

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed the background of the study, rationale, the urgency of study, study research question

1.1 Background of the Study

Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write, possessing linguistic competence, or being skilled in reading and writing. The concept of literacy, depending on its context of use, involves the integration of writing skills, reading abilities, and critical thinking (Purwati, 2017; Dwi, 2021).

Gee, as cited in Chairunnisa (2018), defines literacy from the perspective of discourse as "mastery of, or fluent control over, a secondary discourse." Gee further explains that literacy involves a person's proficiency in activities such as thinking, reading, writing, and speaking. In other words, literacy encompasses skillful engagement in a specific set of language practices and communication patterns (Chairunnisa, 2018; Dwi, 2021).

Traditionally, literacy was understood as the ability to read, write, and count. This ancient understanding of literacy deemed a person literate if they could read, write, and count. However, with the development of culture and improvements in living standards, this definition of literacy has become obsolete (Endarta, 2017).

Furthermore, UNESCO also defines literacy as "the ability to recognize, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and calculate using print and written materials that are relevant to various backgrounds." Literacy involves continuous learning to enable individuals to achieve their goals, expand their knowledge and potential, and participate fully in their community and freer society (Montoya, 2018).

Early literacy is the ability of early childhood to read, write, and count. Early childhood literacy skills are developed and learned in the family and social environment. The importance of literacy in the digital era for early childhood education needs to be appreciated. This study aims to explain the pattern of literacy development in early childhood. The research method used is qualitative. Data is described in written form by providers (i.e., facilitator, parents, principal, and observable behavior). The findings show that early literacy through the production of storybooks has an impact on accelerating language development in early childhood (Mardiyah et al., 2020).

According to the stages of literacy learning in elementary school children (Soebadi, 2013), in children aged 6-7 years or the first grade of primary school, children read more words. They begin to recognize words without having to spell them first and understand the meaning of most of the words and sentences they read. In the middle of the freshman year, they could read simple books by themselves. In children aged 7-8 years, they read words and sentences, expanding their vocabulary and knowledge of the world around them. They can read aloud with expression and already have a preference for their favorite book or story. By the end of this period, usually, the child can already read independently and fluently. In children aged 8 years and above, they are already proficient in using reading skills to learn inside and outside of school.

Apart from the above understanding, early literacy does not only mean teaching small children how to read, but instead, it means helping kids develop the skills they need to be successful shoppers. Early literacy activities develop rich language skills: vocabulary, self-expression, and comprehension. This ability helps children understand the printed words when they start reading. Children's librarians have highlighted five early literacy practices that help prepare children to read. Here are five early literacy exercises, along with some activities you can do with

your child to develop their language skills: playing, singing, reading, speaking, writing (Lexington, 2023).

Kampus Mengajar is part of the teaching and learning activities of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program and aims to provide opportunities for students to learn and develop themselves through activities outside the classroom. The Teaching Campus aims to have an impact on strengthening literacy and numeracy learning in schools by working with teachers and schools to develop learning models that develop students in a range of specific knowledge and skills, and foster creativity and innovation in learning. This program opens space for students to apply their skills and knowledge to assist students in basic education. This program provides opportunities for students to realize their interests, passions, and aspirations. Additionally, it is hoped that students can inspire other students to expand their ideals and knowledge (Merdeka, 2022).

Teachers' perceptions play a critical role in shaping their teaching methodologies, curricular choices, and interactions with students. A teacher's perception of literacy practice goes beyond mere technicalities; it encompasses a comprehensive understanding of its cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions. For elementary school teachers participating in Kampus Mengajar, these perceptions influence how they design and execute literacy-focused lessons, cultivate a reading culture, and integrate language arts across subjects. Positive perceptions can lead to innovative and engaging teaching strategies, while negative perceptions might hinder the development of well-rounded literacy skills.(Irfan & Al-Amin, 2022).

1.2 Rationale

This study focuses on teachers' perceptions of literacy practices at an elementary school during the Kampus Mengajar program. The research is based on the experiences of the author while participating in the campus teaching program. The author were assigned to teach at SDN 3 Tegalbug, where they also conducted this study. The aim of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions of literacy learning during campus teaching activities and to determine if this program can help increase literacy in schools. This is important as literacy issues still need to be addressed in Indonesia. According to the 2019 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey published by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Indonesia is ranked 62nd out of 70 countries, placing it among the bottom 10 countries in terms of literacy rates (PMK, 2021).

1.3 The Urgency of Study

The urgency of this study lies in understanding how teachers perceive literacy learning during the Kampus Mengajar program. According to the National Institute for Literacy, literacy encompasses a person's ability to write, read, speak, solve problems, and perform calculations - essential skills needed in society and work. As previously explained, based on a survey conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019, Indonesia ranks 62nd out of 70 countries, placing it among the bottom 10 countries with low literacy rates. This low literacy level is attributed to the lack of interest in reading among students and the relatively unfamiliar reading culture in Indonesian society.

The Kampus Mengajar program holds the potential to contribute to the development of literacy in Indonesia through student participation. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) has high hopes that this program Would positively impact literacy in the country. Numerous studies have examined how teachers perceive literacy initiatives in schools. Thus, the author aim to

investigate teachers' perceptions of literacy learning in elementary schools during the Kampus Mengajar program and whether these perceptions can influence literacy development. The focus of this study is on understanding a teacher's perception of literacy learning during the Kampus Mengajar program.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the background of the study above, The questions that Would be discussed in this study can be stated as follow:

1. What are the teachers perception regarding to early literacy practice implementation at elementary school?
2. What challenges do the teachers face during the implementation reading at elementary school?