



Library Strategy in Improving Islamic Literacy Culture in MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategies the MT Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember library applied to improve the culture of Islamic literacy among students. Using a qualitative approach through case studies, data is collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of the study show that the strategies implemented by the school library include the formation of a School Literacy Team, collaboration with PERPUSDA Jember, the provision of motivational words, the procurement of school wall magazines, the awarding of awards to active students, and the provision of reading corners. These strategies have proven effective in increasing students' interest in reading and understanding Islamic materials and encouraging the development of their literacy skills in both academic and non-academic contexts. In addition, this study found that collaboration with external institutions and awards are important factors in increasing student participation in literacy activities. This study concludes that libraries play a crucial role in fostering a strong Islamic literacy culture in schools, which can enhance the quality of education and students' character. It is recommended that libraries continue to develop digital resources and increase students' awareness of the benefits of Islamic literacy, thereby supporting more effective learning.

Keywords: Library Strategy, Islamic Literacy Culture, MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren.

Introduction

School libraries, as one of the primary sources of information in schools, significantly impact the learning process. Therefore, libraries play a strategic role in improving Islamic literacy among school teachers and students. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, libraries are considered a vital source of education, encompassing all elements essential for its implementation, including educational personnel, the community, funds, facilities, and school infrastructure. This law highlights the crucial role of libraries in supporting education in Indonesia (Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20, 2003).

Libraries are the heart of an institution, whether a university, educational institution, or other organization. Today's libraries are not only repositories for storing and searching books, but also rich and varied sources of information. Various information can be found in libraries, including scientific and semi-scientific sources and materials related to history and other fields. University libraries and specialized libraries tend to provide more scientific information. In contrast, public libraries offer a broader range of semi-scientific and popular information, encompassing various materials, including fictional stories and historical facts (Zielinski, 2018).

To improve Islamic literacy among students, educational institutions must provide innovative learning environments and spaces that support a deeper understanding of the Islamic religion. In this context, the role of school libraries is becoming increasingly important because libraries have great potential to disseminate information that can enrich students' knowledge of Islam. Islamic literacy encompasses reading religious texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, and understanding and applying Islamic values in daily life (Ismail & Rahman, 2020).

Literacy, in a broader sense, is the ability to understand and apply the information read, whether it is information in the form of religious texts or general knowledge related to life. A literacy culture instilled in students early on significantly impacts the quality of their academic success, both in school and in society. In addition, literacy also plays a role in enriching students' insights that are beneficial for their social life processes (Sari & Widodo, 2019).

In this case, the application of Islamic literacy culture in the world of education in Indonesia, especially at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember, still has considerable room for improvement. Currently, the library strategy in schools for implementing Islamic literacy culture is minimal and needs further development. Therefore, school libraries must develop effective strategies to foster a literacy culture among students.

The MT Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember Library has its characteristics and attractions that distinguish it from formal institutions at the Aliyah/high school level. This library boasts a diverse collection, comprising approximately 3,000 titles of reading materials, ranging from novels and comics to magazines, newspapers, and reference books. This diverse collection enriches students' knowledge of various fields and promotes Islamic values crucial for supporting the development of an Islamic literacy culture among students. The collaboration with publisher Erlangga, which began in 2021, has also significantly contributed to improving the quality of reading materials available in this library. This demonstrates that libraries strategically introduce students to a comprehensive and applicable Islamic literacy culture in their daily lives.

Literature Review

To understand the strategy of improving Islamic literacy culture in schools, it is essential to examine several key theoretical frameworks that inform this study. These theories provide a foundation for understanding the role of libraries in enhancing Islamic literacy and the broader cultural and educational dynamics that influence the development of literacy skills among students. Below are some of the relevant theories and concepts that will inform this study:

Literacy Theory

As defined by UNESCO, literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. This theory extends beyond the ability to read and write; it also involves the capacity to use literacy skills to access, evaluate, and engage with information in meaningful ways (UNESCO, 2004). In Islamic literacy, literacy is not only about understanding religious texts such as the Qur'an and Hadith, but also about applying Islamic values and teachings in everyday life. Libraries in educational institutions play a crucial role in promoting this form of literacy by providing students with access to Islamic resources and creating an environment that encourages the exploration of Islamic teachings.

Islamic Literacy Theory

Islamic literacy refers to reading, understanding, and applying Islamic knowledge in daily life. This concept encompasses both traditional literacy skills, such as reading the Qur'an and Hadith, and broader cognitive abilities, including critical thinking and reflection on Islamic teachings. According to al-Faruqi (2004), Islamic literacy is a multifaceted concept that encompasses spiritual, intellectual, and ethical dimensions. It involves not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the cultivation of wisdom that aligns with Islamic principles. As a learning center, the library serves as a platform for disseminating Islamic knowledge, enabling students to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings and apply them in real-world situations.

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivist learning theory, as articulated by Piaget (1973) and Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing their understanding of the world through experiences and interactions with their environment. In the context of Islamic literacy, constructivism suggests that students do not passively absorb information but actively engage with it, reflecting on and interpreting the teachings of Islam in light of their own experiences. The library's role in a constructivist classroom is to provide students with diverse materials and resources that promote independent learning and critical thinking, fostering a deeper understanding of Islamic values and practices.

Library and Information Science Theory

Library and information science theory explores how libraries function as centers of learning and knowledge dissemination. Theories in this field emphasize the importance of library strategies in improving access to information, facilitating learning, and promoting literacy. According to the American Library Association (2007), libraries are essential educational institutions that provide students with the tools and resources needed for lifelong learning. In the context of Islamic literacy, the role of the library extends beyond housing books to facilitating the discovery and engagement with Islamic knowledge. Libraries can play an active role in shaping students' Islamic literacy by offering programs, workshops, and resources that encourage exploration of Islamic texts and foster a deeper understanding of Islam.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate how library strategies at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember foster Islamic literacy culture among students. The case study methodology is suitable for this research, as it enables an in-depth understanding of specific practices within a particular context (Yin, 2018). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations.

Data Collection Methods using Interviews were conducted with the librarian, teachers, and students to gather insights into the strategies implemented by the library and their impact on Islamic literacy. The interviews were designed to explore participants' experiences and perceptions regarding the library's role in promoting Islamic literacy. Document Analysis involved reviewing the library's records, including its collection of Islamic resources, reports on library programs, and collaboration with external publishers like Erlangga. This provided background data on the library's strategy and resources. Observations were made in the library to understand the environment, student engagement with Islamic texts, and how the library space is utilized to support literacy.

A purposive sampling method was used to select participants who could provide relevant insights based on their direct interaction with the library and its services. These participants were selected based on their involvement with 1 librarian, 5 teachers, and 10 students.

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which involves identifying patterns (themes) within the data. The analysis followed these steps:

1. Data Familiarization: Transcribing and reviewing interview recordings and observation notes.
2. Coding: Key sections of the data were coded based on recurring themes related to library strategies and Islamic literacy.
3. Theme Identification: Codes were grouped into themes, such as the availability of Islamic resources, library programs, and student engagement.
4. Theme Interpretation: Themes were analyzed to understand their impact on the development of Islamic literacy.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was ensured throughout the study. The relevant review board granted ethical approval. This study is based on a single case, MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember, and may not be generalizable to all school libraries. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study means that the findings are based on participants' subjective experiences.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the research conducted at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember, focusing on the school library's strategies to improve Islamic literacy culture. Several key strategies and outcomes have been identified based on the observations, interviews, and document analysis. These strategies have contributed to developing a strong literacy culture within the school community, specifically enhancing Islamic literacy among students.

Library Strategies to Improve Islamic Literacy Culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember

Citing the opinions of experts, among others, Porter and Michael stated that strategy is a pattern of determining decisions and actions to change a condition desired by the organization in the future as a response to the guidance of changes in the organizational environment. Based on the opinions presented above, it can be understood that strategy is an action that requires careful planning and consideration. A plan that is systematically designed to achieve a specific goal.

The strategies employed by the library to enhance literacy culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember are systematically designed to foster a strong reading and writing culture among students, with a particular focus on Islamic literacy. Based on the data collected, the following six strategies were identified as key components in improving the school's Islamic literacy culture:

Forming a School Literacy Team

In achieving the library's success, the library's strategy in improving literacy culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum is inseparable from the formation of the School Literacy Team. School literacy teams are groups formed within the school environment to enhance students' reading, writing, and comprehension of texts. The team's primary goal is to promote and support a strong literacy culture in schools, enabling all students to develop the literacy skills necessary for academic and daily success.

One of the primary strategies is the formation of a School Literacy Team, led by Mrs. Ninuk Dyah Puspitasari. This team, composed of madrasah teachers and library staff, focuses on enhancing students' reading, writing, and comprehension skills with a special emphasis on Islamic texts. The team's efforts aim to cultivate a strong literacy culture that supports academic and personal growth among students while fostering an environment that encourages deep engagement with Islamic knowledge.

Collaboration with PERPUSDA from Jember

To enhance the library's resources and increase student engagement, the library has partnered with the Jember Provincial Library (PERPUSDA). This collaboration has proven effective in expanding the library's book collection, particularly with Islamic literature, and attracting students' interest in literacy activities. Monthly visits from PERPUSDA have enriched the library's resources, offering students access to a broader selection of Islamic books, Quranic studies, Hadith, Islamic history, and contemporary Islamic thought. This collaboration directly addresses the library's resource gaps and fosters a sense of community involvement in promoting Islamic literacy.

The fulfilment of the MT Miftahul library's collaboration with external parties is evidenced by the monthly transportation of PERPUSDA from Jember to the institution. Based on the results of the interview that was conducted with Mrs. Muzayyanah Jamil, it was found that, to achieve the success of

the library's strategy in improving literacy culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren, it is inseparable from the cooperation with PEPRUSDA, because it is considered that the collection of books in the library is still lacking. By introducing the PERPUSDA to the Institution, it is intended to attract students' attention and encourage them to develop a fondness for reading.



Figure 1. Visit to Jember PERPUSDA

Regarding the library that has collaborated with the Jember PERPUSDA, based on the interview results with Mr. M. Fairon, it was found that the library also has cooperation with Erlangga, who indeed believes that collaborating with this party can help the library's development.



Figure 2. A visit from Erlangga

Procurement of Motivational Words

To inspire students to engage with reading and writing, especially with Islamic texts, the library has introduced motivational words in strategic areas. These words are intended to encourage students to remain motivated and passionate about literacy, with a particular focus on Islamic values and teachings. This strategy aims to reinforce the connection between literacy and the application of Islamic principles in everyday life. However, based on interviews, the placement of these motivational words could be improved to ensure greater visibility and impact, encouraging students to think more deeply about the Islamic teachings conveyed in the words.

If adjusted to the theory, the results of this study indicate that the strategy employed by the library aligns with the theory used by the researcher. However, the placement of motivational words in each room can still be considered inadequate, as evidenced by the lack of motivational words both inside and outside the classroom.



Figure 3. Student motivational work

Procurement of School Wall Magazines

Wall magazines (Mading) are a strategic tool used by the library to engage students in literacy activities, particularly those related to Islamic-themed content. These magazines, featuring articles, short stories, poems, and student works related to Islamic values and principles, provide a platform for students to showcase their literacy and creativity. The publication of Islamic content in these wall magazines helps students connect their academic learning with their religious education. However, as reported in interviews, the frequency of updates and the content's ability to capture students' attention remain challenges that need to be addressed to keep students engaged in Islamic literacy activities.

One significant drawback of acquiring this manufacturing facility is that the manufacturing process is rarely updated. This has a substantial impact, as making no longer plays a crucial role in supporting students' literacy. Students will not be interested in reading material they have previously encountered. The creativity of students is not fostered because they lack the obligation that encourages them to complete the rubrics.

Based on the results of the interview with Mrs. Muzayyanh Jamil and M. Rizal Umami explained that the procurement of wall magazines is carried out once a month instead of once a week, because access for students is also still lacking, for the change of attaching the school wall magazine itself from the osim who provides a schedule for each class, and for the content of the wall magazine, such as, poems, rhymes, and works from the students. For the procurement of school wall magazines, the process is still considered lacking due to the lengthy attachment process and the content that fails to capture students' attention.



Figure 4. School Wall Magazine

Rewarding Active Students

The library implements a reward system to motivate students who actively engage in literacy activities, particularly those with Islamic reading materials, attend Quranic study groups, or participate in library programs. This strategy aligns with Suharsimi's (2003) view on the importance of rewards in influencing student behavior. By recognizing and rewarding students for their interest in Islamic literacy, the library fosters a positive feedback loop that encourages continued participation and deeper engagement with Islamic texts and teachings.

This award is expected to inspire other students to visit libraries, both physical and digital, more actively and increase their interest in reading. This activity aligns with the school's efforts to cultivate an intelligent and insightful generation. Rewarding active users includes motivating students to visit the library, stimulating students and the entire academic community to develop a love for reading, and fostering enthusiasm for reading among students.



Figure 5. Rewarding the most active students

Based on the research results, giving rewards is indeed very important in teaching and has been applied in this school library. Offering rewards to students who actively visit the library is one effective strategy to attract students to the library. To determine which students are active, it can be observed from the monthly summary of student visit data. From this, students also became increasingly interested in the literacy culture applied in the library. Rewards will be given from the library at the end of each month.

No	Kode	Nama Siswa	Nama Buku yang dibaca	Tgl kunjungan	Keterangan
1	18523	M. Inqib Dardawati	25 Nabi dan Rasul	11.1.2024	✓
2		M. Nuril Rahman	Sidagiri: Asal dari jihad	11.1.2024	✓
3		RUSTAN ASSIDDIGI	Pustaka Sidagiri: Saat Tepat Beribadah	11.1.2024	✓
4		Hikmah Beribadah	Buletin Sidagiri	11.1.2024	✓
5		KATA MIFTA	400 pelajaran Islam	11.1.2024	✓
6	18091	Safira Nur Rizki	Buletin Permatasari	15.01.2024	✓
7	18081	Siti Nurul Taqwa	Al-Bait al-Haram	15.01.2024	✓
8	18373	Siti Rahmadani	Emulasi Qadriyah dan Khasanah	15.01.2024	✓
10	18196	Rahma Shila Nur H.	Tawarikh	15.01.2024	✓
11	18140	Yuliana Fita Indah Sari	Kau Dengarlah Imanku	15.01.2024	✓
12	18115	Shalwa Kusumawati	Cerita Gekil	15.01.2024	✓
13	18450	Dini Rumi K.	Kau & Aku (Tarekat)	15.01.2024	✓
14	18441	Siti Rizka	Seperti di Dunia Melayu (Sungai)	15.01.2024	✓
15	18119	Angela R.	Cerita Gekil	15.01.2024	✓
16	18113	Cafara	Be with you	15.01.24	✓

Figure 6. Active data on student visits

Procurement of Reading Corner

Reading corners in classrooms are a significant part of the library's strategy to improve Islamic literacy culture. These designated spaces offer students easy access to a variety of Islamic reading materials, including the Qur'an, Hadith collections, Islamic history, and contemporary Islamic literature. The reading corners serve as informal reading spaces where students can explore Islamic texts outside of formal classroom settings. By bringing Islamic literacy closer to students, these corners foster a love for Islamic reading and encourage the application of Islamic values in daily life.

This reading corner is one of the most comfortable reading places, aside from the library, when there are no running subjects, as students can read casually. Although this classroom reading corner is a necessary facility that schools must have, its design is the result of the creativity of each student in each class during the procurement process. Therefore, to foster enthusiasm and appreciation for students' creativity in making and decorating reading corners, the school held a competition to decorate classrooms and reading corners. The results of the classroom decoration and selected reading corners will later be awarded prizes.



Figure 7. Classroom Reading Corner

Based on the interview results, the researcher concluded that the strategy of providing a reading corner, which exists at MTs Miftahul Ulum, has had an impact on students' literacy culture by bringing reading materials closer to them, and greatly helps libraries in improving literacy culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum.

Implications of Library Strategy in Improving Literacy Culture at MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember

The strategies implemented by the MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember library have yielded several positive outcomes, both at the school level and the student level, particularly in terms of enhancing Islamic literacy. These outcomes demonstrate the success of the library's strategies in cultivating a culture of Islamic literacy and engagement.

The Realisation of Outstanding Literacy Schools

The library's strategies have contributed to MT Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember becoming an exemplary school in terms of Islamic literacy. The continuous efforts to build a literacy culture that includes reading and writing activities related to Islamic teachings, such as Quranic studies and Islamic history, have helped create an environment where Islamic literacy is valued and practiced. The school's achievement as an outstanding literacy institution is further supported by its collaboration with external partners, such as PERPUSDA and Erlangga, which have enriched the library's resources and expanded the opportunities for students to engage with Islamic knowledge.

Building a reading and writing culture in school is not easy. It takes patience and militant work from the principal and teachers. The role of school principals as learning leaders in building a literacy culture is vital. This is because the principal will be able to move teachers to set an example and encourage

students to want to read and write to pour out their various ideas. In addition, the support of all school residents is also crucial so that the program to build a literate school will be realised.

Based on the research results, the institution can be described as an outstanding literacy institution, as evidenced by the development of a literacy culture that permeates school programs, including literacy initiatives, and the improvement of students' reading literacy. Some of the strategies applied in the school literacy program include forming a school literacy team, providing rewards for students who actively visit the library, collaborating with PERPUSDA, and also with Erlangga.

The Number of Students Who Participated in the Competitions

The number of students who participated in the competition further proves that the institution is an outstanding literacy school. This is evidenced by the number of students who participated in competitions across academic and non-academic fields, as well as by schools that participated in class literacy competitions and won third place.¹ The competition aims to commemorate National Literacy Day, observed annually on May 17. All school residents are invited to participate by decorating their classrooms creatively and beautifully, thereby highlighting the importance of literacy.



Figure 8. Poetry Competition Winners

Literacy Skills Are Being Developed

This can be realised because schools strive to establish cooperation and receive financial assistance from the government or other sources. This is further evidenced by the facilities in the library, namely digital TV, which can aid the learning process and help teachers find references for learning-related activities.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6geeZDNMk4>



Figure 9. Digital TV for Learning

Meanwhile, for students, the application produces:

1. Increasing Students' Interest in Reading

This is evidenced by the data on student visits to the library, which increases every month and shows that the number continues to rise. The increase in students' interest in reading is due to several factors, including the addition of book collections, such as reading books, novels, and magazines. The library's impact on increasing students' interest in reading demonstrates significant progress.



Figure 10. Student reading activities

2. Academic and Non-Academic Achievement Increases

The significant increase in student achievements evidences. This is evidenced by winning competitions in the academic field, notably the Science Olympiad competition on behalf of Naidatul Fitriah's Grade 9D students, as well as in other non-academic fields, such as sports and art week competitions, where representatives from classes VIII and IX won first and second place, respectively.



Figure 11. Winners of the competition from academic and non-academic fields

Many Works Produced by Students

Given the emergence of various student works, this is an important benchmark related to the library's strategy for improving student literacy culture. These works can take various forms, including caricatures, posters, motivational phrases, and other visual elements. From the many works produced by students, the school can identify the talents of other students. Later, based on these works, the school can choose which students to represent it in the competition.



Figure 12. Student work

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the MTs Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember library's strategies to enhance Islamic literacy culture among students. Through a comprehensive analysis of interviews, document reviews, and observations, this research reveals the significant impact of the library's strategies in fostering Islamic literacy.

The library's diverse collection, including religious texts and contemporary Islamic literature, is pivotal in promoting a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings. The library creates an environment that encourages critical thinking and reflective learning about Islamic values by maintaining a balanced mix of traditional and modern resources. The collaboration with publishers such as Erlangga has further enriched the availability of updated and high-quality materials, making Islamic literacy more accessible and relevant for students.

The library's strategies, including collection development, student engagement through reading programs, and organizing study groups, have proven effective in increasing student interest and

participation in Islamic literacy activities. These initiatives not only support academic learning but also contribute to the cultivation of good reading habits, fostering a culture of literacy within the school.

However, despite the positive outcomes, the research identifies several areas for improvement. The limited access to digital resources and the space constraints in the library were highlighted as challenges that need to be addressed. Expanding digital resources and improving the physical space of the library will likely enhance its ability to reach more students and provide a more comfortable learning environment.

In conclusion, the MT Miftahul Ulum Suren Jember library has demonstrated the importance of strategic planning and resource management in enhancing Islamic literacy culture. The findings of this study suggest that school libraries, when equipped with the right strategies, can play a significant role in shaping students' understanding of Islam and promoting literacy within the broader educational context. Moving forward, expanding digital resources and increasing awareness of available materials will be key to further strengthening the library's impact on Islamic literacy.

Future research could explore how the integration of digital platforms in school libraries can enhance accessibility to Islamic literacy materials and support the learning process in modern educational environments. Additionally, comparative studies across various schools could provide valuable insights into best practices and strategies for improving Islamic literacy through libraries.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Expand Digital Resources:** Increase the availability of Islamic digital resources to meet the demands of students who prefer online access to information.
2. **Improve Physical Space:** Consider expanding the library's space to accommodate more students, particularly during peak hours, to ensure a conducive learning environment.
3. **Enhance Awareness and Training:** Implement orientation sessions for students and staff to increase awareness of the library's resources and how to effectively use them for academic and Islamic learning.
4. **Strengthen Library-Community Partnerships:** Continue and expand collaborations with publishers and other educational institutions to bring in new resources and initiatives that align with the goals of enhancing Islamic literacy.

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