

# Creation of a Mini Library to Improve Children's Literacy Skills at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Malaysia

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## ABSTRAK

**Abstract:** This study aims to improve the literacy skills of Indonesian migrant workers' children at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan, Malaysia, through the creation and utilization of a mini library as a contextual learning medium. This study uses a classroom action research (CAR) method implemented in two cycles, with stages of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were 20 elementary school students at SB At-Tanzil. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, literacy skills tests, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted descriptively and qualitatively by comparing the results between cycles. The research results showed a significant improvement in children's literacy skills after the implementation of the mini library. In cycle I, most students were just beginning to get used to reading and writing simple summaries. However, in cycle II, students showed improvements in reading comprehension, better structured writing, and increased interest in and habit of reading daily. The mini library successfully created a conducive, enjoyable, and accessible literacy environment for migrant children. This improvement in literacy skills aligns with constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of interaction with the learning environment, and emergent literacy theory (Clay, 1991), which explains that literacy develops through meaningful reading experiences. The research results also support the concept of Contextual Teaching and Learning (Johnson, 2007), where learning linked to children's real lives fosters learning motivation and active engagement. Overall, this study concludes that creating a mini library is an effective strategy for improving the literacy skills of migrant workers' children. This program can be used as a model for inclusive and sustainable community-based literacy learning in educational environments for Indonesian children abroad.

## PENDAHULUAN

Education is an important aspect in human life that not only functions as a means of disseminating knowledge, but also as an effort to shape character, skills, and insight so that individuals are able to adapt and play an active role in society, both through formal and non-formal channels that are flexible according to the needs of students (Pandya & Maniar, n.d.). The Indonesian national education system includes three pathways, namely formal, non-formal, and informal, where formal education takes place in a structured and tiered manner, while non-formal education is designed to meet the learning needs of communities that are not served by the formal system, such as children of migrant

workers abroad who often face obstacles in accessing education due to administrative problems, limited funds, and differences in the education system in the country where they live (Hawari et al., n.d.).

As an effort to overcome the limited access to education for migrant children in Malaysia, non-formal educational institutions such as Sanggar Bimbingan At-Tanzil are present by providing learning based on the Indonesian national curriculum that not only emphasizes academic aspects, but also instills religious values, nationalism, and Indonesian culture, so that students can maintain their national identity in a multicultural environment, while at the same time demonstrating the strategic role of non-formal education in forming character and an adaptive and contextual learning culture (Aprilia et al., 2025).

This study aims to analyze the literacy skills of students at the At-Tanzil Guidance Center in Kg Lindungan, Malaysia. Literacy is a basic skill that plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of human resources. Literacy is not merely the ability to read and write, but also encompasses the ability to think critically, understand information, and use it to solve everyday life problems (UNESCO, 2022). In the context of 21st-century education, literacy is the primary foundation for developing other skills such as communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving. Therefore, improving literacy skills from an early age is one indicator of the success of a nation's education system. However, challenges to literacy development remain numerous, particularly among children from vulnerable and marginalized groups. In Malaysia, the government's efforts to build a reading culture through the "Malaysia Membaca" initiative (2021) have shown positive results, but have not yet fully reached all levels of society. Children from migrant communities, particularly those from Indonesia, are a group that still faces significant barriers to accessing adequate learning resources (Fa'idah et al., 2024).

SB At-Tanzil in Kg Lindungan, Malaysia, is a non-formal educational institution established to meet the learning needs of Indonesian migrant children. Most of the students at this school are children of migrant worker families working in the informal sector, with limited socioeconomic status. Their status as migrant children makes access to formal education in Malaysian schools difficult due to legal and administrative issues. As a result, they rely on community educational institutions like SB At-Tanzil for their basic education. In this context, literacy takes on even greater significance for migrant children. Literacy is not only a means of learning to read and write, but also a tool for social and cultural empowerment. Through literacy, migrant children can develop language skills, express themselves, understand their cultural identity, and adapt to new social environments. Literacy also plays a crucial role in boosting self-confidence and opening up broader opportunities for their future (Aprilia et al., 2025).

The reality at SB At-Tanzil shows that migrant children face various obstacles in developing literacy skills. Limited access to relevant reading materials, inadequate learning facilities such as libraries, and a lack of literacy support at home are key factors contributing to low reading interest and comprehension. Furthermore, language differences between Indonesian, Malaysia, and sometimes English also pose challenges that hinder their literacy development. However, the conditions of migrant children, particularly those attending the At-Tanzil Guidance School (SB) in Kg Lindungan, Malaysia, present unique challenges. Most of them come from Indonesian migrant families with limited economic resources, limited access to learning resources, and limited literacy environments. These limitations

directly impact children's basic literacy skills, particularly in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading habits (Aini, 2021). Furthermore, migrant children often face language barriers and cultural adaptation, which impact their learning process in a different environment.

To address these issues, the creation of a mini library at SB At-Tanzil is a strategic and contextual step. Although simple, the mini library plays a crucial role as a literacy learning center, where children can access a variety of reading materials appropriate to their age and cultural context. The presence of a mini library can increase children's exposure to reading texts, foster reading habits, and create a supportive learning environment. Numerous studies have shown that the presence of a reading corner or mini library in schools can increase reading motivation, expand vocabulary, and strengthen children's critical thinking skills (Jenia et al., 2025).

The creation of a mini library at SB At-Tanzil, Kg Lindungan, not only aims to improve the literacy skills of Indonesian migrant children but also serves as an effort to empower inclusive and sustainable education. Through access to engaging reading materials and a positive literacy environment, it is hoped that migrant children can develop their academic, social, and emotional potential and better adapt to the challenges of life as a transnational community.

## **METODE**

This research used the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), CAR is a form of reflective research conducted by the teacher to continuously improve and enhance classroom learning practices. CAR is implemented through systematic stages including planning, acting, observing, and reflecting in one or more cycles. This research approach is qualitative and descriptive, focusing on the process of implementing the action and changes in children's behavior or literacy skills following the implementation and utilization of mini libraries in schools.

This research was conducted at SB At-Tanzil, located in Kg Lindungan, Malaysia. This school is a non-formal educational institution that accommodates the children of Indonesian migrant workers. The research period was two months, from September to October 2025, encompassing preparation, implementation of two cycles of action, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were students at SB At-Tanzil, children of Indonesian migrant workers. Thirty-five students participated, demonstrating varying basic literacy skills (reading and writing). The researcher served as both a teacher and an action planner.

The data in this study were collected using various qualitative techniques to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information regarding students' literacy development, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, based on the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and data verification. To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used, comparing observation results with interview results and documentation to obtain consistent and reliable data. The indicator of success in classroom action research is that at least 75% of students show an increase in literacy skills (reading and writing).

## **HASIL**

Prior to the intervention, initial observations indicated that the literacy skills of migrant workers' children at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Malaysia were still low. Of the 20 students studied, only around 30% demonstrated good reading comprehension skills, while the remainder struggled to understand text content and recapitulate the main ideas of the reading material. This situation was caused by several factors, including limited reading materials at school due to the lack of library facilities, low interest in reading, evident in students' lack of reading habits outside of class hours. Lack of supportive learning environments, as most parents work as migrant workers and do not have time to accompany their children's learning at home. Interviews with teachers also indicated that literacy activities at school were incidental, poorly planned, and not yet a routine part of daily learning. Therefore, a systematic effort is needed to create a conducive literacy environment, one of which is through the creation and utilization of mini libraries at schools.

### **Cycle I**

#### a. Planning Stage

In this stage, researchers and teachers developed an action plan to improve literacy skills through the creation of a mini library. Steps taken: Provide a small space in the school to be used as a mini library. Collect and organize an initial collection of 100 children's books (folk tales, fables, picture books, educational comics). Develop a literacy activity schedule, including reading together for 15 minutes every day, discussing the content of the reading and writing simple summaries, and developing observation instruments and a rubric for assessing student literacy skills.

#### b. Action

The action activities were carried out over four days. The steps of each day's activities were as follows:

- Day I: Introduction to the mini library, procedures for borrowing books, and story reading with the teacher.
- Day II: Independent reading in the mini library, then students retell the contents of the reading orally.
- Day III: Students write a simple summary of the book they have read.
- Day IV: Students present a "favorite book exhibition," sharing the contents of the book in front of the class.

#### c. Observing

During implementation, researchers and teachers made observations of students' literacy activities. Observation results showed that most students seemed enthusiastic about borrowing books and reading during break time. Students who were previously passive began to show interest in reading. As many as 65% of students were able to explain the content of the reading orally. However, the ability to write summaries is still low, because many students write with incomplete sentences and limited vocabulary.

#### d. Reflecting

The reflection results showed that the implementation of Cycle I was not optimal, despite an increase in reading interest. The challenges identified were that the book collection was still limited and lacked variety. Writing activities were not engaging for students. Some students still had difficulty understanding the reading material. From these reflections, the researcher concluded that improvements were needed in Cycle II, namely by adding more creative literacy activities and increasing the number of reading materials tailored to the children's interests.

### **Cycle II**

#### a. Planning

At this stage, the researcher revised the plan based on the results of the previous reflection, with the following steps increasing the book collection to 150 copies with a wider variety of themes (picture stories, children's encyclopedias, motivational books, and educational comics). Developing more engaging literacy activities, such as rolling stories (children take turns reading stories), rewriting my favorite fairy tale, and expressive reading competition. Developing more detailed observation instruments to assess students' reading and writing skills.

b. Action

Cycle II activities were carried out over four days, with a more active and interactive pattern:

- Day I: Classroom reading sessions.
- Day II: Small group discussions about the book's content.
- Day III: Rewriting the story in their own words.
- Day IV: Presentation of work and award for the "best reader."

c. Observing

Observation results showed significant improvement compared to cycle I. Students appeared more active and confident in reading in front of the class, 90% of students regularly visited the mini library every week. Reading comprehension skills improved; students were able to identify characters, plot, and moral messages in stories. Summary writing skills also improved; 80% of students were able to write story content with coherent sentences and richer vocabulary.

d. Reflecting

The final reflection showed that the mini-library-based literacy activities had successfully improved children's literacy skills. Students became more enthusiastic about reading and developed a strong curiosity about the contents of books. Writing skills improved, indicated by the ability to express ideas in simple writing. A reading culture was established within the school environment—the mini-library became a favorite daily place for students. Teachers also felt the benefits of this initiative, as literacy activities helped improve students' understanding of other subject matter.

Based on the results of two action cycles, it can be concluded that the creation and use of mini libraries effectively improved the literacy skills of migrant worker children at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Malaysia. This improvement occurred in reading interest, reading comprehension, and simple writing skills. Furthermore, the creatively packaged literacy activities also fostered self-confidence, communication skills, and collaboration among students. These positive changes in literacy behavior demonstrate that implementing a literacy-based learning model through mini libraries can be an effective strategy for improving the quality of education for Indonesian migrant children abroad.

## PEMBAHASAN

The results of a classroom action research conducted at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Malaysia indicate that literacy activities, including the creation and use of a mini library, significantly improved the literacy skills of migrant workers' children. This improvement was evident in their reading interest, comprehension skills, and ability to write simple summaries after two cycles of action. These findings align with various literacy and contextual learning theories that underpin this research.

### Mini Libraries as Literacy Environments that Support Children's Literacy Development

Research findings indicate that the presence of mini libraries creates a learning environment rich in texts and reading experiences, thus fostering students' motivation to read independently. This aligns with the constructivist learning environment theory proposed by Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978), which states that children learn actively through interaction with their environment and learning resources (Cook, 2010). In the context of this research, mini libraries serve as a stimulating learning

environment that facilitates children's knowledge construction through reading, discussion, and writing. Children are no longer passive recipients of information but become active learners directly involved in the literacy process. Furthermore, research results also show that after the mini libraries were introduced, 90% of students regularly visited the library and demonstrated a strong interest in reading. These findings support the Ministry of Education and Culture's (2017) School Literacy Movement. (GLS) assertion that a supportive physical and social environment can strengthen reading habits among students (Cook, n.d.).

### **Improving Reading and Writing Skills as a Form of Functional Literacy**

The improvements in reading comprehension and summary writing skills observed in this study also confirm UNESCO's (2006) theory of functional literacy, which states that literacy is not limited to the ability to read and write symbols, but also encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, and use information in everyday life. In cycle I, students began to become accustomed to reading and retelling book content, while in cycle II, their skills improved significantly—they were able to identify characters, plot lines, and moral messages in the reading material. These skills demonstrate that the literacy being developed is not merely mechanistic, but has moved toward meaning-making literacy. This is also supported by Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which states that children's cognitive development will improve when they are guided by teachers or peers in challenging learning activities. In this study, shared reading activities, group discussions, and teacher-led writing are forms of scaffolding that help children advance to higher levels of literacy skills.

### **Emergent Literacy and Early Reading Habits**

The development of children's literacy skills in this study also aligns with the emergent literacy theory proposed by Marie Clay (1991). This theory emphasizes that literacy skills do not emerge suddenly, but develop gradually through direct experience with written language and enjoyable reading activities. Before the intervention, most students were not accustomed to reading books outside of school. However, after the literacy activities were implemented, students began to show enthusiasm for reading every day and were able to write summaries in their own words. This indicates that meaningful reading experiences in the mini library helped foster literacy habits naturally, in line with the principles of emergent literacy. Thus, the establishment of the mini library not only improved students' cognitive abilities in comprehending texts but also fostered a positive affect towards reading. According to Clay (1991), affective aspects such as enjoyment and motivation play a crucial role in building a long-term literacy foundation.

### **Literacy Learning in the Social Context of Migrant Children**

This study also emphasizes the importance of considering the social and cultural context in literacy learning. Children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia live in environments that differ from their home environments in Indonesia. They face limited access to formal education, learning resources, and family support due to economic and social conditions. The implementation of a mini library at SB At-Tanzil is an inclusive literacy empowerment strategy because it bridges these limitations. This aligns with Freire's (1983) view of literacy as empowerment—that literacy is a tool to free people from social constraints and open up opportunities to critically understand the world. Through regular literacy activities, migrant children not only acquire reading and writing skills but also learn to express their ideas and feelings through simple writing. This demonstrates that literacy activities play a role in increasing migrant children's self-confidence and self-awareness as individuals with equal potential and rights to learn.

The results of the second cycle of reflections indicated that the mini-library-based literacy activity model successfully created positive changes in both students and teachers. Teachers became more creative in designing literacy activities, while students became more active and independent in

their learning. Theoretically, these results reinforce Johnson's (2007) perspective on Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which emphasizes the importance of connecting learning to students' real lives. In this study, reading and writing activities in the mini library represent a form of contextual learning that is close to the world of children, reading stories, writing about experiences, and discussing moral values contained in the reading material.

The results of this study conclude that mini libraries are not only physical facilities but also a means of social and academic transformation for the children of migrant workers. This program can serve as a model for empowering Indonesian children's literacy abroad through a participatory and contextual approach. These results support modern literacy theories that position literacy as a multidimensional capability, encompassing cognitive, social, and cultural aspects (UNESCO, 2022). By comparing research findings with relevant literacy theories, it can be concluded that improving the literacy skills of migrant workers' children through the creation of mini libraries is a concrete implementation of constructivist theory, emergent literacy, and contextual learning. Mini libraries have proven to be an effective means of creating a literate learning environment that enhances reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, as well as fostering lifelong learning habits in migrant children.

## **SIMPULAN .**

Based on the results of classroom action research conducted through two cycles at SB At-Tanzil Kg Lindungan Malaysia, it can be concluded that the creation and use of a mini library has proven effective in improving the literacy skills of Indonesian migrant workers' children. The improvement in children's literacy skills was seen significantly from cycle I to cycle II. Children showed an increase in reading interest, ability to understand reading content, and simple summary writing skills. The activities of reading together, telling book contents, and writing about experiences have fostered positive literacy habits. The presence of a mini library creates a conducive and enjoyable literacy environment. Children become more active and motivated to read. This supportive learning environment is in line with constructivist theory (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978) which emphasizes the importance of interaction between students and the environment in the learning process. The increase in literacy also supports the concept of emergent literacy (Clay, 1991), in which literacy skills develop gradually through meaningful reading experiences. Migrant children who were previously unfamiliar with reading began to demonstrate enthusiasm and independence in selecting and understanding reading materials. From a social perspective, literacy activities through mini libraries play a role in empowering migrant workers' children to gain self-confidence and self-awareness as individuals capable of learning and expressing themselves through written language. This aligns with Freire's (1983) view of literacy as a tool for social liberation and empowerment. Thus, the implementation of a mini library at SB At-Tanzil not only improves academic literacy skills but also fosters a sustainable reading and writing culture within the migrant children's school environment. The mini library serves as a contextual learning medium that connects reading activities to children's life experiences, as explained in the theory of Contextual Teaching and Learning (Johnson, 2007). Overall, this research demonstrates that mini library-based literacy learning is an effective and applicable strategy for improving the literacy skills of Indonesian children abroad, particularly those with limited access to learning resources. This program is worthy of being used as a model for literacy development in non-formal education communities within the communities of migrant workers' children.

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