

Literacy Activities as the Role of Library to Improve Character Education in Binjai City Library Office

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Abstract: One of the library roles becomes a place of learning resources for the community. In addition, the library also plays a role in providing a place to learn for children in the context of character education. This study aims to determine how the role of library to help the improvement of children's character education. This study uses descriptive qualitative research techniques and data collection techniques through observation, interview, and documentation. In this study, we employed data validity test through source triangulation and triangulation techniques. Analysis data used refers to the Miles and Huberman models. This study involved eight informants, consisting of: one Librarian, four library staff, one storyteller, one teacher, and one parent who participated in literacy activities. The results of this study indicates that the library has a role in supporting the growth and development of children, particularly in character development, namely: 1) providing a place for children to learn inside and outside the library, 2) improving character education by reading tourism activities, 3) building the quality of children's literacy and instilling character values through toddler park reading corner activities. According to the research findings from the data obtained from interviews with informants, it reveals that the library roles help to improve character education in Binjai City Library. It can be evidenced from the literacy activities carried out by the library.

Keywords: Character Education, Literacy Activities, Role of Library

A. Introduction

The character and personality of human beings have become something that cannot be separated (Esposito, 2012). From birth, a person must be responsible for his behavior. Humans also have the flexibility and ability to change their behavior. Their character can develop if there are influence and experience gained in the surrounding environment, such as family, school, friendship, and library environments. Character is a value inherent in a person that is used as a basis for thinking and acting (Leober et al., 2007). Character is also a person characteristic to live in society. In order to develop the character of a child, it can be done with character education.

However, the current implementation of character education is not optimal. This can be seen from the fact that there are still many phenomena of moral damage.

In October 2019, there was a brawl carried out by a group of students in Depok, which resulted in the death of one student and the destruction of SMK Izzata building (Khamalah, 2017). In addition, in March 2023, a high school student was killed by three other students when he was about to cross the street to come home. These cases showed a very worrying moral damage. Some factors causing moral damage are technological progress and globalization. Generally, technological progress and globalization have both positive and negative impacts. Positive impact is in the form of ease of interaction in all aspects of life. Meanwhile, the negative impact is the infiltration of foreign cultures and values that are often not in accordance with the norm. Foreign cultures and values that enter include Westernized lifestyles, hedonism, consumerism, promiscuity, drugs, acts of violence, drinking alcoholic, and others. Based on this phenomenon, character education is needed to save children from the infiltration of foreign cultures and values that do not reflect the character of good citizens. Effective character education will create a child with a good personality (Yan, 2017).

Character education is education that aims to provide character learning or instil character values in children so that they can be an individual with noble characters, morals, resilience, tolerance, and well-behaved individuals (Mohtar, 2022). In character education, there are important values developed including nationalist values, critical, confident, independent, creative and innovative, polite, democratic, helpful, as well as dare to take risks for the actions taken. Character education is the main foundation for a nation in shaping the development of children's souls both physically and mentally. Therefore, in the purpose of character education, there needs to be a good and synergistic movement among the various components involved formal, non-formal, and informal, both in schools, families, communities, and library institutions. In the process of character education itself, it is necessary to continue and not end with the never-ending process, as it has a goal to prepare the future that is rooted in the philosophy and religious and cultural values of Indonesia. Character education is very helpful for the development of children's souls both physically and mentally, ranging from nature to a better human nature (Gilbert, 2016). Through the available resources, the implementation of character education in various educational institutions, both formal and informal, is expected that they can participate in carrying out activities that help educate the nation's younger generation.

The novelty of this research is efforts to instil character values is through the library. It plays an important role in becoming a pillar of children's character education so that they have noble personalities. Libraries can create character education programs or activities as has been done by the Binjai City Library Office. The movement of special children's literacy activities carried out by the Binjai City Library Office is a reading tourism activity and a reading corner activity for pre-schoolers. The activity aims to develop character in children. The children participate in a series of activities focused on instilling the values of a noble character. In addition, the literacy activities aim to socialize the library for participants so that they know the benefits of reading books and the coming to the library.

B. Methods

The research method used in this journal article research is descriptive qualitative. Qualitative research is a research procedure that obtains descriptive data in the form of written words or narratives obtained from collecting oral data through interviewing the observed person (Rizky et al., 2020). The location of this study was carried out at the Binjai City Public Library Office St. Sibolga, Rambung Bar, South Binjai, Binjai City, North Sumatera 20735.

The subject of research in this article is the informants who know about literacy activities held by Binjai City Library. While the object of research is literacy programs or activities implemented by the library as a movement to improve children's character education. In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling technique in taking the research informants.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Name	Position
1	Fitri Arianti	Librarian
2	Suryana	Library Staff
3	Lusi Apridayanti	Library Staff
4	Heni Tirtayani	Library Staff
5	Deyka Sarihartono	Library Staff
6	Melati Indah	Storyteller
7	Fauziah	Elementary school teacher of 024753 Binjai
8	Ririn Ardina Shandra	Parents of children who once came to the toddler park reading corner

The data sources used by researchers to obtain information were primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques were through interviews, observations, and documentation (Polkinghorne, 2005). We used qualitative data analysis techniques as suggested by Miles and Dan Huberman, data reduction refers to the process in which we summarized, sharpened, selected, focused, eliminated, and organized data so that the final conclusions could be described and verified. Data presentation refers to the process after the data had been reduced, the researcher presented it in a systematically arranged text format, where the selected information had been simplified into a narrative form. Drawing conclusions refers to the researcher wrote the conclusions from the data obtained. Drawing conclusions can be done by comparing the conformity between the statements of the research subjects with the meaning contained in the basic concepts of the study (Sandelowski, 2000).

C. Results and Discussion

Introducing Binjai City Library

The Binjai City Library offers several services, including circulation services, reference services, internet services (Free wifi), mobile library services, and special services for children, such as reading tours and toddler corner reading services in the park.

The Realization of Binjai Smart City through a Love Reading by Cultivating Libraries and Archives as a Source of Information. The Mission of the Library:

1. Realizing a Complete and Up-to-Date Collection
2. Encouraging the Promotion for Community Reading Enthusiasm
3. Developing Library Services based on Information and Communication Technology
4. Developing a Library that Reaches the Wider Community
5. Developing Modern Library and Archive Infrastructure
6. Realizing a Reliable and Professional Library and Archive Management Staff
7. Realizing Good Archive Preservation so that Archives are Preserved Intact

The Role of Libraries in Improving Children's Character Education

Based on observations and interviews, it was found that Binjai City Library has an important role in the character education of children in Binjai City. As explained by Fitri Arianti who stated, "The library has two regular activities organized specifically for children, namely reading tourism activities and toddler park reading corner activities. Reading tourism activities were carried out in the children's service room whose activities aim to develop children's characters through reading fairy tales. Then, there is a reading corner activity held outside the library in the Toddler Park near the Merdeka Binjai field which aims to introduce books to the children" (interview March 31, 2023). This can be evidenced by the special children's literacy activities organized by the library. These activities are as follows:

Reading Tourism Activities

Reading tourism activities are special activities for the children organized by Binjai City Library. These activities have long been held with the aim of developing children's character and increasing children's interest in reading. The name of "Reading Tourism Activities" has existed since 2017. Reading tourism activities are held 6-12 times a year depending on the existing budget. The library invites schools to participate in the event, for one event invite one school. Participants were invited with a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 60 children. The library plays a significant role in inviting schools in the city of Binjai, as stated by Fitri Arianti that "The role of the library is not only felt by schools in the city, but also felt by all schools in Binjai. We strive to reach schools in remote areas of Binjai so that all schools can get benefit from the library" (interview March 31, 2023). The details of tourism activities read, as follows:

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The opening started with a speech from the head of Binjai City Library. Then, continued with the reading of the prayer. After that, the storyteller will take over to do icebreaking so that children can focus on the next stage. As an interview to the storyteller "Before starting to tell fairy tales, children must be given an Icebreaking in advance so that they can refocus and understand the contents of the story" (interview March 10, 2023).



Figure 1. Participants do Icebreaking

Reading a Fairy Tale

In the selection of fairy tales, the library collaborates with the fairy-tale village organization. Fairy tales that will be performed in reading tourism activities were submitted to the fairy tale village organization or storyteller who told the story. The library only suggested stories that contain character education.

In storytelling, the storyteller preferred to make their own stories, as stated by Melati Indah "I create my own stories, most recently at a reading tourism event, I read a story about "The Magic Book" that educates children to have a hardworking nature and a forgiving personality". In addition, the message that can be taken from the story is that if we want something, we must strive for it and pray to God, not to anyone else" (interview March 10, 2023).



Figure 2. Reading a Fairy Tale

FAQs about fairy tales reading

After reading the story is finished, it ends by inviting one by one the children to the front to tell the contents of the story they heard.



Figure 3. Participants retold the content of fairy tales

Playing Games

After reading the fairy tale, the storyteller held the games aimed at keeping the participants' focus.



Figure 4. Making shapes from origami

Reading a Book Together

After all activities run well, participants were asked to choose books in the children's service room freely. It was intended that children are comfortable in the library. Besides, reading books together will add interest in reading to children.



Figure 5. Reading a Book Together

Fairy tale reading activities are very influential on the development of children's character. According to Albert Bandura, "*Most people learn by selectively observing and remembering the behavior of others*". The core of social learning theory is modeling, and modeling is one of the most important steps in learning. As conveyed by Fauziah, a teacher from SDN 024753 Binjai who participated in the reading activity during the literacy activities, the activity particularly reading of fairy tales, is very beneficial in shaping children's character. "Fairy tales greatly influence children's character development, and reading fairy tales can change better children's characters because the fairy tales selected in this literacy tour activity have many moral messages and exemplary attitudes that children can emulate," she said (interviewed on March 11, 2023).

Through this reading tour activity, the library expects to help educating the character of children so that they have good character as the purpose of the library in realizing quality human resources for the future of the nation and state.

The Activities of Toddler Park Reading Corner

The Activities of Toddler Park Reading Corner has been held since 2013. Books provided in the reading corner involved fairy tale books, textbooks, educational books, and novels. Reading corner activity scheduled from Monday-Friday at 16.00-17.00 and Saturday-Sunday at 16.00-18.00.

The reading toddler park reading corner activity has five library personnel who are responsible for this activity. There are two to three library personnel's who supervise in one day. The task of library energy aims to promote the toddler park reading corner, convey the contents of books to children, help to tell the contents of books and learn to read in children who are not yet good at Reading. As stated by Suryana, "The reading corner activity is eagerly awaited by children, especially on Saturdays and Sundays. Usually, children are waiting for us at the Toddler Park, we help them to read, tell the content of the book as they want" (interview March 11, 2023).

The benefits of this reading corner are felt by parents as well, it was conveyed by Ririn Ardina Shandra "I am very happy with the reading corner activities. Besides to being a place to play, this toddler park is a place to learn for children, my

child is very happy every time he is invited here. The books provided also have stories that are very appropriate to instil character values in children, besides that child love to read”.



Figure 6. The Activities of Toddler Park Reading Corner

The purpose of this reading corner activity is to foster interest in reading to the Children of Binjai city and instil character values to children.

According to the research findings from the data obtained from interviews with informants, it reveals that the library roles help to improve character education in Binjai City Library. It can be evidenced from the literacy activities carried out by the library.

First, the library conducted reading tourism activities by inviting schools to participate in activities. The activities included opening, fairy tale reading, question and answer about the fairy tale read, playing games, and reading books together. The findings of this study are in line with other studies related to storytelling as a medium of character education. As the results by Setyowati (2019) research, it shows that fairy tales as a medium for applying characters are very effective to apply to elementary school children and the need for habituation and good examples to grow the character of children. The effective application of fairy tales to grow children's character is also in accordance with Piaget's theory of cognitive development (Ni and Yu, 2015) which states that children aged 7-12 years (elementary school age children) are at the concrete operational stage, where they are not yet able to think abstractly so they need concrete objects to understand something. In accordance with its theory, fairy tales can bring children in learning that relates to their real life or the environment around them, so that when learning is associated with fairy tales, children will more easily understand it. After understanding the material, then they can also take the positive side of the story in a fairy tale.

Second, a toddler park reading corner activity. In the toddler park reading corner, the library provides many books, such as fairy tale books, educational books, textbooks, and novels. Children are free to choose which books to read. Library

personnel assist children in learning to read and recite the contents of books. One of the benefits of this reading corner activity is to produce literacy skills in children and also improve children's cognitive abilities. Cognitive development is one of the most important developmental experiences of children. Cognitive development of learners must be stimulated or given a stimulus to increase, especially the classification of characteristics at the level of cognitive development with the reading corner activities. Modern experts argue that reading is an absolute skill that must be possessed by them from an early age. By reading process, students can take lessons and open a window of knowledge and the world that is the provision of success (Leu et al, 2004).

D. Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted by the researcher on the role of the library in improving character education through literacy activities in Binjai City Library Office can be concluded that Binjai City Library acts as a facilitator for children by providing a special place inside and outside the library, as evidenced by the existence of literacy activities that support improving character education, improving character education by holding reading tourism activities, and Building the quality of children's literacy and instil character values by holding a toddler park reading corner activity.

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