

## Conference Paper

# The Praxis of Literacy Movement in Indonesian Context

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## Abstract

Indonesia faces challenges in improving its literacy rank. In 2011, the literacy level of Indonesian fourth graders were in the 45th rank (with score 428 under 500) from 48 countries in PIRLS. In 2015 PISA's report the fifteen-year-old Indonesian Junior High School students, occupied the 64th rank of 72 countries with score 396 under 496. To overcome this problem, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture issued its Ministerial Regulation no. 23/2015 pertaining the students' character building. This constitutes the basis of school-based literacy movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*). This study explores the praxis of literacy movement at one school (has implemented GLS since 2016) located in the condensed slum area of North Jakarta. Stratified purposeful sampling was deployed to select the research participants, i.e. 290 students and 20 teachers. The data were obtained from questionnaires and interviews. The result showed that not all teachers read the literacy guidelines determined by the government and their reading habit had not met the ideal number. Both teachers and students have different perception regarding to the time and frequency of school-based literacy activity. The fifteen minutes reading activity and reading strategies taught by the teachers were not varied. The teachers merely supervised the students while conducting the literacy activity. The students read the books they brought from home. The school-based literacy program gained the students' literacy competence in understanding level (understand the content of the book they read) and built students' character such as tolerance, teamwork skills, perseverance, responsibility, confidence, independence, politeness, and composure.

**Keywords:** literacy movement, reading literacy, literacy competence, 15-minute-reading activity

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## 1. Introduction

Indonesia faces challenges in improving its literacy rank despite its significant improving efforts, such as revisiting curriculum, building teachers' capacity and promoting literacy movement. Although McKinsey Global Institute (2012) predicted Indonesia will occupy the fourth-first position of countries with the world's largest economy in 2030 [1], the

PIRLS' (Progress International Reading Literacy Study) and PISA's (Program for International Student Assessment) reports demonstrate Indonesia's unsatisfactory profile on literacy. In 2011, the literacy level of Indonesian fourth graders were in the 45th rank (with score 428 under 500) from 48 countries in PIRLS. According to the 2016 PISA's report the fifteen-year-old Indonesian Junior High School students, occupy the 64th rank of 72 countries with score 396 under 496. The further evidence also shows that 70% adults in Jakarta merely understand short information, as they are unable to comprehend the long-text information (PISA, 2016).

Facing the disruptive era, in 2015 the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture issued its Ministerial Regulation no. 23/2015 pertaining the students' character building. This constitutes the basis of school-based literacy movement (*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* – henceforth GLS). This policy regulates the mechanism of how to develop the students' character building as the culmination of school literacy movement. This can be seen as the government's effort to improve society literacy skills, through school, family and community collaborative actions.

In the last two years GLS has been gradually implemented particularly in all secondary schools across Indonesia. However, the studies concerning the praxis of literacy movement are still scarce. The previous studies conducted by Solihin, Utama, Pratiwi, & Novirina (2019) investigated the index of literacy activities describing the Indonesian literacy community by using the secondary data sources from Statistics Central Bureau (*Badan Pusat Statistik*), Basic Education Data (*Data Pokok Pendidikan*) and National Library (*Perpustakaan Nasional*) as well literacy community [2]. Emilia, Palupi, & Kusumawardani (2018) identified the reading literacy level of tenth graders of senior high schools in 34 provinces in Indonesia by administering the reading test, students and teachers' questionnaire and rubric of facilities and supporting component of literacy [3].

This study is then crucial to conduct as it scrutinizes the praxis of school-based literacy movement in one Junior high school located in the condensed slum area of North Jakarta. The following aspects – time and frequency GLS conducted; the type of activities conducted in GLS; deployment of learning sources; students' expectation on school-based literacy activity; teachers' activities during fifteen minutes reading activity; reading strategies taught by the teachers; parents' roles or involvement; school literacy policy; students' literacy competence and character building after GLS and teacher's literacy profile—are the elements this paper addresses in its scrutiny.

## 2. Research Method

### 2.1. Participant

This study investigated one junior high school (established in 1984) located on Jalan Raya Tugu Semper, Semper Barat, Cilincing, North Jakarta, Indonesia. The participants comprise 290 eighth graders (12-15 years old) students and 20 teachers (aged 27 to 59 years old). The teachers taught various subjects, such as Counselling, English, Social Sciences, Mathematics, Religion (Islam), Arts and *Bahasa Indonesia*. In regard to the teachers' academic qualification, 95 percent of them were undergraduates whilst the rest were graduates. 67 percent of them were civil servants whilst 33 percent was non-permanent teachers

### 2.2. Data collection and analysis

Instruments used to gather the data were students and teachers' questionnaires and interviews. Teachers and students filled the questionnaires vis-à-vis the implementation of school-based literacy. Those data were analyzed. Due to the time constraints, the interviews were conducted to 5 students and 2 teachers. The interviews were then transcribed and coded whilst the data taken from questionnaires were triangulated in order to check their trustworthiness and credibility.

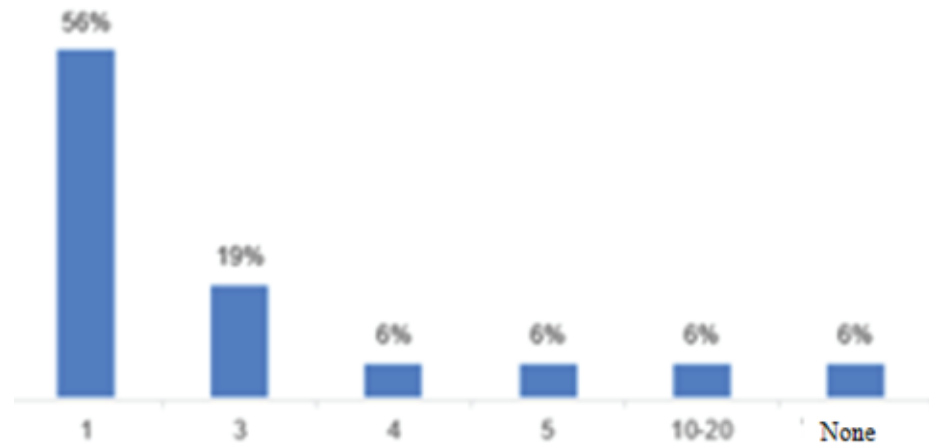
## 3. Results

### 3.1. Teachers' literacy profile

Not all teachers read the guidelines, namely *Desain Induk GLS and Panduan GLS*, determined by the government. Only thirty-five percent of the teachers read whilst sixty-five percent of them did not do so as they avowed that guidelines had not been socialized at their school. This resulted in the condition that they got the information or knowledge of school-based literacy guidelines merely from the principal and colleagues (forty five percent); the electronic sources (eighteen percent) and the trainings or workshops (eighteen percent). Moreover, fifty-six percent of teachers contended that the guidelines were not implemented at their schools whereas forty-four percent claimed the otherwise.

In conjunction with this, the teachers' reading habit did not also show the ideal number. Fifty six percent of teachers claimed that they read one book per month. The

rest (nineteen percent) contended they read 3 books per month, six percent read 4-5 books, and six percent read 10-20 books. Ironically six percent of them did not read anything (**Figure 1**).



**Figure 1:** The number of books the teacher each month.

### 3.2. Fifteen-minute reading activity

Each teacher responded differently regarding the time and frequency of school-based literacy activity especially a 15-minute-reading activity. All teachers claimed that their school conducted the 15-minute-reading activity. Fifty five percent of them pointed out that reading activity were conducted on daily basis. Twenty percent of them admitted the reading activity was undertaken merely once a week whilst twenty five percent conceded that it was conducted in the range of two or more a week. From the teacher's interview, it is showed that 15-minute reading activity was undertaken every Monday to Thursday from the first to the third week of each month conducted in the classroom. Every Thursday from the first to the third week, the selected students were asked to retell what they had read in front of the class. The fourth week was the performance day, i.e. the selected student was assigned to retell the book they had read in the form of reading aloud in the middle of the school yard. Teachers and other students were the target audiences.

In the similar tone as their teachers, the students confirmed the aforementioned information given by their teachers but in various responses (five students were interviewed and their responses were also varied regarding to the time of GLS implementation). Forty-four of them admitted that their school-based literacy activity, especially the 15-minute-reading activity, was conducted on daily basis. Forty-six percent claimed that it

was undertaken every Thursday; five percent every Tuesday and Thursday; two percent every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; one percent every Monday and Tuesday, and one percent every Monday and Tuesday. This can be overtly seen as follows:

*Interviewer: Gerakan Literasi Sekolah hari apa aja? [On what day is GLS conducted?]*

*Nabila: Iya, setiap hari Senin sampai Kamis baca buku di kelas. Setiap hari Kamis minggu ke empat paparan di lapangan. [It was conducted every Monday to Thursday on the class. We have to retell the book we had read on the fourth week of each month in the middle of the school yard]*

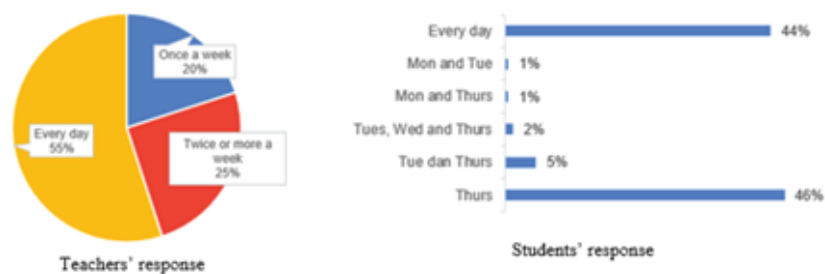
*Interviewer: Gerakan Literasi Sekolah hari apa aja? [On what day is GLS conducted?]*

*Coky: Hari kamis [Thursday]*

*Interviewer: Apa yang kamu lakukan? [What are you doing?]*

*Coky: ya baca. Kadang-kadang baca di kelas, kadang-kadang di lapangan [Reading. Sometimes reading in the class and in the school yard]*

The excerpt above demonstrates that both teachers and students have different perception regarding to the time and frequency of school-based literacy activity, especially the fifteen-minute-reading activity. The contradiction could be seen from the charts of responses of students and teacher questionnaires (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Time and frequency of a-fifteen-minute-reading activity

This chart shows that the time of reading activity had not been conducted every day. The guideline of GLS exhorts each school encourage students to read on daily basis in order to build their reading habit. In addition, during the 15-minute-reading activity, the students identified several types of teachers' activities during the fifteen-minute-reading. Fifty-three percent of students conceded that teachers merely supervised, observed or listened to the students. This goes in line with the following interview:

*Interviewer: Apa yang guru kamu lakukan ketika kamu membaca? [What did your teacher do during 15-minute reading activity?]*

*Elisa: Gurunya diam aja. Lihatin murid yang sedang membaca. Terkadang kita mengerjakan PR karena gurunya gak teliti. [the teacher remained silent watching his/her students read. We sometimes do our homework during the activity, as our teacher did not check on us.]*

Moreover, twenty four percent of students pointed out that teachers read the book. The remaining numbers were (a) assessing students' literacy (8%), (b) logging the students who read (4%), (c) asking the students to retell (4%), (d) retelling the story (3%), (e) teaching reading (2%), (f) asking the students the content of book they read (1%) and (g) giving advice to the students (1%). This, however, contradicts the teachers' responses. They claimed that eighty percent of them asked the students to fill in the journal consisting the book title they read whilst twenty percent of them made their students summarize the content of books they read (Figure 3).

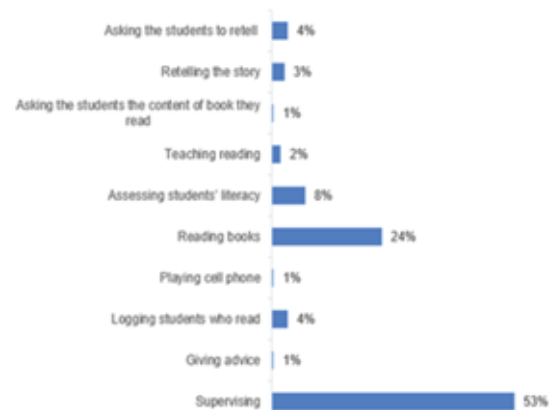
### 3.3. The aftermath of 15-minute reading activity

From the questionnaires and interviews, it is found that the school-based literacy activities were conducted before teaching and learning process in the morning. It was not embedded in the teaching and learning process conducted in the classroom as well as in the school yard. This is in line with the the *Satgas' GLE Kemendikbud (2018)* urge that the school-based literacy activities can be undertaken before class begins or it can be integrated in the curriculum.

The teacher questionnaires also demonstrated that the activities of school-based literacy consisted of various activities: retelling what the students had read (56%), creating activities i.e. reconstructing the story they had read (22%) and reading activity i.e. read aloud and read fast (22%). In conjunction with this, the student questionnaires showed that the school-based literacy activities constituted reading activity (76%), retelling the books they read in the middle of the school yard (19%), summarizing the story they read (4%) and creating stories (1%).

### 3.4. The deployment of learning sources

The teachers and students' responses showed that the collection books of their school library were interesting to read. A hundred percent of teachers and ninety-six percent of students had similar perception to their school library. Even though the students said



**Figure 3:** Teachers' activities during 15-minute reading activity

the books of school library were interesting, merely thirteen percent claimed that the books they read were from their school library. Seventy-five percent of them asserted that the interesting books are from their parents. The rest of them (6%) contended that self-purchasing is the best method to obtain the books they desire. The method of borrowing books from their friends is conducted by one percent of students. In addition, they also preferred to read fiction books to non-fiction books.

From the teacher's questionnaires, it was found that all teachers encouraged their students to use other reading sources, from internet, video and others, for their learning activities. Besides, eighty five percent of them also claimed that they asked their students to discover the answer of the quiz or exercise in the library.

### 3.5. Students' expectation on school-based literacy activity

The students' questionnaires showed that the students expected to have various school-based literacy activities, as they felt the school-based literacy activities were monotonous. They expected to have the activities vis-à-vis to the attempt to increasing the amount of book reading; creating story; reciting the story they read; adding the reading time; inviting literacy practitioners from various institutions; conducting GLS on daily basis; involving teacher in reciting activities; group-making; conducting literacy competition and establishing reading centre and providing interesting book (Figure 4). The finding also demonstrates that the most students demand the activities that lead them to read more books (19%).



**Figure 4:** Students' expectation on school-based literacy activity

### 3.6. The strategies to promote school-based literacy movement

The teacher's questionnaire demonstrated that the teachers implemented certain strategies, such as discussing the content of the book to the students (72%) and teaching reading strategies to the students (68%). Similar to students' responses, they were taught reading strategies (90%). Though most teachers taught the reading strategies to the students, they were not taught how to make multimodal text, such as pamphlet, video, etc. Only thirty-seven of them pointed out that they urged their students to make multimodal texts.

The other finding showed that thirty-two percent of teachers did not teach reading strategies to the students as they perceived that it is *Bahasa Indonesia* teachers' responsibility. It is contradictive to GLS guideline stating that all stakeholders must involve actively in that program. Pitcher & Mackey (2013) also explained that all the school members have the same responsibility to undertake the literacy program.

### 3.7. The parents' and community's involvement towards the school-based literacy movement

The parents contributed to students' reading literacy. This can be seen from the teachers' questionnaires that pointed out that the parents were involved in school-based literacy movement. Sixty percent of the teachers agreed that the parents' involvement was in the form of books providing for their children. Forty percent of them did not involve in such activity as the teachers did not communicate it to the parents. They were also not aware of the importance of reading.

The students' questionnaires showed that their parents did not read the books for them (60%) as they were busy (92%) or they did not like reading (8%). The other finding also showed that seventy-six percent of students recited the books they have read or



discussed the content to their parents and twenty-four percent of them did not do so as their parents were busy or they were merely lazy to read the book.

In this condition, the literacy community has salient role in supporting the school-based literacy movement. However the schools did not allow such involvement. The finding shows that ninety five percent of teachers conceded that the community did not participate to encourage students' literacy activity.

### 3.8. Students' literacy competence and character building

School-based literacy movement is expected to reach students' literacy competence. From the teachers' responses, it is showed that ninety-five percent of students understand the content of the book they read. This can be seen from the students' competences to recite the books (36%), rewrite the story they read (18%), comprehend the use of low frequency vocabularies (18%), understand the content (18%) and draw conclusion (9%).

In alignment with the teachers' responses, students asserted that ninety-four percent of them understand the content of book they read in the fifteen-minute reading activity. Five percent of them did not understand their reading as the time allocated was too short. Seventy-five percent wanted to read the book whilst twenty five percent did not do so as they perceived that the activity was tiring and boring. In addition, one of the students conceded that no changes occur in her reading improvement. This can be seen as follows:

*Interviewer: Kamu sudah melaksanakan Gerakan Literasi Sekolah sejak kelas 7. Apakah ada peningkatan kemampuan membaca kamu? [You have conducted GLS since grade 7. Have you felt any reading improvement since that time?]*

*Elisa: Gak. Biasa aja. [Nope. It remains the same.]*

*Desain Induk Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* as the guideline of school-based literacy program states clearly the goal of its program which develops the students' character. The teachers' questionnaire showed that school-based literacy activities contributed to the students' character changes. Eighty-nine percent of the teachers contended that the outcome of GLS can be seen in the forms of students' character building, such as tolerance, teamwork skills, perseverance, responsibility, confidence, independence, politeness, and composure.

## 4. Discussion

Most teachers (fifty six percent of teachers) only read one book per month. This condition had not met the ideal number. Pitcher & Mackey (2013) urged that teachers had to commit to read which they are expected to read 10 to 12 books a month [4]. Actually, teachers are expected to be a role model for the students especially in reading habit. Slovaček, Sinković, & Višnjić (2017) explained that teachers had to motivate students by showing their good role model in teaching creative literacy [5].

The data showed that mostly teachers merely supervised, observed or listened to the students the students while they did the literacy activity, i.e. the fifteen-minute-reading activities. They did not give any feedback to the students. This indirectly relates to the teachers' competence to teach literacy. The good competence of teachers shows the quality of reading literacy of students [6]. The literacy activities applied were also monotonous as earlier mentioned. This contradicts Slovaček et al. (2017) who suggested that teachers need to use creative method or technique to teach literacy.

All teachers encouraged their students to use other reading sources, from internet, video and others, for their learning activities. The learning sources for literacy activity can be obtained from various sources, not only buying the books or any other texts or borrowing them from library, but also accessing to internet (Setiyadi, 2017) [7]. This requires the teachers to integrate the technology use (Alvermann & Hagood, 2000; Hutchison & Reinking, 2011; Leu et al., 2012 in Pitcher & Mackey, 2013). In addition, Pitcher & Mackey (2013) pointed out that various websites provides learning sources, such as types of reading, games or interesting material used for literacy activity.

Most students expected that the school-based literacy activities accommodate their need to have more allocated time in reading books (19%). This resonates Allington's (2001) argument (in Pitcher & Mackey (2013)) that there was strong correlation between the amount of time students read and their achievement, i.e. the students will reach the better achievement if they read more. Gambrell (2011) in Pitcher & Mackey (2013) also suggested we need to encourage the students by providing them good book collection books, facilitating conducive social interaction, and reading incentives.

The strategy conducted by the teachers emphasized merely on the discussion of the content of the book. Whilst, Pitcher & Mackey's lens (2013) the teachers should also teach reading strategies to the students in various ways, such as making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, analyzing, and synthesizing. Retnaningdyah & Laksono-Krisyani (2017) also add that literacy strategies, such as doing prediction, recognizing the vocabularies, relating one to text to the other texts, creating some

multimodal texts, and applying the graphic organizer can be implemented in order to rectify the condition.

On the other hand, in building conducive literacy environment, the parents also play essential role. However, as the finding suggested that they merely provided the book for their children. Pitcher & Mackey's (2013) suggestion that the parents were informed and socialized the importance of literacy activity, can be taken into account. They could be invited to join the "the Parents' Book Club", as they will conduct activities, such as practicing reading strategies, or that they are introduced to the rich literacy environment which involve them to participate in their children's literacy activities [8]. Such behavior is believed capable to influence their children's perceptions [9].

Notwithstanding the aforementioned findings and discussion, another finding indicated that the school-based literacy program enhanced the students' literacy competence in understanding level (understand the content of the book they read), as Retnaningdyah & Laksono-Krisyani's (2017) pointed out that literacy activities were expected to build students' critical thinking, creative thinking, communicative and metacognitive skills [10]. The literacy praxis also contributed to the development of character building.

## 5. Conclusion

This research shows that the teachers' literacy profile indicated that they need to improve their reading habit and roles in order to develop school-based literacy activities. The teacher and students' perceptions on GLS' time and frequency are also different. Fifteen minutes reading activity and reading strategies taught by the teachers are monotonous. The parents' role and involvement merely realized on the provision of books. The students' literacy competence merely lies on how understanding the content of the book they read.

This study has implication theoretically and practically. The study extends the knowledge of praxis of school-based literacy movement in junior high school level theoretically. In practical, the study gives the recommendation to the stakeholders i.e. the principals, teachers and parents about the ideal implementation of school-based literacy activities to achieve better students' reading literacy competences.

This study has limitation to explore students' reading literacy competence as the aftermath of implementation of school-based literacy movement. Class observation is required to get the in-depth portrayal of GLS. This then requires the further research

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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