Management of the school literacy movement (SLM) programme in Indonesian junior secondary schools

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this research was to examine the roles and functions of school principals and the staff of junior secondary schools in Indonesia, in implementing the government school literacy movement (SLM) programme. An explorative descriptive research study was undertaken involving 48 school principals of junior secondary schools at the Sidoarjo districts in East Java Province, Indonesia. Data were obtained through questionnaires and descriptive analysis of the principals' responses. The results of this study indicate that all school principals have some literacy programmes. However, there are limitations in managing the programmes and deficiencies in the availability of text resources, as well as in the promotion of literacy. As a consequence of the study, it was found there is a need for professional development to overcome the difficulties and obstacles of school management.

INTRODUCTION

International Surveys of Indonesian Students

International educational survey results, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), affect education policy in Indonesia.

Indonesian students' PISA results are below average; PISA surveys are repeated every three years, to assess 15-year-olds. The Programme for International Student Assessment assesses performance on reading, mathematics and science. The Indonesian result for science in 2012 was 382, and in 2015 it was 403. This result is still below the average for OECD countries, of 493, in 2015. The mathematics competency in 2012 was 375, and in 2015 it was 386. The average score for OECD countries in 2015 was 490. Reading competence in 2012 was 396, and in 2015 it was 397. The average score for OECD countries in 2015 was 493 [1][2].

The TIMSS survey is repeated every four years and tests students aged 10 to 14. It is managed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The average mathematics score for Indonesian students at 8th grade in 2011 was 386, and the average fourth grade students' mathematics score in 2015 was 397. The average score for science for 8th grade students in 2011 was 406, and fourth grade students in 2015 was 397, which is below the average of 500 [3-5].

Indonesian results on the PIRLS reading literacy study are low. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, which is international in scope, is carried out on literacy and reading for elementary school students (grade 4) co-ordinated by the IEA. This is repeated every five years and focuses on the abilities of learners aged 10 in reading, and on national policies concerning literacy. The result for Indonesian 4th graders in 2007 was 405 and in 2011, it was 428; both below the average of 500. The latest data for 2016 have not been announced at the time of writing this article [6][7].

These results demonstrate the weakness of Indonesian students, which affects education policy in Indonesia, especially the Indonesian curriculum changes of 2013.

One of the programmes in the curriculum of 2013, released since 2015, is the school literacy movement (SLM). The SLM is a comprehensive effort involving school stakeholders (teachers, learners, parents/guardians) and the community, which form the educational ecosystem. The SLM aims to foster interest in reading and to improve reading skills [8].

LITERATURE SURVEY

Literacy and Understanding Mathematics and Science

Literacy is closely related to the success of students in other fields, such as mathematics and science. Reading is a tool for learning other fields, including mathematics. Many researchers have examined the relationship between reading comprehension and mathematics, which is a critical skill needed to understand the mathematical process. Researchers have established a significant correlation between reading and doing mathematics related to reading comprehension [9][10].

Roberson and Summerlin stated that language skills - particularly the reading skills needed to comprehend mathematical texts and problems, and the listening skills required to understand and follow the presentation of a mathematical solution - are the vehicles through which students learn to apply mathematical concepts and skills [11]. Based on studies by Zepp cited by Imam et al, reading skills, such as the significance of paragraphs, predicting the outcome of events, understanding directions, noting details and vocabulary were found to have significant correlations with algebra scores and various problem-solving abilities in mathematics [9]. Barnes cited by Imam et al observed that finding a main idea, using detailed information and making inferences are needed skills in solving mathematical problems [9].

Bowers as cited by Imam et al claimed that reading complements science, because of the similarities between the skills required for reading and science [9]. Armbruster noted that the skills that make good scientists also make good readers, viz. engaging prior knowledge, forming hypotheses, establishing plans, evaluating, understanding, determining the relative importance of information, describing patterns, comparing and contrasting, making inferences, drawing conclusions, generalising and evaluating sources [12].

Students cannot understand secondary science content unless they read and understand science texts [13]. Carnine found that science texts are difficult for most middle school students, particularly those with poor reading skills [14]. Research indicates that there is a correlation between reading comprehension and student success in mathematics or science, and that reading comprehension contributes to success in mathematics and science [15].

The improving of students' mathematics and science skills needs to be supported by the SLM, as stated in the Regulation of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture No. 23, 2015. One of the activities cited is …*an activity of 15 minutes reading a non-text book before learning begins*.

Reading Literacy

The PIRLS definition of reading literacy is grounded in IEA's 1991 study, where it is defined as …*the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual*. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. People read to learn, to participate in communities in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment [16].

To have reading literacy is to understand, use and reflect on written texts, in order to achieve goals, to develop knowledge and potential, and to participate in society [18]. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) defines reading literacy as: understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve goals, develop knowledge and potential, and participate in society. This definition acknowledges the diversity and complexity of the processes involved in reading [17].

Today, the definition of literacy has expanded, from traditional notions of reading and writing, to including the ability to learn, comprehend and interact with technology in a meaningful way [18]. The recent literature has addressed the need for changes in the way one thinks about reading comprehension, as influenced by technology. In their new literacy and technology position statement, the International Reading Association (now International Literacy Association) in 2001 suggested that …*traditional definitions of reading, writing, and viewing, and traditional definitions of best practice instruction derived from a long tradition of book and other print media will be insufficient*. This position statement recommends new strategies for students and teachers using new and varied forms of information and communication technology [18].

School Literacy Movement (SLM) in Schools

School reading literacy is the ability to access, understand and use things intelligently through various activities, including reading, viewing, listening, writing and/or speaking [8]. The SLM attempts to make the school a learning organisation whose citizens are literate throughout life. The main objective is to nurture the character of the learner through the culture of the school literacy ecosystem embodied in the school literacy movement, so that they become lifelong learners. The specific aims of the SLM are to:

1.   develop a culture of literacy in schools;

2. increase the literacy of the school community;
3. make school a fun and child-friendly learning environment;
4. have a variety of reading books and accommodate various reading strategies.

The SLM implementation phases include the:

1. reflection phase - the growth of reading interest through a 15-minute reading activity;
2. development phase - improving literacy skills through enrichment activities;
3. learning phase - improve literacy skills using enrichment books and reading strategies for all subjects.

From the perspective of social constructivism, it may be argued that both success and failure in literacy learning results from the collaborative social accomplishments of school systems, communities, teachers, students and families [19]. It can be concluded that the principal, as a school manager and leader, should direct the SLM programme in a school.

The interactions between students and educators are mediated by the role definitions of educators. In Cummins' framework [20], these role definitions were seen to be influenced by three social contexts:

1. power relationships among groups within the society;
2. relationships between schools and diverse communities;
3. interactions between teachers and students in the classroom [20].

Whereas Cummins' framework has four elements, Au proposed a framework with seven elements in order to incorporate the major aspects of a literacy programme [21]. The seven elements are:

1. the goal of instruction;
2. the role of the home language;
3. instructional materials;
4. classroom management and interaction with students;
5. relationship to the community;
6. instructional methods;
7. assessment [21].

METHOD

Explorative descriptive research was undertaken involving 48 school principals of junior secondary schools at Sidoarjo district in East Java Province, Indonesia. All the school principals had more than two years' experience as manager and leader of the schools. Data were obtained through questionnaires that consisted of 27 items each with two choices, viz. *already* or *not yet* together with a blank. The questionnaire items served as achievement indicators for the SLM. There were 12 items for the reflection phase; nine items for the development phase; and six items for the learning phase.

The principals' choices were tabulated for each item and displayed in a table as percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reflection Phase of SLM

Table 1 shows that all principals have committed to implementing and supporting the SLM programme by providing a library with a variety of reading books (non-textbooks: both fiction and nonfiction). This can be seen in response to items 1, 2, 5 and 10.

Table 1: Questionnaire items for the reflection phase of SLM.

No.	Indicators	Already	Not yet
1	There is a 15-minute reading activity performed every day (at the beginning, middle or towards the end of the lesson).	100%	0%
2	The 15 minutes of reading activity has been running at least one semester.	100%	0%
3	The teacher becomes a model in the 15-minute reading activity by reading during the activity.	75%	25%
4	The school principal and educational staff become models in the 15-minute reading activity by reading during the activity.	62.5%	37.5%
5	The principal and his staff are committed to implementing and supporting the school literacy movement.	100%	0%
6	There is rich text material displayed in each classroom.	45.8%	54.2%

386

7	There is rich text material displayed in each classroom, corridors and other areas of the school.	20.8%	79.2%
8	There are campaign posters to broaden the understanding and determination of the school community to become lifelong learners.	95.8%	4.2%
9	There are libraries, reading corners in each class and a comfortable reading area, with a collection of non-textbooks used for literacy activities.	41.7%	58.3%
10	The school library provides a variety of reading books (non-textbooks: fiction and nonfiction) that learners can use to expand their knowledge.	100%	0%
11	School gardens, cafeterias and the school health unit (SHU) are clean, healthy and with rich text. There are posters about clean, healthy and good living habits.	31.3%	68.7%
12	Learners have a daily reading journal (writing the title and page that is read).	83.3%	16.7%

There are 95.8% of schools, which have campaign posters related to reading, so as to broaden the understanding and determination of the school community to become lifelong learners (item 8). However, the implementation of literacy programmes is not complete. For example, only 75.0% of teachers become a model in the 15-minute activity by reading (item 3) and only 62.5% of school principals and educational staff do (item 4). A reasonable, but not complete, 83.2% of schools ask students to keep daily reading journals (item 12).

Many schools are not adequate in their development of SLM. There are 68.7% of schools, which do not provide posters about clean, healthy and good living habits (item 11); 58.3% of schools have not provided libraries, reading corners in each class and a comfortable reading area with a collection of non-textbooks (item 9); there are 54.2% of schools that have not displayed rich text material in each classroom (item 6) and 79.2% have not displayed rich text material in corridors and other areas in the school (item 7).

Development Phase of SLM

Table 2 shows that many principals are beginning to develop SLM programmes as school policy. There are 91.7% of principals who develop various follow-up activities to the 15 minutes of reading activity in the form of generating oral and written responses in the lesson and 83.3 % principals who have established a school literacy or similar team (SLT). However, the programmes related to the development phase are still not carried out in more than 50% of schools.

Table 2: Questionnaire items for the development phase of SLM.

No.	Indicators	Already	Not yet
1	Learners have a portfolio that contains a collection of reading material.	16.7%	83.3%
2	Learners have a portfolio that contains a collection of reading material with at least 12 non-textbooks.	0%	100%
3	Students' reading lists are on display in class and/or school corridors.	2.1%	97.9%
4	There are various follow-up activities to the 15 minutes' reading activity in the form of generating oral and written responses as part of non-academic assessment.	10.4%	89.6%
5	There are various follow-up activities to the 15 minutes' reading activity in the form of generating oral and written responses in the lesson, as part of an integrated academic assessment in the subject.	91.7%	8.3%
6	There is a school literacy team (SLT) or similar formed by the principal.	83.3%	16.7%
7	There is recognition on a regular basis of the achievement of students in literacy activities.	52.1%	47.9%
8	There are activities that support an academic school literacy culture, such as travel to a library or mobile library visits to schools.	45.8%	54.2%
9	There are activities with a literacy theme on certain days.	10.4%	89.6%

For example, only 16.7% of schools maintain a student portfolio (item 1) and 0% maintain a portfolio of reading material with at least 12 books (item 2); just 2.1% have displays in class and/or school corridors (item 3). Only 10.4% of schools conduct various follow-up activities in the form of generating oral and written responses as part of non-academic assessment (item 4).

There are 45.8% of schools with activities that support an academic school literacy culture (item 8). There are 10.4% of schools with activities that have a literacy theme. There are 52.1% schools that have regular literacy activities.

Learning Phase of SLM

Table 3 shows that the SLM has not fulfilled its objectives of implementing the 2013 Indonesian national curriculum as revised in 2016. However, for the availability of various reading strategies (item 3), there are 83.3% of schools compliant and 58.3% of schools that provide facilities for students to use the environment with a variety of academic literature available (item 2).

Table 3: Questionnaire items for the learning phase of SLM.

No.	Indicators	Already	Not yet
1	There is a display of the work (the result of critical thinking skills and creativity to communicate verbally, written, visual or digital) on the theme of literacy.	10.4%	89.6%
2	Learners use the social environment with a variety of academic literature (print, visual, auditory, digital) and with literacy-rich textbooks.	58.3%	41.7%
3	There are various reading strategies (15-minute reading activities and/or in learning).	83.3%	16.7%
4	Teachers implement *literacy strategies for learning* in all subjects.	37.5%	62.5%
5	Schools involve the public (parents, alumni and community) to develop school literacy activities.	20.8%	79.2%
6	Schools network with external parties for the development of school literacy programmes and professional development of school literacy.	20.8%	79.2%

All other school activities associated with the SLM are less than 40.0% complaint. For example, just 10.4% of schools display the work (item 1). There are still 62.5% of schools, where teachers do not implement *literacy strategies for learning* (item 4); 79.2% of schools have not involved the public in developing school literacy activities (item 5).

The results of this study indicate that the SLM implementation still needs to be improved. Hariri et al describe management functions including planning, organising, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting [22]. The weakness of the SLM programme was in planning, organising and staffing, and possibly also other aspects. What is needed is professional development for the principal and staff, because as Glickman et al explain … *if one is to look for a place to improve the quality of education in school, a sensible place to look is the continuous education of educators - that is, professional development* [23].

CONCLUSIONS

School principals of junior secondary schools, in managing their schools, have not fully implemented the government school literacy movement programme (SLM), especially the development and learning phases.

The results of this study indicate that all school principals have programmes for reading at the beginning, during and after the last lesson (Table 1, item 1). However, there are limitations in the programmes. As an example, 79.2% of schools have not yet prepared rich text resources (Table 3, item 5); 62.5% of principals and administrative staff have not become involved in the programme (Table 3, item 4); 75.0% of teachers were a model for reading literacy (Table 1, item 3); and 89.6% schools lack adequate literacy resources (Table 2, item 4). Students did not have feedback on which journals or books to read.

A professional development programme is required to overcome the difficulties and obstacles at the school management level to implement the school literacy movement programme.

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