

Implementation of Reading Corners to Improve Al-Qur'an Literacy in Inclusive Education at Nurul Ikhsan Ngadiluwih

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Keywords:

Inclusive education, Reading Corner, and Improve Qur'an Reading Literacy.

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Abstract: Inclusive education in special schools faces the challenge of low reading literacy, particularly in recognizing letters and reading the Qur'an. To overcome this problem, teachers implement a reading corner program in each class. This program is carried out for 10–15 minutes before Islamic Religious Education lessons begin. Students are directed to read the next material in the reading corner, which is equipped with letter cards to help students who are not yet able to read fluently. This approach aims to provide more flexible and enjoyable learning opportunities, especially for students with diverse learning needs. The results show that the target students have begun to recognize Hijaiyah letters better, understand basic Qur'an literacy, and show an increased interest in reading. These findings prove that reading corners can be an effective strategy in improving Quran literacy in inclusive education environments.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is an essential skill that individuals must possess in order to solve various problems and navigate life. From its inception, literacy at the elementary school level has focused on reading and writing (Khofifah & Ramadan, 2021). Literacy for elementary school students is expected to include the ability to listen, read, write, count, convey, and provide information related to student understanding (Suragangga, 2017). Literacy aims to help individuals achieve their goals in life, whether personal, social, work-related, educational, social opportunities, or economic and political integration (Indriyani et al., 2019). In addition, literacy is very much needed by students in an effort to improve their reading and writing skills. However, literacy activities are not only about reading and writing, but also about how students communicate. Literacy skills should be possessed by individuals as one of their basic rights as learners. Thus, it can be concluded that literacy is an activity in which students process their understanding and convey information in solving problems that arise.

Reading literacy is a basic skill that students must have from the time they enter elementary school. Reading literacy aims to help students understand and find effective strategies for reading skills, including the ability to understand the meaning of a text (Noveliana & Ghani, 2022). Reading is the process of seeing and understanding the content of a text, and understanding the content of a text is a process of acquiring new knowledge (Ahmad, 2017). Furthermore, it involves analyzing the information obtained from the reading material to find the essence of the text (Maryati & Priatna, 2018). According to Saputri, a culture of reading in schools is very necessary as it can improve the quality of learning and also foster students' comprehension skills, thereby making the teaching and learning process more meaningful and of higher quality (Saputri, 2022). Reading skills are very important in determining students' success in learning because all subjects in school require an understanding of concepts through reading. However, according to a study by Isnani and Usman (2023), many elementary school students do not have a passion for reading. Students tend to prefer playing games, watching TV, and other games that children enjoy rather than reading books. Meanwhile, students who have reading literacy skills are expected to be able to develop their ability to solve problems and think critically (Husna, 2020).

Reading literacy in inclusive education schools is very important to implement because students with physical, emotional, mental, social, or intellectual disabilities require special educational services that meet their needs and human rights. In addition, inclusive education continues to strive for the right of all children to obtain an education, facilitate, eliminate discrimination, and reduce disparities between students in schools. Although supported by a clear vision to accept students with special needs, teachers are given the freedom to implement creative and innovative learning in their classrooms. The involvement of parents as one of the keys to the success of reading literacy in inclusive education has not developed well (Mayya, 2019).

The results of education reports, PBD, and other evaluations of literacy skills show that the reading literacy skills of students at Nurul Ikhsan Special School in Ngadiluwih District are still low. In Indonesia in 2025, a GoodStats

survey showed that only 1 in 5 people read books every day, indicating a low interest in reading. This survey highlights the lack of motivation, access to quality reading materials, and the dominance of instant entertainment or other hobbies as factors contributing to low reading interest among students. The results of observations of literacy activities among students at Nurul Ikhsan Special Needs School in Ngadiluwih District, which involved 20 students, found that 5 students read fluently and 15 students did not read fluently, with some still spelling or memorizing letters, especially the Hijaiyah letters of the Qur'an in inclusive education. This observation also found that the school's literacy movement was not running well, as students' literacy habits were only evident during lessons. A further problem found was the low level of Quran reading literacy among elementary school students in Ngadiluwih District, caused by several factors, namely the lack of motivation from parents, lack of support, and lack of guidance for students in Quran reading literacy. On average, students are still unable to read connected Hijaiyah letters.

To improve students' literacy in reading the Qur'an, a reading corner (Pojok Baca) should be set up and used daily before lessons begin. The reading corner serves as a mini library in each classroom, complementing the school library by providing additional reading materials for students. The reading corner aims to make it easier for students to obtain information through reading, with teachers guiding students in improving their reading comprehension. Developing a reading corner in inclusive education is an effective way to encourage reading from an early age. Therefore, the reading corner is very important in improving students' reading habits and literacy skills in reading the Qur'an.

The plan for Al-Qur'an reading literacy activities in inclusive education at Nurul Ikhsan Special School in Ngadiluwih District is to establish reading corners that are used to maximize the function of reading corners in the classroom. With the existence of reading corners in the classroom, it is hoped that they can be used again as one of the programs to improve Al-Qur'an reading literacy in inclusive education at school. This activity will be carried out for 15 minutes before class starts, and students who are not yet able to read well will receive special guidance.

This study aims to improve students' Al-Qur'an reading literacy skills through the implementation of a reading corner in inclusive education at the Nurul Ikhsan Special School in Ngadiluwih District.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a qualitative study that aims to understand the conditions in the field to find out the experiences of the research subjects. This study was conducted for 1 month, with 20 students at Nurul Ikhsan Special School as the subjects, through the stages of planning, implementation, and observation. Data collection techniques used observation, namely by observing the students' reading abilities, and interviews conducted by the principal, parents, students, and documentation. Observation data was obtained using observation sheets on students' reading literacy. Interview data was obtained through interviews conducted by students to determine the implementation of the reading corner. Documentation was carried out to document literacy practices in the classroom. After the data was obtained, it was analyzed descriptively to draw conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. The Implementation of Reading Corners to Improve Al-Qur'an Reading Literacy in Inclusive Education

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the implementation of reading corners at Nurul Ikhsan special school showed an increase in students' interest in reading in general. Most students spent more time in the reading corner during breaks or free time in class. They show interest in various types of reading materials, both fiction and non-fiction.

These limitations have an impact on efforts to optimize the reading corner to improve literacy in Islamic Education subjects. Teachers are aware of these limitations and try to compensate for them by providing alternative reading materials through teaching materials that they bring to class themselves. However, the limitations in fostering students' awareness to actively engage in literacy still remain a task that must be overcome by teachers. This is because there are also

many students who find reading difficult due to a lack of reading guidance, etc. As stated by previous researchers, reading corners must be integrated with more specific literacy needs in order to be effective in supporting the learning process (Setiawati & Mahmud, 2020).

b. Students' Interest in Reading After the Implementation of Reading Corners

The results of the study show that the reading interest of students in the second grade of Nurul Ikhsan special school increased after the reading corner was implemented in the classroom. Based on interviews with second-grade teachers, students became more interested in spending time reading, especially storybooks and general knowledge books. Teachers also noted an increase in student involvement during literacy activities in the classroom. Here, students play a student-centered role and teachers act only as facilitators. The reading corner provided was attractive and enjoyable. As a result, many students were interested in taking turns in literacy activities. Of course, the reading corner was created through collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. This is in line with findings that reveal that a comfortable and attractive reading corner atmosphere can motivate students to be more active in reading activities (Jaenal et al., 2023).

Increased interest in reading Islamic educational literature has led students to regularly borrow books with Islamic themes, ranging from stories of the prophets to Islamic cultural history and so on. It is also not uncommon for some students to exchange opinions with other friends. Factors such as an attractive reading corner design, neat book arrangement, and guidance from teachers also play a role in attracting students' attention to the reading corner. As stated by previous researchers, a well-designed reading corner can be an attractive place for students to develop their interest in reading (Janawati & Riantini, 2024; Kasim et al., 2023; Wiyanti, 2023).

c. The Relationship between the Implementation of Reading Corners and the Strengthening of Literacy among Inclusive Students in Islamic Religious Education

The relationship between the implementation of reading corners and the strengthening of literacy among students in Islamic religious education in the second grade of Nurul Ikhsan Special School showed positive results, although further development is still needed. Interviews with Islamic education teachers show that students who use reading corners more often tend to understand the learning material more easily. Reading corners that provide a variety of religious literature play a significant role in bringing students closer to readings related to Islamic teachings. With the availability of appropriate literature, students are expected to be able to use reading corners to deepen their understanding of Islamic values. In addition, regular literacy practice will foster a love of literacy in students who need a little guidance in reading. Of course, this is very necessary to minimize the number of students who still cannot read in each educational unit, whether through written or verbal guidance. Teachers play a very important role in this.

According to Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, optimal learning occurs when students receive appropriate support in their studies. In this context, reading corners serve as a form of scaffolding, providing reading materials that are appropriate for the students' skill levels. Teacher support in motivating students to use the reading corner is also a strong factor in strengthening literacy. Teachers who are actively involved in guiding students to utilize the reading corner can help students develop their literacy skills, particularly in reading and comprehending religious literature thoroughly.

Challenges and Solutions for Optimizing Reading Corners

The main challenge in optimizing reading corners in grade II at Nurul Ikhsan Special School is fostering students' willingness to read. One way to do this is by establishing a well-structured habit of reading every morning or during breaks.

To overcome this challenge, it is important for teachers to enforce this habit in each class using the available Islamic education books. Teachers can provide guidance to students on readings that are relevant to the learning material

and involve students in more interactive literacy activities, such as book discussions or reading presentations.

Another solution that can be implemented is to improve the design and layout of the reading corner to make it more attractive and well-organized. Books related to Islamic religious education subjects can be grouped separately so that students can more easily find relevant reading material. In addition, students will also become more communicative and innovative in their learning.

After the implementation of the reading corner program at Nurul Ikhsan Ngadiluwih Special School, the collected data was analyzed to evaluate the program's effectiveness in improving students' literacy culture. The research results were presented systematically to provide a factual picture of the changes that occurred. In accordance with the principles of participatory research and to maintain clarity of analysis, the research results were divided into two main sections. The first section presents quantitative findings in the form of numerical data from questionnaires that measured students' reading interest before and after the program. The second section presents qualitative results in the form of quotations, thematic findings from interviews, and observations of the dynamics of program implementation in the field. This separation aims to group the data in a more structured, transparent, and easy-to-understand manner in accordance with the rules for presenting results in social and educational research.

Comparison of reading interest before and after the program data was obtained from a reading interest questionnaire completed by 20 students before and after the implementation of the reading corner program. Table 1 shows a significant increase in three main indicators of students' reading habits, namely the habit of reading outside of class, daily reading duration, and the habit of bringing books to school.

Table 1. Observation results of students before and after the Reading Corner program

Category	Before Program	After Program
Students read regularly outside of class	20%	75%
Students read for at least 15 minutes per day	30%	80%
Students bring reading books to school	15%	70%

This increase in student literacy habits shows that the reading corner program has a real impact in encouraging the formation of regular reading habits. Not only limited to the classroom, these changes also include literacy habits at home and outside of school, which are beginning to function as new literacy spaces. Families, in this case parents, play an active role as literacy centers that accompany children in the reading process. These findings confirm that the reading corner program is not merely symbolic or ceremonial, but has the potential to trigger a broader transformation of literacy culture. This success is inseparable from the collaborative approach that involves schools and families.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Familiarizing students with literacy through the reading corner program has had a tangible impact in encouraging the formation of regular reading habits. This change is not limited to the classroom; it also extends to literacy habits at home and outside of school, which have begun to function as new spaces for literacy. Families, in this case parents, play an active role as centers of literacy that accompany children in the reading process. The reading corner program is not merely symbolic or ceremonial, but has the potential to trigger a transformation in literacy culture. This success is inseparable from a collaborative approach involving schools and families.

Future researchers may explore the effectiveness of different learning media and methods used in reading corners to enhance Al-Qur'an literacy among students with diverse needs, or focus on teacher strategies and challenges in managing inclusive reading activities. Other possible directions include examining the role of parental involvement and peer tutoring in supporting Qur'anic literacy, analyzing the impact of school culture and environment in sustaining reading corner programs, or developing innovative digital-based reading corners as a complement to conventional ones. These studies would provide broader insights into optimizing inclusive education practices while strengthening students' ability to read and understand the Al-Qur'an.

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