

Efforts to Improve Literacy at MTs N 6 Sleman

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ABSTRACT

MTs N 6 Sleman has a strong background in efforts to improve literacy in the madrasah. With a high commitment, structured curriculum, good library, parental involvement, and diverse literacy activities, the madrasah aims to create literate and competitive students in meeting the challenges of the future. The uniqueness of MTs N 6 Sleman has intrigued researchers to study the comprehensive and structured efforts undertaken by the madrasah to instill a spirit for literacy growth in the madrasah community. This research will employ a qualitative descriptive research design. Descriptive research is conducted to depict the actual conditions of a variable that is not clearly understood, using collected data and making systematic and accurate analytical conclusions. The efforts made by MTs N 6 Sleman to enhance literacy go through three stages: (1) Familiarization stage through enjoyable reading activities in the madrasah, (2) Development stage of reading interest, and (3) Implementation stage of literacy-based learning.

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Introduction

The challenges of the 21st century encompass three crucial components that can serve as assets in facing the free market: Language, Mathematics, and Information Technology. These three skills must be equipped to the younger generation, especially students (Jatmiko Wibisono, Hafidz, Iffat Abdul Ghalib, 2023). Therefore, it is only fitting that, through the legal foundation outlined in Ministerial Regulation Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Cultivation of Character, the Ministry of Education and Culture is fostering the School Literacy Movement (GLS), involving all stakeholders in the field of education, ranging from the central level to provinces, regencies/cities, and educational institutions.

In the School Literacy Movement (GLS), educational institutions play a pivotal role. Educational institutions must be able to create a conducive ecosystem involving the school head, teachers, library education staff, students, and parents (Ngabdul Shodikin et al., 2023). This should be implemented as part of the efforts to execute Ministerial Regulation Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Cultivation of Character and in preparing a generation that is literate (Muchamad Chairudin, 2023). As outlined in GLS objectives, (1.) to make schools cultural literacy learning organizations, and (2.) to shape literate school citizens in areas such as a. reading and writing, b. numeracy, c. science, d. digital literacy, e. financial literacy, f. culture, and citizenship. GLS targets the school ecosystem at the primary and secondary education levels. (GLS Task Force Kemendikbud: 2018)

It appears that the objectives and targets of GLS are being addressed by MTs N 6 Sleman. MTs N 6 Sleman is an Islamic junior high school located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY). The school demonstrates a high commitment to improving literacy among its students. The interesting aspect behind the enhancement of literacy in this madrasah is based on several factors (Robbaniyah et al., 2022). Firstly, MTs N 6 Sleman has a comprehensive understanding of the importance of literacy in students' lives. Teachers at MTs N 6 Sleman understand that literacy education not only assists students in academic activities but also prepares them to be competent individuals in the real world (Jazim: 2023). Therefore, the madrasah strives to create a learning environment that supports literacy education.

Furthermore, the curriculum at MTs N 6 Sleman is designed based on literacy to incorporate literacy learning in every subject. There is even a dedicated hour for literacy every week (Anang: 2023). Teachers focus not only on core subject matter but also on teaching reading and writing skills to the students. Thus, students not only gain broad knowledge but also strong literacy skills.

In addition, MTs N 6 Sleman also places special emphasis on the madrasah library. A good and well-organized library is an essential facility in enhancing student literacy. The madrasah ensures that its library is filled with various books and other literacy resources (Susanto, 2022). Students are encouraged to utilize this facility as much as possible, both in formal learning activities and for their personal interests (Sri Muhayanah: 2023).

Moreover, MTs N 6 Sleman also endeavors to involve parents in literacy improvement efforts at the madrasah. Parents are invited to participate in literacy activities (Kholis & Yunita, 2023), such as reading together with their children or joining book clubs organized in the madrasah (Aji et al., 2022). Collaboration between the madrasah and parents is crucial in creating a strong literacy culture in both the madrasah and home environments (Sri Muhayanah: 2023).

To support this literacy program, the madrasah also organizes various extracurricular activities focused on literacy (Armanila, 2022). For example, reading clubs, story writing competitions, and drama performances are held at the madrasah. This not only increases students' interest in literacy but also provides them with opportunities to develop and showcase their literacy skills (Fari: 2023).

Overall, MTs N 6 Sleman has a strong background in efforts to improve literacy in the madrasah. With a high commitment, structured curriculum, good library, parental involvement, and diverse literacy activities, the madrasah aims to create literate and competitive students in meeting the challenges of the future. The uniqueness of MTs N 6 Sleman has intrigued researchers to study the comprehensive and structured efforts undertaken by the madrasah to instill a spirit for literacy growth in the madrasah community.

Method

This research will employ a qualitative descriptive research design (Syaiful Anam, 2023). Descriptive research is conducted to depict the actual conditions of a variable that is not clearly understood, using collected data and making systematic and accurate analytical conclusions. The research design is utilized to outline the research process. The study will be conducted at MTs N 6 Sleman. Data will be obtained through observation, documentation, and interviews with key informants, including the school head, teachers, library staff, and students of MTs N 6 Sleman. The research will be conducted openly, with

the researcher directly present in the field to document relevant documents and evidence considered crucial within the scope of the study.

Results and Discussion

Efforts to enhance literacy involve several stages. According to Teguh (2017), the stages of the School Literacy Movement are as follows: (1) The Habituation Stage involves fostering a reading interest through enjoyable reading activities at school, aiming to cultivate an interest in reading; (2) The Reading Interest Development Stage aims to develop the ability to comprehend readings and connect them to personal experiences, encourage critical thinking, and creatively enhance communication skills through activities responding to enriched readings; (3) The Implementation Stage of literacy-based learning involves academic requirements (related to subjects) (Rahmawati & Rachman, 2022), aiming to support the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum that mandates students to read non-textbook materials, which can include books on general knowledge, hobbies, special interests, and can also be related to specific subjects. Based on the above study, the implementation of the School Literacy Movement (GLS) is generally divided into three stages: habituation, development, and learning.

In MTs N 6 Sleman, the subject of this research, it is evident that efforts have been made to enhance literacy within the madrasah. These efforts have been carried out through the three stages of the School Literacy Movement. The implementation of these stages takes various forms of activities (Agustina, Anisa Rachma; Ifadah, Luluk; Muanayah, 2022). The explanation regarding the implementation of literacy movement activities in MTs Negeri 6 Sleman includes:

1. Habituation Stage

According to the results of interviews with the school head, several teachers, and library staff, efforts to improve literacy in MTs N 6 Sleman during the habituation stage include activities such as:

- a. The organization of a writing competition event. As explained by one of the teachers named Yeti Islamawati, this competition is usually held at a specific moment every year (Yeti, 2023). Additionally, Sri Muhayanah, who is both a teacher and the head of the library, added that the competition is organized by the madrasah library, and typically, the top 10 works by students are published in an anthology book with an ISBN (Sri: 2023). Furthermore, the library staff, Mrs. Dina, emphasized that MTs N Sleman holds a short story or poetry writing competition on a specific day once a year with a different theme each year (Dina, 2023). Meanwhile, the head of the madrasah, Jazim Khalis, S.Ag, emphasizes that activities like these automatically encourage students to develop their writing skills and enhance literacy interest. Importantly, it makes students feel happy, enjoy the process, and not burdened when engaging in literacy activities (Novita et al., 2022). In addition to that, the school creates a bulletin board (mading) or a madrasah journal utilized by students as a platform to share their written works. Besides writing competitions among students, the madrasah also occasionally organizes grammar competitions for students. The aim of these competitions is to train students' abilities in using language correctly and effectively. Through these competitions, students can learn in a competitive environment and improve their literacy skills (Jazim, 2023).
- b. A library that is friendly and well-equipped, based on the observation at MTs N 6 Sleman, it is evident that the library has provided a complete and comfortable space for students. The library at MTs N 6 Sleman is stocked with a diverse collection of books

that align with the students' learning levels (Observation, 2023). According to statements from one staff member named Mrs. Fary, students at MTs N 6 Sleman are encouraged to visit the library regularly to read and acquire new knowledge. In this regard, educational staff/library employees often reward students monthly for their frequent visits. Additionally, once a year, during the Language Month, the library collaborates with the school head to present awards to exemplary students selected and monitored by the literacy task force (Fari, 2023).

- c. Literacy activities in the classroom, based on observations and interviews with several teachers at MTs N 6 Sleman, particularly homeroom teachers, reveal that they actively introduce and engage students in literacy activities within the classrooms. For instance, homeroom teachers collaborate with library staff to create a class library in each classroom, commonly referred to as a reading corner. This reading corner is utilized for book discussions, group reading sessions, and summarizing readings, serving as an exercise to enhance students' comprehension of the texts they read (Saptini, 2023). In addition to the reading corner, efforts in the habituation stage through enjoyable activities at MTs N 6 Sleman also leverage the use of the school's digital Android TV technology. MTs N 6 Sleman utilizes digital Android TV technology to enhance student literacy, such as employing online learning applications or interactive video lessons to increase students' interest in reading, writing, and communication (Akfi, 2023).

2. Development Stage of Reading Interest

Efforts to enhance literacy in the development stage of reading interest by MTs N 6 Sleman include:

- a. Routine Reading Program: According to an interview with Mr. Anang Sumarna, the vice principal in charge of the curriculum, MTs N 6 Sleman conducts a monthly literacy program called "Saturday Literacy" during the first week of each month. This program is part of a routine reading initiative that involves all students. Both students and teachers are required to engage in at least 40 minutes or 1 JPL (Jam Pembelajaran Literasi - Literacy Learning Time). Through this activity, students develop a habit of reading, contributing to the improvement of their literacy skills (Anang, 2023).
- b. Literacy Activities Outside the School: Yeti Islamawati, an Indonesian Language teacher and literacy activist, adds that to enhance reading interest, MTs N 6 Sleman organizes an annual event, such as visits to public libraries or museums, to broaden students' literacy perspectives. Although only selected students participate, they can share the gained knowledge with their peers (Yeti, 2023).
- c. Guest Author Visits: Based on an interview with the vice principal in charge of the curriculum, Mr. Anang Sumarna states that inviting guest authors is done to motivate students to enhance and cultivate a love for literacy. The school invites guest authors to provide insights into writing, the creative process of an author, and the benefits of writing. By gaining direct experience from experienced authors, students are expected to broaden their literacy perspectives and become more interested in writing (Anang, 2023).

3. Implementation Stage

Upaya meningkatkan literasi pada tahap pelaksanaan pembelajaran berbasis literasi yang dilaksanakan oleh MTs N 6 Sleman antara lain:

- a. Integrating Literacy into All Subjects: The school principal emphasizes that teachers at MTs N 6 Sleman are aware of the importance of literacy. They understand that literacy is not solely the responsibility of Indonesian language or literature teachers but should be promoted across all subjects to support the literacy development of students. Teachers routinely incorporate literacy elements into their lesson plans (RPP),

integrating reading and writing activities into various subjects. For example, students may read source texts during the scientific observation process or write essays or opinions as part of scientific communication (Jazim, 2023).

- b. Improving the Quantity and Quality of Books in the Library: The school library at MTs N 6 Sleman plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process (KBM). During instructional hours, several subject teachers utilize the library as a learning space, supported by the library's comprehensive book collection and a comfortable environment for students (2023). In the implementation stage of literacy-based learning at MTs N 6 Sleman, the library facilities play a significant role. The library offers a wide range of books, including fiction and non-fiction, as well as magazines and newspapers. The comfortable seating arrangements encourage students to read and cultivate their literacy interests. Furthermore, the library staff is creatively involved in enhancing both the quantity and quality of books. They organize book donation campaigns for students, teachers, and external parties to contribute relevant and interesting books to the library's collection. This is evident through donation boxes placed near the library attendant's desk.
- c. Involving Parents in Literacy Activities: According to an interview with the head librarian, Mrs. Sri Muhayanah, to boost students' literacy at MTs N 6 Sleman, the school conducts parent meetings once per semester. During these meetings, parents discuss the importance of literacy, and they receive tips and strategies for enhancing their children's literacy at home. These meetings serve as a means of sustaining the literacy program at the madrasah, as it recognizes that the time students spend at home is more significant than the time spent in school (Sri, 2023).

Conclusion

Improving literacy at MTs N 6 Sleman is guided by Ministerial Regulation Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Cultivation of Character Education and in preparing a generation that is literate. In implementing this regulation, MTs N 6 Sleman is supported by the awareness of teachers about the importance of literacy and is further reinforced by a well-equipped and adequate library facility. The efforts made by MTs N 6 Sleman to enhance literacy go through three stages: (1) Familiarization stage through enjoyable reading activities in the madrasah, (2) Development stage of reading interest, and (3) Implementation stage of literacy-based learning. The Familiarization stage includes: Organization of writing competition events, A library that is friendly and well-stocked, and Literacy activities in the classroom. The Development stage of reading interest includes: Regular Reading Program, Conducting literacy activities outside the school, and Inviting Guest Authors. Meanwhile, the Implementation stage of literacy-based learning includes: Integrating literacy into all subjects, Improving the quantity and quality of books in the library, and Involving parents in literacy activities.

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