Literacy Skills as an Effort to Maintain Quality Culture in Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in Malang City During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. This research has been conducted based on the declining condition of literacy in Indonesia since 2017. Since quality culture is crucial during this time, a research on literacy skills in elementary schools needs to be done. This is a qualitative descriptive research. It aims to analyze the literacy skills in maintaining the quality culture in Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the instruments used in this research are interviews and documentation. The research subjects comprise teachers, headmasters, and students of Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City. The results show that during the pandemic, the subjects have applied digital and informational literacy skills in the learning process through several platforms. Moreover, using these skills, the teachers have co-written a compilation of best practic-es registered on ISBN. Supporting factors in literacy skills as a quality culture in Muhammadiyah elementary schools include the intensity to access more information, optimization of teacher skills through various workshops and peer tutors, and improvement of existing infrastructure in schools. While the hindering factor is the understanding of educators and education on the school literacy movement is school literacy.

Key words: literacy, quality culture, elementary school, Covid-19


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INTRODUCTION

The unpredicted Covid-19 pandemic originated from Wuhan, China (Ding et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2020) has changed the lives of people in various sectors around the world (Khasanah et al., 2020). In Indonesia, the cases of people who contracted the Coronavirus are increasing day by day (Setiawan, 2020). According to the data updated by the government, in July 2020, there are 78,572 cases. 3,710 people are dead and 37,636 are cured. This increasing case can threaten the education sector. One of the efforts done by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 is temporarily closing the educational institutions on all levels.

Competence is the ability that a person has to carry out his profession well. The recent year’s PISA results have become an early reminder to change the educational paradigm in Indonesia. According to the research by the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia in 2017, the people’s level of reading interest is 36.48% (low). This result is in line with what was stated by Wandasari (2017) who shows that according to an Indonesian author Ajip Rosidi, in a year, Indonesian children only read 17 pages of a book and take 15 days to finish a page. Moreover, an Indonesian poet and senior author Taufik Ismail states that since the country gained its independence, no school has a single mandatory literary book. This tragedy is known as “Nol Buku Indonesia (Zero Indonesian Book)” (Tim Warta, 2016).

The results of the literacy activity index in Indonesia in 2019 show that out of 34 provinces, East Java ranked 26 (Rahman & Kosasih, 2019). The literacy level of the province is 33.19% (low). Malang City is known as the City of Education (Kadir, 2009; Situmorang et al., 2019; Wirawan, 2015) due to a large number of schools and colleges. There are more than 80 colleges in Malang (Y. I. Permatasari, 2019; Pisdon, 2018). Meanwhile, there are 195 public elementary schools, and 87 private elementary schools spread over five districts (Candrawati & Widiani, 2015). Specifically, in Malang City, there are six Muhammadiyah elementary schools, namely SDM (Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah) 1, SDM 3 Assalam, SDM 4, SDM 5, SDM 8 K.H. Mas Mansur, and SDM 9 Panglima Sudirman.

SDM 8 K.H. Mas Mansur and SDM 5 have parallel classes. Based on the interview from teachers and headmasters, the human resources in the school are 40% fresh graduates. The literacy activities have been applied in the schools. Various innovations have been designed to maintain and improve the quality culture of the schools, an example is participating in various literacy workshops. In quality culture, learning, and
instruction activities closely related to literacy (Hunt & Birks, 2004; Kurbanoglu, 2003; Olsson & Edman-Staalbrant, 2008). With all limitations and obstructions in the learning process, the schools strive to improve the literacy level through online learning.

Based on the data, literacy is important to be studied as one of the quality culture programs. As a manifestation of quality culture in schools, the Ministry of Education and Culture through the Directorate of Elementary School Development has organized various programs to improve quality learning, such as facilities improvement, school management, character building improvement, school literacy movement, healthy school program, and library performance optimization (Jannah, 2010; Untari, 2017; Widodo, 2018; Zahroh, 2014). Regarding the literacy movement, the Ministry of Education and Culture has stipulated the Decree of the Minister Number 23/2015 on Character Building (Rahayu, 2016) comprising the habituation of literacy culture. This decree has generated the GLS (School Literacy Movement) and became the government’s program (Akbar, 2017; Pradana, 2017) in creating a literate environment in schools (Hidayat & Basuki, 2018; Naibaho, 2007).

This movement is the right momentum to maintain the quality of education. Through this education, literacy can be maintained. The education sector as one of the fields responsible to prepare excellent human resources always gets special attention. Maintaining the quality of education during the Covid-19 pandemic becomes a real challenge (Azzahra, 2020; Pujilestari, 2020). The policy regarding the learning process also has changed. Nowadays, all learning activities are conducted online from home (Liguori & Winkler, 2020; Pena & Lim, 2020). This government’s instruction to maintain physical and social distancing (Masrul et al., 2020; Nurhalimah, 2020; Paramitha, 2020) should be obeyed and thus, the learning process is conducted online (Hiltz & Turoff, 2005).

Direct learning with face-to-face interaction is now limited and even negated (Purwanto et al., 2020). With all the limitations, the education sector suddenly applies the online system. Despite the pros and cons, school residents should adjust to online learning activities. The activities must be designed well to maintain the quality of national education.

Learning and instruction activities are part of a quality culture that can be maintained by every educational institution. The concept of quality culture is a factor in educating people to be noble, honest, responsible, optimistic, brave, skillful, cooperative, resilient, discipline, and having integrity. An important, yet either often missing in Indonesia for literacy is that literacy is primarily a language process.

A school with an excellent quality culture can be identified through several variables, such as school management, learning process, curricular activities, library performance, and health service (Basri, 2011; Puspitasari, 2018). However, the development of quality culture in school requires the participation of all the school residents and the stakeholders, including the parents. Therefore, managerially, the school’s headmaster is responsible for the development of quality culture. Operationally, all school residents and stakeholders are responsible for the school’s daily activities.

This research aims to analyze the implementation of literacy to maintain the quality culture of Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City and to describe the obstacle factor in implementing the literacy to maintain the quality culture of Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City during the pandemic of Covid-19. This research found the implementation of literacy in quality culture in Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang.

**METHODS**

The type of qualitative research used is descriptive research. Descriptive research aims to describe the situation of an activity or event. This is in accordance with (Sukmadinata, n.d.) that descriptive research is the most basic form of research to describe the existing phenomena, both the natural phenomena and man-made engineering. This study used descriptive qualitative research to describe the implementation of literacy to maintain the quality culture and its obstacle factor in Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City.

This research was conducted in SD Muhammadiyah 8 K.H. Mas Mansur and SD Muhammadiyah 5 in Malang City in the academic year 2019/2020. The two schools are the members of K3S (the Headmasters Work Group). The subjects are the headmasters, teachers, and students. The data sources comprise words, observation, and interview from the informants, and supporting documents regarding the implementation of literacy as an effort to maintain the quality culture in the elementary schools.

Similar to the other qualitative descriptive studies, the data collection in this study used a minimally to moderately-structured open-ended interviews. The interview process was done through an online platform and filled in a prepared form. During the data collection, a data validity check was required. The data validation in this research used the source’s triangulation. After collected, the data were analyzed. Below is the instrument used in the research.
The data analysis method used by the researcher is the Miles and Huberman model started from data reduction, data description, and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 2007b, 2007a)

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

During the Covid-19, all activities in the society are restricted, including the education sector. Nowadays, all education levels engage in ‘study at home’. Based on the documentation study, the study-at-home policy was implemented on March 9, 2020, after the Ministry of Education and Culture issued the Decree Number 2 and 3 Year 2020 on Online Learning and Work-From-Home to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19. During this pandemic, all activities including learning are conducted at home (Almanthari et al., 2020; Kong, 2020; Moszkowicz et al., 2020).

Despite the emergency, the quality culture of the school should be maintained. Based on the interview results, the quality culture during the pandemic can be maintained through the school literacy movement. This program can be conducted both offline and online. As private schools, both of the schools face a number of restrictions, including the education sector. Now, all activities in the society are restricted, including the education sector. Nowadays, all education levels engage in ‘study at home’. Based on the documentation study, the study-at-home policy was implemented on March 9, 2020, after the Ministry of Education and Culture issued the Decree Number 2 and 3 Year 2020 on Online Learning and Work-From-Home to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19. During this pandemic, all activities including learning are conducted at home (Almanthari et al., 2020; Kong, 2020; Moszkowicz et al., 2020).

Table 1. Reference of Interview Instrument

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The implementation of the quality culture in SD Muhammadiyah 8 K.H. Mas Mansur and SD Muhammadiyah 5 requires time, process, and tenaciousness. All the steps are taken structurally. Based on the interview results, both of the schools have implemented literacy. All the literacy activities were coordinated by a coordinator. Various types of literacy activities were conducted at home. The students and teachers are restricted, including the education sector. Now, all activities in the society are restricted, including the education sector. Nowadays, all education levels engage in ‘study at home’. Based on the documentation study, the study-at-home policy was implemented on March 9, 2020, after the Ministry of Education and Culture issued the Decree Number 2 and 3 Year 2020 on Online Learning and Work-From-Home to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19. During this pandemic, all activities including learning are conducted at home (Almanthari et al., 2020; Kong, 2020; Moszkowicz et al., 2020).

The observations are made through observing literacy activities carried out by Muhammadiyah elementary school teachers. Based on the observation results, the learning and instruction activities in both of the schools are conducted online. During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning changed. All face-to-face learning activities are now conducted online (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). Recently, almost all the educational institutions in Indonesia conduct digital-based learning. Even though easy access to information becomes a supporting factor in learning activities, the implementation requires guidelines and supervision.

To maintain the quality culture, the stakeholders should cooperate in succeeding in the program. The stakeholders comprise the headmaster as the policy-maker, coordinator as activity commander, classroom teachers as the facilitator of learning activity, and parents/guardian as students’ supervisor at home. Based on the interview results, in literacy activities, students are allowed to choose any book they want. However, teachers and parents do not recommend any book that is not in accordance with the students' abilities.

The literacy planning by the schools centralized on the policy made by each of the headmasters, through literacy coordinators, and classroom teachers. The following figure is a structure of roles in the literacy activities of the schools.

One of the activities is reading storybooks at home. Based on the interview results, the students also looked for information and insight on the internet under the supervision of their parents and the guidelines by their classroom teachers. The activities will be evaluated after submitting the tasks to their teachers online. This evaluation is used after each lesson. It takes various forms, the teacher asks the child to retell the reading that has been read. The form of evaluation carried out is also equipped with a rubric.

Various types of literacy are not directly accessed by students at home. The students and teachers are demanded to use technology wisely to support the quality culture of the schools. The benefit that can be gained during this pandemic is an increasing level of literacy. The use of digital literacy keeps developing. The following is one of the forms of literacy done by the students with teachers’ guidelines and under parental control.

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Figure 1. Teacher’s Instruction in Implementing Literacy

The Figure 1 shows that literacy is designed in form of learning. The learning design is essential to help the students accomplish the learning objectives. As anticipation, the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a learning program on TVRI channel to be accessed by all students and teachers in Indonesia.

Digital literacy done by students, teachers, and parents during the pandemic has assisted the users to share information (Martin & Grudziecki, 2006). The recent learning process applies to the flexible learning process (Huang et al., 2020). The two schools use it to maintain the existence of quality culture. The characteristics of the learning are 1) the learning process can be done everywhere and anywhere. This is based on the documentation results showing that literacy activity and learning activity can be done every time; 2) the students can learn everything they want; 3) the learning source can be accessed from anywhere; 4) the teachers can innovate in determining the implementation of learning; 5) the implementation can be done flexibly. In the literacy activity, support from the management party becomes the success of e-learning (Agustina et al., 2016).

From the teachers’ perspective, they can implement literacy by developing the learning materials. The materials are sent to the parents through the provided platform. The parents of both schools use the WhatsApp group chat to communicate. Moreover, as professional development during the pandemic, the teachers keep implementing literacy. The teachers' professional development comprises the practice of science, technology, and skills to improve the quality of the learning process and professionalism of the educators.

The professional development activities are 1) composing scientific works in the educational field; 2) inventing educational technology; 3) designing learning equipment/props/guidance tools’ 4) composing scientific writings and participating in curriculum development activities. Based on the interview results during the pandemic, the teachers strove to discuss with each other to compose the best-practice articles. The compilation of the articles is now registered on the ISBN 978-623-7446-13-2 entitled Bakti dari Hati, Senarai Karya Guru, SD Muhammadiyah Kota Malang. The work shows that the teachers still develop information literacy regarding their experiences at school.

Supporting factors in literacy skills as a quality culture in Muhammadiyah elementary schools include the intensity to access more information, optimization of teacher skills through various workshops and peer tutors, and improvement of existing infrastructure in schools. While the hindering factor is the understanding of educators and education on the school literacy movement is school literacy.

CONCLUSION

Due to the decreasing level of literacy in Indonesia, the Minister of Education and Culture formed the School Literacy Movement. The literacy forms implemented in Muhammadiyah elementary schools in Malang City are information literacy and digital literacy. during the pandemic, all learning activities are conducted online. The quality culture of the schools should be maintained. Therefore, the two schools have maximized online learning activity through information literacy and digital literacy. In the implementation, the teachers designed the activities and communicated to the parents. Then, under the supervision of the parents, the students conducted literacy activity through online learning. Supporting factors in literacy skills as a quality culture in Muhammadiyah elementary schools include the intensity to access more information, optimization of teacher skills through various workshops and peer tutors, and improvement of existing infrastructure in schools. While the hindering factor is the understanding of educators and education on the school literacy movement is school literacy. Moreover, to maintain the quality culture, the teachers also implemented information literacy. From the activity, the teachers have composed scientific work in form of book registered on ISBN.
REFERENCES


