

ENHANCING THE CREATIVITY OF CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT

From the moment a child is born, creativity should be fostered and strengthened. Children and teenagers live in a creative world where they need room to move, think, and get emotional guidance. Engaging in reading activities is one approach to increase creativity. As compared to other nations, Indonesians still show a very low level of interest in reading books. According to UNESCO data, the nation has the second-lowest literacy rate in the world. Indonesia is ranked 60th out of 61 countries in terms of interest in reading books. Relevant parties should move quickly to facilitate and investigate the source of the public's loss of interest in reading. One strategy to promote creativity and a love of reading among the younger population—especially children—is to establish children's libraries. After a community development project came to an end on June 6, 2024, the children of the Hafidhin Royan Orphanage in South Jakarta City gained access to a small library called as "Pojok Pustaka." Reading bookshelves have been placed in kid-friendly areas to complete the service project. The orphanage children said they were happy to read the many picture books Pojok Pustaka had given them when asked about their feelings. The number of books at the Pojok Pustaka has been gradually increased in an attempt to keep kids from getting bored and to make sure they always have new selections when they come to read.

Keywords: innovative youth, children's creativity, creative community, creativity development

INTRODUCTION

Creativity is one of the important aspects in the development of children and adolescents that has a significant impact on their ability to face future challenges. The ability to think creatively not only helps in solving problems innovatively, but also plays a role in the development of social, emotional, and intellectual skills. In this increasingly dynamic and competitive era, creativity is the key in equipping children and adolescents to be able to adapt quickly to the changes that occur around them.

However, in reality, many children and adolescents do not get optimal opportunities to develop their creativity, whether in the family, school, or community environment. Educational curricula that tend to focus on academic outcomes and conventional teaching patterns often lack space for creative expression. In addition, the rapid development of technology can also be a challenge, where children and adolescents are more often passive consumers of digital media than using it for creative things.

Seeing the importance of creativity in the growth of children and adolescents, planned interventions are needed to create an environment that supports the development of their creativity. This activity "Increasing the Creativity of Children and Adolescents" is designed to provide a space for children and adolescents to explore new ideas, dare to experiment, and express themselves through various media, both art, science, technology, and other practical skills.

Thinking creatively is the capability to come up with unique solutions to problems by taking a fresh and unexpected perspective to them (Santrock, 2002). Mayesty (1990) described creativity as an individual's distinctive manner of doing, thinking, or producing anything significant or beneficial to both oneself and others. Gallagher defines creativity as the capability to use one's imagination to create, find a new form, and/or develop anything in Munandar (1999). Thus, creativity is linked to the process of expressing and realizing one's unique identity in relation to others, nature, and oneself. In contrast to people in many other countries, Indonesians show very little interest in reading. According to UNESCO data, Indonesia ranks as the second least literate country globally, with just one out of every 1,000 Indonesians considered an avid reader. This indicates an extremely low reading interest of only 0.001 percent (Bustomi, 2022). In terms of book reading interest, Indonesia is ranked 60th out of 61 countries. Both adults and children in Indonesia display minimal interest in reading books, a situation made even more concerning considering how widely available books are today (Widianto, 2017).

There are various reasons for Indonesia's low reading popularity (Widianto, 2017). The social milieu is important since it gradually molds a person's habits. The nearest environment, the family, typically discourages reading among members. For many reasons, the primary one being expenditure, parents forbid their kids from buying books.

Moreover, it is nearly a guarantee that non-reading peers of the children and younger generation will choose to emulate the bad behaviors of their peers.

The children and younger generation of today is likewise prone to losing appreciation for the process and seeking instant gratification. You have to read a book through from beginning to end. However, the younger generation finds it difficult to read the book and enjoy the reading experience since they are not as dedicated to reading to understand its contents (Warsita, 2008).

Policymakers should act swiftly to promote and look into the reasons behind the public's lack of interest in reading books. It is obvious that cooperation between writers, publishers, and the government is necessary to obtain reading materials (BPKP, n.d.). Writers are most important to readers since they are the ones who will spread ideas and knowledge as authors and information searchers. Publishers are also needed to assist writers in publishing their works. Because it can be very difficult for an author to print and publish their own works without substantial funding. Third, the government needs to be heavily involved in offering book subsidies, particularly for pricey textbooks.

To make library services more accessible to public, especially the younger generation, and cheaper for those with tight book budgets, authorities ought to set aside a certain amount of money. Having a strong passion for reading and being up to date on the latest local information sources are requirements for growing to love libraries more. One of the things that can be done is to establish a national library, office library, school library, or micro-library (Jatinegara & Luna, 2009).

The "Enhancing the Creativity of Children and Teenagers" activity aims to provide a space for children and teenagers to be creative through various activities, such as art, music, drama, and technology. This activity is expected not only to improve their creative skills, but also to build confidence and collaboration skills. In addition, by involving parents and the community, it is hoped that an ecosystem will be created that supports the sustainable development of children's and adolescents' creativity.

This activity is also designed to identify the creative potential of each participant through a variety of fun and interactive approaches. Through this program, it is hoped that children and teenagers can find new interests and talents that can lead to future career development. By understanding the importance of creativity in the development of children and adolescents, as well as the challenges they face, this activity is expected to make a positive contribution in creating a generation that is innovative, adaptive, and able to compete at the global level.

Through the development of creativity, it is hoped that children and adolescents will not only become more productive and innovative individuals, but also be able to contribute to society in a more meaningful way. This activity is the first step to form a karakter generasi muda yang siap menghadapi tantangan masa depan dengan semangat kreatif yang tinggi.

METHOD

Among many ways to support young people's reading and creative interests while also making reading enjoyable for them is to set up miniature libraries in public spaces like parks, schools, or other gathering places for kids. While not every social class has access to a small library, it would be fantastic if some individuals with greater earnings could build one the size of a community center (Mangkoesapetro, 2004).

Muhsin and Supriyanto provide a range of small library management strategies (2009). For instance, it is possible to issue membership cards at fair rates and, if needed, without having to pay additional borrowing costs. Even though the average living quality of the residents is below the poverty line, full personal information is sought of every visitor to this micro library in order to lessen the possibility that volumes will be misplaced (Mudhofir, 1992).

Retaining library use and keeping it from turning into a community display requires minimizing administrative costs (Warsita, 2008). Children's mini libraries help children broaden their knowledge outside of the classroom and are great resources for those unable to attend school to acquire new information (Noerhayati, 1986). In this area, children could also occupy their time with productive pursuits (Munir, 2009). Adults, of course, can also make use of this mini-library as the nearest free reading area and to obtain the most recent knowledge required to compete in their associations and workplaces (Warsita, 2008).

The creation of a small library in the children's community is crucial to piqueing young people's interest in reading, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Mudhofir, 1992). Aside from the fact that there aren't as many

books available due to space limitations, the small library's collection of books is comparable to that of other libraries and ranges from adult fiction to children's literature. Children's books are suggested for the little library, though, as this community service project is meant to be finished in an orphanage where children make up the majority of the population. The "Pojok Pustaka" tiny library will feature picture books, textbooks, and general books that serve to widen children's horizons. Tales, including well-known ones appropriate for kids' graphic novels, will be provided to pique the interest of young readers in reading.

Kids at orphanages will be entertained with storytelling as part of the community service projects, in addition to the books distributed through the library corner. The narrative aims to encourage children's inventiveness and imagination. An infrequent component of the social and cultural activity of storytelling exchanges involves improvisation, innovation and skills. Every civilization has a story or narrative that is delivered to its audience for a variety of purposes, including moral indoctrination, education, entertainment, and cultural preservation (Chaltin, 2003).

The program is being held in the Hafidhin Royan Yatim Foundation's orphanage, the Hafidhin Royan. It is located in South of the capital Jakarta City, the Special Capital Region of Jakarta, at Jl. Bhakti Indah No.32, RT.2/RW.5, Ciganjur, Kec. Jagakarsa. The absence of a library at this well-run orphanage hinders the kids from becoming interested in reading, which is why volunteer programs have been selected to be established there.

Selecting the target audience

The Child-Friendly Integrated Public Space (RPTRA), a public area designed as a child-friendly green open space equipped with various facilities that promote children's development and provide comfort for parents, was initially considered as a potential location for this community service activity. It serves as a place where children and parents can interact with people from all walks of life, making it an ideal setting, alongside the orphanage, for implementing the program.

The RPTRA is established, run, and maintained by the local community. RPTRA is present in every subdistrict within the Province of DKI Jakarta. A portion of the RPTRAs were built using monies from the APBD (Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget), while a portion were founded through donations from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds. The local populace can benefit from RPTRA's advantages because it is placed in the center of a residential neighborhood and is accessible to everyone. The RPTRA offers amenities that are accessible to those with disabilities as well as kid-friendly. Another element that makes RPTRA stand out as a trustworthy security system is closed circuit television (CCTV) surveillance, which gives parents piece of mind about their kids' safety as they play and learn.

Nevertheless, a number of RPTRAs have given kids reading materials, according to observations done thus far. RPTRA has developed into a useful place to start when promoting children and younger generation's growing interest in reading. The Hafidhin Royan Yatim Foundation, which operates the orphanage at Jl. Bhakti Indah No.32, RT.2/RW.5, Ciganjur, Kec. Jagakarsa, Jakarta, was chosen as the program's location in light of this.

Activities will take place in the form of workshops, classes, and practice sessions that cover various fields of creativity, such as fine arts, music, theater, and technology. Each session will be guided by an experienced instructor who has a background in the field. Interactive and fun learning methods will be applied to encourage active participation of participants. In addition, participants will be divided into small groups to enhance collaboration and interaction between them.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The Hafidhin Royan Orphanage received the Pojok Pustaka mini library along with bookshelves and numerous reading books on June 6, 2024. The notice titled 'Pojok Pustaka' was also given. However, the following preparations have been planned as a lead-up to D-day:

Make connections. Mrs. Marlina Irwanti Purnomo, the committee member in charge of creating this community project, suggested to Mr. Syafaat, the director of the Hafidhin Royan Orphanage, that the children living there be granted access to a small library. This design was approved by the Hafidhin Royan Orphanage administration. On May 18, 2024, he approved the implementation of the small library. Subsequently, Mr. Syafaat received another call from Mr. Morissan, the director of this community service executive, discussing the technical plan for executing the community service program. Concerning the voluntary labor plan, Intercession was requested to submit a formal statement of approval.

Setting up the equipment. The Pojok Pustaka micro library needs to be equipped with the following items, among others: bookshelves, nameplates, banners, little tables, and rugs.

- 1) For the bookshelf, a basic five-level Montessori stacking shelf measuring 60x30x75 centimeters was chosen. This particle board bookshelf has a maximum weight capacity of 50 kg. Shelves must be built before being purchased because they are purchased dismantled from online merchants. Due to its limited length, the bookshelf must be arranged on a small table so that guests may easily select books while maintaining a nice appearance. The required banner, which reads a line "Community Service Program. Sahid University Graduate School," is two meters long and one meter broad. Increasing kids' interest in reading by acquiring a "POJOK PUSTAKA" mini-library. June 6, 2024, Jakarta. The Graduate School's logo is displayed on the left side of the banner.
- 2) The table being utilized is a standard kindergarten school table, and it's been arranged with bookcases to improve the area's aesthetics. Much of the original paint had gone from the simple table at the base of the bookcases, and it still needed painting with vivid color to appear decent.
- 3) "Pojok Pustaka" is written in black letters on a white acrylic nameplate for the miniature library. The nameplate has the Universitas Sahid Graduate School (pasca sarjana) logo on the left side.

Activity Implementation

On August 6, 2024, additional relief supplies and equipment were delivered to the Hafidhin Royan orphanage in Jakarta, located at Jl. Bhakti Indah No.32, RT.2/RW.5, Ciganjur, Kec. Jagakarsa. Present at the event were Mr. Syafaat, the administrator of the orphanage, Morissan as the chief executive, Marlinda Irwanti Purnomo as a team member, and around twenty children from the orphanage. For the inauguration ceremony, a bookshelf with the event banner was set up in front of the administrator's office. The formal handover of the Pojok Pustaka nameplate from Mrs. Irwanti to Mr. Syafaat, along with the symbolic transfer of library books from Mr. Morissan to Mr. Syafaat, marked the initiation of the Pojok Pustaka micro-library (Figure 4). The children at the orphanage were then invited by the committee to browse and choose books to read. They eagerly selected their books and sat down to read on the carpet in front of the Pojok Pustaka bookcase.





Figure 1. It has been suggested that placing reading bookshelves in places where children can easily reach them and reading stories to them can stimulate their creativity

The orphans expressed great excitement about having access to the mini library and extended their heartfelt thanks to the Graduate School at Sahid University for their efforts in setting it up. They also expressed hope that the Pojok Pustaka book collection would continue to grow, allowing for further expansion in the future. Mrs. Irwanti Purnomo encouraged the children to read diligently to help them achieve their dreams and become knowledgeable individuals. After the presentation, a group photo was taken in front of the orphanage dormitory.

The committee set a goal to gradually expand the book collection and regularly rotate books between libraries to ensure that children always find new material to read, preventing boredom. Future community service projects will focus on adding more books and small libraries to support this effort.

CONCLUSION

- 1) Because they continue to be less interested in reading than people in other nations, Indonesians are sometimes perceived as being less creative. According to UNESCO data, Indonesia has the second lowest percentage of literate people globally. Indonesia is ranked 60th in the world out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest. In order to determine the reason behind the public's lack of interest in reading, the interested parties should be persuaded to organize and carry out study as soon as feasible. Creating children's libraries is one way to encourage reading among younger people, especially kids.
- 2) After this community development project concluded on June 6, 2024, the children of the Hafidhin Royan Orphanage in South Jakarta City were able to use a small library known as "Pojok Pustaka." The placement of reading bookshelves in conveniently accessible locations and the use of storytelling to pique children's imaginations allowed the service project to be completed effectively.
- 3) The children said in their remarks how excited and nervous they were to read each and every picture book that Pojok Pustaka had authored. The library will continue to add books one by one so that children who visit the Pojok Pustaka to read always have a selection of fresh books to choose from. This will stop more boredom from occurring.

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