



The effectiveness of Deli Serdang library's information literacy program on community literacy skills

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Abstract

Background: Information literacy has become a crucial competency in the digital era, enabling individuals to filter valid and relevant information. Despite increasing internet access, many users are digitally active yet cognitively passive in verifying the information they receive. Deli Serdang Regency continues to face challenges related to low community literacy levels, as reflected in its low Community Literacy Development Index score. **Purpose:** This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the information literacy program implemented by the Deli Serdang Library in enhancing community literacy skills.

Methods: The research employed a quantitative approach using a one-group pretest-posttest design. The sample consisted of 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria: having participated in the information literacy program and residing in the Deli Serdang area. Data were collected using a questionnaire, and analyzed using the Paired Sample T-Test to determine differences before and after the program implementation.

Results: The information literacy program conducted by the Deli Serdang Library has proven successful in improving community literacy skills

Conclusions: The information literacy program effectively fosters critical and responsible thinking in navigating the complex flow of information in the digital age. The study underscores the vital role of libraries as centers for community empowerment through the promotion of a sustainable literacy culture in the digital era.

Keywords:

Information literacy
Program effectiveness
Literacy skills
Deli Serdang library

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The following are appended: (1, which emphasizes that “Literacy involves critical thinking, the interpretation of information, and its application in daily activities.” Thus, literacy is a fundamental competency that supports the development of both individuals and communities in confronting complex global challenges. Therefore, enhancing public literacy skills has become a strategic priority in developing human resources that are inclusive and adaptive to changing times.

Based on the data in Figure 1 from PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), Indonesia’s public literacy rate in 2018 was ranked 75th out of 80 countries. In 2022, there was an improvement in ranking, with Indonesia occupying the 71st position out of 81 countries (Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

Although Indonesia’s literacy ranking improved, the literacy score was 12 points lower than the 2018 score. This can be interpreted to mean that the literacy rate in Indonesia remains low.

Furthermore, the development of the community literacy rate in North Sumatra province, based on data from BPS (Statistics Indonesia), shows that its Community Literacy Development Index in 2023 was ranked 32nd out of 34 provinces with a score of 56.10. Meanwhile, the community literacy rate in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra province, in 2022, with its Community Literacy Development Index, was ranked 29th out of 33 regencies/cities with a score of 34.75 (Perpustakaan Nasional, 2023).

From the data in Figure 3, it can be concluded that the literacy rate from

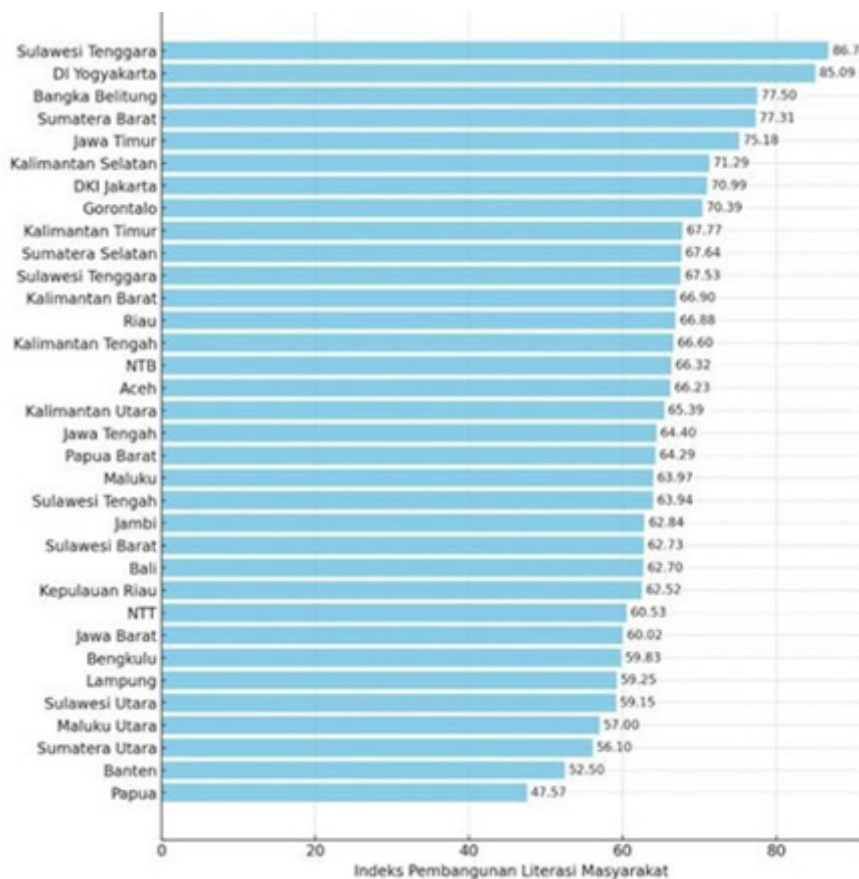


Figure 2. Community Literacy Rate by Province

Source: National Library of Indonesia, 2023

the national level down to Deli Serdang Regency is still low. Consequently, libraries have a key role in literacy campaigns by providing quality resources and ensuring the best use of information.

Deli Serdang, as a region with significant human resource potential, still faces a literacy gap, especially among young adults and communities with lower-secondary education. Efforts to improve literacy in this region are crucial, considering that literacy affects not only academic ability but also economic empowerment, political participation, and the social resilience of the community. This is consistent with the research findings of Agustino (2019), who argued that literacy movements can aid in the economic empowerment of communities, such as through activities like recycling plastic waste into marketable souvenirs and introducing the adoption

of healthy and productive information and communication technology transformations.

The American Library Association (ALA) emphasizes the importance of a set of skills to detect, evaluate, and efficiently manage information. Information literacy is closely related to an individual's ability to think critically in information seeking, as well as sensitivity to various aspects of life, which is essential (Sayekti, 2023). The Big6 is an information literacy model formulated by Mike Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz. This model integrates the use of information technology and aims to find, access, process, apply, and evaluate information appropriately according to the context of needs and task demands (Jatmiko, 2019).

As an information service institution, the library plays a vital role in supporting and assisting in teaching information

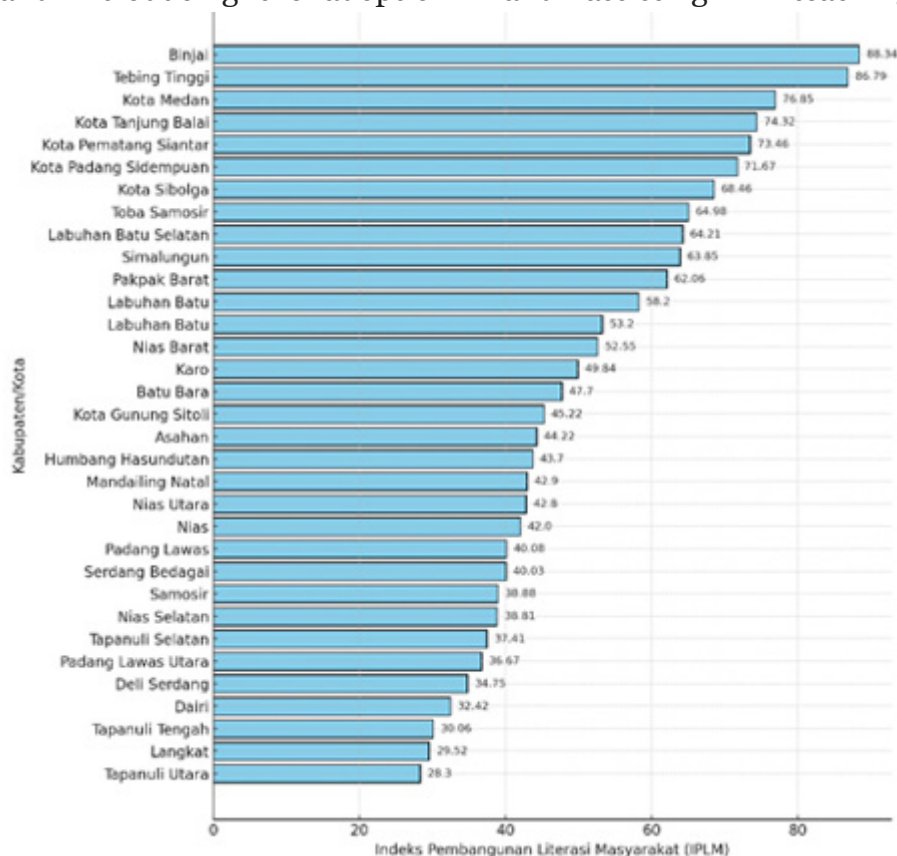


Figure 3. Community Literacy Rate in Regencies/Cities of North Sumatra

Source: National Library of Indonesia, 2023

skills with the goal of making users more information literate (Priatmojo, 2022). The Deli Serdang Library is an institution that not only provides information services and reading collections for the people of Deli Serdang but also plays an important role in improving community literacy skills. The Deli Serdang Library has developed various information literacy programs. The programs offered by the Deli Serdang Library include information literacy training, reading promotion activities, and various other educational events.

Through information literacy programs based on local needs, the library's role extends beyond being a mere space for reading; it serves as a center for lifelong learning that supports continuous knowledge development and enhances individuals' abilities to comprehend texts, connect them with life experiences, and sharpen critical thinking skills (Haryanti, 2019). This finding is in line with research conducted by Saputra & Sari (2023), which showed that community-based literacy programs can be an effective means of improving community literacy skills at the local level. Another study by Dewanty & Nawangsari (2024) indicated that the Community Reading Garden program was considered effective as it was able to provide comprehensive information services.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in investigating the extent to which the Information Literacy program at the Deli Serdang Library is capable and successful in enhancing community literacy skills. This study highlights the Deli Serdang Regency Public Library because it is a public service institution at the regional level that not

only provides reading materials but also actively develops community-based information literacy programs targeting the general public, distinguishing it from many studies that focus on formal educational institutions. Although the Deli Serdang Library has implemented various programs to improve community literacy, there is no concrete data or evidence showing how effective these programs are in enhancing it. This serves as the starting point and primary strength of this research.

This study offers a different approach compared to previous studies by focusing on the effectiveness of an information literacy program in a public library at the regency level, rather than in schools or reading gardens. Furthermore, this study uses a quantitative pretest-posttest method to objectively measure its impact. The emphasis on information literacy, not just basic literacy, also strengthens the novelty of this research, as it focuses on critical thinking and information management skills relevant to the challenges of the digital era. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the program's success, as well as serve as a foundation for formulating and developing more sustainable and evidence-based literacy policies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted at the Library and Archives of Deli Serdang Regency, located at Jalan Mawar No. 12, Lubuk Pakam District, Deli Serdang Regency. The study was carried out over a period of 2 months (April-May 2025). The primary objective of this research was

to obtain an in-depth understanding of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the information literacy program implemented by the library in enhancing the community's literacy skills.

The method employed in this study is a quantitative method with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest design. A quantitative approach is a research method conducted on a specific population or sample, where data is collected using pre-designed instruments (Sahir, 2022).

The data collection technique used was the distribution of questionnaires. A questionnaire is a data collection technique carried out by presenting a set of written questions to respondents to obtain the required information (Hikmawati, 2020). The questionnaire was administered before the respondents participated in the program (pretest) and after they completed it (posttest). In this study, the questionnaire consisted of 20 items: 8 items to measure variable X (effectiveness of the information literacy program) and 12 items for variable Y (community literacy skills). The questionnaire was developed based on the indicators in The Big6 model and the concept of information literacy developed by the American Library Association (ALA).

This study utilized a purposive sampling technique, which is used to select a sample based on specific criteria. The criteria were as follows: (1) the respondent must have participated in the information literacy program organized by the Deli Serdang Library; (2) be a resident of the Deli Serdang Regency area; and (3) be at least 15 years of age or older. The total population was 91,858 individuals. To determine the sample size from this

population, the researcher used Slovin's formula with a 10% margin of error. Based on the calculation, the sample size was rounded to 100 respondents.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{91.858}{1 + 91.858(0,10)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{91.858}{1 + 91.585(0,01)}$$

$$n = \frac{91.858}{1 + 918,58}$$

$$n = \frac{91.858}{1 + 919,58}$$

$$n = 99,89,$$

Data analysis was performed using the Paired Sample T-Test. The formula is as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{sd/\sqrt{n}}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

The results and discussion in this study include a description of the data from validity and reliability tests conducted on 100 final respondents, following a pilot test with 39 respondents. The instrument, which consisted of 20 questions—8 questions for the information literacy program variable (X) and 12 statements for the literacy skills variable (Y)—was tested before its use in the main research. Subsequently, a normality test, homogeneity test, and a paired sample t-test were performed.

Based on the data in Table 1 from the validity test, it was found that the r-calculated value for each instrument item ranged from 0.562 to 0.820, while the r-table value was 0.325. In validity testing, an item is considered valid if its r-calculated value exceeds the r-table value. Based on the analysis conducted, all items showed an r-calculated value greater than the r-table,

Table 1. Validity Test for Variable X

No	r-calculated	r-table	Status
1	0,638	0.325	Valid
2	0,677		Valid
3	0,601		Valid
4	0,562		Valid
5	0,650		Valid
6	0,820		Valid
7	0,762		Valid
8	0,793		Valid

Source: Research Data, 2025

indicating that all tested items meet the validity criteria. Thus, it can be concluded that this research instrument has adequate validity and can be reliably used as a data collection tool.

Based on the validity test results shown in Table 2, all items exhibited r-calculated values between 0.508 and 0.753, all of which exceed the r-table value of 0.325. This indicates that all 12 tested items meet the validity criteria, as they are capable of measuring the aspects intended by the instrument. Therefore, all items in the instrument were deemed suitable for use in the research, having met the established validity standards.

Table 2. Validity Test for Variable Y

No	r-calculated	r-table	Status
1	0,544	0.325	Valid
2	0,508		Valid
3	0,586		Valid
4	0,753		Valid
5	0,648		Valid
6	0,696		Valid
7	0,638		Valid
8	0,571		Valid
9	0,685		Valid
10	0,652		Valid
11	0,550		Valid
12	0,519		Valid

Source: Research Data, 2025

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test for Variable X

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.840	8

Source: Research Data, 2025

Table 4. Reliability Test for Variable Y

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.848	12

Source: Research Data, 2025

Using SPSS version 27.0, the data analysis in Table 3 shows that variable X is reliable and consistent. This is reflected by the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.840, which exceeds the specified minimum threshold of 0.60.

The analysis using SPSS version 27.0 in Table 4 indicates that variable Y is reliable and dependable. This is demonstrated by the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.848, which is above the 0.60 threshold.

Based on the results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method (Table 5) to test the data distribution before and after the treatment, it was found that

Normality Test

Table 5. Normality Test Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Method

		pre test	post test
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	N	100	100
	Mean	57.37	78.40
Most Extreme Differences	Std. Deviation	7.234	6.368
	Absolute	.075	.068
	Positive	.075	.061
	Negative	-.052	-.068
Test Statistic		.075	.068
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.182	.200 ^d

Source: Research Data, 2025

the significance value (Sig.) for the pre-treatment data was 0.182. This value exceeds the significance threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating that the data has a normal distribution. Meanwhile, for the post-treatment data, the obtained significance value was 0.200, which is also greater than 0.05. Thus, both the pre- and post-treatment data exhibit a normal distribution according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Homogeneity Test

Based on the results of the homogeneity of variances test shown in Table 6, it was found that the significance (Sig.) values from all calculation approaches—based on mean, median, median with adjusted degrees of freedom, and trimmed mean—were all above the significance threshold of 0.05. The highest significance value was 0.174 (based on median with adjusted df), while the lowest was 0.166 (based on mean). Since all significance values exceed 0.05, it can be concluded that the variances between the data groups are homogeneous.

Table 6. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2
hasil	Based on Mean	1.935	1	198
	Based on Median	1.859	1	198
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.859	1	195.889
	Based on trimmed mean	1.882	1	198

Source: Research Data, 2025

Paired Sample T-Test

Table 7. Paired Samples Statistics

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	post test	78.40	100	6.368	.637
	pre test	57.37	100	7.234	.723

Source: Research Data, 2025

Based on the analysis of Table 7, it was found that the mean post-test score was 78.40 with a standard deviation of 6.368, while the mean pre-test score was 57.37 with a standard deviation of 7.234, for the same 100 respondents. The standard error of the mean for each was 0.637 for the post-test and 0.723 for the pre-test. The mean difference between the pre-test and post-test shows an increase of 21.03 points. This descriptively reflects a quite significant improvement in scores after the treatment or intervention was applied.

Based on the Paired Samples Test analysis in Table 8, the mean difference between the post-test and pre-test results was 21.030, with a standard deviation of 9.530 and a standard error of the mean of 0.953. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranged from 19.139 to 22.921, indicating that the score increase for participants post-intervention lies within this range. The resulting t-value

Table 8. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower
Pai post test	pre test	-21,030	9,530	,953	19,139

		Paired Samples Test		Significance	
		Paired Differences	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	One-Sided	Two-Sided
		Upper	t	df	p
Pai post test	pre test	22,921	22,0	99	<,001
r 1	- pre test		68		<,001

Source: Research Data, 2025

was 22.068 with 99 degrees of freedom (df), and the two-sided significance value was recorded as < 0.001 , far below the threshold of $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between the initial and final scores. This confirms that the implemented information literacy program had a positive and tangible impact on improving the participants' test results.

Community Literacy Skills Level Before the Program

Prior to the implementation of the information literacy program, the community members of Deli Serdang who were respondents in this study demonstrated a relatively low level of literacy skills. Based on the pre-test results conducted on 100 respondents, a mean score of 57.37 was obtained with a standard deviation of 7.234.

This score reflects the community's limitations in various aspects of information literacy, where many individuals had not mastered the basic skills needed to find, evaluate, and effectively utilize information. Consequently, they experienced difficulties in distinguishing between valid and invalid information (Molerov et al., 2020). A majority of respondents showed a tendency to accept information from social media without any prior validation or verification process. This condition indicates that the Deli Serdang community was not accustomed to using libraries or other credible information sources as their primary reference to meet their information needs. In fact, some participants indicated that before joining the program, they did not understand the difference between primary and secondary sources, or between

fact and opinion in online news.

This finding is consistent with research by Susanti (2024) which showed that the Indonesian public generally lacks critical literacy skills in sorting digital information, making them vulnerable to information disorders such as misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information. Moreover, the habit of *sharing before reading* is still commonly found, where people tend to disseminate information before reading and fully evaluating its content.

Most respondents also showed a lack of habit in active reading or seeking information from trusted sources. They mostly received information unilaterally from social media or their immediate environment without any clarification or evaluation process. This condition suggests that public awareness of the importance of literacy is still very low (Maulana et al., 2023).

The low pre-test score is not only an indicator of weak cognitive ability in understanding information but also reflects low intrinsic motivation towards literacy activities. The community still perceives reading or seeking information as "unimportant" or "less relevant" to their daily lives. This may be due to a lack of positive experiences in accessing meaningful information, insufficient support from the social environment for literacy habits, and the absence of an educational approach that can link information literacy with the practical needs of the community. Consequently, there is a neglect of basic skills that are actually crucial in this information age. Thus, efforts to improve information literacy must not

only focus on cognitive aspects but also target the affective and contextual aspects that shape the community's attitudes and habits towards information.

This signals the urgent need for improving literacy skills among the public, especially amidst an increasingly dense and complex flow of information. This low literacy rate is also in line with the data from the Community Literacy Development Index (IPLM) for Deli Serdang Regency, which ranked 29th out of 33 regencies/cities in North Sumatra (Perpustakaan Nasional, 2023).

Community Literacy Skills Level After the Program

After participating in the information literacy program organized by the Deli Serdang Library, the community's literacy skills level experienced a significant increase. The post-test results showed a mean score of 78.40 with a standard deviation of 6.368. This marks an increase of 21.03 points compared to the pre-test score.

In general, the success of this program reflects the effectiveness of the applied needs-based approach. The training was tailored to the participants' backgrounds, including the use of easily understandable language, direct simulations, and the provision of local case studies. This made the participants feel the program was relevant to their daily lives, thereby increasing their engagement.

This improvement indicates that the implemented program successfully enhanced participants' understanding of how to determine information needs, find appropriate sources, evaluate information

credibility, and use that information ethically and productively. In other words, the community, which previously lacked literacy proficiency, is now better prepared and skilled to face the information challenges of the digital era.

This enhancement in literacy skills also indicates a shift in attitude from passive to active in responding to the flow of information. Participants became more reflective when reading information and more critical in responding to developing social, political, and economic issues. Thus, the information literacy program not only improved technical knowledge but also contributed to shaping a community that is intelligent, critical, and media-savvy (Randyantokho et al., 2024).

The program also indirectly boosted the community's self-confidence in accessing digital services. Individuals who previously felt "afraid of making mistakes" when using the internet now have become accustomed to online information searches, using online catalogs, and accessing e-books and credible news. This transformation reflects that information literacy is not just a transfer of knowledge but a process of competence and independence building.

Therefore, the post-training score increase not only reflects the program's quantitative success but also shows a qualitative impact on the community's mindset, habits, and literacy culture. The information literacy program at the Deli Serdang Library can serve as a replicable model for other regions facing similar issues.

Effectiveness of the Information Literacy Program in Enhancing

Community Literacy Skills

The research findings, analyzed through a paired sample t-test on 100 respondents, show that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. The pre-test mean score of 57.37 increased to 78.40 in the post-test, with a mean difference of 21.03 points. A significance value of < 0.001 indicates that the information literacy program run by the Deli Serdang Library had a statistically significant impact on improving community literacy. This finding demonstrates that the program was effective in strengthening individuals' abilities to access, evaluate, and accurately utilize information. In other words, the library functions not only as a repository of information but also as a center for competency-based learning, especially in helping the community navigate complex information challenges.

This aligns with the perspective of the American Library Association (ALA), which emphasizes that "Information literacy is an essential competency that includes the ability to identify information needs, conduct systematic searches, evaluate the reliability and relevance of information sources, and use it effectively and in accordance with ethical principles." In this context, the library serves as an active learning center that promotes the enhancement of literacy skills through various training and educational activities (Syar & Masyita, 2024).

The increase in participants' post-test scores also indicates that their metacognitive skills developed. The ability to recognize information needs, devise search strategies, and evaluate sources are forms of higher-order thinking skills that are crucial in the

context of lifelong learning (Pero, 2020). The managers of the information literacy program strive to socialize it to the public by providing motivation and explaining the benefits and goals of reading activities (Yanuarsari & Muchtar, 2022).

This information literacy program also reflects the principles of The Big6 model developed by Eisenberg and Berkowitz, which emphasizes six stages of the information literacy process, starting from task definition, information seeking strategies, location and access, use of information, synthesis, to evaluation. Through this program, the community was guided to think systematically and critically in using information, which subsequently had a positive impact on their literacy skills.

This program can become a social learning space where participants gain new experiences, exchange information, and practice skills relevant to their needs. The information literacy program implemented by the library plays a vital role in gradually increasing the community's literacy capacity (Fadhli, 2021). The library now functions as a dynamic learning space, encouraging individuals to develop their literacy potential to the fullest. In this context, efforts to create competent human resources should be accompanied by the formation of a strong intellectual culture. As conveyed by Marsono et al. (2021), there are still significant challenges in developing consistent reading habits, which should be supported by the availability of quality reading materials at affordable prices.

Furthermore, consistent with the definition of literacy according to UNESCO, (2006) offering a way out of poverty. This Report focuses on the first Education for All

goal, which calls upon countries to expand and improve early childhood care and education--a holistic package encompassing care, health and nutrition in addition to education. Disadvantaged children stand to benefit the most, yet too few developing countries, and too few donor agencies, have made early childhood a priority. In other areas there is considerable progress toward Education for All, especially the key goal of universal primary education. More girls are attending school and international aid for education is increasing. As the Report demonstrates, however, much still needs to be done to meet the target date of 2015. Only if bold action is taken now can exclusion be overcome and comprehensive learning opportunities assured for everyone, in early childhood and throughout life. The following are appended: (1, which involves not only reading and writing skills but also the understanding and application of information in various life contexts, the improvement achieved in this study shows that the information literacy program is capable of equipping the community with comprehensive literacy skills. In other words, the program not only develops basic cognitive abilities but also transformative literacy competencies, as intended by UNESCO. This strengthens the program's position as a strategic educational intervention, as it successfully equips participants with essential skills to face the information challenges of the digital era, which is fraught with hoaxes, disinformation, and information bias.

A non-contextual information literacy program risks being ineffective because it does not address the needs and habits of the target community. Therefore,

community involvement in the planning and implementation of the program is a key to long-term success. In line with this, Marsono et al., (2021) also stated that literacy programs in the villages of North Sumatra would be more effective if supported by the digitalization of services and local empowerment.

Librarians also play a crucial role in the success of information literacy programs. A librarian who has a deep mastery of various information sources and possesses the skills to transfer knowledge to the public can potentially be an agent of change who plays a vital role in encouraging the improvement of community literacy skills (Jaya, 2024). Moreover, the success of this program is also inseparable from the support of adequate information infrastructure. The availability of reading spaces, internet access, a diverse collection of reading materials, and information technology facilities are essential components in creating a conducive literacy environment. Librarians must be able to utilize technology as an interactive and engaging learning medium, especially for the digitally-native younger generation.

Studies show that librarian competency, the availability of relevant programs, and active user participation are key factors in the effectiveness of information literacy programs in both academic and community settings (Rahayuningsih et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The information literacy program organized by the Deli Serdang Library has proven successful in enhancing the community's literacy skills, particularly

in accessing, evaluating, and utilizing information accurately and responsibly. This success is closely linked to the active involvement of librarians in facilitating the learning process and the use of an educational approach tailored to the needs and characteristics of the participants. This success demonstrates that the library has a strategic role, functioning not just as an information provider, but as a center for community empowerment capable of fostering literacy awareness, promoting critical thinking, and strengthening public participation in facing the challenges of the digital era.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct broader studies across various types of libraries in different regions, including in remote areas. Such studies should focus on comparing the effectiveness of different information literacy approaches, analyzing long-term changes in the community's information behavior, and identifying the barriers faced in implementing literacy programs in various social and cultural contexts.

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