

Improving Students' Literacy Through Co-Curricular Programs At Nyarinying Elementary School, Sumbawa Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the improvement of student literacy through the implementation of a co-curricular literacy program at Nyarinying Elementary School, Sumbawa Regency. Literacy is a basic skill that must be developed from elementary school, encompassing reading, writing, and comprehension. This study aims to describe the initial state of students' literacy skills, analyze the implementation of the co-curricular literacy program, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the program. This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Subjects included the principal, co-curricular program coordinator, class teachers from grades I to VI, and selected students. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and methods. The results of the study showed that before the implementation of the co-curricular program, students' literacy skills were relatively low. After the program was implemented, there was a significant increase in reading fluency, reading comprehension, writing skills, reading interest, and student self-confidence. Supporting factors included school policies, teacher commitment, the availability of literacy resources, and student enthusiasm. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors included limited time, differences in student literacy skills, limited reading materials, and suboptimal parental involvement. Overall, the co-curricular literacy program proved effective in improving students' literacy skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for human resource development and national development. At the elementary school level, education plays a strategic role as the initial stage in developing students' basic competencies, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as developing attitudes, character, and thinking. In the context of 21st-century education, strengthening literacy and numeracy is an essential competency that must be developed early on so that students can think critically, analytically, and adapt to changing times (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020).

In the context of 21st-century education, demands on learning quality are increasingly complex. Students are not only required to master factual knowledge but also to possess critical, creative, communicative, and collaborative thinking skills. One of the main keys to realizing these competencies is mastery of literacy and numeracy, the basic skills that enable students to understand,

process, and use information effectively (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Literacy and numeracy are the main foundation for the development of higher-order thinking skills (higher order thinking skills) and lifelong learning.

Literacy is a core competency that plays a strategic role in supporting students' academic success and lifelong learning. Literacy is not only defined as the technical ability to read and write, but also encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, evaluate, and critically use information in various life contexts. At the elementary school level, literacy serves as the primary foundation for mastery of various subjects and the development of students' learning character.

Literacy development at the elementary school level is also inseparable from the developmental characteristics of students. Psychologically, elementary school students are at the concrete operational stage of development, where the learning process is more effective when linked to real-life experiences, hands-on activities, and contexts close to everyday life. Therefore, literacy learning that focuses solely on mechanical reading and writing without engaging in meaningful experiences has the potential to reduce student interest and engagement in learning. This requires teachers and schools to design varied, contextual, and enjoyable literacy activities to meet the developmental needs of students (Anisa, 2020).

Various studies have shown that low literacy skills among elementary school students remain a serious problem in Indonesia. Low interest in reading, limited access to quality reading materials, and a focus on teacher-centered learning are contributing factors. National assessments and various literacy surveys also indicate gaps in literacy skills between regions, including in non-urban areas.

This situation is also reflected in various regions, including West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) Province and Sumbawa Regency. Based on the 2025 Sumbawa Regency Education Report, sourced from the 2024 National Assessment, the literacy achievement of general elementary school students is in the "Good" category, with more than 70% of students achieving minimum literacy competencies. However, numeracy achievement remains in the "Moderate" category, with the percentage of students achieving minimum competencies ranging from 40–70%. This data indicates that despite progress in literacy, several students still have not achieved the expected competencies, particularly in numeracy and in-depth reading comprehension.

Besides being a basic academic skill, literacy is also closely linked to students' cognitive and socio-emotional development. At elementary school age, literacy skills play a crucial role in shaping students' mindsets, study habits, and attitudes toward the learning process. Students with strong literacy skills tend to be more confident in participating in learning, actively ask questions, express ideas both verbally and in writing, and have a higher motivation to learn. Conversely, limited literacy skills can cause students to have difficulty understanding subject matter, low learning participation, and even feelings of inferiority and dependence on teachers (Hamzah, 2023).

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, has promoted literacy strengthening through various policies, one of which is the School Literacy Movement (GLS). However, implementing literacy within extracurricular learning alone is considered insufficient to build a strong and sustainable literacy culture. Therefore, supporting strategies are needed to expand students' learning space and time, one of which is through co-curricular programs.

Co-curricular programs are learning activities designed to deepen, enrich, and strengthen the competencies students acquire through extracurricular learning. In the context of literacy, co-curricular activities can be implemented in various ways, such as reading corners, shared reading, creative writing, book discussions, and other thematic literacy activities. These activities enable students to learn in a more contextual, enjoyable, and student-centered manner.

Nyarining Elementary School in Sumbawa Regency is one of the elementary schools striving to develop students' literacy skills through the implementation of a literacy co-curricular program. This program is designed as a systematic effort to increase students' reading interest, reading ability, reading comprehension, and writing skills. However, the effectiveness of the literacy co-curricular program requires an in-depth study to determine its impact on improving student literacy and the factors influencing its success.

Based on the description, this study aims to comprehensively examine the implementation of the literacy co-curricular program at SDN Nyarining, Sumbawa Regency, analyze the increase in student literacy after the program was implemented, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. SDN Nyarining was selected as the case study unit for an in-depth study. Subjects included the principal, co-curricular program coordinator, first- to sixth-grade teachers, and several purposively selected students.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, direct observation of literacy activities, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. Data validity was ensured through source and method triangulation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the initial literacy level of students at Nyarining Elementary School in Sumbawa Regency is still relatively low. This is evident in their low reading fluency, limited comprehension of reading material, and underdeveloped writing skills. Some students still have difficulty understanding the main ideas of the reading material and expressing them in simple writing.

The literacy co-curricular program is implemented on a schedule and integrated with the school program. Literacy activities are implemented through various activities, such as reading together before class, utilizing classroom reading corners, independent reading assignments, and simple writing activities based on the reading. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding and motivating students in each literacy activity.

After the consistent implementation of the literacy co-curricular program, students' literacy skills have significantly improved. Students demonstrated increased reading fluency, comprehension, and confidence in recounting information learned from reading. Furthermore, students' writing skills have also improved, both in terms of sentence structure and the ability to express ideas in writing.

The literacy co-curricular program also increased students' interest in reading and self-confidence. Students became more enthusiastic about participating in reading and writing activities and more actively participated in simple discussions related to the reading material. This demonstrates

that literacy activities designed engagingly and contextually can create meaningful learning experiences for students.

The successful implementation of the literacy co-curricular program is supported by several factors, including school policies that support literacy strengthening, teacher commitment to program implementation, the availability of literacy facilities and infrastructure such as reading corners and reading books, and support from the school community. However, this study also identified several inhibiting factors, such as limited implementation time, differences in literacy skills among students, limited variety of reading materials, and suboptimal parental involvement.

The findings of this study align with previous research showing that school-based literacy programs, particularly those implemented through co-curricular activities, can significantly improve students' literacy skills. Therefore, co-curricular literacy programs can be an effective strategy to support elementary school students' literacy development if implemented sustainably and involving all school stakeholders.

4. CONCLUSION

The literacy co-curricular program implemented at Nyarinying Elementary School in Sumbawa Regency has proven effective in improving students' literacy skills, including reading, writing, reading comprehension, reading interest, and self-confidence. While some implementation challenges remain, the program has made a positive contribution to building a sustainable literacy culture in elementary schools.

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