

The implementation of Islamic Reading Corner as an Effort to Increase Literacy of Al Quran Education Park

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses Community Service (PKM) activity through Community Service Program students of STAI Darul Falah at the Al Muhajirin Qur'an Education Park (TPQ) Bongas Village, Cililin District, West Bandung Regency in the field of education. The activity focused on assisting students with literacy by providing a reading corner. Basically, the effort to optimize the alphabetic culture in Bongas Village are already existed through strengthening education in religious institutions, one of which is the Al-Muhajirin Al-Qur'an Education Park. However, one of the challenges faced is the TPQ does not yet have adequate libraries, and there are no routine programs related to literacy. This needs to be improved in order to increase the enthusiasm for learning of children or students at TPQ Al Muhajirin which is located in Bongas village. The aim of this research is to increase literacy culture among students of TPQ Al-Muhajirin, hamlet (RW) 18 Bongas Village by providing Islamic reading corner facilities. The results of this community service have an impact positive towards the character development and early literacy habits for students. Apart from that, it is expected that this program can become a sustainable activity and increasingly support early literacy learning for children or students.

Keywords: Islamic Reading Corner, Literacy, Qur'an Education Park

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INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a crucial part of the intellectual development of a community. The society culture in literacy can be used as a form of participation in shaping the perspective and intellectual development of a community. This includes important foundations that bring opportunities for appropriate improvement for the common interests of all parties (Laster et al., 2023). Through the practice of cultural values of literacy, individual's ability in the social environment is inspired and encouraged to become lifelong learners, and is actively involved through steps of understanding, analyzing and reflecting on information. Apart from that, by implementing the cultural values of literacy, rural residents have the opportunity to increase understanding, creativity and insight in various areas of life. In Indonesia, especially in rural communities, the ability in understanding texts and writing has been becoming an issue that must be considered. In reality, there are still many residents who experience problems in this regard. This problem hinders the progress of individual potential and society as a whole (Ali, 2022). The lack of sensitivity to

alphabetism in some villages is often caused by limited sources of quality texts or articles.

One of the efforts to optimize alphabetic culture in rural areas is through strengthening education in religious institutions, one of which is the Al-Qur'an Education Park (TPQ) through an Islamic reading corner. The TPQ is one of the units providing informal Islamic education for pre-school and elementary school age. The time or hour for the educational process at the institution takes place in the evening, namely before and after noon time or before and after Asr time (Wihaya Kusumah et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the reading corner area is basically the corner area of the classroom which has been decorated and enriched with various variants of books and information related to literacy. This room functions as an extension of the library's role (Indriani et al., 2022). It is expected that through this facility, students will be taught to develop the habit of understanding texts, which in turn will make the students eager to read books regularly (Rimba Kurniawan et al., nd). In this case, the books are related to Islamic books and education.

Bongas Village, which is located in the Cililin sub-district, West Bandung, is one of the areas that has a large population of TPQ students. However, in the case of literacy culture, Bongas Village still faces several challenges, especially regarding access to a variety of quality Islamic books. The diversity and attractiveness of the Islamic book collection at the TPQ Al-Muhajirin hamlet 18 is still lack of facilities, which indirectly influencing students' reading interest and their literacy level. Therefore, based on the background of the problem above, it is crucial to conduct research on Islamic Reading Corners as an initiative to improve literacy culture among students of TPQ Al-Muhajirin RW 18 Bongas Village. The aim of carrying out this research is to explore the role of Islamic reading corners in the initiative to increase the literacy of students at TPQ Al-Muhajirin RW 18 Bongas Village.

METHODS

This research employed descriptive methods in a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is an approach used to investigate situations where the research object occurs naturally, where the researcher acts as the main means, data collection is carried out through various combined techniques, and data analysis is carried out inductively (Apriliani et al., 2024). In qualitative research, data sources consist of words and actions, with additional data such as documents and other elements. Therefore, in this section, data types are divided into words and actions, written data, photography, and statistics (Khasanah et al., 2023).

This research was conducted at TPQ Al-Muhajirin hamlet 18 Bongas Village, Cililin District, West Bandung Regency. This research was carried out in the 3rd and 4th weeks of August 2023. In this study, data is collected through observations, interviews and document collection. Furthermore, in extracting the meaning of data, there are three phases such as data verification, data simplification, display, and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of implementing an Islamic reading corner at TPQ Al Muhajirin were carried out collaboratively with Community Service Program (KKN) students.

The assistance in providing facilities in conducting the Islamic reading corner was well-received. The society also expected that literacy activities through the use of Islamic reading corner facilities could still continue as they should even after the Community Service Program students has finished.

The next activity is equalizing perceptions with the ustadzah which is carried out through Focus Group Discussions. The initial stage of the service team is to equate perceptions with the management. TPQ management stated that reading habitual activities were not carried out routinely. Furthermore, FGD activities were carried out with the ustadzah as the teacher by discussing the importance of reading for children. Several conclusions from the FGD activities are drawn: (1) reading activities can be conducted regularly; (2) a reading corner in the form of display and book shelves that are easy to move; (3) providing books with an Islamic nuance. Next, the service team and management team agreed to plan activities and implement the Islamic reading corner program.



Figure 1. FGD Team managing TPQ

After conducting focus group discussion, the next step is the process of setting up the reading corner at TPQ Al Muhajirin on Saturday. The community service not only arrange the books alphabetically but also set the books shelves near the entrance area. Thus, TPQ students who have just arrived at TPQ will immediately be drawn to the reading corner.

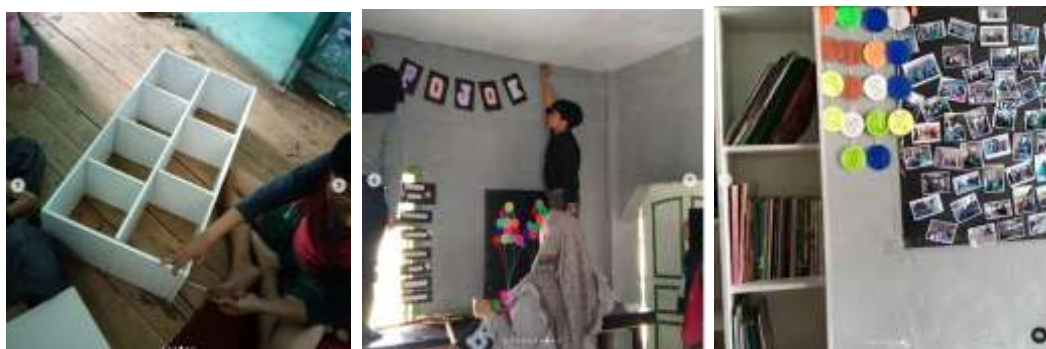


Figure 2. The Process of Laying Out and Placing Islamic Reading Corners



Figure 3. Promotion of Islamic Reading Corner via social media

After arranging the shelves, the researchers and Community Service team (KKN) created some arts from post cards to promote children, especially students to visit the reading corner. The promotio also uploaded on social media so that it can reach the students' community. After promoting the reading corner, the researchers evaluated whether this Islamic reading corner can be accepted by the community and experiencing development at TPQ Al Muhajirin. The evaluation was observing directly the number of students who visit and read at the reading corner (Rumakaway et al., 2022). The following is a diagram of the number of visitors to the Islamic reading corner at TPQ Al Muhajirin, District. Cililin, West Bandung Regency.

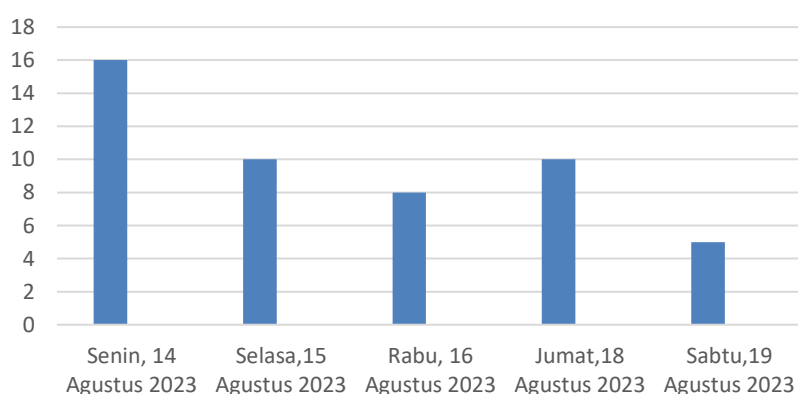


Figure 4. Nominal Diagram of Islamic Reading Corner Visitors

Regarding the results of the diagram above, the number of visitors increased on the first day after the reading corner provided. The enthusiasm of visitors on the first day was much greater than on the fifth day, as the first day was the first launch of the program so there were much more visitors. Even those who came just looked around and some also read. Meanwhile, on the fifth day, the number of visitors became minimal because there was a lack of activities that could support literacy activities so

not many visitors came to TPQ Al Muhajirin. From the results above it can also be seen that the islamic reading corber program can run well even though there were still not too many readers and visitors, but this does not rule out the possibility in the following days so there needs to be more process to be able to introduce this reading corner to the community. and promoting the literacy process in village communities.

In facing the challenge that has been explained above, the assistance from Community Service students (KKN) was required to facilitate children and students during the program runs. The activity during this mentoring includes the reading of stories about the Prophet and I Want to Know, as well as My Story activities. The activity was conducted in order to stimulate students' activeness in having the courage to appear and be willing to read.

The reading of short story is held regularly every Friday. The students are guided in an interactive way, including providing games to keep the children interested. Through the I Want to Know and My Story activities, students are explained to have the courage to tell stories in front of their friends. In this process, children feel appreciated for their abilities and are expected to be able to pass on this positive habit to other students so that they will also be eager to read and share stories in public. This mentoring activity also serves as an example for Ustaz/Ustazah in order that they can organize similar activities, such as reading weeks or other activities, and aware of the students' potential directly.



Figure 5. Islamic Reading Corner Assistance

The results of the reading short story which performed by KKN students succeeded in attracting the students' interest. The students were very enthusiastic about taking part in literacy and reading activities guided by both lecturers and KKN students as teachers or mentors. Apart from that, through this reading literacy assistance, students also accumulate knowledge through the learning process with their friends (Wahyuningrum et al., 2022). The prophet's stories were not always told exclusively by companions; instead, students were also given the opportunity to read, compose stories by solving random puzzles, and listen to their peers telling stories in front of the class. This provides an opportunity for students to study collaboratively (Lestari, 2021)

The success of this reading literacy assistance program is achieved through several steps which include planning, implementation and rewards. These steps are in line with findings which also identified three stages in reading literacy assistance,

including planning, where students' reading activities are planned and designed. In the context of literacy assistance, the assistant not only instructs students to read, but also designs questions and games that indirectly encourage students to read the reading sources (Burke, 2024).

The second stage is the implementation stage, both through online and offline platforms, and both have their respective advantages and disadvantages. The service team make an attempt to run the reading literacy program in a way that creates a harmonious atmosphere, which will attract students' interest in pursuing more information about things that interest them.

The third step, namely the appreciation and reflection stage, is crucial in evaluating the results of the literacy program. This can be achieved by encouraging students to share stories in front of classmates or by providing rewards in the form of small prizes through quiz questions. This activity commonly encourages students' enthusiasm to continue learning and reading. Providing awards, whether in the form of praise or awards, will further motivate students to remain the learning process.



Figure 6. Literacy Program Awards

The most crucial aspect of reading literacy is the character building of students. Through the moral messages obtained from reading the Prophet's Stories and My Stories, students will deepen the characters contained in these stories. The selection of prophet stories provides positive role models for students (Shah et al., 2024). Although this service does not measure the changes in the character of TPQ students from the beginning before the activity started, the enthusiasm of the students during the activity shows that the students enjoyed the process of learning together and discussing the stories of the prophet. The children looked very enthusiastic while acting out the story, and their friends who were listening were also very attentive.

Apart from that, the Curriculum Center for Development and Education of National Culture and Character states that there are 18 character education values that can be used as a reference in the learning process, namely religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, creative, hard work, independent, respect for achievement, friendly/communicative, democracy, curiosity, love of peace, love of reading, love of the country, national spirit, care for the environment, social care and responsibility (Rofiki et al., 2023). The description of the 18 character education values is described below.

Table 1. Describes the Values of Character Education

Character Education Values	Description
Religious	Internally obedient attitudes and behavior implement the teachings of the religion he adheres to, Tolerant towards the implementation of religious worship others, and live in harmony with religious adherents other.
Honest	Behavior that is based on effort making himself a person always trustworthy in words, actions, and work.
Tolerance	Attitudes and actions that respect differences religion, race, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and other people's actions are different from themselves.
Discipline	Actions that demonstrate orderly behavior and comply with various provisions and regulation.
Hard work	Behavior that shows genuine effort really in overcoming various obstacles study and assignments, and complete assignments as well as possible.
Creative	Think and do something to produce a new way or result of something that have been owned.
Independent	Attitudes and behavior that are not easy depend on others to complete
Democratic	How to think, behave and act assess their rights and obligations equally and other people.
Curiosity	Attitudes and actions that always strive to know more deeply and widely than something he learned, saw, and heard.
Spirit of nationality	Ways of thinking, acting, and insightful prioritize the interests of the nation and state above self and group interests.
Love the country	How to think, behave and do things shows loyalty, caring, and high appreciation for language, physical, social, cultural, economic, and environmental national politics.
Appreciate achievements	Attitudes and actions that influence him to produce something useful for society, and acknowledge and respect the success of others.
Friendly/communicative	Actions that show joy talk, socialize, and collaborate with others.
Love peace	Attitudes, words and actions cause other people to feel happy and safe in his presence.
Like to read	The habit of making time for reading various readings that provide virtue for himself.
Environmental care	Attitudes and actions that are always trying prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment, and develop efforts to repair natural damage that has occurred.

Social care	Attitudes and actions that always want to provide assistance to other people and communities in need.
Responsibility	A person's attitude and behavior towards carry out his duties and obligations, which he should do, towards himself, society, the environment (natural, social and cultural), the country and God Almighty.

Source: (Ali, 2022)

Efforts are made to embed these characters education values in students' daily lives, both through reading books and imitating the environment around them. Similar actions have been carried out by Kartini and colleagues (2021) related to story-telling activity for young children, which attract attention effectively and provide character teaching. The application of prophet stories was also applied by (Monalisa et al., 2022) through the history of Prophet Sulaiman, who succeeded in developing the empathetic and caring character of elementary school students (Nurchasanah et al., 2021). Apart from that, (Robiangatun, Riyadus Sholichin, 2024) also apply character education through telling stories of prophets and apostles as role models. Character education for students include religious aspects, such as memorizing letters, praying, and performing tadarus, which are carried out by (Khasanah et al., 2023) for elementary school students.

Some of the prophet stories given to TPQ students include inspirational stories such as the story of the Prophet Abraham's example in his obedience to his parents and God as creator, as well as his patience in facing trials. Besides, there is also a story about Prophet Solomon's example in respecting all living creatures, even small ants, and the story of Prophet Noah's example in facing trials and obeying God's commands. Inspirational stories about these prophets are presented in the form of summaries and puzzle games. Santri actively and enthusiastically participated in this activity. The activity is expected assist instill moral values, by illustrating appropriate behavior that should be avoided by children (Herlina & Haris, 2022).

The success of this teaching approach through prophetic stories, together with interesting learning methods, can be used as a model in building student character (Halim, 2022). The students also feel the benefits of the assistance they receive, especially because children sometimes feel bored with heavy study routines and increasing assignments. Childhood is an important period in character building that cannot be achieved just by instant learning. Santri need social interaction with friends, teachers, the community, and also need role models from figures and their families (Ali, 2022). These two statements underline the importance of a holistic and interactive approach to the character of education, involving engaging teaching methods and positive social interactions.

CONCLUSION

Literacy has a crucial role for students and society. There is a need and effort to be made to increase literacy in society. The establishment of a reading corner at TPQ Al Muhajirin is an initiative that can generate interest in reading and increase literacy among students. One method used to stimulate students' interest in literacy programs is through mentoring. Through community service activities (KKN) in literacy assistance for TPQ students, opportunities are given to the children to take examples

from the stories of the prophet through reading and discussing the value within the story. The enthusiasm shown by the students while they participated in this activity is an indication of the success of the character and literacy learning strategy which involves the stages of planning, implementation, as well as rewards and reflection (Qonita, 2018). Apart from that, support in the form of mentoring to Ustaz/Ustazah also provides concrete examples in mentoring children's literacy, which can be continued to ensure that children's basic literacy skills can continue to develop.

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