

Reading movement in community: A study of *Gerakan Buru Membaca*

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ABSTRACT

The Buru Reading Movement (*Gerakan Buru Membaca*) was an initiative of Iqra Buru University community service and developed later into one of the Buru District Government programs, which have been implemented since 2017. The program was designed to improve and promote the community's reading habits in Buru Regency, Maluku, Indonesia. This was a qualitative study aimed at describing the implementation of *Gerakan Buru Membaca* in Buru Regency. The research located in Namlea District because of its relatively high population density and heterogeneity. There were forty people interviewed, and this number was obtained through purposive sampling. We employed an analysis technique proposed by Miles and Huberman. The results revealed that the reading movement received a positive response from the community and the village government. The active role is implemented through the provision of village libraries, study rooms, and study houses of learning available. Furthermore, a mobile library, which was only available in the Namlea Village area, prioritized its services in open or public spaces. In other villages, however, the movement was still in the form of reading and learning spaces provided by the village government, with the participation of the community. Despite the positive response from the community, the movement still experienced several constraints.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Namlea District is the capital of Buru Regency and consists of seven villages and 11 hamlets. The Namlea District area covers 226.55 km² and has the largest population in Buru Regency. According to the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (*Badan Pusat Statistik/BPS*) data for 2018, the population of Namlea District was 34,326, and the population growth rate was 6.26% per year [1]. This has increased the heterogeneity of the Namlea District population [2] and threatens to disrupt community life.

The Buru Regency people are a heterogeneous and increasingly diverse community [3], resulting from the growth of new regions with abundant natural resource potential. The local government developed a program with the Education Board, Iqra Buru University and The Ministry of Education to counteract the negative impacts of the communication development for community life in Buru Regency [4]. The program was aimed at improving the quality of life for the community through education and knowledge. The approach adopted pointed out that reading one book can help the reader understand 10 books and was tested in the Buru Reading Movement (*Gerakan Buru Membaca*) program.

Reading can be considered as a process of understanding a combination of letters and words. It involves identifying words and integrating their meaning into sentences and other language structures [5]. According to previous study, reading is the process of interpreting symbols and imbuing them with meaning [6]. It is an essential and fundamental requirement that every citizen must-read if a country is to become a developed nation [7]. The quality of education can be improved through developing reading culture, and this, in turn, can also improve the quality of human resources within a country [3]. A reading culture encourages lifelong education through reading and can continuously develop a person throughout their life [8]. It is difficult for a nation to achieve progress in this information age if it does not acquire a reading culture [9].

The factors that encourage an interest in reading to emerge are enthusiasm [10], reading is no longer a hobby but has turned into a daily needs [11]. Willingness and increased reading ability also promote the development of a reading habit [12]. The growth of a reading culture can be seen through the habit of reading, which can be encouraged by making interesting and sufficient (in type, number, and quality) reading materials available. This not only develops an interest in reading interest but also develops culture more generally [13].

The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* became a new paradigm for community education and learning in Buru Regency. Making time for reading was neither a new nor a popular trend as it was already encouraged by informal and non-formal learning institutions [14]. The development of technology makes many people use leisure time wisely, especially the opportunity to read. Technology allows children and adolescents to play games and browse social media rather than websites with educational content. This affects their mindset and actions in their everyday lives [9]. Factors underlying the low interest in reading among Indonesian people: cultural factors, the educational environment in the classroom, the pleasure in meeting with friends and engaging in chitchat, the allure of electronic media, and the lack of quality reading materials that are relevant to the needs of readers [15].

Nafisah [16] suggested that the community's low interest in reading was influenced by several factors, including needs priority and the level of needs ranging from the basic needs to the need for one's self-existence. Moreover, the level of needs will gradually increase corresponding to the higher living standards [17]. Indonesian people are still fulfilling primary needs (clothing, food, and shelter). If these basic needs are met, they will gradually feel the need to obtain information, encouraging an interest in reading [18]. Furthermore, there are still not many Indonesian people who regularly spend some of their income to increase their reading collection. If they have any unexpected additional income, they usually consider buying new clothes or more sophisticated cellphones and seldom think of purchasing new books [16].

Reading should be a necessity. This becomes motivation for younger generation to develop human resources and children of the generation excel in a country, as explained by Maslow in Theory of Human Motivation [7]. The primary needs must be fulfilled to reach the highest human need level, it is self-actualization [19]. The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* helps people to self-actualize through learning by reading. The self-actualization achieved by reading is straightforward and can be applied to many people on a large scale.

Throughout the history of humanity, the culture of literacy has been essential for the advancement of civilizations [20]. The spread of literacy encourages people to think critically and review everything around them, and reading is fundamental to the process of learning and intellectual growth [21]. One way to maximize self-potential is by reading. Through reading, various potentials can be well optimized. In this era of globalization, reading is a basic necessity for shaping one's behavior. By reading, a person can obtain additional information and expand his or her knowledge and appreciation of culture [22].

Agustin and Cahyono [23] investigated the effect of the school literacy movement on improvements to the reading culture, or *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* (GLS), at Geger 1 High School. They suggested that the implementation had begun to show results, and some parties, who were the crucial components of the literacy movement, slowly but surely began to show their concern. The *Gerakan Literasi Sekolah* activities took place in the morning, before the first session and the start of teaching and learning activities.

Wibowo [24] asserted that books and reading were two sides of the same coin, or in other words, they were interrelated. Although there were a variety of media to facilitate reading activities, books were still the first choice. Getting used to reading required both a process and a time for reading if it was adopted into everyday life. Environmental factors and lack of facilities greatly affected this process.

To increase the interest in reading in the community and develop a reading society, various activities that can stimulate a love of reading are necessary [13]. This study aimed to analyze the implementation of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* in Namlea Regency to encourage people to have the habit of reading, and even reading becomes a daily necessity. This study described the implementation of the reading movement and explains the benefits for the people of Namlea District. This research can be a motivation for the community and the village government in developing a reading culture through the village library.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in Namlea District, Buru Regency, Maluku, Indonesia. Namlea District was selected as both the population density and the heterogeneity were high compared to other sub-districts in Buru Regency. The 40 people interviewed were selected through purposive sampling [25] and considered related parties to achieve the research objectives [26]. The requirements needed to determine participants in the study include residents of Namlea District based on age, education level, and field of work. The participants were traders, civil servants, students, farmers, and fishers who lived in Namlea District.

The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with each participant in Namlea District and also questionnaire [27], to investigate the implementation of the reading movement program and other supporting factors [28]. The study also sought supplementary information [29] related to the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* run by the government and the community in Namlea District via the internet and literature studies using government documents/archives.

In this study, researchers used qualitative data analysis based on the concepts of Miles and Huberman [30] pointed out that at each stage of the study, the activities in qualitative data analysis are carried out interactively and continuously until the data are saturated. Data analysis involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification [31].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The facilities provided by Buru Regency government to support an interest in reading are shown in Table 1. The availability of reading facilities encouraged and assisted the local government in socializing and implementing the reading movement in the community's daily activities. The mobile library provided book delivery and reading services on site for the Namlea village area; the activity run from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm. The village provided the village library and reading room as places where the community could engage in reading activities. The community took the initiative in creating reading and learning center posts. These were places for school-aged children to engage in intensive learning activities, although these activities also took place in homes and yards.

Table 1. Community learning facilities

| Location | Availability | Activities |
|----------|--|---|
| Namlea | Mobile library/village library/reading posts | Reading activities are carried out in open spaces |
| Lala | Village library | The activities are carried out during business hours |
| Karang | Village reading room/house of learning | People are reading and studying while doing school work |
| Jamilu | Study room | Reading is done in the village office room |
| Siahoni | House of reading/village library | People have study groups, and they meet on a rotating basis at each of the residents' homes |
| Sanleko | House of learning | People read together and have study groups |

Source: The compilation of field research results in January-March 2019

Theoretically, the availability of learning facilities should have increased the community's reading activities. However, the findings in this study revealed that there was not a complete change in the community's reading behavior. School-aged people still dominated reading activities, and the program implementation was not regular, and people met together to chit-chat instead of reading. In implementing the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*, many people were concerned and unsure about what would be achieved by the regional government through the program. This concern results from the increasingly open and uncontrolled access to information and communication through the use of the television or internet, so that makes people prefer to spend time looking for entertainment rather than reading books to get information and knowledge. A study conducted by Kartika and Nugrahanto in Majalengka District found that watching television was more attractive to elementary school students than reading books. The price of books was also relatively high [32]. In another study, Wibowo argued that environmental factors and the lack of facilities greatly affected the inclination to read. It was concluded that the government should provide facilities to support the reading movement community through its literacy program [24].

The local government understood that motivation was the main capital for measuring the success of the program. So, having the motivation to come and spend time reading books was the initial framework for developing a successful reading movement. Intrinsic motivation comes from within a person, which can promote reading [23]. The reason people have low motivation in reading because they are busy with work, so there is no time to read; there is no awareness that the benefits of reading as a necessity are not even accustomed to early on. The existence of this movement is expected to increase people's motivation to read actively. The orientation and impacts of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* activities are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The activities of *Gerakan Buru Membaca*

| Activity description | Target group | Orientation | Expected impact |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Reading in public spaces | Youth, teenagers, children, and parents | Reading activities in leisure time | A more conducive social setting that can be used as a time for reading |
| Reading in the village office | Visitors to the village office, residents | Reading while doing activities in the village office or library | A thirst for information and curiosity |
| Reading at the house of learning | Elementary and middle school students | Reading while doing schoolwork | The motivation of school students to learn and read |

Source: The compilation of field research results in January-March 2019

Table 2 shows that there are changing in activities and impacts from the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*. The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* makes young people, teenagers, and children take advantage of their free time by reading books in public places to impact social conditions that are conducive to reading. The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* is carried out at the village office with a target for visitors to the village office and residents to read, so it is hoped to increase people's curiosity to get various information from the books they read. Furthermore, elementary and junior high school students are accustomed to reading at home to study so that they are reading and can also do school assignments so that students not only work to read but also study hard. The activities listed in Table 2 show the change from a habit to a culture. The process begins with something that is often or commonly done and eventually becomes a habit or culture. In addition to the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* activities, the distribution pattern of books and supporting facilities was an essential element in the program's success.

Table 3 describes the distribution of books and facilities for the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*. The table shows that there are six distribution locations of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* areas: Namlea, Lala, Karang, Jamilu, Siahoni, and Sanleko. Based on books distributed throughout the region, the largest distributor of types of textbooks, then other types of books such as biography, interpretation, scientific, encyclopedia, novel, anthology, and comics. Meanwhile, the supporting facilities distributed are cars, flexible reading tables, folding chairs, plastic chair, bookshelf, and round tables.

Table 3. The distribution of books and facilities

| Location | Book subjects | Percentage | Supporting facilities |
|----------|----------------|------------|--|
| Namlea | Text | 43% | Cars, flexible reading tables, folding chairs |
| | Scientific | 11% | |
| | Dictionary | 4% | |
| | Interpretation | 17% | |
| | Biography | 25% | |
| Lala | Text | 51% | Reading desk, plastic chair, bookshelf |
| | Anthology | 12% | |
| | Encyclopedia | 9% | |
| | Comics | 13% | |
| | Novel | 15% | |
| Karang | Biography | 21% | Bookshelves, round tables, and folding chairs |
| | Text | 70% | |
| | Comics | 9% | |
| Jamilu | Text | 65% | Bookshelves, reading tables and folding chairs |
| | Novel | 10% | |
| | Dictionary | 5% | |
| | Interpretation | 20% | |
| Siahoni | Text | 85% | Chairs and reading tables |
| | Comics | 15% | |
| Sanleko | Text | 64% | Chairs and reading tables |
| | Comics | 16% | |
| | Biography | 20% | |

Source: The compilation of field research results in January-March 2019

The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* provided sources of information and knowledge for the community by distributing books and providing supporting facilities. These sources and facilities help the movement to increase the knowledge of the community, leading to a more progressive mindset following the orientation and purpose of the movement. The existing book collection facilitated the village government and implementers of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*. They would be able to participate in education and instill moral and religious values in the community.

Reading is a process of converting symbols/signs/writing into meaningful sounds. Therefore, reading is largely determined by physical and mental activities requiring someone to actively and critically

interpret written symbols as a pattern of communication that enables the reader to understand the writer's meaning and obtain the information needed [33]. The main focus of *Gerakan Buru Membaca* was to provide a collection of reading materials, together with services to support reading and opportunities to socialize.

In several discussions with the implementing participants of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*, the basic description of the implementation strategy was revealed: i) This movement was implemented to build interest in reading and learning; ii) Involving all stakeholders from villages to districts as a network; iii) To strengthen the movement and; iv) Stimulate the community to spend time reading, both in their work and in their recreational activities. Implicitly, the movement was implemented to make reading a relaxing activity, keep the brain sharp, prevent illness, and prolong life.

In addition to the various socialization activities and reading support services fostering the community's reading interest, the role of family, community, and surroundings were also important. Parents have a crucial role in fostering their children's interest in reading. To make people keen on reading and to make it a daily necessity, the role of parents is unquestionably to introduce books to children at an early age and make them accustomed to reading and retelling stories about the books they read. This must be practiced repeatedly and continuously; hoping that the child will develop a love of reading and carry on reading into adulthood. In this way, they will consider reading as a necessity, not just a hobby [32].

There needed to be a synergy between parents and the available facilities provided by the reading movement to achieve increased public interest in reading and the creation of a positive stimulus for brain development and thinking. Learning is a process of alteration in human personality, and it is manifested in improved behavior, videlicet improving skills, knowledge, attitudes, habits, understanding, thinking power, and other abilities. Reading, as an activity, involves two things: i) The reader, which implies the existence of understanding; and ii) The text, which implies the existence of a writer. The essence of reading is skill development, starting from understanding words, sentences, and paragraphs to critically understanding and evaluating the entire content of the reading material. Furthermore, the visual activity of reading is a series of eye movements in following lines of writing, concentrating one's sight on a word and groups of words, and reviewing a word and groups of words to gain an understanding. Observing, understanding, and giving meaning to written words are based on the knowledge and experience of the reader [34].

To add insight and knowledge about the *Gerakan Buru Membaca*, reading becomes a thought process occurring through perceiving and understanding information and giving meaning to written words. The reader processes the information by using clues while reading, relevant knowledge, and experience. The process connects the writing with the sounds following the writing system used. Reading is not just a mechanical activity but an activity to capture the meaning of groups of words [34]. Table 4 shows the community's interpretation of the effects of implementing *Gerakan Buru Membaca* in the five research locations.

Table 4. The interpretation of *Gerakan Buru Membaca* implementation activities

| Location | Interpretation |
|----------|--|
| Namlea | People are getting used to reading in open spaces; relaxing activities are filled with reading. Teenagers and students were seen participating in discussions and reading activities in open spaces. |
| Lala | The residents visiting the village officials were not only handling administrative problems but also reading books. |
| Karang | School-age children often gather in the village reading room; besides telling stories and playing, they also read books available in the room. |
| Jamilu | The activities of the village office residents increased with the presence of school-age teenagers having learning activities in the village office. |
| Siahoni | The children's activities in learning and reading are more visible with the frequent gathering in the house of learning to do schoolwork. |
| Sanleko | Children and adolescents' learning activities are increasingly focused on the house of learning. |

Source: The compilation of field research results in January-March 2019

Table 4 reveals that the factors driving the growth of reading interests were enthusiasm and reading becoming a hobby, and the willingness and ability to read. The growth of a reading culture comes from reading developing into a habit maintained by the availability of sufficient (in type, number, quality), interesting reading materials [13]. Developing a reading culture does not only need books and reading rooms but also needs the development of thoughts and behavior. Consequently, a generation that dislikes and is not familiar with reading needs to change into a generation that loves reading. This will encourage creativity and knowledge transfer to take place and develop [32].

The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* developed a reading culture in Namlea District, with the long-term goal of developing human resources that have both knowledge and understanding of information and science. The implementation of *Gerakan Buru Membaca* in Namlea District was an effort made by the government and stakeholders to improve the quality of community life. Through the movement, it was expected that the

thinking and analytical skills, insight, and community knowledge would be improved. Furthermore, it was expected to create a positive stimulus for the ways of thinking and actions of Namlea District community. Support and positive responses from the village government and community leaders made it easier to implement the reading movement. The focus of the movement was to increase public interest in reading. Achieving the orientation and objectives was a manifestation of the hard work of the movement's implementers, who aimed to attract the community to reading, visit the village library and study houses, use all the facilities provided, and read to realize an intelligent community.

4. CONCLUSION

The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* becomes a new paradigm for community education and learning in Buru Regency. *Gerakan Buru Membaca* movement is very important to foster a culture of reading literacy for the community. This study analyzed the implementation of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* in Namlea District to encourage people to have a habit of reading, even reading into daily needs. This study explained the implementation of the reading movement and explains its benefits for the people of the Namlea Regency. The *Gerakan Buru Membaca* received a positive response from the community and the village government. People become motivated in cultivating reading through the village library. Buru District Government provides facilities to support people's reading interests such as the provision of cellular libraries, village libraries, village reading rooms, study rooms, reading home libraries, learning houses. The existence of this movement is expected to increase the motivation of the community to read actively.

Through this movement, it is expected that people can have thinking and analytical skills, insights, and knowledge. The obstacles faced in the implementation of the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* need to get attention from all parties so that the *Gerakan Buru Membaca* can run well with the support of the village government, community leaders, and the community to be able to cultivate reading in daily life to realize an intelligent society.





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