



The Role of Schools in Creating a Well-Being Literacy Environment for Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT

One of the problems that is being faced by the world of education, especially early childhood education schools in Indonesia, is the lack of children's critical thinking skills during reading and writing learning activities and children's fear of literacy learning activities due to the lack of diversity in the use of media in schools which makes children's interest in literacy low. This study aims to find out how schools help early childhood health literacy and mental health. Project-based learning, along with music and movement. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach for data collection. The data collection methods used including observations, interviews, and documentation with Braun & Clarke's thematic analysis will then be used to conduct the analysis. The results of this study show that schools play a role in supporting mental health literacy and early childhood well-being by providing facilities such as reading corners, libraries, and interesting reading posters. The school also uses various strategies to attract children's interest in reading and create a well-being literacy environment, such as the illustrated storytelling method, role-playing method, project method, song and movement method.

Keywords: *Early Childhood, Literacy, The Role of Schools, Well-being*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the key to building a quality generation, one of which is in developing a literacy culture from an early age to shape children's life skills in the future. Moreover, in the current era, digital technology, especially gadgets, is

increasingly dominating various aspects of life so that the development of literacy culture is beginning to be disrupted by new habits that make children less interested in reading. It is strengthened by a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022 that 33.44% of early childhood children in Indonesia can already use gadgets with details, 25.5% of children aged 0-4 years and children aged 5-6 years with a percentage of 52.76% with an average duration of using gadgets of 6 hours per day. In contrast to the percentage of children reading books and reading books with adults still very small with a percentage of 11.12% reading books and 17.21% reading books. This shows that early childhood spends more time playing with gadgets than reading.

According to Neuman (2015), it is argued that early childhood must naturally learn to build a culture of language, reading, and writing. From the age of 0-6 years old, children can read and write. At present, children acquire literacy knowledge through simple actions rather than by being taught, they prefer to participate in literacy-related activities and observe them (Dennis & Votteler, 2013). Moreover, literacy is very important to be introduced from an early age because it reflects the development of new civilizations in each country. Literacy is a person's ability to manage and understand information by reading, writing, arithmetic, and solving everyday problems. For example, the results of the 2018 PISA survey show that out of 78 OECD member countries, Indonesia is ranked 70th in terms of literacy (Hidayati et al., 2024).

The low literacy of early childhood is caused by various factors, such as children being born and growing up with technological advances so that digital technology, especially gadgets, has become part of them in daily life. In addition, literacy introduction strategies in children can also affect children's interest in reading and writing (Hidayati et al., 2024). When the literacy process is packaged in a thoughtful and interesting way, this does not make children feel bored and even makes children not want to introduce literacy (Nurhayati, 2019). This can also be seen from the results of research conducted by Hidayati et al. (2023) the introduction of literacy through conventional methods such as reading books makes children avoid and even emit negative expressions including crying, shouting, and even tantrums when doing these activities. Unlike when the introduction of literacy with the use of digital technology, children give a positive response (Hidayati, 2025). Mawaddah (2017) added that the introduction of literacy uses an unattractive approach, makes children bored and confused, causing them to dislike and even not be interested in literacy. Because the school environment can affect children's development, including self-identity, belief in self-abilities, life picture, interpersonal relationships, right and wrong norms, conception of social systems, and children's desire to learn. So all elements need

to be involved in the introduction of literacy in well-being children , especially schools.

School is a second home for children because children spend more time at school approximately 7 hours/day. This means that one-third of the time will be spent in school to learn, and obtain information, the formation of children's personality both cognitive and emotional and literacy interest will grow and develop (Rohman, 2017; Santosa et al., 2019; Anisa et al., 2021). In addition, schools are responsible for children's mental health and well-being (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011). So the importance of education and schools in maintaining children's mental health, especially in the development, prevention, and intervention of children's mental health because experience and life at school will affect children's conditions in the future. With the relationship between children's experiences at school and children's mental health, it is hoped that schools will build a comfortable, safe, and positive environment for children, especially in learning to recognize literacy.

According to Turashvili and Japaridzw (2012), the feeling of happiness that children have at school can also have a positive impact on their academics. Children who feel that they have positive well-being in learning at school will also be actively involved in their learning activities, but on the other hand, if the child does not feel well-being, they will not want to be actively involved in learning and will make the learning climate negative (Candra & Rizal, 2021). Therefore, researchers want to see the role of schools in creating a well-being literacy environment for early childhood.

METHOD

Qualitative descriptive is used in this study because it is to see an overview of the role of schools in creating a well-being literacy environment for early childhood. This research is in one of the kindergartens in Kebayoran Baru, Jakarta. The selection of this location is based on the infrastructure facilities that are very adequate to see and know the role of schools in creating a well-being literacy environment for early childhood. Data were collected by observation, interview, and documentation techniques. This observation was carried out on group A children and group A school environment as well as interviews with group A teachers. The results of the data will be processed by thematic analysis techniques described by Braun & Clarke (2006) by going through several stages, namely data recognition, obtaining initial code, finding themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing a research report.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using observations and interviews with teachers in group A classes, the study found that there are several things that schools do to create a well-being literacy environment for early childhood.

A. Infrastructure to Support Early Childhood Literacy

In school education units, adequate infrastructure can help children learn and facilitate learning activities. The existence of good facilities for literacy can prevent children from experiencing literacy problems and maintain their mental health related to literacy. The Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 concerning the National Education System of 2003 stipulates that "Every formal and non-formal education unit provides facilities and infrastructure that meet educational needs in accordance with the growth and development of physical, intellectual, and social potential, According to Rohman (2017) facilities, reading materials, facilities, and literacy infrastructure are all indicators that show that schools have the capacity to support literacy. Based on observations of the school environment and interviews with class A teachers, there are infrastructure facilities provided by schools in creating a well-being literacy environment for early childhood, including the following.

1. Reading Corner in Each Class

In supporting healthy literacy, schools provide reading corners in every classroom. By providing a wide collection of interesting, colorful, and illustrated reading books. Reading in the corner every day for 15 minutes can increase children's interest in literacy, especially reading. By using the reading corner every day, they can encourage children to become reading lovers, provide a fun reading experience, foster reading habits, and make teachers an example of reading.

2. Library

To support children's reading literacy, schools provide libraries. Libraries have a great influence on the influence of children's literacy. In addition to helping them improve their literacy, they can also enjoy a new atmosphere where they can meet and talk with their classmates (Afghani et al., 2022). Optimizing the function of school libraries can help children be more interested in literacy activities. According to Sukma & Sekarwidi (2021), a school library is a place where various library materials are collected to add insight and information as well as to support the teaching and learning process in accordance with educational goals. The library is designed to be as attractive as possible, especially for the procurement of reading materials with the aim of increasing children's motivation for reading materials. Based on the findings of observations and interviews, the school also pays attention

to library facilities so that children are comfortable, such as attractive seating, easy-to-reach layout of reading materials, and interesting posters related to literacy. This is in line with Azhari & Ramadan (2022) that facilities and infrastructure are important things for schools to pay attention to.



Libraries that help early childhood in reading usually have a collection of books that are interesting and appropriate to their reading ability. Books that have interesting pictures and stories that are appropriate for the child's age level (Latifa et al., 2023). Libraries can also hold joint book reading activities such as fairy tales or story programs told by expert narrators. This can help increase children's interest in literacy, especially reading and understanding stories (Fajriyah, 2018; Wahab & Amaliyah, 2021). In addition, libraries can also be a place where children can explore and interact with books and other reading materials. They can learn about different types of books, get to know their favorite authors, and explore topics that interest them. In addition, libraries can also be a place to share books with their friends, so they can give each other interesting book recommendations (Afghani et al., 2022).

3. Poster

Posters or sticky images also help the literacy movement for early childhood because they are pasted and easy for children to see. These posters can also help children's visuals in developing reading literacy in school (Afghani et al. 2022; Setiarini & Setyawan 2023). Poster media usually consists of written messages, both written and imaged, which are intended to attract the attention of many people so that the message can be easily received by others (Baiti & Zulkarnaen, 2022). Posters used in the classroom to support early childhood literacy according to the criteria, namely (a) Posters that have text that can be read by children; (b) Posters that have images that can be read by early childhood; (c) Posters that have colors that can be read by early

childhood; and (d) Posters that have a form that can be read by early childhood.

These posters can also help early childhood learn to read, write, and understand information. According to the results of observations and interviews, schools and teachers made attractive posters where the posters not only contain text but also combine interesting images and colors. This aims to make the meaning contained in the poster easy to understand by children and make them more interested in seeing it. In addition, teachers and schools pay close attention to the placement of posters. The teacher installed posters in the classroom with the child's visibility that was not too high. They also put up posters with different typefaces, months, days, and lesson themes.

B. Methods of Implementing Literacy in Schools

Improving reading, writing, and critical thinking skills is an important thing for schools to pay attention to. In addition, schools and educators must consider methods that can attract children to support well-being literacy and not give a negative impression to children related to literacy activities (Hidayati et al., 2024). Unattractive methods can cause children's boredom and disinterest in literacy (Hidayati, 2023). There are several methods that teachers can use to implement literacy in elementary schools, based on findings from interviews and observations. Some of the techniques that can be used are as follows:

1. **Illustrated storytelling method;** Children gain a better understanding of storylines and improve their imagination skills by using storybooks filled with interesting images. As said by Hidayati (2023), several things need to be considered in making a storybook such as the concept of choosing a theme where educators must take the theme from the closest to the child to the furthest from the child's life. In addition, themes need to start with simple things and then develop into complex things so that the themes used can be understood easily by children (Rizkiyah, 2022). Moreover, children are in the pre-operational stage where learning is through symbolic activities (Santrock, 2012). In addition, educators need to involve children in book reading activities together by reading the ledger aloud, and sharing book reading experiences (Hidayati et al., 2023).
2. **Role-Playing Methods;** This method can teach children various aspects of development, such as language, social-emotional, cognitive, and others because in role-playing activities, children will play a role according to the theme. In addition, children will learn to process words to speak according to roles. If this is done repeatedly, it can improve reading and writing skills (Hidayati et al., 2023). Added by Neuman & Jillian Knapczyk (2022) one way to practice language skills, especially reading and writing, is for children to

play a role. It can also have a positive impact on improving a child's early academic abilities.

3. Project Method; The introduction of literacy through this project can teach children to read and write because the activity involves research, application, trial, and presentation of results. The application of literacy uses the project method when the theme of communication learning, educators encourage children to make communication tools because through this method children can recognize numbers or letters. Children who obtain project learning with the help of literacy modules are able to identify questions to be explored further through scientific investigation and are quite able to distinguish questions that can be investigated scientifically (Sari et al., 2017).



4. Song and Motion Methods; Songs and movements help children learn to say words with pleasure as they are spoken in songs. At the beginning of the semester, educators use this method primarily to introduce letters, day names, and month names to students with the aim of making them more receptive to new knowledge. The use of song and movement methods in children aged 4-6 years will unconsciously make children learn. This method can stimulate children's development according to their age (Safitri & Pujiati, 2023). Hidayati et al. (2023) added that because children's world is a world of play, games, songs and movements are ways for educators to introduce literacy to children.

CONCLUSION

As an educational institution, they must pay more attention to and support children's growth, especially literacy. Schools must ensure that good literacy is important to children without negatively impacting their mental health in the

future. This means that they must provide facilities and fun methods so that children do not feel burdened or pressured by literacy. Each class can have a reading corner, a mini library, and interesting reading posters. In addition, schools use various ways to attract children's interest in literacy and create a healthy literacy environment, such as the illustrated storytelling method, role-playing method, project method, song and movement method.

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