

Educational Literacy Assistance and Training for Indonesian Migrant Children in Malaysia

Siti Nur Azizah^{1✉}, Ariel Alvi Zahry², Anika Rahma Putri³, Tiana Amalia Putri⁴, Maya Putri Fadhillah⁵, Putri Ayu Arumsari⁶, Nuraliya Purba⁷, Farras Anoura⁸

¹ Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

¹ Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

² Faculty of Sharia, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

³⁻⁴ Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universitas Airlangga, Indonesia

⁵ Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Universitas Pakuan Bogor, Indonesia

⁶ Education Delegate, Semangat Muda Indonesia Foundation, Indonesia

⁷ Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

⁸ Menlo Park School Jakarta, Indonesia

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✉ Correspondent Author:

Siti Nur Azizah

Faculty of Economics and Business,
Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia

Faculty of Economics and Business,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto,
Indonesia

Email: sitinurazizah@ump.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Reading, writing, and counting are basic abilities that every student must have, especially at the elementary school level. Based on the results of initial observations and direct interviews with relevant community organizations, children have limited skills and abilities in reading, writing, and arithmetic due to certain conditions. This service is here to assist and train children of Indonesian migrant descent who live in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This activity uses the foster sister method or approach, which includes reading, writing, and arithmetic assistance to improve the quality of human resources, especially in education. This educational literacy training can improve people's standard of living. Thus, children have access to knowledge in the fields of education, technology, and information. The results obtained from this activity were an increase in the reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities of children of WMI descent who live in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Introduction

The migration of Indonesian citizens to Malaysia has been going on for a long time, even before the two countries' independence. According to Kassim (2000), Malaysia's rapid economic growth attracted an influx of foreign workers for more than two decades until the

economic crisis in mid-1997. Most foreign migrant workers in the country were from Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. Economic, cultural, religious, and linguistic factors are why many Indonesians migrate to Malaysia, including from Kerinci Regency and

Jambi Province (Niehlah, Jufriansah, Khusnani, Fauzi, & Sari, 2023).

The motivation or encouragement for people to become migrant workers abroad is to increase family income. Apart from large salaries, the destination's attractiveness in the form of similarities in language and culture (Ford, 2006) makes it easier for migrant workers to adapt to the destination country. Kinship networks also play an essential role in encouraging ease of migration (Bieder, 1973; Choldin, 1973; Wahyudi, 2015). This condition is also found in the migration process of Kerinci residents to Malaysia, which continues to this day, including all family members and children (Rosalina & Setyawanta, 2020).

Initially, children were brought on visit visas but continued until they were overstayed. This condition then creates difficulties for migrant children to gain access to education (Christie, 2016; Fauziyah, Amalia, & Kartikasari, 2022; Wardhani et al., 2022). Children brought by their parents or born in Malaysia face various problems, such as needing a residence permit (visa) or birth certificate (Della Amrina Yusra, 2023). As a result, these children's access to educational services is limited. Although educational services are provided by the Indonesian government in the Peninsular Malaysia region through the existence of the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (SIKL), these educational facilities cannot be fully accessed by the children of migrant workers due to human resource constraints (Musli & Yumasdaleni, 2023). The limited number of teachers means children do not receive intensive educational assistance like those in Indonesia (Anam, Munir, & Hidayat, 2022).

Education is one of the pillars of a nation's progress (Mandasari, et al., 2021; Nasucha, et al., 2021; Fuadi, et al., 2023). The better the quality of a nation's education, the better the quality of that nation. Education is prioritized in Indonesia because it is vital to realizing a dignified national civilization (Anam et al., 2022) (Wulan, Wijayanti, & Santoso, 2023). The quality of a nation is determined by the intelligence and knowledge of its population, which results from how much knowledge it obtains, and that knowledge comes from oral and written information (Permatasari, 2015). Literacy culture can also influence the population's quality without needing higher education. *Literacy* is the ability to read and write (Permatasari, 2015) (Aswinda, Hanita, & Simon, 2021; Dewi, 2018).

Based on observations and the social conditions of children descended from migrants living in Peninsular Malaysia, there is a problem of deficiencies in literacy because there are still many children and residents who are not proficient in reading, writing, or arithmetic (Novia, 2023; Azizah et al., 2023). This service aims to educate the generation through programs or training in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This ability is a basic level of knowledge where people can recognize letters and numbers. So, this ability is essential to facilitate communication in written and numerical form (Azizah et al., 2023).



Figure 1. Program Legality under Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL)

Method

This activity begins with applying for local government permits, an initial analysis by visiting the service location, and a discussion with community organizations in Malaysia regarding the children's initial abilities and some of the deficiencies in existing facilities. Preparatory activities begin with an initial discussion with the head of the mass organization regarding the implementation schedule, after which observation activities are carried out. The results of the observation activities are then reported again to find solutions to the problems found during the observation (Latifah & Rahmawati, 2022; Suwarma et al., 2023).



Figure 2. Observation

The implementation of reading writing and counting training consists of three activities: reading, writing, and arithmetic. This training was held from July 17 – 24, 2023, in Peninsular Malaysia and was attended by 45 participants. The training method used is the direct method, namely a direct teaching method to develop learning for the children of migrant workers, which is well structured and can be learned step by step. The Community Service Team provides training in reading, writing, and counting at Sanggar Bimbingan, which is an informal school managed by the head of a Jambi mass organization who lives in Malaysia.

The social empowerment steps taken are as follows:

- ✓ The Community Service Team coordinates with heads of mass organizations regarding implementing training and mentoring to improve children's literacy culture, including procedures, time, and location of implementation.
- ✓ The head of the mass organization directs all residents to gather to participate in the training according to the predetermined schedule.
- ✓ The team made observations about children's literacy abilities.
- ✓ The team guided the importance of reading writing and counting training using a projector.
- ✓ The team teaches the children reading, writing, and arithmetic individually.
- ✓ Provide evaluations or questions to determine the improvement in children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Result and Discussion

Literacy skills are a basic aspect that students must have which are used to absorb various sources of information received. This training activity was conducted for one week, July 17 – 24, 2023. However, before carrying out the reading, writing, and arithmetic training, data was first collected regarding the age and abilities of the children. The data collection results obtained 45 students with limited reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities. This training activity begins with giving a pretest to the participants' reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities. Then, proceed with gradually implementing reading, writing, and arithmetic training (Azizah et al., 2023).



Figure 3. Program Implementation

Reading, writing, and arithmetic training activities play a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual foundation of participants, particularly the children at the Guidance Studio. These activities are meticulously designed to introduce and enhance fundamental skills in a comprehensive and engaging manner. The objective is to create a learning experience that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates a deep understanding of the subjects (Widyastuti et al, 2023).

The initiation of the training revolves around reading exercises, where participants are introduced to the nuances of both capital and lowercase letters. This foundational step is essential in laying the groundwork for more advanced linguistic abilities. The participants progress to spelling letters in a single word, gradually building their proficiency. The subsequent phase involves reading training focused on constructing and comprehending sentences, culminating in the challenging task of reading paragraphs.

Simultaneously, writing training activities are seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. Participants are equipped with essential writing tools such as books, pencils, and erasers. The writing training commences with a systematic approach, teaching participants the art of crafting both uppercase and lowercase letters. Observing the progress, the training advances to the formation of combination letters into coherent sentences. This gradual progression ensures that participants develop a holistic grasp of writing skills.

Further refinement is achieved through the practice of writing words comprised of multiple letters. The intricacies of punctuation mark usage are also elucidated to participants, enhancing their overall writing proficiency. This multifaceted approach ensures that the participants not only master the basics of writing but also comprehend the finer nuances of language structure (Khusnani et al, 2023).

The training regimen extends beyond language skills to encompass numeracy. Numeracy training commences with a comprehensive introduction to numbers, spanning the intricacies of ones, tens, thousands, and beyond (Budiningsih et al,

2022). Participants are enlightened about the conceptual disparity between numbers and numerals, where numbers represent abstract concepts and numerals serve as symbols for these concepts.

The numerical journey continues with an exploration of basic arithmetic operations, namely addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. The symbols associated with each operation are meticulously explained, providing participants with a robust foundation in mathematical operations. Real-life scenarios are integrated into the curriculum to illustrate the practical applications of these operations, enabling participants to seamlessly relate theoretical knowledge to everyday problem-solving.

Counting activities further reinforce numeracy skills, incorporating hands-on mathematical exercises. These activities not only enhance the participants' numerical proficiency but also foster a deeper appreciation for the practical applications of mathematics in their daily lives.

The overarching goal of this holistic training approach is to activate participants, encouraging them to actively engage in reading, writing, and arithmetic activities. By immersing participants in a dynamic and immersive learning environment, the training aims to instill a love for learning and a curiosity for exploring the depths of knowledge.

To gauge the efficacy of the training, a posttest is administered to participants. This evaluation tool serves as a comprehensive measure of the children's reading, writing, and arithmetic abilities post-training. The results are invaluable in assessing the success of the program and identifying areas for further

improvement. Additionally, feedback from participants is actively sought to ensure that the training program remains adaptive and responsive to the evolving needs of the learners.

The reading, writing, and arithmetic training activities at the Guidance Studio represent a holistic and thoughtfully crafted approach to education. By intertwining essential language and numerical skills, the program aims to empower participants with a well-rounded educational foundation that extends beyond rote memorization. Through continuous refinement and assessment, the program strives to create a dynamic learning environment that fosters intellectual curiosity and prepares participants for a lifetime of learning and growth.



Figure 4. Program Documentation

Conclusion

Implementing community service activities through literacy and numeracy training is a strategic initiative to develop quality human resources. In general, this activity was carried out well. The process and results are based on the formulated objectives from the beginning of preparation. In addition, participants' understanding and mastery of the training material presented can be applied directly during the assessment or exam process. The reading and writing skills, as well as the

numeracy skills of the participants, have improved, and some residents have started to get used to reading every day when they see the writing displayed around them. Even though several aspects are inadequate, this activity can be continued by local teachers to improve children's literacy.

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