

EMPOWERING LITERACY SKILLS OF CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS AT KAMPUNG BHARU LEARNING CENTER MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Background: Literacy in the digital era should be a means for children to develop themselves. Based on the observation of students who are children of migrant workers at the Kampung Bharu Learning Center, it was found that students need special attention related to literacy skills.

Purpose: This study aims to help the students of Kampung Bharu Learning Center to improve their literacy skills including reading, writing, and speaking skills and to improve the quality of the learning process by optimizing the existing facilities and teachers. It is hoped that this research can provide benefits to the children of migrant workers in improving their literacy skills.

Methodology: The method used in this activity is the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which is a participatory research approach that facilitates the process of sharing information using local knowledge and the ability of students to assess, analyze and plan what students need themselves. This research was conducted using the methods of observation, lectures, demonstrations, exercises, and mentoring.

Results: Literacy empowerment activities were carried out by conducting activities including teaching process activities interspersed with educational games and ice-breaking, market day activities, literacy tree making activities, classroom management counseling activities. The students were excited and enthusiastic while participating in the activities carried out in this study. The activities carried out can support the improvement of students' literacy skills, improve the quality of learning, and provide learning solutions with limited facilities in Kampung Bharu Learning Center.

Keywords: empowerment, learning center, literacy skills, migrant worker children

I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy in the digital age should serve as a tool for children to enhance their personal growth and equip them to meet the challenges of today (1). Literacy is an essential skill for humans that depends on the ability and awareness to keep learning. Literacy is closely related to the activity of reading information which is interpreted as information or news about something. Information literacy aims to cultivate the skills necessary to understand and use information, both printed and online, in an objective manner (2). In the current era of disruption, it is crucial for learners to master this fundamental skill to be at the forefront of the digital transformation wave of the 21st century (3). While literacy is commonly defined as the ability to read and write, the mastery of literacy goes beyond these skills. It encompasses a variety of evolving cultural practices and contexts (4). Among the challenges faced by Indonesia, literacy issues in the field of education require particular attention. This is due to the country's decreasing competitiveness in recent decades when compared to other nations (5).

Migrant workers are workers who come from outside their country of origin. Migrant workers migrate to Malaysia to fulfill their needs, especially in the economy. These migrant workers go abroad with their children. For this reason, migrant children may experience different conditions from other children because they often live in unsafe and unhealthy environments and most migrant children may also not have sufficient education (6). Children of migrant workers basically can access education in private schools in Malaysia. However, access to education in these private schools is costly for migrant workers. In addition, there are some problems such as the children's personal documents. This is because some of the children of migrant workers were born and raised in Malaysia. In fact, some of them have illegal status because they do not have birth certificates or official residence documents. This illegal status means that many Indonesian children cannot access education in Malaysian schools (7). Therefore, the literacy movement is very important to be implemented in the education of children of Indonesian migrant workers. Until now, there has not been a truly consistent effort to realize the literacy movement of Indonesian migrant worker children in Malaysia (8).

Efforts to equalize the right to education for school-age children during cultural diversity and socio-economic limitations are the basis for the establishment of Learning Centers (SB). On the other hand, the availability of supporting facilities for the implementation of the learning process and teaching teachers as well as learning studio caregivers is very far from being feasible and meeting the standards of an institution organizing the level of basic education units (9). Kampung Bharu Learning Center Kuala Lumpur Malaysia is one of the non-formal education institutions that serves as a place to help students who have difficulties in learning. In addition, Kampung Bharu Learning Center can also play an important role in developing literacy skills in students (1). In accordance with field observations at the Kampung Bharu Learning Center (despite the diversity of student characters and origins) one thing was found that requires special attention, namely related to literacy skills. They have been living in Malaysia for a long time in a "non-academic" family environment, so they are far from literacy activities. Therefore, one thing that is urgently needed is the introduction and empowerment of literacy skills in migrant children so that they still have adequate competencies upon their return to Indonesia.

Based on the situation analysis above, it can be obtained information that the priority problems related to the learning process of Indonesian migrant worker children in Malaysia are (a) Lack of literacy skills in primary education students; (b) Low quality of learning carried out in the Learning Center in the existing cultural diversity; (c) Limited facilities and teachers. In detail, these problems are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Situation Identification Results at SB Kampung Bharu

No	Situation	Status
1	Literacy skills	Very weak
2	Quality of learning process	Very low
3	Facilities and teachers	Limited

Source: by the author (2023)

Based on the identified problems, this study aims to assist the students of Kampung Bharu Learning Center in improving literacy skills including reading, writing, and speaking skills and to improve the quality of the learning process by optimizing existing facilities and teachers. By achieving these objectives, it is hoped that this research can provide great benefits for the students of the Kampung Bharu Learning Center in improving the literacy skills of children of migrant workers who are in Malaysia.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method used in this activity is the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method is a participatory research approach that facilitates the process of sharing information using local knowledge and the ability of students to assess, analyze, and plan what students need themselves (10). PRA is conducted by applying observation, lectures, demonstrations, exercises, and mentoring methods. PRA emphasizes participation in the overall activities as well as increased self-reliance and internal strength. The PRA approach involves the community in the thought process that takes place during program planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation activities (9).

Observations were conducted at the beginning of the activity time. Lectures were used to provide explanations and descriptions of the importance of literacy skills. Demonstrations were used to show and give examples of how to implement the planned literacy. Exercises are used to train and try out with students how to improve literacy skills. Furthermore, mentoring is the act of assisting in solving problems encountered during the implementation of activities and controlling the activity program to achieve its goals.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This activity was carried out by Djuanda University students who were placed in the Kampung Bharu Learning Center in the KKN International program. The mentoring was carried out for students of the Kampung Bharu Learning Center on Jalan Raja Alang Kampung Bharu, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and was carried out on August 23 to September 3, 2023. The history of the establishment of the Muhammadiyah Kampung Bharu Learning Center began with the establishment of TPA (Taman Pendidikan Al-quran) in 2015 and developed into a reading and writing learning group in 2019. In 2021, the Indonesian Embassy by Mr. M. Farid Maruf, Ph. D and supported by PCIM established the Muhammadiyah Learning Center Kampung Bharu which was inaugurated on April 9, 2021. Initially, there were only 15 children in SB Kampung Bharu until finally it reached 55 people for children aged 7 - 15 years, while early childhood from 4 - 6 years old is around 20 people and the total currently has 70 people.

During the observation, it was found that the reading skills of most of the students of the Kampung Bharu Learning Center were still very low and therefore reading assistance was needed. This can be seen from the way students read who are still stammering, not correct in pronouncing letters and there are some students who have not memorized the alphabet. Based on the results of observation and documentation, it shows that the availability of supporting facilities for the implementation of the learning process and the teaching teachers as well as the caregivers of the learning studio are far from feasible and meet the standards of an institution organizing the level of basic education units. For this reason, this study implemented several programs to provide solutions to these problems.

1. Teaching, Games Education, and Ice Breaking

The teaching and learning process is a process that contains a series of actions of teachers and students or the basis of reciprocal relationships that take place in educational situations to achieve goals (11). Routine teaching activities are carried out every day. Teaching activities aim to hone the literacy skills of students at the Kampung Bharu Learning Center. On the sidelines of teaching activities, games education and ice breaking are interspersed, the aim is to train students' concentration, train critical thinking, and creativity. By holding games education and ice breaking, students become more interested and excited in learning. This routine activity runs smoothly every day, although sometimes there are challenges that some students are difficult to organize in teaching and learning activities.



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 1 Teaching Activities

As an ice breaking activity, Maumere Gymnastics and Indonesian Children's Gymnastics were carried out. This activity begins with a warm-up and continues with light gymnastics in general. The activity was very lively, students seemed to really enjoy the gymnastics.



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 2 Ice Breaking Activity

Watching educational films on Indonesian culture was held to introduce Indonesian culture that needs to be introduced to students. In addition to Indonesian culture, several other useful movies were also shown in Indonesia. Of course, because they are Indonesian children, it is necessary and important for them to know what is in Indonesia, and how many provinces are spread throughout Indonesia. Students are very serious in watching and listening to the stories shown, with this activity can add to their knowledge and insight, especially in the field of culture and social society.



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 3 Educational Movie Watching Activity

2. Market Day

Market Day is an event or activity for buying and selling or transacting. Market day activities are an effort to build and foster the spirit of entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship in children from an early age. In market day activities, children get a direct learning process. Children carry out learning by doing directly (12). In the future, students are expected to have skills in entrepreneurship, especially in the school environment. The targets of this Market Day activity are students in grades 1-6 of the Kampung Bharu Learning Center.



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 4 Market Day Activity

3. Learning Center Learning Media Creation

Creativity makes and complements learning media in the Kampung Bharu Learning Center by making a Literacy Tree. The literacy tree is a medium that can be applied to measure the amount of reading that has been read. As the trees grow, the number of books they contain will increase, and the Literacy Tree will improve student literacy (13).



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 5 Literacy Tree Making Activity

4. Classroom Management Evaluation Counseling

Classroom management is a variety of activities deliberately carried out by a teacher in order to be able to manage the class properly so that learning objectives are achieved and maintain optimal conditions for the learning and teaching process (14). Classroom management evaluation counseling activities are a form of implementation and evaluation of classroom management in the Kampung Bharu Learning Center. Implementation of classroom management which includes activities in organizing the class, maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the learning room, arranging student seating, arranging learning tools, all of which require a large role of the teacher in classroom management. With this activity, the results obtained are an evaluation of all classroom management, so that classroom management becomes even better.



Source: by the author (2023)

Figure 6 Classroom Management Counseling Activity

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND NEWNESS

Based on the results of the research conducted at the Kampung Bharu Learning Center, it can be concluded that the activities carried out are very important to help empower the literacy skills of children in the Learning Center, especially for children of Indonesian migrant workers. Literacy empowerment activities are carried out by carrying out activities including teaching process activities interspersed with educational games and ice breaking, market day activities, literacy tree making activities, classroom

management counseling activities. Students were also excited and enthusiastic while participating in the activities carried out in this study. In a situation that may be full of challenges and uncertainties, this research can support the improvement of students' literacy skills with various activity models to improve the quality of learning and provide learning solutions with limited facilities in the Kampung Bharu Learning Center.

Through the activities that have been carried out, it is hoped that the parties can cultivate activities that can empower literacy skills for children of Indonesian migrant workers in the Kampung Bharu Learning Center.

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