

## Conference Paper

# The Implementation of a Life Skills-Oriented Participatory Learning Strategy to Improve Reading and Writing Skills

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## Abstract

The key to improving the quality of women's lives in rural areas is improving their reading and writing skills. This strategy emphasizes the needs and considers local potentials. To obtain an accurate conclusion, this research used a quantitative approach with a single subject A-B-A design. The data collection techniques used were tests, observations, and interviews. The subjects consisted of three mothers of varying ages and with a range of writing and reading skills. The research results proved that the activities of reading and writing as performed by mothers in Panawuan village, Garut regency were variously related to the purpose, duration, teacher, and time. From this research, we obtained a general picture that the implementation of participatory learning strategies could run well and be effective in improving reading and writing skills, although there were still inhibiting factors in this implementation. To develop the results of this research, it is necessary to try to develop longer post-literacy research by prioritizing local potential and needs and/or by coupling this with the use of their mother tongue as the language of instruction. In addition, there should also be an attempt to implement this in urban environments with different professions, environmental potential, and needs.

**Keywords:** reading and writing skills, participatory learning strategies, life skills

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## 1. Introduction

One of the government national development policies concerned with the improvement of human resource quality is a policy about increasing women's role in the society. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics indicates that more females than males have never attended, or are not yet attending, school [1]. In addition, about 64% of Indonesian women are illiterate [2]. This problem is caused by three things: dropping out of school, limited access, and cultural issues.

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This problem is also experienced by Garut regency in its population ratio. It has a female population of 1,339,770 or nearly 50% of the total population [1]. In terms of quantity, the female population is a potential resource that needs to be taken into account in the sense of needing to be utilized as the principal or subject of qualified development. On the other hand, there is no partisanship from all of the elements related to the improvement of the quality of the female population, which is almost as large as the male population [3].

In Indonesia, data from the Central Bureau of Statistics showed that the number of females who have never attended, or are not yet attending, school is approximately twice that of males [1]. The school dropout rate of the female population in nine-year compulsory education is higher than that of males, at 13.54% versus 8.74% [1]. Because of that, there are a lot of things to be done to develop human resources further. If human resources are to be developed, it will require an improvement in the quality of the female population in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills through both formal and nonformal education [4, 5].

One of the strategies tried out in the attempt to overcome these problems was a life skills-oriented participatory learning strategy [6, 7]. This strategy was expected to improve the reading and writing skills of mothers in Panawuan village, Sukajaya, Tarogong Kidul, Garut.

## 2. Methods

In this study, the authors used an experimental method with a single-subject design. This was chosen due to the differences in the background in terms of age, education, and jobs. In spite of this, they had a certain ability to read and write, which meant that the research subjects had similarities in the various levels of their basic reading and writing skills. By using this design it was expected that we would be able to observe more about the detail – ranging from the description, analysis, and later efforts to handle the problems faced during its implementation. Thus, the changes in the behavior of each subject could be observed carefully from one phase to another.

The experiment pattern in this single-subject design uses an A-B-A design diagram, which can be seen on Table 1. Table 1 shows that in the research there was observation, which is symbolized by O, aimed at discovering the existing knowledge and competencies of the subjects. After this, there will be treatment, symbolized by X, which will be done by turns with observation. This treatment period was used to improve the subjects' existing knowledge and competencies. In the end, there was another

observation period in which the changes in the subjects after they had been given treatment were observed.

In this study, the strategy was implemented on three mothers. Meanwhile, the data collection techniques used in this research were tests, interviews, and observations while a quantitative approach was used for data processing.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Findings

The findings of this research can be seen on Figure 1. With an average score of 78.58, Subject 1 is good, because she already has the ability to read fluently, although she is still not using the right intonation when reading sentences or parafigures.

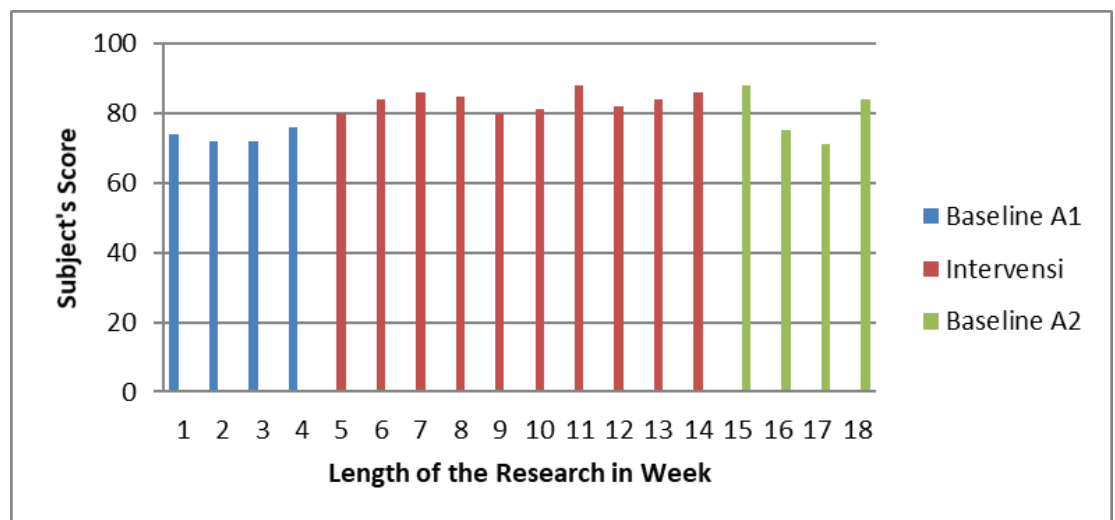


Figure 1: Overall reading skill results of Subject 1.

With these scores, the direction tendency is decreasing, but the tendency of data trace stability shows that it is stable (100%). Because of the tendency of 100% stability Subject 1 immediately gets intervention because the score increases by six points. The intervention results for the reading skills of Subject 1 showed stability early in the evaluation of the intervention, supported by a 100% stability level as well as a seven-point increase. The A-2 baseline measurements are still less stable, with a tendency of 50% stability and scores of 71-88, but the score changes show much higher score than the result of baseline A-1 and intervention stages.

With an average score of 71.35, Figure 2 is included in a fairly good category, because she already has the ability to read fluently, although she is still not using the right

intonation when reading sentences or parafigures. Also, there are letters that are not read in accordance with their sound.

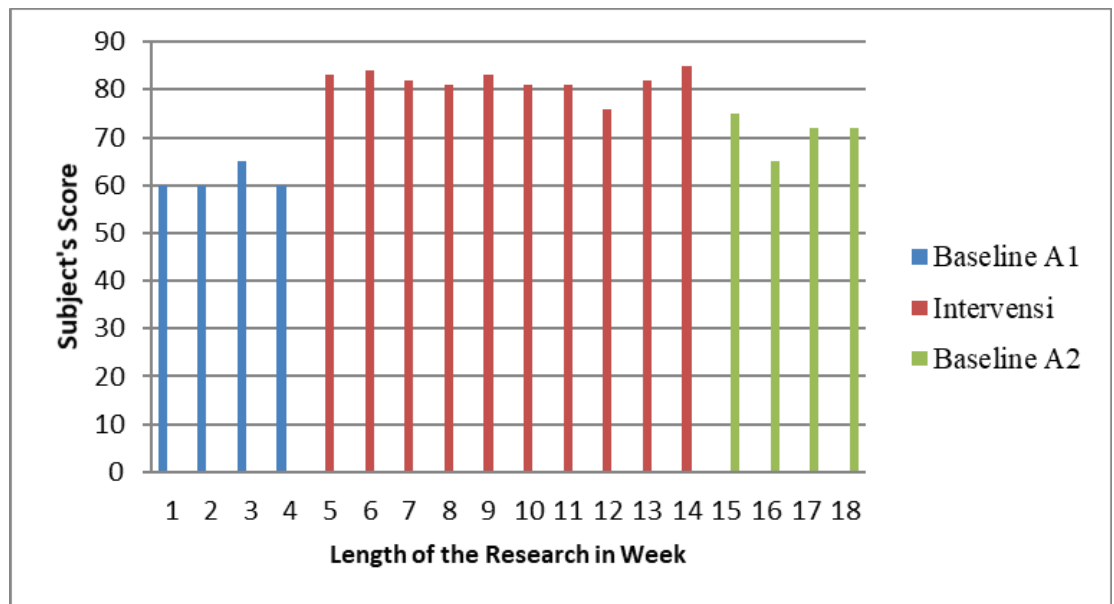


Figure 2: Overall Reading Skill Result of Subject 2.

Thus, the direction tendency is seen to increase in the A-1 baseline phase so that with four phases the subject is able to get intervention. In the intervention phase, the increase in direction tendency of 100% also shows a good stability level, with an increase of five points on baseline A-1, nine points on intervention, and 10 points on Baseline A-2, which is the best compared to other subjects.

With an average score of 77.48, Figure 3 is included in a good category, because she already has the ability to read fluently, although she is still not using the right intonation when reading sentences or parafigures.

With that score, the direct tendency is seen to rise in the A-1 baseline phase so that with four phases the subject can consider intervening. Similarly, the intervention phase, which has a rising direction tendency with 100% stability, also indicates a good stability level, with the score by 10 points on the A-1 baseline, seven points on the intervention, and eight points on the A-2 baseline.

Meanwhile, the results of writing ability can be described as follows.

Based on the data that the author collected, the ability to write of each subject is illustrated on Table 1 and Figure 4.

With an average score of 75.52, Subject 1 is good, because she already has good writing skills, although she still cannot use the appropriate alphabet, or write local-language words.

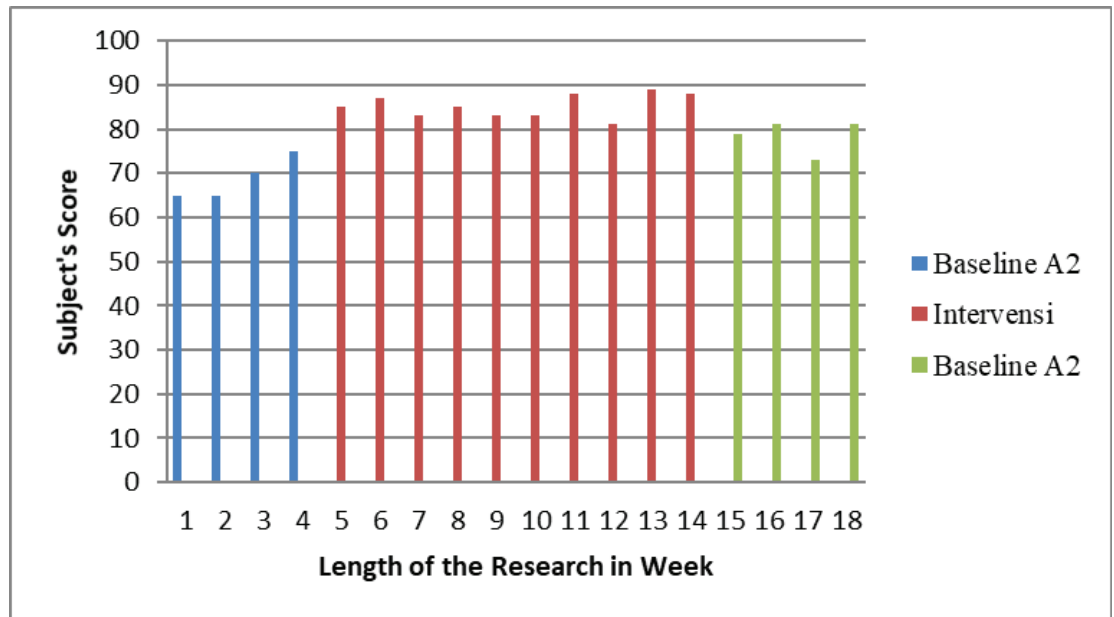


Figure 3: Overall Reading Skill Result of Subject 3.

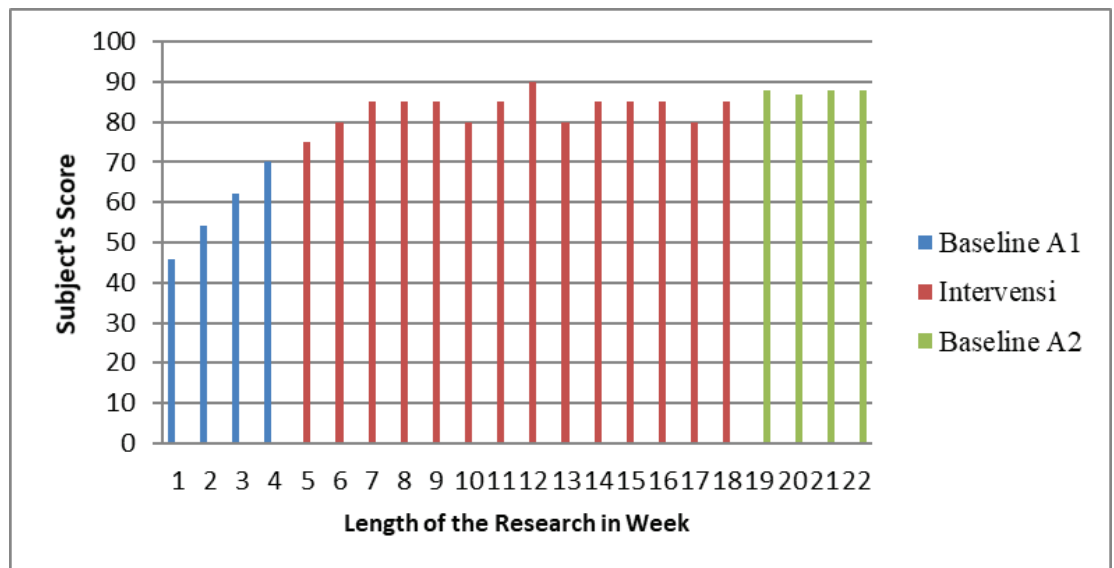


Figure 4: Overall Reading Skill Result of Subject 1.

With these scores, the direction tendency is seen to rise from the A-1 baseline phase, which is only a viable variable. This means that it should be considered to do an intervention in a stable direction until the A-2 baseline phase. The increasing direction tendency from 50% to 90% then 100% also indicates a good stability level. This is also strengthened by a 24-points increase on the A-1 baseline, fifteen points on the intervention, and one point in the A-2 baseline phase (Figure 5).

Subject 2 is included in a fairly good writing category, with an average score of 61.54. In terms of writing, Subject 2 uses old spelling, writes with an unbalanced size

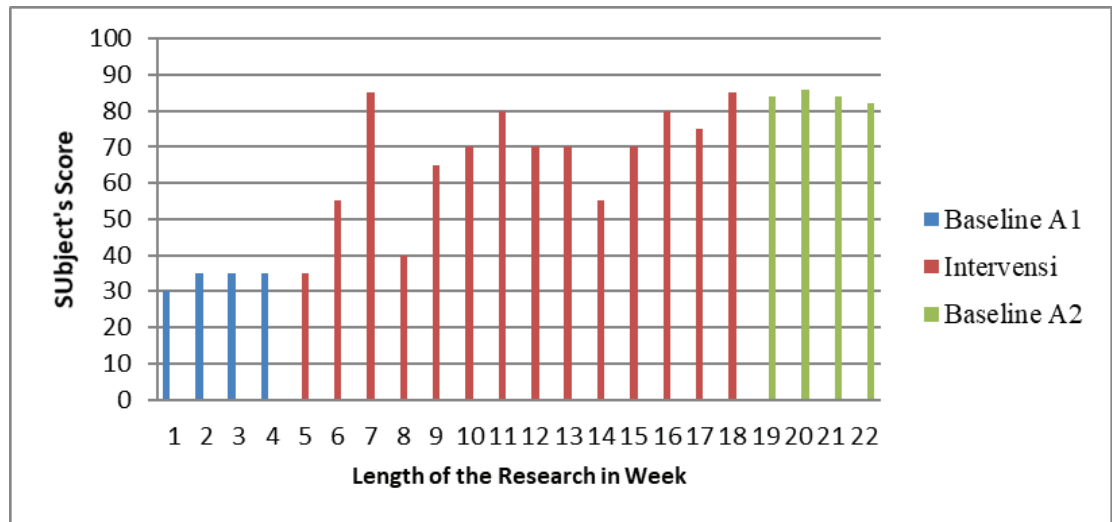


Figure 5: Overall Reading Skill Result of Subject 2.

of letters, writes without spaces in a sentence, and writes without punctuation in a sentence.

With that average score, it can be seen that Subject 2 has a rising direction tendency from the A-1 baseline phase to A-2 baseline. As we can see from the tendency of stability, which is variable, and stable to stable, Subject 2 shows decent changes in the A-1 baseline, which is only a variable. This means that it should be considered to do an intervention in a stable direction until the A-2 baseline phase is also stable (100%). The data is strengthened by the increase of five points on the A-1 baseline, 35 points on the intervention, and finally an additional two points in the A-2 baseline phase (Figure 6).

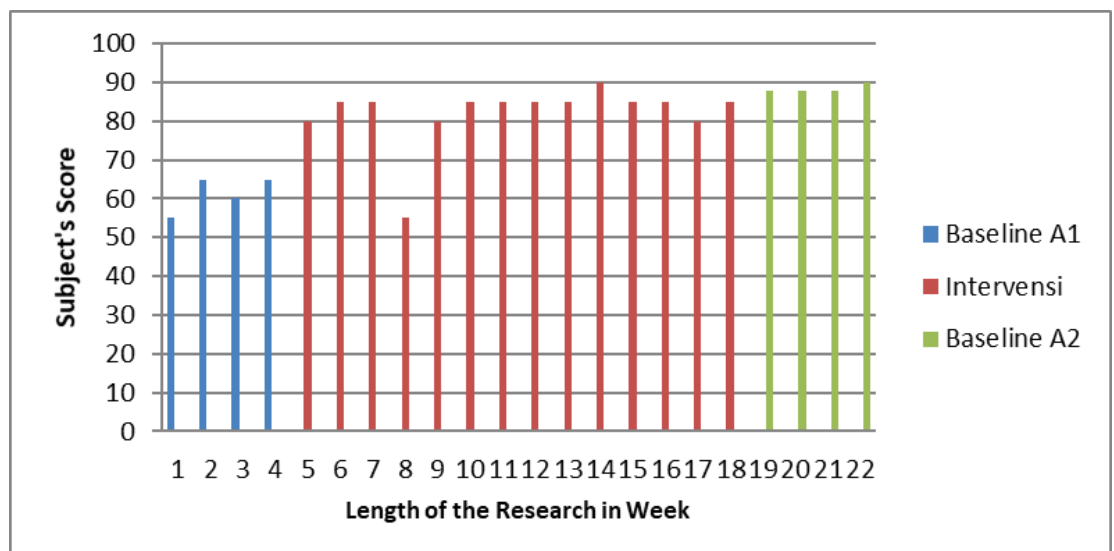


Figure 6: Overall Reading Skill Result of Subject 3.

With an average score of 77.30, Subject 3 is good, because she already has good writing skills, although she still cannot use the right alphabet, or write a local-language word.

With these scores, the direction tendency is seen to rise from the A-1 baseline phase, which is only a viable variable. This means that it should be considered to do an intervention in a stable direction until the A-2 baseline phase. The increasing direction tendency from 50% to 90% then 100% also indicates a good stability level. This is strengthened by the increase of 24 points on the A-1 baseline, fifteen points on the intervention, and one point in the A-2 baseline phase.

### 3.2. Discussion

From the descriptions and analysis of the data above, the authors can conclude that a life skills-oriented participatory learning strategy is effective for improving reading and writing skills. Women in the village are modest people. They are not good at reading and writing, which they do not think of as a big problem [8]. Moreover, it is said that we read to eliminate illiteracy and encourage ourselves [9]. In addition, Whitehead said that we read to consider the benefits of what we do or what we dare to do [10]. From that, it is already very clear that by reading we can get a lot of benefits.

From the data that the researchers collected, many obstructions emerged when this strategy was being executed. When we look at that problem, it seems that reading skills are influenced by several factors [9]. Pearson, there are two factors – internal and external – that affect it [11]. Internal factors include language competence, interests and motivation, attitudes and habits, and intelligence. Meanwhile, external factors include elements of reading (readability of a text and writing organization) and reading environment (facilities, school, community environment, as well as model teachers).

In regard to writing skill, affected by several things such as behavior, perception, memory, cross-modal ability, dominant hand use, and the ability to understand instruction. From those factors, it can be understood that if there are problems with learners' motor development, they will have problems in writing [12]. The writing may be unclear, discontinuous, and so on. Thus, writing skills require brain health as well as physical health because the combination of the four brain lobes with physical functions contributes to the writing process.

From the findings and experts' opinion above, we can see that the obstruction experienced in the learning process could be solved if the planning process of the learning programs considered the use of subjects' learning outcomes [13, 14]. If this

can be done, the improvement in economic quality, which originally only focused on the individual level, can rapidly and precisely develop to a larger community level [15].

## 4. Conclusion

After doing some analysis and discussing these research findings, which have emerged over four months, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, there are activities of reading and writing among mothers in Garut regency that are associated with various goals, durations, teachers, and times.

Second, life skills-oriented participatory learning strategies are effective for improving the reading and writing skills of the subjects of this research, as seen from the improvement in each phase from the A-1 baseline phase to intervention to the A-2 baseline phase.

Third, as a follow-up to the findings on the use of participatory learning strategies, life skills education training is carried out. This training runs well, which can be seen from context components such as input, processes, and products. From the results of oral and written thoughts, they get a lot of thoughts. With the plans to improve vocational training that continues to develop the local potential for making processed foods from glutinous rice or rice, it is expected that the poverty problem will be optimally decreased or solved.

Fourth, among the supporting factors for a participatory learning strategy, there is a strong desire among all subjects to have the ability to read and write and family – both husband and children. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors that can be observed include health problems such as eye condition and learning time, which can be interrupted by a sudden call for work, thereby reducing the level of concentration somewhat during the study.

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