

IMPLEMENTATION OF LITERACY PROGRAMS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS IN THE COMMUNITY (Case Study at SMAN 18 Bandung)

Tegar Fadillah¹, Anita Rakhman²

^{1,2} IKIP Siliwangi, Cimahi, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

¹ fadillahtegar909@gmail.com, ²anitarakhman1@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the implementation of a literacy program and its influence on improving students' social skills within the community. The background of this study lies in the low reading interest among high school students, which affects their ability to communicate, think critically, and interact socially. The study was conducted at SMAN 18 Bandung, which implemented a school literacy program through reading and summarizing activities before learning sessions. This research used a mixed-method approach with a concurrent embedded design, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation involving students, teachers, and community members. The findings reveal that the literacy program significantly contributes to enhancing students' social skills by 69%, particularly in communication ability, cooperation, and critical thinking. Continuous implementation of literacy activities fosters students' social awareness, self-confidence, and active participation in community engagement.

Keywords: Literacy Program, Social Skills, High School Students, Community Environment

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan program literasi dan pengaruhnya terhadap peningkatan keterampilan sosial siswa di lingkungan masyarakat. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh rendahnya minat baca siswa SMA yang berdampak pada kemampuan komunikasi, berpikir kritis, serta interaksi sosial di lingkungan sekolah dan masyarakat. Penelitian dilakukan di SMAN 18 Bandung yang telah menerapkan program literasi sekolah melalui kegiatan membaca dan merangkum buku sebelum kegiatan belajar mengajar dimulai. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan mixed methods dengan desain concurrent embedded design, menggabungkan teknik pengumpulan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif melalui observasi, wawancara, angket, serta dokumentasi terhadap siswa, guru, dan masyarakat sekitar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan program literasi memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap peningkatan keterampilan sosial siswa sebesar 69%, terutama dalam aspek kemampuan komunikasi, kerja sama, dan berpikir kritis. Pelaksanaan program literasi secara berkelanjutan terbukti mampu menumbuhkan kesadaran sosial, rasa percaya diri, serta mendorong partisipasi aktif siswa dalam kegiatan sosial di lingkungan masyarakat.

Kata kunci: Program Literasi, Keterampilan Sosial, Siswa SMA, Lingkungan Masyarakat

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INTRODUCTION

Literacy is one of the basic skills that plays an important role in developing individual potential and shaping the social character of society. In the context of education, literacy is not only defined as the technical ability to read and write, but also as a form of social practice that

involves interaction, interpretation of meaning, and participation in community life (Street, 1984; Gee, 1996). Thus, literacy activities in schools serve as a means for students to build knowledge, broaden their horizons, and develop the social skills necessary for community life. Literacy is no longer understood as merely the ability to read and write, but has evolved into a set of competencies that include the ability to understand information, think critically, and use knowledge to participate in social contexts. According to Pertiwi and Sundari (2023), literacy is a multidimensional ability that integrates cognitive, social, and cultural skills so that individuals can adapt to the demands of modern life. This perspective emphasizes that the implementation of literacy programs in schools aims not only to improve academic abilities but also to develop students' social skills.

The phenomenon of low reading interest and literacy culture among students in Indonesia remains a serious challenge. The results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey show that Indonesian students' reading literacy scores are still below the average of OECD member countries. This condition has a direct impact on the low critical thinking, effective communication, and social participation skills among teenagers. In the context of high school, this implies that students have weak abilities in collaborating, discussing, and understanding social values in the school and community environment. Therefore, literacy education in schools needs to be directed not only at improving academic abilities, but also at fostering social character and awareness of participation in community life.

In addition to being an individual competency, literacy is viewed as a social practice that is influenced by cultural context and interpersonal interactions. Kurniasih (2022) states that literacy activities in schools can become an arena for shaping social behavior because reading, discussing, and processing information encourage meaningful interpersonal interactions. In line with this, literacy plays an important role in shaping empathy, cooperation, and communication skills, which are the foundation of students' social skills.

SMAN 18 Bandung is one of the schools that has systematically implemented the School Literacy Program (PLS) through 15 minutes of reading before class, book discussions, and social literacy projects. This program focuses not only on improving cognitive abilities, but also on shaping students' social attitudes and communication skills. Through reading, reflective writing, and sharing ideas in front of the class, students are trained to express their opinions, respect differences, and work together with their peers. In this context, literacy becomes a vehicle for fostering social bonding and collective awareness in the school environment.

Systematically designed literacy programs have been proven to support the social development of students, especially at the adolescent level. Research by Sari and Wibowo (2024) shows that student involvement in structured literacy activities can increase self-confidence, the ability to express opinions, and emotional intelligence in interactions. These findings reinforce the importance of implementing literacy programs in schools as a strategy for strengthening social skills that are relevant to the educational needs of the 21st century.

Previous studies support the importance of literacy and communication as means of developing social skills. Nuraeni, Rakhman, Elshap, and Mulyono (2025) found that public speaking training was effective in improving the communication skills and self-confidence of students at SMKN 2 Garut. These activities encouraged students to express their opinions and increased empathy in social interactions. Meanwhile, Susilawati, Rukanda, and Rakhman (2024) show that life skills-based training can foster independence, responsibility, and adaptability among

students in their social environment. Both studies confirm that literacy development integrated with social learning can improve students' social and participatory competencies.

Conceptually, the relationship between literacy and social skills can be explained through social learning theory. Vygotsky (1978) asserts that the learning process always involves social interaction between individuals and their environment. Through collaborative literacy activities, such as group reading or book discussions, students learn to understand other people's perspectives and internalize social values. Bandura (1986) expressed a similar idea in his Social Learning Theory, stating that social behavior can be acquired through observation, imitation, and meaningful social experiences. In the context of school literacy programs, such interactions become a vehicle for building empathy, responsibility, and cooperation among students.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that literacy not only serves as a cognitive instrument, but also as a medium for developing social skills. Through the implementation of literacy programs that focus on reading, discussion, and social participation, students are expected to develop communication and collaboration skills, as well as social awareness, which form the basis for the character building of a literate society. Thus, the focus of this study is formulated in one main question, namely: How does the implementation of the literacy program at SMAN 18 Bandung contribute to the development of students' social skills, particularly in the aspects of communication, cooperation, and social participation in the community?

This study aims to analyze in depth the implementation of literacy programs at SMAN 18 Bandung and their contribution to improving students' social skills. The results of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of a social-based literacy model in community education, as well as serve as a practical reference for educational institutions in strengthening a culture of literacy as a means of shaping students' character and social competence.

METHODS

This study used a mixed methods approach with a concurrent embedded design, which is a research design that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches simultaneously, where one approach acts as a support to the main approach (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen considering that research on the implementation of literacy programs and their impact on students' social skills requires a comprehensive understanding, both in terms of numbers and descriptions of social behavior observed in the context of schools and communities.

Research Subjects and Participants

The subjects of this study were 11th grade students at SMAN 18 Bandung in the 2023/2024 academic year who were actively involved in the implementation of the school literacy program. The research participants included 30 students selected through purposive sampling based on their involvement in literacy activities, such as morning reading and literacy club activities. In addition to students, this study also involved three teachers, namely Indonesian language teachers and literacy advisors who played a direct role in the implementation of the literacy program. The study also involved two representatives from the community around the school who interacted with students in literacy-based social activities. All participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, taking into account their relevance and direct involvement in the school literacy program (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data Collection Techniques

Data in this study was collected through several complementary techniques. Participatory observation was conducted during literacy activities to observe students' social behavior when reading, discussing, and interacting in the school environment. To gain a deeper understanding, interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and the community to explore their perceptions of the impact of literacy activities on students' social skills. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to students as a quantitative instrument to measure aspects of social skills, including indicators of communication, cooperation, and social empathy. Documentation techniques were also used to reinforce the research findings through the collection of literacy activity records, photos of program implementation, and students' literacy work. All research instruments were developed based on the social skills indicators proposed by Goleman (2000), including communication, cooperation, empathy, and self-control, so that the data obtained reflects a comprehensive picture of the impact of literacy programs on students' social development.

Research Instruments

The research instruments used consisted of several complementary tools to obtain comprehensive data. Observation sheets were used to record students' social behavior and directly monitor the implementation of the literacy program in the classroom. In addition, interview guidelines were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and responses of students, teachers, and the community regarding the impact of the literacy program on students' social development. A social skills questionnaire was used as a quantitative measurement tool to assess students' communication, cooperation, empathy, and self-control skills, which were compiled based on Goleman's social skills indicators. Documentation was also used to collect supporting evidence in the form of photos of literacy activities, school records, and students' literacy products, so that the overall data obtained could provide a more complete and in-depth picture of the effectiveness of the literacy program.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data in this study were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model, which includes the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. These three processes were carried out interactively and continuously throughout data collection, enabling researchers to identify patterns of findings that were consistent and relevant to the research focus. This analysis allowed researchers to systematically organize information from observations, interviews, and documentation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of literacy programs on students' social skills.

Meanwhile, quantitative data from the questionnaire results were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques by calculating the percentage increase in students' social skills. The scores from the questionnaire were then categorized into high, medium, and low criteria to provide a clearer picture of the level of influence of the literacy program on the development of students' communication, cooperation, empathy, and self-control skills. This combined approach provides more comprehensive analytical power in assessing the overall effectiveness of the literacy program.

Research Flow

The following is the research flow with a concurrent embedded mixed methods design:



Figure 1. Research Flow

The research process begins with problem identification and determination of the research focus. This stage aims to define clear research objectives and formulate research questions. Next, the study applies a mixed methods approach using a concurrent embedded design, where qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously. Data collection is conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain comprehensive information from multiple sources. Data analysis involves both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data are analyzed through coding and thematic interpretation, while quantitative data are processed using appropriate statistical methods. Finally, the results from both approaches are integrated to generate comprehensive conclusions. This integration strengthens interpretation, answers the research questions, and provides meaningful implications and recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Effect of Literacy Programs on Students' Social Skills

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a literacy program at SMAN 18 Bandung has a significant effect on improving students' social skills. The literacy program, which involves reading and summarizing books for 10 minutes before class, has proven effective in encouraging students to communicate more actively, work together, and develop critical thinking skills. A total of 69% of students stated that the literacy program helped improve their social skills, particularly in terms of public speaking and social interaction. Qualitatively, the results of observations and interviews show that students become more confident when speaking in front of the class, more open in discussions, and able to appreciate their friends' opinions. Teachers reported that consistent literacy activities created a positive learning atmosphere and improved student discipline and participation in learning activities. Interviews with the community reinforced these findings, with students being described as polite, sociable, active in environmental activities, and highly socially empathetic. To clarify the research results, the following table summarizes the research findings related to the improvement of students' social skills.

Table 1. Summary of Research Results on Improving the Social Skills of Students at SMAN 18 Bandung

Social Skills Indicators	Conditions Before the Literacy Program	Conditions After the Literacy Program	Change Description
Communication	Passive, lacking confidence	Dare to speak, actively participating in discussions	Significant improvement
Cooperation	Lacking involvement	Actively cooperating and appreciating the roles of	Improvement

Social Skills Indicators	Conditions Before the Literacy Program	Conditions After the Literacy Program	Change Description
	groups	friends	
Empathy	Lacking sensitivity towards friends	More caring, able to understand the feelings of others	Stable increase
Self-Control	Less able to control emotions	Calmer, able to regulate behavior	Increased
Social Involvement in the Community	Not very active	Active in neighborhood activities, mutual assistance, and committees	Increased
Student Perceptions (69% agree)	Did not feel any social benefits	Feel that literacy helps with public speaking and social interaction	Increased

These results further confirm that literacy programs have a real impact on the development of students' social skills. The data in the table shows changes not only in academic aspects, but also in students' daily behavior both at school and in the community. Improvements in communication skills, cooperation, and social involvement are indicators that consistent literacy activities can shape more positive social characters. Thus, literacy programs not only serve as activities to improve reading skills, but also as an effective means of fostering students' social intelligence, discipline, and sensitivity to their surroundings. These findings provide an important basis for schools to continue developing literacy activities as part of their student character building strategies.

Supporting and Hindering Factors

From the interviews, several supporting and hindering factors were identified. The main supporting factor in the successful implementation of the literacy program was the role of teachers as facilitators. Teachers provided guidance on students' potential, encouraged students to participate in various activities that added to their experience, and continued to assist students so that they could develop socially. Support from families and the community also contributes to the success of the program, as demonstrated by student involvement in community activities such as neighborhood association meetings, religious activities, and community service.

Another obstacle identified in this study was the lack of variety in books that students were interested in. Some students felt bored because the reading materials available were not interesting enough. This obstacle affected students' enthusiasm for participating in the literacy program. However, teachers continued to emphasize the importance of literacy as preparation for the future and tried to provide reading materials that were more relevant to students' interests.

Implementation of Literacy Programs for Students' Social Skills

Literacy programs at SMAN 18 Bandung are carried out routinely before classes begin. Every morning, students engage in 10 minutes of independent reading, then summarize the content of what they have read. On several occasions, students present their summaries in front of the class. This process aims to build reading habits while developing students' communication, critical thinking, and social interaction skills.

In general, the implementation of the literacy program takes place in four stages:

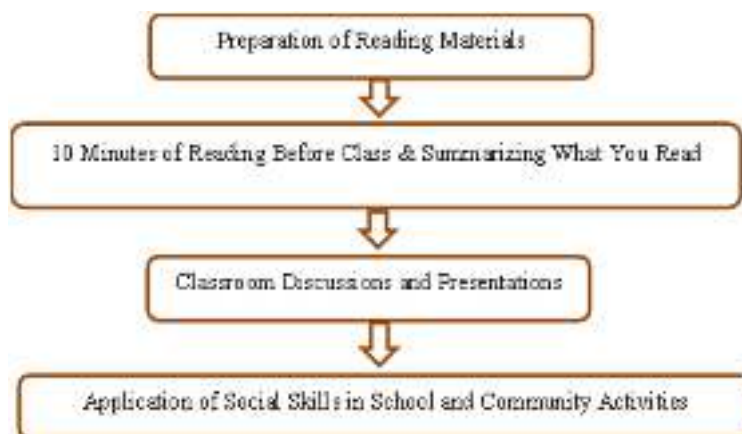


Figure 2. The Stages of Implementation of the Literacy Program

After going through this series of processes, it is clear that literacy programs not only form reading habits, but also serve as a means of strengthening students' social skills. The activities of reading, summarizing, and presenting the content of the reading material consistently provide space for students to interact, communicate, and work together more effectively. This process encourages students to develop self-confidence, critical thinking skills, and sensitivity to their social environment. In addition, structured literacy habits make students more prepared to participate in learning and better able to manage their emotions and behavior during learning activities. Thus, the literacy program not only has an impact on academic aspects but also makes a strong contribution to the formation of students' social character at SMAN 18 Bandung.

Discussion

Research findings show that the literacy program implemented at SMAN 18 Bandung has made a real contribution to improving students' social skills. This improvement can be seen from changes in student behavior in terms of communication, cooperation, empathy, and self-control after regularly participating in literacy activities. Survey data showing that 69% of students felt that the literacy program had benefited their speaking and interaction skills confirms that reading and summarizing activities not only have an impact on the cognitive domain, but also shape the social competencies needed in everyday life. This is in line with the results of observations and interviews, which show that students have become more confident when speaking in front of the class, more open to discussion, and able to respect their friends' opinions. These findings not only describe superficial changes but also reflect a profound transformation in the way students participate in the learning process, manage their emotions, and build social relationships.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the view that literacy is a social practice, not merely an academic activity. Through reading, summarizing, and presenting the content of what they have read, students engage in interpersonal communication processes that enable social interaction to develop. These activities require students to speak, listen, understand other people's perspectives, and adjust their behavior in a group context. Thus, the improvement in social skills found in this study is a logical consequence of the intensity of interaction and reflective activities in literacy programs. When viewed from a community education perspective, this participatory literacy practice is in line with the principles of experiential learning, in which

meaningful social interaction is a key factor in shaping students' character and interpersonal skills. Reading activities followed by class discussions and presentations provide a real environment for students to practice expressing ideas, responding to criticism, and building empathetic communication.

These findings are also consistent with previous studies. Nuraeni et al. (2025) confirmed that communication-based activities such as discussions and presentations have a significant effect on increasing students' self-confidence and social skills. In the context of this study, literacy activities not only encourage students to read independently, but also facilitate the process of sharing ideas through discussions and presentations of reading results. Through this process, students learn to manage their fear of speaking, communicate ideas clearly, and develop the ability to work with classmates. These skills are highly relevant to 21st-century learning needs, which emphasize collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Thus, the findings of this study reinforce the argument that dialogic literacy can enrich social competence while supporting the Pancasila learner profile, which emphasizes critical thinking and global diversity.

In addition, Susilawati, Rukanda, and Rakhman (2024) emphasize that group interaction in educational activities has an important influence on the formation of life skills, especially in collaboration and communication skills. The findings of this study reinforce this argument, as the literacy process at SMAN 18 Bandung places students in social situations that require them to listen to each other, exchange ideas, and work together to analyze the content of the reading material. The school and community environment, which also provides space for students to participate in various social activities, reinforces the positive impact of the literacy program on students' interpersonal development. This shows that the literacy program is in line with the existing social capital of students and the community, resulting in more stable and sustainable improvements in social skills.

Overall, this discussion confirms that structured literacy programs have a holistic impact on student development. Literacy is not only a means of improving intellectual abilities, but also a vehicle for shaping social character. The improvement in communication skills, empathy, teamwork, and discipline demonstrated by students indicates that literacy programs function effectively as a medium for social learning. With the support of teachers, families, and the community, literacy activities have great potential to be further developed as a strategic approach to shaping a generation that is intelligent, critical, and socially well-adjusted. In other words, the findings of this study position literacy as an educational instrument that not only hones academic skills but also builds students' social identity as individuals who are able to interact, collaborate, and make positive contributions in the school environment and the wider community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on the effect of literacy programs on the social skills of students at SMAN 18 Bandung, it can be concluded that literacy programs contribute significantly to the development of students' social skills. The implementation of literacy activities, which include independent reading, summarizing reading content, and conveying reading results through discussions and presentations, has been proven to improve students' communication, cooperation, empathy, and self-control. These findings are demonstrated by changes in student behavior, which has become more confident, more active in participating in discussions, and showing better cooperation skills in group activities.

In addition, the survey results show that most students feel the benefits of the literacy program in improving their speaking and social interaction skills. Qualitative findings from observations and interviews also reinforce that literacy programs not only have an impact on cognitive skill development, but also shape students' social character in their daily lives at school and in the community. Supporting factors such as the role of teachers, family support, and student involvement in community activities also contribute to the success of this program. Meanwhile, the lack of interesting reading materials is a challenge that needs to be addressed in the future development of the program.

Overall, this study shows that literacy programs are effective learning strategies not only for improving academic abilities, but also for building students' social competencies. These programs deserve to be further developed and strengthened as part of efforts to build character and develop the 21st-century skills needed by students.

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It is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of community education, particularly in relation to strengthening social skills through literacy programs in schools.

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