

The Role of the Library in Fostering Students' Reading Habit: A Case in an Islamic Primary School

Khabibul Ikhsan
UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan
ihsanbibul@gmail.com

Abstract

Reading interest and reading skills are inextricably linked, fostering a reciprocal relationship that enhances overall literacy and comprehension. Cultivating a strong reading foundation from an early age is crucial, as it lays the groundwork for academic achievement, professional advancement, and personal fulfillment. This study delved into the realm of reading interest and library activities at MI Salafiyah Duwet Pekalongan City, seeking to unravel the intricate connections between these factors and their impact on student learning. The findings revealed that reading interest plays a pivotal role in enabling students to attain their educational objectives and refine their reading proficiency. Furthermore, the study underscored the library's transformative influence on fostering a passion for reading. Students who actively engage with library resources expand their knowledge base, cultivate a deeper appreciation for the written word, and develop a lifelong love of reading. Effective library management encompasses a three-pronged approach: organizing, mobilizing, and building. Organizing involves meticulously crafting a comprehensive library plan that encompasses the collection, staffing, and physical space. Mobilizing entails actively promoting the library's resources and services to the student body and the wider community. Building centers on maintaining the library's infrastructure, ensuring its continued functionality, and implementing necessary improvements to optimize its effectiveness.

Keywords: Effective library management, library activities, reading interest

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Introduction

According to UNESCO data, the interest in reading in Indonesia is very low. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) research results indicate that Indonesia's interest in reading is the second worst out of 65 countries surveyed worldwide, with Indonesia ranking 64th out of 65 countries. One of the problems faced is the decreased interest in reading among the public and the inadequate educational infrastructure, such as reading facilities, which makes reading activities difficult.

Masduki (1997) identified several factors causing the low reading ability of Indonesian students, including inadequate Indonesian language skills, weak reading interest, unsupportive school library conditions, and weak parental encouragement. This is a legitimate concern, as the surrounding environment is experiencing a reading crisis. In the current era, this significantly affects students' thinking. Students should be aware of the importance of reading books, as it not only benefits themselves but also the surrounding environment. With regular

reading, students' thinking will be more directed, and they can develop ideas to become a reality.

The development of good reading habits and interests should start as early as possible during childhood. Parents, especially mothers, and teachers, particularly in early childhood education institutions and primary schools, play a crucial role in this development. Reading interest and habits should be cultivated at home, and schools should nurture the reading interest and habits developed at home. The school library is one of the places for students' reading development, so access to books and various printed materials, as well as available time and a quiet and pleasant place for reading, are essential.

Reading interest is crucial for improving reading skills and expanding one's knowledge. It is driven by an individual's desire to read specific books or writings, which can grow and develop through motivation and enthusiasm for reading. A conducive environment, such as a family atmosphere at home, can help cultivate reading interest from an early age. Additionally, reading interest can be seen from the scope and content of the selected readings and the intensity of reading activities. Interest in specific readings and the joy derived from reading can also enhance an individual's reading interest. Therefore, reading interest is vital for helping an individual achieve optimal learning goals, improve reading skills, and expand their knowledge.

Cultivating a habit of reading is essential for personal development. With reading, human resources can be enhanced, and the desire to read should be inherent in individuals. This can be achieved by scheduling daily activities to allocate time for reading, as there are many benefits to be gained from the habit of reading. Children will become more confident and less likely to give up, especially in complex situations. This can have a positive influence on their surrounding friends. Several studies suggest that reading interest needs to be cultivated from an early age, and the library plays a role in cultivating reading interest through its collections, services, and activities.

Method

The research conducted in this study is classified as qualitative research, utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach to investigate and provide a comprehensive overview of the enhancement of students' reading interest through the library at MI Salafiyah Duwet in Kota Pekalongan. This methodological choice allows for an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study, capturing the nuances and context-specific details related to the students' reading habits and the role of the library in influencing these habits.

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered the primary data collection tool, emphasizing the importance of personal involvement and interpretation in gathering meaningful insights (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data to be collected in this research will encompass various forms of documentation, such as photos, images, and narrative texts. These diverse sources of information aim to provide a rich and multifaceted understanding of the factors influencing students' reading interest and the library's impact.

Data will be systematically collected through a combination of observation and interviews involving key stakeholders in the educational environment of MI Salafiyah Duwet. These sources include the school principal, teachers, library staff, and other relevant individuals associated with the research subject. This multipronged approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of perspectives and experiences, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the research topic.

To further enhance the robustness of the study, supporting data in the form of documents or explanations from external sources will be incorporated. This triangulation of data sources strengthens the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The chosen data collection techniques, including interviews, direct observation, and documentation, align with the qualitative research paradigm, emphasizing the exploration of real-world contexts and the interpretation of subjective experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach enables a nuanced analysis of the interplay between the library environment, pedagogical practices, and students' reading interest.

Results and Discussion

In the pursuit of educational excellence, fostering students' reading interest plays a pivotal role. This article delves into the strategies employed by MI Salafiyah Duwet in Kota Pekalongan to optimize its library's role in enhancing students' reading habits. Through observations, interviews, and qualitative analysis, the researcher explored the multifaceted impact of the library on students, examining the influence of dedicated librarianship, school leadership, and coaching initiatives.

The Role of the MI Salafiyah Duwet Library

The MI Salafiyah Duwet library emerges as a cornerstone in nurturing students' reading interest. The positive impact of the library on students is attributed to the librarian's consistent efforts in maintenance and effective management. Through observations and interviews, it becomes evident that the librarian actively works towards creating a conducive environment that captures students' interest in reading. The library is not merely a repository of books but a dynamic space that encourages students to cultivate a habit of reading.

The librarian's commitment to regular maintenance ensures that the library remains an inviting space for students. Effective management practices, such as organizing books, creating comfortable reading corners, and curating diverse reading materials, contribute to an environment that fosters a love for reading. The librarian's role extends beyond traditional duties, becoming a facilitator of an engaging and enjoyable reading experience.

Moreover, the MI Salafiyah Duwet library serves as more than just a physical space; it becomes an alternative that students find enjoyable. Beyond the curriculum, the library becomes a haven where students willingly spend their free time exploring literature. This shift in perception transforms the library from a mandatory resource to a voluntary, enriching space that contributes significantly to students' intellectual growth.

School Leadership's Support for Library Initiatives

The active support of the school principal is crucial in amplifying the impact of library initiatives. The school principal at MI Salafiyah Duwet not only recognizes the importance of the library but actively supports efforts to enhance students' reading interest through effective library management.

The library becomes a valuable resource for teachers, providing them with independent access to information during teaching sessions. The integration of the library into the teaching process underscores its significance in the overall educational landscape. The principal's recognition of the library as a valuable educational tool sets a precedent for teachers and students alike, emphasizing the importance of independent learning and research.

Students' Reading Interest: Influences and Outcomes

Students' reading interest is influenced by various factors, including the availability of reading materials, preferred genres, and the quality of the readings accessible in the library. The findings suggest that a high level of interest contributes to the enhancement of students'

reading abilities. This increased interest motivates students to explore diverse topics, improve language skills, gain general knowledge, and even develop specific interests.

The library, as a rich repository of materials, plays a pivotal role in shaping students' reading preferences. The diverse collection caters to different interests and learning styles, ensuring that students find materials that resonate with them. This diversity contributes to a well-rounded reading experience, fostering a sense of curiosity and exploration.

Individuals with a high reading interest are known to actively seek and read materials aligned with their interests and needs. This proactive engagement with reading materials contributes not only to an increased comfort with reading but also to a broader knowledge base. The theoretical underpinning of this discussion draws on established theories of reader engagement and the cognitive benefits of regular reading habits.

Citing reputable scholarly journals, the discussion enriches the analysis, providing a broader context for understanding the implications of the research findings. Theoretical perspectives on reader engagement, library utilization, and the cognitive benefits of reading are explored to deepen the reader's understanding of the significance of MI Salafiyah Duwet's library initiatives.

Structured Approach to Library Enhancement

MI Salafiyah Duwet's approach to enhancing students' reading interest through the library is systematic, involving planning, implementation, and evaluation. The discussion delves into each stage, providing insights into the organizational, movement, and coaching aspects of the library's management.

Organizational Stage

The organizational stage is crucial for achieving the library's goals. Despite challenges such as library staff being occupied with other tasks, the effectiveness of the organizational aspect in the MI Salafiyah Duwet library is evident. The availability of library services during break times signifies the importance of school library institutionalization. Clear organizational structures, both macro and micro, are vital for effective library management.

Drawing on established theories of library management, the discussion explores the significance of organizational structures in ensuring the smooth functioning of the library. The role of library staff, challenges faced, and the overall impact on students' reading experience are analyzed within the theoretical framework of library organizational structures.

Movement Stage

The movement stage involves leadership, direction, communication, motivation, and the provision of facilities. The MI Salafiyah Duwet school principal's annual evaluation of library activities, guidance, and motivation to library staff exemplify effective leadership in library management. The movement stage also includes initiatives to encourage students to visit the library during break times and mornings.

The discussion delves into the theories of leadership in library management, exploring how effective leadership contributes to a vibrant and engaging library environment. The impact of leadership on student engagement and the overall success of library initiatives is analyzed within the theoretical context of library leadership.

Coaching

Coaching the school library is essential and should be tailored to the specific level of each school. Technical aspects involve efforts to improve the management procedures of the school library. At MI Salafiyah Duwet, coaching is primarily conducted by the school principal, who assesses the library's condition directly, providing guidance accordingly. However, the absence of specific training programs for library staff is acknowledged, which could contribute to further improvement.

The discussion draws on theories of library coaching and professional development, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning for library staff. The impact of coaching on the library's overall effectiveness, staff motivation, and the enhancement of library services are explored within the theoretical framework of library coaching.

In conclusion, the qualitative research conducted at MI Salafiyah Duwet in Kota Pekalongan demonstrates the significance of a well-managed library in fostering students' reading interest. The findings underscore the importance of organizational, motivational, and coaching efforts in maximizing the impact of the library on students' reading habits and skills.

The theoretical framework applied throughout the discussion provides a deeper understanding of the implications of MI Salafiyah Duwet's library initiatives. By drawing on established theories of reader engagement, library management, leadership, and coaching, the discussion adds theoretical depth to the practical insights gained from the research.

The success of MI Salafiyah Duwet's library initiatives serve as a model for schools seeking to enhance students' reading interest. As education continues to evolve, the role of well-managed libraries remains integral in shaping students into avid readers, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

Conclusion

The investigation into the role of the library in fostering students' reading habits at MI Salafiyah Duwet in Pekalongan City provides valuable insights into the intricate dynamics between reading interest, library activities, and student learning. This study recognizes the profound impact of reading interest on academic achievement, professional growth, and personal fulfillment, emphasizing the need to cultivate a strong reading foundation from an early age.

The findings of this study underscore the transformative influence of the MI Salafiyah Duwet library in nurturing students' passion for reading. The positive outcomes observed among students actively engaging with library resources highlight the pivotal role played by the librarian in maintaining and managing an environment conducive to reading. The library, portrayed not merely as a repository of books but as a dynamic space, becomes a voluntary and enriching haven for students, fostering intellectual growth beyond the confines of the curriculum.

Effective library management emerges as a key factor in this process, embodying a three-pronged approach: organizing, mobilizing, and building. The organizational stage, despite challenges faced by library staff, demonstrates effectiveness through the availability of services during break times, emphasizing the importance of clear macro and micro-organizational structures. The movement stage, exemplified by the active support of the school principal, integrates the library seamlessly into the educational landscape, emphasizing its significance to teachers and students alike. The coaching aspect, primarily conducted by the school principal, recognizes the need for continuous improvement in library services.

The theoretical framework applied in this discussion draws on established theories of reader engagement, library management, leadership, and coaching. This not only enriches the analysis but also provides a broader context for understanding the implications of MI Salafiyah Duwet's library initiatives. The theoretical underpinning explores the cognitive benefits of regular reading habits, emphasizing the role of the library in cultivating a lifelong love of reading.

The success of MI Salafiyah Duwet's library initiatives serves as a model for other educational institutions aiming to enhance students' reading interest. As highlighted in the study, the school library is not merely a physical space but a catalyst for intellectual curiosity

and exploration. It is a space where students willingly invest their time beyond academic requirements, contributing significantly to their overall development as avid readers, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners.

As the researcher navigates the complexities of the information age, the importance of nurturing reading interest and cultivating effective library practices cannot be overstated. By doing so, the researcher empowers individuals to reach their full potential, equipping them with the tools necessary to comprehend, analyze, and contribute meaningfully to an ever-evolving world. The success of MI Salafiyah Duwet in fostering a culture of reading stands as a testament to the enduring impact of a well-managed library in shaping the future of our students and, by extension, our society.

Conflict of interests

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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