



Efforts of the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Garden Management in Increasing the Reading Interest of Primary Education-Age Children

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Abstrak

Minat membaca anak usia sekolah dasar telah menjadi isu kritis dalam bidang pendidikan di Indonesia. Salah satu inisiatif yang bertujuan untuk menumbuhkan minat baca anak adalah melalui Taman Bacaan Masyarakat (TBM). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi upaya TBM Al-Istiqomah dalam meningkatkan minat baca anak di Desa Cileunyi Kulon, Kabupaten Bandung. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang dilakukan di TBM Al-Istiqomah, Cileunyi Kulon, Kabupaten Bandung, pada Januari hingga April 2023. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data mengikuti tahapan pengurangan data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa TBM Al-Istiqomah telah menerapkan berbagai strategi untuk meningkatkan minat baca di kalangan anak usia sekolah dasar, seperti menyediakan bahan bacaan yang menarik, menyelenggarakan kegiatan literasi yang menarik dan interaktif, serta berkolaborasi dengan lembaga PKBM dan organisasi pendidikan nonformal lainnya. Namun, beberapa faktor pendukung dan tantangan telah diidentifikasi dalam upaya ini, antara lain terbatasnya pendanaan untuk pembangunan, kurangnya sumber daya manusia, dan kesulitan dalam menjalin kemitraan dengan otoritas pemerintah daerah.

Kata Kunci: *Minat membaca anak-anak; taman bacaan masyarakat; Literasi anak*

Abstract

Reading interest among primary school-aged children has become critical in Indonesia's education field. One initiative to foster children's interest in reading is the Community Reading Gardens (Taman Bacaan Masyarakat, TBM). This study seeks to explore the efforts of TBM Al-Istiqomah to enhance children's interest in reading in Cileunyi Kulon Village, Bandung Regency. The research employs a qualitative approach conducted at TBM Al-Istiqomah, Cileunyi Kulon, Bandung Regency, from January to April 2023. Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis follows the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that TBM Al-Istiqomah has implemented various strategies to improve reading interest among primary school-aged children, such as providing engaging reading materials, organizing appealing and interactive literacy activities, and collaborating with PKBM institutions and other non-formal educational organizations. However, several supporting factors and challenges have been identified in these efforts, including limited funding for development, a lack of human resources, and difficulties in establishing partnerships with local government authorities.

Keywords: *Children's interest in reading; community reading garden; Children's literacy*

Introduction

The reading interest of children of primary education age is a crucial factor in shaping the quality of human resources in the future. Good literacy skills in children improve academic

achievement and encourage critical thinking and creativity. However, various studies show that reading interest among children still needs to be increased. Community Reading Gardens (TBM) play a significant role as a non-formal educational institution that provides access to

reading materials for the community, especially children. TBM is a center for lifelong learning and developing a reading culture. According to research conducted at TBM Jayanti Palembang, the reading interest of elementary school-age children in the neighborhood is very high. Children strongly desire to visit, realize the importance of reading, and feel happy in reading activities without coercion. This shows that the presence of TBM can significantly stimulate children's interest in reading (Ramadaniah & Hakim, 2018). A child's immediate environment, which involves parents and the child's daily life, is the first and primary place in providing education. This environment plays a vital role in influencing children's physical, emotional, and intellectual growth and development. The closeness and interaction in this environment provide a solid foundation for forming children's future characters, habits, and values.

In addition, TBM also plays a role in increasing reading interest through various literacy activities. For example, TBM Stone Garden holds activities that foster a love of reading, broaden people's horizons, and introduce and preserve nature. These activities have proven effective in increasing people's interest in reading. (Maulana & Firdaus, 2023).

Community Reading Gardens (TBM) play a significant role as a means of learning and a source of information for the community, especially in fostering children's interest in reading. TBM provides access to various reading materials that can enrich the learning experience and foster a love of reading from an early age. According to Sutarno NS (2008), TBM is deliberately created by the government, individuals, or non-governmental organizations to provide reading materials and foster reading interest in the surrounding community. (Putri & Setyadi, 2019).

International research shows that the existence of reading gardens and positive perceptions of them are closely related to reading habits in elementary school students. A study by Rahim and Yasin (2015) found that reading habits have a significant relationship with reading interest and the existence of reading gardens, a crucial aspect to be developed in improving children's literacy. (Faisal, 2021). TBM Al-Istiqomah, as one of the TBMs located in Bandung, has a strategic role in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age in the surrounding community. Through various programs and activities designed to

attract children's interest, TBM strives to create an environment conducive to developing a reading culture. This effort aligns with research findings that show that creating a reading garden can increase students' interest in reading by looking at the number of students who visit to read and realize the importance of reading to increase insight. (Juita & Asma, 2021).

Research on the efforts of Community Reading Gardens (TBM) in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age has been carried out a lot. The Aluia study discusses how TBM can serve as a means of learning and a source of information for the community, including children. TBM can significantly increase reading interest by providing suitable reading materials and a conducive environment. (Aulia, 2018). Prayogo's research emphasizes the importance of TBM's role as a non-formal institution providing community reading materials. With optimal services, TBM can help increase interest in reading, especially among children in primary education. age (Prayogo, 2022). Rahayu's research examines the strategies implemented by TBM managers to increase reading interest, such as providing interesting book collections and other supporting activities. The results show that these efforts successfully foster interest in reading among children. (Rahayu & Widiastuti, 2018). Bustan's research aims to discover the reading interests of elementary school-age children around TBM Jayanti Palembang. The results showed that most respondents were highly interested in reading, influenced by attention, interest, feelings of pleasure, time use, and follow-up after reading. (Bustan et al., 2023).

Referring to the previous research above, the gap analysis of this study aims to conduct an in-depth study of the management of TBM Al-Istiqomah. Focusing specifically on children of primary education age as a target group. Examine innovative strategies TBM managers use to attract children's interest in reading. Paying attention to the local socio-cultural context that is the background of TBM. Conduct indicator-based success evaluations to provide practical and applicable recommendations. The purpose of this study is to analyze the efforts of the management of the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Park in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age through management strategies and activity programs, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors faced in its implementation.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to understand the phenomenon in depth in a specific context, namely the efforts of the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Park (TBM) management in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age. The case study method allows for a detailed exploration of the events, processes, and interactions in the TBM. (Yin, 2017). The research was conducted at the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Park in Cileunyi Kulon Village, Bandung Regency. This location was chosen because TBM Al-Istiqomah is known for organizing literacy activities to increase the reading interest of primary school children in the surrounding environment. As Merriam suggests, selecting relevant locations is essential in case study research. (Merriam, 2009).

This study uses a purposive sampling technique, a sample selection technique based on specific criteria that are by the research objectives. (Patton, 2014). Purposive sampling was chosen because it allows researchers to focus on the individuals with the most relevant information about the phenomenon under study. (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). The study subjects include the manager of TBM Al-Istiqomah, parents accompanying children to TBM, and children of primary education who actively visit TBM. The sample selection criteria include direct involvement in TBM activities and experiences related to efforts to increase reading interest.

The data collection technique involves three main methods: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with managers, parents, and children to explore information related to management strategies, activity programs, and obstacles and supports in increasing children's interest in reading. In-depth interviews are used to delve into individual perspectives. (Silverman, 2013). The researcher observed activities at TBM Al-Istiqomah, including children's interaction patterns with reading materials and participation in literacy activities. Observation allows researchers to understand the context directly. (Stake, 2000). Documentation is carried out, and data in activity reports, visitor statistics, reading collections, and visual documentation are collected to support the analysis. Documentation

provides additional data to enrich interviews and observations. (Yin, 2017).

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. (Miles et al., 2014). This process consists of three main stages of data condensation: filtering and selecting data relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation is presented as narratives, tables, or diagrams to facilitate interpretation. Conclusion drawing and verification: The researcher draws conclusions based on the main findings and verifies the data to ensure the validity of the results. The Miles and Huberman model was chosen because it provides a systematic approach to analyzing qualitative data in an interactive and iterative manner (Miles et al., 2014).

Result and Discussion

The Community Reading Park (TBM) management has a strategic role in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age. Interest in reading early is an essential foundation in shaping children's sustainable literacy skills. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that literacy is not only about the ability to read and write but also includes fun and motivation in accessing various sources of information. In this context, TBM is responsible for creating an environment that supports the development of children's interest in reading.

TBM Al-Istiqomah is an example of a literacy institution that strives to provide quality services through innovative strategies. The various programs and activities implemented aim to make reading fun and meaningful for children. In addition, the existence of a comfortable, creative, and inclusive TBM also contributes to the achievement of national education goals, especially in supporting the National Literacy Movement (GLN) launched by the Indonesian government.

This section will discuss the research results related to the efforts made by the management of TBM Al-Istiqomah to increase the reading interest of children of primary education age. This discussion will also link research findings with relevant theory, literacy policies, and best practices to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the role of TBM in building a literacy culture in society.

The observation results show that TBM Al-Istiqomah implements the "TBM Seeds" (Improving the Beauty of TBM) program,

designed to create a comfortable, attractive, and conducive literacy space for visitors. This initiative is relevant to previous research findings that show that a relaxed and aesthetic learning environment can increase visitors' motivation and engagement in literacy activities, especially children. A pleasant physical environment serves as a means of support and strategically enhances the reading and learning experience.

A pleasant physical environment serves as a means of support and strategically enhances the reading and learning experience. One of the TBM managers stated that:

"Kami merancang ruang TBM ini sedemikian rupa dengan banyak elemen visual dan ruang terbuka yang bisa digunakan oleh anak-anak. Kami percaya bahwa ruang yang indah dan nyaman bisa mendorong mereka untuk lebih banyak berinteraksi dengan buku."

This statement aligns with the understanding that the physical environment can affect the quality of a child's literacy experience, as described in previous research. In addition, interactive activities such as literacy trees are a practical innovation that attracts the interest of children of primary education age in reading. This approach is based on the concept of "playful learning," which integrates visual elements and participatory activities to increase children's interest and engagement in reading. (Fisher et al., 2013). Literacy trees, for example, help children visualize their reading achievements, providing a more enjoyable learning experience. This strategy is considered effective because children tend to be more responsive to activities involving direct interaction and imagination.

One of the participants of the activity said, *"Saya suka resensi buku saya ditampilkan di pohon literasi. Itu membuat saya merasa bangga dan lebih bersemangat untuk membaca lebih lanjut."* This strategy is adequate because children tend to be more responsive to activities involving direct interaction and imagination.

The program implemented at TBM Al-Istiqomah aligns with this approach, combining education, creativity, and fun elements. In addition, programs such as "TBM Seeds" have the potential to become a model of best practice for other community reading gardens that face similar challenges in attracting children's interest in reading. Furthermore, the program can also be linked to Bronfenbrenner's theory of developmental ecology, which emphasizes the importance of microenvironments (such as TBM)

in shaping a child's development. An aesthetic, inclusive, and supportive TBM can serve as an ideal ecosystem for building reading habits early on (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007).

The Tadarus and Khatam buku program initiated by TBM Al-Istiqomah is an innovative effort to build a consistent reading culture among primary school children. This approach is relevant to research showing that regular reading habits can significantly improve children's literacy skills, even for short durations. (Mol & Bus, 2011). Reading 20 minutes daily, as applied in this program, enriches children's vocabulary, develops their understanding of texts, increases imagination, and forms long-term reading habits.

This activity becomes more meaningful by integrating group presentation activities and book reviews. Presentations in small groups serve as a collaborative learning method that encourages children to share knowledge and practice their communication skills. This aligns with Vygotsky's research on social learning, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in building new understandings and skills. (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, creating book reviews that are attached to the literacy tree provides a symbolic appreciation for children's achievements and fosters a sense of pride in their literacy achievements.

Implementing competitions based on the number of books is also an additional motivation for children. This healthy competition stimulates children's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to continue reading, in accordance with the findings (Wigfield et al., 2016) that rewards for individual achievements can increase children's interest in reading and perseverance in literacy activities. Furthermore, this competition approach creates a positive environment for children to be inspired and motivated by peer achievement.

Overall, the Tadarus and Khatam Qur'an programs implemented by TBM Al-Istiqomah help increase children's interest in reading and contribute to developing their social skills, self-confidence, and competitiveness. This program can be a model of literacy innovation that can be applied in other community reading gardens to support the National Literacy Movement.

The study's results show that TBM Al-Istiqomah has implemented various strategies to increase the reading interest of children of primary education age. These strategies include providing interesting reading materials, implementing interactive literacy activities like literacy trees, and strengthening collaboration

with other educational institutions such as PKBM Al-Istiqomah and DTA Istiqomah Ijabah. This effort reflects TBM's strategic role as an informal learning forum focusing on developing children's literacy.

The provision of interesting reading materials is one of the main factors in increasing reading interest. One of the TBM managers stated that, *"Kami berusaha menyediakan buku-buku yang sesuai dengan minat anak-anak, seperti cerita rakyat, komik edukasi, dan buku-buku bergambar. Dengan begitu, mereka lebih tertarik untuk datang ke TBM dan membaca."* This statement is in line with the views of Guthrie & Wigfield (Wigfield & Guthrie, 2000), which emphasizes the importance of the availability of relevant reading materials to increase children's reading motivation.

In addition, interactive literacy activities such as literacy trees encourage children to continue reading. One of the teachers of TBM partners explained, *"Anak-anak merasa bangga saat resensi buku mereka ditempel di pohon literasi. Itu seperti penghargaan kecil yang membuat mereka semakin semangat membaca."* This activity supports the theory of Fisher et al. (Fisher et al., 2013), which states that visual-based literacy activities and active participation can increase the attractiveness of reading while strengthening children's understanding of reading. To foster effective interaction in children, tutors seek to establish active communication by engaging them through open-ended questions. This approach aims to understand the extent of children's understanding of the material presented. In addition, to encourage the participation of children who tend to be passive, tutors provide opportunities for them to ask questions individually (Alviensyah et al., 2024). This step is done so that every child feels appreciated, heard, and understood. As expressed by Djamiluddin & Wardana (Djamiluddin, 2019), creating an interactive learning environment provides opportunities for students to be actively involved in the learning process through interaction between students and between students and teachers.

Collaboration with other educational institutions is also important in supporting the literacy ecosystem in the environment around TBM. Head of PKBM Al-Istiqomah revealed, *"Kami sering mengadakan kegiatan bersama, seperti lomba membaca dan diskusi buku. Anak-anak tidak hanya membaca tetapi juga belajar*

berinteraksi dan bekerja sama." This collaboration creates an inclusive and sustainable literacy environment. TBM's collaboration with PKBM and DTA Istiqomah Ijabah has had a positive impact on increasing children's interest in reading. Head of PKBM Al-Istiqomah revealed:

"Kami sering mengadakan kegiatan bersama, seperti lomba membaca, diskusi buku, dan pelatihan untuk anak-anak. Dengan kerjasama ini, kami bisa menjangkau lebih banyak anak dan memberikan pengalaman belajar yang lebih luas."

Overall, TBM Al-Istiqomah's efforts through innovative and collaboration-based programs have proven effective in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age. Implementing this strategy provides opportunities for children to build literacy skills and grow their confidence and enthusiasm in reading.

In general, based on the results of observations, the condition of the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Park (TBM) is quite good, with adequate facilities to support literacy activities. Existing facilities, such as a comfortable reading room and a reasonably varied book collection, have positively contributed to the reading interest of children of primary education age. However, several aspects need to be improved, such as more effective room planning and financial management. TBM manager stated,

"Kami memang sudah berusaha menyediakan ruang yang nyaman, namun masih perlu penataan lebih baik agar lebih efisien dan mendukung kegiatan literasi anak-anak dengan lebih maksimal."

This statement underscores the importance of optimal space management in creating an atmosphere that supports learning activities.

One of the factors that encourages TBM Al-Istiqomah's efforts to increase interest in reading is the cooperation established with non-formal educational institutions, such as PKBM and Diniyah Takmiliah Awaliyah Istiqomah Ijabah. This collaboration provides children broader access to reading materials relevant to their needs. One of the TBM managers mentioned:

"Kerjasama dengan lembaga-lembaga pendidikan ini sangat membantu kami

dalam memperluas cakupan pembelajaran dan memberikan anak-anak lebih banyak pilihan bacaan yang sesuai dengan kurikulum non-formal yang mereka jalani.”

However, despite reasonable efforts, TBM Al-Istiqomah faces several obstacles that must be overcome immediately. One of the biggest challenges is the limited funds that cause the development of literacy facilities and activities to be hampered. In an interview, the manager of TBM revealed:

“Kami memang sudah mengajukan berbagai proposal, namun pendanaan yang diperoleh masih terbatas. Ini menjadi hambatan bagi kami untuk mengembangkan berbagai kegiatan yang lebih menarik dan berkualitas.”

In addition, TBM also experienced a shortage of human resources, which affected the quality of services and the management of literacy activities. For example, *“We often lack teachers or facilitators who can provide direct guidance to children. This makes us have to be more creative in designing activities to attract children's attention still,”* said one of the TBM administrators.

The results of this study show that despite the challenges, TBM Al-Istiqomah is still committed to improving the quality of literacy services for children. This research also shows the importance of support from the government and other related parties in improving TBM facilities and management so that it can be more effective in achieving literacy goals. (Rubiyad & Fajriyah, 2025). One of the parents who is also actively supporting TBM said, *“Kami berharap pemerintah bisa lebih memperhatikan taman bacaan seperti ini. Jika ada dukungan dari pemerintah, kami yakin kualitas layanan bisa lebih maksimal dan lebih banyak anak yang dapat memanfaatkan TBM ini.”*

Based on these findings, closer synergy is needed between TBM, local governments, educational institutions, and the community to overcome existing obstacles. The success of literacy programs is often influenced by the support of various parties who collaborate to create a conducive environment for children to develop their interest in reading (Langer, 2002).

This study shows that better management in terms of spatial planning and financial management is essential for the sustainability and development of TBM. Therefore, TBM managers must pay attention to more structured managerial

aspects, including financial planning and resource allocation for literacy activities. These findings imply the importance of providing managerial and financial training to TBM managers to manage existing facilities and resources effectively. In addition, alternative sources of funds from the private sector or the government can be searched to support the sustainability of TBM's operations.

One of the main strengths of this study is the collaboration between TBM Al-Istiqomah PKBM, DTA Istiqomah Ijabah, and the student's parents. This collaboration strongly supports more prosperous and more diverse literacy programs, which can ultimately strengthen children's interest in reading. These findings suggest the importance of expanding the reach of cooperation with various parties, both formal and non-formal educational institutions, to increase access to quality reading materials and support sustainable literacy activities.

Creative and innovative literacy programs, such as literacy trees, have proven effective in attracting children's interest in reading. This program focuses on reading books and provides visual and interactive elements that can stimulate children's imagination, thus making reading activities more enjoyable. This result implies the importance of developing a literacy program integrating play and visualisation elements into the learning process. Other TBMs can adapt this model by adding more interactive activities to enrich the literacy experience.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the Al-Istiqomah Community Reading Garden (TBM) is an institution that plays an important role in increasing the reading interest of children of primary education age. The efforts made by the management of TBM Al-Istiqomah, such as the provision of various types of interesting reading materials, interactive literacy activities, and cooperation with other non-formal educational institutions, were able to increase the reading interest of children of primary education age in Cileunyi Kulon Village, Bandung Regency. Although there are several obstacles, TBM Al-Istiqomah has the potential to continue to develop and provide benefits to the local community.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that TBM Al-Istiqomah continue to make efforts to increase the reading interest of children of primary education age by developing

more creative and innovative literacy programs, expanding cooperation with related parties, and optimizing the management and utilization of its facilities. In addition, the government and local

communities need to support TBM in maintaining and expanding its existence as a means to increase interest in reading and literacy in Indonesia.

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