

## Improving Reading Skills Through Our "Kacakarya" Reading We Create Using a Montessori Approach

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### Abstract

The low reading abilities and skills of children have become an important reason to improve reading literacy among children in Kampung Gunung Bakti Rt 04, Desa Cihanjawa. The low level of education in the community, dominated by graduates of elementary school, is one of the factors causing a lack of awareness among parents in providing guidance to their children about the importance of developing reading habits from an early age. Reading can be a support for achieving educational goals in Indonesia and should be made a routine daily activity. Reading literacy is a process that involves the ability to read, comprehend and analyze various information obtained to solve problems that arise in daily life with the aim of improving the quality of life. This community service aims to improve the reading literacy abilities and skills, with a focus on improving children's reading abilities. The service used a collaborative Participatory Action Research (PAR) design. The author collaborated with the managers of MI Al-Barokah and Rumah Belajar Muttaqin located in Kampung Gunung Bakti Rt 04, Desa Cihanjawa. The research results showed a 60% increase in children's reading abilities. The improvement of reading literacy skills requires support from all parties to further increase the success.

**Keywords:** Low reading abilities, Reading literacy, Cihanjawa Village

### INTRODUCTION

To improve the ability and reading skills of grade III MI Al-Barokah students, teachers are expected to have the ability and skills in choosing models, media and methods to be used for children must use the right learning approach. The approach in learning, especially reading, is more emphasized on the communicative approach, namely the performance of using good and correct Indonesian to communicate. To read it yourself using the Montessori approach. The Montessori approach was one of the approaches chosen to be implemented. The Montessori method was invented by a female character named Maria Montessori. The theory of child development is as the basis of the Montessori method. The Montessori method is a method applied to children who are in low grades, this method is part of the development of educational theories accompanied by theories of child development. This method emphasizes more on the activities shown by children with the help of materials or tools designed and emphasizes the process of adapting the child's learning environment according to their level of development. Montessori states that education should run according to the development of children based on a certain age by paying attention to the individual development of children (Agustin, 2020).

In Purwakarta Regency, precisely in Cihanjawa Village, it is one of 14 villages in the Bojong area, Gunung Bakti Village, which is an area near Mount Burangrang which is a mountainous area far from urban areas and precisely located in villages with diverse communities. Starting from the diversity of education levels, professions, characters, economic, social conditions and others (Mustofa & Fajar, 2022). Cihanjawa Village itself, especially Gunung Bakti Village which is located on Rt 04 which is surrounded by other villages such as, Pasir Banteng Village and Babakan Petey Village. The majority of people in Gunung Bakti Village work as farmers totaling 302 people, judging from the level of education, the Gunung Bakti community is still relatively low, there are still many who only graduated from

elementary school with a total of 588 people. Some community members in Gunung Bakti Village have poor knowledge and awareness in terms of children's education, especially in terms of reading, lack of attention given by their parents at home or by the surrounding environment in terms of education. In fact, there are several children in MI Al-Barokah school, especially grade III who cannot read at all and only know a few letters of the alphabet, even though reading is a necessity of life for humans and especially the most important in terms of living their lives (Herdiawan, 2022). This problem occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic which had hit 2 years ago whose learning was at home so that children were less controlled, especially in terms of reading so that when they were in third grade there were still those who could not read. Although some of the children still cannot read but in terms of writing are quite proficient and when talking about reciting children are already proficient because in their daily lives, children use their time by reciting in five times, so that children in the skills of reading the Quran or reciting do not need to be doubted, but still lacking in terms of education especially reading literacy. This is one of the reasons for the importance of literacy, especially reading literacy in children because reading can support the success of educational goals in Indonesia which must be made a daily routine activity. (Syarif, 2020)

From several previous studies showing low interest in reading, interest in reading is the tendency of a person's soul deeply which is characterized by feelings of pleasure and a strong desire to read without any coercion. . As for what shows the low interest in reading that occurs in Indonesian society where out of 1000 people, only one person likes to read. (Hudhana, (2020). Furthermore, Anies Baswedan quoted by Qoniah in his journal said that the significant increase in literacy participation in Indonesia was not then accompanied by the growth of reading culture. . (Wulanjani, 2019)(Qoni'ah, 2020)The results of a UNESCO survey that highlighted that Indonesians' reading interest was ranked 38th out of 39 countries studied, support this as well. (Kasiyun, 20115). A UNESCO study in March 2016 revealed that Indonesia was ranked 60 out of 61 countries with low reading interest. (Putri Pradana, 2020) . Indonesia's reading ability points decreased from 397 in 2015 to 371 in 2018 according to another survey data provided by Subakti in the Program for The International Assessment. (Subakt, 2020).

According to its etymology, "literacy" refers to literacy, that is, the ability to write and read a person. The word "literacy" itself comes from the Latin word "literatus" which means learner. According to KBBI, literacy is defined as a person's ability to communicate in a language, which includes the ability to read, write, speak, count, and solve problems efficiently, creatively, and ingenuously at the level of proficiency needed in everyday life. (Rohim, 2020).

The ability to read, dig deeper, and analyze various information collected to solve problems that arise in everyday life is a stage in literacy culture, according to Widayanto quoted by Suryadi in his journal. This stage seeks to improve the quality of life. (Suryadi, 2021).

Nurchaili further underlined that literacy culture is an ingrained culture that must be adopted. (Setyowati, 2018) . "Read it if you want to know the world," advised Pramoedya Ananta Toer. And write if you want to be known to the world. The remarks underscore the importance of constant reading to broaden our perspective on the world. Books may be our main source of guidance. Learn something that will benefit the surrounding environment. As a result, the more books we study, the more comprehensive our understanding becomes (Muslimin., 2018). Reading will help us get out of the depths of ignorance, especially the poverty of knowledge. The significance of this literacy will have an impact on children's ability and success in understanding a text.

The purpose of this service is to improve the ability and skills of reading literacy where the main focus is to improve reading skills in children. So, to follow up on this problem, the author is determined to conduct research to the community with the aim of improving reading literacy skills, which mainly focuses on increasing interest in reading in children. The author

collaborated with "MI Al-Barokah" in Cihanjavarhususnya Village on Rt 04. The existence of MI Al-Barokah in Cihanjavar Village is a supporting means in improving reading literacy in Cihanjavarhususnya Village Rt 04. MI Al-Barokah itself has 99 students with a total of 6 classes in each class, some of whom cannot read, approximately 30 percent who cannot read and the rest are already proficient and some are not fluent in reading. In addition to collaborating with MI Al-Barokah, the author also collaborates with a flagship program created by KPM Group 04 Gunung Bakti students, namely the Muttaqien Learning House which provides special learning for children who cannot be calistung generally for all of them, where this superior program can help individual programs which can later become sustainable programs by empowering the community, especially teenagers in the mountain village of Bakti Rt 04. Thus, the author took the initiative to conduct research to the community in improving reading literacy in collaboration with the Muttaqien Learning house, where the author will facilitate and hold several reading literacies programs with a structured schedule for one month through Literacy "KACAKARYA" Kami membaCA Kami berkaRYA.

## METHOD

This community service activity uses Participatory Action Research (PAR) design which is collaborative, practical, and involves others. (Tabroni & Purnamasari, 2022). By using descriptive statistical methods, the author tries to provide a clearer picture of the success rate of the Research program to be run. As for the research conducted, the author collaborated with the manager of the Muttaqien Learning House. The following are the stages carried out in this study using the PDCA model.



**Figure 1.** Stages of Research

1. Plan. The author makes observations first after that looking at the problem which is then analyzed more deeply by observing the problems that occur through interviews with teachers and students and documentation carried out to teachers, the target of service, especially to students, especially the manager of MI Al-Barokah who will be a collaborator in this research activity. At this stage, the author also discusses with the manager of MI Al-Barokah about the solutions to be offered and formulates a schedule of activities and programs that will be carried out for the next month with the manager of MI Al-Barokah
2. Do. At this stage, before the implementation of the action, the author first conducted trials on students, especially grade III students using the Montessori approach. Broadly speaking, research actions to improve reading literacy skills include "KACAKARYA", namely KAmimembaCAKAmiberkaRYA, which of course this activity is carried out while still paying attention to the regulations set by the school.
3. Check. At this stage, the author made direct observations about the changes that occurred

during this program during 9 meetings and recorded other actions needed. In measuring the improvement of reading skills, the author uses learning media in BetukMading which includes the work of MI grade III students and reads it using a Montessori approach.

4. Act. At this stage, the author records the success of the actions that have been carried out little by little.

The purpose of this activity is to improve the ability and skills of reading literacy in children with the main focus of improving reading skills through "KACAKARYA". This study will be conducted for 4 weeks in February 2023. The target of this study is 25 children of elementary / MI grade III age.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

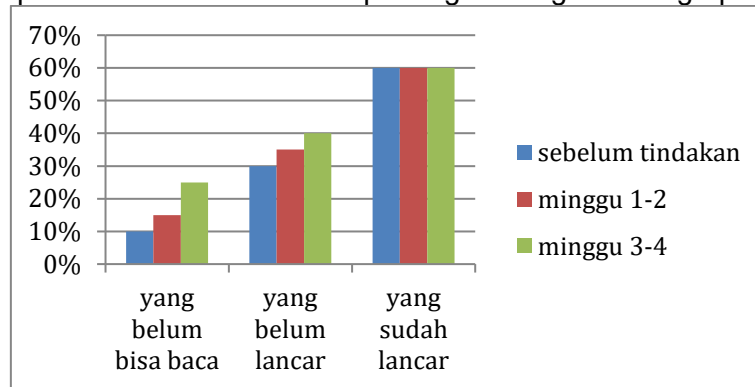
Based on the results of interviews with several teachers at MI Al-Barokah, it shows that especially in school children the elementary / MI level is still relatively low. This is explained by several factors that affect the low ability to read in children. These factors are: 1). Limitations of schools in implementing literacy programs since the implementation of online learning 2). Lack of supervision and awareness of parents of the importance of their role in helping to improve reading skills in children. In addition, based on interviews that the author conducted with teachers that their daily activities are used for recitation. Actually, they know the importance of reading, but because they are not familiar, so this is one of the factors causing low interest or motivation in reading. Thus, it is necessary to increase children's interest in reading or reading literacy culture as a solution to the problems that occur in children in Cihanjawa Village, especially in Gunung Bakti Rt 04 village. This is in line with what Anies Baswedan said on an occasion who said that literacy is a skill that must be possessed by every Indonesian nation in the 21st century. (Alfarikh, 2017).

Reading is an exercise used to infer the meaning of material that has been read, either explicitly or implicitly, and is associated with the reader's experience in reading (Vita, 2020). Children engage in reading-by-reading books of their choice, both fiction and nonfiction. There are several media, methods or models used. In this program the author uses the Montessori method approach, the Montessori Method is a child education approach developed based on Montessori theory and arranged in accordance with the understanding of child development. The most obvious feature of this approach is that it emphasizes the activities produced by the child by emphasizing the process of adaptation to the child's learning environment, which is formed according to the child's stage of development and uses physical activity to absorb learning concepts and develop practical skills.

This paper seeks to explain how the Montessori approach improves pre-reading skills. for the media itself using the mading media "KACAKARYA" and for the model itself using the reading model carried out, among others: 1) Read aloud both from fiction and nonfiction books of his choice but mostly use nonfiction books. Children will be asked to share their reading results in the form of their work rewriting what they read into origami paper to become a work in mading, this activity is carried out after completing the reading process. The author ascertains how well the ability and ability of children in understanding the meaning of the contents of the book that has been read.

Based on the results of observations, it was proven that there was an increase in children's reading ability from week to week even though little by little, where before the action was taken, 10% could not read, 30% were not fluent and 60% were fluent in reading. And in weeks 1 and 2 it starts to increase to 15% and the non-current ones to 35%, and in the 3rd and 4th weeks it increases to 25% and the non-current ones to 40%. The test itself is carried out by the way the children of one person one person come forward for a reading test with the reading material that has been provided after testing the author to know the child's ability to what extent. For indicators of the child's own skills can be seen with the child being able to

read the book provided after that the child is able to write back what is read into origami paper. Below the author presents the success of improving reading skills in graphic form.



**Figure 2.** Graph of Improvement in Children's Reading Ability



**Figure 3.** Reading silently



**Figure 4.** Guided Reading

In addition, success is also seen from his work skills not only seen from his reading literacy, starting from the 3rd week the children provide project materials for literacy mading, after that they write the results of what they read in the previous week into origami paper and decorated as skillfully as possible, after decorating and coloring the origami paper is pasted on cardboard that has been adapted to origami paper. In week 4 the children began to attach their work to the mading that had been provided. It is clear that even in terms of skills they managed to improve compared to before.



**Figure 5.** The process of creating a masterpiece



**Figure 6.** Pasting process



**Figure 7.** Works

In the program that has been carried out, through various observations periodically that the program has been able to provide added value for the people of Gunung Bakti Rt 04 village, especially MI Al-Barokah. Especially in improving children's abilities and skills towards reading literacy. It is proven that there is a significant increase in reading, so that in the future it can be assisted in its development and can be improved again. In this activity there are still many shortcomings including, books are not available with many there are only a few books

available, especially with the library there is no even a reading corner. And there are only nonfiction books, it is also limited. And that is also a factor in children lacking interest in reading because of the absence of available facilities. In addition, the role of parents at home is also very important in reminding their children to get used to reading.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the description that the author has described above, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. In improving the ability and skills of reading literacy is carried out through the "KACAKARYA" program, namely KAmimembaCAKAmiberkaRYA.
2. There was an increase in reading skills in the people of Kampung Gunung Bakti Rt 04 Cihanjavar village with a percentage before the action of 10%, then increased in weeks 1-2 by 15%, and increased again in weeks 3-4 by 25%.
3. There is an increase in children's reading ability from before the action to after the action as evidenced by observation. Where before the action is done, children read books just reading sentence by sentence without understanding what they have read and without being able to interpret what is contained in the book read. In addition, children are still weak in remembering what has just been read. However, after the action is carried out there is an increase in the child's ability to interpret what has been read, both implied and expressed, the child can retell orally about the results of the reading, and the increase in reading intensity in children seen from the increase in the number of books read from week to week.
4. There is an increase in the ability to work as evidenced by observations. Where in the 3rd week the children are very enthusiastic in working even they are very happy when told to work even sometimes they themselves ask to work, for example drawing and they are very enthusiastic about following the learning. When they were told to bring equipment to work, they all brought it. After that they were asked to write down what they read last week to be re-divorced and written on origami paper that had been provided and decorated according to what they wanted according to their abilities. Then, at the next meetings, precisely in week 4, the children's writing skills have begun to show changes for the better. It can be seen when they can complete their tasks in the last week very well and skillfully, after that they stick them on the mading that has been provided before, and the results are very good and creative.
5. Children have begun to have critical thinking after actions such as being able to ask questions and opinions when discussing, children can convey moral messages from books that have been read, children can coordinate these moral messages into everyday life so that indirectly children can learn how to solve a problem.
6. In this research activity, the advantage is that children are able to work freely because mading has been provided for those who want to pour their work, the availability of Montessori method facilities that were previously used only need to continue it. However, the drawback is that there is no adequate storage place for books or bookshelves even the library is also not there so that they are difficult to read and find books to read.
7. There needs to be full support from various parties, both village governments and parents so that children's reading literacy skills can continue to be improved and followed up, especially for children who have the potential to read and work so that they can be developed again.
8. Of course, this research is not completely perfect, so the author hopes that researchers and devotees can further provide maximum research through more interesting reading literacy programs such as by holding storytelling competitions, and others.

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