

Literation Abilities of Elementary School Students in Kupang District, NTT Based on Five Basic Reading Skills NTT

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the literacy level of elementary school children from grade 1 to grade 3 in Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) based on four basic literacy skills, namely: (1) letter knowledge; (2) vocabulary or vocabulary; (3) reading fluency; (4) reading comprehension. The status of this research is a collaboration between the Nusa Cendana University Research Institute and the Sayangi Tunas Cilik Foundation (YSTC) Kupang. The study was conducted at 56 elementary schools spread over 7 sub-districts in Kupang Regency, NTT. The study population was 5085 children. Sampling of children in this study used the Slovin formula with an error rate of 2%. Samples were taken of as many as 1678 children. Data on children's literacy skills were taken using standardized tools from YSTC. These tools are already available in the form of a digital questionnaire. Data collection using a tablet with a face-to-face interview method (1 child with 1 enumerator). As many as 60% of children in the lower grades (grades I, II, III) of Elementary Schools in Kupang Regency are able to read. The specific findings of this study: (1) girls have higher literacy skills in the five basic literacy skills. (2) the role of the mother is more dominant in helping children read at home. (3) the higher the level (grade) the smaller the difference in literacy skills between boys and girls.

Keywords

ability; literacy; basic reading skills



I. Introduction

Indonesia is a country with a very low literacy rate. The results of the evaluation of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 released Tuesday 3 December 2021 showed that Indonesia's reading score was ranked 72 out of 77 countries, Mathematics scores ranked 72 out of 78 countries, and Science scores ranked 70. from 78 countries. PISA 2018 was attended by 79 countries with a total of 600 thousand participants. Among Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia is at the bottom with the Philippines. Another variable that worsens the literacy skills of Indonesian children is the lack of time to study at home. Indonesian children spend more time watching television. Data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the amount of time Indonesian children spend watching television is 300 minutes per day. This number is too large compared to children in Australia only 150 minutes per day and in America only 100 minutes per day. While in Canada 60 minutes per day. (Very Low Indonesian Literacy; republica.co.id, Monday 15 Dec 2014 14:00 WIB). Based on the "Most Littered Nation in the World" study conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia was ranked 60th out of 61 countries in terms of ideal reading time. Indonesia is behind Thailand (59) and above Botswana (61).

Literacy skills are the entrance to mastery of science and technology. According to Pramusinto (2020) the power of technology including digitalization and automation continues to grow and change the pattern of production, distribution, and consumption. As with other areas of life, technology is used to make changes, so also with the legal system as technology in making changes (Hartanto, 2020). Meanwhile, the use of information technology is the benefit expected by users of information systems in carrying out their duties where the measurement is based on the intensity of utilization, the frequency of use and the number of applications or software used (Marlizar, 2021). The Indonesian government recognizes the importance of literacy. Such awareness is explicitly stated in Permendikbud No. 21 and No.23 of 2015 concerning the School Literacy Movement (GLS). In fact, the School Literacy Movement is a development of Permendikbud No. 21 of 2015 concerning the movement of character building in schools. In 2016, the Directorate of Elementary School Development published the GLS Guidebook for Educators, Principals, and Education Personnel. The GLS Handbook is a guide for all stakeholders in the school environment to revive the literacy climate. However, efforts to improve the literacy skills of elementary school students are not only the responsibility of the government, but also the responsibility of all parties, including non-governmental organizations. Synergy and collaboration of all parties is very urgent to improve the literacy skills of elementary school students.

This research is in collaboration with the non-governmental organization Save the Children Indonesia to determine children's ability to read and understand reading. This basic research has been conducted from April 1 – April 13, 2019 in Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. The data collection process in this study was carried out by the Research Team from the Institute for Research and Community Service, University of Nusa Cendana. This survey was conducted to find out as early as possible the literacy ability of children in East Nusa Tenggara Province. Lerner (2000) shows evidence that children who are given early intervention, these children can catch up and can develop like other children. This is closely related to the nature of the development of the human brain. The human brain experiences rapid development when individuals are in the age range 0-5 years. During this time, the nerve nodes in the brain develop very rapidly and are interconnected with one another (Huttenlocher in Lerner, 2000).

II. Research Methods

This research is descriptive quantitative. Data collection is done through the survey method. The survey was conducted in 56 elementary schools spread over 7 sub-districts in Kupang Regency (East Nusa Tenggara Province). These schools are Save the Children partners. The population of children in this study were all children in grades 1, 2, and 3 as many as 5085 children (2611 boys and 2474 girls). Sampling using the Slovin formula with an error rate of 2%. Thus, the sample of children taken was 1678 children. technique Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling to obtain the number of samples in each class and each gender.

The children's survey uses tools that have been standardized by Save the Children (StC) Indonesia. Tools are already available in the form of digital questionnaires. Data collection using a tablet with a face-to-face interview (one child with one enumerator). Data collection on children's literacy skills is based on five basic children's reading skills, namely letter knowledge, phoneme recognition, vocabulary, reading fluency, reading comprehension (StC, 2018).

The data that has been collected will be uploaded to the Kobo server. After all the data is complete, the dataset will be downloaded from the server in the form of xls. Next, the data was cleaned, followed by the calculation of scores for each child's reading ability from the letter recognition level to reading comprehension. The next step, the data is tabulated in the form of a frequency distribution table to find out how many children are able to meet 5 levels of literacy, with the following indicators:

Table 1. Indicators of Literature

COMPONENTS	ASSESSMENT
1 RESEARCH Most frequently used Accuracy of reading a reading % readers Reading fluency Reading Comprehension	Table words % of words read accurately (20 words in total) % of readings read accurately (100 words in total) % children who are able to read a minimum of 5 words in 30 seconds. Average number of words read accurately in 60 seconds by readers. % of the average comprehension questions answered correctly by readers.

III. Discussion

3.1 Results

a. Geography and Demographic

Regency Kupang Regency is one of the regencies in the province East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. The district capital was located in Oelamasi from 22 October 2010. Previously, the capital city of Kupang Regency was located in Kupang City since 1958. Initially, the Kupang Regency Government wanted to build it in the small town of Sulamu, which is 70 kilometers to the Northeast of Kupang City. The population of Kupang Regency in 2020 is 366,383 people, with a density of 69 people/km².

Topographically, Kupang Regency has a tropical & dry climate, tends to be influenced by wind and is categorized as a *semi-arid area*, due to relatively low rainfall, the vegetation condition is dominated by savanna and steppes. Dry season is 7-8 months. While the rainy season is relatively short (3-5) months per year. The highest rainfall is in South Amfoang District. This climatic condition certainly affects the farming and farming patterns of the people of Kupang Regency. Only 3% or 7,453 ha of the total area of Kupang Regency is dry paddy land. The rest, 97% or about 572,365 ha is dry land in the yard or moor.

The topography of Kupang Regency is mountainous and hilly with a slope of up to 45 degrees. The soil surface is critical and bare, so it is sensitive to erosion. However, on the expanse of the lowlands it is fertile and wide land where the population of Kupang Regency is usually concentrated. Topography like this causes physical isolation, economic isolation, and social isolation. Moreover, poor infrastructure (roads and bridges) in some sub-districts makes some areas difficult to access. This situation affects the prices of goods and services. On certain islands the price of goods tends to be expensive (<https://kupangkab.go.id/hal-profil-kabupaten-kupang.html>).

Kupang Regency has a land area of 7,178.26 square kilometers and is the largest area in East Nusa Tenggara Province. Kupang Regency covers 15.16 percent of the total land area of NTT. Kupang Regency is located between 9°19 – 10°57 South Latitude and 121°30 – 124°11

East Longitude. The boundaries of this district are as follows: North with Sawu Sea and Ombai Strait, West with Kupang City, Rote Ndao Regency, Sabu Raijua Regency and Sawu Sea, South with Indian Ocean and East with South Central Timor Regency and the State of Timor Leste. By sub-district, until 2017, the district was divided into 24 sub-districts. Takari has the widest area of 9.59 percent of the total area of Kupang Regency (5,298.13 km²). Kupang Regency, until 2016, consisted of 24 sub-districts, 160 villages and 17 sub-districts.

In 2017, there were 362 SD (State and Private), 158 SMP (State and Private). In 2016, there were 80 SMA/SMK (State and Private) in Kupang Regency. The ratio of students per school at the SD level is 133 children per school and SMP is 141 children per school. While the ratio of students per teacher is as many as 14 children at the elementary level.

b. Research Results

Measuring the literacy ability of elementary school (SD) children in Kupang Regency (NTT) refers to five basic skills, namely: (1) letter knowledge, (2) phoneme awareness or phonological responsiveness, (3) vocabulary or vocabulary, (4) reading fluency, and (5) reading comprehension. Children are given a knowledge test of 26 letters or the alphabet (A – Z). The results of the study obtained data as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Average Percentage of Children Read Correctly Letters

Class	Gender		Total
	L	P	
I	73%	82%	77%
II	86%	89%	87%
III	94%	95%	95%
Total	84%	88%	86%

Furthermore, children who were the same were tested for his ability to read as many as 20 words. The words they read are the words they usually find in everyday learning, both in textbooks and in conversations with teachers and their friends. The results showed as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of Words Read Correctly by Children When Given 20 Words

Class	Gender		Total
	L	P	
I	31%	42%	37%
II	62%	69%	66%
III	82%	89%	85%
Total	59%	66%	62%

By gender, girls do better on this test. In all classes, the percentage of words that were read accurately by girls was higher than that of boys with a total of 66% for girls and 59% for boys.

In the next stage, the sample children underwent a reading test with 100 words correctly. The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Percentage of Words Read Correctly by Children when Reading (Total 100 Words)

Class	Gender		Total
	L	P	
I	19%	27%	23%
II	53%	63%	58%
III	79%	90%	84 %
Total	50%	59%	55%

When viewed by gender, consistent with the results of the most widely used letter knowledge and word tests, girls also perform better on these tests. On average, boys can only read 50% of the 100 words in passages while girls can read 59% of the 100 words in passages.

The last test to measure the ability of the sample students is reading comprehension. Measure children's understanding of the story by asking 10 questions. Table 5 shows the results of the understanding test of elementary school children in Kupang Regency.

Table 5. Average Percentage of Comprehension Questions Correctly Answered By *Readers*

Class	Gender		Total
	L	P	
Grade I	41%	42%	42%
Grade II	50%	51%	50%
Grade III	58%	66%	62%

The results of the comprehension test show, children in class were able to answer 42% or 4 out of 10 comprehension questions on average. Children in Grades II and III were able to answer 50% (5 of 10) and 62% (6 of 10) comprehension questions on average.

In this reading ability test, the child is assessed the level of speed in the first 30 seconds, then the first 1 minute of the 100 words given in the test. Word reading speed can determine the percentage of children who are *readers* (children who can read at least 5 words correctly in the first 30 seconds). The following table shows the percentage of low grade children's ability to read words correctly.

Table 6. Percentage of Children Reading Words Correctly

Indicator	Class	Gender		Total
		L	P	
% <i>reader</i>	I	23%	35%	29%
	II	59%	70%	64%
	III	83%	95%	89%
	Total	55%	66%	60%
Fluency (words read correctly within 60 seconds of the passage (total 100 words))	I	23	25	24
	II	34	39	36
	III	49	59	54
	Total	40	45	43

Referring to the table above, there are 23% first grade boys and 35% boys First grade girls are able to read at least 5 words correctly in the first 30 seconds. These numbers increase for second and third graders. Consistent with the results of the most widely used letter and

word tests, the percentage of women who were able to read at least 5 words in 30 seconds was higher than that of men.

In addition, the research team measured the children's reading fluency skills by calculating the average number of words read correctly in 60 seconds during the test. The test results found that first graders could read an average of 24 words in 60 seconds, second graders could read an average of 36 words in 60 seconds, and third graders could read an average of 54 words in 60 seconds.

Children's reading skills are supported by the availability of reading materials at school and at home. The following describes the availability of reading materials at home.

Table 7. Percentage of Children who have Reading Materials at Home by Type of Reading

NO	TYPE OF READING	Gender		Total
		L	P	
1	Textbooks	74%	80%	77%
2	Scriptures/other religious books	94%	94%	94%
3	Magazines	22%	22%	22 %
4	Newspapers	40%	41%	40%
5	Storybooks	57%	65%	61%

Table 8 shows the availability of reading materials at home such as textbooks, holy books/religious books, magazines, newspapers, and story books. However, an interesting finding is that almost all children have holy books/other religious books (94%).

The following table describes the study time and frequency of reading books in the past week.

Table 8. Study Time and Frequency of Reading Book in the Last One Week

No	Indicator	Class	Gender		Total
			L	P	
1	Study time at home (hours)	I	2,3	2.5	2.4
		II	2.5	2.5	2.5
		III	2, 5	2.7	2.6
		Total	2.4	2.6	2.5
2	Frequency of reading books in the last 1 week	I	1.3	1.2	1.2
		II	1.3	1.4	1.3
		III	1.5	1,5	1.5
		Total	1.3	1.4	1.3

The table shows that on average boys read books at home in a day as much as 2.4 hours and girls as much as 2.6 hours and the frequency of children reading books in the last week for boys can be 1.3 hours and 1.4 hours for girls.

The following table shows the places where children often read books.

Table 9. Percentage of Choices of Where Children Read Book

NO	Descriptor	Gender		Total
		M	F	
1	House	34%	34%	68%
2	School	13%	11%	24%

3	Others	2%	1%	3%
	Total	50%	46%	96%

The table above illustrates, children prefer home as a place to read books (68%) compared to school or other places.

The following table presents the perceptions and reading habits of elementary school children in Kupang Regency (East Nusa Tenggara Province).

Table 10. Perceptions and Book Reading Habits

No	Indicator	Descriptor	Gender		Total
			L	P	
1	Perception- what helps children read fluently	don't know/no answer	11%	9%	19%
		if someone helps/accompanied me in practicing reading	22%	21%	43 %
		More time to practice	11%	10%	21%
		more interesting books to read	8%	8%	16%
2	Children's habit of borrowing books	Yes	34%	30%	64%
		No	18%	18%	36%

Table 11 shows 43% of children said that if someone helps/accompanies them to practice reading then they will be able to read fluently. While the habit of children borrowing books, as much as 64% to be read as much as 64%.

The following table presents the duration of children's reading activities with families such as fathers, mothers, and other family members. The activities we ask the children to do are watch family members read, help them learn, read to them, tell stories, and play with them. There are 5 activities that can be seen in the table below:

Table 11. Percentage of Children by Number of Activities with Parents

Parents	Total Activities					
	5	4	3	2	1	0
Father	14%	16%	16%	16%	13%	24%
Mama	17%	19%	22%	15%	13%	15%

Table 12 shows that children do more learning activities with their mothers than with their fathers. The average learning activities at home are presented in the following table.

Table 12. Studying Activities at Home

No	Indicator	Class	Gender		Total
			L	P	
1	Number of samples	I	291	282	573
		II	285	270	555
		III	292	258	550
		Total	868	810	1678
2	Duration of study at home with father (hours)	I	2,3	2,5	2.4
		II	2.2	2.3	2.3
		III	2.1	2.4	2.2

		Total	2.2	2.4	2.3
3	Duration of study at home with mother (hours)	I	2.6	2.9	2.7
		II	2.7	2.9	2.8
		III	2.6	2.7	2.6
		Total	2.6	2.8	2.7
4	Duration of studying at home with other family members in the house (hours)	I	2, 4	2.6	2.5
		II	2.3	2.5	2.4
		III	2.3	2.4	2.4
		Total	2.3	2.5	2.4

Table 13 shows that children ask for more help from their mothers to help them in reading activities at home.

3.2 Discussion

Basic literacy is the most elementary academic need to produce creative, innovative, and adaptive human resources to the development of science and technology. In this context, the most important investment activity in the development of quality human resources.

The Indonesian government has placed education as a mandatory business which is legally mandated in Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution. Various efforts have been made by government and non-government institutions to advance education in order to encourage the progress of the nation. One of the important efforts in this context is a literacy proficiency survey. Research or surveys become the basis for finding literacy problems at the elementary school (SD) level. In this connection, the findings serve as a reference for the government to intervene in programs to advance the literacy skills of elementary school children.

The description of the literacy abilities of elementary school children in Kupang Regency can be known through four basic reading skills, namely (1) letter knowledge; (2) vocabulary or vocabulary; (3) reading fluency; and (4) reading comprehension. The four basic skills are analyzed below.

a. Knowledge of Letters

Knowledge of letters is the earliest literacy skill that elementary school children must have or master. Knowledge of letters is related to mastery of the Latin alphabet or alphabet. A total of 26 letters arranged alphabetically that must be mastered. The results showed that elementary school children's literacy knowledge in Kupang Regency was classified as good. This situation is shown by 77% (20.02) of the 26 letters that can be read correctly by class I children. Meanwhile, class II children can read letters correctly as much as 86% (22.36) of 26 letters. Grade III children can read the letters correctly as much as 95% (24.7) of the 26 letters.

The data above shows that up to the third grade, there are still elementary school children in Kupang who cannot master letters. This situation greatly affects the mastery of other sciences. This finding was confirmed by Chall & Jacobs (2003 in Ritonga, 2021) who said, "...high literacy skills provide a fairly large role in expanding knowledge, having open and critical thinking."

Based on gender, girls are better able to read letters (alphabet) than boys. The findings showed that 82% (21.32) of the 26 letters could be read correctly by grade I girls. Meanwhile, 73% (18.98) of the 26 letters were boys in grade I. This tendency was found in grade II and grade III students. . A total of 86% or 245.1 people out of 285 samples of second grade boys can read the 26 letters of the alphabet correctly. The percentage of reading the 26 letters of the alphabet in grade II girls is higher than boys, namely 89% (240.3) of the 270 girls

sampled. Grade III boys can read 94% of the letters of the alphabet correctly. This figure is lower than that of grade III girls, which is 95% (245.1) of the 258 female samples.

b. Word Reading Skills

The second skill studied was word reading. The number of words read is 20. Grade I children can read 37% or 7.4 words of the 20 words tested. Grade II children can read 66% or 13.2 words of the 20 words tested. Meanwhile, grade III children can read 85% or 17 of the 20 words tested. Overall, this test shows that girls are more capable than boys for all levels of the sample class (grades I, II, and III). The average word reading ability of girls reaches 66% (13.2) words can be read from the 20 words provided compared to boys in the same class/level which only reaches 59% (11.8) words that can be read from the 20 words provided given.

The researcher added the number of words tested. A total of 100 words were given to students in all sample classes. The result of reading 100 words shows that Class I children can read 23 words out of 100 words; Class II can read 58 words out of 100 words; and Class III can read 84 words of the given word. As with the results of the letter knowledge test and word reading test, girls' achievement is consistently higher than that of boys. A total of 59 words can be read correctly out of 100 words tested. Meanwhile, boys only reach 50 words out of 100 words. However, the higher the level or grade, the smaller the difference in the ability to read letters and read words for girls and boys. The range of percentage differences between classes is quite large. Between class I and class II by 35%. While between class II and class III by 26%.

c. Reading Speed

Reading speed (fluency) is calculated in seconds. The research team counted how many words the child had read correctly in the first 30 seconds. Furthermore, how many words were successfully read correctly by the child in the first minute of the 100 words tested. The results showed that 23% of the boys and 35% of the first grade girls were classified as *readers*. They can correctly read five words in the first 30 seconds. Class I children, on average, can read 24 words from 100 words in the first 60 seconds. Class II children, on average, can read 36 words out of 100 words in the first 60 seconds. Class III children, on average, can read 54 words out of 100 words in the first 60 seconds.

Interesting findings on word reading speed at the three levels. The magnitude of the percentage range between classes tends to be reversed with the previous three skills. The difference in word reading speed between grade I and grade II children is 12%. Meanwhile, the difference between class II and class III is larger, namely 18%. In this situation, it is assumed that first graders have generally completed Early Childhood Education.

d. Reading Comprehension

The final literacy test is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension relates to the understanding of the story. There are 10 questions regarding stories read by children. An average of 42% or 4 questions can be answered by class I children. Class II and class III students, on average, can answer 5 (50%) questions out of 10 questions asked about story comprehension. As many as 60% of children in the lower grades (grades I, II, III) of Elementary Schools in Kupang Regency are able to read. The percentage of girls is higher than that of boys, 66% and 55%, respectively.

The four skills measured showed an interesting trend. The findings show that girls have higher skills than boys from the four types of reading abilities of elementary school children in Kupang Regency. This finding can be confirmed by the results of another study which found that girls have higher literacy skills than boys (Bonomo, 2010; Mohd-Asraf &

Abdullah, 2016; Ritonga, 2021). This situation confirms the findings of this study that girls read more when they are at home than boys.

These findings relate to gender-based differences in learning. Women have the ability to deal with learning transitions and are very good (Mohd Asraf & Abdullah, 2016, Ritonga, 2021). However, the argument is different from Below (in Ritonga, 2021). According to Below, the gender gap in literacy skills is influenced by cultural/social or environmental causes and usually the assumptions and behavior of teachers towards their students will influence what practice they will impart to their students. Below looks more specifically at the cultural background of the teacher as a teacher.

On the other hand, the family is not a literal environment in Kupang Regency. The role of parents in improving children's literacy skills is still very low. The findings show that only 2.3 hours of children study with their father, 2.7 hours of children study with their mother, and 2.4 hours of children study with other family members (see Table 13). Lack of time to study with parents and family members is caused, parents have more time to work to make ends meet. The results of other studies confirm the situation as expressed (Hasim, 1994, Pidarta 1997), that the interest and attention of parents to education is not the main thing. Their main concern is meeting economic needs. After these economic needs are met, then their hearts are moved towards education.

The problem found by researchers in a journal written by Sahmini and Latifah (2019:622) is that the family is the foundation in education. The care of parents in the family becomes the support for members of the family itself. However, the reality of family and community education is that mothers do not understand and do not even provide detailed explanations and examples related to family and community education. The presentation is very brief. It could be that mothers find it difficult to express opinions and ideas in written form. That is, in this study it was found that the basic literacy of the community was lacking, so this reduced literacy knowledge and assistance in children (Sahmini and Latifah, 2019:622).

Likewise, the assumption that the role of parents is quite large in advancing education, both at school and in the family is refuted by the findings of Supeno's research (1994, in Pidarta, 1997). The results of the study found that the role of parents in learning activities at home was not significantly correlated with the intensity of students' learning motivation. In fact, learning facilities at home are also not significantly correlated with student motivation.

It is important to remember that even from a young age children are active agents who construct their experiences in various ways (Carroll et al., 2019). So that the role of the teacher and the assumptions that have been imprinted in his thoughts are expected to contribute equally to boys and girls, without differentiating treatment. It is very important for teachers to recognize conflicts in boys as demands to be "real men" according to masculinity coupled with literacy demands (Alloway, 2000). In addition, high literacy skills provide a large enough role in expanding knowledge, having open and critical thinking (Chall & Jacobs, 2003).

Parents' awareness and understanding of the importance of literacy stimulation is the basis for developing children's literacy skills. Parents' understanding relates to the right way or technique used in carrying out literacy activities with children. Most of the parents in this study were less able to develop creativity to make a variety of activities for their children, so that the children experienced boredom after the program ended. This shows that in Indonesia, parents tend to be passive in encouraging children to be active in literacy activities. (Journal of Psychology Volume 44, Number 3, 2017: 177 – 184 DOI: 10.22146/jpsi.16929J. Improving the Early Literacy Ability of Preschool Children through the Stimulation Program Widyaning Hapsari1 , Lisnawati Ruhana 2 , & Wiwien Dinar Pratisti3 1,2,3 Faculty of Psychology Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).

IV. Conclusion

The results of the literacy ability survey of elementary school children (Class I, II, and III) can be concluded as follows. The literacy level of elementary school children in Kupang Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province reaches 60%. By gender, girls' abilities were higher than boys for all literacy skill levels. Children read more at home than in other places. The family environment has not become a literature environment for children, because reading materials are very lacking. Likewise, the role of the family is very limited in children's reading activities at home. In reading or studying at home, children in Kupang Regency study more with their mothers than their fathers or other family members.

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