Strengthening School Literature Movement in Elementary School During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Literacy development in Indonesia is still reported to be low. This is written in the findings of a 2020 program for international student assessment (PISA) survey, which found that Indonesia ranked 72 out of 79 countries in the world in reading literacy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the implementation of the school literacy movement program was done online. The purpose of this study is to investigate the implementation of SLM throughout the Covid-19 era, as well as the barriers encountered by teachers during the SLM implementation process. The case study method is used in this work, which takes a qualitative approach. Data was collected by observation, interviews, and documentation, and data was analyzed utilizing triangulation techniques in three stages: collection, reduction, and conclusion. The findings revealed that schools were still practicing the three steps of SLM, namely habituation, development, and learning. During the epidemic, literacy exercises are introduced in which students are directed to be productive in their work through writing tasks. The work of the students is published in the form of a book. The challenge to implement SLM during the Covid-19 pandemic has been teachers’ inability to manage students’ reading comprehension exercises properly.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential element of a nation’s civilization (Cusanelli & Trevallion, 2020). Human resources cannot run well without education. Education is critical in developing a global competitive mindset. Education has a great influence on human life (Baatouche et al., 2022). The challenges of the twenty-first century are complex, especially in terms of human resources and required abilities. Skills
including critical thinking, creativity, communication, and teamwork are in high demand (Singh, 2019; Febriani & Anasruddin, 2020; Halverson, 2018).

According to the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) 21st century learning paradigm, students must prepare and possess 16 skills in order to live and succeed in the present and future. The 16 skills are organized into three categories: literacy, competency, and character education. Reading, writing, and mathematics are all basic sciences that help students progress intellectually. Reading literacy is important in school. Reading can help students learn life skills. Reading is a literacy activity (Wandasari, 2017). Literacy helps children perceive, interpret, and apply school-acquired knowledge. Literacy comprises reactions, comprehension, and behaviors that are implemented through ongoing learning.

The School Literacy Movement was built on nine priorities (nawacita) based on the Ministry of Education and Culture’s tasks and functions, particularly nawacita 5, 6, 8, and 9. (8) Promote cultural exchanges across nations (9) promote variety and increase Indonesian social cooperation. According to Wolf & Lopez (2022), the advancement of technology and information has decreased students’ interest in reading. Students’ intelligence is connected with their knowledge learned. Oral and written information is acquired. Reading activities obtain oral information. Reading activities can help students think critically (Antasari, 2017).

In accordance with Permendikbud Number 23 of 2015 concerning Character Growth, the Ministry of Education and Culture developed the School Literacy Movement (SLM). SLM is an integrated effort to make schools a learning organization with lifelong literate citizens (Srirahtayu et al., 2021). This activity is designed to encourage students’ love of reading while sparking their imaginations.

The SLM comprises three stages: habituation, development, and learning. The habituation stage promotes student interest in reading. Next, development. Literacy activities in the development stage aim to increase students’ reading fluency and comprehension. The third stage, learning, is designed to keep people engaged in reading and reading activities while improving their literacy skills with enrichment materials and textbooks. SLM activities are implemented for 15 minutes before the lesson. This activity is all about reading. The SLM Guidebook for Elementary School suggests that teachers implement reading activities such as reading aloud, silent reading (SSR), guided reading, shared reading, and independent reading.

In 2015, UNESCO found that Indonesian students’ enthusiasm in reading was 0.001. That is, only one person in a thousand is interested in reading. Indonesians read zero to one book per year on average. Malaysians and Singaporeans read two to three novels per year on average. Compared to US individuals who read 10-20 books annually, this number is falling behind. Japanese citizens can read 10-15 books each year.

Indonesia’s literacy rate is 64th out of 65 countries surveyed. The reading level of Indonesian students is 57 out of 65 countries (Permatasari, 2015). Moreover, an OECD survey shows that Indonesian reading culture ranks 52nd out of 52 countries in East Asia (Hapsari et al., 2017). Considering the aforementioned, it is appropriate to continue promoting the literacy movement to enhance public awareness and concern for fellow creatures of God.

The 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) shows Indonesia placed 45th out of 48 participating countries with a score of 428 out of 500. In the PISA assessment, Indonesia got a score of 371 and ranked 72 out of 79 countries. This test was used to compare student achievement on numerous skills (Nuryana et al., 2020). This study reveals that literacy interest to expand students’ knowledge is still not particularly desirable to Indonesian students.

The Covid-19 epidemic in Indonesia has an impact on educational activities; policies relating to studying at home are enforced in order to prevent the spread of pandemic. The policy governing students to study at home was implemented on March 24, 2020. This policy became a major concern in Indonesian education due to the emergency situation. In order to save education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education, culture, technology and higher education regulated the educational process during the pandemic (Subarto, 2020; Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021)
A new challenge in literacy learning in Indonesia today is learning done at home (Online). Due to the Covid-19 virus which has spread all over the world. In fact, Indonesia has adopted online learning for 8 months. Literacy skills are currently needed by the nation’s generation. Because literacy is an important element in facing the industrial revolution 4.0 (Rahman et al., 2019). Rapid technological advances must be met with a high level of literacy skills. These activities can encourage a reading culture, produce works and other innovations (Hanik, 2020). On that basis, face-to-face classrooms are limited to stop the spread of Covid-19. Through distance learning, schools can find the best strategies to improve student culture, especially in elementary schools. This is because the instincts of students at the elementary school level can still form sustainable habits (Fatimah & Kartikasari, 2018).

Research related to literacy problems in schools has been widely reviewed by previous researchers such as (Batubara & Ariani, 2018; Hidayat & Basuki, 2018), but the focus is only on literacy problems in general. According to a similar study conducted by Laksono & Retnaningdyah (2018) on the implementation of the literacy movement in elementary schools, school infrastructure implementing GLS is still below standard, but school residents are excited about implementing the program in schools. Similarly, Mayuni et al., (2020) conducted research comparing literacy programs in junior high schools in Indonesia and Taiwan, which revealed policy discrepancies between the two countries. According to Jatnika (2019), study on the school literacy movement conducted in Vocational High Schools demonstrates that there is a match between the programs implemented in schools and the guidelines published by the government. Meanwhile, conducting research specifically discussing the school literacy movement in Islamic education in elementary schools in the Covid-19 era, no one has researched yet. Thus, this study aims to explore strategies in implementing the School Literacy Movement (SLM) which has been launched by the government for elementary school students during Covid-19. This study also aims to reveal the problems faced by teachers while implementing SLM in Elementary Schools in Sidoarjo, East Java.

2. METHODS

This research used is qualitative with a case study research design. The SLM program was chosen as the case study because the researcher wanted to learn more about it after conducting a preliminary study. This study focused on a Sidoarjo elementary school that used SLM before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study used semi-structured interviews and documentation to obtain data. The researchers then conducted data analysis in four stages: (1) data collecting via interviews with teachers, parents, and students. The study included the class teacher, five parents, and five students. This involves documenting the interview results, identifying the things needed, capturing images during the interview, and any other documentation required by the researcher as supporting data. (2) Sorting reduces data. (3) the presentation of data using a narrative text, and (4) drawing conclusions from the outcomes of reliable study. The researcher applies the Miles and Huberman paradigm to analyze data, commencing with data reduction, data description, and conclusions (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 2007). The procedure for this research can be seen in the image below.
3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Based on the findings of research data collection, which included interviews with 11 relevant experts, including class teachers, five parents of children, and five students, as well as observations made directly by researchers during interviews. The study’s findings indicate that during the Covid-19 pandemic, teachers adopted online literacy exercises.

The teacher implements online literacy programs by distributing topic matter through a Whatsapp group. Following that, students were required to read the material contained in the Theme/LKS book as determined by the teacher in accordance with the lesson plans and to complete the tasks in the book or to videotape student activities while reading at home. Finally, the teacher assesses students’ skills through collected student writings in the form of assignments. Additionally, teachers implement all stages of the school literacy movement, beginning with the stages of habituation, development, and learning. The following is a transcript of the research findings.
Table 1. Transcript of Research Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Implementation of Literacy Movement Habituation in Elementary Schools</td>
<td>Habitation activities are carried out through reading aloud for approximately 15 minutes for the low class and silently reading for the high class before learning begins. Activities are carried out through online learning media such as zoom or google meet.</td>
<td>Class teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic still carry out reading activities every morning before learning begins. Parents can accompany children during reading activities together. Activities are carried out online.</td>
<td>Reading books that are directed by the teacher when reading 15 minutes before learning are fiction books such as fairy tales, legends, and fables. Apart from fiction, non-fiction books such as encyclopedias can also be read.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Literacy Movement Development in Elementary School</td>
<td>The teacher gives students assignments to write stories. For example, write down the number of Covid-19 cases in the neighborhood. Furthermore, students can be asked to make poems, pictures, posters, or videos related to preventing Covid-19, and various other tasks.</td>
<td>The class teacher during the Covid-19 pandemic gave an assignment to write with the theme of Covid-19. This is done so that children know what actions can be taken during the Covid-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>The teacher gave directions to make poetry, pictures, posters, or videos related to preventing Covid-19, and various other tasks.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Learning Literacy Movement in Elementary School</td>
<td>At the time of learning the teacher applies a balanced strategy with guided writing. The teacher guides the students’ writing results. Student writing is collected via school email. The articles collected will be published.</td>
<td>The way teachers implement online literacy is through class groups. Assignments that have been done, students can submit these assignments via school email.</td>
<td>The teacher implements online literacy activities. The teacher’s way of implementing it is to give assignments to write together and it will be published as a book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Obstacles in the Implementation of Literacy Movement</td>
<td>The obstacle in carrying out literacy</td>
<td>Obstacles in carrying out literacy during the Covid-19 pandemic</td>
<td>The obstacle in carrying out literacy</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Factors Affecting Reading Interest</td>
<td>The factor is from within the students themselves. Interest in reading in students already exists and children also like reading, but it needs to be improved. Schools have also filled reading materials, because in schools there must be a library. The cooperation of teachers and parents is also very important in growing and increasing students’ reading interest because parents must know what their children are lacking so that parents will control their children at home.</td>
<td>Interest in reading in students is still small, but students like to read if there is an assignment given from the teacher. The school has also filled reading materials for students, and the cooperation of parents and teachers is very important in growing and increasing interest in reading because when the teacher gives material/assignments, the parents will notify them.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Learning Shift</td>
<td>The media used by teachers in literacy activities during the Covid-19 pandemic is whatsapp with theme books and worksheets that are lent to students.</td>
<td>The media used by class IIIB teachers in literacy activities during the Covid-19 pandemic is whatsapp and sometimes teachers share material from YouTube.</td>
<td>The media used by the class teacher in literacy activities during the Covid-19 pandemic were whatsapp and youtube.</td>
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</tbody>
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### Discussion

1. **Implementation of School Literacy Movement Program during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

   Based on the results of interviews with principals and teachers at SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah, The School Literacy Movement has been socialized and implemented since 2017. Initially, this socialization intended to equalize the perceptions and commitments of school principals, teachers,
students, librarians, and education personnel to reading activities in schools. This socializing session should have introduced the School Literacy Movement to the principal, teachers, students, librarian, and education personnel. This results of this study described the implementation of School Literacy Movement at SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah in three stages: habituation, development, and learning. In-depth interviews about School Literacy Movement during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed important details. The following information on the School Literacy Movement at SDI Al-Maslachah was as the following:

a. **Habituation Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Prior to the pandemic, daily 15-minute reading activities were conducted before beginning the learning activity. After prayer, all kids participated in a 15-minute reading exercise. Each day, students complete a 15-minute reading activity that includes non-lesson materials such as story books, comic books, novels, and science. Reading for 15 minutes has been shown to improve student reading comprehension and memorization of short suras (Purwati, 2018). Each student activities were made to meet student’s unique needs. While some students preferred reading silently, others read loudly. During pandemic, the school literacy movement habituation activities still continued. The fifteen-minute reading activity were completed through online learning such as zoom or google meet. The difference is that students are instructed to read together utilizing an e-book or a shared screen displayed on each student’s laptop screen.

After 15 minutes of reading, the students were instructed to take notes. Not only should the title and author’s name be noted, but the entire document should be recorded, beginning with the title, author’s name, publisher, and major idea. Prior to the pandemic, the recording was done on the given literacy sheet. Each pupil is provided with a literacy sheet. Occasionally, recording is done on reading cards to be placed on the available reading looks in class. The reading card in the reading look is meant for archives, where students and others interested in reviewing the outcomes of student literacy can do so. Throughout the current pandemic, pupils take typed notes that will be forwarded via Whatsapp group or class teacher email.

Following 15 minutes of reading, students were instructed to write not only the title and author's name, but also to take complete notes beginning with the title, author's name, publisher, and main idea. Prior to the pandemic, the students’ writing activity was given through literacy sheet which they had personally. Writing activities were conducted on reading cards placed on the class’s reading look. The reading card in the reading look was made to facilitate students or anyone who were interested in reading the results of student literacy. Recently, students were asked to take notes forwarded via the Whatsapp group or to the class teacher’s email due to the pandemic of Covid-19.

b. **Development Activities During the Pandemic of Covid-19**

Prior to the pandemic, the school literacy movement was developed through responses to enrichment books during literacy lesson hours or during activity hours in the school library/class reading corner. The use of the reading corner is in line with research conducted by Putri Pradana (2020) which shows that students created artworks such as booklets and plant identification cards. Additionally, students could share a narrative from the readings they read with their friends, and the teacher would ask students questions about the story. Retelling the contents of the story could train students' memory and understanding of reading.

Throughout the Covid-19 epidemic, development activities were conducted by assigning students to create narratives. For example, Students in upper class could monitor the physical and social conditions surrounding their homes, compiled the list of Covid-19 cases in neighborhood, observed and wrote the community attitudes and responses to Covid-19, identified the steps taken by environmental management to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and wrote their perspectives on the situation as individuals, social beings, citizens, or servants of God Almighty. Additionally, students were requested to create poetry, illustrations, posters, or movies relating to Covid-19 prevention, among other assignments.
c. Learning Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Before the pandemic, school literacy learning activities at SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah were not only carried out in the classroom but also outside the classroom. For example, students left the classroom to observe the environment around the school and write stories or poems. This is in line with research conducted by Haritha et al., (2021) which states that storytelling activities through pictures have benefits such as being able to motivate students to learn. The activities encouraged students to field trips in order to gain new knowledge from what has been observed. Furthermore, students are directed to write stories according to their respective experiences.

During Covid-19 epidemic, literacy education was conducted online using an online learning system. With guided writing, the teacher uses a balanced method. The teacher guides the students' writing results. Student writing was collected via school email. The teacher set the size of the paper, the type of letters, and other details. Although there were still students whose structure was unsuitable at the time of collection, the sentences created by students were fairly difficult to read, and there were too many photographs included. The deadline for submission was one week; those who did not collect or were late, their essay would be rejected. The following stage is for the teacher to edit. The teacher noted several writing errors made by students and instructed them to repair them. Additionally, after all procedures were completed, the student's work would be published as an ISBN book.

The implementation of school literacy movement during the Covid-19 outbreak include encouraging students to read and write published ones. Students might explore topics by reading literature or observing their surroundings. Because of observations and writing, it was possible to conclude that students were able to think critically and creatively. Writing activity in literacy learning effort to bring schools through the stages of creative and critical thinking required by the twenty-first century. The existence of works published by students required creative and critical thinking producing the works (Sipayung et al., 2018). By introducing students to real-world experiences, which are then converted into writing, this might encouraged students' ongoing creativity. Student literacy skills in the twenty-first century was closely tied to the demands of reading skills in order to analyze content analytically, critically, and reflectively (Farikah, 2019). Experiential learning also taught students that anything might be more meaningful (Fryer & Bovee, 2016). This demonstrated that students' work was one of their daily activities.

In accordance with Basyiroh (2018) theory that literacy skills have an effect on children's relational, emotional, and cognitive development. If children had a high level of literacy in relation to their environment, they would develop self-confidence and able to socialize and be accepted in that context. Basyiroh's statement above emphasized the importance of language skills in their social and personal adjustment, as well as emotional and cognitive development. Communication, reading, and writing abilities are all necessary for everyone. For instance, statements about reading and writing that are appropriately learnt from the beginning that serve as educational benchmarks (Nopilda & Kristiawan, 2018). Despite limited activity during the Covid-19 Pandemic, SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah continued to conduct the School Literacy Movement for students. The ability to read and write is a fundamental human ability that must be acquired (Rokhman et al., 2014).

2. Obstacles in the Implementation of the School Literacy Movement during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The lack of school literacy socialization during the Covid-19 pandemic was an obstacle at SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah. The teachers were also unable to immediately monitor student progress on assignments. Like when reading, the teacher could not closely monitor students' comprehension of the readings. Because of space and time limitations, this activity could not be done in person. In the Covid-19 epidemic period, when it came to developing student literacy, teachers' lack of knowledge regarding digital-based learning materials was one of their biggest limitations. Because some teachers were very old and on the edge of retiring, their knowledge of learning media and technology was limited, which made the use of learning media in online classes during the Covid-19 epidemic condition less optimal.
According to Pangondian et al., (2019), one of the most important factors in the success of online learning is the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Teachers’ abilities and competencies in developing online-based learning media are required due to the obstacles faced. A lack of professional development in acquiring the competence to design online learning has been shown in several research (Aini et al., 2019). Teachers must possess not only teaching skills, but also professional competences that assist in the literacy development process in online learning (Yusnita et al., 2018; Kasmar et al., 2019; Febriani & Anasruddin, 2020).

In the educational technology concept, the distance learning model is the origin of online learning; technology was merely a tool as a medium for teachers to deliver content, messages, and information that becomes educational content. Thus, the availability of communication technology did not represent the most fundamental aspect of learning during the Covid-19 epidemic. In this situation, educational technology and learning technology enable the learning process to continue even while students and teachers were away from the classroom. With the concept of distancing learning, the difficulties associated with teachers’ inability to manage online learning, and the fact that not all students had smart mobile phone capable of accessing online learning, were not an excuse for not holding learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. The printed modules could be used in the replacement of information technology gadgets to facilitate learning during a pandemic (Minichiello et al., 2022).

To continuously improve the quality of online education, educational institutions must take many critical steps. First, improving the facilities and infrastructure to enable online learning, including infrastructure, a Learning Management System (LMS), and appropriate repositories. Second, developing the capacity of educators who support the implementation of online mentoring, such as developing internal competence in media production, connectivity, and online learning management. Third, keeping the continual expansion of the technology support platform for distance learning. Support for various digital platforms for learning activities is planned to continue until the Covid-19 situation is resolved. Some of these attempts were performed in order to properly prepare online learning in the next literacy learning process (Arifa, 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

Literacy is a 21st century skill that must be possessed by students, especially elementary school students. One form of literacy that needs to be developed is a creative culture and critical thinking in responding to the challenges of the 21st century. This can be expressed through the School Literacy Movement activities that have been promoted by the government since 2016. Writing literacy activities developed by SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah as an effort to implement school literacy movement program during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the results, students can produce works through the school literacy movement program which was implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. The existence of distance limitations does not prevent students from being productive in their work. Activities that have been implemented at SDI Unggulan Al-Maslachah can help the process of critical and creative thinking since elementary school age. This activity provides positive benefits for students, namely in producing work in the field of education. Despite the limitations experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, SDI Al-Maslachah continues to strive to maximize online assistance in implementing the school literacy movement.

It is extremely important that student observation sheets are used in efforts to maximize the school literacy movement during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to determine how far the movement has progressed. In addition, it is necessary to have independent reading activities by students so that the character of reading fondness is nurtured and gets many benefits from reading activities. Therefore, collaboration between teachers and parents is needed so that the implementation of the school literacy movement during the Covid-19 pandemic can be achieved optimally. The weakness of this research is that it only uses one school as a place of research, so it still requires more information related to the implementation of the school literacy movement. Further research can continue this research by using more research subjects.
REFERENCES


