming a strong reading culture for children at the elementary school level in Cibodas Village. This increase in reading interest will significantly contribute to the quality of education and intellectual development of the younger generation in the area.

Declarations

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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