

Research Article

Efforts of the Head of Madrasah MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 in Improving Student Reading Literacy Based on AKMI Results in 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the efforts of the principal of MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3 to enhance students' competencies based on the 2023 Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) results. The AKMI outcomes revealed varied student achievements, with most categorized as "Competent" (CK 3), while some remained at the "Basic" (CK 2) level, particularly in reading and science literacy. Key challenges included limited resources such as reading materials and teaching aids. To address these gaps, the principal implemented various strategies, including the integration of the School Literacy Movement through reading corners, pre-lesson reading policies, and literacy-based learning optimization. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to analyze the 2023 AKMI results and the principal's strategic measures. This study highlights the critical role of school leadership in fostering literacy culture and student competencies to support the development of high-quality human resources.

Keywords: Student Competency Achievements; Akmi; Madrasah School

1. INTRODUCTION

MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 is one of the formal educational institutions established directly by K. Fathor Rahman in 1961. This institution has a long history as the first formal madrasah in East Gadu village, Ganding District. Its geographical location is very strategic, in the middle of residential areas and on the border of two villages, namely East Gadu Village and West Lenteng. This condition makes MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 the main choice for the surrounding community in sending their children to school. With a combination of a long history, strategic location, layout that supports comfortable learning, and adequate facilities, MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 continues to be committed to providing quality education for the younger generation. This makes MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 an educational institution that has an important role in educating the lives of the surrounding community. In supporting the achievement of educational goals, MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 has adequate facilities and infrastructure, starting from the design of the layout of the MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 building designed to support a comfortable learning process. The study rooms are placed in such a way that they do not face directly to the highway. This significantly reduces noise disturbances from motor vehicles and public vehicles, thereby creating a conducive learning atmosphere for students.

Since its inception, MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 has experienced several changes in the leadership of madrasah heads starting from Mr. H. Muriadi serving as the first madrasah head, who led from 1961 to 2007. In the 2007–2021 period, the leadership was continued by Mr. Amin Sukriadi. Furthermore, in 2022 until now, Mr. Farid is trusted to lead this madrasah. This is because one of the institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3, continues to develop and follows the policies that have become the decrees of the Ministry of Religion, including the implementation of the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) which is used as a new instrument in evaluating the education sector organized by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through the Directorate General of Islamic Education in 2021 (Hidayat & Hidayati, n.d., p. 2).

AKMI is a comprehensive assessment that aims to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in reading, numeracy, science, and socio-cultural literacy at the MI, MTs, and MA levels. Through the implementation of AKMI, the entire madrasah community is encouraged to change their mindset in strengthening the teaching and learning process by

focusing on developing critical thinking and reasoning skills. This approach aims to ensure that madrasah graduates have superior skills in solving scientific-based and humane problems (POS AKMI, 2023)

Based on the results of the 2023 Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) at MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3, it provides an overview of the madrasah profile, the achievement of student competencies collectively, and individual analysis based on the level of literacy achieved. Based on data, this madrasah consists of 11 students at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level from class V with the implementation of the assessment carried out in 2023. As a madrasah with a relatively small number of students, AKMI's results reflect the dynamics of diverse learning outcomes. In the aspect of reading literacy, most students have been able to access, interpret, and evaluate information from simple texts. This shows basic mastery of reading comprehension, especially in text accompanied by visual elements such as tables, graphs, or diagrams. However, students still need reinforcement to improve their ability to understand more complex texts, both in terms of structure and content. Reading literacy is one of the main focuses to be improved, because this competency serves as a foundation for other literacy development.

In numeracy literacy, the majority of students showed a good level of mastery by achieving the Cakap category (CK 3). They are able to solve mathematical problems through the application of relevant strategies. This competency includes number operations materials up to one million, calculation of fractions of value, number factors, to calculation of circumference and flat building area. In fact, there are students who have reached the Skilled category (CK 4), such as on behalf of Diana Alfahiroh, one of the AKMI peserta who showed extraordinary ability in solving numeracy problems. This is a potential that can be further developed through project-based learning activities or numeracy competitions. In science literacy, students also showed quite satisfactory achievements. Most students are in the Cakap (CK 3) category, where they are able to come up with hypotheses and evaluate simple scientific questions. However, the ability to reason and understand text-based science information still needs to be strengthened so that students can be more critical and analytical in evaluating information. Science literacy is an important aspect to support STEM-based learning (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) that is relevant to today's challenges.

Socio-cultural literacy is also one of the areas that shows good achievements. Students are able to apply the values of nationality, tolerance, and inclusion in a variety of contexts. However, some students in the Basic category (CK 2) showed that the ability to analyze and relate socio-cultural problems still needs to be improved. Learning that focuses on group discussions, case studies, or simulations of social problems can be an effective method to improve this competence. Individually, the majority of students are in the Cakap category (CK 3) for almost all types of literacy. However, there are several students who are still in the Basic category (CK 2), especially in reading literacy, science literacy, and socio-cultural literacy. On the contrary, the existence of students who have reached the Skilled category (CK 4), such as Diana Alfahiroh's on numeracy literacy, shows that the academic potential in this madrasah can be further improved with varied and interactive learning support. These results provide an idea that although MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3 students have shown good achievements in several aspects, there are areas that need more attention to support the development of their overall competencies. Optimizing literacy-based learning that is integrated in the curriculum is a strategic step to improve student achievement in the future.

In this context, based on the results of student achievements in the implementation of AKMI in 2023, the head of the madrasah has a very strategic role in improving the educational services needed by students as a basis for developing a policy to improve the competence of students at MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3. In addition, the head of the madrasah has a great responsibility in developing the quality of education in the institution he leads. The role of the head of the madrasah is very significant in supporting the growth and development of education, especially in an effort to improve human resources and student abilities. Madrasah heads together with teachers and other education personnel are required to continue to be active in improving professionalism, in order to access new knowledge to support a better teaching and learning process. (Wibowo & Subhan, 2020, p. 2).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subject, such as behavior, perception, motivation, action, and so on. This approach is carried out comprehensively (holistic) by describing the findings in the form of words and language, in accordance with certain natural contexts, and using methods that are also natural. This approach aims to provide a detailed overview of the results of AKMI 2023 and the efforts of the head of the MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3 madrasah in improving the competence of students.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dynamics of national education in Indonesia continue to undergo policy changes over time. Each change of stakeholders usually brings a new design for the national education system. Quoting *kompas.com*, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, revealed that the format of the National Examination (UN) will be replaced by a competency assessment. This policy, which is part of the Merdeka Learning program, is based on the results of hearings and agreements with various related parties, such as students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders in the field of education. Competency assessments are designed to provide opportunities for teachers to independently assess their students (Susanti *et al.*, 2022, p. 2).

Along with its development, the Competency Assessment policy has begun to be implemented by various ministries that have primary and secondary educational institutions, including the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. In order to support this policy, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs introduced an innovative step by designing a special competency assessment for madrasas under its auspices, which was later known as the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI). Starting in 2021, AKMI is a new instrument in evaluating the education sector organized by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through the Directorate General of Islamic Education (Hidayat & Hidayati, n.d., p. 2). AKMI is a form of national-scale assessment designed by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. This program is in line with the vision of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, which is to become a professional and reliable institution in building a pious, moderate, intelligent, and superior society in order to realize an advanced, sovereign, independent, and characterful Indonesia with the principle of mutual cooperation. In addition, AKMI also supports the six main missions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The existence of AKMI in the world of education, especially madrasas, is strengthened by the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2021 concerning National Assessment, which emphasizes the importance of improving the quality of the national education system in a sustainable manner.

This assessment serves as an initial assessment to evaluate students' strengths, weaknesses, and knowledge and skills before learning begins. Therefore, it is necessary to manage the appropriate assessment instruments in diagnostic tests so that the resulting diagnosis is also accurate. Through AKMI, diagnostic tests are carefully designed to achieve this goal. AKMI provides instruments to measure students' abilities in reading, numeracy, science, and socio-cultural literacy. Each type of literacy in AKMI is designed to measure general competencies, not competencies that are specific to specific subjects. (Ahmad Suryad, 2024 n.d., p. 3). The results of AKMI 2023 MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 show varying student competency achievements, with the majority at the "Cakap" level (CK 3), but there are still students at the "Basic" level (CK 2), especially in reading literacy and science literacy. The limitations of facilities such as reading books, teaching aids, and educational technology are the main obstacles in supporting literacy, numeracy, and science-based learning (AKMI Report 2023). These results provide an idea that although MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3 students have shown good achievements in several aspects, there are areas that need more attention to support the development of their overall competencies. Optimizing literacy-based learning that is integrated in the curriculum is a strategic step to improve student achievement in the future. From the results of AKMI 2023, the role of madrasah heads in improving student competence is very significant, because the leadership of madrasah heads has a great influence on the educational process in achieving the expected goals. One of the important contributions of madrasah heads is in encouraging a culture of reading and writing among students. When students have a love for reading activities, this can give birth to a generation that is intelligent and wise, as well as become an asset of quality human resources for the progress of the nation. In other words, reading is one of the main keys to improving the dignity and dignity of a country (Fatimah *et al.*, 2023; Kardi *et al.*, 2023).

One of the steps implemented by the head of the madrasah to improve the literacy culture is to require students to read books for 10-15 minutes before learning begins. This policy is part of a strategic effort that is expected to foster interest in reading, as well as understanding of texts among students, teachers, and the entire madrasah community. With this step, the madrasah strives to create a fun learning atmosphere, so that reading activities are no longer considered something boring or scary by students.

This is in line with the findings of Dasor *et al.* (2021), which stated that the development of literacy culture in madrasahs can create a friendly and fun learning environment. Reading is not only an academically beneficial activity, but also an entertaining experience for students, teachers, and all madrasah residents. In addition, reading routines that are integrated with daily activities in madrasahs are one of the effective forms of character education to build positive habits. Thus, this policy supports the vision of the head of the madrasah in making the madrasah an institution that inspires and educates through a strong literacy culture. In addition, in support of this policy, the head of the madrasah made a special place that was packed with the creation of a reading corner that provided various reading materials to be used as a learning resource. This area is designed so that students can read, borrow, or use books in their spare time, such as

between lessons, to foster their interest in reading as well as learning. The existence of a reading corner aims to encourage students to be more fond of reading by providing various types of reading, both fiction and non-fiction, that are tailored to the needs of students (Thahir *et al.*, 2021). So that their free time can be filled with useful reading activities. In addition, the reading corner is also expected to be able to improve students' literacy skills, both in reading and writing, and contribute to improving student competence.

The completeness of the reading corner itself includes bookshelves, bookcases, various reading collections, including textbooks and non-lessons, with an attractive reading corner design. The book collection in the reading corner is neatly arranged, and the cleanliness is always maintained by students under the guidance of the class teacher. Reading culture needs to be instilled from elementary school age through the use of reading corners. Activities in the reading corner are carried out for approximately 15 minutes before learning starts. At MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3, the use of the reading corner is carried out through several steps, namely: (1) designing the reading corner as attractive as possible; (2) compiling books regularly; and (3) providing story books and non-fiction books. The existence of a reading corner in the MIS Raudlatul Atfal 3 class has been proven to be able to increase students' interest in reading. With an attractive room appearance and a well-organized book collection, the reading corner can encourage students' interest in reading (Faradina, 2017; Kurniawan *et al.*, 2020). The reading corner also plays a role in motivating students to be more diligent in reading, developing critical thinking skills, bringing access to books closer to students so that they are more interested in reading, and supporting school libraries in instilling reading habits as part of their daily routines (Abid *et al.*, 2023; Adela, 2022).

A high interest in reading allows the learning process to be more meaningful without any pressure. Reading activities have a positive impact on improving students' skills and exploring creative ideas. The reading corner can be equipped with books that suit the needs of each grade level. This is in line with the opinion of Ramandanu (2019), who stated that a classroom reading corner is a place designed so that students can read easily and efficiently in time. The reading corner serves as a learning resource in the classroom or for reading and writing activities, which is designed to resemble a mini library garden that is easily accessible to students (Khasanah *et al.*, 2023, p. 6).

Reading interest is a strong source of motivation to analyze, remember, and evaluate the material that has been read. In addition, reading provides an enjoyable learning experience, which contributes to a person's intensity and direction in achieving their future goals. This process is also an important part of self-development, which needs to be continuously trained because the interest in reading is not something that is inherited naturally (Helena, 2020). Interest in reading is also a key element for the progress of a nation, because mastery of science and technology (IPTEK) can only be achieved through high reading habits, not just listening or listening (Khasanah *et al.*, 2023, p. 6). Based on the results of interviews with the head of the madrasah, the use of reading corners has a very important role in supporting the learning process in the classroom. This reading corner helps foster students' interest in reading and writing. Students often take advantage of the time before the lesson starts or during recess to read in the reading corner. Thus, they have more opportunities to read at any time.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, the existence of the Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI) at MIS Raudlatul Athfal 3 has provided an overview of diverse student competencies. The majority of students are in the "Proficient" category (CK 3), but there are a number of students in the "Basic" category (CK 2), especially in reading literacy and science literacy. The limitations of supporting facilities, such as reading books and teaching aids, are the main obstacles in learning. Madrasah heads play a strategic role in improving the literacy culture and competence of students. The strategies implemented include the integration of the School Literacy Movement, the optimization of the reading corner, and the reading policy before learning begins. The implementation of the reading corner has proven to be effective in increasing students' interest in reading, encouraging critical thinking, and supporting literacy-based learning. Optimizing literacy-based learning that is integrated with the curriculum is a strategic step to support the development of student competencies as a whole. The active leadership role of the head of the madrasah together with teachers and other education personnel is very important to create an inclusive and quality learning environment, in order to produce superior and competitive graduates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the STKIP PGRI Sumenep Campus and the supervisors who have helped complete this final project.

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