The Role of Literacy Culture in Improving Students' Learning Outcomes at Elementary School

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The School Literacy Movement has been implemented across Indonesian schools for nearly decade, yet its effectiveness on learning outcomes remains uncertain. This study investigates the correlation between literacy activities and students' academic achievement at SDN (Public Elementary School) Bojasari Wonosobo. A descriptive quantitative approach was used, involving 58 students from grades IV and V through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. The analysis using Pearson's correlation test showed $r = 0.038$, $p = 0.763$, indicate that literacy activities do not significantly influence students' academic achievement. Despite this weak correlation, finding show that the literacy program positively increased reading interest. The limited effect of literacy on students' learning outcomes due to mechanical reading practices, limited teacher scaffolding, and minimal use of comprehension strategies. This study highlights the need for instructional reforms emphasizing reflective reading and parental involvement to transform school literacy from procedural habit into a meaningful learning culture.

1. Introduction

Literacy has long been recognized as a critical foundation for academic success. However, Indonesia continues to face persistent challenges in literacy performance. Surveys conducted by both national and international institutions show that Indonesia's literacy rates remain low compared to neighboring countries. For instance, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey between 2015 and 2018 revealed a significant decline in Indonesia's literacy ranking – from 64th out of 72 countries in 2015 to 74th out of 79 countries in 2018 (Schleicher, 2019). The most substantial decline was observed in reading literacy, which decreased by 26 points. Even more concerning, the reading literacy scores in 2000 and 2018 remained identical at 372 points, showing no improvement over 18 years. Moreover, the Indonesian National Assessment Program (INAP) found that fourth-grade students' mathematical literacy was in the poor category (77.16%), their reading literacy was adequate (47.13%), and their science literacy was poor (73.60%) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). Another survey in 2019 showed the average Reading Literacy Activity Index was only 37.32, indicating a low literacy level (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019).

To address low literacy levels, the Indonesian government issued Regulation of The Minister of Education and Culture No. 23 of 2015 concerning Character Building in Indonesia, which served as the foundation for implementing the School Literacy Movement (in Indonesian*, Gerakan Literasi Sekolah,* abbreviated *GLS*) (B Antoro, 2018). The GLS targets all members of primary and secondary education institutions, aiming to build a literacy-based school culture (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). The program aims to produce individuals who are literate not only in reading and writing but also in numeracy, science, culture, finance, citizenship, and digital literacy (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019). This program is structured into three stages: familiarization, development, and learning.

Despite the implementation for nearly a decade, the effectiveness of GLS remains uncertain, especially regarding students' learning outcomes. A previous study by Mayumi et al. (2020) compared literacy movements in Indonesia and Taiwan. In Indonesia, GLS focuses more on summarization, thus having no significant effect on students' understanding and learning outcomes. Whereas in Taiwan, it promotes reflective reading and discussion to develop reading comprehension from an early age. Antoro et al. (2021) found that the school literacy movement (GLS) had no correlation with learning outcomes. However, Farleynia & Giovano (2020) found a significant correlation between digital literacy and academic achievement. Similarly, Hendrika & Zainuddin (2020) reported that reading for 15 minutes before lessons improved students' report card scores. These findings report inconsistencies in the effects of GLS on students' learning outcomes. Therefore, it raises important questions about whether GLS genuinely enhance learning outcomes or are only a formality to fulfil the government program.

To resolve the issue, this research try to examine the relationship between school literacy activities and student achievement at SDN (Public Elementary School) Bojasari Wonosobo. The school has been implementing GLS for seven years. This study not only aims to identify correlations but also to identify the causes and factors that influence student learning outcomes.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach. The participants were 58 students in grades IV and V. These two grades were chosen because students had participated in the School Literacy Movement (GLS) for the longest duration. Data were obtained through questionnaires and interviews with several students. The questionnaire contained 25 items aligned with GLS indicators in the familiarization, development, and learning stages. Items assessed students' reading habits, summarizing frequency, teacher involvement, and the use of non-textbook materials.

The interviews with teachers and students provided qualitative insights into how literacy activities were implemented in daily routines. Observations focused on classroom and library conditions, while documentation covered students' reading summaries and report card scores. Students' literacy activity scores were compared with their academic achievements based on 2023/2024 report card scores. The relationship between the two variables was analyzed using Pearson's correlation test, and statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$.

3. Result and Discussion

The School Literacy Movement requires schools to conduct a 15-minute reading session before daily lessons. This activity has been implemented at SDN Bojasari since

2018 to foster reading interest and improve academic performance. The correlation between literacy activities and student report card scores, calculated using SPSS 21, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation between Literacy Activities and Student Learning Achievement

Variable		Literacy Activity	Report Card Score
Literacy Activity	Pearson's r	-	0.038
	p-value	-	0.763
Report Card Score	Pearson's r	0.038	-
	p-value	0.763	-

The correlation coefficient (r = 0.038) indicates a very weak, or nearly nonexistent, relationship between literacy activities and student achievement. Therefore, it can be concluded that literacy activities have not significantly affected students' academic performance at SDN Bojasari. Nevertheless, the literacy movement continues to have a positive impact on students' interest in reading and engagement with texts. Developing a strong literacy culture in schools requires three essential components: a physically literacy-friendly environment, a socially supportive atmosphere, and an academically enriching setting (Beers et al., 2011). These strategies should be implemented within each school's context across three stages of the literacy program: familiarization, development, and learning.

Data from the familiarization stage indicated that 81% of students consistently participated in the 15-minute reading activity at least four times a week. This activity was routinely conducted every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Students began class at 7 a.m. with a prayer session, followed by reading books of their choice. After reading, they were asked to summarize or retell what they had read either verbally or in writing. All students (100%) owned a special notebook for these summaries. However, only 43% reported that their teachers read along with them, while 57% stated that their teachers neither read nor discussed the content of the readings. This lack of teacher participation is unfortunate, as teacher involvement is the strongest motivational factor in literacy participation (B.. When reading becomes a mechanical activity that focuses more on summarization than comprehension, it fails to develop higher-order thinking skills (Mayumi et al., 2020; Niculescu & Dragomir, 2023). From a constructivist perspective, comprehension emerges through guided interaction and scaffolding. The absence of teacher involvement weakens scaffolding, leading to procedural rather than meaningful reading (Alimdjanovna, 2024). It justifies why students' learning outcomes do not improve even though they are summarizing diligently.

The school library contains approximately 93 non-textbook titles and 53 textbooks. This quantity is relatively adequate considering the school's size. About 48% of students agreed that the library collection was sufficient and well-maintained. However, the school had no assigned librarian; instead, teachers alternated in supervising the library and assisting students in borrowing or returning books. During recess, the library remained quiet, as most students preferred playing or eating rather than reading. Despite this, each classroom had a reading corner containing various non-academic books, mostly picture storybooks. A total of 58% of students reported enjoying these reading corners because of the diversity of books available, while 42% expressed disinterest. Previous studies confirm that classroom reading corners can significantly increase students' reading interest (Ramandanu, 2019).

With regard to literacy campaign posters, 60% of respondents stated that they had seen literacy-themed posters displayed in classrooms, school corridors, and near the teacher's office. Among them, 23% found the posters engaging, 47% considered them ordinary, and 30% regarded them as unattractive. In some classrooms and hallways, students' creative works, such as poems, rhymes, and drawings were also displayed. Approximately 57% of students felt that these displays were interesting and neatly organized, while 29% found them moderately appealing and 14% found them uninteresting. In terms of external involvement, a mobile library managed by the regional public library visited the school once a month. Meanwhile, parental and community involvement in literacy activities remained limited. This pattern reflects a broader national issue, where limited community participation remains a key obstacle in the implementation of school literacy programs (Indrawan et al., 2022; Mayuni et al., 2020). Yet, public participation from parents, local communities, and policymakers is a key factor in sustaining literacy development (Mayuni et al., 2020).

In development stage, the primary indicator was related to follow-up sessions. Follow-ups were conducted verbally by asking students to briefly retelling in front of the class and non-verbal by writing responses in the form of summaries. All respondents (100%) stated that they maintained separate notebooks for summarizing the books they had read. Yet, 87% reported that summarizing activities were not conducted regularly; they occurred only occasionally. Summarizing activities offer multiple cognitive benefits, particularly in improving comprehension skills (Anjani et al., 2019). Moreover, this practice has been shown to enhance linguistic intelligence and encourage critical and creative thinking (Dwiprabowo, 2021; Hartati et al., 2020; Suyatno, 2022). However, excessive reliance on it can be counterproductive. Teachers expressed concern that many students were more focused on producing summaries than understanding the content of their reading. This indicates that the act of summarizing, while useful, had become a mechanical task rather than a meaningful comprehension exercise. Consequently, many students failed to fully grasp the material they read. Focus on finishing summary rather than understanding the text can reduce the quality of learning because students prioritize speed over meaning and reduce the development of higher-order thinking skills (Niculescu & Dragomir, 2023; Pilgreen, 2013; Riana, 2021).

Furthermore, most students confirmed that their summaries were never exhibited, but simply stored away in classroom corners. Teacher also rarely giving feedback about the result. 53% of respondents reported that no awards or recognition were given to students for literacy achievements, while 86% said that awards were only presented at the end of the semester based on academic performance. However, a "literacy tree" made from colorful cardboard featuring students' names, hobbies, and dreams was present in some rooms, created collaboratively by students and teachers. In the absence of feedback or recognition, literacy becomes an isolated activity. Iqmaulia & Usman (2019) emphasized that rewards and acknowledgment significantly increase intrinsic motivation, yet SDN Bojasari rarely implemented such reinforcement.

During the learning phase, four achievement indicators were observed. The most prominent student activities involved using reading strategies during learning sessions, applying strategies to understand texts, and utilizing non-textbook materials to enhance knowledge. However, based on classroom observations and student questionnaires, the overall implementation at SDN Bojasari remained below expectations.

First, with regard to the use of reading strategies, only 43% of students reported applying consistent reading strategies, and 26% admitted not using any. This deficiency limits comprehension because effective reading requires metacognitive control (Dewi

et al., 2020; Kemala et al., 2021). As Brilliananda & Wibowo (2023) argue, comprehension depends not merely on exposure to text but on cognitive strategies such as prediction, questioning, and inference. Interviews claim that both fourth- and fifth-grade teachers explained that they had taught reading strategies as part of their classroom instruction and integrating them into other subjects. However, many students appeared to lack sufficient practice in applying these strategies independently.

Regarding the use of learning resources, the majority of students relied on non-textbook materials as supplementary reading sources. A total of 61% of students reported using non-textbook materials such as storybooks, magazines, or informational texts from the reading corner or library to broaden their knowledge. In contrast, 22% stated that they used such materials only occasionally, while 17% rarely used them at all. These findings suggest that students showed greater initiative in accessing alternative reading sources than in developing reading strategies. However, 27% of respondents stated that they frequently visited the library during breaks, 22% occasionally did so, and 51% preferred playing instead. Teachers noted that students were more likely to engage with easily accessible resources such as the reading corner than with the library, which could only be visited during recess. They also mentioned that students preferred visual and illustrated books to dense textual materials, indicating a strong preference for light reading over analytical reading. This aligns with (Sutrisno et al., 2022) who found that reading corners within classrooms encourage more spontaneous and frequent reading habits due to their accessibility.

Statistically, the weak correlation ($r = 0.038$) cannot be interpreted as a lack of educational value in literacy. These findings indicate that the implementation model applied has not yet touched on the aspect of deep thinking. In the context of its application at SDN Bojasari, GLS is still at the level of routine habituation and has not encouraged high-level thinking. From a theoretical perspective, students learn better when they actively interact and construct meaning with teachers or peers. Activities such as summarizing texts are not sufficient to encourage this process. In addition, literacy can only develop if the entire environment is supportive, including teacher role models, adequate library access, and parental participation. Thus, the findings of this study do not indicate the failure of literacy as a concept, but rather limitations in the quality of implementation, where activities emphasize procedural compliance rather than deep understanding and meaning processing.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the literacy activities at SDN Bojasari Wonosobo have not been fully effective. The correlation between School Literacy Movement and academic achievement was weak, indicating that students' literacy competence remains suboptimal. However, this outcome should not be interpreted as the failure of literacy initiative, but rather as evidence of limited instructional quality. Literacy cannot develop merely through repetition by asking students to only summarize, it requires reflective learning, peer collaboration, and teacher strategies to develop comprehension. To enhance its effectiveness, school need to integrated reading comprehension strategy, provide discussion after reading sessions, promote students' motivation, and collaborating with parent in students' literacy activities. Literacy culture should evolve from a habitual program into a transformative learning process that empower students not only to read but to think, question, and apply knowledge into their lives.

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