

## Principal's Strategy in the Literacy Movement to Improve Literacy Scores in the Education Report at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro, Pidie Regency

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the principal's strategies in implementing the literacy movement to improve literacy scores in the education report at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro, Pidie Regency. A qualitative approach was used to explore the effectiveness of various literacy initiatives, including reading programs, teacher training, and community involvement. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings indicate that principals play a crucial role in fostering a literacy-friendly environment through structured programs, leadership, and stakeholder collaboration. The study concludes that effective literacy strategies contribute significantly to improving students' literacy skills and overall academic performance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in shaping civilization and enhancing a nation's human resources. Quality education plays a crucial role in developing individuals with intellectual competence, social skills, and strong character. In the era of globalization, where international competition is intense, education quality serves as a key indicator of national progress (UNESCO, 2006).

One of the essential aspects of education is literacy, which includes reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Literacy not only influences students' academic performance but also determines their competitiveness in the workforce and social life. Countries with high literacy rates demonstrate better innovation, productivity, and overall societal well-being (Dewayani et al., 2021). The Indonesian Constitution, as stated in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution, mandates the government to provide quality education for all citizens, emphasizing the importance of literacy development in the national education system.

According to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, literacy development is influenced by social interactions and environmental support, including families, schools, and communities. Additionally, Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory highlights the role of visionary and inspiring leaders in driving positive changes in educational settings. In this context, school principals play a strategic role in fostering a literacy-friendly environment through leadership, structured programs, and collaboration with stakeholders.

In Indonesia, literacy and numeracy have become core components of the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), replacing the National Examination (Kusumaryono, 2020). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results from 2022 indicate that Indonesia ranked 68th out of 81 participating countries, reflecting ongoing challenges in literacy and numeracy (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). The low literacy levels in Pidie Regency, as evidenced by education reports, highlight the need for strategic interventions to enhance students' reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Observations at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro reveal that many students struggle with reading comprehension due to limited reading habits at school and home. The School Literacy Movement (GLS) has been implemented to address this issue by fostering a literacy-rich environment through structured reading programs and improved access to reading materials. However, challenges such as limited infrastructure, inadequate resources, and lack of teacher training hinder its effectiveness.

This study aims to analyze the strategies adopted by school principals in implementing literacy programs at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide recommendations for improving literacy education in primary schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Principal's Strategy*

A school principal's strategy involves being flexible in addressing unexpected challenges while maintaining a long-term vision (Istikomah, 2018).

Leadership is the ability to influence and direct individuals or groups towards specific goals. Several leadership styles exist: autocratic, where decisions are centralized with the leader; democratic, which encourages participation; and laissez-faire, where authority is decentralized (Woods in Istikomah, 2018). The effectiveness of leadership depends on situational factors such as tasks, expectations, and organizational environment (Handoko in Istikomah, 2018).

### ***Definition of Principal Leadership***

Principal leadership focuses on curriculum development, staff supervision, and continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning (Yukl in Ardiansyah & Jaenab, 2020). It influences teachers and students, ensuring that learning outcomes are achieved through structured planning and school management. Effective leadership fosters collaboration between stakeholders, including parents and the community (Kartono in Ardiansyah & Jaenab, 2020).

### ***Roles and Functions of the School Principal***

The principal plays multiple roles: educator, manager, administrator, supervisor, leader, innovator, and motivator (EMASLIM) (Mulyasa in Fitrah, 2017). The principal is responsible for formulating school policies, overseeing curriculum implementation, managing human resources, and ensuring a productive learning environment. Additionally, principals must create a learning school culture that continuously improves educational outcomes (Purwanto, 2019).

### ***School Literacy Movement (GLS)***

The School Literacy Movement (GLS) is a government initiative aimed at improving students' reading habits through structured programs (Ministry of Education and Culture). The program includes 15-minute daily reading activities, increased access to reading materials, and collaboration with teachers and parents. However, challenges such as limited resources and teacher training gaps hinder its effectiveness.

### ***Components of Literacy***

Literacy extends beyond reading and writing to include early literacy, basic literacy, library literacy, media literacy, technological literacy, and visual literacy (Murtiningsih, 2020). These components equip students with critical thinking skills to navigate various sources of information. In Indonesia, literacy education is essential for improving national education standards and global competitiveness (Nashar, 2022).

### ***Principal's Role in Strengthening Literacy***

The principal is a key driver in fostering a literacy-friendly school environment. This involves curriculum integration, teacher training, community engagement, and infrastructure support (Lutfiah, 2023). Principals must ensure

that literacy programs align with national education goals and address barriers such as limited access to books and digital learning tools.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Approach*

This study employs a qualitative research approach, which focuses on understanding phenomena based on participants' experiences, perceptions, and motivations (Moleong in Fiantika et al., 2022). Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative research emphasizes holistic and descriptive analysis, using words and narratives rather than numerical data (Creswell in Fiantika et al., 2022). The study seeks to explore the school principal's strategies in implementing literacy movements at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro, Pidie Regency.

### *Research Location and Time*

- **Location:** The study is conducted at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro, Pidie Regency.
- **Timeframe:** The research is conducted over three months (December 2024 – March 2025), covering data collection, analysis, and reporting.

### *Research Subjects*

The study involves school principals and teachers from both schools as key informants, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Principals And Teachers

Informant	SD Negeri Blang Keudah	SD Negeri Tiro
Principal	1	1
Teachers	2	2

*Source: Pidie Regency Department of Education and Culture*

### *Research Instruments*

This study uses purposive sampling, selecting participants based on their relevance to the research objectives (Sugiyono in Santina et al., 2021). The primary instrument is the researcher, supported by:

1. Observation Guide – to analyze classroom and literacy-related activities.
2. Interview Guide – semi-structured interviews with principals and teachers to explore literacy strategies.
3. Documentation Review – analyzing school records, meeting reports, and relevant materials.

### *Data Validity (Credibility Test)*

To ensure data validity, the study employs triangulation (Sugiyono, 2009), which cross-verifies findings using multiple sources and methods:

- **Technical triangulation:** Data is validated through observations, interviews, and document analysis.
- **Source triangulation:** Responses from principals and teachers are compared for consistency.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

The study applies three data collection methods:

1. Observation – Directly observing literacy initiatives at both schools.
2. Interviews – Conducting in-depth discussions with principals and teachers on literacy strategies.
3. Documentation – Analyzing school literacy programs, student assessments, and administrative records.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The study follows Miles and Huberman's (1994) data analysis model, involving:

1. Data Reduction – Summarizing, coding, and filtering key findings.
2. Data Display – Organizing data into descriptive narratives and tables.
3. Conclusion Drawing – Identifying patterns and interpreting findings.

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

### ***Planning the Principal's Strategy in the Literacy Movement***

#### **a. SD Negeri Blang Keudah**

- The principal developed a literacy strategy based on the school's real conditions, limited reading materials, and support from parents and the community.
- Interviews showed that literacy planning involved teachers through meetings to evaluate students' literacy scores and devise more effective strategies.
- Implemented routine programs:
  - 15-Minute Reading Movement before lessons begin.
  - Friday Literacy, where students read, discuss, and summarize books.
  - One Book Per Week, requiring students to read a book and retell its content.
  - Reading Corners, currently only available in Grade IV.
    - The School Activity and Budget Plan (RKAS) allocates limited funds for literacy programs.
    - The school's BOS funds (Rp 61,100,000 per year) are mainly allocated for learning facilities and teacher welfare, leaving literacy programs underfunded.

#### **b. SD Negeri Tiro**

- Literacy programs were designed based on an evaluation of the Education Report and school needs.
- The principal has developed a literacy strategy guide covering vision, mission, short-term, and long-term goals.
- Implemented programs:
  - Reading corners in every classroom.
  - Jambo Baca, an open literacy space.
  - Literacy Bulletin Board, displaying student-written works.
    - Teachers integrate literacy into all subjects and receive training on literacy strategies.

### ***Implementation of the Principal's Literacy Strategy***

#### **a. SD Negeri Blang Keudah**

- Literacy programs were communicated to all school members.
- The principal and teachers ensured that literacy efforts included reading, writing, and speaking skills.
- Key programs:
  - Circulating Books, where students exchange books.
  - Muhadharah, where students read aloud and share stories in front of the class.
- Main challenges:
  - Limited internet access prevents digital literacy implementation.
  - BOS funds are insufficient for book procurement and teacher training.

#### **b. SD Negeri Tiro**

- Literacy programs were more structured, with better library utilization and digital literacy integration.
- Key programs:
  - 15-minute reading before lessons.
  - Storytelling contests and book discussions.
  - Use of e-books and digital media.
- Teachers received training on strategies to improve students' reading interest.
- Main challenges:
  - Limited internet access remains an issue.
  - The library needs additional book collections.

### ***Follow-Up Plans***

#### **a. SD Negeri Blang Keudah**

- Focus on improving access to reading materials.
- Plans to procure additional library books.
- Increasing parental involvement in literacy programs.
- Seeking book donations from literacy communities.
- Exploring internet connectivity to enable digital literacy implementation.

#### **b. SD Negeri Tiro**

- Optimizing the use of existing literacy facilities.
- Maximizing the role of Jambo Baca, the mini library, and literacy walls.
- Conducting further teacher training.
- Expanding digital literacy by incorporating online learning resources.

### ***Supporting and Inhibiting Factors***

#### **a. Supporting Factors**

- SD Negeri Tiro has more comprehensive literacy facilities and better internet access.

- SD Negeri Blang Keudah benefits from a committed principal and teachers who actively run literacy programs.
- b. Inhibiting Factors
  - SD Negeri Blang Keudah faces budget constraints, a lack of books, and no internet access.
  - SD Negeri Tiro still needs to strengthen digital literacy and expand its book collection.

## DISCUSSION

- a. The principal's strategy in driving literacy at SD Negeri Blang Keudah and SD Negeri Tiro reflects the role of educational leadership in improving students' literacy skills. According to Sergiovanni (1987), "Reflective leadership enables school principals to continuously learn, grow, and make wiser and more effective decisions."
- b. SD Negeri Tiro demonstrated stronger innovation in providing literacy facilities than SD Negeri Blang Keudah (Fullan, 2024).
- c. The issue of limited book access aligns with UNESCO's (2024) findings that Indonesia's book supply still falls short of international standards.
- d. SD Negeri Blang Keudah struggles with literacy implementation due to resource limitations (Nasrullah & Asmarini, 2024).
- e. SD Negeri Tiro is better prepared to address literacy challenges due to a more systematic strategy and stronger facility support.
- f. Digital literacy remains a significant challenge for both schools, especially SD Negeri Blang Keudah, which lacks stable internet access.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Conclusions*

1. Strategic Planning: The literacy movement strategies at both schools were adapted to their specific conditions. SD Negeri Blang Keudah focused on habitual reading activities with limited resources, while SD Negeri Tiro emphasized teacher training, digital literacy, and parental involvement. The success of literacy programs depends on the school's conditions and the principal's ability to utilize available resources effectively.
2. Implementation Differences: SD Negeri Blang Keudah faced challenges such as a non-functional library, budget limitations, and no internet access, leading to a resource-based literacy strategy. In contrast, SD Negeri Tiro had better facilities, allowing for technology-based literacy strategies, online reading resources, and strong community involvement.
3. Follow-Up Plans: SD Negeri Blang Keudah needs to improve its library, procure more reading materials, and engage the community to overcome financial and infrastructure limitations. Teacher training should also be enhanced to develop innovative literacy methods despite technological constraints. SD Negeri Tiro should expand technology-based literacy programs and collaborate with external organizations to enrich literacy resources. Both schools need continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure program effectiveness.

4. **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors:** SD Negeri Blang Keudah struggles with poor library facilities, budget constraints, no internet access, and difficult school accessibility. However, strong commitment from principals and teachers supports the literacy initiative. SD Negeri Tiro benefits from better literacy facilities, internet access, and technology-based programs, but maintaining program consistency and stakeholder involvement remains a challenge.

### ***Recommendations***

1. **Enhancing Literacy Programs:** SD Negeri Blang Keudah should focus on improving facilities, teacher training, and parental involvement. SD Negeri Tiro should strengthen technology use and expand community participation to sustain literacy growth.
2. **Increasing Effectiveness:** SD Negeri Blang Keudah should revitalize its library by allocating funds for books and essential facilities. The local government and education department should provide internet access and teacher training. Infrastructure improvements are also crucial. SD Negeri Tiro should further enhance digital reading habits and strengthen parental involvement in literacy programs.
3. **Ensuring Sustainability:** SD Negeri Blang Keudah should renovate its library gradually, seek government, community, and donor support, and introduce more diverse literacy activities involving teachers, students, and parents. SD Negeri Tiro should continue integrating technology in literacy programs and provide teacher training on digital learning tools.
4. **Optimizing Literacy Strategies:** SD Negeri Blang Keudah should explore alternative funding sources, such as government aid or partnerships with literacy communities, to address budget constraints. Despite limited internet access, print materials and environment-based literacy activities can be leveraged. SD Negeri Tiro should maximize technology use in literacy programs and encourage greater participation from teachers and students. Both schools should strengthen collaboration with parents and the community to build a more supportive literacy environment.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

### ***Limitations of the Study***

This study is limited to two primary schools in Kabupaten Pidie, making it difficult to generalize the findings to schools with different socio-economic conditions, educational policies, and infrastructure.

### ***Suggestions for Further Research***

Future studies should conduct a comparative analysis of literacy programs across urban and rural schools to identify adaptable and scalable literacy strategies.

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