Integration of Information Literacy into the Primary Education Curriculum: A Study of Elementary School Libraries in Enrekang Regency

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Abstract

The rapid development of information technology demands that learners acquire information literacy skills from an early age as part of 21st-century competencies. Information literacy encompasses not only the ability to search for and use information but also the skills to evaluate, process, and present information critically and ethically. In the context of primary education, the curriculum and school library play a strategic role in laying the foundation for information literacy from an early stage. This study aims to explore how the integration of information literacy into the primary education curriculum is implemented in elementary schools in Enrekang Regency, as well as how school libraries contribute to supporting this process. The research employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method in three elementary schools that have active library programs. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with teachers, librarians, and principals; observation of literacy activities; and document analysis (lesson plans, syllabi, and library programs). The findings indicate that the integration of information literacy remains incidental and is not yet structured within the formal curriculum. School libraries have made efforts to become open learning spaces, yet their role has not been fully optimized due to limited resources and coordination among school stakeholders. The implication is that supportive policies are needed to systematically strengthen information literacy through curriculum integration, teacher training, and the revitalization of school libraries as literacy centers and learning resource hubs.

***Keywords**: Information Literacy; Curriculum; Primary Education; School Library*

Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi informasi yang pesat menuntut peserta didik sejak usia dini memiliki kemampuan literasi informasi sebagai bagian dari keterampilan abad ke-21. Literasi informasi tidak hanya mencakup kemampuan mencari dan menggunakan informasi, tetapi juga kemampuan mengevaluasi, mengolah, dan menyajikan informasi secara kritis dan etis. Dalam konteks pendidikan dasar, peran kurikulum dan perpustakaan sekolah menjadi sangat strategis dalam menanamkan fondasi literasi informasi sejak dini. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana integrasi literasi informasi dalam kurikulum pendidikan dasar diterapkan di sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Enrekang, serta bagaimana perpustakaan sekolah berperan dalam mendukung proses tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode studi kasus di tiga sekolah dasar yang memiliki program perpustakaan aktif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan guru, pustakawan, dan kepala sekolah; observasi kegiatan literasi; serta analisis dokumen (RPP, silabus, program perpustakaan). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi literasi informasi masih bersifat insidental dan belum terstruktur dalam kurikulum formal. Perpustakaan sekolah telah berupaya menjadi ruang pembelajaran terbuka, namun peranannya belum maksimal karena keterbatasan sumber daya dan koordinasi antar pihak sekolah. Implikasinya, diperlukan kebijakan yang mendukung penguatan literasi informasi secara sistematis melalui integrasi kurikulum, pelatihan guru, serta revitalisasi fungsi perpustakaan sekolah sebagai pusat literasi dan sumber belajar.

Kata Kunci: *Literasi Informasi; Kurikulum; Pendidikan Dasar; Perpustakaan Sekolah*

Introduction

The rapid development of information and communication technology has significantly transformed human lifestyles, including in the field of education. Today's children are growing up amid a flood of information that is readily accessible through various digital media. In this context, information literacy skills are crucial to be developed from an early age, especially for elementary school students who are at the formative stage of learning habits and critical thinking.

Information literacy refers to the ability to recognize the need for information, to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively and ethically. It is not merely a technical skill, but also involves the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and responsible decision-making abilities. Therefore, information literacy must be an integral part of the school learning process, not simply an add-on.

School libraries play a strategic role in supporting information literacy-based learning. A library is not merely a place to store books, but serves as a learning resource center that can foster students' skills in accessing and utilizing information. Unfortunately, in many elementary schools in Indonesia, including those in Enrekang Regency, the role of the school library has not yet been optimized as an active learning space. As a result, the development of students' information literacy remains suboptimal.

Several previous studies have addressed the importance of information literacy in education. Yasin (2022) emphasized that strengthening information literacy at the elementary level is critical for student success in facing the challenges of modern learning. Meanwhile, Ismaya (2023) found that the involvement of school libraries in student literacy activities remains limited due to the lack of synergy between teachers and librarians. At the international level, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) strongly advocates for the collaboration between teachers and librarians to integrate information literacy skills into the school curriculum.

However, studies that specifically examine the integration of information literacy into the primary school curriculum through the role of school libraries in non-urban areas such as Enrekang Regency remain limited. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring real practices in the field, identifying challenges, and formulating contextually appropriate and applicable strategies.

The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus: (1) the integration of information literacy into the formal primary education curriculum, and (2) the involvement of school libraries as key facilitators in the process. Thus, this research not only describes the current conditions but also contributes to developing relevant models of information literacy practice in rural and semi-rural primary schools.

The urgency of this study is further reinforced by the demands of the Deep Learning Curriculum, which emphasizes project-based learning, character development, and independent learning. Information literacy serves as a fundamental skill to enable students to design, implement, and evaluate their learning processes independently and responsibly. Without strong information literacy, students may struggle to filter accurate information, fall into plagiarism, and face obstacles in developing 21st-century skills.

Additionally, Enrekang Regency, as a region striving to improve the quality of primary education, requires a contextual approach to support learning transformation. Its rich local potential and strong community spirit can serve as strengths in developing school libraries as literacy centers grounded in local culture and wisdom. Therefore, this study is expected to serve as a starting point for policymakers, educators, and librarians in formulating integrated and sustainable strategies for strengthening information literacy.

Based on the background above, this study aims to:

1. Describe the form of information literacy integration into the primary school curriculum in Enrekang Regency.
2. Analyze the role of school libraries in supporting the enhancement of students' information literacy.
3. Identify challenges and opportunities in developing information literacy through synergy between teachers, librarians, and school stakeholders.

This research is expected to provide a deep and comprehensive picture of information literacy integration practices in elementary schools and serve as a reference for designing more responsive literacy education policies that address both local needs and global challenges.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the practice of integrating information literacy into the primary education curriculum, as well as the role of school libraries in supporting this process. This approach was chosen because it allows for a contextual description of phenomena and provides room to explore experiences, perspectives, and policies implemented at the elementary school level.

The method used is a case study, focusing on three elementary schools in Enrekang Regency that vary in terms of location (rural and urban), accreditation status, and the level of literacy-related library activity, namely SDN 172 Enrekang, SDN 147 Pelali, and SDN 140 Kabere. The sites were selected through purposive sampling, based on specific criteria such as the presence of an active library, the involvement of a librarian, and the willingness of the school to participate in the research.

Data collection was conducted through three primary techniques: 1) In-depth interviews with principals, classroom teachers, subject teachers, and librarians to explore their understanding of information literacy and how it is integrated into the learning process. 2) Direct observation of literacy activities in classrooms and libraries, including the use of reading materials, teaching strategies, and student engagement. 3) Document analysis, which included reviews of syllabi, lesson plans (RPP), library work programs, and school policies related to literacy.

The data were analyzed thematically, by grouping information into key themes based on the research questions. To enhance data validity, triangulation of sources and methods was employed, along with member checking with key informants.

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted in three elementary schools in Enrekang Regency that have active libraries and have demonstrated efforts to strengthen information literacy within the learning process. The three schools are located respectively in a rural area, a suburban area, and a district town, thus offering diverse social and cultural contexts that enrich the findings of the study.

Based on data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, three main themes emerged: (1) the integration of information literacy into the curriculum, (2) the role of school libraries in the practice of information literacy, and (3) the challenges and prospects in the development of information literacy in elementary schools.

1. **Integration of Information Literacy into the Curriculum**

In all schools that were part of this study, it was found that information literacy has not yet been fully integrated in a systematic manner into the formal curriculum. Generally, literacy-related values are only implicitly included in learning activities, particularly through subjects such as Bahasa Indonesia, Science, Social Studies, and local content. Some

teachers incorporate information-seeking activities, such as searching from books or the internet, as part of student assignments, but there is no structured emphasis on the skills of selecting, analyzing, and evaluating information.

One teacher at SDN 172 Enrekang, located in Enrekang Subdistrict, stated:

> "We encourage students to find information, for example for group assignments, but we haven't specifically taught them how to evaluate that information. Perhaps because there hasn't been any special training on it yet."

This indicates that information literacy is still perceived merely as the ability to search for and read information, without extending to critical thinking or information ethics. The current curriculum does not yet direct learning towards comprehensive information literacy skills, and teachers do not have specific guidelines to help them develop lesson plans (RPP) that are responsive to such needs.

Nevertheless, some teachers have already started using project-based learning approaches to encourage students to gather and present information from various sources. This reflects growing awareness and initiative to gradually integrate information literacy into classroom activities.

2. The Role of School Libraries in Supporting Information Literacy

The school libraries at the three research sites demonstrated a range of dynamics. At SDN 140 Kabere, located in Cendana Subdistrict (a suburban area), the library is managed by a non-civil servant librarian who actively organizes activities such as *"Free Reading Days," "Book Synopsis Writing,"* and *"Reading Presentation Sessions."* These activities indirectly help students develop purposeful reading habits and a more critical understanding of information content.

The school librarian explained:

> "We don't just ask the students to read, we also encourage them to discuss. We teach the children to retell the contents of the book or create questions based on what they've read."

The librarian's role is highly central, not only as a technical manager of the collection but also as a pedagogical facilitator of literacy. Unfortunately, at SDN 147 Pelali, located in Curio Subdistrict (a rural area), the library serves merely as a book storage space, with limited opening hours and no dedicated staff. In such cases, the teachers bear the main responsibility for driving literacy activities, despite constraints in time and resources.

Nevertheless, the enthusiasm of school principals and teachers to make the library an alternative learning space remains strong. They expressed hope for support from local government to appoint professional librarians and provide training for both teachers and library staff in information literacy.

3. Challenges and Prospects in Developing Information Literacy

Several key challenges were identified in strengthening information literacy at the elementary school level in Enrekang:

a. Lack of training and teacher understanding regarding information literacy. Most teachers do not fully understand the concept of information literacy or how to teach it systematically.

b. Limited teaching materials and relevant learning resources. The textbooks used are still focused mainly on factual texts and provide little room for exploration of information from diverse sources.

c. Inadequate library facilities. In many schools, the library has not yet functioned as a center of learning activities. Collections, reading spaces, and technological support remain limited.

d. Absence of school policies that support the integration of information literacy into the curriculum. Information literacy is still regarded as an add-on, rather than an integral part of the learning process.

Despite these challenges, several opportunities and hopeful signs have emerged, including:

a. Students' enthusiasm for seeking information from various sources, including the internet, indicating that with proper guidance, they have the potential to become independent learners.

b. The growing commitment of teachers and school principals who recognize the importance of information literacy as part of 21st-century life skills.

c. The presence of local potential and community literacy culture, such as home reading activities and the influence of community figures, which can be utilized as a culturally grounded approach.

These findings are in line with Christine Bruce's (1997) *Seven Faces of Information Literacy*, which emphasizes that information literacy is not merely about technical skills in accessing information but also involves understanding how information is used critically in both learning and real-life contexts. For elementary students in Enrekang, the integration of information literacy must include the development of reflective, analytical, and responsible thinking about the information they consume and produce.

Moreover, Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) theory supports these results, particularly in highlighting the critical role of teachers and librarians in guiding students through the stages of information seeking: from identifying information needs, exploring multiple sources, to interpreting and presenting information. Without adequate guidance, students may end up confused and reliant on invalid sources.

Furthermore, these findings reinforce Vygotsky's Sociocultural Learning Theory, which posits that learning occurs optimally within a social context through interaction with more capable peers or adults (scaffolding). In this context, the school library serves as an important social learning space where students can engage in meaningful and collaborative literacy activities.

From the perspective of Indonesian education, these findings are also consistent with the School Literacy Movement (GLS) promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which asserts that literacy should become an integrated school culture across intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. However, to ensure the success of this movement, concrete support is needed through training, policy alignment, and full utilization of the library as a hub for information literacy.

Thus, the strengthening of information literacy at the primary education level should not be seen as a supplementary program, but rather as a core element of educational transformation. It is essential for shaping a generation of lifelong learners who are critical, inclusive, and prepared to face the challenges of the global information era.

Conclusion

This study reveals that the integration of information literacy into the primary education curriculum in Enrekang Regency is still in its early stages and has not yet been comprehensively structured. Information literacy is mostly presented in incidental activities that are not yet standardized in formal curriculum documents such as lesson plans (RPP) or syllabi. Teachers tend to include information-seeking tasks in their instruction, but they do not explicitly teach essential skills such as selecting, evaluating, and processing information critically and ethically.

School libraries have significant potential to support the strengthening of information literacy. In several schools, librarians have taken the initiative to implement literacy programs such as independent reading, book synopsis writing, and information presentation. However, this role remains inconsistent due to limitations

in human resources, facilities, and supportive school policies. Many libraries still function passively and have not yet been fully optimized as literacy centers and learning resource hubs.

The main challenges in strengthening information literacy at the primary level include limited teacher understanding, a lack of contextual learning materials, the suboptimal role of school libraries, and the absence of explicit school policies promoting the integration of information literacy. Nonetheless, the commitment of teachers and school principals, along with students' enthusiasm for literacy activities, provides a valuable foundation for further development.

Information literacy must be systematically integrated into the learning process through clear curriculum policies, teacher training, and the empowerment of school libraries. These steps are crucial for building a learning culture that is critical, independent, and responsible from the early stages of education.

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