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Creativity and Literacy Development in the Islamic Elementary School

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ABSTRACT: Creativity and literacy are two essential things in the digital age. This study aims to determine the development of creativity and literacy in the integrated Islamic elementary school. Research results indicate that Islamic schools have many programs to build their students' creativity and literacy. This program is conducted in the learning process and extracurriculars. Teachers give opportunities to express students' idea to develop their creativity. Habituation is chosen to cultivate students' literacy skill. The learning process in this school focuses on the ability in producing creative thinking, accommodating the students' needs and interest based on literacy development, and also directing the reading and writing process through four applied languages: Indonesian, Javanese, English, and Arabic.

1 INSTRUCTIONS

Education provides abilities and skills for students' life. Digital era contributes to a variety of learning resources for students. Information can be obtained anywhere, but the process still returns to the user. Computers can process information accurately by programs that have been implemented, but they could not make innovation outside the programs.

The shift of human involvement in information processing by technology is inevitable. Nevertheless, there are still human abilities that cannot be imitated or replaced by machines and technology. Being a creative person becomes the most relevant offer with the emergence of various problems. Creativity is expected to be a useful solution for solving problems, as Sanjaya (2013) states that knowledge is considered accurate when it is useful for dealing with and solving problems or phenomena that arise.

Our world is changing. Every day we face so many issues. Problems emerge in wide range area such as environmental crisis, economy, population, food, human right and others. We could not avoid problems. Every day human fight various issues and need innovation to deal with them. Creativity offers solutions for it. This skill enables humans to find combinations and possibilities to find a way regarding the various problems. Creativity reduces human anxiety to complete a task. New ideas provide motivation to solve problems. Hemingway effect mentions that motivation to complete a task which was previously failed to be completed would be higher the closer that person perceives where

he/she was in finishing that task (Oyama, Yoshinori, et al., 2018). Bigger motivation encourages people to overcome a problem. Moreover, this skill is highly recommended to bring new formula to overcome new issues. When machine is stuck to solve the last year's problems, human can modify, create new ideas to the newest situation by using this skill: creativity.

If creativity is related to how human is trained to process information, then there is another fundamental skill that is needed. Before processing the data, we firstly need the ability to obtain the data. The more information we obtain, the more innovative the idea will be. The seed of creativity is grown by collecting the right information. ⁶ gather the information, literacy is the most important. Literacy has a whole meaning. Literacy can be interpreted as the ability to access, understand, and use something intelligently through various activities, including reading, seeing, listening, writing, and speaking (Faizah et al., 2016).

Previous study shows that students relied much more on copying and paraphrasing content (Killi, Charita et al., 2020). It shows that students' literacy is low. They could not combine information and just repeat the sentences. This condition also happens in Indonesia. Students show low ability in literacy and creativity. Looking at Indonesia's literacy ability index, in which it is ranked in the 64th position out of 72 countries (Ministry of Education, 2016), the government has launched a program known as the literacy movement. This movement targets various layers in many environments. Schools, as formal educational institutions, receive special attention. Through the school literacy movement, the Indonesian Ministry of Education hopes to increase students' literacy ability.

Fun schools shape children's creativity.⁹ Davies (2013) mentions that some situation may encourage children's creativity, they are: flexible use of space and time, availability of appropriate materials, working outside the classroom, 'playful', respectfulness between teachers and learners, opportunities for peer collaboration, partnerships with outside agencies, awareness of learners' needs, and non-prescriptive planning.

Today, Islamic schools are popular in Indonesia. They promised the balancing of knowledge and religious learning process for their students. Despite of religious value, Islamic elementary schools must provide life skills such ⁴, literacy and creativity. This is very important to ensure adequate quality of learning to support students' lives in the future. Providing skills needed in the future should not be missed in the elementary school.

To observe the development of creativity and literacy, we conducted a study on "the development of creativity and literacy in Islamic Elementary school"

2 METHOD¹

The study was conducted at an Islamic elementary school in Pacitan. The data are collected for one semester in the 2019/2020 school year. The research subjects were the principal, teachers, students and library staff. The object of the research is the development of creativity and literacy. Data collection uses documentation, observation, and interviews to support observational data (Bungin, 2010).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to all the research subjects. The questions have been arranged according to the research objectives and developed in the field according to the needs. In addition to interviews, data collection is done by conducting observations. Observations were made to see the activities in the school. Activities observed were of two kinds, namely when learning took place and other activities outside of learning. Observation guide sheets are arranged to facilitate observations when collecting the data.

Data retrieval was also conducted by searching for documentation. Supporting documents can be in the form of achievement records, schedules, activity reports, activity proposals and so forth. All data were then matched to determine the validity of the data. If the data collected were not synchronous, then data retrieval was carried out. There are four very important stages that are interrelated in a research, namely: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification (Sugiyono, 2018). The data that had been collected were analyzed and presented descriptively.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1.1 provides the data based on the implemented research, obtained data regarding the development of students' creativity and literacy in Islamic Elementary School.

Table 1.1. Literacy Program.

No	Activities	Executor
1	Wall Magazine	School Library
2	Book Review	School Library
3	Providing Books	School Library
4	Fifteen Minutes Reading in One Day	Classroom Teacher
5	One Book for One Child	School Library
6	Reading Challenge and Rewarding	School Library
7	Literacy Competition	School Library
8	Express Class	Extracurricular's Teacher
9	30 Minutes Reading (Arabic)	Classroom Teacher

All of the items above have been implemented. All programs are run under the school library instruction.

Table 1.2 Learning Process in the Classroom

No	Activities	Observed	
		Yes	No
1	Providing chances to ask questions	✓	
2	Providing chances to share ideas	✓	
3	Encouraging students to explore learning materials	✓	
4	Recalling memories	✓	
5	Not allowing students to discuss		✓
6	Intimidating		✓
7	Appreciating	✓	
8	Telling stories	✓	

Extracurricular is held by professionals on Friday and Saturday, namely: swimming, expression, martial arts, anchoring, soccer, volleyball, painting, mathematics and science, family skills, English club, scout and quark. Four languages are given in the school, namely: Indonesian, Arabic, Javanese and English. All of them are used orally and in written form.

The results of the study are further explained separately in terms of the development of creativity and student literacy.

3.1 Creativity

The development of student creativity is carried out holistically both inside and outside the classroom. Creativity is developed both in terms of creative thinking skills and creating a product. Students practice their creative thinking skills while the learning process is

taking place. In fostering these skills, the atmosphere and classroom management are well designed.

Classrooms are designed to form the letter "U" facing the whiteboard and the teacher's desk in groups. This seating arrangement makes it easy for students to discuss and mobilize themselves. The learning process is designed to foster a variety of higher-order thinking skills, including creative thinking skills by using a student-centered learning approach, and the cooperative method seems to be more dominantly used.

The use of cooperative method is one of the best ways to develop active and effective learning (Silberman, 2007). This method allows students to develop their potential to the fullest by focusing on group and individual development. Slavin (2005) states that cooperative learning has a significant effect on student learning if groups are valued based on the individual learning of each member.

Teacher gives individual and group awards as a facilitator in the learning process. On each occasion, the teacher patiently provides opportunities for students to express their opinions or ask questions. The teacher has a personal relationship with all students and always shows a positive attitude in learning. Allman et al. (2010) state that a positive attitude is a powerful tool that can increase enthusiasm, increase self-esteem, and create an atmosphere conducive to learning. In all learning sessions, the teacher links the material to the students' daily lives.

Contextual learning provides understanding following the conditions experienced by students. The teacher does the four basic building blocks of creative thinking skills, namely associating, asking, observing, and trying. Nurlaela (2015) explains that developing creative thinking skills are divided into four pillars, known as the scientific approach components. Associating is the skill of connecting several perspectives from a variety of different disciplines to form creative ideas. Asking questions is an activity that raises a series of questions that are formulated to get new ideas. Observing is defined as the ability to make observations and the sharpness of missing opportunities to develop innovation behind it, while trying is students' activity of doing repeated experiments for something they want to know until they find an answer to their question.

The researcher observes a high tolerance for differences of opinion during the learning process. Motivation is given to students who could not reach the learning objectives, as Maltase et al (2018) mentions that failure can be used for learning and training for perseverance. Learning is carried out by giving the broadest possible thinking space for students. Yusuf (2013) states that in order to develop children's reasoning and creativity, children need to be given opportunities to ask questions, argue, or assess (give criticism) about various things related to learning, or events that occur in their environment. Different learning methods can be applied to develop creativity (Bezanilla et al, 2019). Therefore, giving students freedom and comfort to study is an important aspect.

Through the use of learning media, teacher provokes students' curiosity. This curiosity arises in the form of questions and guesses that the students present to the teacher and their classmates. High curiosity is the hallmark of a creative thinker. It is because they need to retrieve information from many different sources (Adair, 2008).

In the middle of the learning process, students are allowed to show some ice-breaking for refreshments. Maintaining brain fitness through some activities is very important to get creative ideas and smart thoughts in understanding or solving problems (Sudarma, 2013). Various other developments adjust the talents and interests of students outside the classroom.

Outside the classroom, the teacher develops creativity through various elective extracurricular programs. There are 12 types of extras offered to students, namely: swimming,

expression, martial arts, archery, football, volleyball, painting, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences, KK, English Club, Scouting, and KUARK. Students are directed to pursue activities that interest them. Extracurricular activities are guided directly by experts and practitioners in their respective fields. This program is given to foster students' creativity in various fields according to their interests and talents.

It is observable through the indicators of student creativity in various fields and from the many achievements in the field of creativity. Throughout 2018, there were 37 achievements recorded in various fields, including writing, coloring, singing, swimming, drawing, musabaqoh hifdzil Quran, and others.

3.2 Literacy

In the literacy movement guidebook published by the Ministry of Education, there are at least six types of literacy. In this Islamic school, the development of literacy skills focuses on reading and writing. Development is chosen based on the level of urgency. Without fluency in reading and writing, learning is not correctly applied. Literacy reading is essential, as mentioned by Sutejo (2009) that the tradition of reading and writing is the essential means in the learning process.

Of the ten qualities set at school, two points indicate attention to the development of literacy skills at school, namely, point 5 that is fond of reading and point 9 on reading the Qur'an. Literacy in the reading area was developed, not only covering Indonesian as the official language of education. Four kinds of languages become the focused attention of schools, namely: Javanese, Indonesian, English, and Arabic.

Based on the school literacy movement guidebook issued by the Ministry of Education, there are five targets for achieving school literacy (Faizah, 2016). From the observation, research indicated that they found all participants fun and friendly. All school members show empathy, care, and respect for others, foster a spirit of curiosity and love of knowledge, enable citizens to be able to communicate and contribute to the social environment and accommodate school community participation and external environment.

The development of student literacy skills is accessible at the school library. By reading for 27 weeks and on interventions, students' capacity in literacy is proven to increase (Mesa, Carol et al, 2020). The school has designed and implemented eight types of program focal points regarding literacy, which are bulletin boards, book reviews, book reading, fifteen minutes reading in one-day program, one book for one child, reading challenges and reading awards, visiting the regional library, and holding competitions. Literacy includes reading, storytelling, and poetry.

Some competitions provide opportunities for class representatives to deal with other classes. Teachers sometimes send students with low literacy skills to represent their class. This action is carried out in the hope that it can foster student motivation and enthusiasm to be more active and love literacy activities. This strategy is proven to increase the confidence, motivation, and enthusiasm of students who have low literacy abilities.

Coordination between class teachers and library staff is well established so that the programs planned can be well-implemented. Through coaching classrooms by teachers, students' need for reading awareness can be significantly built. Reading corner is a facility that is available because of students' awareness of getting used to reading books. Then, the students take turns in reading their books with their peers. Student confidence grows with encouragement and trust given by the teacher. Treating all school members with respect becomes an integral part of shaping literacy abilities in schools (Routman, 2012).

Reading habit is not only formed at school. At home, students are encouraged to practice reading. Students who have completed the story will have to present it in class. Some students are asked to take turns in telling stories in front of the class before the learning begins. The teacher and students give appreciation to the story that is delivered from the students' reading results. The students' literacy ability is observable from the smoothness of the presented stories as Kern (2000) argues that literacy is not only about knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, but also about textual organizational knowledge beyond sentence level, genre knowledge, as well as an oral and written language. By reading those books, children will also get character value (Ardhyantama).

With limited space, the school library provides a variety of reading resources that are popular among students. The library functionaries then take the initiative to schedule a visit for the students in a week. This limitation makes the students impatient to wait for the day of their visit.

Based on the explanation, it is seen that the literacy development in Islamic elementary school is following the basic principles of developing the Ministry of Education's literacy movement. The five basic principles that apply are: holistic, integrated, sustainable, contextual, and responsive to local wisdom (Saryono et al., 2017).

4 CONCLUSIONS

The research results on the development of creativity and literacy in Islamic elementary school found that students' creativity is developed during the learning process and extra-curricular activities. Two types of creativity are developed, namely creative thinking and carrying out creative activities or making creative products. The creativity development based on the talents and student interests is accommodated in extracurricular activities guided directly by experts in their fields.

The seriousness of the school in developing students' literacy skills is observable from the compiled quality assurance. The library department manages the development of student literacy skills in schools. This department coordinates with related parties. The focus of literacy developed is limited to literacy reading and writing in four languages, namely Indonesian, Arabic, Javanese, and English.

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