

# Culture Literacy in Non-Formal School: *Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia*

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**Abstract**—In general, literacy is always associated with the world of education, and it is very closely related to the practice of social relations that include knowledge, language, and culture. *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (School Literacy Movement) is a solution offered by the government to answer the problems of this age. Therefore, this study aims to describe the literacy culture of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia, who attend the non-formal Community Learning Center School of Pontian Fico. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This research reveals that literacy activities are very important in supporting learning for children. The findings in this study also reveal that literacy activities for Indonesian Migrant Workers' children who attend the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico Sabah Malaysia are only reading activities, which are reading 15 minutes before the learning begins. The limited availability of books also becomes one of the obstacles in the literacy program, especially in the border area. To create a culture of good literacy, special attention needs to be paid by the government to create programs that are relevant for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** *Community Learning Center (CLC), literacy culture, non-formal schools*

## I. INTRODUCTION

*Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* or School Literacy Movement is a program designed by the government to address Indonesia's cultural lag of literacy from other countries. *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* aims to develop student's reading and writing culture at the low, middle, and upper levels of schools. Besides, the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is about increasing the capacity of citizens and schools to understand the importance of culture at this age. To support continuous learning, schools should become a fun learning house and shows various reading materials as well as facilitate reading strategies for students. The stages of implementing the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* are divided into three namely, habituation training, development training, and also learning (Surangangga, 2017).

According to the aims of *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*, it is not surprising that almost every formal school in Indonesia has come to the attention of the government in implementing *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*. One of the previous studies entitled "The Development of a Literacy Program to Improve the Quality of Middle School Level of Primary Education in the

City of Medan" found that public schools in the City of Medan have successfully followed the guidelines of the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*. The implementation of the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is adjusted to the goals and needs that expected by the government (Harahap, Faisal, Hasibuan, Nugrahaningsih, & Azis, 2017).

Based on the research that is done frequently, the discussion about how the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is implemented in non-formal schools has not been studied yet. The government should be fair in disseminating the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*. The children of Indonesian Migrant Workers who live in border areas, especially in Sabah, Malaysia are also entitled to have access to the same education as other Indonesian children. Also, the governments have to implement literacy activities according to the needs of children of Indonesian Migrant Workers who attend the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico. The rights and obligations of Migrant Workers children are based on the fact that every citizen has the educational rights. This is in line with the statement raised by Teguh (2017) which says that in addition to formal schools, non-formal schools are also entitled to receive literacy education.

Seeing how important the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is, the researcher is interested in explaining and describing how to implement the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*, especially for children of Indonesian migrant workers who attend non-formal schools and live in border areas. The focus of this study is only on literacy culture and how it impacts the education of literacy education in non-formal Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico.

This study was carried out on several considerations. First, based on the urgency of education and how important it is for the government to know the literacy culture of the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers who attend schools in the border area, especially at the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia. Second, based on the importance of literacy development especially for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers. Third, the results of this study are expected

to be able to illustrate the wider community that the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in the border area are also entitled to their rights as citizens of Indonesia, especially in literacy education, following the statement of Kusmana (2017) which states that the development of student literacy is very urgent so that literacy must be incorporated into learning. In this growing age, students are expected to be literate to be able to answer the challenges of the times.

#### *A. Literacy Culture*

Susanto (2016) states that a person can be categorized as literate if they already understand information as a result of reading activities that are most appropriate and implement what has been understood. Mastery of literacy in all forms of science is very important and necessary because it can encourage the advancement of the Indonesian. Specifically, literacy is a form of activity to interpret or interpret all forms of science that make humans have a broad knowledge. Growing a literacy culture among students requires hard work by many parties.

Literacy culture is closely related to reading and writing activities. Reading is one of the most important aspects of realizing a literacy culture. However, not all students like to read, the main key in making students fond of reading is to create a routine reading program for students at school because there is no guarantee students have free time to read outside school hours. For example, when students are at home, they may be busy playing gadgets, working to help parents, or spending time with friends. So, the program initiated by the government named *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* is the right solution to realize the culture of school literacy (Antoro, 2017).

According to the opinions above, a common thread can be drawn to infer literacy culture. Literacy culture is an activity that is closely related to reading and writing activities. This conclusion is supported by the opinion of Irianto and Lifa (2017) which states the importance of literacy awareness to support one's success in dealing with various problems of life today.

#### *B. Community Learning Center (CLC)*

The Community Learning Center (CLC) is a non-formal school that is very meritorious for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers, especially in Sabah Malaysia. With the CLC, the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers can get an education despite the limitations of many things. The purpose of the CLC, according to Rizani (2014), is to provide access to education to; (1) children who are of school age but not in school, (2) children who can read or cannot read, (3) children whose education has not been fulfilled by other non-formal education.

According to data from the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia Kota Kinabalu at the initial rank of February 2012, there were 33 CLC with a total of 2.007 children of Indonesian Migrant Workers registering for school. Over time, the number of children of Indonesian Migrant Workers who register for school has increased dramatically. The enthusiasm of the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in learning, the Indonesian government continues to increase the number of Non-Community Community Learning Centers,

especially in remote areas of oil palm plantations to accommodate the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in education. In 2017 the number of CLC increased to 231 spread throughout the Sabah region of Malaysia. Also recorded in 2017 that the number of children of Indonesian Migrant Workers entering school age reaches approximately 53,000 and only 40% are touched by education (Fatahillah, 2018).

## II. METHOD

The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research method. According to Moleong (2012), qualitative research is research that produces analytical procedures that do not use statistical or other quantitative analysis procedures. The approach that researchers used in this study are a descriptive study approach. This research intends to dig deeper into literacy culture, especially in the non-formal school Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico. Simply put, this research wants to describe the object and not generalize but rather explore the object according to the purpose of the study.

Data collection is done by using interview techniques that aim for researchers to get an overview of the issues to be discussed in the study and obtain detailed information from respondents. Arikunto (2013) stated that the data sources are classified into three namely people, place, and paper. In this study, researchers chose the person as the main data source.

Respondents who were the subject of this study were non-formal school teachers Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia. Respondents numbered 3 people. Respondents were selected based on the sampling technique used in this study.

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. This is adjusted to the theory of Sugiyono (2010) which states that the purposive sampling technique is the technique of taking data in the form of samples with several considerations that are following the objectives of the researcher.

This method is adapted to the purpose of the study, which is to describe how literacy culture in non-formal schools, especially in the Community Learning Center, Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia. The stages in this research are; (1) researchers conduct a literature study; (2) the researcher formulates the research problem; (3) researchers conduct research; (4) researchers reduce the data, (5) and finally researchers draw conclusions. The data obtained in the field will be analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques.

## III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *A. History of the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico*

It can be said that education is the right of all nations. Every human being has the educational rights. The children of Indonesian Migrant Workers are no exception who live in the middle of oil palm plantations in the border area. The children of Indonesian Migrant Workers have the right to access education and conduct similar activities, such as a flag

ceremony (see Figure 1), like other Indonesian children. Non-formal school Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico is one of the non-formal schools initiated by the Indonesian government to provide education for all Indonesian people in the border area, especially in Sabah, Malaysia. The objective of the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico was established to serve the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in the border area.



Fig.1. Students at Non-Formal School Community Learning Center Pontian Fico.

Community Learning Center Pontian Fico was founded in 2012. Located in the middle of an oil palm plantation in Sabah, Malaysia. Community Learning Center Pontian Fico is equivalent to Open Junior High School. Since opening in 2012 until now, the school has managed to score the best graduates to continue their education to a higher level. Companies in the oil palm fields provide teaching and learning activities in the form of simple buildings and makeshift school facilities.

The presence of the non-formal school of Community Learning Center Pontian Fico has given a hope for children's future of Indonesian Migrant Workers, especially in Sabah, Malaysia. A large number of Community Learning Center is opened in the middle of oil palm plantations and the presence of teachers from Indonesia is expected to give them an idea of the outside world, especially in their own country, Indonesia. However, it is not enough to just open a school and provide great teachers but it also needs to apply certain methods and media in conveying information to the children of migrant workers.

Nowadays, three teachers are teaching at the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico. Teachers who teach at the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico are delegates from the Indonesian government and are assisted by local Indonesian teachers who have long lived in Sabah Malaysia who have teaching qualifications. The number of students who are studying at Community Learning Center Pontian Fico in the academic year of 2019/2020 is 68 students.

*B. Literacy Program at the Non-formal School CLC Pontian Fico*

Since the establishment of Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico in 2012, in 2018 teachers are just initiated a

reading program before teaching and learning activities were carried out (see Figure 2). The 10-15 minute reading program every day encourages the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers to see the outside of the world. All teachers who teach at the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico strongly support the government program named *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*.



Fig.2. Reading activities before learning.

*C. Interest in Reading Indonesian Migrant Workers Children*

The benefit of holding a literacy program in the non-formal Community Learning Center School of Pontian Fico is one of which to increase students' insights. The more consistent the reading program held the higher children's reading interest of Indonesian Migrant Workers. The mandatory reading program that is held before learning begins makes students addicted to books. Besides high reading interest, the existence of the reading program before learning begins to create a culture for those who want to learn. High reading interest should also be supported by many aspects to answer the challenges of this age.

*D. Reading Material*

The reading material at the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico consists of fiction, nonfiction, and learning module books. The number of books used as reading material for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers amounts to approximately 200 titles. However, out of the many titles and themes of the book, only a few themes are favored by the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers. The most suitable reading material for the social situation for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers is the storybook. The title of the most liked book in the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico is a collection of short stories titled *Setelah Gerimis* by Hikayat Ashwan Sha (see Figure 3).

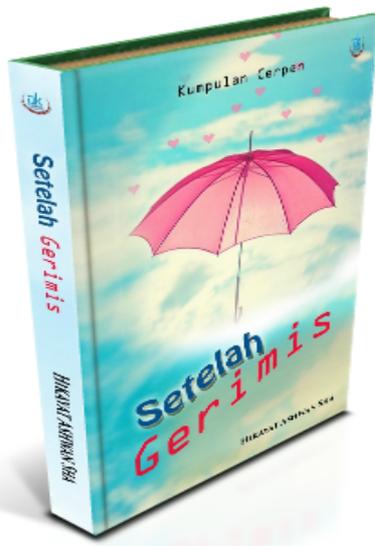


Fig.3. Students favorite book at Community Learning Center Pontian Fico

#### E. Literacy Facilities

Thus far, teachers who teach at the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico to date have only facilitated simple reading corners and bookshelves. Besides, there are no more facilities that can support literacy activities at the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico. However, despite the limited facilities such as the lack of reading material but the learning atmosphere is very supportive of the literacy program (see Figure 4).



Fig.4. Literacy environment.

#### F. Resistance

The biggest obstacle experienced by teachers at the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico in carrying out the literacy program is the lack of reading material for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers. Sometimes, monotonous reading material makes students bored to read books. Another obstacle is the lack of assistance from any party in the context of the success of the literacy program for Indonesian Migrant Workers children so that the teacher only moves on his own.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The results of the study found that the presence of non-formal schools for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia has provided hope for their future as Indonesian citizens. The 15-minute reading literacy program implemented at Pontian Fico Community Learning Center, Sabah Malaysia has succeeded in attracting migrant workers' children to love reading. The Literacy program implemented has succeeded in increasing the reading interest of Indonesian Migrant Workers' children. It can also be said that the existing facilities are sufficient to support literacy activities. However, the biggest obstacle faced by teachers is the lack of reading material for the children of Indonesian Migrant workers at the Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers living abroad especially in the border area need government attention in terms of literacy. One of the schools that are being a center to gain knowledge for the children of Indonesian Migrant Workers is the non-formal School Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico.

Teacher's efforts in helping the government by introducing and implementing the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* have many obstacles. One of the biggest obstacles to running a literacy program is the lack of reading material.

The solution offered from the results of this study is to call on the Ministry of Education to provide equitable socialization and training for teachers to be skilled in implementing the *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah*. Hopefully, the government will be able to donate quality books consistently for literacy materials at the non-formal School Community Learning Center of Pontian Fico. Also, the results of this study are expected to open the eyes of many parties that literacy activities are very important nowadays.

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