

# ***The Real Contribution of The Pinjam Pustaka Literacy Community in Developing Children's Interest in Reading in Sorong City***

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**Abstract.** This research aims to find out the real contribution of the Pinjam Pustaka literacy community in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong City. This research is descriptive qualitative type. This method is used because it can emphasize the search for meaning, the description of phenomena, and is presented in narrative form. The source of data in this research is in the form of statements submitted by the founder and volunteers of Pinjam Pustaka about the role or contribution of Pinjam Pustaka in developing children's interest in reading. The results obtained in this study are that Pinjam Pustaka takes various concrete steps in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong, such as providing quality and diverse reading materials. Pinjam Pustaka also does not close itself in terms of its literacy movement, but rather opens space for collaboration with various parties. On the other hand, in its literacy efforts, Pinjam Pustaka also experiences obstacles such as the availability of resources, because it is considered quite overwhelmed in serving the increasing number of visitors.

**Keywords:** Literacy Community, Borrow Library, Reading Interest, Sorong.

## **INTERFERENCE**

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## INTRODUCTION

Literacy activists who are members of a community do not escape the challenges of mobilising children's and communities' interest in reading. One of the challenges is the low level of community participation and awareness. There are also many parents who do not fully realise the importance of literacy in their children's development (Vidiawati 2019). Access to reading materials is also a serious obstacle for literacy activists, especially in literacy communities with limited resources, both funds and physical access to libraries or bookstores. Limited quality or uninteresting reading materials can also be a barrier as children need relevant and interesting books to spark their interest in reading. (Lila Pelita Hati, Lestari Dara Cinta Utami Ginting, and Vanesia Amelia Sebayang 2023).

In addition, the involvement of parents and teachers is often less than optimal (Putri Pradana 2020). In fact, collaboration between parents and educational institutions is very important in forming a solid foundation of children's literacy. Technological challenges, such as the dominance of electronic media, also contribute to the decline in children's interest in reading. Cultural and environmental factors are also very influential in supporting the development of children's literacy. These external factors are still found in the midst of literacy activists' efforts to create a culture of literacy. On the other hand, (Sari 2018) revealed that there are factors that affect students' interest in reading from within themselves. This factor is the inability of children or the community to practice reading. Their inability or lack of fluency in reading is another cause of students' or children's lack of interest in reading.

These internal and external problems have become commonplace in any literacy community. In Sorong City itself, as one of the cities in Indonesia, literacy communities sometimes face the same thing. However, some are complicated, some are semi-complicated, or some are just minor obstacles. Therefore, the existence and role of literacy communities in a region becomes very strategic in the effort to increase children's interest in reading (Sofyan et al. 2023). Especially if you look at the facts in 2020, based on the results of the BPS survey, as quoted by (Suryaningtyas 2021), shows that West Papua's human development index is at 65.09 or second to last before Papua Province. The people of West Papua, especially those in peripheral areas, are still far from being well-educated. In general, in Papua (Papua and West Papua Provinces), the data above shows that there are still some people who are less literate. As a form of response to the above conditions, one of the literacy communities in Sorong City, Southwest Papua, namely Pinjam Pustaka, has made many breakthroughs as a form of their efforts and contributions in creating a culture of literacy, especially in Sorong City. Pinjam Pustaka is a community that was born from a sense of concern for children who have minimal interest in reading. Pinjam Pustaka invites and accommodates school children and those who are not willing to learn. Pinjam Pustaka was born to facilitate children who want to learn to read for free. Pinjam Pustaka creates a comfortable atmosphere for children. The visitors are presented with varied reading materials, which can make the visitors not get bored quickly. (Putri Pradana 2020)

said that children's low interest in reading is caused by the high price of books and limited library facilities.

*Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community comes together with other literacy communities in Sorong City as one of the responses to the awareness of the importance of literacy in advancing society. *Pinjam Pustaka* was also born out of a widespread understanding of the importance of literacy as a key to success in modern life. This awareness includes the understanding that literacy is not just about reading and writing, but also deep critical thinking skills (Damayantie 2015). Even more so when it comes to the 3T areas. Problems such as low reading levels or limited access to literacy resources encouraging the *Pinjam Pustaka* community to continue to collaborate in overcoming these problems (Sari 2018). *Pinjam Pustaka* realises that alleviating literacy poverty cannot be in the hands of one element alone, but there must be participation-collaboration from all parties. Be it schools, families, government, scholars, and other related parties.

Some of the facts of the problem above are the reason for researchers to see the extent of the contribution of the *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong City. What kind of efforts are made in dealing with the obstacles faced. Then from the background above gave birth to three questions in this study: 1. How is the contribution of *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community in increasing children's interest in reading in Sorong City? 2. What is the role of the government in terms of collaboration with the *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community, in forming a sustainable literacy ecosystem in Sorong City? 3. What are the obstacles experienced by *Pinjam Pustaka* in its efforts to develop children's interest in reading in Sorong City?

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research aims to analyse the real contribution of *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong City, as well as to find out the forms of collaboration between *Pinjam Pustaka* and related parties in forming a sustainable literacy ecosystem in Sorong City. Likewise, the obstacles and efforts made by *Pinjam Pustaka* in developing children's interest in reading. This research is a descriptive qualitative research with the research subjects being the founder of *Pinjam Pustaka*, *Pinjam Pustaka* volunteers, and visitors (children). This research was conducted at *Pinjam Pustaka* Community Reading Garden located at Ruko Toki-Toki, second floor, Maleo Street, Kampung Pisang, Sorong City, Southwest Papua. Data collection techniques by means of interviews, observation and documentation. With these three steps, researchers gained in-depth insights into the role, practices and challenges faced by the *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong City. Data analysis techniques include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. Based on the data collected, it is then described and analysed.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Contribution of Pinjam Pustaka Literacy Community to Increase Children's Reading Interest

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community has a significant contribution in increasing children's interest in reading with various forms of activities and initiatives carried out. One form of contribution is through providing access to a variety of reading materials. (Setiawati and Mahmud 2020) stated that the provision of varied reading materials plays an important role in increasing children's interest in reading. The availability of books with a variety of genres, themes and difficulty levels can create an interesting and fulfilling literacy experience for children. First of all, variety in reading materials allows children to explore different types of stories and information according to their personal interests and preferences. This not only broadens their worldview but also gives them the freedom to choose books according to their interests.

In relation to Setiawati and Mahmud's statement, the *Pinjam Pustaka* literacy community has provided various types of children's reading books. *Pinjam Pustaka* can be said to have a complete collection of reading materials. Not only that, *Pinjam Pustaka* is also very selective in providing reading materials for children. They filter the books that enter the reading room. They provide and accept books that are child-friendly.

*'Books, we have a large collection. And most of them are quality books. There are child-friendly books here, English books, Indonesian books. There are also novels here, but they are child-friendly novels. Not just any book is available here'. (Interview with Pinjam Pustaka volunteer, November 2022).*

That's how a literacy community should be. Trying to attract visitors with strategic measures, such as a complete collection of reading materials. Thus, visitors do not quickly feel bored and saturated to come to read and learn. This is corroborated by (Affandi 2017) which states that, a *Taman Baca Masyarakat* needs to develop approaches and strategies in increasing interest in reading. Steps that can be taken include providing reading materials that are tailored to the interests and talents of visitors.

In addition, a variety of reading materials helps to tailor reading to children's reading readiness and ability levels. For example, books with varying difficulty levels allow children to choose books that match their reading ability, which in turn increases their confidence in reading. This has also been a concern for the literacy community *Pinjam Pustaka*. *Pinjam Pustaka* is well aware of the condition of the children who frequent the library. So, when determining reading materials, in addition to paying attention to child-friendly books, *Pinjam Pustaka* also categorises reading materials by age level. For example, providing books that are physically thick, have large letters, and are not easily damaged (torn). This is because *Pinjam Pustaka's* visitors come from different age levels.

*'Maybe it's more about the type. For toddlers, the books are thick, we have them here, which are not easily damaged, like pop up books'. (Interview with Pinjam Pustaka volunteer, November 2022).*

Reading materials that are tailored to children's age and development can also stimulate their interest because they can be more easily understood and relevant to their life stages (Ikawati 2013). Furthermore, variety in reading materials helps to create a dynamic and interesting literacy environment. For example, picture books, or as mentioned by the Pinjam Pustaka volunteer above, pop up books. Pop up books, as stated by (Siregar A 2016) can provide enjoyment for young children. Because when reading pop up books, children can imagine and interact with what they read. Thus, children become not just reading, but at the same time carrying out the reasoning process. Because, in principle, reading activities must be able to develop the reader's reasoning because reading is a process of integrating the information obtained by the reader from the text he reads with his knowledge and opinions (Mertosono 2023).

It is also important to understand that children have different interests and learning styles. By providing a variety of reading materials, literacy communities give each child the opportunity to find books that suit their needs and preferences. Therefore, Pinjam Pustaka's actions are appropriate as it actively seeks to provide a rich and diverse collection of books to stimulate children's interest in reading and guide them towards a lifelong love of literacy. Realising children's love for literacy requires concrete steps that are manifested in the form of activities. At a different time, the author had the opportunity to ask the founder of Pinjam Pustaka, Dayu Rifanto. Mas Dayu is a literacy activist who has a high concern for the development of community education in Sorong Raya, Southwest Papua. Dayu Rifanto talked about the contribution of Pinjam Pustaka in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong.

*'The first and foremost is to ensure children's access to good reading materials. So far, we have consistently opened every Saturday since its establishment in January 2021. This means that by consistently opening, visitors feel certain that they can read, or borrow books at the reading park. Because of this certainty, on average every month we have 50 to 80 visitors, which means that in a year there are 600 to 960 visitors in total who visit. Not only that, there are also regular borrowers who often come to borrow books every month, although the number is not large, 3-5 visitors only. Still related to access, so far there are 1000s of children's reading books available at the @pinjampustaka reading park, where books starting from the early reader level are available' (Interview with the founder of Pinjam Pustaka in June 2023).*

With such consistency, *Pinjam Pustaka* is expected to increase children's interest in reading and help them to develop good reading and writing skills. In addition, *Pinjam Pustaka* can also help improve the quality of education and literacy in society as a whole.

### **Library Lending Activities in Developing Children's Reading Interest**

Pinjam Pustaka literacy community is also relatively consistent in organising various activities that can increase children's interest in reading in Sorong Raya, such as book talks, reading together, and others. Activities like these can help children to be more interested and engaged in reading, and improve their reading and writing skills (Syafriana 2020). Based on Dayu Rifanto's explanation, there are several types of activities that are routinely held by Pinjam Pustaka in its efforts to increase children's interest in reading in Sorong Raya.

*'Promotion of Literacy in the community, to do this, there are storytelling activities that are routinely organised interspersed with other activities. There is #MariMendongeng which focuses on storytelling and reading stories, carried out online and offline. There is also #MariMembacaBersama, this is a silent reading activity conducted online, and targets anyone (broadly, not only those who live in Sorong), this continues with the #marimembacilik class, where this is a reading class attended by only children, and held online. Another activity is #sahabatpena, which is currently running for the second time with Kak Tarlen Handayani, an artist and community activist in Yogyakarta. This is not to mention other incidental activities'.*

*'In our activities, we also involve other communities, collaborating. Not only that, we also distribute reading donations to those in need, especially when there are reading books that we feel we already have, or there are donors who want us to forward their donations to other reading park colleagues in Sorong'.*

*'Actually, another important thing is that pinjampustaka becomes a learning space for volunteers to explore literacy issues, in a consistent space, every Saturday open. These spaces become learning spaces, preparing volunteers for their role in the community. We know, spaces like this are rare in Sorong'. (Interview with the Founder of Pinjam Pustaka in June 2023).*

### **Forms of cooperation in developing children's interest in reading**

The cooperation of the literacy community is very important in developing children's interest in reading. The literacy community must have the support of various parties, such as parents, teachers, local government, libraries and other community organisations, who care about children's education and literacy. They work together to provide easy and open access for children to read and access quality books (Pamungkas 2023).

*'Until now, our capital is cooperation, because with that, many problems can be overcome. This cooperation is not only with any community or initiative in Sorong, but also outside Sorong. This cooperation is non-binding and fluid, we are greatly helped by the social media we have. That way, there are many learning opportunities, networking, reading support, knowledge that we get. So far, those who have worked together, either helping us, or us learning from them include: BTS Army Indonesia Fans Club, Indorelawan, RRI Sorong, CWM, Vreemla, LSS Reboeng, TBM Forum (both in Sorong, and central), Literacy Forum of Sorong*

Raya, Library Office of Sorong Regency, Kidcreastory (Singapore), Ayo Dongeng Indonesia, etc.' (Interview with the Founder of Pinjam Pustaka in June 2023).

### **Barriers Faced by Pinjam Pustaka in Developing Children's Interest in Reading**

In trying to develop children's interest in reading, a literacy community will inevitably experience obstacles, both internal and external. This is also the case for Pinjam Pustaka. The lack of human resources (tutors, teachers or volunteers) is one of the obstacles that a literacy community must overcome immediately (Silitonga, Damayanti Istiningih, and Ester Djerumpun 2023).

*'Personally, there are no obstacles, but when there are many children, that's the only obstacle. Because the children come in waves. If they come one by one, it's okay. But if five-five and so on, well'.* (Interview with Pinjam Pustaka volunteer in November 2022).

These barriers are not too serious. Considering that many literacy communities experience obstacles, such as the lack of a collection of reading materials and space facilities. Therefore, the obstacles experienced by Pinjam Pustaka in developing children's interest in reading in Sorong, Southwest Papua are expected to be overcome soon. Of course, with the cooperation of various parties. Because talking about alleviating the lack of children's interest in reading requires attention from various parties, parents, government, society, and other communities.

### **CONCLUSION**

*Pinjam Pustaka* has taken concrete steps in improving children's interest in reading in Sorong, such as providing a variety of quality reading materials, organising various literacy activities, and collaborating with various parties. Cooperation with literacy communities, parents, government and other communities is very important in developing children's interest in reading. Support from various parties helps to create a sustainable literacy ecosystem.

Despite its best efforts, *Pinjam Pustaka* is inevitably faced with various obstacles, such as the availability of resources and other supporting facilities. However, with good co-operation and collaboration, many problems can be overcome. In developing children's interest in reading in Sorong, *Pinjam Pustaka* takes various concrete steps, such as providing various types of children's reading books. *Pinjam Pustaka* can be said to have a complete collection of reading materials. Not only that, Pinjam Pustaka is also very selective in providing reading materials for children. They filter the books that enter the reading room. They provide and accept books that are child-friendly.

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