The Role of Class Reading Corners in Improving Student Literacy in PLP Activities at SDK Majamere

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ABSTRACT

The school literacy movement program is defined as the ability to access, understand, and utilize something intelligently through various activities, such as writing, reading, and listening. The class reading corner also functions as a mini library to help students become more familiar with and familiar with reading books. Based on the results of observations on the implementation of PLP II, it was found that students were less interested in reading, the AKM results showed a literacy Pre-Test score of 42%. The use of class reading corners to increase students' interest in reading is the purpose of this study. This study uses descriptive qualitative research using test, observation, and interview methods. Data collection techniques through tests. The instruments are in the form of AKM Pre-Test and Post-Test sheets. The subjects of this research are 19 students consisting of 9 female students and 10 male students in class V SDK Majamere. The results of the AKM Post-Test activities increased by 47%, with the results of the Post Test literacy percentage of 89%, this is due to the creation of a class reading corner. Based on the researcher's findings, the positive impact of the literacy movement on the reading interest of fifth grade students increased after the creation of a class reading corner.

Keywords: *AKM; School Literacy Movement; Class Reading Corner.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government, as stated in the fourth paragraph of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, holds the responsibility to educate the nation. Education is positioned as a top priority in national development because it serves as the key to a country's advancement. High-quality education produces superior human resources (HR), which in turn drives growth and development in various sectors. The role of education in enhancing national competitiveness is well-documented, with studies indicating its significant contributions to a nation's economic prosperity and social cohesion (Liu & Xu, 2017; Sahlberg, 2006). Furthermore, the integration of technology in education has been recognized as a transformative factor that improves learning outcomes and fosters the development of skills necessary for the modern workforce (Gadzali, 2023).

One critical component in the education process is literacy. Literacy forms the

foundation for learning, as it enables individuals to access, understand, and utilize information from various sources effectively. Literacy also fosters critical thinking and informed citizenship, making it a vital component of personal and national development (Sahuichenko et al., 2020). It empowers individuals to participate fully in societal and economic activities, aligning with the Indonesian government's focus on literacy as part of global educational goals advocating for inclusive and equitable quality education (Boyi, 2013).

As explained by Palupi et al. (2020), the term "literacy" originates from the Latin word *literatus*, meaning "a person who learns." In the context of education, literacy encompasses the ability to read, write, and comprehend information, which are fundamental competencies for all students. In this era of globalization, literacy is a vital skill, not only for accessing information but also as a tool to face the challenges of the modern world (Aswat et al., 2020). Literacy equips individuals with the means to broaden their horizons, enhance critical thinking, and develop creativity.

According to Fahrianur et al. (2023), literacy at the elementary school level is often defined as the capacity of students to understand and process information through reading and writing activities. Literacy skills at this stage are crucial as they form the foundation for further learning at higher educational levels. The benefits of literacy for elementary school students span various aspects, including: (1) increasing knowledge through text-based learning; (2) optimizing brain function in processing information; (3) developing critical and analytical thinking skills; (4) expanding students' perspectives through reading; (5) enhancing verbal skills; (6) fostering logical thinking; and (7) improving focus and concentration in learning (Harahap et al., 2022).

Despite these clear benefits, literacy remains a significant challenge in Indonesia's education sector. Data reveals that Indonesia's reading interest level is relatively low compared to other countries. UNESCO studies show that the literacy levels of Indonesian students fall below the international average, highlighting that many students lack adequate reading and writing skills. This issue is a serious concern because literacy serves as the foundation for mastering science and technology.

Despite these clear benefits, literacy remains a significant challenge in Indonesia's education sector. Data reveals that Indonesia's reading interest level is relatively low compared to other countries. UNESCO studies show that the literacy levels of Indonesian students fall below the international average, highlighting a widespread deficiency in essential reading and writing skills among the youth (Faisal & Martin, 2019; Herda, 2023). This issue is a serious concern because literacy serves as the foundation for mastering more complex subjects, particularly in science and technology (Tamam et al., 2023). The challenges in improving literacy can be attributed to several factors, such as inadequate educational infrastructure and the quality of teaching methods in schools (Sunarti, 2024; Iskandar, 2023). To address these challenges, innovative teaching strategies incorporating technology are urgently needed to enhance student engagement and literacy outcomes. Addressing literacy challenges is critical for the nation's development, particularly in preparing students to navigate the complexities of modern science and technology (Asrizal et al., 2018). Integrating digital literacy into the curriculum can equip students with skills to thrive in a digital world, underscoring the need for collaboration between educators, policymakers, and communities (Luthfiyyah et al., 2021).

The School Field Introduction Program (PLP) II, implemented by STKIP Citra

Bakti students, aims to enhance the quality of education through various school-based activities. One program designed to improve students' literacy skills is the establishment of a *reading corner*. This program aims to create a conducive and engaging learning environment where students are motivated to read.

Khan et al. (2023) explain that a reading corner is an effective strategy to increase students' reading interest. By providing a comfortable and attractive space, a reading corner can become a pleasant place for students to read various reading materials. Additionally, Awalina et al. (2022) emphasize that a reading corner designed with appealing aesthetics can encourage students to read more frequently. Books available in the reading corner should be arranged neatly and made easily accessible to ensure students feel comfortable and interested in reading.

The implementation of the reading corner program at SDK Majamere involved providing various reading materials appropriate to the students' comprehension levels. These books were arranged aesthetically in a designated classroom corner designed to provide comfort to students. Furthermore, the reading corner environment was enhanced with colorful decorations and comfortable seating to create an inviting atmosphere. With this reading corner, it is hoped that SDK Majamere students will feel more motivated to read, thereby improving their literacy skills.

In addition to providing access to reading materials, the reading corner also plays a role in fostering a reading culture among students. Through this initiative, students are encouraged to make reading a part of their daily lives. This reading culture not only helps improve learning outcomes but also offers long-term benefits in developing critical and creative thinking skills.

Based on the description above, this study aims to increase the reading interest of students at SDK Majamere by developing a classroom reading corner. The reading corner is expected to be an effective solution to address the issue of low literacy at the school. This study also seeks to measure the extent to which the reading corner can positively impact students' literacy skills. Thus, this research not only contributes to improving the quality of education at SDK Majamere but also serves as a model that can be adopted by other schools in their efforts to enhance students' literacy.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method to explore the impact of classroom reading corners on students' literacy levels and interest in reading. The research was conducted at SDK Majamere with 19 fifth-grade students (9 female, 10 male) as the subjects. Data were collected through observation, interviews with teachers, and documentation, including AKM Pre-Test and Post-Test sheets.

Observations focused on students' engagement with the reading corner, their reading behaviors, and preferences for different types of books. Interviews with teachers explored their perceptions of the reading corner's effectiveness and its impact on students' literacy skills. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative data from interviews and descriptive statistics for quantitative data from the AKM tests.

The AKM test covered three main areas: finding information, understanding 3 texts, and evaluating content. Validity and reliability were ensured through triangulation, comparing data from observations, interviews, and test results.

Table 1. AKM Literacy Grid

No	Cognitive Level	No. Indicator Item	Mark
1	Find information	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	24
2	Understand	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	36
3	Evaluate and Reflect	16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25	40
		Total Skor	100

Source. Lianingsih., (2021)

According to Ria et al (2023), a test is a method used as a measuring tool to obtain a result using a certain approach. The pre-test and post-test AKM questions were used in this research to measure students' reading literacy skills using the school's KKM standard, namely 70.

Table 2. Minimum Completeness Requirements

No	Completeness Value	Category
1	< 70	Not Completed
2	> 70	Complete

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Based on observations and interviews with school principals and civil service teachers regarding literacy activities in schools during the first week of the Introduction to Schooling Fields (PLP) II, research findings include the conclusion that, so far a school literacy movement has been implemented at SDK Majamere but it is not yet optimal. Researchers can see from the Pre-Test results that students' reading ability and interest are still low.
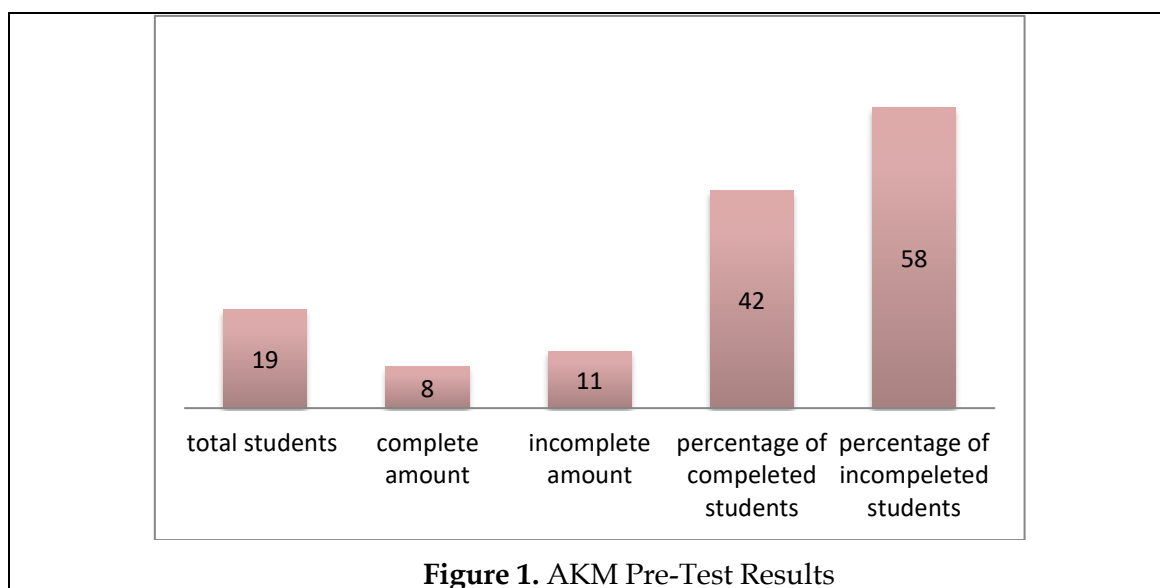

Figure 1. AKM Pre-Test Results

The results demonstrate a significant improvement in students' literacy levels. The AKM scores increased from 42% in the Pre-Test to 89% in the Post-Test. Notably, the largest improvement was in the category of "finding information," which rose from 42% to 89%. This suggests that the accessibility of diverse reading materials in the classroom reading corner contributed to the positive outcomes.

However, two students did not achieve the minimum standard of 70% in the Post-Test. Further analysis indicates these students faced challenges in understanding texts, as highlighted in the observations. Interviews with teachers suggest that providing additional reading practice may help address these issues.

The integration of qualitative and quantitative data reinforces the role of classroom reading corners in enhancing literacy. Observations revealed increased student engagement with reading materials, and teachers noted improvements in independent reading habits among students.

Figure 2. Students Reading in the reading corner

Based on that table the reading corner is designed to be fun and comfortable for students. The necessary actions to create a comfortable and entertaining reading corner in the classroom are the following:

1. The reading corner is designed to be as attractive as possible because it influences students' desire to approach it. It doesn't have to be made of expensive materials, reuse old items and turn them into something special and practical.

2. Various kinds of literary works, including knowledge books, fairy tales, folk tales and short stories, will be displayed in the reading corner, depending on the children's preferences.

3. Changing the books on display is the best approach to maintain students' interest in reading.

4. Use as many locations as possible in the school to create a reading environment and a pleasant atmosphere for students to enjoy reading.

5. Students who read consistently and understand the material should be rewarded with praise or books as prizes

Figure 3. Post-Test Implementation

Photo 3 shows the implementation of the Post-Test by SDK Majamere students. Post-Test is an evaluation and assessment carried out to see students' literacy skills in reading, writing and understanding texts. The purpose of this Post-Test is to determine students' level of knowledge and students' interest in reading. The Post-Test was held on November 18 2023. There were 19 students who took the Post-Test, and it was carried out in class V at SDK Majamere.
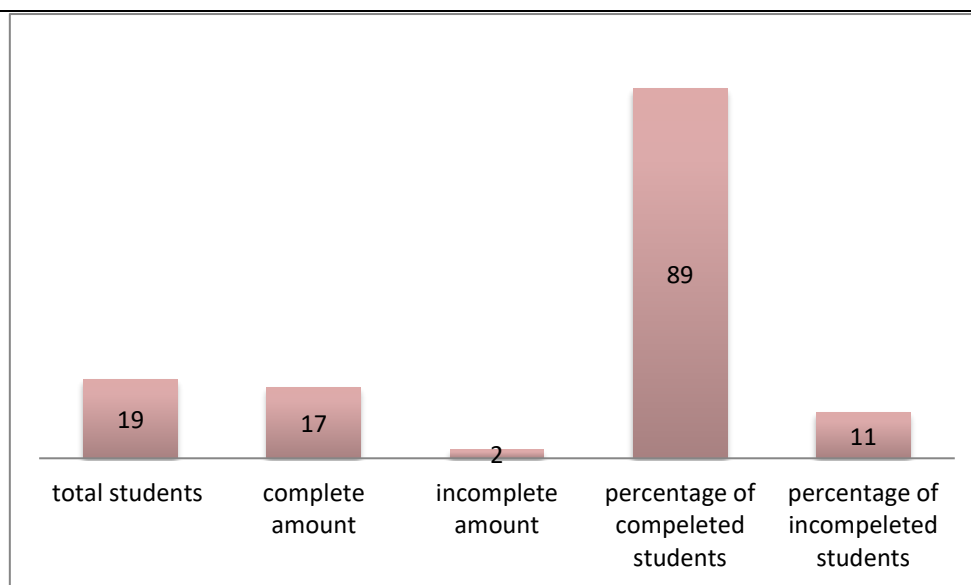

Figure 4. Post-Test Results

Based on the Post-Test results, it shows that one student got the highest score, namely 90. Of the 19 students, only two were still below the KKM, and 17 of them had passed. The percentage of students completing was 89% and those who did not complete it were 11%. Students received the lowest score, namely 65. The establishment of reading corners in schools is one of the factors that contributes to this increase in literacy. Students' interest in reading can be increased by establishing a reading corner in the classroom.

Discussion

One strategy to increase student literacy is the School Literacy Movement (GLS). According to the GLS guidebook (2018), children learn to read in three stages. During the first stage, known as the familiarization stage, students read for fifteen minutes every day and answer questions about how much they understand the text they have read (Prasrihamni et al., 2022). In the second development stage, each student summarizes the story they read from the reading book and then tells it to their friends (Febriana et al, 2023). The final level is the learning stage; If students have been involved in reading activities regularly, they will develop this habit even without any guidance from teachers or outside support. As a result, continuous reading functions for students in classroom learning activities

Based on the findings of the researcher's observations and interviews at the start of the PLP II activities at SDK Majamere, there were several incidents where the classrooms did not have a reading corner. Students have difficulty getting to the school library because it is located quite far from the classroom. Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers at the beginning of the PLP II activities at SDK Majamere, there were several conditions where there were no reading corners in the classroom. The school library is a little far from the classrooms, making it difficult for students to access the library. Pre-Test results show that only 41% of students' literacy skills are complete, meaning they are still below the KKM. Only 8 of the 19 students who took the Pre-Test finished, while the other 11 students did not. Researchers established a reading corner because of students' lack of interest in reading.

One tactic to increase children's interest in reading is to set up a reading corner in the classroom. To increase students' interest in reading, classroom reading corner facilities can form reading habits and provide literacy resources (Fauzan et al., 2021). Apart from that, creating a reading area is considered useful in increasing students' enthusiasm for reading and facilitating learning activities by teachers so that learning is more varied (Kurniawan et al., 2021). This is in accordance with Agustina's (2022) research which shows that students' interest in reading can be stimulated by having a reading corner.

The aim of having a reading corner in class V at SDK Majamere is to encourage students to read diligently by providing interesting literature. The reading sources in the reading corner are adapted to the age of elementary school students and their information needs. Apart from textbooks in the reading corner, there are fairy tales that students read, such as fiction and folk tales, which are uplifting, interesting and educational. The Post-Test results show an increase in the percentage of students' reading interest from 41% to 89%.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the important role of classroom reading corners in improving students' literacy and reading interest. Through the implementation of this program during the school field introduction program (PLP) at SDK Majamere, fifth grade students showed a significant improvement in their reading ability as evidenced by the test score increasing from 42% (Pre-Test) to 89% (Post-Test). This finding underscores the effectiveness of creating a dedicated and engaging reading space in the classroom, even in schools with limited library access. The reading corner provides a

comfortable and accessible environment for students to explore a variety of reading materials, including fairy tales, folktales, and educational books. These materials are carefully curated to suit the age and interests of the students, fostering a natural inclination to read. The design of the reading corner, which emphasizes creativity and resourcefulness by utilizing reused materials, also contributes to its appeal and effectiveness.

In addition, this study highlights the broader implications of integrating classroom-based literacy programs into regular educational practices. The program shows that simple yet strategic interventions, such as reading corners, can have a significant impact on students' academic achievement and reading habits in the long term. The program also addresses a critical gap in literacy programs, particularly in rural areas. Teachers can use classroom reading corners as a tool to encourage independent learning and critical thinking among students.

In conclusion, this study shows that creating classroom reading corners is not only a practical solution to improving literacy but also a sustainable model for cultivating a reading culture among students. These findings underscore the idea that small, innovative changes in the classroom environment can yield significant educational benefits that ultimately contribute to the broader goal of improving national literacy rates.

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