

The Role of the Library in Enhancing the Information Literacy of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Medan

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This study aims to examine the role of the library in enhancing the information literacy of students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan and to identify the benefits students gain from the various information literacy services and programs provided by the library. The study employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. The study population consisted of all 500 twelfth-grade students at MAN 1 Medan, while the sample comprised 83 respondents selected using incidental sampling based on the Slovin formula. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and documentation, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages. The findings indicate that the library's role in improving students' information literacy falls within the good category, with a mean score of 3.18. Various library initiatives, including the provision of information services, user-oriented collections, user education programs, information retrieval guidance, and the utilization of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), have positively contributed to students' abilities to locate, select, evaluate, organize, and effectively utilize information. Furthermore, the perceived benefits of the information literacy programs also achieved a mean score of 3.18, categorized as good, indicating that the library effectively supports students' information needs while enhancing the teaching and learning process within the madrasa. Therefore, the library of MAN 1 Medan has played an optimal role as both a learning resource center and an information literacy center. It is recommended that the library continue to develop more innovative and sustainable services, collections, and information literacy programs to further improve students' information literacy in the digital era.

Keywords: School Library, Information Literacy, Library Role, Students of MAN 1 Medan.

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1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of information technology has fundamentally transformed the way people acquire, process, and utilize information. In today's fast-paced digital era, the availability of data and information continues to increase significantly over time. This phenomenon has given rise to what is commonly referred to as the information explosion. Information is now available in various formats and media, ranging from printed sources such as books and magazines to audio-visual materials and numerous digital resources that can be easily accessed through the Internet. The diversity of these formats has made the process of searching for and selecting relevant information increasingly challenging. Although the ease of access provides individuals with extensive opportunities to obtain information from a wide range of sources, the overwhelming volume of available information also presents significant challenges, as not all information is equally accurate and credible. Consequently, the ability to filter, evaluate, and select reliable information has become an essential competency for every information user.

In response to these challenges, libraries play a strategic role as reliable information providers and as learning centers for the community, particularly for students. Libraries not only provide diverse collections that support learning activities but also guide users in locating, utilizing, and evaluating information

accurately. This role positions libraries as important institutions in fostering students' information literacy competencies, enabling them to use information wisely for both academic purposes and everyday life.

The successful implementation of information literacy services in school libraries largely depends on the competencies of librarians. As library professionals, librarians are responsible for assisting students throughout the processes of information searching, retrieval, and effective utilization. In addition, librarians introduce various information literacy programs designed to develop students' independent learning abilities. In practice, school library programs generally focus on two closely related objectives: promoting a reading culture among students and strengthening their information literacy skills. These complementary programs contribute to the development of students who are knowledgeable, critical thinkers and capable of managing information ethically and responsibly (Safilla, 2014).

School libraries constitute an essential component of the national education system because they function as learning resource centers that directly support the achievement of educational objectives. Beyond providing library collections as academic references, libraries also create a conducive learning environment that encourages students to develop their knowledge independently and continuously. By maximizing library facilities and services, students gain opportunities to explore information from diverse sources, thereby enhancing their critical thinking, analytical, and problem-solving abilities.

Along with the widespread adoption of information technology in education, strengthening information literacy has become a major concern for educational institutions. Many schools have developed various programs aimed at equipping students with the skills required to manage information appropriately. These competencies enable students not only to access information efficiently but also to critically evaluate information, distinguish credible sources, and verify information before accepting or disseminating it. Therefore, information literacy plays a crucial role in fostering critical, rational, and responsible thinking in the use of information (Hasugian, 2008).

Information literacy encompasses more than the ability to search for information. It also includes the ability to identify information needs, utilize various information retrieval tools, process acquired information, and evaluate its quality and relevance. Information that has undergone these processes can then be transformed into new knowledge to support learning activities and decision-making. Consequently, information literacy has become a fundamental competency that every individual should master in order to adapt effectively to the rapid advancement of science and technology.

Within the library context, librarians occupy a highly significant position in promoting information literacy. Their role has evolved considerably from its traditional function. Whereas librarians were once primarily responsible for managing collections and circulation services, they are now expected to serve as facilitators, educators, and mentors for library users. Their primary responsibility is to guide users in locating and accessing information efficiently. In the digital era, librarians are expected to possess strong competencies in searching, organizing, and utilizing information from both print and digital sources. Mastery of these competencies is essential for providing high-quality information services that meet users' expectations (Batubara, 2015).

From a theoretical perspective, information literacy is defined as a set of competencies that enables individuals to recognize their information needs, identify relevant information sources, access information through various media, and evaluate its accuracy and credibility before using it. Furthermore, information literacy involves the ability to process, synthesize, and communicate information ethically and responsibly in accordance with established norms and regulations. Mastery of these competencies provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning, as individuals are continuously required to learn, adapt, and expand their knowledge in response to ongoing societal and technological changes (Farida et al., 2005).

This concept is consistent with the words of Allah SWT in **Surah Al-Mujadalah (58:11)**, which states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوا فِي الْمَجَالِسِ فَافْسَحُوا يَفْسَحِ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ انشُرُوا فَانْشُرُوا يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

Meaning:

The verse explains that every Muslim should always observe proper etiquette when attending a gathering, such as making room for others and showing respect when asked to move or adjust their seating position. Such behavior reflects mutual respect and contributes to maintaining harmony in social interactions. Furthermore, Allah SWT affirms that those who possess faith and knowledge will be elevated in rank before Him. This indicates that knowledge is a noble blessing and one of the means through which human dignity is enhanced. Allah SWT is fully aware of all the deeds of His servants; therefore, every effort devoted to seeking and applying knowledge will receive an appropriate reward (Qur'an, Surah Al-Mujadalah [58]:11).

This verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining good manners, mutual respect, and proper conduct in social gatherings. In addition to teaching ethical behavior in interpersonal interactions, it highlights the honor bestowed upon those who possess faith and knowledge. Allah SWT elevates the status of His servants who believe and continuously seek knowledge. This demonstrates that knowledge occupies a highly esteemed position because it elevates human dignity, both in this world and as preparation for the Hereafter.

The traditional perception of libraries as merely repositories of books or administrative centers for circulation services has gradually become obsolete. Libraries are no longer viewed solely as places that facilitate the borrowing and returning of library materials.

Instead, the fundamental role of school libraries has evolved into a more strategic one. This transformation has positioned libraries as active learning centers that support the holistic development of students' information literacy competencies. Today, libraries serve as learning hubs that actively contribute to the educational process by providing relevant and reliable information resources. In line with this transformation, librarians are expected to function as information professionals who not only manage information resources but also guide members of the school community in accessing, selecting, utilizing, and evaluating information appropriately according to their needs.

One of the activities implemented by the library is the introduction of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) to students. Through this program, students are taught how to search for library collections digitally in a faster and more accurate manner. In addition to technical skills, students are also introduced to library regulations regarding the use of library materials. They are informed about the classification of collections, distinguishing between materials available for loan and reference collections that may only be used within the library.

In terms of reading resources, the library of MAN 1 Medan possesses a relatively comprehensive collection. Its holdings are not limited to textbooks but also include popular science books, reference materials, and various forms of general reading. The availability of these diverse collections is expected to increase students' library visits and foster voluntary reading habits.

The supporting facilities available in the library also contribute to creating a conducive learning environment. The library provides ten computers that students can use to complete school assignments and access various information resources. In addition to serving as a reading space, the library functions as a discussion area where students can interact with one another and consult with librarians. During free periods or when classes are not in session, many students choose to spend their time in the library because of its comfortable atmosphere, which supports learning activities and the exchange of information.

Based on an interview conducted by the researcher with a librarian at the Library of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Medan on Friday, December 2, 2022, it was found that the library continues to face several challenges in providing its services, particularly those related to budget limitations. These constraints have affected both the development of library collections and the implementation of various library programs. One program that has not been implemented consistently is the library orientation program for new users, despite its important role in introducing library services and improving students' information literacy skills. Furthermore, expanding the library's collection with more diverse resources remains necessary to enhance the library's attractiveness and encourage greater student visitation. Based on these conditions, the researcher considers this issue worthy of further investigation through a scientific study entitled "The Role of the Library in Enhancing the Information Literacy of Students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Medan."

2. Literature Review And Problem Statement

The Role Of The School Library

The school library is an essential component of the educational system, serving as a learning resource center, an information center, and a facility for promoting a culture of literacy within the school environment. Libraries are no longer viewed merely as repositories of books; instead, they have evolved into learning spaces that support both independent and collaborative learning. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 43 of 2007 on Libraries, libraries function as institutions for education, research, preservation, information dissemination, and recreation, with the objective of enhancing public knowledge and empowerment. In the context of secondary education, school libraries provide a wide range of information resources that meet students' academic needs and support the achievement of learning competencies. Therefore, the quality of library services has become an important indicator in creating a conducive learning environment that fosters students' critical thinking skills.

Advances in information technology have significantly transformed the role of school libraries. Modern libraries are expected to provide access to information in various formats, including both print and digital resources, to accommodate the increasingly complex information needs of students. Librarians are no longer responsible solely for managing library collections but also serve as facilitators, educators, and mentors in the processes of information searching and utilization. Consequently, the library has become an academic center that encourages students to learn independently, develop creativity, and enhance their problem-solving abilities through the effective use of diverse information resources.

Information Literacy

Information literacy refers to an individual's ability to recognize information needs, identify appropriate information sources, evaluate the credibility of information, and use information effectively, efficiently, and responsibly to solve problems. The concept of information literacy has become increasingly important in the digital era, as students are exposed to an overwhelming volume of information through the Internet and social media. Without adequate information literacy skills, students may encounter difficulties in distinguishing reliable information from misinformation or unreliable sources. Therefore, information literacy has become one of the essential twenty-first-century competencies that students must possess to think critically, creatively, communicate effectively, and collaborate successfully in response to the rapid advancement of science and technology.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) defines an information-literate individual as someone who can identify information needs, access information effectively, evaluate information critically, integrate new information into existing knowledge, and use information ethically and legally. Within the school environment, these competencies are fundamental for supporting successful learning, completing

academic assignments, and fostering lifelong learning. Accordingly, strengthening information literacy should become an integral component of educational programs implemented through both classroom instruction and school library services.

The Role Of The Library In Enhancing Information Literacy

Libraries make substantial contributions to improving students' information literacy by providing learning resources, reference services, user education, and various literacy programs designed to meet users' needs. Activities such as library orientation, information retrieval training, instruction in the use of the **Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)**, the provision of digital collections, and reading literacy programs represent practical implementations of the library's role in strengthening students' information literacy. Through these services, students not only gain access to information but are also guided in selecting, evaluating, and utilizing information appropriately to support their academic needs.

In addition to providing information resources, libraries also function as partners of teachers in promoting literacy-based learning. Collaboration between librarians and teachers enables the implementation of learning activities that encourage students to search for, analyze, and present information from multiple sources independently. Sustainable literacy programs help cultivate a learning culture, increase students' interest in reading, and strengthen their critical thinking abilities. Therefore, optimizing the role of the library represents an important strategy for improving information literacy within the school environment.

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Medan As The Research Context

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan is a secondary educational institution equipped with a library that supports academic activities and promotes a culture of literacy within the madrasa. As an institution that integrates general and Islamic education, MAN 1 Medan requires a well-managed library capable of meeting students' information needs across various academic disciplines. The library is expected not only to provide comprehensive collections but also to offer services that guide students in accessing, selecting, and utilizing information effectively in accordance with advances in information technology.

Nevertheless, the rapid development of digital technology presents several challenges to the implementation of library services. Students increasingly rely on search engines and social media as their primary sources of information rather than utilizing library collections. This trend requires libraries to continuously innovate their services to remain relevant to users' needs by providing digital services, information literacy training, and guidance in the use of credible scholarly information sources. Therefore, investigating the role of the library in enhancing the information literacy of students at MAN 1 Medan is important to understand how the library performs its functions, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide recommendations for developing more effective library services that improve students' information literacy.

Problem Statement

The school library plays a strategic role as a learning resource center that supports the development of students' information literacy. However, in practice, the utilization of library services by students remains suboptimal. Many students prefer to obtain information directly from the Internet without critically evaluating the credibility and reliability of the information sources they use. This situation indicates that the library has not yet fully functioned as a learning center that effectively guides students in acquiring, processing, and utilizing information. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate how the library of MAN 1 Medan fulfills its role in enhancing students' information literacy through its services, collections, literacy programs, and user guidance activities (Muscaritoli et al., 2021).

3. Method

This study employed a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. The descriptive method was selected because the study aimed to systematically and objectively describe the role of the library in enhancing the information literacy of students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan without manipulating or intervening in the variables under investigation. The quantitative approach was used to obtain numerical data that could be statistically analyzed to provide measurable evidence regarding students' information literacy and the library's contribution to its development. According to Arikunto (2010), descriptive research aims to describe a particular condition or phenomenon as it naturally exists based on data collected during the research process.

The study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan, located at Jalan Willem Iskandar No. 7B, Sidorejo Hilir Village, Medan Tembung District, Medan, Indonesia. The research site was selected based on preliminary observations indicating that the MAN 1 Medan library had implemented various services and programs supporting the development of students' information literacy, making it an appropriate setting for this study. The study population consisted of all 500 twelfth-grade students enrolled at MAN 1 Medan. The sample was selected using an incidental sampling technique, whereby respondents were chosen based on their availability and eligibility at the time of data collection. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 83 respondents, which was considered representative of the study population.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through observation and questionnaire distribution to twelfth-grade students at MAN 1 Medan. Observations were conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the library environment, the implementation of information literacy programs, and students' utilization of library services. Meanwhile, the questionnaire was designed to measure students' perceptions of the library's efforts to enhance information literacy and the benefits they gained from the information literacy programs. The research instrument was developed based on the Big6 Skills information literacy framework, which includes the abilities to define problems, identify information needs, select appropriate information sources, utilize information effectively, organize information, and evaluate the information obtained. Secondary data were collected from books, scholarly journals, official documents, and other relevant literature to provide the theoretical foundation and support the analysis of the research findings.

The collected data were processed through several stages: editing, coding, tabulation, and data analysis. The editing stage involved checking the completeness and consistency of respondents' answers, while the coding stage assigned numerical codes to each response to facilitate statistical processing. Subsequently, the data were tabulated into frequency distribution and percentage tables to simplify analysis. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics by calculating the frequency and percentage of each response using the percentage formula: $P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$. The results of the statistical analysis were then interpreted to describe the role of the library in enhancing the information literacy of students at MAN 1 Medan and to identify the benefits perceived by students from the various library services and information literacy programs provided.

4. Results and Discussion

Analysis of the Library's Efforts to Enhance Information Literacy

Based on the observations and data collected during the study, the library of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan has implemented various programs aimed at improving students' information literacy. These programs include library orientation activities and a variety of initiatives designed to foster students' reading

interest. The orientation program introduces users to the library by providing information on library operating hours, library regulations, available services, types of collections, and procedures for using library materials, including explanations regarding materials that may be borrowed and those that are available for in-library use only. However, these orientation activities are not conducted regularly and are offered only on certain occasions. In addition, the library seeks to increase students' interest in reading by expanding its collection annually, thereby providing more diverse information resources that better meet users' needs.

This study employed The Big6 Information Literacy Model, developed by Michael B. Eisenberg and Robert E. Berkowitz, as the framework for assessing the library's efforts. The model consists of six major stages: task definition, information-seeking strategies, location and access, use of information, synthesis, and evaluation. These six stages were operationalized into twelve questionnaire indicators used to develop the research instrument. The analysis of these indicators provides an overview of the efforts undertaken by the MAN 1 Medan Library to support and enhance students' information literacy skills.

a. Facilitating students in identifying information needs.

This aspect refers to students' ability to recognize problems and determine the information required as the initial step in completing academic tasks. The findings show a mean score of 3.34, which falls into the very good category. This result indicates that librarians actively assist students in identifying their information needs and direct them to relevant reference sources, making the task completion process more focused and effective.

b. Supporting students in developing information-seeking strategies.

This indicator measures students' ability to select alternative information sources and determine the most appropriate source for their needs. The mean score obtained was 2.95, categorized as good. Nevertheless, the information retrieval process remains largely dependent on manual searches of library collections, making the process relatively time-consuming and limiting students' ability to locate all the information they require. These findings suggest the need to strengthen technology-based information retrieval services to improve search efficiency.

c. Guiding students in accessing information resources.

This indicator assesses students' ability to locate information resources and obtain the required information from library collections. The mean score of 3.00 indicates a good level of performance. However, user guidance remains focused primarily on locating materials directly from library shelves. Therefore, greater utilization of facilities such as the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), accompanied by training in the effective use of search keywords, is necessary to enable students to access information more quickly, accurately, and independently.

d. Assisting students in utilizing information.

This aspect concerns students' ability to understand information obtained from various sources and identify information that is relevant to their needs. The study produced a mean score of 3.22, classified as good. These findings indicate that librarians provide guidance in selecting appropriate reference materials and support students through discussions and consultations, enabling them to make optimal use of the information they obtain.

e. Supporting the organization and synthesis of information.

This indicator refers to students' ability to integrate information from multiple sources and present it systematically. The mean score was 3.16, which falls into the good category. This result suggests that librarians have successfully assisted students in selecting relevant references; however, further guidance is still needed to help students synthesize information from multiple sources into coherent and comprehensive outputs.

f. Guiding students in evaluating information.

This aspect measures students' ability to assess the quality of the information they obtain and evaluate the effectiveness of their information-searching process. The findings show a mean score of 3.17, categorized as good. This indicates that librarians encourage students to use credible information sources while guiding them in assessing the accuracy of information and evaluating the search process to ensure that the information obtained is reliable, valid, and academically accountable.

Based on the analysis of all research indicators, it can be concluded that the efforts of the Library of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan to enhance students' information literacy are considered effective when the mean score exceeds 3.18. The findings indicate that two indicators surpassed this benchmark: (1) the library's role in assisting students in identifying and defining their information needs, and (2) the library's role in guiding students in effectively utilizing the information they have obtained. These results demonstrate that the library has been particularly successful in supporting students during the initial stages of the information literacy process and in helping them make effective use of information for academic purposes.

Analysis of the Benefits of Enhanced Information Literacy for Students

Based on the overall analysis, the benefits perceived by students following the implementation of information literacy initiatives at the Library of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan achieved a mean score of 3.18, which falls into the good category. In addition, the indicator measuring students' understanding of the user education program obtained a mean score of 3.22, indicating that students perceived the program as beneficial in introducing library services and teaching them how to utilize various information resources effectively. The benefits experienced by students in each aspect of information literacy are described as follows.

- a. Students are able to identify and define their information needs.
This aspect achieved a mean score of 3.24, categorized as good. The findings indicate that, after receiving guidance from librarians, students have developed a better ability to recognize problems and determine the information required to address them.
- b. Students are able to select appropriate information sources.
This indicator obtained a mean score of 3.14, which falls into the good category. However, the benefits perceived in this aspect have not yet reached an optimal level, as some students still experience difficulties in identifying the most relevant information sources for their needs.
- c. Students are able to access the information they require.
This aspect achieved a mean score of 3.08, categorized as good. The findings suggest that students' ability to locate and access information has improved; however, greater utilization of available information retrieval tools is still needed.
- d. Students are able to utilize information effectively.
This indicator obtained a mean score of 3.19, indicating a good level of achievement. The results demonstrate that students are capable of using information obtained from various sources to support their learning activities and complete academic assignments.
- e. Students are able to organize and synthesize information.
The information synthesis aspect achieved a mean score of 3.20, which falls into the good category. This finding indicates that students have developed the ability to integrate information from multiple sources into coherent understanding and well-structured academic work.
- f. Students are able to evaluate the information they obtain.
The information evaluation indicator also achieved a mean score of 3.20, categorized as good. These findings demonstrate that students have begun to assess the accuracy, relevance, and quality of information before using it as a basis for learning activities and decision-making.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the role of the library in enhancing the information literacy of students at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 1 Medan, it can be concluded that the library has performed its role effectively in supporting the improvement of students' information literacy. This is evidenced by the overall mean score of 3.18, which falls into the good category, indicating that the library's services, collections, and information literacy programs have made positive contributions to students' abilities to locate, access, evaluate, and utilize information effectively. Furthermore, the benefits perceived by students from these programs also achieved a mean score of 3.18, categorized as good, demonstrating that the library has successfully supported students' information needs while contributing to the learning process within the madrasa.

Based on the research findings, the library of MAN 1 Medan is encouraged to continue developing its information literacy programs in a more systematic, innovative, and sustainable manner through activities such as library orientation, user education, information retrieval training, and guidance in the use of digital information resources. In addition, librarians should continuously enhance their professional competencies, particularly in the areas of information literacy and information technology, to provide more effective services as learning facilitators. Future researchers are encouraged to broaden the scope of investigation by examining other factors that influence information literacy, such as challenges in implementing literacy programs, the utilization of digital technologies, and students' reading culture. Involving respondents from different educational levels and institutions would also provide more comprehensive findings and contribute to the development of more effective information literacy programs in schools.

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